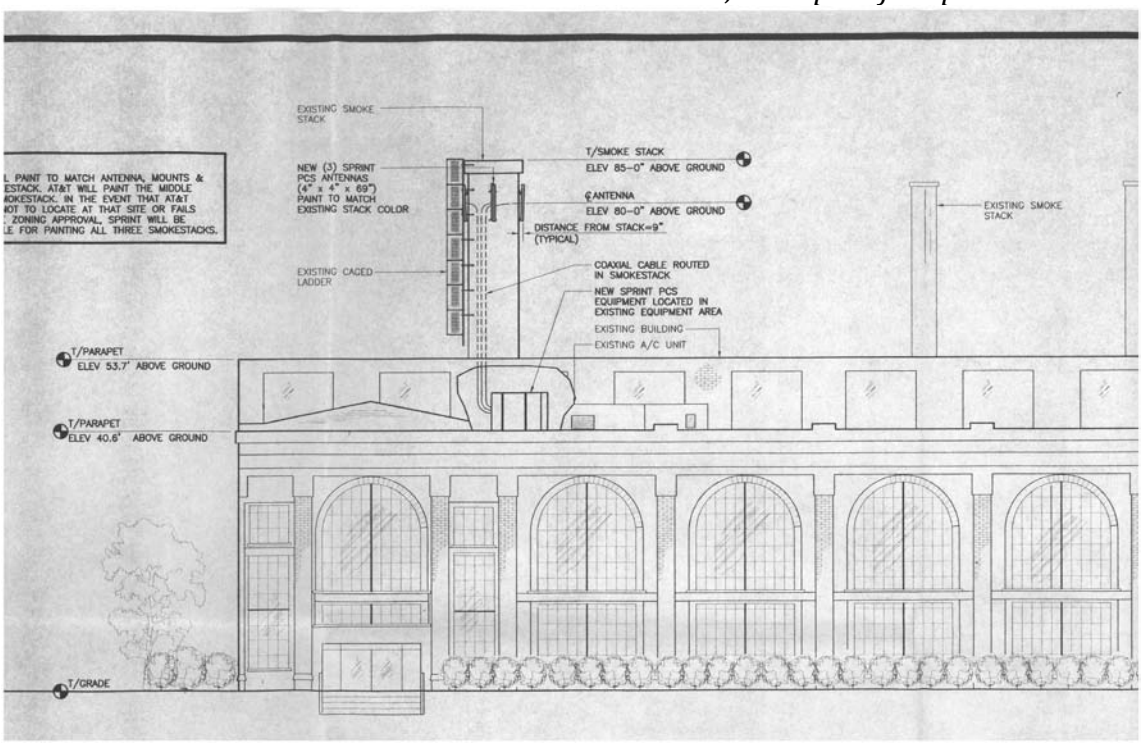
Item 8—Agenda of March 20, 2014 **February 14, 2014, Updated 3/14/2014**

PROPOSAL:
Receive update and discuss 2013 upgrade of Sprint wireless communication antennae on WaterPark, 2910 A Street, a designated landmark.

DISCUSSION:
In 1986 the A Street Water and Power Station, designed by Fiske & Meginnis and built in 1922, was listed on the National Register and designated a Lincoln Landmark with a special permit for rehabilitation as housing. The project subsequently received a National Honor Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Above, published 1923

Below, 1992 plan for Sprint antennae



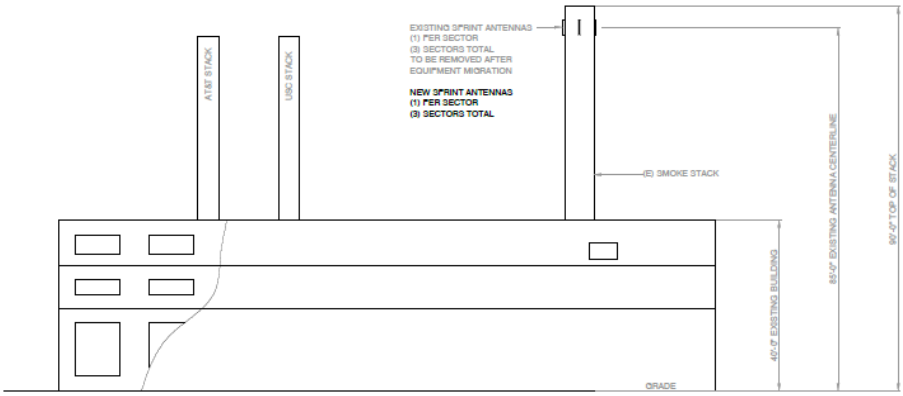
WaterPark, 1992

1992 antennae

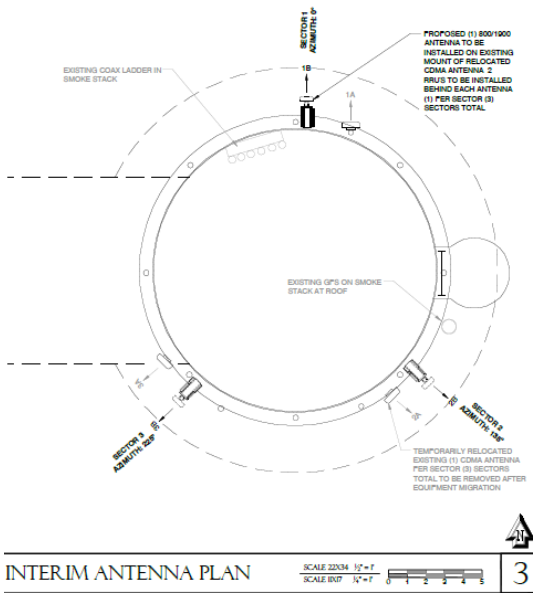
In 1999 the Preservation Commission reviewed and approved a proposal to utilize the easternmost metal smokestack of WaterPark for wireless communications antennae. The larger-diameter eastern stack was approved for exterior installation of three antennae, mounted close against the stack, within the aqua-painted "collar" at the top of the pipe. Sprint also repainted all three stacks as part of the project. In 2008 the western stack was approved for a "stealth" installation inside the stack.

2008, during installation of the antennae in the west stack, before completion, with east antennae in place (above)

In 2013, Sprint commenced an upgrade of antennae in Lincoln for their new "4g" service. In February consultants for Sprint communicated with Lincoln Planning Dept. to inquire whether any of their existing antennae required zoning action for the upgrade, including 2901 A Street, the WaterPark address. Brian Will of Planning verified that all the necessary zoning was in place, as WaterPark has a Special Permit for the Sprint installation. Plans had not yet been submitted. On the strength of this zoning verification, plans were submitted to Building & Safety Dept. for building permits, with the following sketch the only elevation provided.



This may have been inadequate for assessing the difference in visual impact of the three approved antennae and the three upgraded antennae, which are larger and further off-set from the stack. A plan (at left) showing the "interim" installation



when both antennae sets would be present did depict the difference in off-set. In any case, no further information was requested and the question of HPC review and certification was not raised before building permit 1300426 was issued in Feb. 2013 for the work at 2901 A Street.

<u>NB: Upgrades have been made in the City's automated internal notification system so that permits involving designated historic properties are systematically routed to the Planning Dept.'s historic preservation staff.</u>

When phase 1 of the work (installing the new antennae prior to removal of the old equipment) was completed, a Preservation Commissioner inquired of Planning staff about the changed appearance of the installation.

August 2013, Phase 1 complete

The building permit allowed completion of Phase 2—removal of the old antennae after the service had transitioned from the old to new equipment—and the new antennae were painted the color of the top of the stack.

2014 appearance, Phase 2 completed (old antennae removed, painting completed)

Mark Kohler of SMJ International, representing Sprint, will attend the HPC meeting and discuss possible alterations to the installation to minimize its visual impact. He has offered to prepare visual simulations before the April meeting, if requested, to illustrate alternatives of interest to the commission.

<u>Possible actions:</u>
The Commission may choose to make a finding that the appearance of the new antennae is acceptable as installed, in the overall context of this large industrial site. In that case a Certificate of Appropriateness could be voted.

The Commission may determine that the installation was completed in good faith, with any errors on the City's part, and a "Certificate of exception on ground of insufficient return or hardship" could be considered.

Finally, Commissioners could explore with the City and with the Sprint representatives whether any remediation is necessary or feasible.

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