United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
National Capital Parks-East
1900 Anacostia Drive, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20020

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L30 (NCR-NACE)

November 6, 2001

Ms. Jerrily Kress
Interim Director
District of Columbia Board of Zoning Adjustment
441 4th Street, N.W.
Second Floor
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: BZA Application No. 16753, Monopole at Penn-Branch

Dear Ms. Kress:

National Capital Parks-East respectfully urges the Board of Zoning Adjustment to deny the subject application. As managers of the historic Fort Circle Parks corridor, as well as multiple park properties along the scenic Pennsylvania Avenue corridor, we believe a 130-foot monopole would be completely inappropriate for this site.

The Fort Circle Parks (including Fort Davis, just southeast of the site) are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to preserving a large number of historic military earthworks of the Civil War defenses of Washington, the Fort Circle Parks also provide extensive wooded natural habitat, as well as spectacular scenic views, both from the parks themselves, and also as viewed from many significant historic places within the Nation's Capital. That is, Fort Circle Parks provide a scenic backdrop "curtain of green" as viewed from the Mall and the Monumental Core, Arlington House and the Tomb of the Unknowns, much of historic Capitol Hill, the Washington Navy Yard, and numerous other historic and scenic locations..

Fort Circle Parks were first set aside for scenic park purposes by the McMillan Plan at the turn of the previous century. They remain an important "macro-landscape" element of the Nation's Capital today. To interrupt their visual effect with a 130-foot monopole would run counter to the park's management objectives and the intent of the McMillan Plan and subsequent planning initiatives.

As managers of park lands within the scenic and historic Pennsylvania Avenue corridor, we feel that this proposal also conflicts with our mission. We are partnered with the District of Columbia Department of Public Works in the Scenic Byways program, a multi-agency effort to improve and protect the scenic roadways of the Nation's Capital.

BZA
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Board of Zoning Adjustment
District of Columbia
CASE NO.16753
EXHIBIT NO.137

Pennsylvania Avenue is a primary focus of this program. We manage multiple park lands (Fort Circle Parks, Twining Square, Anacostia Park, Pennsylvania Avenue Parks, Eastern Market, and Seward Square) along this historic corridor that leads to the Capitol building. It is our mission, in partnership with others, to provide a scenic "gateway' entrance into the Nation's Capital along Pennsylvania Avenue. Again, we feel that the intrusion of a 130-foot monopole along Pennsylvania Avenue, shortly before the Capitol building first comes in to view, would adversely impact our mission and the scenic beauty of this important gateway to the city.

We further endorse the findings of the September 10 Office of Planning memorandum regarding this proposal. To a great extent, our missions overlap in this instance. While we are not directly involved with managing residential community standards, of course, we note that the interface between the park and the community is an attractive one, and the imposition of an unattractive industrial element into that interface would be to the detriment of both park and residential community values.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposal. For the above reasons, we respectfully recommend denial of the subject application.

Sincerely,

ACTING

Clarenda B. Drake

John Hale For
Superintendent
National Capital Parks-East