



The Center for Architectural & Design Research

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Nevada City Planning Commission

FROM: David Adams, Ph.D., Director

DATE: June 12, 2016

RE: Verizon Application for 8 Rooftop Cellular Antennas at 109 N. Pine St.

I would like to express to the Commission my professional opinion about the above-referenced application.

But first, a little background about myself. I have a Ph.D. in Art History Education, and for 30 years I have taught the history of art, architecture, and design in several state universities and colleges, art and design schools, teaching at Sierra College since 1996. One of my specialties is the history of 20th-century architecture and design. Over the years I have published a number of articles and essays about this in professional journals and books as well as delivered papers and lectures to various academic conferences, schools, and public forums. I am also the Director of the small non-profit organization, The Center for Architecture & Design Research, which I co-founded in 1983 in New York. This organization has been involved with historical preservation projects, architectural design consulting, circulating a large architecture exhibition throughout the U.S., research, and publications. During the summer of 1990 I also conducted on contract to the City of Reno, Nevada, a historical architectural survey (with photographic documentation) of the commercial and residential buildings in that town (when I was teaching at the University of Nevada).

Although being in its current form a rebuilt version from 2004 after the fire, the building at 109 North Pine Street was originally an Elks Lodge apparently constructed in 1913. Stylistically, it reflects the typical early-modern urban building style that had been developed during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, initially especially in Chicago for commercial structures, office buildings, warehouses, etc. (sometimes called the "Chicago School"). Thus, it has curved pediments, an ornamental cornice, flat roof, and large storefront windows on the ground story.

In my opinion the addition of 8 cellular antennas to the edges and corners of the roof of this building would, in addition to any other deleterious effects, seriously compromise and degrade its historical character and, by extension, that of the surrounding early-modern, "Gold Rush" environment in downtown Nevada City that has been and continues to be so attractive to tourists. These antennas would be visible from a certain distance, both from Broad Street as well as from other perspectives. Such forms and technology, of course, did not exist when the structure was built and can only interfere with a perception of its authentic historical and aesthetic qualities.

Therefore, I would like to recommend that the Planning Commission and City reject this use-permit application, both for propriety reasons (since it is a publicly-owned building) and regulatory reasons (the city's historical district preservation ordinance). Thank you for your consideration.