




MEMORANDUM

Clarke Caton Hintz

Architecture  
Planning  
Landscape Architecture

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**To:** Montgomery Township Zoning Board of Adjustment  
**From:** John D. S. Hatch, FAIA   
**Re:** **New York SMSA Limited Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless  
Use Variance and Major Site Plan**  
694 River Road  
Block 8001, Lots 1 and 1Q  
R2 Single Family Residential  
BA-05-14  
**Date:** November 28, 2016

This review memorandum is intended to supplement the other reviews provided by Clarke Caton Hintz, and deals solely with the Historic Preservation issues that arise due to this application.

**1.0 PROJECT & SITE DESCRIPTION**

The applicant is seeking use variance and site plan approval to construct an unmanned telecommunications facility. The proposed work will include twelve (12) panel antennas installed within a 135' tall "silo", two (2) GPS devices and associated equipment in the base of the silo. The improvements are proposed on a 2,500 square foot area leased from the landowner. The compound area will be gravel area enclosed by an eight (8) foot high chain link fence.

The subject property, Block 8001, Lots 1 and 1Q, is an 82.37-acre lot in the R2 Single-Family Residential District. A deed of easement was granted to the State of New Jersey Agriculture Retention and Development Program and was recorded on the property on March 18, 1997. The deed of easement excluded a 5.50-acre portion of the site for use by the property owner. The proposed improvements are located within the 5.50-acre exclusion area that currently contains five (5) existing wooden sheds, a chicken coop, a 1-story building (dilapidated) and a 1 1/2-story dwelling. The exclusion area is heavily wooded, with steep slopes and clearings around the existing improvements.

The proposed improvements are located 200-feet from Block 8001, Lot 1.01, a landmark preservation area within the River Road Local Historic District, that

Philip Caton, FAICP  
John Hatch, FAIA  
George Hibbs, AIA  
Brian Slaugh, AICP  
Michael Sullivan, AICP

*Emeriti*  
John Clarke, FAIA  
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contains the Ryneer A. Staats historical building. In addition, the site is within 100' of the River Road State and National Historic District; within ½ mile of the Griggstown State and National Historic District; about 260' from the Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District; within the Millstone Valley National Scenic Byway; within the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area; adjacent to the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail; about 220 feet from a Dutch barn currently being preserved; within 200' of the Wyckoff-Cornell Burying Ground; within ½ mile of the John Staats House, a designated local landmark that is eligible to be listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places; within ½ mile of the Brokaw-Taggart House, a contributing property in the River Road Historic District; within ½ mile of the Garret Wyckoff House, a contributing structure in the River Road Historic District; within ½ mile of the William Baird House, a contributing structure to the River Road Historic District. The Wyckoff-Cornell burial ground is located within the 5.50-acre exclusion area of Block 8001, Lot 1.

## 2.0 MATERIALS REVIEWED

Reviewed items include:

- 2.1. *Montgomery Township Planning & Zoning Board Application* and related documents, dated November 7, 2014.
- 2.2. *Preliminary and Final Site Plans*, prepared by Malick & Scherer, P.C., dated August 4, 2014, last revised March 28, 2016, **last revised July 7, 2016**.
- 2.3. *Planimetric Survey*, prepared by Malick & Scherer, P.C., dated September 3, 2013, last revised February 10, 2015.
- 2.4. *Environmental Impact Statement*, prepared by EBI Consulting, dated October 21, 2014, revised November 23, 2016.
- 2.5. *Alternative Candidates Analysis*, prepared by V-COMM, LLC, dated February 11, 2015.
- 2.6. *Alternate Antenna Height Analysis*, prepared by V-COMM, LLC, dated March 23, 2015.



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- 2.7. Correspondence from various organizations regarding this application, including from the Millstone Valley Preservation Coalition; the Van Harlingen Historical Society; the D&R Canal Watch; the Township of Montgomery Landmarks Commission; the Township of Montgomery Planning Department, etc.
- 2.8. Correspondence from the NJ Historic Preservation Office regarding the Section 106 review.
- 2.9. *Visual Sight Distance Analysis Report* prepared for Verizon by William F. Masters, Jr., PP dated July 19, 2016.
- 2.10. *Search Area Analysis*, prepared by Atlantic Site Development, dated May 29, 2013 and updated August 29, 2016.

### 3.0 SUMMARY OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION ISSUES

After having visited the site and reviewing the extensive information provided by Montgomery Township regarding this application, I concur with the conclusion expressed by the Township's planner, Ms. Lori Savron, PP, AICP, and by the NJ Historic Preservation Office, that the proposed cell tower will have an "Adverse Effect" on adjacent historic and cultural resources. As a number of letters, in particular the letter written by Ms. Savron to Mr. Stephen Forrest of EBI Consulting on August 4, 2014, provide excellent summaries of the historic and cultural issues, I will not repeat those issues in detail here. That being said, I do want to emphasize several points:

1. The proposed site for this cell tower and associated facilities is extraordinarily sensitive. There are few sites in New Jersey that have its historic importance, that are located so close to so many protected resources, districts and areas, and that are so pristine. The rural and historic character of this area is particularly important to preserve in our densely populated and developed state. If not carefully managed, any new structures or changes to existing structures and sites in this area could have potentially permanent negative consequences.
2. The proposed design of the cell tower, the "stealth silo", is particularly massive and intrusive. While the use of a design that is intended to mimic a farm structure is understandable given the rural location of this site, the height (135') and overall size of this structure is out scale with the location and with other farm structures. The typical maximum height of a silo is less than 80' tall, and there are no



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structures in this area, farm or otherwise, that approach 80' tall, much less the 135' proposed height. Various comments by the applicant acknowledge this fact.

3. Interestingly, existing trees seem to obscure views of the proposed tower in some of the photos taken when the crane simulating the height of the tower was in place. However, in fall and winter this protection is greatly reduced.
4. It is apparent that the silo design was selected to be contextual, intended to relate to the rural location of the site. However, given its overall height and size and the location of the site close to the various historic and protected districts as well as a public way, this design is perhaps the most intrusive of the three options selected. Both the standard monopole and the "tree" would be shorter and less massive. That being said, the prominent location of this site in this sensitive location means that any design for a new cell tower will have an adverse effect on the nearby historic and cultural resources.

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# JOHN D. S. HATCH, FAIA, LEED AP

Principal

## EDUCATION

University of Pennsylvania  
*Certificate in Historic Preservation*

University of Virginia  
*Master of Architecture*

Istituto Universitario d'Architettura  
*Venice, Italy ; UVA Venice Program*

Princeton University  
*Bachelor of Arts*

## PROFESSIONAL LICENSES

Registered Architect  
*Delaware  
New Jersey  
Pennsylvania*

Member, College of Fellows  
*American Institute of Architects*

LEED Accredited Professional  
*USGBC*

## AWARDS

Preservation New Jersey Legacy & Leadership Award, 2015

## PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Trenton Landmarks Commission  
*1989-Present; Chair, 1992-1995*

Passage Theatre  
*1990-Present; Chair, 1997-1998, 2005-2013*

Preservation New Jersey  
*Board of Trustees, 2003-2013  
President 2008-2009*

New Jersey Historic Trust  
*Board of Trustees, 2003-2015*

Princeton Area Community Foundation  
*Board of Trustees*



In his more than 25 years with Clarke Caton Hintz, John Hatch has managed the design of an array of architecturally significant buildings. These include the restoration of Morven, the former governor's mansion in Princeton, the Roebling Complex Re-development, and the restoration of the Hunterdon County Courthouse. In addition to his historic work, he has managed a large number of civic projects and studies, and a wide variety of other projects, including a large number of College and University projects, several senior citizen housing projects, the Somerset Ballpark, and commercial and government projects. All of his projects address issues of context, civic life and sustainability. In addition to his design work, John has written and lectured about such topics as historic preservation, sustainability and urban redevelopment.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Princeton Univ. 200 Elm Drive (1)  
*Princeton, NJ*

Historic Hunterdon County Courthouse (2)  
*Flemington, NJ*

Historic Morven (3)  
*Princeton, NJ*

Roebling Complex (4)  
*Trenton, NJ*

Roebling Mansion Restoration  
*Trenton, NJ*

Trenton Masonic Temple  
*Trenton, NJ*

Trenton Central High School  
*Trenton, NJ*

Pellettieri Homes  
*Trenton, NJ*

Trenton Makes Arts Complex,  
*Trenton, NJ*

Cracker Factory/Everett Corner  
*Trenton, NJ*

Hunterdon County Hall of Records  
*Flemington, NJ*

Golden Swan  
*Trenton, NJ*

Mercer County Community College  
*Trenton, NJ*

N. Pemberton Railroad Station  
*Pemberton, NJ*

Millington School House  
*Long Hill, NJ*

Samuel Fleming House  
*Flemington, NJ*

Garretson Forge & Farm  
*Fair Lawn, NJ*

Webb Memorial Chapel  
*Madison, NJ*

Tunis Cooper Historic Site  
*Bergenfield, NJ*

Trenton Public Library  
*Trenton, NJ*

Museum of Contemporary Science  
*Trenton, NJ*

Mill Hill Historic District  
*Trenton, NJ*

Rutgers University Tillet Hall  
*Piscataway, NJ*

Flemington Historic Preservation Commission  
*Flemington, NJ*

City of Burlington Historic Preservation Commission  
*Burlington, NJ*

