

Fifth Avenue & Bigelow Boulevard - *Cathedral of Learning*

City Designated Historic Structure

OWNER: University of Pittsburgh

WARD: 4th
BLOCK AND LOT NUMBER: 28-C-125

BUILDING INSPECTOR: _____
ZONING CLASSIFICATION: EMI

HISTORIC ARCHITECTURAL RATING: National Importance

DESCRIPTION: The Cathedral of Learning is the skyscraper main building of the University of Pittsburgh. It was the brainchild of University Chancellor John Bowman in the 1920s. Designed by the architect Charles Klauder, the Cathedral of Learning was constructed between 1926 and 1937. It rises to a height of 535 feet from the middle of a large green lawn. Its architectural style is Gothic Revival, with its details rendered in limestone, but in its massing it utilizes the setbacks that were characteristic of the Art Deco period.

INFORMATION FOR THE JULY 12, 1996 HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING:

History

1. On February 25, 1994, the Historic Review Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (#94-013) to the University of Pittsburgh for alterations to the Cathedral of Learning, including the installation of ornamental metal handrails in the center of the stone stairs at the Bigelow Boulevard entrance and the replacement of the revolving doors with new aluminum-and-glass automatic swinging doors in the ground-level entrance on the Bigelow Boulevard side (doors recessed 14 feet from the exterior facade).
2. Also on February 25, 1994, the Historic Review Commission issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (#94-017) to the University of Pittsburgh for alterations to the Cathedral of Learning grounds at the Log Cabin including the installation of accessible-route signage at the sidewalk leading from the parking lot to the Log Cabin.
3. On June 20, 1996, the Historic Review Commission received an application from the University of Pittsburgh for the replacement of a radio antenna on the roof of the Cathedral of Learning.

Work Item

1. Removal of an existing antenna from the roof of the Cathedral of Learning;
2. Installation of a new antenna on the roof, including:
 - * height: 20'-9" (8 feet taller than the existing antenna);
 - * diameter: 2-3/8 inches;
 - * material: fiberglass.

Oakland Civic Center Design Guidelines:

D. Building Rehabilitation and Alteration

3. Roofs: The existing roofline and architectural features that give a building its character, such as roof shapes, towers, dormers, cornices, brackets, and chimneys, should be retained. New features, such as vents, skylights, and rooftop utilities, should be placed out of view from the street. Slate and tile roofs are common in the district, and should be retained and maintained wherever possible. Replacement roofing materials should maintain the visual character of the original materials. The Historic Review Commission, if they are not visible from the street, shall not review flat or low-pitched roofs.

5. Mechanical Systems: Utility and mechanical systems should be placed inconspicuously, and screened if necessary, so that they are not visible on the principal facade(s) of the building as seen from public streets; they should also be screened from residential uses. Features that must be added to meet safety and code requirements, such as stairs and elevators, should be designed to be as inconspicuous as possible, and should not alter significant architectural features of the building. Features that must be added to make a building accessible to the handicapped should be designed and installed without damaging the historic character of the building. The Commission encourages placement of features on secondary facades if placement on primary facades cannot be done without damage to historic fabric.