

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society
before the Historic Preservation Review Board on October 26, 2017**

Re: HPA 17-594 600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE

My name is Beth Purcell and I am testifying on behalf of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society's Historic Preservation Committee. We reviewed the plans for the project dated September 8, 2017 and October 12, 2017.

This five-story Colonial Revival building dominates the 600 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, SE. It has nine archways on the first story, resting on six piers -- these are the most architecturally distinctive features of the building. Built in 1975, it is not contributing.

The applicant has made the case that for public safety reasons, the arcade space behind the piers (arcade) needs to be enclosed. However, we continue to believe that the proposed solution, a line of strip-mall store fronts obliterating the archways, is inappropriate and there is a far better way to meet public safety needs.

At its September 28, 2017 hearing the Board made four rulings:

- (1) the existing arched masonry openings be retained;
- (2) the metal panels flanking the lobby entrance be deleted and masonry retained;
- (3) the proportions of the storefront glazing elements be enlarged by eliminating duplicative vertical framing elements; and
- (4) detailed storefront drawings be developed to ensure that the storefront relates in detailing and character with the historic district.

The applicant has failed to address the Board's primary concerns. We agree with HPO's October staff report and the Board's previous decision to retain the arched masonry openings and preserve the important relationship between the arched openings of the arcade and the arched roofs at the dormers. We urged a total redesign in our earlier comments -- that all the piers and archways be maintained, while filling in the space under the archways. We suggested that the smallest archways at the back (arcade) side of the piers would be the appropriate location to place the storefront panels closing off the arcade, thereby leaving exposed to view on the exterior all the stepbacks of the archways. The middle archway should become visible.

We also recommend that the applicant suggest signage and lighting (how the building would appear at night).

We believe that, at this time, the project is still not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District

Thank you for considering our comments.

Testimony prepared by Alison Ross.