

**Testimony of the Capitol Hill Restoration Society  
before the Historic Preservation Review Board on September 28, 2017  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE (HPA 17-)594**

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 August 23, and September 25, 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. But 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. The September plans only add a few brick piers to the previous design. The applicant erroneously equates the arches with the arcades. It is possible to save the arches while closing in the arcades. For this reason, we urge a total redesign -- that the all piers and archways be maintained, while filling in the space under the archways. We suggest 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 agree with the staff report.

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

We believe that at this time the project is not compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, but that with the requested modifications, it could easily be made compatible.

Thank you for considering our comments.