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**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD  
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

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Landmark/District:	<b>Capitol Hill Historic District</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Address:	<b>600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Concept
Meeting Date:	<b>September 28, 2017</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alteration
Case Number:	<b>17-594</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	<b>Gabriela Gutowski</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Demolition
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

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Owner BDC Pennsylvania Avenue LLC, with plans prepared by architect Rui Ponte, seeks concept review to fill in recessed retail entries with new storefronts on an office building in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Property Description**

600 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE is a large free-standing Colonial-Revival style commercial building built in 1975. The brick facades are punctuated by eight-over-eight double-hung windows. The building has a standing-seam metal mansard roof with arched dormers. The ground floor at the primary elevation features an open arched brick arcade with recessed wood multi-light storefronts. Based on its date of construction, the building is non-contributing to the Capitol Hill Historic District.

**Proposal**

The plans call for the removal of the existing storefronts, enclosing the arcade, and constructing new storefronts. The arched openings would be enlarged and reconfigured into rectangular openings. The new storefronts would be metal, installed within the modified openings. Additionally, the plans show new marques above each storefront bay with metal tie-backs. Signage would be mounted to the marques.

**Evaluation**

Although the building is non-contributing to the district, the first floor is well composed and the wood and brick materials, rhythm, and detailing of its first floor openings helps relate this large building to the character of historic buildings in the district. In-filling the arcade and bringing the storefronts out to the face of the building would make the retail space more consistent with the historic district, and can be achieved in a manner that would have little effect on the overall composition of the building.

When initially proposed, the proposal called for eliminating the arched openings and installing a continuous metal storefront system with no masonry between the openings. While the compatibility of the proposal has been improved by retaining some masonry between the storefronts, HPO has encouraged retaining the arched openings. The openings relate well to the

arched roofs at the dormers and feature a handsome brick corbelling detail that provides an intentional refining element to the openings; making the openings rectangular would eliminate the brick detail and the relationship of the ground floor to the arched roofed dormers. The overall composition would be improved if the new storefront infill was installed within the existing arched openings.

The proposal would also benefit from several additional minor refinements. The metal panels flanking the primary office entrance should be eliminated and the existing masonry retained, eliminating repetitive vertical divisions within the storefronts would improve their proportional relationship with storefronts in the historic district, and detailed storefront section drawings should be developed. Metal storefronts are not inappropriate for a 20<sup>th</sup> century building, however they would better relate to the character of the historic district and to the building if they featured profiled moldings and articulated details.

### **Recommendation**

*The HPO recommends the Board find the concept to be generally compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, and delegate final approval to staff with the condition that:*

- 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;*
- 4) detailed storefront drawings be developed to ensure that the storefront relates in detailing and character with the historic district.*