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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>October 26, 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 revised 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 applicant last presented to the Board at the September 28, 2017 meeting. The plans called for the removal of the existing storefronts, enclosing the arcade, and construction of new storefronts. The arched openings were to be enlarged and reconfigured into rectangular openings, and the new storefronts were proposed as metal installed within the modified openings. Additionally, the plans showed new marques above each storefront bay with metal tie-backs. Signage would be mounted to the marques.

The Board found the concept to be generally compatible with the Capitol Hill Historic District, and delegated 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.

The applicant has stated that he is unwilling to make the changes to the proposal as specified above. Instead the width of the brick piers has been increased to 36" from 28", and a slightly darker shade of red brick will be added to the bottom of the piers. The width of two vertical storefront mullions on either side of the storefront entry doors will be increased. Metal cladding

is still shown on either side of the main building; however brick would remain at the bottom of each pier. Slight variances would be made to the storefront details, including more pronounced steel lintels above the storefronts and slimmer more refined metal awnings. Detailed storefront drawings have not been provided.

### **Evaluation**

While the proposed changes are modest improvements, the revised concept does substantively address the Board's concerns. The retention of an additional 8" of brick piers begins to help ground the building, but the introduction of a darker shade of red brick complicates the composition without measurable benefit.

Per the applicant, the motivation for the proposed changes are driven by the desire to attract potential retail tenants. There is a desire for maximum flexibility concerning the placement of door and storefront bays. It is unclear how this need for flexibility precludes the retention of the existing arched storefront openings. Similarly, there is no apparent benefit from introducing metal cladding at the elevation, nor does it improve the compatibility of the proposal. As the revised proposal is almost identical to what the Board saw previously, the HPO's recommendations remain the same.

### **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.*