

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

Property Address:	5520 Connecticut Avenue NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Chevy Chase Arcade		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	March 26, 2015		Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	15-128	X	Alteration
Staff Reviewer:	Anne Brockett		New Construction

On behalf of owner Chevy Chase Arcade LLC, attorney Brian Murphy seeks the Board's review of an after-the-fact permit application to install doors at the entrance to the Chevy Chase Arcade. The HPO inspector issued a Stop Work Order in January for the work, which had commenced without permits.

The singular importance of the Chevy Chase Arcade was recognized with exterior and interior designation as a District of Columbia landmark in 1988 and listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. As documented in the attached National Register nomination form, the Chevy Chase Arcade is unique in the District of Columbia as the city's only extant shopping arcade, a building type that rose in popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, providing an early version of interior shopping, ultimately evolving into the shopping mall.

The Chevy Chase Arcade was built in 1925 in a Classical Beaux Arts style by real estate developer Edward Jones. It features a limestone façade with a slightly projecting entry bay and arched opening flanked by fluted pilasters with urns above. The entry has double cast-iron gates, believed to be original, that attach to the inside face of the entry arch, leaving a deep reveal when the gates are closed and remaining undetectable when they are open. Inside, the two-story arcade is accentuated by a barrel vaulted ceiling, clerestory windows, original storefronts, the black and white marble floor, and classically derived bas relief frieze and panels.

Project Description

As seen in the photos, the doors have been installed, and the owner wishes to continue with the transom installation. The new glass doors and transom would sit flush with the face of the building.

Evaluation

That this building has existed without a door for the past 90 years and retains its interior in relatively good condition is not insignificant. In fact, the HPO has concerns that altering the building's natural, or minimally enhanced, passive heating and cooling could do more harm to the building by introducing a new interior climate. Historic buildings were designed to be able to breathe and were built to accommodate changes in temperature. Sealing historic buildings can deter the natural transfer of heat, cold, and moisture, causing stress on the building assembly components and compromising the durability of materials inside and out. The interior damage cited in the submission should be examined by a preservation expert or building engineer to

identify the source(s), which is more likely to be natural settling of the building, the age and expected life-span of certain components, incompatible abutting materials, moisture infiltration through masonry joints, the roof, or around improperly sealed windows, or other causes.

The HPO recognizes and appreciates that the owner has made significant efforts to restore and enhance the property during his ownership. However, adding exterior doors to this building unequivocally alters its essential historic character as an open arcade and reduces its elegant recessed entry to a generic storefront. Adding doors, regardless of design, is contrary to the function of an arcade and is inconsistent with the purposes of the Historic Landmark and Historic District Protection Act.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board recommend denial of the after-the-fact permit request to install doors and a transom as incompatible with the character of the landmark and thus, inconsistent with the purposes of the preservation act.