

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

Property Address:	2606 Connecticut Avenue NW	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Woodley Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	December 16, 2021	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	21-505		Permit Review
		X	Alteration

Working with Martha Galo of Exclusive Awnings, restaurant tenant District Kitchen, seeks concept review to enclose the outdoor café space under an existing awning at 2606 Connecticut Avenue NW. The building was constructed in 1921 and was the first purpose-built commercial building in Woodley Park, approved for construction after a lawsuit was filed over the city’s new ordinance that zoned all of Woodley Park residential. For nearly 50 years, the building was home to Arbaugh’s Restaurant and still serves as a neighborhood eatery.

Proposal and Evaluation

The design is for roll-up fabric flaps that attach to the existing awning to seasonally enclose the restaurant’s outdoor seating area. The applicant has worked with HPO and the community to revise their initial submission. Rather than the original design that called for opaque canvas flaps with smaller clear vinyl “windows,” the current design keeps the panels almost entirely transparent.

Seasonal enclosures exist throughout the city and its historic districts. While the Board has occasionally approved (and denied) applications for enclosed cafes depending on their context and visual impact, many have also been erected without permit, particularly in recent times with restaurants struggling during the pandemic. While the use of umbrellas or freestanding shade structures are less visually obtrusive to the fronts of historic buildings, seasonal enclosures provide additional protection and can substantially extend the season for outdoor dining.

In some instances, a more solid appearance may be acceptable given the particular architecture of the subject building and its surrounding context. Here, the first iteration, which resembled an addition to the front of the building, has been replaced with a much lighter design that preserves a more open streetscape. HPO has concerns about the shininess and reflectivity of the proposed material, but finds it is more appropriate than flaps with a higher canvas-to-vinyl ratio that would appear more solid and block views of the building and streetscape.

Recommendation

HPO recommends that the Board approve the proposed project in concept as consistent with the preservation act and delegate final review to staff.

Staff Contact: Anne Brockett