Ms. Marnique Heath  
Chair, Historic Preservation Review Board  
1100 4th Street, SW, Suite E650  
Washington, DC 20024

Re: 525 A St. NE (HPA 17-417)

Dear Ms. Heath:

On June 14, 2017, at a duly noticed regularly scheduled monthly meeting of ANC 6C, with a quorum of six out of six commissioners and the public present, this case came before ANC 6C. The commissioners voted 4-2 for qualified support of the application, as discussed below.

The full ANC reviewed a set of plans dated June 14, 2017. These drawings reflect several changes from the original submission to the Board, e.g., adding a consistent projecting band across the parapet walls and cornices of all five rowhouses.

The Commission believes that the overall concept harmonizes well with the surrounding historic properties. The alternating canted three- and two-story bays, as well as the alternating transom styles over the main entrances, echo the characteristic rhythm of the Capitol Hill Historic District’s late 19th- and early 20th-century rowhouses. The addition of the projecting band improves upon the original concept, in which the tall parapet wall on three of the houses created an unusually tall and awkward-looking unadorned area of brick on the main elevations.

ANC 6C recommends the closure of both curb cuts on 6th St. and strictly conditions its support for the project on this change. We are pleased that the applicant stated orally on June 14 that southern curb cut—which has for many years been a source of illegal vehicular parking in the public space, as well as vehicles projecting into and obstructing the sidewalk—is being eliminated. However, we note that some inconsistencies remain in the June 14 drawings (e.g., sheets A-18 and A-23 continue to show the curb cut remaining).

We support the changes reducing the height of the retaining walls along 6th St. and replacing them with a lower curb topped with an iron fence. Likewise, we appreciate the applicant’s efforts to reduce the width of the lead walk in the area closest to the sidewalk. However, we question the need for the lead walk to be double-wide for most of its length and urge further refinement here to minimize the paving in public space.
One last concern goes to the front staircases to the main floor, which have one edge flush against the lot line, making them misaligned with the front entrance. The ANC recommends that the stairs be offset from either edge of the upper deck/landing, as is typical for most Hill rowhouses (and more esthetically pleasing).

Citizen comments to the ANC on this project varied significantly. A number of local residents stated their opposition, primarily owing to concerns about increased parking pressure and suspicion over the applicant’s intentions for the new dwellings’ future use. (No opponents spoke to the specifics of the design concept presented to the ANC.) However, several other residents expressed support for the project, especially with respect to “completing the block” by infilling what is now a screened parking lot.

Thank you for giving great weight to the views of ANC 6C.

Sincerely,

Karen Wirt
Chair, ANC 6C