HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Landmark/District:	**Capitol Hill Historic District**	( ) Agenda
Address:	**515 7th Street, SE**	(**x**) Consent
		(**x**) Concept
Meeting Date:	**December 15, 2016**	( ) Alteration
Case Number:	**17-071**	(**x**) New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	**Gabriela Gutowski**	( ) Demolition
		( ) Subdivision

Applicant Sonja Sweek, with plans prepared by architect Emily Hirst, seeks concept review for a two-story carriage house with cellar in the Capitol Hill Historic District.

Property Description
The subject property was built c.1857 and is a semi-detached wood framed house with horizontal wood siding and two-over-two double-hung wood windows. The ground floor at the primary façade features a hipped standing-seam roofed porch supported by decoratively carved piers. A shed and 6' 0" tall wood fence currently exist at the rear of the property. The adjacent properties within the row feature one-story garages of similar aligning heights constructed between1904-1927.

The rear of the property fronts Archibald Walk, one of Washington D.C.'s remaining inhabited alleys. In 1897, together with the perpendicular alley known as F Street Terrace, they had 22 buildings and housed over 100 people. In 1952 the majority of the buildings were razed and replaced with a parking lot. A total of six two-story alley dwellings remain, 522, 520, 518, and 516 Archibald Walk, SE, and 512 and 514 F Street Terrace, SE. All six dwellings were constructed c. 1900 and four of the buildings are located directly across the alley from the property in question.

Proposal
The plans call for the removal of the shed and wood fence and the construction of a two-story carriage house with cellar. The carriage house would be 20' 0" tall and feature an 8' 4" deep cellar. The alley facing façade would be brick and feature a paneled garage door and single-leaf entrance door at the ground floor, and two two-over-two double-hung wood windows and a single-leaf door with transom leading to a Juliette balcony at the second floor. The rear yard facing façade would be clad in horizontal wood siding and feature two single-leaf doors at the ground floor and two-over-two double-hung wood windows at the first and second floors. There would be a cellar window and light-well at the rear facing façade.

Evaluation
The design, scale, and materials of the carriage house are compatible with the character of the alley and with the historic district in general. The building's use of red brick, two-over-two double-hung windows, and simple sill and lintel detailing, relates well to the other masonry garages, dwellings, and warehouses within the alley-scape. Although the abutting properties to the north and south currently features only one-story garages, the alley features two-story dwellings, therefore the presence of a two-story carriage house will be compatible with the scale of the surrounding alley context. The proposed overall height of the carriage house at 20'0" is comparable to the height approved by the Board at newly constructed two-story carriage house within the district, such as at a recent case at 231 10th Street SE (HPA 16-209, February 2016), in which it which it required that a proposed 23'9" tall two-story carriage house be reduced to a height no greater than 21'6".

However, the inconsistent size of the door and window openings and Juliette balcony at the second floor at the alley façade create an irregular composition at the building. A more symmetrical and regular fenestration pattern and the elimination of the Juliette balcony would create a façade that better related to the historic buildings within the alley-scape.

Recommendation
The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept to be compatible with the character of the historic district, with revisions to the fenestration at the alley facing façade, and delegate final approval to staff.