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

Landmark/District:	Hebrew Home for the Aged	Agenda
Property Address:	1125 Spring Road NW	X Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	January 25, 2018	X Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	18-047	X Alteration
		X Subdivision

Through the Deputy Mayor's Office of Planning and Economic Development, the development team of Victory Housing and Brinshore Development won a competitive RFP process to redevelop the site of the former Hebrew Home for the Aged and adjacent Paul Robeson School. Working with Wiencek Associates architects, the project team proposes a subdivision of the landmark property and minor additions and alterations to the building itself

The Hebrew Home, the adjacent Jewish Social Services Agency building, and the undeveloped green space between them were designated a historic landmark in 2014. Sharing the lot with the Hebrew Home is a non-contributing 1970s utility building and the Robeson School, which is not historic and was not a part of the D.C. or National Register designation.

Property Description

The Hebrew Home for the Aged was constructed to provide housing and social support for destitute Jews, many of whom were immigrants who neither spoke nor understood English. The building was designed by Washington architect Appleton P. Clark, Jr. in 1924-25 and was expanded in the early 1950s to the designs of William St. Cyr Barrington. In 1940, the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA) was constructed to the west of the Hebrew Home to the designs of Julius Wenig. Although built in three distinct phases, the Hebrew Home and associated JSSA form a uniform landmark composed of brown brick with Moorish and Romanesque influences.

Subdivision Proposal and Evaluation

The landmarked buildings currently sit on three lots. The JSSA occupies its own lot; the landscaped area and half of the Hebrew Home sit on a second lot; and the other half of Hebrew Home and the non-historic Robeson School occupy a third lot. The proposed subdivision will adjust the lot lines to better reflect current and future conditions on the site: no changes are proposed for the JSSA lot; the Hebrew Home and the landscaped area will sit on their own separate lot; and the Robeson site and portions of the Hebrew Home parking lots, rear yard, and east side yard would be set on several new lots intended for development.

The configuration of the Hebrew Home lot would be irregular and cedes land to the new development lots. However, this land - which contains a parking lot to the west, ambulance drop off and a utility building to the north, and non-significant lawn area to the east - does not contribute to the character of the landmark. The proposal works effectively to protect the landmark while compatibly accommodating development on the new lots. Furthermore, the applicants propose no construction associated with the new development on the Hebrew Home lot and the boundaries of the designation will not change.

Project Proposal and Evaluation

The proposal calls for converting the Hebrew Home to affordable senior housing, requiring interior modifications, modest additions, and restorative work to the exterior. No work is proposed to the JSSA building, which will be retained under city ownership.

On the interior, there is a significant amount of non-structural demolition to convert hospital-type rooms to apartments, but the structure will remain intact. Page 7 best depicts the exterior areas of minor alterations, including demolishing the non-contributing utility building, a non-historic carport, covered walkway, shed, and terrace enclosure. None of these alterations raises preservation concerns, and in fact restore the building to a more historic condition.

Additions are proposed within the center courtyard and on the roof of the east wing. The courtyard addition would be clad in panel siding with large expanses of glazing. The addition is not visible from the exterior of the property due to its location within a fully enclosed central court and its one story height. The addition proposed atop the east wing would be somewhat visible from the east, but it is set back 17 feet from the east façade and positioned between the existing substantially taller penthouse structures. It would be clad in brick and punched windows typical of the rest of the building. Because of their minimal visibility and modest design and scale, neither addition presents compatibility concerns.

Finally, the project will provide community access to the open area between the Hebrew Home and JSSA building, which is currently surrounded by a chainlink fence topped with barbed wire. Creating this “pocket park” requires a new stair and ramp access through the existing brick retaining wall along the sidewalk. This wall is a long expanse of brick and small openings to provide entry to a new park have no preservation impact.

Recommendation

The HPO recommends that the Board find the concept compatible with the character of the landmark and consistent with the purposes of the Act, and delegate final approval to staff.

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