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

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Property Address:	<b>5425 Western Avenue, NW</b>	<b>X</b> Agenda
Landmark/District:	<b>Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home [possible landmark]</b>	Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	<b>March 31, 2021</b>	<b>X</b> Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	<b>22-039</b>	<b>X</b> Alteration
		New Construction
		Demolition

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The Lisner-Louise-Dickson-Hurt Home, represented by Urban Atlantic, Wiencek Associates Architects and EHT Tracerics, seeks on-going conceptual design review for construction of a four-story addition to its building in Friendship Heights. While the property is not currently subject to review under the preservation law, the applicants are considering nominating it for landmark designation. As part of that consideration, they are requesting a courtesy concept review to see whether the proposed project would meet preservation standards.

### **Property History and Description**

The Lisner Home is located on a 5.4 acre property bound by Western Avenue, Livingston Street, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, and Military Road, NW. It was built as a privately endowed residential facility for elderly women, originally consisting of a three-story Colonial Revival building designed by the local firm of Faulkner and Kingsbury in 1940. The facility was expanded in 1951, 1957 and 1992, and merged at different times with the Louise Home, the Dickson Home, and the Hurt Home, all originally separate institutions. The applicants have concluded that the property is potentially eligible for designation as a landmark under DC Criterion B and National Register Criterion A as the oldest operating privately endowed home for the aged in the District that has remained continuously operational in its original location.

### **Revised Proposal**

The Board reviewed an initial concept design in December 2021. While it did not take a vote, concerns were expressed that the new construction felt crowded on the site and too close to the 1940 building. The Board also found the extent of parking in front of the 1940 building to be detrimental to its setting and asked that the landscape plan continue to be developed.

The concept has been revised in response to comments by the Board and surrounding neighbors. The V-shaped plan of the building has been flipped so that the open courtyard faces 42<sup>nd</sup> Street rather than Western, and the building pulled back on all sides. The distance between the new construction and the 1940 building has been increased from 25' to 31' and the setback from Western increased from 17' to 35 feet.

The design has been further developed to unify the wings into a common vocabulary of red brick and multi-light single and paired windows capped by a differentiated fourth floor to be clad in a dark gray panel or shingle. The small-scale projections proposed in the previous plan have been eliminated in favor of larger projections centered on each elevation. The windows at the corners of the building have been vertically ganged together with brick and glass spandrel panels.

The parking garage entrance has been shifted from Livingston Street to be accessed off the front traffic circle; the ramp would be covered and landscaped above at the point where clearance allows. The onsite parking proposed in front of the 1940 building has been reduced to allow retention of more green space. Through paving and landscaping, the courtyard between the 1940 building and the addition would be developed to serve simultaneously as the pedestrian entrance into the addition, a landscaped patio for residents' use, and as a loading zone.

### **Evaluation**

As before, the site plan has been developed to reinforce the front court but is pulled further north (away from the 1940 building) and east (back from Western Avenue) to provide a more comfortable space between the buildings and to open up views of the 1940 building. The revised plan, with the open courtyard facing 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, is more successful in breaking the mass of the building down and in relating simultaneously to the formal character of the Home and the informal suburban character of the residential neighborhood. The complicated multi-part massing of the previous design has been substantially simplified through the elimination of the projecting bays and integrating the mass of the front element facing the 1940 building into the rest of the new building's composition.

As the design of the addition continues to be developed, HPO would encourage using only brick for the spandrel panels at the corners (eliminating the glass spandrels) and continued study of the material and color of the fourth floor. As the garage entrance continues to be developed, efforts should be made to minimize above-grade retaining walls and to maximize landscaping to soften and screen the ramp and entrance.

### **Recommendation**

*HPO recommends that the Board find the revised concept to be compatible with the potential landmark, and that the project return for formal concept approval if and when it is designated a landmark.*

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