

CITY

D.C.'s Former Hebrew Home Will Become Almost 200 Units of Housing, Most Priced at Affordable Levels

Mayor Muriel Bowser's administration announces its chosen development plan for the Ward 4 site.

BY ANDREW GIAMBRONE — AUG 22, 2017 1 PM



The former Hebrew Home at 1125 Spring Road NW.

DARROW MONTGOMERY

Eight years after a mental health facility for D.C.'s homeless closed at the site, an 86,000-square-foot historic building in Ward 4 that once also operated as a retirement facility for Jewish residents will be redeveloped through a District-backed plan that will produce more than 180 units of housing. Nearly 150 of those units, or 80 percent, will be affordable, representing a win for housing activists and neighbors who pressed for maximum affordability at 1125 Spring Road NW.

Mayor **Muriel Bowser's** administration has selected Victory Housing Inc., Brinshore Development LLC, and Banc of America Community Development Corporation, one of seven teams that competed for the redevelopment rights under a 2016 city solicitation, as the builders for the project. In

addition to the former Hebrew Home building, the 3.3-acre site includes the adjacent 5,000-square-foot ex-Robeson School building facing 10th Street NW. The Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, led by **Brian Kenner**, conducted a months-long community feedback process for the project after it absorbed the property from the D.C. Housing Authority and another city agency in 2015.

"It is through projects like this one that we will keep D.C. a city that welcomes people of all backgrounds and income levels," Bowser said in a statement. The property is located just a couple of blocks southwest of the Georgia Avenue–Petworth Metro station and near new businesses and apartments that have sprung up as development pushes north.

The victorious proposal features various unit sizes and levels of affordable housing, as community members requested. Roughly 50 units will be reserved for families making no more than 30 percent of the area median income (\$33,000 for a family of four), 70 units for those making no more than 50 percent of AMI (\$55,000 for a family of four), and 30 units for those making no more than 60 percent of AMI (\$66,000 for a family of four). The balance will rent for market rate. The project will also include about 90 affordable one- and two-bedroom units for seniors, and about 10 townhouses for sale.

Many advocates and Ward 4 residents called for Bowser's administration to transform the former Hebrew Home into as much deeply affordable housing as possible, given the District's ongoing affordability crisis and the fact that D.C. owns the property. "This is public land that should be used for public benefit to put a check on the market forces that are pushing people out and to make sure folks are able to stay in this community," nearby resident **Lauren Spokane** told City Paper last week. "If they go with something else—especially if it's very different—it will be disappointing." The two advisory neighborhood commissions that cover or abut the property both picked the winning proposal as their top choice in July.

It's possible that the project will receive local affordable housing funds, but its financing has not been finalized yet. The development also has to be approved by three official bodies: the D.C. Council (which will review a land-disposition agreement), the D.C. Zoning Commission (which will review a planned unit development, or PUD, since the project will require an exemption from density and other rules), and the Historic Preservation Review Board (which must review the project because the Hebrew Home is a landmarked building and its façade cannot be razed). DMPED shepherded the city's solicitation for the property under its "OurRFP" (or requests for proposals) process to receive community input.


"[We] have been studying this project for a while and recognize its significance to the neighborhood both architecturally and as a community asset," said Victory Housing President **Leila Finucane** in a statement. "We are looking forward to hitting the ground running and engaging with the community and the city to produce a final development plan that will meet affordable housing needs while creating a place that truly enhances the neighborhood."

Groundbreaking on the project is at least several months away. Renderings for the successful proposal are below.



VICTORY HOUSING/BRINSHORE DEVELOPMENT/BACDC/WIENCEK & ASSOCIATES

Plan



New Construction Multifamily Mixed Income

New Construction Townhome

Hebrew Home Adaptive Re-Use & Renovation

The site plan shows a large rectangular area divided into three distinct zones. The orange zone is on the left, the red zone is on the right, and the blue zone is at the bottom. The red zone contains a large building footprint, likely the adaptive reuse of the Hebrew Home. The orange and blue zones contain smaller building footprints, likely new construction. The plan also shows surrounding streets, trees, and parking areas.

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