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# Otterbein Senior Life Lebanon, The Aurora

**Brown Calabretta Architects Inc. (Columbus, Ohio) - SPONSORED** - | April 13, 2020



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Dedicated in 1972, the Otterbein Campus Center was a post-industrial expression as sterile, institutional, and as far from home like as possible. The Campus Center was and is the heart of the Lebanon, Ohio campus. Within this antiseptic structure the skilled nursing “Showers and Hill” Healthcare Center occupied the second and third floors. The ground floor housed the campus’s main entry and all resident services and activities.

Some 45 years later, this most important building within a now very large community has become the least distinguished. Faced with the daunting task of total demolition versus renovation, the Otterbein board gave approval to **Brown Calabretta** Architects to create a homelike assisted living facility. Converting the “old barge” 74-bed skilled nursing facility into a “luxury liner” 70-bed assisted living facility was the mission for the design team. Strategic reorganization of activity areas with penetration of natural light from the roof through the third to the second level wherever possible allowed natural light to occur wherever residents reside, regardless of which floor they live on.

Otterbein has learned the key to resident happiness is through universal care and providing a home like environment with personal choices: size and type of resident rooms, temperature control, enrichment activities, and quality of food. Restaurant style food service is an integral component of personal care with the new-age open kitchen/dining concept developed for this project by **Brown Calabretta** Architects. Custom food stations, display cooking, and a variety of nutritious choices allow

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residents to enjoy a wide range of experiences in the new dining areas serving 26 residents on each floor.

The building needed to remain occupied and licensed during the entire construction process, which forced the design to identify the construction scheduling required. Plans called out the east half to be renovated first while the west half remained fully occupied, and the Campus Center remained open. Once completed the east half was occupied and the new Main Entrance and Administration was opened. Then the west side was completed and occupied.

Other main project goals included shifting the main entrance to the Campus Center with new Administrative Offices and a separate entry to the new Assisted Living Facility. Updating the exterior façade to a softer, more residential scale was of paramount importance to Otterbein. It was the cumulative sum of all these needs and desires that led to our design resolution of converting the old “Showers and Hill” Healthcare Center into the new heart of the entire campus now known as “The Aurora” at Otterbein Lebanon.

**Project category:** New construction and remodel/renovation

**Chief administrator:** Jill Wilson, president/CEO, Otterbein Senior Life

**Firm:** Brown Calabretta Architects Inc., [www.bcanet.com](http://www.bcanet.com)

**Design team:** Richard Brown, design lead (Brown Calabretta Architects Inc.); Adam DeSutter, project manager (Abbot Studios LLC); Lisa Boltz, interior designer (Lime Design Commercial Interior Design); Dave Ulliman, MEP engineer (Point One Design Ltd.); Karl Walters, structural engineer (Jack D. Walters & Associates Inc.); Rick Evans, civil engineer (Evans Civil Pro Engineers)

**Number/type of housing units:** 70 assisted living

**Total building area (sq. ft.):** 86,798 (total); 5,300 (new); 59,000 (renovation)

**Construction cost/sq. ft.:** \$197 (new); \$171 (renovation)

**Total construction cost (excluding land):** \$11.1 million

**Completed:** August 2019

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