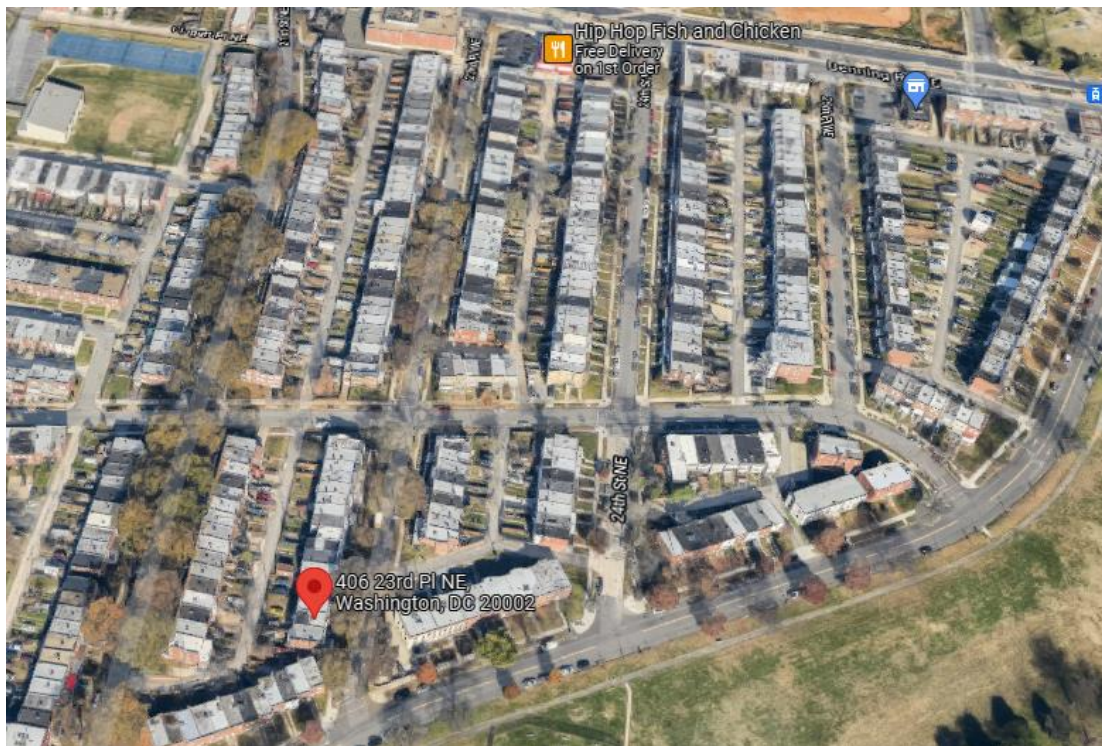


HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION

Property Address:	406 23rd Place NE	X	Agenda
Landmark/District:	Kingman Park Historic District		Consent Calendar
Meeting Date:	December 16, 2021	X	Concept Review
H.P.A. Number:	22-079	X	Alteration

The applicant, architect Joel Heisey, is working with the owner of 406 23rd Place NE on a renovation and addition to a contributing building in the Kingman Park Historic District. The modest brick building is the middle of a group of three, two-story rowhouses built in 1936 by Kingman Park developer and builder Charles Sager. The group is at the southern end of a long, two-block stretch of rowhouses from the same era, running from D Street and Oklahoma Avenue on the south to Benning Road on the north. Like most of the blocks making up Kingman Park, these blocks offer an intact and uniform collection of two-story rowhouses with open porches and small front yards that define the character of the historic district.



Google Maps aerial view showing 406 23rd Street at the southern end of the block

Proposal

The proposal—converting the single-family dwelling to a two-family unit—is a substantial renovation that involves excavating the cellar level, removing the interiors down to the walls on the front and sides, removing the rear wall and adding a rear and third-story addition. Although not clearly called out in the drawings, it also appears that all the existing floor assemblies will be removed and rebuilt, existing stairs will be replaced, and the existing roof will be removed and a new one laid. As proposed, the newly excavated cellar and first story would be one, four-bedroom apartment and the second and third story would be a three-bedroom apartment. The first-floor entrance would provide access to both apartments; doors on the first and second stories in the rear addition would provide secondary access.

The cellar would be excavated under the main house, projecting only slightly into the areaway under the current porch, and would continue into the rear addition. This addition would remove the existing rear wall to span the full width of the house (18') and lengthen the house by 9'2".

The first and second stories of the house would be fully renovated to accommodate a new configuration of space and programming. A new stair would be built in the location of the existing and new floors would replace the existing ones at the same height.

The roof addition would be set back from the front of the house by 23' 10". A 3'-wide stair access would project forward of the roof addition on the right (north) side and would slope up from a point 8' back from the front roof to a height of approximately 10' where it would meet the roof of the addition at the 23' 10" setback point. A roof terrace is proposed for the area between the existing roof parapet and the front wall of the third story addition. A railing, set back 3 feet from the front parapet and side walls, would rise 42 inches high.

Evaluation and Recommendation

This proposal is an important one for the Kingman Park Historic District as it will set a precedent for future roof additions to the two-story rowhouses in the district. There are presently several visible roof additions in the district, but these were completed either before the historic district went into effect or were approved because they are located along Benning Road where the Historic District Guidelines provide for greater flexibility. Most of the existing roof additions are in the expansion area and most of these are on the larger two- and four-unit flats rather than the two-story rowhouses (though several roof additions on rowhouses in the expanded area do exist). Only two roof additions can be found within the boundaries of the historic district as first designated in 2017 which includes the block upon which 406 23rd Place stands.

Based upon a mock-up, the roof addition is not visible from the street either in front of the house or to either side from the middle of the street. As one moves further north along the street, the terrace railing becomes visible and as one moves further south, the roof addition and stair access also come into view. From the intersection of Oklahoma Avenue, the entire addition including railing, stair access and third story—will be quite visible. (See below images, taken by HPO 12/7/21.)

The Kingman Park Historic District Guidelines read,

“Adding to the rear of a rowhouse is typically the best way to add extra space without affecting the architectural character of an historic building or streetscape. Rooftop additions and roof decks may be possible provided they are set back sufficiently so that from the street they are not seen above a primary building elevation.” (Kingman Park Historic District Design Guidelines, 6.0 Additions)

And,

“Rooftop additions are allowed if they are set back sufficiently to the rear portion of the roof so that they are not seen rising above a primary building elevation. Roof additions on corner properties, which have two primary elevations, are not allowed.”(Kingman Park Historic District Design Guidelines, 6.4)

The proposed roof addition is set back a relatively generous 23’ 10” and yet will be visible from Oklahoma Avenue NE. It is not likely that any further setback will reduce the visibility from that vantage point. This perspective is at somewhat of an entry point into the residential streets of Kingman Park and the visibility of the roof addition will interrupt the otherwise seamless two-story uniform height of the block as it ascends to Benning Road NE.

HPO recommends that the Board deny the project as proposed and that it encourage the applicants to return with a modified proposal for a renovation and a two-story addition restricted to the rear of the dwelling. Further, any future proposal should also largely retain the existing floor assemblies. As understood from the current drawings, though not specifically called out, the floor assemblies and roof would be replaced, thus constituting Demolition according to the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations Title 10-C, Section 305.1 (c): *“The removal or destruction of all or a substantial portion of the structural components of the building, such as structural walls, floor assemblies, and roofs.”* HPO thus further recommends that any future renovation proposal largely retain the existing floor assemblies.



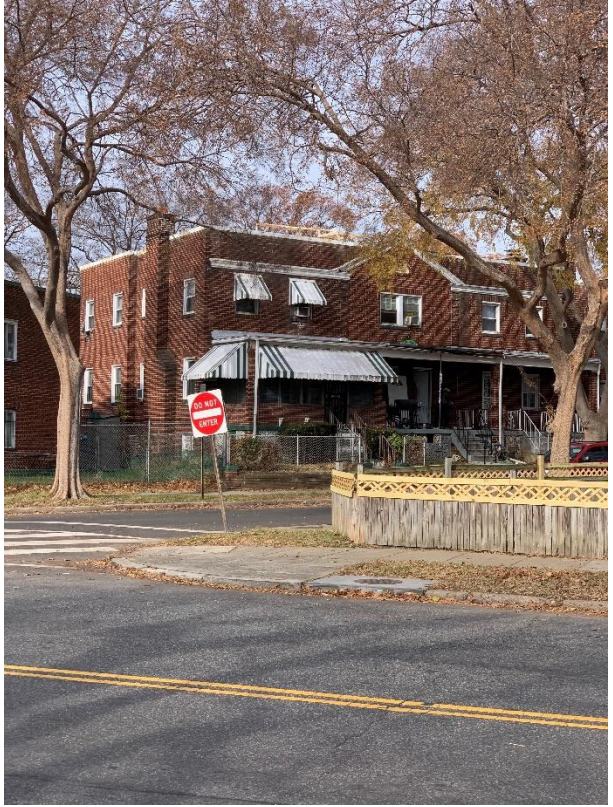
View looking northwest from center of 23rd Place NE south of 406 23rd Place NE (with center gable). Mock-up not visible.



View looking southwest from center of 23rd Place NE north of 406 23rd Place NE. Mock-up not visible.



View looking southwest from intersection of alley and 23rd Place NE north of 406 23rd Place NE. Roof terrace railing visible in mock-up.



View looking northwest from across Oklahoma Avenue to 23rd Place NE to 406 23rd Place NE. Roof terrace railing, stair access and roof addition visible in mock-up.