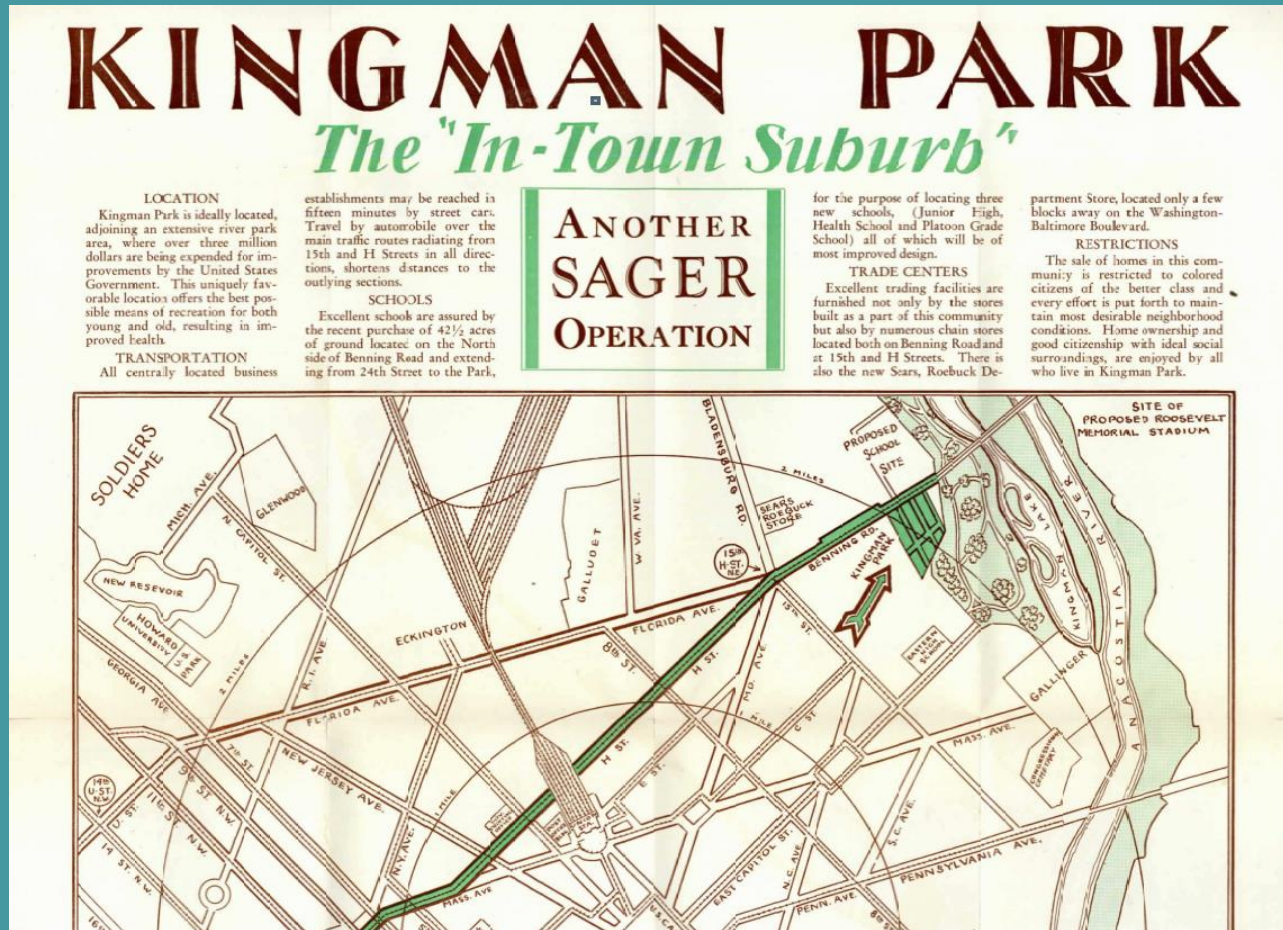


# Kingman Park Historic District (Proposed)

Historic Preservation Review Board  
D.C. Historic District Case No. 16-19



Prepared by D.C. Historic Preservation Office  
January 25, 2018

District of Columbia  
Office of Planning







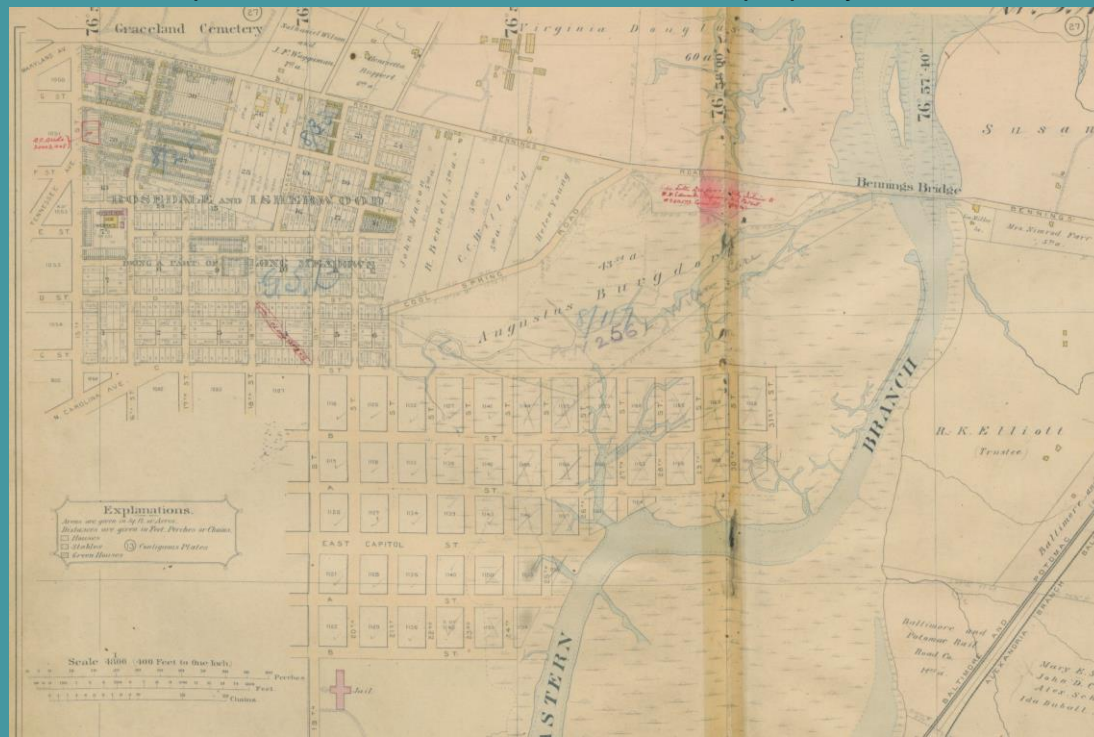
## 1857 Boschke Map

- During the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Cool Spring property was owned by Robert Isherwood.
- In 1876, the property was subdivided into the residential subdivision of “Rosedale and Isherwood.”



# Hopkins 1894 Map

- At the time of the subdivision of Rosedale and Isherwood, the far eastern end of Capitol Hill was essentially undeveloped and city-wide civic improvements did not extend east of 11<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Only H Street—the city’s main artery into and out of the city from the east—was cut and paved by 1872. A streetcar line operated along H Street, but ended at the car barn at 15<sup>th</sup> Street NE.
- In addition to the lack of basic infrastructure (streets, water, gas, and transportation), the unhealthful conditions of the Anacostia Flats discouraged development in the area.
- The wide and extensive marshlands of the Anacostia River, became increasingly polluted as the population of the city increased, and raw sewage was deposited directly into the river.
- The flats became breeding grounds for mosquitos leading to high rates of malaria and other water-borne diseases.
- Development in the area was limited to “undesirable” uses, such as institutions for the sick, poor and criminal- primarily housed on Reservation 13; a city dump; a slaughterhouse; brickworks; and cemeteries.
- Still, these were incremental improvements to the infrastructure which property owners and investors would take advantage of.





# Early Houses of Rosedale and Isherwood



2000 Block Gales, NE (1893)



- The first houses built in the Rosedale-Isherwood subdivision were constructed in the 1880s and 1890s.
- These early houses, identified in green on the map, were modest two-story frame houses occupied in the first decades by working-class residents.
- Most residents were white, including many immigrants (German, Irish) and most rented rather than owned their houses.

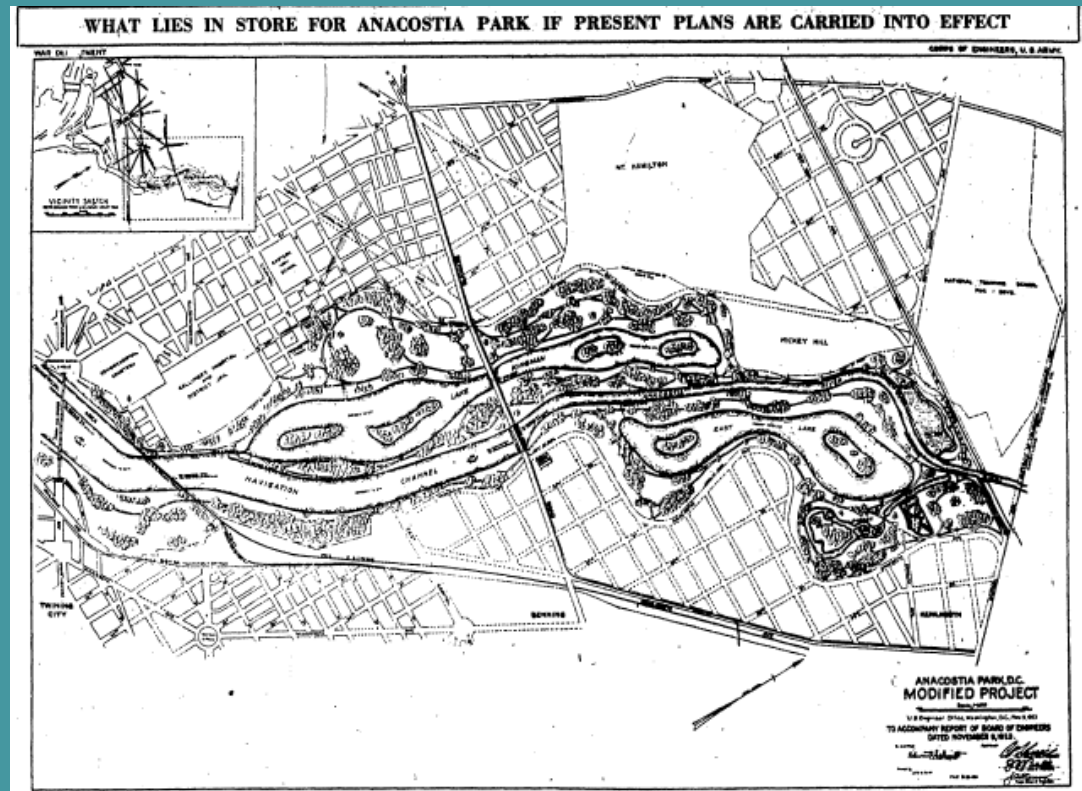
- A sampling of early 20<sup>th</sup> century census records reveals that while white residents dominated in the subdivision in the initial years, African American residents were interspersed throughout, and in some cases occupied entire blocks or rows of houses.
- Over the years, that racial composition shifted. For instance, both the 2000 block of Gales Street and the 600 block of 20<sup>th</sup> Street were almost entirely white-occupied according to the 1920 Census, but by the 1930 census, Gales Street was more mixed, while 20<sup>th</sup> Street had become entirely African American.

635-653 20<sup>th</sup> Street NE (1892)



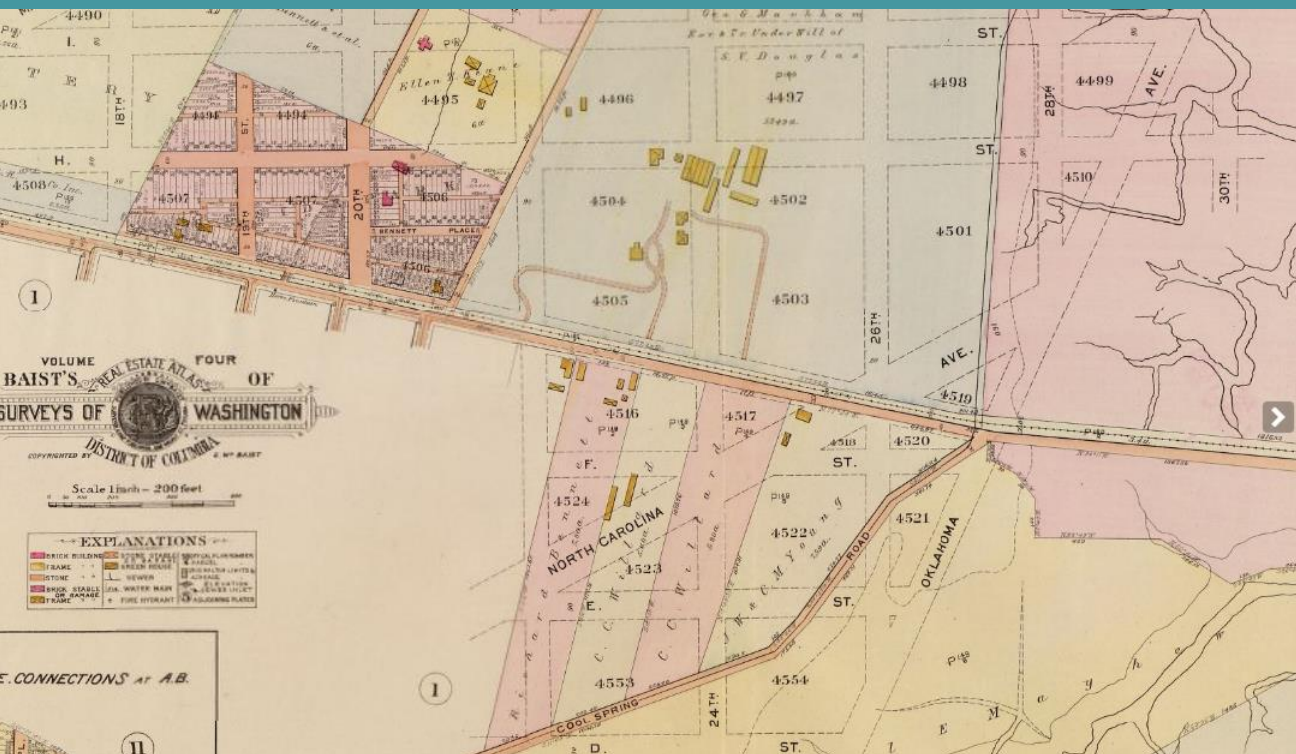
# Army Corps of Engineers 1926 Plan, Anacostia Park

- In 1890, Congress authorized a plan to reclaim the Anacostia River by dredging and filling and in 1901, the McMillan Plan introduced the idea of creating a lake and recreational facilities to make the area desirable for development.
- These plans, never fully implemented as conceived, took decades to realize. By 1927, the Army Corps of Engineers had filled the flats about halfway, making progress on an extensive park with a half-mile-long lake named after the head of the Corps, Brigadier General Dan Christie Kingman.
- These improvements, along with the extension of city infrastructure helped open this area for development during a major period of population growth in the city's history.



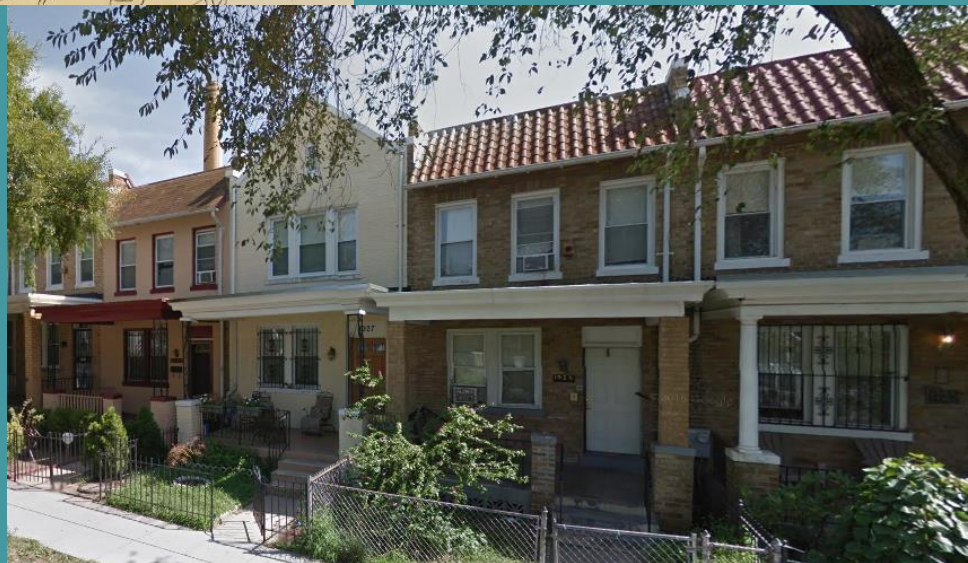


# East Side Park Subdivision, Baist Map



- One of the first developments to capitalize on the reclamation of the Anacostia Flats in this area was East Side Park, just north of Benning Road, across from Rosedale-Isherwood.

- Beginning in 1925-1926, a series of owner/builder/architect teams built rows of houses along Bennett Place, H Street and 19<sup>th</sup> Street within the eastern confines of the subdivision.
- These two-story brick rowhouses were clearly intended for white purchasers as many of the original deeds contained racial restrictions barring the sale of houses to of color.



Bennet Street, East Side Park, 1925

## Charles Sager Ad for Kingman Park houses, April 14, 1928

Ans. Broker  
W. G. Irvin, Owner and Builder  
Cleve. 1831.

Turn west at Connecticut Ave. and Van  
Ness St. to 25th St. north to Warren, or  
east at Wisconsin Ave. to 25th St. or phone  
for info.

**KINGMAN PARK DEVELOPMENT.**  
H ST. CARS TO 24th ST. N.E.

**JUST THINK!**  
Modern Brick Home Under  
\$6,000.

Builders Say:  
"How Does Sager Do It?"  
Over 100 to Be Built.

Near extensive Government  
park, already provided for, in-  
suring future values. To be  
outstanding beauty spot. Built  
and finished like homes selling  
for \$8,000 to \$9,000. Large,  
well proportioned rooms; colo-  
nial front porches, brick col-  
umns, concrete steps. Double  
rear porches; hardwood floors;  
hot-water heat; ample floor  
plugs. Deep lots to alley.

Only \$5,975—Easy Terms.

**CHAS. D. SAGER,**  
REALTOR AND BUILDER.  
MAIN 36. 924 14th ST. N.W.

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coat, bed.

**KINGMAN PARK DEVELOPMENT  
FOR COLORED.**  
H St. Cars to 24th St. N.E.

**JUST THINK**  
Only \$5,975—Easy Terms.  
Modern Brick Home Under \$6,000.  
Over 100 to Be Built.

Near extensive Government Park already provided for,  
insuring future values. To be outstanding beauty spot.  
Built and finished like homes selling for \$8,000 to \$9,000.  
Large well proportioned rooms, Colonial front porches,  
brick columns, concrete steps. Double rear porches, hard-  
wood floors. Hot-water heat, ample floor plugs. Deep  
lots to alley.

**CHAS. D. SAGER,**  
Realtor and Builder.  
Main 36. 924 14th St. N.W.

## Charles Sager Ad for Kingman Park houses "For Colored", April 22, 1928

- In 1927-28, Washington real estate developer Charles Sager entered the market and began the construction of more than 60 single-family residences along the 400 and 500 blocks of 24<sup>th</sup> Street NE.
- Sager, a white developer who up until then had built housing for white middle-class residents, initially sought to do the same on 24<sup>th</sup> Street.
- Upon completion of these first houses in March 1928, Sager began advertising for the sale of houses in "Kingman Park," named after the lake on the edge of his development.
- For the next few weeks, Sager ran regular ads for his houses, with the likely intention of attracting a white, middle-class buyer.
- On April 14, 1928, just two weeks after his first ads appeared, Sager switched tactics and began to solicit "Colored" purchasers to his new development.
- Sager quickly found a ready market of African Americans able and wanting to buy new, quality homes.



## KINGMAN PARK

*Offers You a Safe Investment and a  
Comfortable Home.*

THROUGH the Easy Savings Plan ambitious and responsible citizens of very moderate means may acquire one of these beautiful new homes, a home of which they will always be proud, and at the same time be able to feel that the money which they formerly wasted in paying rent is now being invested where increasing values are assured.

YOU should take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to own a home in the Nation's Capital, where you will be proud to entertain your friends and where you will be far removed from the annoyances of increasing rentals and regular movings caused by the changing whims of landlords.

*Whether you rent or whether you buy  
You pay for the Home You occupy*

NAC  
1430.9827  
W25

## KINGMAN PARK

**A model  
community  
with modern  
brick homes  
for colored  
citizens**

*Built, owned and  
for sale by*

**CHAS. D. SAGER**

**Realtor - Builder**

924 FOURTEENTH STREET N. W.

**Washington, D. C.**

1930



## 750 Homes Planned For Kingman Park

### C. D. Sager Acquires More Land for Colored Development.

Charles D. Sager, realtor and builder, has acquired land for an addition to his Kingman Park development, it was announced last week and plans as soon as the subdivision has been approved to begin grading in preparation for erection of approximately 350 homes in this exclusive colored and fully modern home community.

Kingman Park, including portions of Twenty-second, Twenty-third, Twenty-fourth, Twenty-fifth, E streets and Benning road northeast, is bounded on all sides except the west by Anacostia Park and a new school site and is also in the vicinity of the arboretum which will be more or less a part of the park system for the Northeast section of the city. The development is but a few blocks beyond an active trade center at Fifteenth and H streets northeast and already comprises 230 homes.

In connection with the development of the school site which will cover 42½ acres on the north side of Benning road, work already has been started on the new platoon grade school known as the Charles Young School and work is to be started early this spring on the Hugh M. Brown Junior High School. Plans also provide for erection of a senior high school, athletic field, stadium, swimming pool and 9-hole golf course in this locality.

Hundreds of satisfied advertisers receive prompt results every day with Post Classified Ads.

- Realizing immediate success (he sold 40-some houses by July 1928), Sager expanded his project with the wholesale development of adjacent streets, building several hundred solid, brick rowhouses which he targeted exclusively to blacks.
- The Kingman Park development offered African Americans with steady incomes the opportunity to buy their own homes at a time when other areas of the city, including the nearby East Side Park, were closed to them through racial restrictions.
- As lots in the subdivisions filled with working and middle-class blacks, other developers and builders capitalized on Sager's real estate success.
- On the adjacent 25<sup>th</sup> Place, and later Oklahoma Avenue and D Street, builders erected similar rows of solid brick residences which they then sold to African Americans.
- This tight-knit collection of houses between 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Oklahoma Avenue, south of Benning Road, became a stable residential neighborhood of African-American homeowners and was the nucleus of today's Kingman Park.





## Kingman Civic Group Asks New School

The Kingman Park Civic Association renewed its efforts today to have an appropriation for a new colored senior high school, slated for Twenty-sixth street and Benning road N.E., written into the District budget now before Congress.

The association held its monthly meeting last night at the Charles Young School and voted to renew its efforts in behalf of the new school. The association also voted to seek the co-operation of the Northeast Citizens' Council and the Federation of Civic Associations in a protest against use of land at Twenty-first and C streets N.E. for circuses.

Within its first decades of existence, the KPCA had built an active membership, published a monthly newsletter, pushed for construction of educational facilities and street improvements in Kingman Park, and formed a neighborhood cooperative grocery store to serve residents.

## 46 Push Fight Over Rosedale Before Board

Final Decision Is Promised Thursday On Playground Integration Issue

By Sam Zagoria  
Post Reporter

The District Recreation Board, sitting as the Transition Committee, yesterday heard four hours of testimony, pro and con, on proposed integration at the Rosedale playground and promised a final decision Thursday.

The hearing on the controversial playground at 17th and Gales sts. ne, drew a packed board room at the District Building and brought some strong views from advocates of continued segregation and equally firm ones from those favoring integration.

After all the testimony was in, urged a final vote by the Transition Committee. "We're keeping kids from playing out there. Let's vote right now," he demanded.

Another member, District Budget Officer Walter L. Fowler, instead proposed a later meeting to give members time to digest the testimony of the 45 witnesses and the board's staff time to analyze and verify various statistics submitted.

The committee agreed to meet Thursday at 1 p. m. for a vote. Then it will put on its other hat—as Recreation Board—and give final approval—one way or the other—on how to reopen the playground, closed last month after several incidents of violence.

**Compromise Plan**

Meanwhile, Gichner suggested the board study the integration of the Rosedale swimming pool on a plan of reserving one day for boys—Negro and white—and the following day for girls—Negro and white. The suggestion was referred to the board.

raey live and meeting needs of the community which now is about 48 percent Negro and 52 percent white. Each was given a respectful hearing by the board and there were no interruptions.

The witnesses urged, in many cases, that all playgrounds be made "open" to both races and any changeovers.

Mrs. Walter N. Tobriner, speaking for the District League of Women Voters, declared that "tensions have developed that will increase if the playground is reopened for whites only."

She urged integration of staffs of the Recreation Board at top levels and selection of a new staff "free of the previous animosity" for Rosedale.

This unit should be trained in racial relations, she said, and similar instruction should be given to members of the police force assigned to the area. In addition, the board should make a clear statement of policy and the recreation superintendent directed to speak to various citizens' groups in the area.

A similar campaign was advocated by Miss Mary Houston of the St. Peter Claver Center, a group of lay Catholics. She said the group of lay Catholics, she said, said community associations, churches and schools in the area

For Washington

## Kingman Park Civic Unit Runs Co-op Grocery

Association Head Expects Increased Membership in Spring

This is the sixty-eighth article in a series about associations of citizens in the District.

A cooperative grocery store at 1918 Benning Road Northeast is now paying dividends to members of the Kingman Park Civic Association, who began the venture last month.

Association members have hired two clerks to handle the normally active business of the store and take turns in helping during rush hours, Ernest F. Harper, president, said yesterday.

Other activities of the 12-year-old civic unit range from publishing its own monthly newspaper—with a circulation of more than 1,500—to sponsoring improvements in school playgrounds and streets.

The Kingman Park body serves an area bounded by East Capitol Street on the south, Fifteenth Street Northeast on the west, the Anacostia River on the east and the District Line on the north.

The active membership now numbers 350, Harper said, and he expects the total to reach 500 by spring. They plan to sponsor their annual Christmas carol bus and community Christmas tree this month.

Chief aims of the association this year are to obtain a colored teachers' college for their area, which now has an elementary school, a vocational school and a junior high school, and to have unpaved streets

The historic district nomination describes a history of civic activism continuing in the ensuing decades, much of it focused on the de-segregation of the city's public schools and playgrounds, the lifting of racial restrictions and covenants in real estate, and other civil rights activities. The efforts of KPCA served the Kingman Park community and protected the character and livability of the neighborhood.

In 1928, Kingman Park's first residents established the Kingman Park Civic Association to address the educational, economic and public safety concerns of the community.

While the older East Washington Citizens Association which had formed decades earlier advocated for the "interests of residents living east of the U.S. Capitol," the Kingman Park Civic Association (KPCA) focused specifically on the needs of the area's African-American residents.

# Aerial View of Education Campus and Langston Terrace Dwellings

- In 1931, to accommodate families moving into Kingman Park and other northeast neighborhoods, and to fill a longstanding need for more schools for the city's African-American families, the District's Board of Education purchased a 42-acre site north of Benning Road to build a complex of schools.
- The first school building of the campus, Young Elementary School, opened in October 1931; it was followed by Browne in 1931-32, and Phelps in 1932-34.
- Until then, two neighborhood schools, W.B. Webb at 15<sup>th</sup> and Rosedale, built in 1898, and Henry T. Blow School at 19<sup>th</sup> and Benning Road, built in 1906, were open only to the area's white residents.
- The new schools significantly boosted African-American interest in the area's real estate.
- During the 1930s, house sales in the Kingman Park and adjacent streets took off, led by working- and middle-class African Americans, many of whom held federal government jobs.
- At the same time, the campus served as a community meeting and gathering place.
- Neighborhood children attended the schools, and were free to use the facilities and playgrounds after school hours.
- Residents of the surrounding neighborhoods had a vested interest in the schools and served as advocates for improvement and quality of education at the campus.
- In the mid-1930s, as Kingman Park established itself as a stable African-American neighborhood, the federal government embarked upon a plan to build one of the nation's earliest federally funded housing projects for lower-income, African American residents.





# Langston Terrace

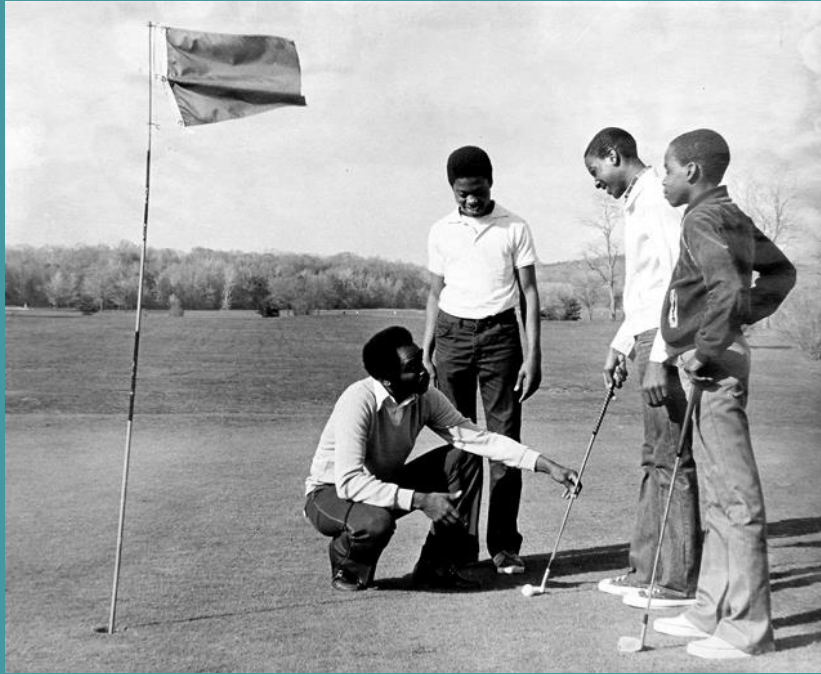
- The 274-unit Langston Terrace Dwellings project was built by the Public Works Administration on an 85-acre site north of Benning Road, adjacent to the recently finished school complex.

- Langston Terrace, designed by African-American architect Hilyard Robinson, was architecturally innovative, with two-story duplexes sited around significant open spaces.

- Built from 1935 to 1938, it offered African Americans an opportunity to improve their sub-standard living situation and enjoy the benefits of community, modern housing and outdoor space.



# Langston Golf Course



**Photo of golf pro and students at Langston Golf Course, 1979**



**Langston Theater, Wymer 1950**

- As the residential base and activism of the neighborhood grew, so too did its commercial, educational, religious and community institutions.
- The complex of schools, stores, a neighborhood theater (the Langston Theater), a library at Langston Terrace Dwellings, and recreational facilities such as Langston Golf Course, emerged to serve the primarily African-American neighborhood.
- One of the first public amenities planned near the new neighborhood was Langston Golf Course.
- In 1927, a group of golfers formed the Capital City Golf Club, the nation's first golf club for African Americans, and that same year they wrote to the Department of the Navy requesting that a public facility for African-American golfers be included in the proposed parkland along the Anacostia River.
- Recent research by the National Park Service indicates that the site for Langston Golf Course was specifically chosen to be in a section of the city that was recognized for its concentrated population of African-American residents.



# Evaluation

## Recommendations

Based upon this history, staff finds that the core area of the proposed Kingman Park Historic District meets D.C. Designation Criteria B and C. Kingman Park compellingly presents through place, a story of imposed segregation and of those oppressed coping with and rising above it. The intact and cohesive collection of single-family rowhouses constructed during the 1920s and 30s offered African Americans the opportunity of home ownership and quality housing at a time when other neighborhoods and adequate housing were not available to them. Similarly, Langston Terrace provided housing in the post-Depression years for low income African Americans in cutting-edge style. Yet, the federal government’s decision to place this public housing for black residents, and later a golf course, next to the existing Kingman Park neighborhood and its schools further reinforced segregation in the city and perpetuated the “separate but equal” premise. Kingman Park provides an excellent example of a community that developed for and was nourished by African Americans during the segregation era.



**HPO Proposed Boundaries for Kingman Park Historic District**