

DRAFT HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDELINES
PROPOSED KINGMAN PARK HISTORIC DISTRICT
REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

ISSUED MARCH 7, 2018

**COMMENTS REQUESTED BY
APRIL 9, 2018**

The D.C. Historic Preservation Office (HPO) has prepared these draft guidelines in response to an application to designate a Kingman Park Historic District, filed in 2016. The D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) held an initial public hearing on the application on January 25, 2018, and requested that the HPO staff prepare these design guidelines for consideration by the affected community.

The public comments submitted on the proposed designation showed a strong interest in more information about the practical effect that a historic district would have on property owners within its boundaries. The affected Advisory Neighborhood Commissions also cited the lack of information about the proposal as a major concern of their constituents. In response, the HPRB requested the preparation of these draft guidelines to give residents a better expectation of what a historic district would mean.

The guidelines are intended to establish a baseline of information for both residents and the ANCs, so as to allow a more detailed discussion in the community, and specific recommendations from the community about the proposed guidelines.

**CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO
KINGMAN PARK**

Historic district design guidelines allow the HPRB to establish design guidance that is tailored to the historic character, building conditions, and circumstances of individual historic districts. While maintaining general consistency with the citywide guidelines applicable to all historic properties, these district-specific guidelines allow flexibility in the application of certain provisions when warranted by the specific characteristics of the district.

Kingman Park has a distinct social and cultural history as a neighborhood built for African Americans during a time of racial segregation in the District of Columbia. It gave working families a chance to prosper in their lives at a time when economic opportunities were severely limited. Thus, the Kingman Park neighborhood was historically a community of modest means.

The cost of owning and maintaining a home, especially as families grow and needs change, remains a primary concern for Kingman Park residents today. These guidelines seek to accommodate those considerations through flexibility in the application of design principles in a manner appropriate to the neighborhood and its history. This means that the focus of the guidelines is on maintaining the physical features that are most fundamental to the community's character, while allowing substantial freedom in the treatment of less-significant features. The guidelines also seek to avoid undue building maintenance and construction costs by allowing a variety of options for repairs and home improvements.

INTRODUCTION

Kingman Park is proposed for listing as an historic district on the DC Inventory of Historic Sites. If designated by the Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB), work requiring a D.C. building permit, such as exterior alterations, new construction, demolition, and subdivisions, is subject to a design review process under the D.C. historic preservation law. The purpose of the law is to ensure that such work preserves important character-defining features of historic properties and is compatible in character with the historic district.

Design guidelines establish the principles that would be applied by the HPRB and Historic Preservation Office (HPO) in the review of exterior work requiring a permit. Guidelines seek to identify the important architectural characteristics of historic properties that should be retained during renovation projects, while also providing assurance to property owners that those alterations that do not affect important features will be allowed. They are intended to provide clarity, transparency and predictability to the decision-making process for property owners.

These draft guidelines have been prepared by HPO for consideration by the community. After a public comment period and any necessary revisions, the guidelines would be submitted for review and adoption by the HPRB if the proposed historic district is designated.

These guidelines supplement the policies established by the city's preservation law, regulations and standards.

The preservation review process is administered by the D.C. Historic Preservation Office (HPO) which has a professional staff of architects and preservation specialists who can provide architectural and technical assistance on

products and methods appropriate to the renovation of older properties.

Property owners are encouraged to consult informally with the HPO before submitting a building permit application for exterior work. The staff can approve most types of work, such as in-kind repair and replacement and minor alterations, in an expedited "over-the-counter" permit review process. More substantial work, such as new construction or large additions, is subject to review by the D.C. Historic Preservation Review Board (HPRB) at its monthly meetings, for which the HPO can provide guidance and direction before the preparation of building plans.

For further information and full texts of the preservation law and regulations, visit the DC Historic Preservation Office at 1100 4th Street, SW, Suite 650, or see our website at www.preservation.dc.gov.

PRESERVATION GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

The city's preservation law describes the public purposes of preservation and establishes the standards for the review of work affecting historic properties. These include **retaining and enhancing** historic properties, **ensuring that changes are compatible**, and **encouraging adaptation** of historic property for current use.

Design guidelines establish the principles applied for achieving these purposes. In giving more specific advice, these guidelines also reflect several well-established considerations applied in the design and review of work affecting historic property.

These considerations include:

Visibility or prominence from the street.

Changes to historic property that are visible to the public are more likely to affect a property's character. As a general rule, changes that are prominent or visible from a street should be more carefully considered, while greater flexibility should be given for changes that are minimally visible or not visible from the street.

Temporary and additive change vs. permanent and destructive change:

Alterations that are temporary or easily reversible have less of a lasting impact on the character of historic property, while alterations that permanently change or remove features have a greater impact. Adding a new element – while retaining significant characteristics – is a better preservation solution than destroying and replacing characteristic features.

Contextual and compatible design: The design of features on historic property should display an awareness of and response to the

specific qualities of the property and its environment.

Quality of design and materials: Historic buildings often display a high quality of design and materials that should be retained. Additions and alterations to historic property should exhibit this tradition of building excellence.

Achieving a reasonable balance: Adapting old buildings requires a thoughtful consideration of practical needs and the civic benefits of protecting architectural and historical characteristics valued by the community.

SIGNIFICANCE AND CHARACTER OF KINGMAN PARK

The proposed Kingman Park Historic District is significant as a neighborhood built for African Americans during a time of racial segregation in the District of Columbia. Beginning in the 1920s and for decades after, Kingman Park was developed as a community to allow African Americans to prosper as citizens in ways systematically denied them in other parts of the District.

Kingman Park contains several different building types and contexts, including rowhouses, apartment buildings, commercial buildings along Benning Road, public school buildings, and Langston Golf Course.

Rowhouses

Between 21st Street and Oklahoma Avenue, south of Benning Road, are hundreds of architecturally modest rowhouses that were constructed and marketed to African American homeowners beginning in 1928. The architecturally composed block-long rows consist of two-story red and buff brick houses with one-story front porches and modest architectural detailing in metal, brick and stone set within open planted front yards. While the rowhouses are not individually distinctive and have been individually modified over the years, they collectively form a coherent and distinguishable residential neighborhood.

Apartment Buildings

In 1935, the federal government began construction of the 274-unit Langston Terrace Dwellings, an architecturally innovative garden apartment complex consisting of two-story duplexes sited around significant open spaces, to provide modern low-cost rental housing for African Americans. Small duplexes and flats similar in scale to the neighborhood's rowhouses were constructed along Oklahoma Avenue in the early 1940s.

Benning Road

The buildings on Benning Road consist of rowhouses, some of which have long been converted to commercial uses, and purpose-built commercial buildings that were constructed to provide services for the community. The street contains several large non-contributing buildings that present opportunities for commercial and residential redevelopment.

Schools

The neighborhood contains an impressive complex of Colonial Revival public schools constructed by the District to accommodate African American families. These include Young (1931), Browne (1932), Phelps (1934) and Spingarn (1952).

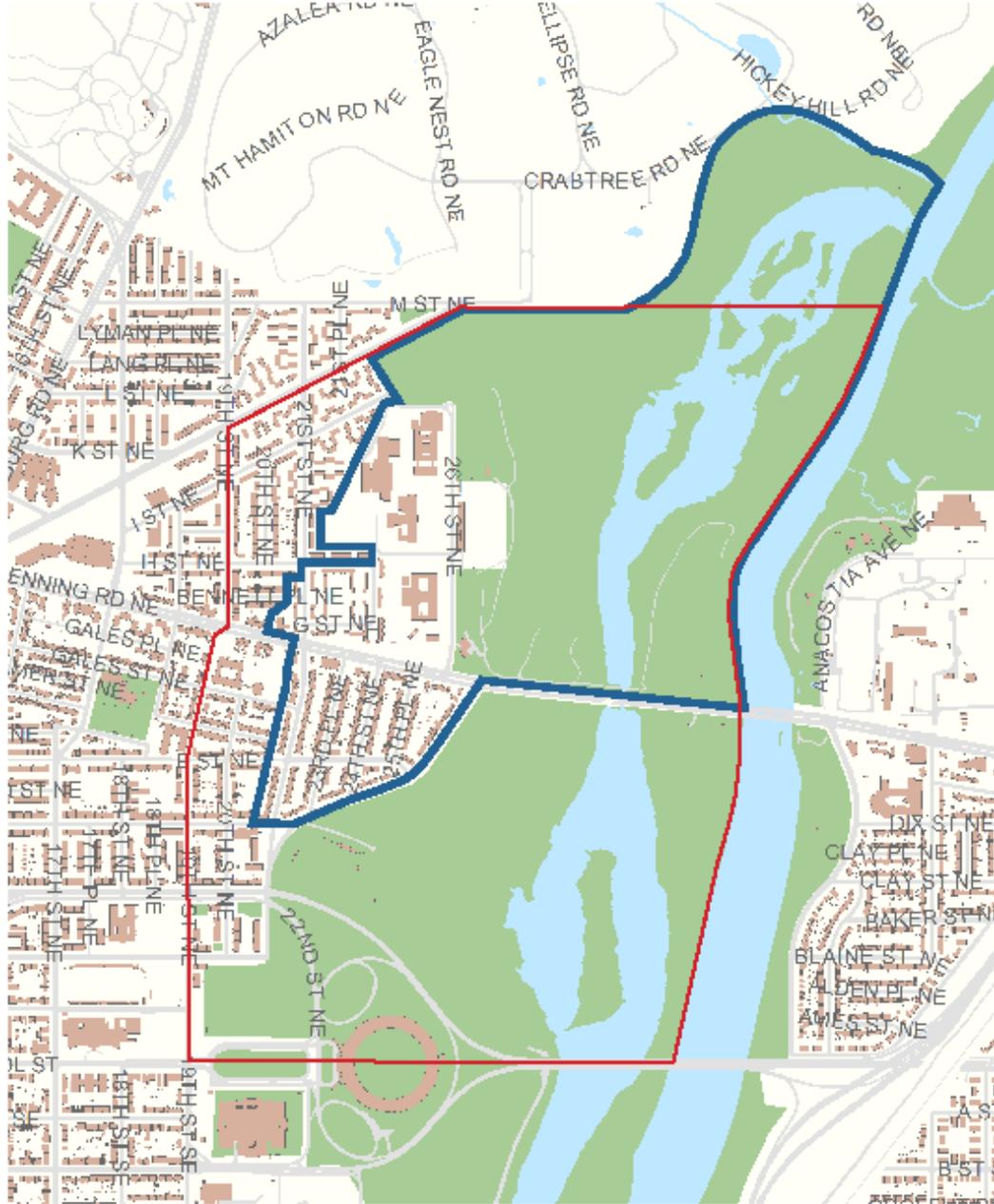
Langston Golf Course

The golf course was opened by the federal government in 1939 as a recreational facility for African Americans in the neighborhood and throughout the region.

These proposed design guidelines primarily address the rowhouses and the Benning Road commercial properties of Kingman Park. Treatment standards for Langston Terrace Dwellings, the public school buildings, and Langston Golf Course are guided by the federal Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation that are applicable to government-owned properties.

Boundaries pending HPRB approval

Proposed Kingman Park Historic District



— Applicant's Boundary recommendation
— Area recommended by HPO for further consideration

DESIGN REVIEW PRINCIPLES

The Kingman Park Historic District design guidelines seek to recognize and preserve the important aspects of the neighborhood and its history, while also recognizing that it is a neighborhood that will continue to evolve. The guidelines are based on the following characteristics and principles:

1. The rowhouses of Kingman Park represent a cohesive and intact collection of two-story, brick, porch-front houses that have a consistent height, scale, quality of design, materials and workmanship. Distinctive character-defining features on street-fronting elevations of rowhouses -- including their two-story height, front brick wall surfaces, one-story front porches, metal cornices, and stone and brick detailing -- should be retained.
2. The architectural character of Kingman Park is conveyed through the primary, street-fronting facades of the buildings. The alley elevations are more utilitarian in design. While all exterior alterations are subject to preservation review, greater flexibility should be given to the review of alterations or additions that affect only rear elevations or that are not visible from public street view.
3. The continuous open front yards establish the setting for the rowhouses in the Kingman Park Historic District. Front yards should be retained primarily as green space, with paving incidental to the landscape, and fences and walls kept low and open so as to not disrupt this continuity.
4. The architectural character of Benning Road in Kingman Park is varied, with houses, converted to commercial uses, commercial buildings, and large sites containing non-contributing buildings. Inclusion of Benning Road in the historic district should balance the dual goals of retaining historic buildings and encouraging high-quality redevelopment

that is consistent with the city's land use policies.

5. Kingman Park has always been a neighborhood for residents of modest means, and the potential costs of home repairs remains a primary concern today. These guidelines also seek to reflect the concerns expressed by residents of the potential costs of home repairs and is intended to provide flexibility.

BUILDING FEATURES

1.0 *Wall Materials*

The row buildings in Kingman Park are all constructed of brick and feature modest brick and stone detailing. The majority of the brick facades in Kingman Park are unpainted. A few of the brick facades have been covered with siding or formstone.

- 1.1 No permit or preservation review is required to paint. Painted buildings can be re-painted and any unpainted building can be painted. However, painting unpainted brick and stone is discouraged as these materials have visual and material qualities that contribute to the visual continuity neighborhood, and once painted, will require regular maintenance and repainting.
- 1.2 Masonry walls should be repointed with mortar that replicates the general appearance of original mortar. Mortar for spot pointing should match and maintain visual continuity with adjacent mortar.
- 1.3 Brick façade surfaces should remain uncovered. Applying a covering over front façade masonry, such as vinyl or other siding, is not permitted. Existing coverings can remain, but removal is encouraged.
- 1.4 Rear elevations do not contribute to the historic character of the

neighborhood, and most have been changed over time. Rear elevations may be re-clad or rebuilt in siding (wood, cementitious or vinyl), stucco, or masonry.

2.0 Wall Details

The front elevations of many Kingman Park rowhouses have modest inset panels of brick or stone. Cornices are typically of metal, and some houses have decorative stucco pediments with wood trim.

- 2.1 Decorative masonry wall features should be maintained and repaired.
- 2.2 Decorative masonry wall features should not be removed or covered over with alternative materials.
- 2.3 If beyond repair, decorative masonry wall features should be replaced to match the historic features using the same materials, or materials that have the same visual appearance.

3.0 Front Porches

The one-story front porches on Kingman Park's rowhouses are one of their most distinctive features. The porches typically have concrete stairs and decks, metal handrails and square brick piers that support flat roofs. The area under porches is left open, or is often enclosed with lattice panels or decorative masonry block. Some of the porches have been enclosed, and some have metal awnings to provide additional shade protection.

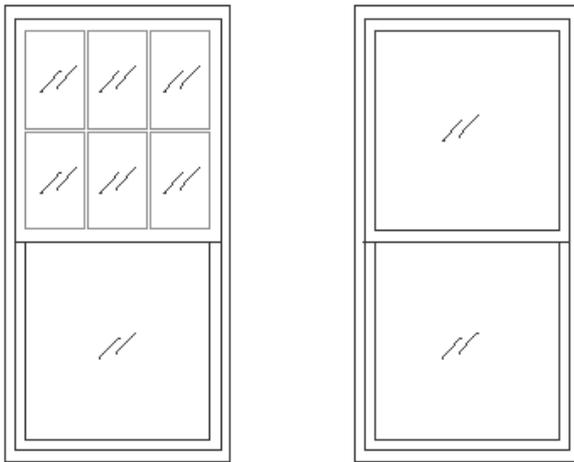
- 3.1 Front porches and their brick piers should be retained.
- 3.2 Maintaining front porches as open is encouraged.
- 3.3 Enclosing front porches is allowed, but should retain a sense of openness, such as with a high proportion of glazing.
- 3.4 Removing, enclosing or replacing a rear porch is allowed.

4.0 Windows

The windows on front elevations of Kingman Park rowhouses were originally wood double hung sash, typically with six panes in the upper sash and one pane in the lower (referred to as 6-over-1 sash). Windows on some houses are grouped in pairs or in a bank of three. Over time, most of the district's original windows have been replaced, often with vinyl units.

- 4.1 Existing windows may remain, be repaired or replaced.
- 4.2 If remaining, window framing elements on front elevations, such as center mullions that separate grouped windows and serve as a structural support for large openings, should be retained. If window framing elements have been capped with vinyl or other coverings, removal of these coverings is encouraged but is not required.
- 4.3 Expanding masonry window openings or blocking them down in size is not allowed on front elevations.
- 4.4 Replacement windows on front elevations should fit and fill the original openings.
- 4.5 Replacement windows on front elevations that replicate the original six-over-one appearance are encouraged but are not required. One-over-one windows are allowed.
- 3.6 Replacement of windows on front elevations with wood sash is encouraged but is not required. Vinyl, fiberglass or aluminum sash windows are allowed.
- 3.7 The size, material and appearance of replacement windows on rear elevations are not required to match the original appearance. Window openings on rear elevations may be expanded or reduced in size. Design flexibility will be given.
- 3.8 Installation of storm windows, screens and security bars is allowed and does

not require a building permit or preservation approval.



*An original 6-over-1 window (left).
A 1-over-1 window (right).*

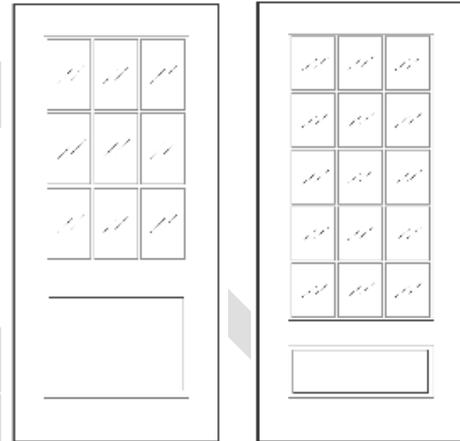
5.0 Doors

Front doors in Kingman Park were originally wood with multiple small panes of glass. (most often 9 or 12 panes). As with windows, there are relatively few original doors remaining. Existing non-original doors range from those that are solid with no glass to doors with panes in a variety of configuration, and are found in materials that include wood, metal and fiberglass.

- 5.1 Existing doors may remain, be repaired, or replaced.
- 5.2 Expanding or reducing the width of a door opening is not allowed.
- 5.3 Replacement front doors should fit and fill the original width of the opening.
- 5.4 Replacement front doors that replicate the original appearance is encouraged but is not required. Replacement front doors can be solid, glazed, or a combination of paneled and glazed, and can be of wood, metal or fiberglass.
- 5.5 The size, material and appearance of replacement doors on rear elevations

are not required to match the original appearance. Door openings may be expanded or reduced in size. Design flexibility will be given.

- 5.6 Installation of storm doors, screen doors, and security gates is allowed and does not require a building permit or preservation review.



*Original door designs for
Kingman Park houses*

6.0 Roofs

The roofs of Kingman Park rowhouses are generally sloped or flat and not visible beyond the cornice lines of the façades. Some rows of houses have parapet walls or small front roofs with dormers and overhanging eaves.

- 6.1 Existing roof heights, as visible from public street view, and decorative roof features such as pent roofs, eaves, cornices and/or dormers should be maintained and preserved.
- 6.2 The roofs themselves are not visible from the street and can be replaced with metal, membrane or other materials.
- 6.3 Mechanical, solar and communications equipment should be set back from the facades, typically at a distance at least equal to their height, so they are not visible from the street.

7.0 Additions

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 may be possible but should be set back sufficiently so that they are not visible from street view. “Not visible” is defined as not being seen from the pedestrian perspectives along public streets.

7.1 In the case of corner lots, or locations where rear additions will be visible from public street view, additions should be compatible with the character of the historic district in terms of wall materials and window sizes.

7.2 Flexibility should be given for the design, materials and character of rear additions that are not visible from street view.

7.3 Rooftop additions are allowed if they are set back sufficiently to the rear portion of the roof so that they are not visible from any public street view.

7.4 Rooftop additions should not alter or result in removal of decorative roof elements.

8.0 Landscape Features

The open planted front yards and low brick retaining walls that line the public sidewalks provide a unifying setting to the houses in Kingman Park. Originally, front gardens were not fenced, although chain link and other metal fences have long existed on many properties. Lead walks were originally concrete.

8.1 No permit or preservation approval is required for planting.

8.2 The low brick retaining walls along the streets in Kingman Park should be maintained in good repair to prevent erosion of front yards and avoid the need for replacing them.

8.3 Replacement retaining walls should be comparable to other walls on the block. Brick is encouraged, but concrete block and landscape timbers are allowed with suitable landscaping.

8.4 Front yard fences should be no taller than 36” high, and respect the open character of front yards on the street.

8.5 Replacement stairs and lead walks should be finished in smooth concrete, stone or masonry pavers. Materials should be of a single, unvariegated color that provides a monolithic appearance.

9.0 Secondary Buildings

Some properties in Kingman Park have small rear yard sheds. Rear yard sheds do not contribute to the character of the historic district and can be removed or replaced.

10.0 Utility Meters

Utility meters should be installed so that they are as visually unobtrusive as possible from public view, and should not cover over window openings or architectural detailing. Detailed guidance on utility meter installation is provided in the guideline “Utility Meters for Historic Buildings” on the HPO website.

11.0 New Construction

New construction should be compatible with its site, taking into account the immediate context and the broader character of the historic district. Compatibility does not mean or require duplicating existing buildings, and the review of new construction is not intended to discourage good contemporary design or creative architectural expression.

New construction along Benning Road should be consistent with the city’s zoning regulations and Comprehensive Plan policies that support mixed-use development (ground floor retail and upper story residential uses) and with streetscape improvements that improve visual and urban design qualities.

BUILDING PERMIT REVIEW

Work Subject to Review

Exterior work in the Kingman Park Historic District that requires a DC building permit is subject to historic preservation design review. Interior work, whether it requires a building permit or not, is not subject to historic preservation design review unless such work affects a building's structural system or support members. The below types of work require a building permit and are thus subject to historic preservation review:

- Roof replacement
- Masonry repair and repointing
- Window and door replacements
- Fences, retaining walls and paving
- Exterior mechanical equipment
- Additions and new construction
- Other exterior alterations

Work Not Subject to Review

The following work on property in the Emerald Street Historic District is not subject to historic preservation design review:

- Interior alterations, except those involving substantial structural demolition;
- Exterior painting and paint colors;
- Window screens, storm windows, security bars, and removable window air conditioning units;
- Landscaping, including planting, maintenance, or removal of trees and shrubs. However, before removing trees, owners should consult with the DC Department of Transportation's Urban Forestry Division (www.ddot.dc.gov/ufa);
- Impermanent and moveable site features not requiring a foundation, including outdoor furniture, play equipment, and garden sculpture or ornaments.

Permit applications can be downloaded from the DC Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs website (www.dkra.dc.gov), and homeowners seeking their own permits can take advantage of expedited service at the Homeowner Center at the DCRA Permit Office at 1100 4th Street, SW on the 2nd Floor (Waterfront Metro). To discuss a project with Historic Preservation Office staff prior to applying for a permit, please call HPO at 442-8800 to speak to a preservation specialist.

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