BLIGHT RECERTIFICATION

For the area bounded by
11th, Noble, 10th, Callowhill, 9th, Carlton, Ridge, Wood, Streets.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents an evaluation of blight in an area approximately 4.88 acres generally bounded by 11th, Noble, 10th, Callowhill, 9th, Carlton, Ridge, Wood Streets. This recertification will permit the current boundaries of the Franklin Urban Renewal Area to be extended a second time.

The subject area is completely within the Center City Redevelopment Area originally certified by the Planning Commission on January 8, 1963 and as amended. The 1963 certification is superseded by this recertification only for the area bounded 11th, Noble, 10th, Callowhill, 9th, Carlton, Ridge, Wood Streets.

The recertification study reviews existing conditions in the subject area in relation to seven criteria used to determine whether blight exists in the area. The criteria are set forth in Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law, which stipulates that only one of these criteria must be met to make a finding of blight in the area. The law also states that blighted conditions need not be evident throughout the area under study. The fact that individual properties are free from blight does not make the finding of blight arbitrary, according to the law, because comprehensive planning requires that areas be considered in their entirety and not in their unseverable parts.

This report cites specific examples of the conditions listed in two of the criteria.

Blight exists in the study area.

II. CRITERIA

Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law contains the following criteria for establishing the presence of blight in a particular area:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions
2. Inadequate planning
3. Excessive land coverage
4. Lack of proper light, air, and open space,
5. Faulty street and lot layout
6. Defective design and arrangement of buildings
7. Economically or socially undesirable land use.

III. ANALYSIS

The following Section describes the characteristics of blight evident in the area bounded 11th, Noble, 10th, Callowhill, 9th, Carlton, Ridge, Wood Streets.

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions.

Evidence of this criterion is presented in two categories: vacant structures and vacant trash strewn lots.

Of the 45 separately titled properties identified within these blocks only 31 are fully or partially occupied. Of the occupied structures: 7 are residential, one is mixed use of residential and storage, 2 are auto repair shops, 5 are food distribution companies, 1 is a bar, 2 are textile related warehouses, 1
is a shooting range and 1 is a church. The remaining used parcels are paved parking lots. Of the total square footage of all the parcels in the area (+/- 202,800 sq.ft.) more than half of the area is vacant buildings (27,072 sq.ft.) and vacant lots (86,644 sq.ft.).

Unsafe and unsanitary conditions were also documented through the observation of abandonment, trash littered vacant lots, closed off sidewalks, alleys covered with trash and overgrowth. Especially the area under the steel catenary of the Reading Railroad tracks is unsanitary because of accumulated trash and is unsafe as a result of its darkness. A staff survey on October ---- 2001 indicated trash on almost all streets and alleys and sidewalks (as indicated in the photographs submitted with the presentation).

2. Economically and socially undesirable land use

There is also evidence of economically or socially undesirable land use in this area.

This criterion is primarily met within the study area by virtue of 6 vacant structures and 5 vacant parcels. Also the Reading rail tracks are socially and economically undesirable use because they attract street activity that is perceived as unsafe by pedestrians.

Vacant structures and lots are economically undesirable in as much as city wide experience has demonstrated that vacant properties have an increased likelihood of being or becoming long term tax delinquent in the payment of real estate taxes. They are also obviously undesirable as they are under built in terms of allowable zoning.

Vacant structures and lots are socially undesirable for a number of reasons: they downgrade the overall physical environment of the neighborhood, they reduce an area’s vitality and they increase the potential for vandalism, arson and other crime in the neighborhood.

Parking lots that are located on the corner of the blocks and flow over to the sidewalk or are separated by barbed wire from the sidewalk are socially undesirable uses. Absence of pedestrians on the sidewalk causes the sidewalks to be taken over by trash. (see photo exhibit).

IV. CONCLUSION

The existing conditions in the blocks bounded by 11th, Noble, 10th, Callowhill, 9th, Carlton, Ridge, Wood, Streets exhibit two (2) of the criteria necessary for a finding of blight under Pennsylvania Redevelopment Law. Those criteria are:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions
2. Economically or socially undesirable land use

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that these two (2) criteria for blight are present and the area is eligible for recertification.
Franklin Urban Renewal Area: Proposed Boundary Extension
(10th Street Corridor) Existing Conditions

- Vacant Land / Vacant Building / Surface Parking
- Occupied Building
RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Urban Renewal Law, Act of May 24, 1945 (P.L. 991) as amended, authorizes the Philadelphia City Planning Commission to certify as blighted specific areas which may then, in whole or in part, be made the subject of redevelopment proposals formulated by the Redevelopment Authority in accordance with said Act, and...

WHEREAS, after substantial review and study, the City Planning Commission staff has presented a report concluding that the area bounded by 11th, Noble, 10th, Callowhill, 9th, Carlton, Ridge, Wood Streets exhibits characteristics of blight under terms of said Act, and...

WHEREAS, the Planning Commission concurs with the findings and conclusions set forth in said report.

NOW THEREFORE, on this seventeenth day of January 2002, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission hereby finds, based upon its staff report dated January 2002 that the area bounded by 11th, Noble, 10th, Callowhill, 9th, Carlton, Ridge, and Wood Streets exhibits the following characteristics of blight as established by Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions, and
2. Economically or socially undesirable land use.

And thereby certifies this area as the extension of the Franklin Urban Renewal Area under the terms and provisions of the said Act.