

**Blight Certification for the area bounded by
S. 57th Street, Hoffman Avenue, Cobbs Creek Parkway, and Baltimore Avenue**

Philadelphia City Planning Commission
May 2005

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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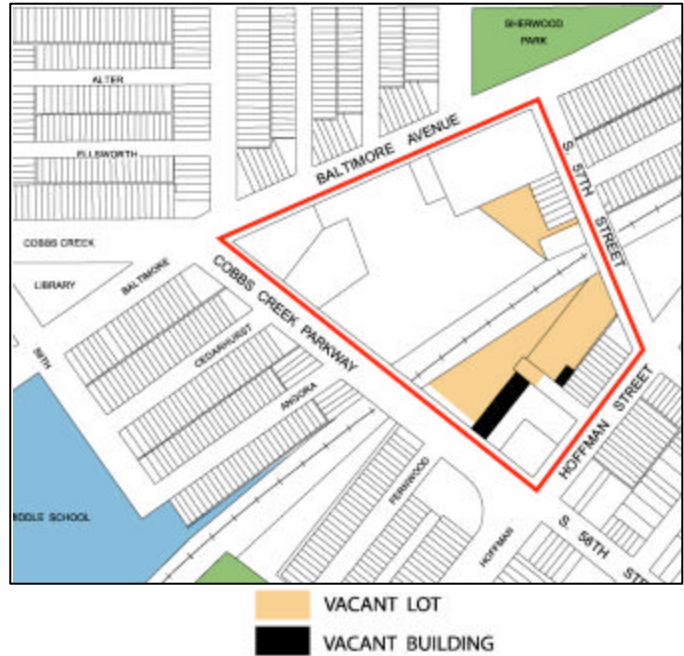
Report by:

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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

ANALYSIS

The following section describes the characteristics of blight evident in the area bounded by S. 57th Street, Hoffman Avenue, Cobbs Creek Parkway and Baltimore Avenue.



1. Unsafe, Unsanitary, Inadequate or Overcrowded Conditions

Vacancy represents unsafe and inadequate conditions. The study area contains three large vacant lots and two vacant buildings. The vacant lots are located at 1040 and 1042-56 S. 57th Street and 1133 Cobbs Creek Parkway. Two of the lots are adjacent to the Angora commuter rail station. They have been overgrown and, in one case, have been used for scrap metal and auto parts collection. As such they are a deterrent to access and use of the rail station. Periodic short-dumping at this location exacerbates the perception of a lack of safety. The third vacant parcel is adjacent to the Baltimore Avenue shopping center and restaurant properties. The layout of this lot and its unimproved character have a damping effect on the shopping center. The impact of these lots, in a highly visible location at the juncture of five public transit routes, is greater than would be the case in a less-frequented location.



Vacant land behind homes fronting on Hoffman Ave.

Total square footage of the three vacant parcels is 80,174 sq. ft. This represents 24.2% of the land within the study area. The combined vacant property is large in size and occupies a significant percentage of the study area.

For the reasons given above – vacancy, dumping, overgrowth, large size and visibility of the vacant sites -- these vacant properties show clear evidence of unsafe and inadequate conditions.

2. Economically or Socially Undesirable Land Use

There is substantial evidence of economically and socially undesirable land use. This criterion is primarily met within the study area by virtue of the five vacant properties mentioned above. Vacant

structures and lots are socially undesirable for a number of reasons: they downgrade the overall physical environment and reduce the area's vitality (especially when located along a major, highly-visible thoroughfare such as Baltimore Avenue). Vacant buildings may be structurally deteriorated and therefore pose a danger to children and passersby who might seek to enter the property. Vacant lots often contain debris and hazardous material that poses a danger, especially to neighborhood children.



Vacant building, 1135-37 Cobbs Creek Parkway

Vacant structures and lots are economically undesirable inasmuch as citywide experience has demonstrated that vacant properties have an increased likelihood of becoming tax-delinquent. A case in point is the vacant commercial building at 1135-37 Cobbs Creek Parkway. Commercial vacancies erode the local economy and reduce tax revenue to government.

Long term tax delinquency exists on eight of the thirty-one taxable parcels in the study area. This represents fully 25.8% of the privately-owned parcels in the study area (an aggregate of \$171,535 in back taxes and penalties). Tax delinquency

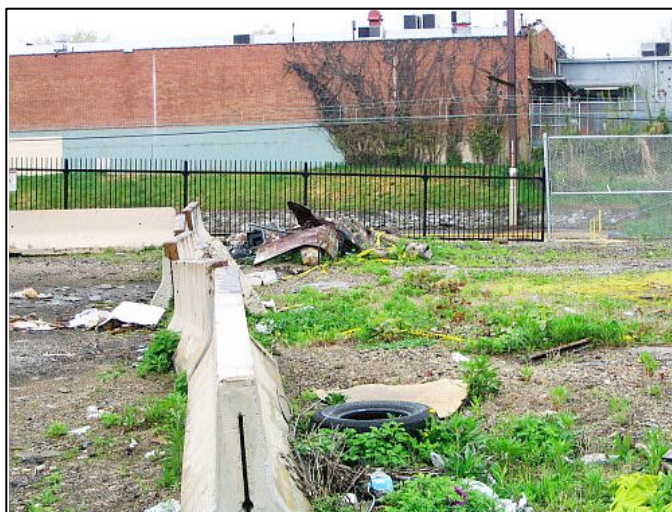
represents economically undesirable land use. When real estate tax is not paid, privately-owned properties are benefiting from municipal services without contributing to the revenue base that pays for those services. The eight tax-delinquent properties are two or more years behind in taxes.

The presence of the large vacant lots appears to be having a downward effect on property values. Relatively low property values provide additional evidence of economically undesirable land use. For the Census block group containing this city block, the median residential sale price in 2003 was \$12,000, which is significantly below the 2003 City median of \$77,500. This demonstrates economically undesirable land use.

CONCLUSION

In the area bounded by S. 57th Street, Hoffman Avenue, Cobbs Creek Parkway and Baltimore Avenue, existing conditions are consistent with two of the criteria necessary to produce 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



Trash accumulates adjacent to the rail station platform.

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that these two criteria for establishing the presence of blight are satisfied and the area is eligible for certification.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment 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, on August 20, 1963, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission certified the area bounded on the north by Girard Avenue, Parkside Avenue, Columbia Avenue (extended), the Manayunk branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad, 59th Street, Columbia Avenue, Lebanon Avenue; on the west by Cobbs Creek Park; on the south by the Media Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad; the line of 43rd Street extended to the Schuylkill River; on the east by the Schuylkill River as exhibiting characteristics of blight under terms of said Act, and

WHEREAS, after substantial review and study, the Commission staff has presented a report concluding that the area bordered by S. 57th Street, Hoffman Avenue, Cobbs Creek Parkway and Baltimore Avenue exhibits characteristics of blight as defined by the Act, and

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

NOW THEREFORE on this twelfth day of May 2005, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission hereby finds, based upon its staff report dated May 2005 that the area bounded by S. 57th Street, Hoffman Avenue, Cobbs Creek Parkway and Baltimore Avenue exhibits the following characteristics of blight as established by Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law:

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

and hereby certifies the above described area as blighted under the terms and provisions of the said Act.