

**Blight Certification
for the area known as East Germantown;
bounded generally by Stenton Avenue, 20th Street,
Haines Street and Magnolia Street**

Philadelphia City Planning Commission
June 2003

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INTRODUCTION

This report is an evaluation of blight in an area known as East Germantown, located in the Northwest section of Philadelphia. The study area boundary for certification is: Stenton Avenue on the north, 20th Street on the east, Haines Street on the west, Olney Avenue, R-7 Railroad, and Magnolia Street and Belfield Avenue on the south.



Location of the East Germantown study area in Northwest Phila.

The Philadelphia City Planning Commission has received a request from The Redevelopment Authority to determine if conditions are present in the East Germantown area that would warrant a certification of blight. A blight certification in this neighborhood will facilitate housing rehabilitation.

Germantown is well known as one of the oldest historical sections of Philadelphia, exemplified by large colonial homes, parks and mansions. It was a summer vacation area during colonial days. Germantown has many designated historical sites and historical events, such as the Battle of Germantown, and living quarters of famous colonials including George Washington. The area has large, architecturally significant churches of various denominations. The area of focus in this report is East

Germantown, which is historically a working class neighborhood, and mainly housed workers from nearby mills, factories and the railroad. Over the last 100 years various working class groups have resided in the East Germantown area. The housing stock is diverse with both large and small row houses, and twin homes. This area has experienced all the economical and social problems that have plagued other sections of the City. This report will describe the existing conditions of East Germantown with evidence to support a certification of blight.

Seven criteria were reviewed to determine whether or not blight exists in the study area. The criteria are set forth in the Pennsylvania Redevelopment Law, which stipulates that only one of the criteria must be met in order for an area to be deemed blighted. 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 non-servable parts.

This report cites specific examples of the conditions listed in three of the criteria. Blight does exist in the study area.