

**Southwest Germantown
Redevelopment Area Plan**

Philadelphia City Planning Commission

December 1998

I. Introduction

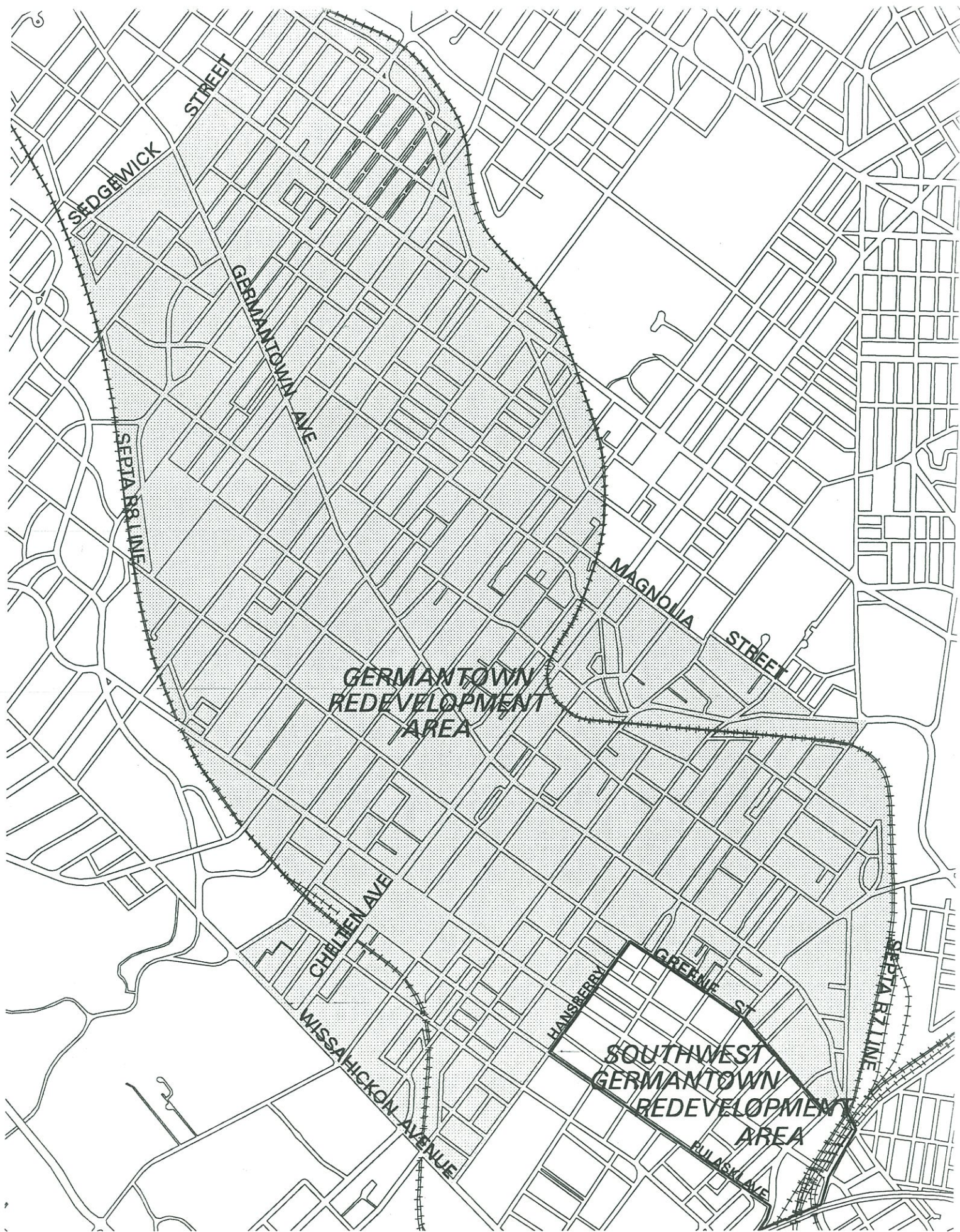
The Southwest Germantown Redevelopment Area is generally bounded by Hansberry Street on the north, Greene Street on the east, Windrim Avenue and Roosevelt Boulevard on the south and Pulaski Avenue on the west.

Southwest Germantown is a neighborhood of rich and varied architecture. The neighborhood is primarily residential; however, a concentrated commercial district is located on Wayne Avenue and a small cluster of industrial uses is located north of the Wayne Junction transportation hub. Although the identified Redevelopment Area contains viable residential structures, the neighborhood includes blocks that are severely blighted, with some residential structures that are beyond repair. A field survey conducted in late October 1998 found that approximately 101 vacant structures and 37 vacant lots were present here. The deteriorated physical condition and appearance of many of these vacant properties discourages reinvestment by owners of nearby occupied properties, thereby setting the stage for further property abandonment.

The extent of structural vacancy varies from block to block within the Redevelopment Area. On many blocks, vacant structures are interspersed among vacant lots and occupied residential buildings, contributing to a sense of blight and neglect on residential streets. Many of these vacant structures are either partially sealed or not secured at all. If not checked, this blight may eventually spread to the more viable sections of the neighborhood.

In May 1995 the *Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation Neighborhood Strategic Plan* was released. This *Strategic Plan*, which was funded by the Office of Housing and Community Development, includes the Southwest Germantown neighborhood and was prepared under the direction of the Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation (GGHDC). GGHDC is a community-based developer providing new and rehabilitated housing for low and moderate-income buyers and renters, primarily in Northwest Philadelphia. Freedom Square, a retail development of about 20,000 square feet, sponsored by GGHDC, is located one block east of the certification area at Germantown Avenue and Wister Street. It comprises the commercial center of the immediate neighborhood. The Elder's Place senior housing complex and newly constructed and rehabilitated townhouses form a solid core of residential immediately adjacent to Freedom Square. The serious degree of deterioration, on some blocks in proximity to these recent developments, is of great concern to GGHDC and other community-based organizations, area residents and elected officials.

The *Strategic Plan* contains a comprehensive presentation of existing conditions, socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, residential and business district characteristics, community assets and issues for the Southwest Germantown community. Strategic Plan objectives include: improving community organization and economic conditions, eliminating vacant houses and sealing those awaiting rehabilitation, marketing the neighborhood to prospective homeowners and increasing the involvement of institutions in the neighborhood. The plan also proposes alternative housing and economic development strategies, and makes a series of specific recommendations for implementation of Strategic Plan goals.



SOUTHWEST GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The Redevelopment Authority on behalf of GGHDC requested the Redevelopment Area designation. This Redevelopment Area Plan has been developed in consultation with representatives of several of the principal community based organizations in the area in order to advance the goals of the *Strategic Plan*.

The Certification of Southwest Germantown as a Redevelopment Area by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission on December 17, 1998 is in accordance with the provisions of Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law.

II. REDEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The Redevelopment Area Plan for Southwest Germantown should be viewed both as a statement of long-term community development intentions, and as a means of advancing the implementation of redevelopment proposals that may be ready to proceed in the near future. The principle purpose for establishing a Redevelopment Area is to allow public interventions that will promote the redevelopment of deteriorated sections, and the conservation of the more positive physical characteristics of the overall community. The plan sets the stage for the enhancement of many stable residential blocks and for positive business expansion opportunities in non-residential sections of the community.

The specific objectives are:

1. to eliminate the blighting influence of undesirable land uses throughout the neighborhood, thereby creating opportunities for new construction,
2. to foster the productive re-use of abandoned lots and abandoned structures, especially in the more stable parts of the community, and
3. to encourage the rehabilitation/full utilization of underutilized structures that are in deteriorated condition.

III. BOUNDARIES AND EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Southwest Germantown section of the neighborhood was certified as a Redevelopment Area on December 17, 1998. The Redevelopment Area boundaries are Hansberry Street, Greene Street, Windrim Avenue, Roosevelt Boulevard and Pulaski Avenue.

The designation as a Redevelopment Area is based on existing conditions in these neighborhoods that are consistent with the following criteria:

- a. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded conditions of certain buildings, and
- b. Economically or socially undesirable land uses.

In summary, the area contains 101 vacant structures, many of which are in dangerously deteriorated condition, and 37 vacant lots. Many of the lots are overgrown with weeds or covered with litter and other debris. Additionally the median values of owner occupied properties are considerably below the city wide median, and the owners of more than 240 properties are two or more years delinquent in the payment of real estate taxes.

V. EXISTING LAND USE

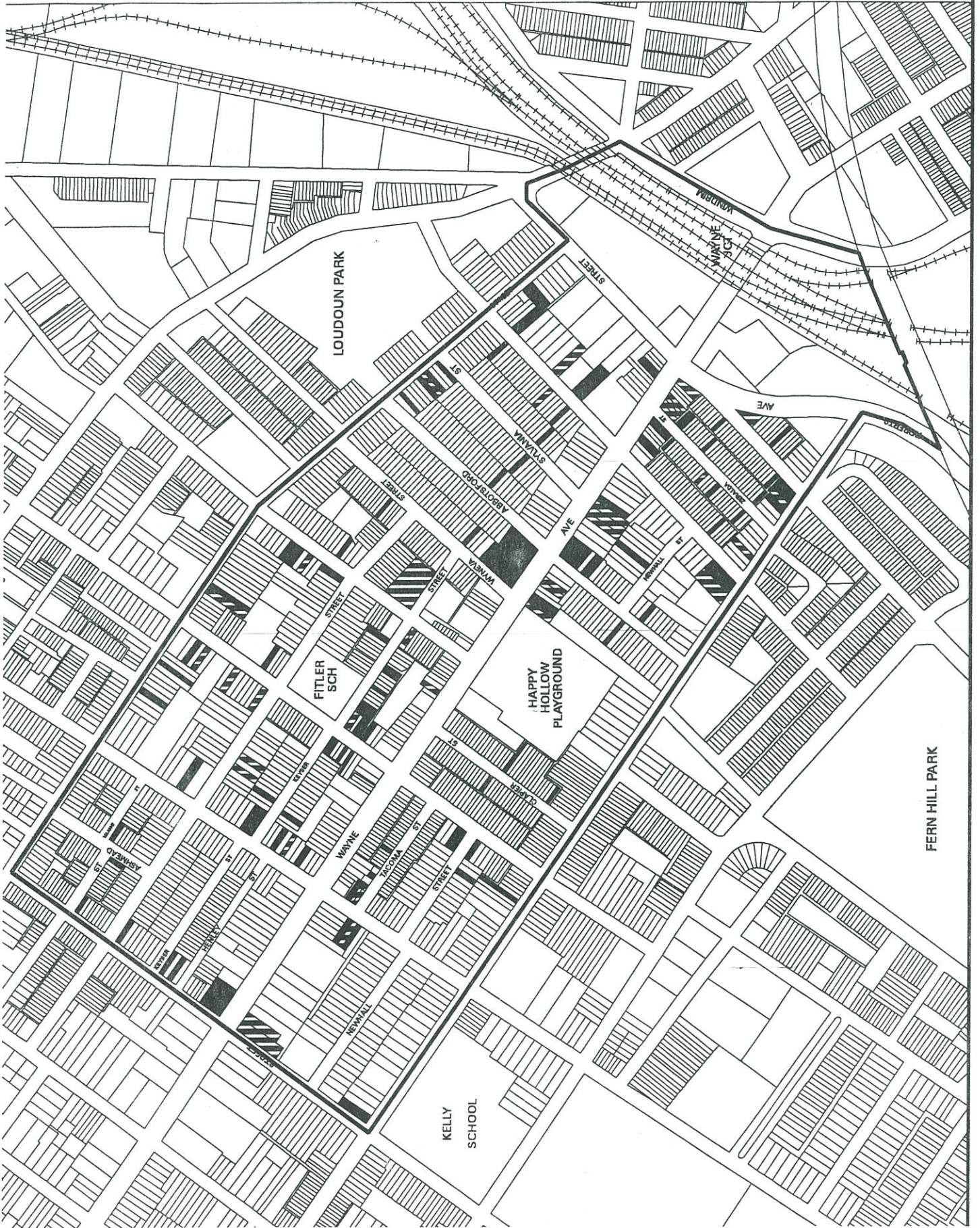
The predominant land use in Southwest Germantown is residential, however patterns of density and housing type vary considerably. Much of this residential consists of single family row homes that are well maintained. There are many blocks of distinctive houses, including large Victorian twins, row houses and detached single family houses. According to the Census Bureau, the owner occupancy rate in 1990 for the two census tracts that include Southwest Germantown was 57.9%. This was 4% below the citywide rate of 61.9% and reflects the fact that many of the larger buildings, including semi-detached buildings, had been previously converted to multi-family use because they were too large for single family occupancy. This is also reflected by the large percentage of vacant units in the 1990 census (over 14%) which suggests that many multi-family buildings are only partially occupied.

While residential is the predominant land use, there is a significant area of commercial land use concentrated in the three block section of Wayne Avenue between Manheim and Wyneva Streets. Industrial uses and some commercial uses are located at the southern edge of the Redevelopment Area adjacent to the Wayne Junction transportation hub. Industrial buildings are mostly found along Roberts Avenue and Berkley Street. While quite old, many of these structures have been well maintained and are actively used. Institutional and recreational uses include the Fitler elementary school at Seymour and Keyser Streets and the Happy Hollow playground, which occupies a large site at Wayne Avenue and Logan Street. Several churches, a newly constructed group home and a drug and alcohol treatment center are among the remainder of land uses in the area, but collectively they represent only a small proportion of the overall land area.

V. EXISTING ZONING

The zoning pattern that now exists in this part of Southwest Germantown is a mix of residential, neighborhood commercial, industrial and related classifications that range from R-5 Residential to G-2 Industrial. As a result of an areawide rezoning effort in 1971, the zoning closely follows the pattern of existing land use. This is especially true of the residential classifications. As shown on the Existing Zoning Map, the residential districts occupy the greatest amount of land and form the core of this section of the neighborhood, with commercial and industrial districts located along Wayne Avenue and Roberts Avenue and Berkley Street respectively.






Vac
Lots
Vaca
Bldgs

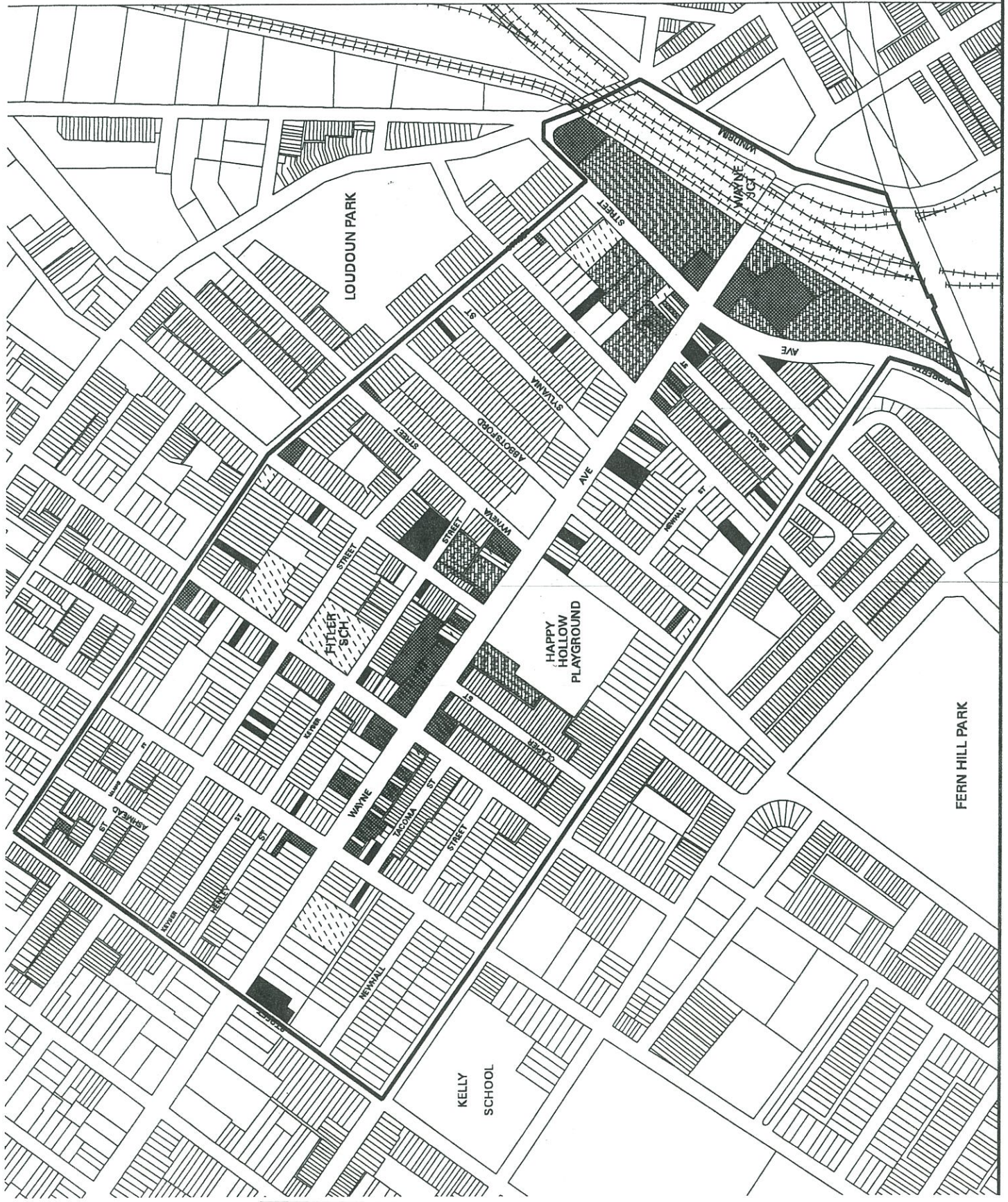


VACANT STRUCTURES AND VACANT LOTS
SOUTHWEST GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

1 INCH = 500 FEET

LAND USE

	RESIDENTIAL
	COMMERCIA
	INSTITUTION
	INDUSTRIAL
	VACANT LAN.



**EXISTING LAND USE
SOUTHWEST GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA**



1 INCH = 500 FEET

ZONING
SOUTHWEST GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

ILLUSTRATIVE PHOTOGRAPHS

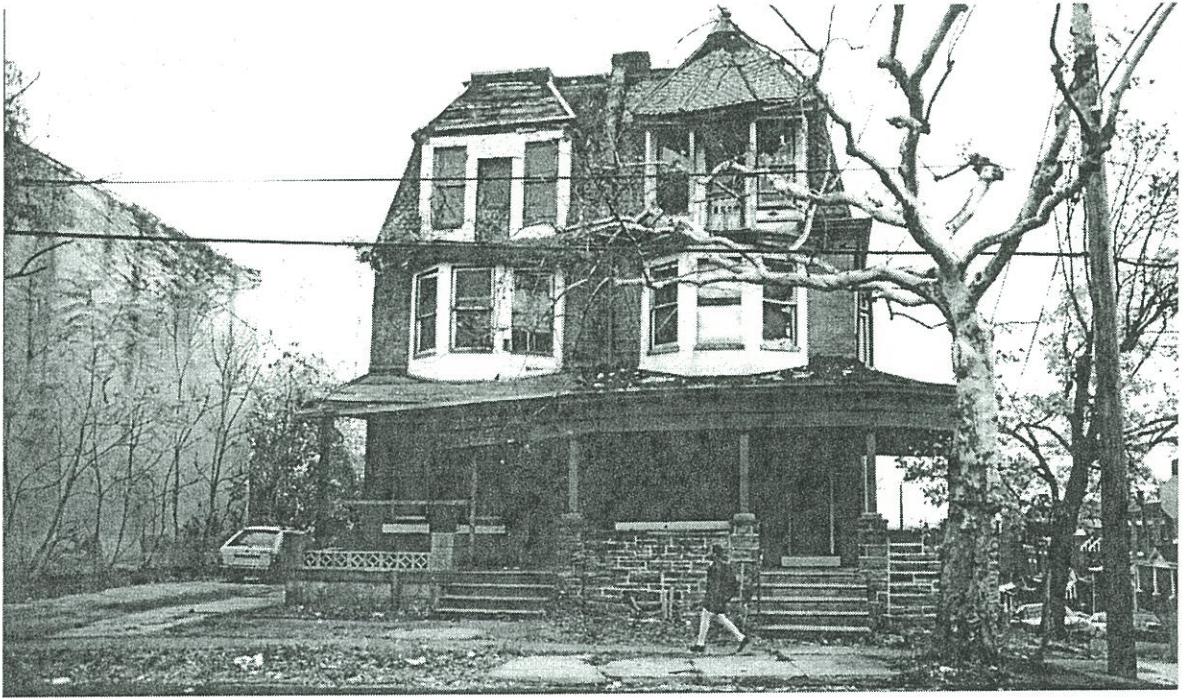


227 & 229 Seymour Street (Northeast corner Seymour & Newhall Streets)



167-183 Seymour Street (Northwest side of street)

Unsafe, Unsanitary, Inadequate Conditions, and ...



4529-4531-4533 Pulaski Avenue (Northwest corner Pulaski Avenue & Berkley Street)



4701-21 Wayne Avenue (Wyneva Hotel)

.....



4601 Pulaski Avenue (Northwest corner Pulaski Avenue and Apsley Street)



Rear of 4922-4924 Keyser Street (Looking east from City parking lot at 4721 Wayne Avenue)

.....Economically Undesirable Land Uses

V. PROPOSED LAND USE and ZONING

Two physical development goals are envisioned by *The Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation Neighborhood Strategic Plan*. These goals and related project concepts are discussed in detail in the Organizational Implications section of *The Strategic Plan*. Also, more detailed planning has been ongoing as GGHDC looks to expand on their LINK I activities. This revitalization strategy is known as the LINK Development because it is based on a program to enhance Living in Neighborhood Kinship. The strategy combines community organizing and planning with social supportive services and physical development utilizing the strengths of Germantown Settlement and GGHDC in concert with other providers of services to the community to create a comprehensive agenda for the identified target area.

While all of the project possibilities have merit as community improvement ideas, few are ready to proceed to building construction. In most instances, lack of funding and control of the land are the main issues. While some of the proposals may quickly move from concept stage to formal project status, it cannot be assumed that this will be the case for all. Accordingly this Redevelopment Area Plan acknowledges the potential significance of the principle community proposals for this area by including them on the Proposed Land Use Map, but it only makes recommendations as to general, not specific, changes in zoning for the individual development sites.

Project concepts that have been proposed by the Greater Germantown Housing Development Corporation include:

- *Improve Economic Conditions on Wayne Avenue*- acquire, rehabilitate and reoccupy vacant residential properties adjacent to the Wayne Avenue commercial area. Improvement of these conditions is an important goal to improving other conditions in the area. Of particular importance is the Wyneva Hotel, located on Wayne Avenue between Wyneva Street and Abbottsford Avenue. It is a blighting influence on the commercial area, adjacent residential areas and the Happy Hollow Playground. An appropriate development program for this site is a priority.
- *Eliminate Vacant Houses through Rehabilitation*- vacant properties for rehabilitation should be selected strategically. Some vacant properties might be demolished and others should be securely sealed to prevent use for illegal activities. The housing strategy will address vacant buildings in need of rehabilitation, partially occupied multi-family buildings, and occupied buildings in need of maintenance. A potential target area for this strategy will be adjacent to the Wayne Avenue commercial area and along Wayne Avenue in general.

Philadelphia
City
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Commission
DECEMBER 1998

RESIDENTIAL
& RELATED
COMMERCIAL
& RELATED



1 INCH = 500 FEET

PROPOSED LAND USE
SOUTHWEST GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA

VII. PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

No changes in street layout, street grades, or traffic regulation are proposed in the Southwest Germantown Redevelopment Area. Access to the study area is adequate for the proposed reuses. There is sufficient land area for off-street parking for the uses proposed for the Redevelopment Area Plan. Sufficient off- street and on- street parking for the surrounding commercial and residential uses already exists throughout the neighborhood.

VIII. HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Redevelopment proposals requiring the demolition or alteration of locally designated historic structures, or structures deemed eligible for National Register Designation shall be reviewed by staff of the Philadelphia Historical Commission prior to receiving formal public agency approvals.

IX. RELOCATION

Relocation of tenants or owners of occupied properties to advance specific redevelopment proposals, if necessary, will be kept to a minimum. All relocation activities will be conducted in accord with local, state and federal procedures and standards.

X. PROPOSED STANDARDS AND CONTROLS

Standards and controls for uses, density, land coverage, building area, parking and off-street loading will be set by the zoning code regulations. All impacts of redevelopment on the surrounding residential community will be minimized through development controls regulating site design, building materials and landscaping. The Redevelopment Authority will establish these controls. Those restrictions will be reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission.

The Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended, and the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended, regulate Redevelopment and Urban Renewal in the City of Philadelphia.

Redevelopment in the Southwest Germantown Redevelopment Area will be in conformity with the provisions of this Redevelopment Area Plan. It will be in accord with the requirements of any Urban Renewal Plan prepared by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia for this area, and will comply with the Code of General Ordinances of the City of Philadelphia. All plans and proposals prepared by the Redevelopment Authority will be subject to the recommendations of the City Planning Commission and the approval of the Council of the City of Philadelphia.