

GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN

67-11

GERMANTOWN

REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN



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JULY, 1967

24,905



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
13th Floor, City Hall Annex
S. E. Cor., Juniper & Filbert Sts., Philadelphia, Pa. 19107
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Assistant Executive Director

July 11, 1967

Mr. Gustave G. Amsterdam, Chairman
Redevelopment Authority of the
City of Philadelphia
City Hall Annex
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Amsterdam:

Transmitted herewith is the Germantown Redevelopment Area Plan which has been prepared by the City Planning Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Urban Redevelopment Law of May 24, 1945, P. L. 991, as amended.

The certified Germantown Redevelopment Area is bounded on the north by the Chestnut Hill Branch of the Reading Railroad; on the north-west by Sedgwick Street; on the west by the Chestnut Hill Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad; on the southwest by Rittenhouse Street and Wissahickon Avenue; on the south by Hansberry Street and Greene Street; on the southeast by Berkely Street, Germantown Avenue and the Reading Railroad; and on the east by Wister Street, Belfield Avenue, Magnolia Street, Church Lane and Magnolia Street.

This Redevelopment Area Plan is in accord with the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Philadelphia dated 1960, as amended, and was approved by the City Planning Commission at its meeting of July 11, 1967.

Sincerely yours,

Philip Klein
Vice Chairman

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INTRODUCTION

This initial publication of the Germantown Redevelopment Area Plan has been approved by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission for community review and is subject to amendment. The Plan is based in part upon the community's review of the "Preliminary Report, Proposed Land Use and Zoning, Central and Lower Germantown," published in September, 1966 by the City Planning Commission.

The Germantown Redevelopment Area is bounded on the north by the Chestnut Hill Branch of the Reading Railroad; on the northwest by Sedgwick Street; on the west by the Chestnut Hill Branch of the Pennsylvania Railroad; on the southwest by Rittenhouse Street and Wissahickon Avenue; on the south by Hansberry Street and Greene Street; on the southeast by Berkey Street, Germantown Avenue and the Reading Railroad; and on the east by Wister Street, Bellfield Avenue, Magnolia Street, Church Lane and Magnolia Street. Germantown was certified as a Redevelopment Area by the City of Philadelphia on September 10, 1963. The area encompasses some 1740 acres, which includes approximately 52,000 persons and 20,824 dwelling units according to the 1960 U. S. Census. For general planning purposes the Plan includes land adjacent to but not included within the Certified Redevelopment Area.

Germantown has many aspects of a "model" urban residential community, in both its social and physical diversity and in its contemporary patterns of growth and change. The Plan recognizes the significance of Germantown as an integral community, having unique historical and environmental qualities and recognizes also the importance of Germantown in the context of the city-wide environment. Central Germantown is designated in the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Philadelphia as a regional commercial and cultural center linked to the central city. In striving to give direction to the forces of change and growth which Germantown is undergoing as part of the dynamics of the greater Philadelphia region, the Redevelopment Area Plan bases its detailed planning proposals on the longer range development policies of the Northwest District Plan, published by the City Planning Commission in September, 1966.

This Redevelopment Area Plan amends the Comprehensive Plan of the City of Philadelphia.

OBJECTIVES

The general goal of the Germantown Redevelopment Area Plan is to give direction to the dynamics of the community's physical development and thereby strengthen its stability by establishing clear planning policies for land use, zoning, and capital improvements. In published form, this policy can then be the subject for continuous review and refinement by the Planning Commission and by the community.

The plan has four specific goals:

1. To conserve and reinforce the existing quality of the residential environment and to preserve and utilize Germantown's historic values;
2. To reinforce the identity and efficiency of the Central Germantown Regional Center and the numerous neighborhood centers of commercial and community activity;
3. To facilitate the necessary expansion of the community's public and private institutions;
4. To improve movement through the community, to improve accessibility to and from the community, and to facilitate movement within the community.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Germantown Redevelopment Area was certified on September 10, 1963, by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission. Designation for redevelopment was warranted by the following criteria:

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded condition of certain dwellings;
2. Inadequate planning of the area;
3. Lack of proper light, air, and open space;
4. Faulty street or lot layout;
5. Defective design and arrangement of the buildings;
6. Economically or socially undesirable land uses.

These conditions still exist in the area, and in some cases have intensified. The demand for moderate income apartments continues to encourage the conversion of old single-family dwellings into apartments, creating overcrowding, lack of sufficient open space and residential parking, and increased traffic volumes on residential streets. Traffic congestion and disorder result from increased volumes of traffic flow on existing narrow streets, which in turn create blighting influences upon adjacent residential properties. Land development for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes has occurred both in the form of conversion and new construction without proper standards, giving rise to inflated land values and excessive land development. Over the years, commercial and industrial land uses have developed and expanded in residential areas, having deteriorating effects upon the neighborhood and causing congestion on the streets.

The Central Germantown Commercial core has suffered from its lack of efficient automobile accessibility, available parking, and attractive pedestrian shopping environment as compared with its competition in the modern outlying shopping centers.

The demands upon elementary and secondary schools in the area - both public and private - have exceeded their ability to expand their facilities and building programs.

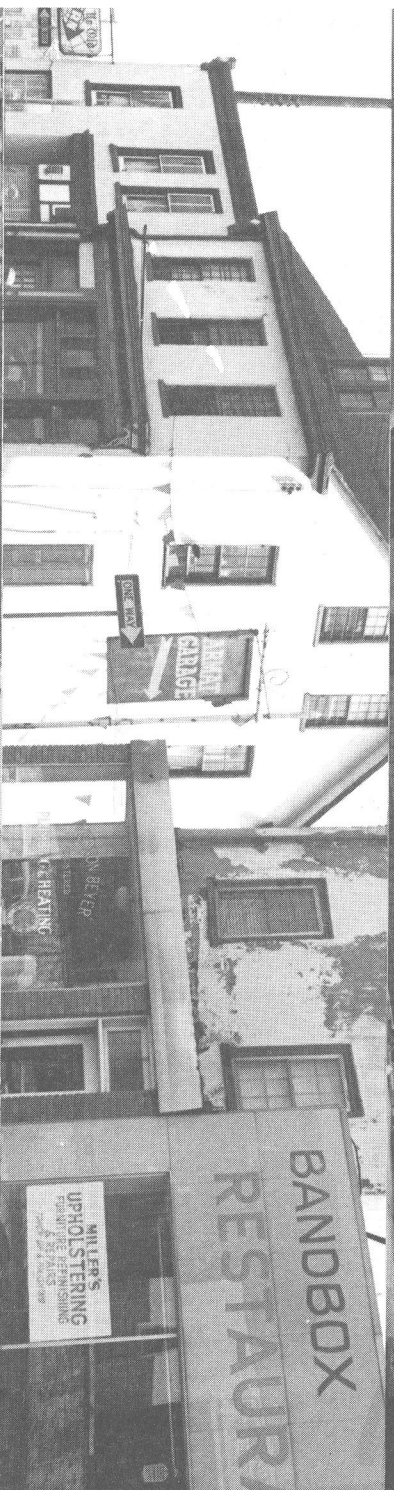
Incompatible and Undesirable
Land Uses

Lena Street

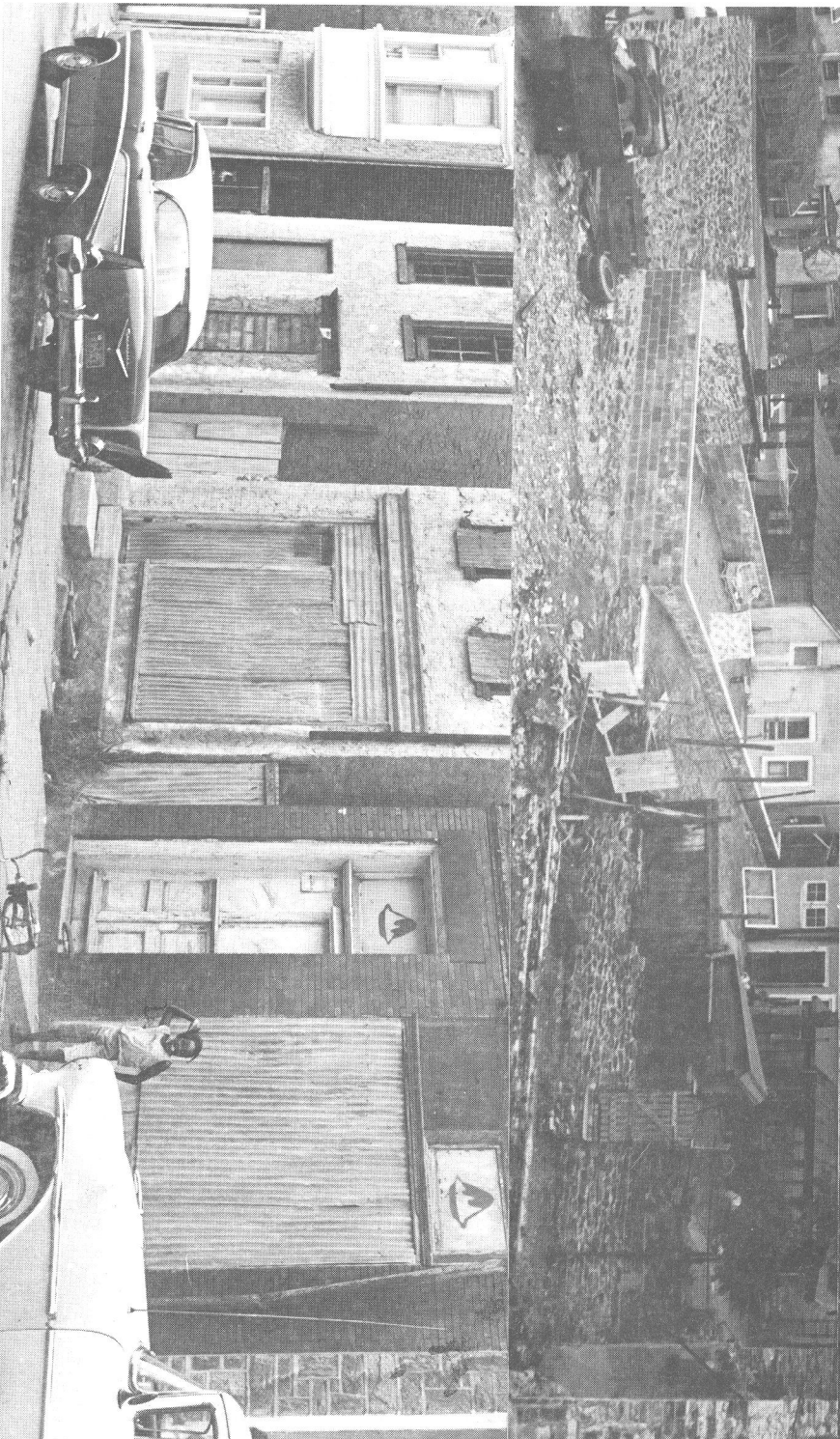
Armat Street



Unsafe and Unsanitary
Conditions



Vacant Land and Buildings
Church Lane
East Haines Street



EXISTING DESIGN STRUCTURE

Over a period of nearly two-hundred years the physical form of Germantown has developed as a result of historical circumstance, natural phenomenon of the land forms, and the activity patterns and needs of its inhabitants. The underlying order within which this form has evolved is described as the "design structure."

By identifying the existing physical design structure of Germantown, principles of locational criteria for future development in Germantown can be advanced, and those principles become the basis for detailed land use, zoning, and street change proposals.

The community design structure can be seen as a composite of three interrelated but discrete scales of activity giving form to identifiable scales of land use: the regional scale, the community-wide scale, and the neighborhood scale.

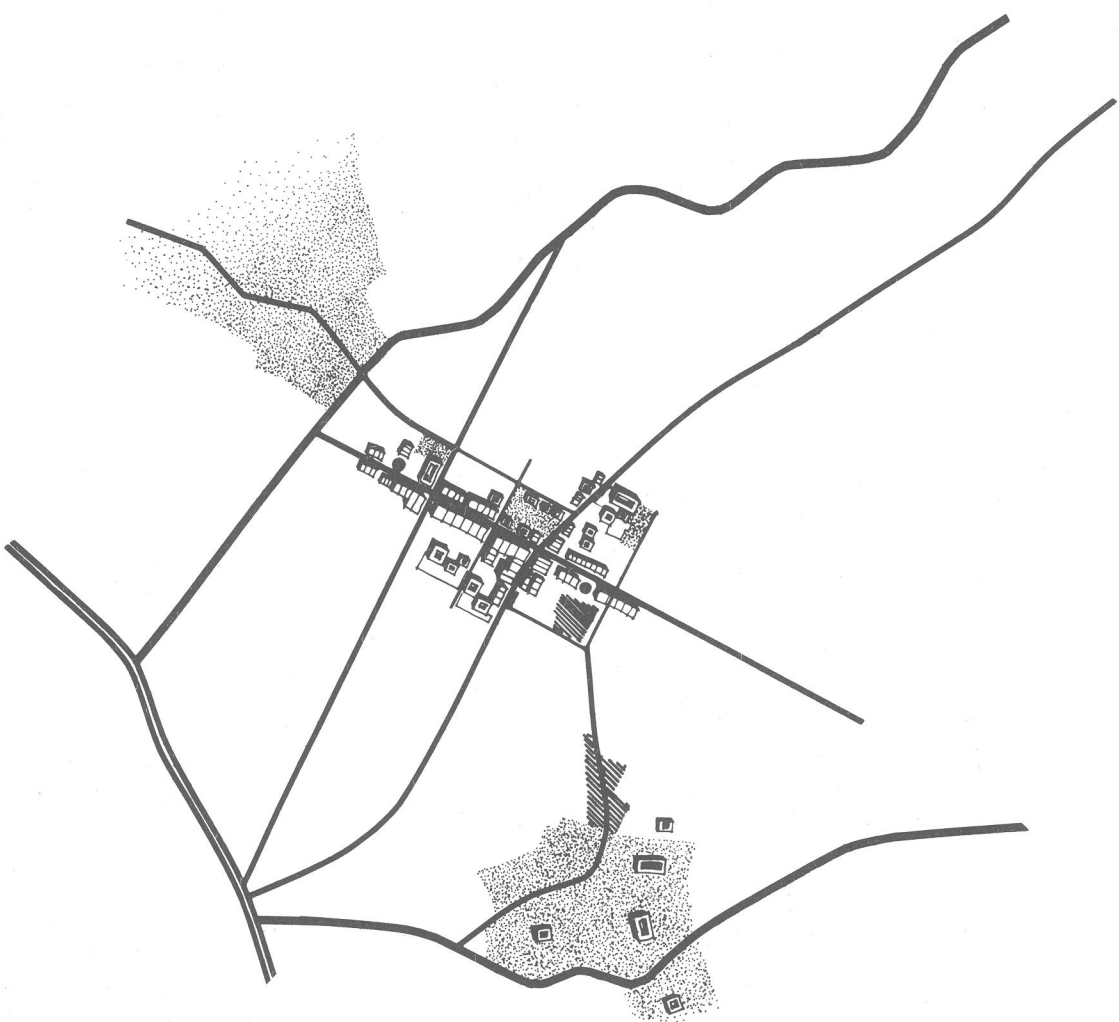
Those activities which are of the largest scale identify Germantown with the City as a regional center. They include such facilities as the regional high school, the department stores and the professional offices, the area-wide institutions such as the YM and YMCA, the proposed regional library, churches, historical locations of national significance, theaters, museums, the Wissahickon Park and nearby La Salle College and Germantown Hospital. These facilities are linked to the City by major arterials such as the Wissahickon Drive, Lincoln Drive, Cheltenham Avenue and the Roosevelt Expressway.

Other activities are community-wide. Germantown Avenue has traditionally served as the community activity spine, and as such has a nature distinguishable from that of the regional center.

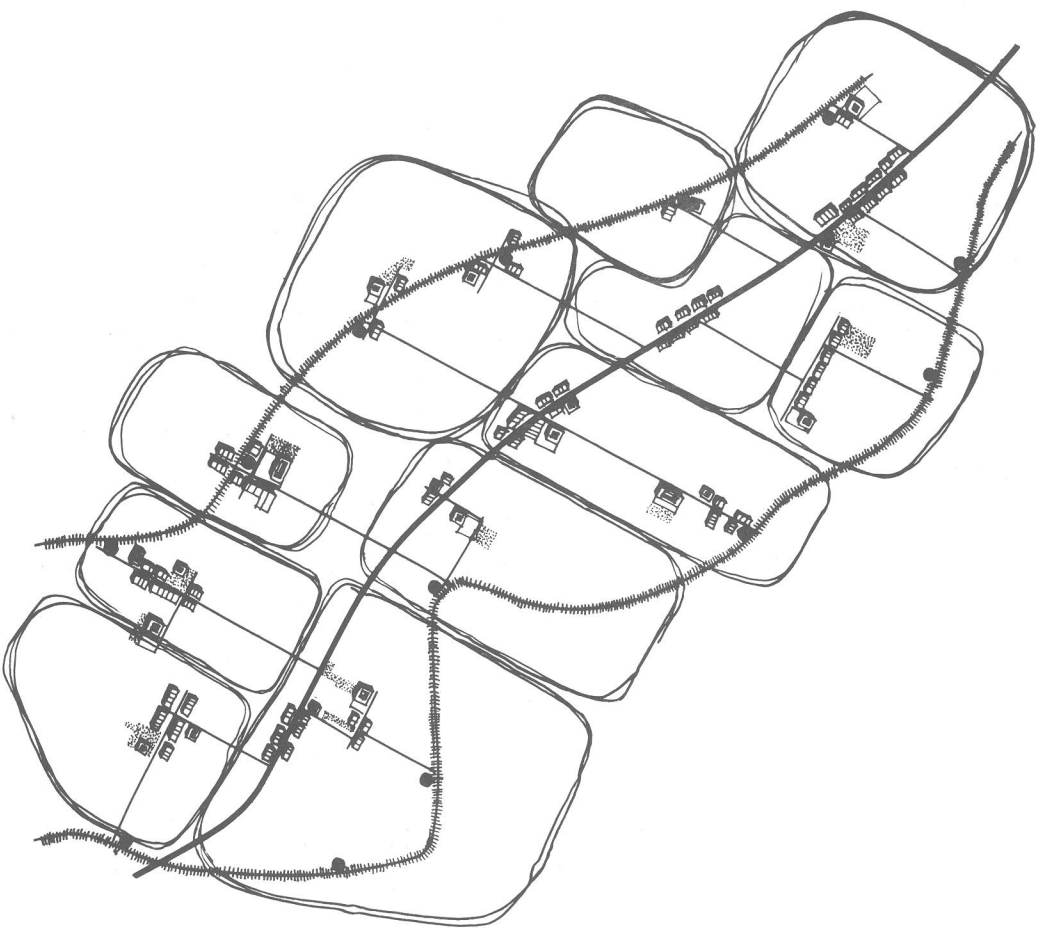
Germantown Avenue has become the linear shopping and institutional avenue where the community's supermarkets, banks, branch libraries, local churches, and many of its most valuable historically certified buildings are located. Chew Avenue, Greene Street, and Wayne Avenue parallel Germantown Avenue and are developed similarly. Major community cross streets form a superblock grid such as Wister Street, Manheim Street, Schoolhouse Lane, Washington Lane, Upsal Street and Sedgwick Street.

Activities at the neighborhood scale identify the various residential areas within the community, each of which represent unique environmental and social characteristics. Neighborhood identities generally focus upon the neighborhood school and playground, convenience shops and commuter railway stations. A prominent local street connects a neighborhood's commuter station and its local shopping and school, such as, East Penn Street and Wakefield Street in Wister, Queen Lane in Westside, Haines Street in Morton, Tulpehocken Street in West Central and Washington Lane, Horter Street, Carpenter Lane and Gorgas Lane in Upper Germantown.

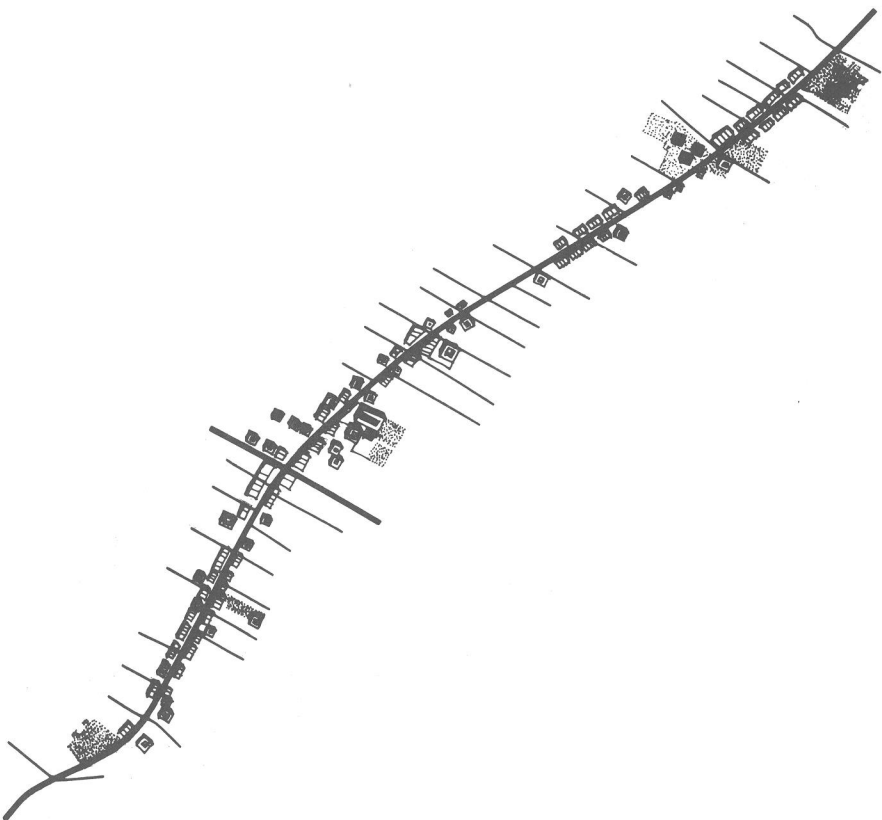
- EXPRESSWAY
- ARTERIAL STREET
- COMMUNITY STREET
- NEIGHBORHOOD STREET
- RAILROAD STATION
- SCHOOL AND PLAYGROUND
- COMMUNITY INSTITUTION
- RECREATION
- SHOPPING
- INDUSTRY



REGION



NEIGHBORHOOD



COMMUNITY

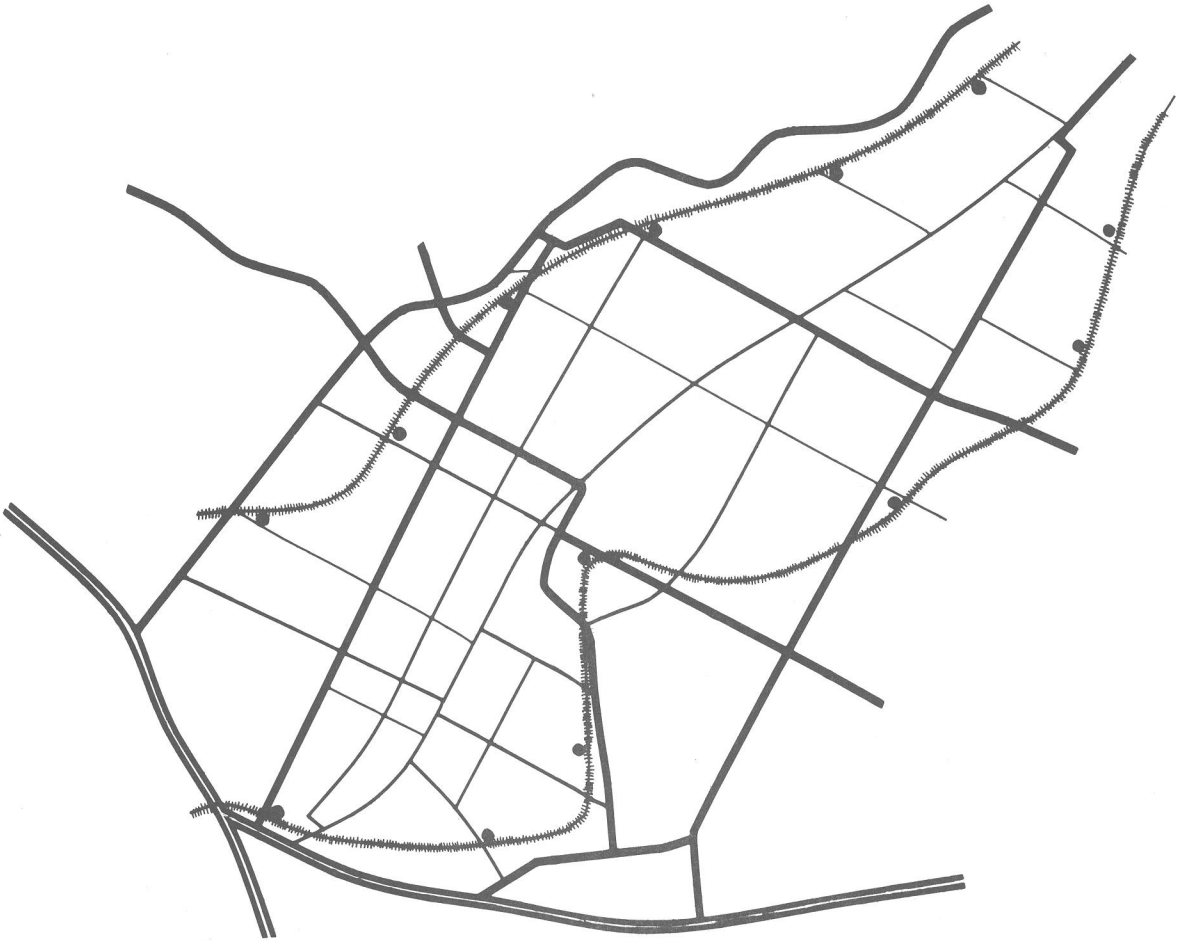
PROPOSED DESIGN STRUCTURE

A goal of the Germantown Redevelopment Area Plan is to reinforce and enhance the physical design structure which has evolved over time in response to the needs and activity patterns of Germantown's residents. Principles of movement and locational criteria have been diagramed to give architecture image to these development goals. Based upon these principles, the Redevelopment Area Plan proposes specific land-use and zoning controls, as well as street changes in order to give planned direction to the future physical development of the community.

A hierarchy of movement is proposed aimed at giving differentiation to the functional requirements of various streets determined by the scale of activity each serves. Accessibility to and from the Regional Center from outside the community would be served by the Wissahickon Drive-Rittenhouse Street arterial, Belfield Avenue, Cheltenham Avenue, and the Wissahickon Avenue-Lincoln Drive arterial. Many of the local streets now used for this purpose would thus be relieved. Accessibility between neighborhoods, shopping centers, and community facilities would be served by the community's major internal streets such as Wayne Avenue, Greene Street, and Germantown Avenue, over which the mass transit system links many of the community's facilities as well as the Regional Center.

The Preliminary Site Plan serves as an architectural image of how various facilities would be clustered according to their functional needs, their scales of activity, the scale of their accessibility needs, and the supporting services they mutually require such as parking, open space, and traffic control.

MOVEMENT



PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN



LAND USE

Existing land uses in Germantown can generally be categorized as:

1. Predominantly residential of a wide range of type and quality;
2. Retail and service commercial also of a wide range of type and quality, tending to spread along arterial streets and into residential areas;
3. Community facilities and institutions both public and private, widely dispersed throughout the community;
4. Public and private open space;
5. General industry concentrated along the railroad routes and light industry dispersed throughout the community.

The Proposed Land Use Plan recommends locations for schools, public recreation, and community facilities near existing concentrations of neighborhood shops and local centers of community activity. These centers are located along community streets and transit routes for maximum local accessibility.

The plan designates a reduction in ground area (but not in floor area) of retail commercial uses in order to intensify the present commercial centers including the regional center in Central Germantown.

The plan proposes that marginal commercial uses be located at the fringe of local shopping centers and that incompatible industrial uses be converted to residential and institutional reuses.



- REDEVELOPMENT AREA
- RESIDENTIAL
 - COMMERCIAL
 - INDUSTRIAL
 - INSTITUTIONAL
 - RECREATIONAL
 - P parking
 - V vacant

GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

3897 JULY 1967 0 400' 800' 1200'

EXISTING LAND USE



ZONING

The present zoning of the area reflects neither the existing pattern of land use nor an orderly guide to a future pattern of land use. The present dynamics of land use change in Germantown has resulted in an existing zoning pattern which has become outdated and piecemeal. Deficiencies in the existing zoning include:

1. Excessive areas of commercial zoning;
2. Residential zones which permit excessive land coverage and densities, especially on small lots along narrow streets;
3. The absence of zoning districts which provide proper controls and standards for the conversion of older single-family dwellings to apartments;
4. Zoning districts which permit commercial and industrial uses incompatible with surrounding residential uses.

The Preliminary Zoning Proposal of the Germantown Redevelopment Area Plan has been prepared for review by the community and is subject to future revisions by the City Planning Commission as a part of the City's current zoning-remapping program. Recommendations of the community organizations will be carefully considered in preparing revisions to this plan.

The plan recommends that areas be rezoned according to the intended character and density of their future development and related to the proposed land use and circulation plans. Commercial and industrial districts are designated along major routes of movement. The plan recommends that the L-3 Light Industrial District be applied where limited industrial uses adjoin residential areas, and that required set-backs be reduced where intensely utilized sites require accommodation. In limited areas aimed primarily at retaining an existing residential character, the plan proposes R-2C, R-5C, or R-9C depending upon the character of its equivalent present single-family category. These zoning districts (R-2C, R-5C and R-9C) are presently being developed by the staff of the Planning Commission and will be forwarded to the Technical Advisory Committee on Zoning for their review. The purposes of these districts will be to permit: (a) the conversion of an existing single-family structure to multi-family use by certificate according to specified standards of open space, off-street parking, and density, or (b) new construction limited to the equivalent single-family district. New apartment construction would therefore not be permitted in these districts, so as to maintain the existing character of the neighborhood.



- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- INSTITUTIONAL
- RECREATIONAL
- REDEVELOPMENT AREA

GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 1967
0 400' 800' 1200'

PROPOSED LAND USE





- 9 RESIDENTIAL *
- 1 COMMERCIAL *
- 1 INDUSTRIAL *
- 2 RECREATIONAL
- REDEVELOPMENT AREA
- * number and/or letter indicates district

GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA
PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
JULY 1967
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EXISTING ZONING



PROPOSED STANDARDS OF DEVELOPMENT

In addition to the zoning regulations, the controls contained within the Central Germantown Urban Renewal Area and the Morton Urban Renewal Area shall apply within their respective boundaries as required standards for the development of new structures and the rehabilitation of existing structures.



- * RESIDENTIAL. 9A
- * COMMERCIAL. 2
- * INDUSTRIAL. L3
- RECREATIONAL. L3
- REDEVELOPMENT AREA. —
- * number and/or letter indicates district

GERMANTOWN REDEVELOPMENT AREA
 PHILADELPHIA CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
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PRELIMINARY ZONING PROPOSAL



PROPOSED STREET CHANGES

Streets to be widened:

Belfield Avenue between Wister Street
and Church Lane
Rittenhouse Street between Wissahickon
Avenue and Germantown Avenue
Kenyon Street between Chelton Avenue
and Armat Street (as part of
Rittenhouse-Belfield connection)
Wissahickon Avenue between Roberts
Avenue and Price Street

Streets to be added:

Baynton Street between Penn Street and
Wister Street
Rittenhouse-Belfield connection between
Germantown Avenue and Belfield
Avenue
Schoolhouse Lane between the Ritten-
house-Belfield Connection
and Kenyon Street
Maplewood Street between Greene Street
and Germantown Avenue
Lena Street between Haines Street and
Narragansett Street

Streets to be closed, right-of-way retained:

Laurens Street between King Street and
Queen Lane
Market Square between Schoolhouse Lane
and Church Lane
Maplewood Street between Greene Street
and Germantown Avenue
West Ashmead Place between Germantown
Avenue and the West Ashmead
Place (N-S) loop
Price Street between Germantown Avenue
and Lena Street
Rittenhouse Street between Germantown
Avenue and Lena Street
Haines Street between Germantown Avenue
and Lena Street
Stafford Street between Lena Street and
Germantown Avenue

Streets to be stricken and vacated:

West Price Street between Tacoma Street
and Wayne Avenue
Tacoma Street between Rittenhouse Street
and West Price Street
Kenyon Street between Armat Street and
Schoolhouse Lane
Lena Street between Armat Street and
Church Lane
Church Lane between Lena Street and
Wakefield Street
Wakefield Street between Church Lane and
Coulter Street
Woodlawn Street between Germantown
Avenue and Kenyon Street
Narragansett Street between Germantown
Avenue and Lena Street
Wakefield Street between Rittenhouse
Street and Haines Street

HOUSING OF DISPLACED FAMILIES

The Germantown Redevelopment Area Plan proposes redevelopment of some residential areas for roadway, institutional, and commercial purposes. In cases where displacement occurs due to public redevelopment, the Rehousing Bureau of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia will assist in the relocation of any displaced families.

ESTIMATED COST OF ACQUISITION

The Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia estimates the acquisition cost of Morton Urban Renewal Area Unit I to be \$3,025,000, of Morton Amendment I to be \$2,000,000, and of Central Germantown Urban Renewal Area to be \$5,275,000.

CONTINUING CONTROLS

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, P. L. 911, as amended, and the United States Housing Act of 1949, as amended, regulate Philadelphia's redevelopment and Urban renewal.

The renewal of the Germantown Redevelopment Area will be carried out in conformity with the provisions of the Germantown Redevelopment Area Plan. With applicable boundaries, renewal will be in accordance with the requirements of the Urban Renewal Plans prepared by the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia and will comply with the provisions of 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.

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PH6.2	Planning Commission.
AUTHOR	Germentown redevelopment area plan.
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TITLE	July 1967.

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