

PRELIMINARY PLAN PROPOSALS FOR NORTH-CENTRAL-EAST AREA, PHILADELPHIA
CITY PLANNING COMMISSION, MARCH 1966

DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

The North Central East section of Philadelphia is bounded on the north by Lehigh Avenue, on the east by the Delaware River pierhead line, on the south by Spring Garden Street and on the west by Broad Street. According to the 1960 census 152,305 people lived here in 48,864 dwelling units. Sixty-three percent of these dwelling units were considered sound with all facilities. The population has declined from a high recorded in the 1950 census of 205,137. A large part of this decline can be traced to extensive urban renewal activity in the western part of the area. Two and three-story row houses form the dominant residential pattern. In general, the two-story structures exist on the minor streets and in the newly constructed urban renewal areas. The large, three-story houses, now often converted to multifamily use, front on the major streets, and in the area bounded by Fifth Street, Eighth Street, Girard Avenue, and Norris Street. Except for public housing and Temple University, there are no large multifamily high-rise structures in North Central East.

In addition to the predominant residential use, many commercial establishments have located in continuous strips along Kensington Avenue, Germantown Avenue, Frankford Avenue, Front Street, Lehigh Avenue, Girard Avenue, Broad Street, and parts of Marshall Street and Second Street. In addition smaller establishments are scattered throughout the residential blocks. Most of these shopping areas serve the adjacent community but those located on Broad Street, Lehigh Avenue, Front Street, and Frankford Avenue seek a broader market. Completely modern shopping facilities are rare in this area.

Next to residential, industrial uses consume the greatest amount of land in North Central East. Except for Penn Treaty Park and a new restaurant-shopping complex, port oriented uses line the full length of the Delaware River. An area predominantly industrial but mixed with residential and commercial extends from Fifth Street to Frankford Avenue from Berks Street to Spring Garden Street. North of Berks Street manufacturing plants line both sides of American Street to Lehigh Avenue. Lots of lesser size occur along Aramingo Avenue and the Ninth Street line of the Reading Railroad. In addition to these obvious concentrations individual plants are scattered throughout the area in no apparent pattern.

Six hospitals, St. Mary's, Kensington, Episcopal, St. Christopher's, St. Luke's, and Stetson along with Temple University and the Salvation Army are the major institutions in the area. Temple University is expanding the present campus with an extensive building program. St. Mary's, St. Christopher's, and Episcopal have recently engaged in major new construction. In addition to these institutions, many churches and local clubs are scattered throughout North Central East.

There are 13 playgrounds and 6 parks in the community. All the playgrounds are below the minimum recommended size; they do not provide adequate space for field games or for fieldhouses. These are inadequate for the area.

PROPOSALS FOR NORTH-CENTRAL EAST

Housing

In August 1965 the Philadelphia Department of Licenses and Inspections identified 3,926 derelict structures and 1,544 lots in this area. Many of the lots are grouped to form larger parcels. Improvement in the physical environment will produce an immediate positive quality and the number of the housing units will gain a net increase in both the Philadelphia acquire through the procedure it is proposed that the city of program all those properties outside areas outlined in the derelict property them to the Philadelphia Housing Development Corp. for other uses and transfer ing Development Corp. would then choose to rehabilitate or rebuild the property or sell it to the Philadelphia Housing Authority which would undertake the same action.

This net gain in the total number of housing units will be used in several ways.

1. It will provide new quarters for families living in adjacent overcrowded conditions.