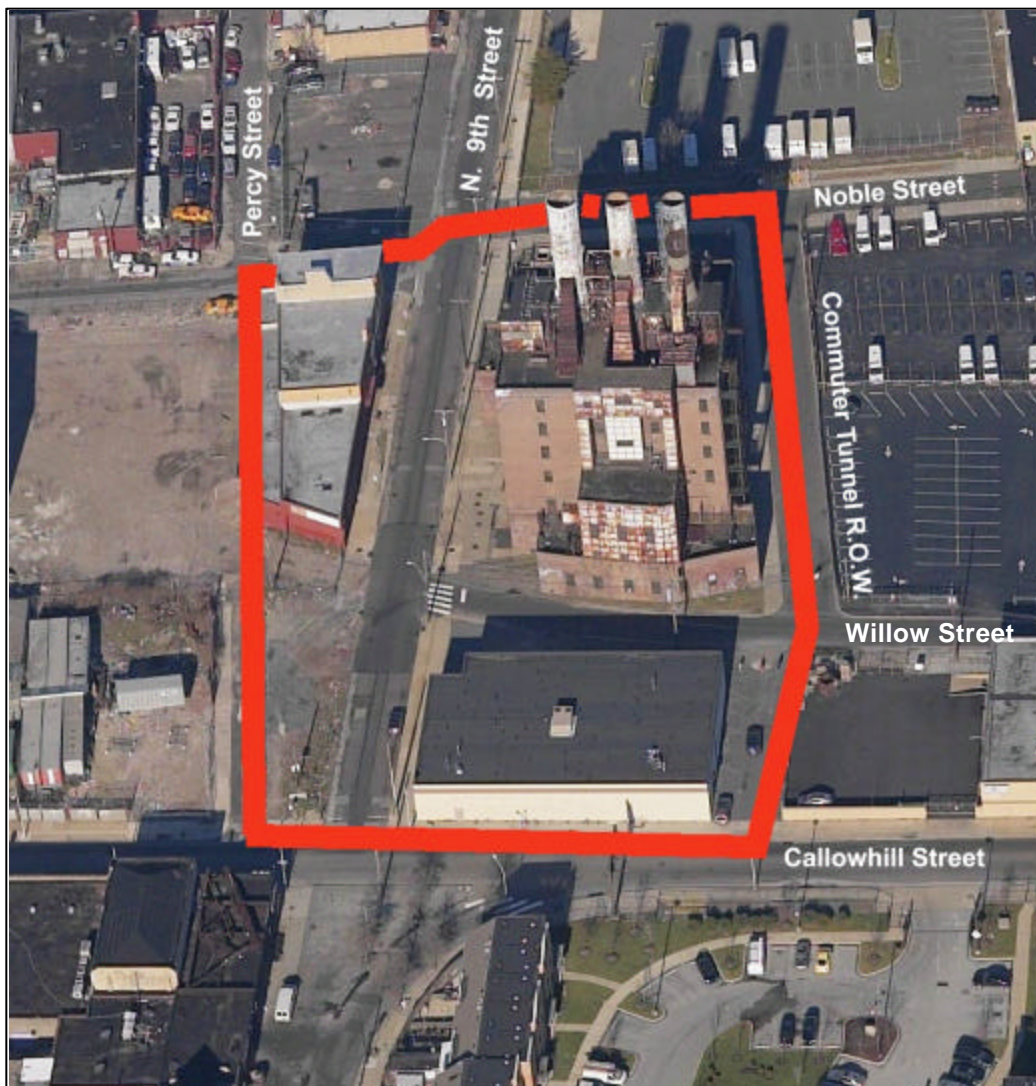


# Blight Recertification

## Center City Redevelopment Area

Area Bounded by Callowhill, Percy and Noble Streets  
and the commuter tunnel right of way



Philadelphia City Planning Commission  
September 21, 2004

*Philadelphia City Planning Commission*



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Blight Recertification for the Area Bounded Area Bounded by Callowhill,  
Percy and Noble Streets and the commuter tunnel right of way

**I. INTRODUCTION:**

This report presents an evaluation of blight within the area bounded by Callowhill, Percy and Noble Streets and the commuter tunnel right of way, located within the Center City Redevelopment Area.

This recertification study reviews existing conditions in the study area in relation to seven criteria used to determine whether blight exists in an area. The criteria are set forth in Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law (P.L 991, May 24, 1945 as amended), which stipulates that only one of the criteria must be met in order for an area to be deemed blighted.

**II. CRITERIA:**

Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law has established the following criteria for evaluating blight in a particular area.

- Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions
- Inadequate planning
- Excessive land coverage
- Lack of proper light, air and open space
- Faulty street and lot layout
- Defective design and arrangement of buildings
- Economically or socially undesirable land use

**III. ANALYSIS**

The following section describes evidence of blight in the area bounded by Callowhill, Percy and Noble Streets and the commuter tunnel right of way according to Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law.

1. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions

Evidence of this criterion is presented below:

- a) The area is largely vacant.
- b) The former Trigen Plant at 411 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street is environmentally contaminated.

With only one occupied structure, the study area exhibits substantial vacancy of over ninety percent (90%). Vacant and abandoned property is economically undesirable, a haven for vermin and vandalism and is a blighting influence on the area. Overgrown vegetation, trash, sealed buildings and lack of activity appear unsafe.

The building at 411 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street is posted with signs (see below) warning of asbestos contamination. This is clearly an unsafe condition that requires remediation.



## 2. Faulty Street and Lot Layout

Evidence of this criterion is presented below:

- a) Percy Street is an overly narrow, dead end street.

### Standards for Street Width

Section 14-2104 (5) of the Philadelphia Code requires new streets to meet the following minimum widths:

- a. 64 ft. for a primary residential street
- b. 54 ft. for a secondary residential street

- c. 50 ft. for a tertiary street
- d. 36 ft. for a marginal access street

Percy Street (pictured below) does not meet City standards for street width. It is an overly narrow 30 ft. wide stub end street with no space for turnaround. It is a blighting influence on the area. Dead end streets are prohibited for new streets under section 14-2104 (3) of the Philadelphia Code.



Percy Street looking north

### 3. Defective Design and Arrangement of Buildings

The former Trigen Plant at 411 N 9<sup>th</sup> Street is not suitable for reuse in its present configuration. This large industrial building, pictured on page four, was constructed as a facility for generating steam. Rail cars brought fuel to the plant via the railroad tracks leading into the factory, where furnaces would consume the fuel and generate steam. The large interior spaces within the building that formerly held the boilers and mechanisms for processing and generating steam preclude easy alteration for reuse. In effect, there are no floors inside the building – a design that is defective for current standards of reuse. The building is obsolete and abandoned.



The vacant Trigen Building at 411 N. 9<sup>th</sup> Street

4. Economically or socially undesirable land use

Evidence of this criterion is illustrated through the following:

- a) Vacancy and environmental contamination
- b) Tax delinquency

The former Trigen Plant at 411 N 9<sup>th</sup> Street is vacant and environmentally contaminated and is an undesirable presence in the area. It is having a downward effect on property values in the area. The property owes over twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000) in back taxes and requires substantial investment to return it to productive use. The current land use is undesirable both fiscally and environmentally.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The existing conditions in the area bounded by Callowhill, Percy and Noble Streets and the commuter tunnel right of way exhibit four of the criteria necessary to produce a finding of blight under the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law. Those criteria are:

- 1) Unsafe, Unsanitary, Inadequate or Overcrowded Conditions
- 2) Faulty street and lot layout
- 3) Defective design and arrangement of buildings
- 4) Economically or socially undesirable land use

The preceding analysis has demonstrated that these four criteria for establishing the presence of blight are present and the area is eligible for recertification as blighted.

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## 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 January 8, 1963, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission certified the area bounded by Spring Garden Street, the Pierhead Line of the Delaware River, South Street and the Schuylkill River as exhibiting characteristics of blight under terms of said Act, and

WHEREAS, after substantial review and study, the City Planning Commission staff has presented a report concluding that the area bounded by Callowhill, Percy, Noble Streets and the commuter tunnel right of way as exhibiting characteristics of blight under terms of said Act, and

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

NOW THEREFORE, on this 21st day of September 2004, the Philadelphia City Planning Commission hereby finds, based upon its staff report dated 21st day of September 2004 that the area bounded by Callowhill, Percy, Noble Streets and the commuter tunnel right of way exhibits the following characteristics of blight as established by Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law:

1. Economically or socially undesirable land use
2. Faulty street and lot layout
3. Defective design and arrangement of buildings
4. Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate or overcrowded conditions

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