

THE GERMANTOWN AVENUE URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

Chestnut Hill Development Review Application & Review Process

The information below is provided as a reference in planning and proposing work that will impact the Germantown Avenue Streetscape and includes:

- **Excerpts from The Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines related to Building Facades, Awnings, Signs and Illumination.**
- **Application for Streetscape Committee Review**
- **Application for Review by Development Review Committee**

It highlights The Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines, references The City of Philadelphia Zoning Code and outlines the Chestnut Hill Community Association (CHCA) application and review process.

The full version of The Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines are available at:
<https://chestnuthill.org/advocacy.php>

REVIEW PROCESS:

FOR PROJECTS NOT REQUIRING VARIANCE from Philadelphia's Zoning Board of Adjustment:

This includes all exterior projects limited to changes to an existing Building Façade, Awning, Signage, Illumination or Sidewalks.

Please submit an application for Streetscape Committee Review.

The project will be reviewed by the CHCA Streetscape Committee for compliance with The Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines and the City of Philadelphia Zoning & Building Codes.

Projects may also require a permit from the City of Philadelphia.

The **Streetscape Committee Review Application** can be obtained online at [STREETSCAPEAPP](#), and at the **Chestnut Hill Community Association Office Town Hall Building, 8434 Germantown Ave. Philadelphia**

Please contact CHCA Office at 215-248-8810 with any questions.

FOR PROJECT REQUIRING A VARIANCE from Philadelphia's Zoning Board of Adjustment:

Projects that receive a denial from the City and are seeking a zoning/use variance or a special exception from the City of Philadelphia must submit an Application for a review by the Development Review Committee.

The application can be obtained on line at:

[DRC Application](#)

The **Development Review Process** is initiated by submitting the Development Review Committee (DRC) Application to the CHCA.:

- Notification is posted by CHCA and a meeting is scheduling for review with the DRC.
- After this review it is normally referred to one or more of the committees in CHCA Physical Division for further review at a scheduled meeting including the Streetscape Committee, or to the Historic District Advisory Committee
- If all committees approve the request, the DRC will recommend the variance be approved by the CHCA Board.
- The CHCA Board will send the letter to the City of Philadelphia Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) who will make a final decision on request.

Any questions, please contact CHCA Office at 215-248-8810

The Chestnut Hill Business District has up-to-date information on grants and other related programs that may impact decisions you make regarding modifications to the exterior of properties.

Please contact them for details at 215-247-6696.



CHESTNUT HILL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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CODE REFERENCES:

All work must conform to the requirements of the *City of Philadelphia Zoning Code* and *The Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines*, whichever is more restrictive.

Reference to the Philadelphia Zoning Code include but are not limited to:

Title 11 Streets

- Section 11-505 Sidewalks Paving and other improvement by Owners
- Section 11-506 Alleys, Driveways and Retaining Walls
- Section 11-600 Construction, Encroachments and Projections over, on and under streets
- Section 11-603 Projections over streets
- Section 11-604 Encroachments upon and Obstructions over streets

Title 14 Zoning and Planning

- Section 14-100 General Provisions
- Section 14-200 Definitions
- Section 14-400 Base Zoning Districts
- Section 14-500 Overlay Zoning Districts
- Section 14-503 NCA Neighborhood Commercial Area Overlay
 - (3) Germantown Avenue
- Section 14-510 WWO (Wissahickon Watershed Overlay)
- Section 14-900 Signs
- Section 14-904 Accessory Sign Controls

The Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines

The Guidelines are organized and refer to specific requirements for different areas of Germantown Avenue described as:

- Southern - 7600-7900 Germantown Avenue
- Central - 7900-8200 Germantown Avenue
- Northern - 8223-8617 Germantown Avenue
- Top of the Hill - 8612-8708 Germantown Avenue

ADDITIONAL REFERENCE INFORMATION:

available at the CHCA Office in Town Hall Building, 8434 Germantown Avenue:

- Color Charts
- Awning Types: Examples of preferred styles and canvas material, color and patterns
- Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines, Full Version
- Streetscape Committee Review Application.
- Development Review Committee Application.

Please contact the CHCA office at 215-248-8810



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SIGNS

Your establishment's sign is vital to your business—and is an important component of the streetscape. A walk up and down Germantown Avenue reveals a variety of signage; each one creates a valuable "first impression" for the business within.

Chestnut Hill's signage guidelines are intended to be flexible, yet respectful of the Avenue's history and architecture. All elements of a sign are considered: the size of the sign in proportion to the building, relation to façade, lettering, colors, material, lighting and installation.

Note: Please refer to accompanying pages for the Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines excerpts related to changes in **Building Façade, Awnings, Illumination and Sidewalks.**

Excerpts from the Guidelines related to the **Signs** on Germantown Avenue

- **Content:** The content of a sign should be restricted to the name, function and logo of the business.
- **Color:** Sign color and design should be based on the architectural style of the building and incorporate colors from a historic color chart, available in the CHCA office; see note below.
- **Illumination:** All sources of the sign's lighting must be hidden from view. The lighting should be shielded so that no direct light shines onto sidewalks, streets or adjacent properties.
- **Number:** Up to three (3) signs per business are allowed with approval by the CHCA.

Wall Signs:

- Wall signs are parallel and attached to an exterior wall of a building. A wall sign can be no more than 15% of the wall (including window and door openings) to which it is attached and no more than 12 square feet in area/size.
- Wall signs cannot obscure significant architectural features of the building.

Projecting Signs:

- A projecting sign must be in compliance with the Philadelphia Zoning Code (see section 14-904)

Pylon (Freestanding) Signs:

- Pylon signs are permanently anchored in the ground. **Pylon Signs should only be considered when wall-mounted signs cannot be used.**
- Pylon signs are not allowed in certain zoning designations on Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike and if allowed should be behind the property line.
- The maximum size for the sign face (front area) is 12 square feet and the maximum height of the pylon sign is 6 feet.

Interior Window Signs:

- Interior window signs are defined as permanent, and painted or attached onto the inside surface of a building (or window) within the interior display area (that is visible to the street).
- Window signs cannot be more than 20% of the glass area of which they are a part. The area of window signs is included in the total calculation of allowable signage area.

(See other side for more information)



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SIGNS

Temporary Signs:

- Temporary signs cannot have more than one dimension over 4 feet, nor have an area that exceeds 50 square feet.
- A temporary sign cannot extend over or into any street, alley, sidewalk or other public thoroughfare, nor can it prevent free entry or exit from any door, window or fire escape.
- A temporary sign can be displayed for only 60 days. Exceptions must be approved by the CHCA.
- Exemptions to the above can be found under *2.3J Exempted Signs* on page 15 of the Germantown Avenue Urban Guidelines document.
- Portable and sandwich board signs must be approved by the CHCA Streetscape Committee.

Strictly Prohibited:

- Plastic, internally lit or flashing signs
- Spinners, flags, balloons or pennants used for advertising purposes (see also “Temporary Signs”)
- Billboards, Roof signs, and Off-premises and ‘Accessory’ signs on private property.

How we define ‘area’

A sign’s ‘area’ shall mean the space/square footage that includes the lettering, wording, logo and accompanying design on a background (open or closed), but excludes the framework and bracing. Where the sign consists of individual letters, designs, or symbols, painted onto or attached to a building, wall, awning or window the ‘area’ shall be the smallest rectangle that encompasses the letters, designs, or symbols.

REVIEW PROCESS:

Installation of new SIGNS, changes or continuance of existing SIGNS, must be reviewed by the CHCA Streetscape Committee for recommendations in complying with the Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines and City of Philadelphia Zoning Code.

In the case where changes require a variance before a permit is issued by the City of Philadelphia, submit a Development Review Committee Application to CHCA to initiate the Development Review Process necessary for appeal to The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). For an appointment, please call 215-248-8810.

Note: All work must conform to the requirements of the City of Philadelphia Zoning Code and Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines, whichever is more restrictive.

All signage projects require a permit from the City of Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia Zoning Code regulates Signs; number, size, type and illumination based on zoning designation of property, including but not limited to Sections 14-400, 14-900 and the extent signs can project into right-of-way per Sections 11-603.

The Chestnut Hill Business District has up-to-date information on grants and other related programs that may impact decisions you make regarding modifications to the exterior of properties.

Please contact them for details at 215-247-6696.



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AWNINGS

Awnings mark entries, cover and protect areas from sun, rain and snow, enhance the façades of buildings and provide color and variety in the streetscape. Together with Signage they create an important first impression of the business and have the most immediate impact on the appearance and appeal of the streetscape of this established, thriving and unique location in Philadelphia.

Each particular use of an awning, at a side entry or over a front window or entrance must be approved.

Note: Please refer to accompanying pages for excerpts from the Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines related to changes in **Building Façade, Sign, Illumination and Sidewalks**.

Excerpts from *Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines* related to **Awnings**:

- **Design:** Should complement the building's architecture and the adjacent street uses.
- **Colors:** Should be selected to enhance the architectural style, harmonize with the colors of adjacent buildings and be sensitive to the fact that Chestnut Hill is a National Historic District.
- **Material:** Cloth, canvas or similar material.
- **Position:** The bottom edge of the awning must be at least **8** feet above the ground.
- **Graphics:** An awning may have the name of the business on the valance. If the business name is used on the valance, it becomes part of the calculation of the total square footage of allowable signage (please refer to "Wall Signs").
- **Mounting:** Hardware and fasteners used to attach signs to building must be obscured from view and installed so that building façade is not damaged, weakened or otherwise disfigured.
- **Examples:** Color charts, canvas color/patterns and preferred Awning designs are available at the Town Hall Building; see address below.

REVIEW PROCESS:

Installation of or changes to an **AWNING** must be reviewed by the CHCA Streetscape Committee for recommendations in complying with the Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines and the City of Philadelphia Zoning Code. For an appointment, please call 215-248-8810.

In the case where changes require a variance before a permit is issued by the City of Philadelphia, submit a Development Review Committee Application to CHCA to initiate the Development Review Process necessary for appeal to The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

Note: All work must conform to the requirements of the *City of Philadelphia Zoning Code* and *Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines*, whichever is more restrictive.

The Philadelphia Zoning Code regulates any projection from building into a right-of-way - this includes Awnings, per Sections 11-603, 14-904.

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ILLUMINATION

Lighting installed on the exterior of the building façade, to provide illumination of signage, general accent lighting to enhance the appearance of the building or installed inside a store window or display area to showcase a retailer's wares is encouraged. It can make the individual building facades and retail shops more dramatic and memorable and contribute to the evening and night time ambiance of the streetscape, making it safer for pedestrians.

Note: Please refer to accompanying pages for the Guidelines excerpts related to changes in **Building Facades, Signage, Awnings and Sidewalks.**

Excerpts from the Guidelines related to the **Illumination** on Germantown Avenue:

- **Sign Illumination:** See Excerpts for 'Signs', for code requirements and restrictions of signage illumination.
- **Light Levels:** During evening and night, lighting levels within stores should be lower than light levels on the street. Harsh overhead lighting such as provided by many fluorescent fixtures are discouraged, on any level inside buildings where they are visible from the street, especially those which remain on in evening hours of operation when sunset is before end of business hours.
- **Window Displays:** displays should be illuminated, especially those in windows so they are easily visible from the street. This illumination should not be directed at the street or inside shop in a manner that draws attention to the dark interior and should be of an intensity and temperature that brings items in the window in focus.
- **Light Spill:** Ground, Pole and building mounted lighting should be shielded from view except for low voltage sources of 15 watts or less and not spill on to adjacent properties or cast shadows on sidewalks or open areas.
- **Low profile and low-height lighting** of planting and paved areas is recommended, particularly where it will improve pedestrian safety.

REVIEW PROCESS:

Addition of or changes to Illumination and Illumination of Signage must be reviewed by the CHCA Streetscape Committee for recommendations in complying with the Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines and the City of Philadelphia Zoning Code. For an appointment, please call 215-248-8810.

In the case where changes require a variance before a permit is issued by the City of Philadelphia, submit a Development Review Committee Application to CHCA to initiate the Development Review Process necessary for appeal to The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

Note: *All work must conform to the requirements of the City of Philadelphia Zoning Code and Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines, whichever is more restrictive.*

The Philadelphia Zoning Code regulates illumination of signs, per Section 14-904.

The Chestnut Hill Business District has up-to-date information on grants and other related programs that may impact decisions you make regarding modifications to the exterior of properties.

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BUILDING FACADES

The principal front of the building facing Germantown Avenue is an integral part of your establishment and of the street that supports your business.

Note: Please refer to accompanying pages for the Guidelines on **Signage, Awnings, Illumination, and Sidewalks.**

Excerpts from the Guidelines related to the **Building Facades** on Germantown Avenue:

- **Colors** should be selected to enhance the architectural style, harmonize with the colors of adjacent buildings and be sensitive to the fact that Chestnut Hill is a National Historic District. Color charts are available at the Town Hall Building, See note below.
- **Blank Facades;** buildings should have no blank façade on any floor facing Germantown Avenue or those portions of Bethlehem Pike in the Historic and Business Improvement District.
- **Proportions of Openings:** The width and height of doors, windows and entrances shall be visually compatible with adjacent conforming properties and open space. Large expanses of glass should be subdivided to achieve a scale and modulation compatible with the essential historic scale of the street and enhance the pedestrian experience of the street.
- **Materials** used for repair or renovation of Facades should be natural materials including but not limited to stone, brick, stucco and wood. The choice of all building material should be compatible with surrounding buildings and 'appropriate' according to the Department of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.
- **Façade Width:** Please refer to the complete Germantown Avenue Guidelines if constructing or subdividing a building.
- **Building Entrances** should be at grade. Please refer to the complete Germantown Avenue Guidelines if constructing or subdividing a building.

REVIEW PROCESS:

Changes to a BUILDING FACADE must be reviewed by the CHCA Streetscape Committee for recommendations in complying with Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines and the City of Philadelphia Zoning Code. For an appointment, please call 215-248-8810.

In the case where changes require a variance before a permit is issued by the City of Philadelphia, submit a Development Review Committee Application to CHCA to initiate the Development Review Process necessary for appeal to The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA).

Note: All work must conform to the requirements of The City of Philadelphia Zoning Code and Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines.

The Philadelphia Zoning Code regulates any projection from a building into a right-of-way, this includes but not limited to signs, awnings, canopies, marquees, bulk windows, cellar access doors and steps, wheelchair elevators, porches, architectural embellishments such as columns, pilasters per Title 11, Chapter 600.

The Chestnut Hill Business District has up-to-date information on grants and other related programs that may impact decisions you make regarding modifications to the exterior of properties.

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SIDEWALKS

Chestnut Hill sidewalks display a variety of styles, materials, and conditions. They are an important component of the streetscape, and merit appropriate choices when repairing or replacing.

Note: Please refer to accompanying pages for Guidelines excerpts on **Awnings, Signage, Building Facades, and Illumination.**

Excerpts from the Guidelines related to the **Public Sidewalks and Pedestrian Throughways:**

- **Public sidewalks and pedestrian throughways** should provide a unity of design and appearance in harmony with surrounding walkway surfaces while ensuring pedestrian safety. The diversity of paving materials (brick, flagstone, Belgian block pavers, etc.) is encouraged along sidewalks, private alleyways, pathways, courtyards, and entrances to parking lots and stores. Wherever possible, plantings along pedestrian throughways should be preserved and enhanced. Macadam is not to be used under any circumstances.
- **Repairing and replacing:** Sidewalks are the responsibility of the property owner to maintain. We recommend proactively repairing and replacing as is possible, based upon a plan that is consistent with the Guidelines, and respectful of existing surrounding sidewalk styles and materials. The existing variety of brick, flagstone, and [appropriate] concrete are all encouraged. The Streetscape Committee can provide guidance for materials selection, colors, and resources. Please contact us before contracting for sidewalk repair or replacement.

REVIEW PROCESS:

Changes to SIDEWALKS must be reviewed by the CHCA Streetscape Committee for recommendations in complying with Germantown Avenue Urban Design Guidelines and the City of Philadelphia Zoning Code.

In the case where changes require a variance before a permit is issued by the City of Philadelphia, submit a Development Review Committee Application to CHCA to initiate the Development Review Process necessary for appeal to The Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA). For an appointment, please call 215-248-8810.

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RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES

The recommended guidelines cover development and renovation in the Germantown Avenue Commercial Area. These guidelines are intended for use by developers and review committees, as well as the community as a whole.

1.0 THE GERMANTOWN AVENUE COMMERCIAL AREA

1.1 Description

The Germantown Avenue Commercial Area (GACA) consists of the commercially and residentially zoned sites along Germantown Avenue from Chestnut Hill Avenue to the abandoned Pennsylvania Railroad viaduct south of Cresheim Valley Road, Bethlehem Pike from Newton Street to its intersection with Germantown Avenue, and the commercial sites one block on either side of Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike. The block of Winston Road Between Mermaid Lane and Moreland Avenue is to be considered part of the Germantown Avenue Commercial Area as well.

1.2 Purpose of the Guidelines

The purpose of the design guidelines is to ensure that changes in the nature of the roadway and sidewalks, construction of new buildings, renovation of existing buildings, and landscaping (both existing and new) contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of the historic character of the Germantown Avenue Commercial Areas and of the residential properties adjoining it. These guidelines are designed to create visual harmony with the village character and ambiance of Germantown Avenue. At the same time, they allow property owners, developers and architects freedom to express their own design values and creativity.

The village character of Chestnut Hill is expressed within the commercial area by the following diverse elements:

- a) open spaces -- greens, parks, squares

1.4 Parking

The purpose of this section is to provide guidelines for the inclusion of parking areas within the GACA. The guidelines attempt to reconcile the often conflicting requirements of automobile and pedestrian. The underlying assumption of this section is that pedestrian needs are primary and vehicle requirements secondary. To integrate parking successfully within the GACA, design must recognize and address sensitively the pedestrian scale evident throughout these guidelines.

Parking demand is a direct function of business type: Careful consideration should be given to anticipated uses of sites under discussion. Uses generating heavy parking demand are prohibited unless they are able to supply adequate parking. In general, high turnover, low average ticket businesses generate the greatest parking requirements while low turnover, high average ticket enterprises generate somewhat less parking demand.

- a) Parking areas within setbacks at the front of buildings are prohibited.

- b) New curb cuts on Germantown Avenue are not to be allowed without a professional traffic study of the square block in which the site under discussion is located, and of adjacent blocks
- c) Parking must be at the rear or side of buildings with minimal visibility of cars from sidewalks. Either planted materials and / or walls and fences should be used to screen cars from view. Every effort must be made to minimize the intrusion of light into surrounding properties. Lighting standards with ornamental detail sensitive to surrounding architecture are strongly encouraged. Wherever possible, shields to direct light flow should be used.
- d) Signs that indicate the location of parking lots must be clearly marked in order to ensure safe passage for both pedestrians and motorists. Pedestrian crosswalks of a material contrasting to lot paving are encouraged.
- e) The village character of Chestnut is enhanced by the existence of small dispersed parking lots. Within these lots, top priority should be given to the preservation of existing vegetation, especially large trees, regardless of species. Generous landscaping within the interior of any parking lot is encouraged in order to minimize open expanses of barren asphalt paving. The use of overarching canopy trees to provide a sense of enclosure and the use of under planting with smaller trees, shrubs and ground cover to provide pedestrian interest is also encouraged. Careful consideration should be given to the transition between parking lot and sidewalk.

Buffers appropriate to the site and scale of adjoining residential property are needed to soften the visual impact of the parking lot on residential neighbors. Planters and barrels along sidewalks and window boxes on attendant structures will soften harsh lines within the site.

- f) It is important that every effort be made to ensure pedestrian and vehicular safety at points of access to all parking lots.
- g) Wherever feasible, The Chestnut Hill Parking Foundation should be retained as parking lot management agent. The community-run parking system will provide accountability for property owners as well as ease of use and access for customers.
- h) Metered parking should continue in those areas of the GACA in which it is now provided. The two-hour parking restriction should be enforced to encourage shopper parking and discourage all-day parkers on the meters. In areas not currently served by parking meters, installation of them will be necessary as parking demand builds in response to increased development. Side streets should be metered only within the bounds of the GACA. Removal of parking meters to encourage improved traffic flow should be carefully evaluated to prevent reduction of available parking within the GACA.

1.5 Trolley Service

The community should strive to keep trolley service on Germantown Avenue for the following diverse reasons:

- a) Trolleys are less polluting than diesel buses and private automobiles.
- b) Trolleys tend to restrict the flow of high speed traffic on the Avenue slightly more than buses and thus keep it safer and more congenial as a shopping street.

- c) Buses can pass and be passed on the left. This would be a hazard on Germantown Avenue.
- d) Trolleys help maintain the character of the Avenue.
- e) Trolleys also provide public transportation and access to the Avenue.

1.6 **Historic Structures**

Exterior alterations of those buildings along Germantown Avenue open to public view that have been identified as "significant" or "contributing" are required to follow the guidelines developed by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (revised 1983). In addition, the review process for Historic Structures should include critique and comment by the Chestnut Hill Conservancy's Historic District Advisory Council.

1.7 The following additional standards shall apply to evaluation of the appropriateness of a proposed alteration to an historic structure:

- a) Every reasonable effort shall be made to use the property for its originally intended purpose or to provide a compatible use requiring minimal alteration.
- b) The distinguishing characteristics of the property shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural feature shall be avoided whenever possible.
- c) Each property shall be recognized as a product of its own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and that seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
- d) Changes that have taken place over the course of time are evidence of the property's history and environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right and, if so, this significance shall be respected.
- e) Distinctive stylistic features and examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be treated with sensitivity.
- f) Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material shall match the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture and other visual qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features shall be based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historic, physical, or architectural elements from other structures.
- g) The gentlest means possible shall be used to clean the property's surface if necessary. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building material are prohibited.
- h) Contemporary design for alteration to a property shall not be discouraged when such alteration does not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material and if the design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character of the property, its environment, and surrounding contributing properties.
- i) Wherever possible, a new addition or alteration shall be accomplished so that its future removal will not impair the essential form and integrity of the structure.

1.7 Wissahickon Watershed Development Ordinance

All future development should comply with the Wissahickon Watershed Development Ordinance.

1.8 Organization of the Guidelines

The guidelines are divided into five major parts. The first part deals with Germantown Avenue / Bethlehem Pike within the study area as a whole; the rest deals with the sub areas of Germantown Avenue Commercial Area.

The structure is as follows:

2.0 Germantown Avenue / Bethlehem Pike as a Whole

3.0 Top of the Hill

4.0 Northern Germantown Avenue

5.0 Central Germantown Avenue

6.0 Southern Germantown Avenue

2.0 GERMANTOWN AVENUE / BETHLEHEM PIKE AS A WHOLE

2.1 Description

The area consisting of the 7600 to 8600 blocks of Germantown Avenue, that portion of the 8700 block south of the Free Library and the Historical Society building, and that portion of Bethlehem Pike between its intersection with Germantown Avenue and Newton Street. Winston Road between Mermaid Lane and Moreland Avenue forms part of this area.

2.2 Purpose

The purposes of the guidelines pertaining to this area are:

- a) to achieve a sense of unity for the GACA, while allowing each part of the Avenue to have its own character and to allow diversity in building design.
- b) to improve the present environmental quality of the streets and sidewalks of the GACA without imposing a shopping-mall-like appearance on the street.

2.3 Design Elements

2.3A Cartway

The Belgian blocks give the road much of its visual character, while the concrete mid-section makes driving more pleasant. Thus the paving materials should remain. It is important to maintain the current trolley tracks for the energy saving benefits of mass transportation. The cartway of Germantown Avenue should retain its present surface materials. Wherever removed, Belgian block should be replaced within 30 days.

b) The surface material at pedestrian crossings should be poured-in-place concrete with a non-skid textured surface. Crosswalk striping should be well-maintained for pedestrian safety.

c) It is necessary to preserve, wherever possible, the bluestone curbs on Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike.

2.3B Parking and Curb Cuts

Any new curb cuts and driveways in the GACA are not to be approved unless they are part of an approved, comprehensive, professionally-conducted traffic and parking study accompanied by a site plan of the entire square block under review.

2.3C Street Lights

Street lights act as an important unifying element of the Avenue. The similarity of fixtures and their placement at regular intervals gives the visual continuity to the street.

- a) Any replacement or addition of individual street lights on Germantown Avenue should be by the same model as the existing ones.
- b) If major replacement of light standards occurs, a style compatible with the historic character of the community should be selected for installation.
- c) If new light standards are installed along Bethlehem Pike, they should be similar in design to those on Germantown Avenue.

2.3D Trolley Wire Support Poles

The metal trolley wire support poles should be replaced when required with the type of concrete pole that now exists.

2.3E Landscaping

Appropriate plantings along streets and sidewalks should be encouraged. Street trees are mandatory adjacent to the cartway. Such trees provide natural air-conditioning, assist in setting a pedestrian scale, and create a comfortable sense of place.

a) Planting Strips

Trees should be planted on 15-25' centers, depending on tree size, within a continuous planting strip parallel to the cartway. The strip, which will permit adequate moisture to roots, should be made of cobbles, slates, bricks, precast concrete pavers, or grass. Paver colors should complement adjoining buildings, and gray or muted brown tones are recommended. The materials used within the strip should be sympathetic to pedestrian flow and safety concerns. It is recommended that all planting strips be curbed with appropriate historic materials. Proper installation of the planting strip is required in order that the materials do not shift, break or dislodge themselves. To permit adequate drainage and sufficient oxygen to tree roots, the planting strip should rest upon a bed of fine sand. The use of poured concrete or other non-pervious materials is prohibited.

b) Tree Pits

If a planting strip as described above is not feasible for safety and pedestrian flow considerations, tree pits are remitted. The pits should be a minimum of 16 square feet, preferably a 4 by 4 foot square. If that is not possible, then a long narrow strip, e.g. 2 feet by 8 feet, will be permitted. Border materials for the pit should be cobbles, slates or Wissahickon schist. Openings in the sidewalk for the tree pits should be smooth, saw-cut, and bear a logical relationship to the scoring pattern of the concrete.

c) Types of Trees

Diversity is encouraged in the selection of street trees. Recommended types include beeches, oaks, red and sugar maples, and American chestnuts. The creation of large, well-adapted trees with overarching canopies is encouraged where possible. Consideration

should be given to texture, seasonal color and form in selection of specific tree types. The CHCA Street Tree Inventory should be consulted for location-specific recommendations. Callery pear plantings should be restricted to Germantown Avenue only; They may be used there because of the necessity of not interfering with the trolley wires.

d) Additional Landscaping

Wherever possible, specimen plantings should be avoided. Recommended are loose groupings of canopy trees, understory trees and shrubs, both deciduous and evergreen, and an evergreen ground cover. Tree planting is strongly encouraged in all available open areas --behind property lines, in parking lots, and in alleyways. Window planters and planting barrels of natural materials are strongly encouraged at appropriate spots. Blank walls should be interrupted with plant materials. Planting beds should be placed logical relationship to supporting architecture. If planting strips are insufficient to support street tree growth, perennials and appropriate shrubs should be planted.

e) Sensitivity to existing landscaping structures, such as walls, trellises, or stone or slate steps is strongly encouraged.

2.3F Public Sidewalks and Pedestrian Throughways

The public sidewalks and pedestrian throughways that service the GACA should provide a unity of design and appearance in harmony with surrounding walkway surfaces while ensuring pedestrian safety. The diversity of paving materials (brick, flagstone, Belgian block pavers, etc.) is encouraged along sidewalks, private alleyways, pathways, courtyards, and entrances to parking lots and stores. Wherever possible, plantings along pedestrian throughways should be preserved and enhanced. Macadam is not to be used under any circumstances.

2.3G Exterior, Retail and Commercial Signage

Retail and commercial signs are important components of the streetscape. Signs do more than communicate information. By the quality of their design, they can either contribute to, or diminish the integrity of the Historic District. They can serve as attractive accents, or they can clutter the streets.

The purpose of the sign guidelines is to promote the visual cohesiveness of the Historic District by encouraging signs to be harmonious with the character of each building. To avoid monotony, individual proprietors are urged to design their own signs within these specified perimeters. Imaginative designs become artistic expressions. New or modified signs should reflect, in a creative way, the historic village atmosphere of Chestnut Hill. When creating or altering a sign, attention should be directed to all aspects of its design: its message, size, shape, colors, lettering materials, lighting, location, relationship to the architectural style of the building, and connection to adjacent structures. Signs should also be compatible with the pedestrian scale of the community and, by their careful conception, enhance the overall experience of Chestnut Hill. Changes to existing signs of new sign construction must be reviewed and must comply with the following guidelines:

- a) All signs must comply with the existing Philadelphia zoning ordinances.
- b) Plastic, internally lit, or flashing signs are not allowed. Internal, but not external, neon signs may be permitted with approval. Neon should not contain specific product or business names but rather depict a symbolic or decorative characterization of goods / services offered. (For example, a restaurant would illustrate eating utensils.)

- c) Spinners, flags, balloons or pennants that are used for advertising purposes are not allowed, but temporary use is addressed in Section 2.31.
- d) The content of a sign should be restricted to the name, function, and logo of the business.
- e) Sign color and design shall be moderate, attractive, and in keeping with the architectural style of the building and, secondarily, with adjacent structures.
- f) All sources of sign lighting should be hidden from view. The lighting should be shielded so that no direct light shines onto sidewalks, streets, or adjacent properties.
- g) Up to three signs per business are allowed, if approved.
- h) All signs must be in proportion to the building as defined below:
 - i) Sign area:
 - a. The area shall mean all the area of lettering, wording, and accompanying designs and symbols, together with their background (whether open or enclosed) but excluding framework and bracing.
 - b. Where the sign consists of individual letters, designs, or symbols, painted on or attached to a building, wall, awning, or window, the area shall be the smallest rectangle which encompasses the letters, designs or symbols.
 - 2) Wall signs:
 - a. Wall signs are parallel and attached to an exterior wall of a building. A wall sign must be no more than 15% of the wall (including window and door openings) to which it is attached and no more than twelve square feet in size.
 - b. The sign must not be placed so that it obscures significant architectural features of the building.
 - 3) Projecting signs:
 - A projecting sign shall be in compliance with the Philadelphia Code.
 - 4) Roof signs are prohibited.
 - 5) Pylon signs:
 - a. Pylon signs are permanently anchored in the ground, and should only be considered when wall mounted signs cannot be used.
 - b. No pylon signs should be allowed on Germantown Avenue or Bethlehem Pike unless they are behind the property line.
 - c. The maximum size for the sign face is 12 square feet and the maximum height of the pylon sign is 6 feet.
 - 6) Portable signs are prohibited.
 - 7) Billboards are prohibited.
 - 8) Interior window signs:
 - a. Interior window signs are permanent and painted on or attached to the inside surface of a building or within the interior display area.
 - b. Window signs should not be more than 30% of the glass area of which they are a part. The area of window signs is included in the total calculation of allowable signage area.
 - c. Lighting should be interior back-lighting only.

2.3H Off-premises signs are prohibited

2.3I Temporary Signs

- a) Temporary signs shall not have more than one dimension exceeding four feet nor have

an area exceeding 50 square feet.

b) No temporary sign shall extend over or into any street, alley, sidewalk or other public thoroughfare nor shall it be erected so as to prevent free ingress to or egress from any door, window or fire escape.

c) Temporary signs may be displayed for no more than 30 days. Exceptions must be approved.

2.3J Exempted Signs

The provisions of these guidelines do not apply to the following signs:

a) Real estate signs which advertise the sale, rental or lease of the premises on which such signs are located.

b) One professional nameplate not exceeding 24 square inches in area per name.

c) One bulletin board not over eight square feet for public, charitable or religious institutions when it is located on the premises of such institution.

d) Signs denoting the architect engineer or contractor when placed on a work project. Such signs should not exceed 16 square feet in area.

e) An occupational sign denoting only the name and profession of an occupant in commercial building, public institution building or dwelling house and not exceeding two square feet in area.

f) Memorial signs or tablets and names of buildings or date of erection when cut into any masonry surface or when constructed of bronze or other incombustible material.

g) Traffic or other municipal signs, legal notices, railroad crossing signs, danger signs and temporary emergency or non-advertising signs as may be approved.

h) signs denoting whether a business is open or closed and traffic signs for private businesses, none of which shall exceed two square feet in area.

2.3K Building Design

Specific guidelines for the design of structures are provided for each sub-area. The following guidelines apply to the GACA as a whole:

a) Buildings should have no blank facades on any floor facing Germantown Avenue or Bethlehem Pike or the Side streets. The ratio of glass area to wall area should be compatible with neighboring buildings. Large expanses of window glass should be subdivided in order that the pedestrian scale of the buildings on Germantown Avenue be maintained and, wherever possible, enhanced.

b) New construction, renovation, and expansion should be of natural materials including stone, stucco, wood and unpainted brick. The choice of any building material should be compatible with surrounding buildings and appropriate according to the Department of the Interior Standards. Simplicity is preferable. The painting of previously unpainted brick is to be discouraged.

c) The colors of Chestnut Hill should reflect sensitivity to the fact that Chestnut Hill is a National Historic District. Colors should be selected to enhance the architectural style of the building and to harmonize with the colors of the adjacent buildings.

d) Any security grates in shop windows and doors should allow unobstructed view into the window displays when closed. Interior grates are always preferred. The bulk of the overhead storage area should be screened from view.

e) All new structures should be designed to respect neighboring structures in terms of

proportion, scale, and floor and roof lines. All new construction shall be in harmony with the form, orientation, and configuration of the existing buildings along the street. The building mass of new construction should not overwhelm its neighbors. Height as viewed from the street shall be compatible with adjacent contributing properties. The scale of spaces between buildings should be carefully considered.

f) All finished materials should be in harmony with the style of the surrounding structures and street. All metal sash members should be painted or have opaque coatings.

g) The proportion of openings, width and height of windows, doors and entries, shall be visually compatible with adjacent contributing properties and open space. A long, unbroken facade in a setting of existing narrow structures shall be divided by openings, set-offs, and decorative details into smaller bays thereby complementing the street-scape.

h) The fenestration of new construction or renovated buildings should harmonize with the scale, proportion and rhythm of neighboring buildings, while satisfying the functional requirements of the structure.

i) The structure's roof shape is a major distinguishing visual element. Generally, a simple roof shape similar in form and type to adjacent and visually-related roofs is appropriate.

j) A structure which has frontage on more than one street or alley resulting in multiple facades shall require application of compatibility standards to each facade.

2.3L Awnings

Awnings mark entries, provide covered areas protected from the sun, rain, snow, create variety and soften the hard facades of the buildings. Each particular use of an awning needs to be approved.

a) Awning colors, materials and design should blend well with the architecture and the adjacent street uses. Awnings should be made of cloth or a similar material.

b) Bottom edge of awning should be not less than 7 feet above ground.

c) An awning may have the name of a business on its lower edge. The use of the business name in this way becomes part of the calculation of the total square footage of allowable signage.

2.3M Illumination

a) During the evening and night, lighting levels within stores should be less than the light levels on the street.

b) Window displays should be illuminated with back lighting. Window illumination should not be directed into the street.

c) Ground and pole-mounted artificial lighting sources should be shielded from public view except for low density decorative lighting sources of fifteen watts or less. Light from ground and pole-mounted artificial lighting sources should not spill out onto adjacent public and private properties.

Inconspicuous low-height lighting of planting and paved areas is recommended, particularly where it will contribute to pedestrian safety. General flood lighting of a small-scale building is encouraged.

2.3N Fences and Walls

Fences of wrought-iron, stone or wood are encouraged. Chain link fence, although not encouraged, may be used in the rear of a property if not facing on another street. Chain link

fence shall not be erected in a location that is visible from the street or is in front of the setback line. Chain link or privacy fence shall not exceed six feet in height and shall generally be restricted to side and rear yards. Front yard fence shall be permitted only where allowed by guidelines. Box wire, chicken wire and wire fences in general shall be discouraged.

3.0 TOP OF THE HILL

3.1 Description

The Top of the Hill comprises the following properties: on the west side of Germantown Avenue: 8612 to 8708 Germantown Avenue (inclusive) -- from the SEPTA tracks to the Seventh Day Adventist Church; on the east side of Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike: 8623 Germantown Avenue to 3 Summit Street; and on Bethlehem Pike: from the intersection of Germantown Avenue to 57 Bethlehem Pike.

3.2 Purpose

The purposes of the guidelines for this area are as follows:

- a) to provide a visually strong gateway to the Germantown Avenue Commercial District,
- b) to provide a continuity in the character of the northern end of Germantown Avenue and
- c) to provide a buffer between residential and commercial areas of Chestnut Hill.

3.3 Land Uses

The present land uses should continue. The filling stations should continue as at present or become retail, commercial, institutional or residential in the future all other uses should remain the same.

All present public parking lots should be retained. Conversion of parking lots to building use should be strongly discouraged.

3.4 Design Elements

The guidelines that apply to Germantown Avenue as a whole apply to this area. These guidelines can be described by considering them element by element.

3.4A Site Layout

The set back of existing buildings (i.e., space between the building and street) should be maintained. New development should be designed to include pedestrian plazas and throughways. Given the transitional nature of this area, any new construction should use existing set-backs as the precedent to be maintained. Particularly careful review is required in order that extra sensitivity to the churches and residential buildings by shown in any zoning changes and in building design.

3.4B Building Massing

All building facades on Germantown Avenue and Bethlehem Pike should be at least two stories but not more than three stories tall.

3.4C Building Facades

- a) Building fronts should be "subdivided" into not greater than 20-foot units.

b) The ground floor of all non-institutional buildings should have entrances at no more than 20-foot center to center.

The land uses in the area should remain as they are. Any two-or-more-story buildings should provide residential or office uses on the upper floors. The uses permitted under C-1 and C-2 zoning should be enforced. The goal is to have people present in the buildings on the Avenue at all times. Germantown Avenue is busiest from mid-morning on into the evening. On the west side of the Avenue, the buildings tend to be two stories high, thereby allowing a residential presence while not blocking out sunlight. The three-story buildings on the east side do block some morning sun, but fewer people are on the Avenue at that time of day. The additional floors provide desirable residential uses. Structures of greater than three stories would significantly change the character of Germantown Avenue in this area and reduce the amount of sunlight during the critical part of the day.

4.4 Design Elements

The guidelines which apply to Germantown Avenue as a whole apply to the Northern Germantown Avenue segment of the GACA. These guidelines can be best described in considering them element by element.

4.4A Site Layout

a) New curb cuts and driveways are not permitted on Germantown Avenue unless a comprehensive parking and traffic study is presented and approved. All parking for new developments must be accessed from side streets or existing alleyways.

b) Setbacks for any new construction taking place with the Northern Germantown Avenue Area should be based upon existing setbacks with no more than 75% of the site being covered by buildings with the remainder of the site to be allocated for public parking or open space. Efforts should be made to encourage a building density of less than 75%. Parking should be located behind the land uses in the area should remain as they are. Any two-or-more-story buildings should provide residential or office uses on the upper floors. The uses permitted under C-1 and C-2 zoning should be enforced. The goal is to have people present in the buildings on the Avenue at all times. Germantown Avenue is busiest from mid-morning on into the evening. On the west side of the Avenue, the buildings tend to be two stories high, thereby allowing a residential presence while not blocking out sunlight. The three-story buildings on the east side do block some morning sun, but fewer people are on the Avenue at that time of day. The additional floors provide desirable residential uses. Structures of greater than three stories would significantly change the character of Germantown Avenue in this area and reduce the amount of sunlight during the critical part of the day.

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The guidelines which apply to Germantown Avenue as a whole apply to the Northern Germantown Avenue segment of the GACA. These guidelines can be best described in considering them element by element.

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a) New curb cuts and driveways are not permitted on Germantown Avenue unless a comprehensive parking and traffic study is presented and approved.

All parking for new developments must be accessed from side streets or existing alleyways.

b) Setbacks for any new construction taking place with the Northern Germantown Avenue Area should be based upon existing setbacks with no more than 75% of the site being covered by buildings with the remainder of the site to be allocated for public parking or open space. Efforts should be made to encourage a building density of less than 75%. Parking should be located behind the building.

Parking should be located behind the building.

c) Expansion of existing buildings is discouraged, but may be permitted either to the rear or to the side of the property but not to the front of the buildings.

d) New development should be designed to include appropriately scaled pedestrian plazas and throughways.

4.4B Building Massing

a) All new construction on the west side of Germantown Avenue should be no more than two stories in height. Those on the east side should be compatible with adjoining structures and be no more than three stories high.

b) The present distribution of alleys linking Germantown Avenue to the parking and other uses behind the row of buildings on the Avenue should be retained. This breaks up the row of facades into smaller units.

4.4C Building Facades

a) The buildings housing first floor retail shops should be divided into units of no more than 20-foot facades.

b) The first floor of all non-institutional buildings should have entrances at no more than 20-foot intervals, center to center.

c) New buildings should use materials and color to harmonize with existing commercial structures.

5.0 CENTRAL GERMANTOWN AVENUE

5.1 Description

Central Germantown Avenue consists of the 7900 to 8200 blocks, inclusive. These are blocks between Springfield and Southampton Avenues. The unique character of this part of Germantown Avenue is derived from the building-to-street relationship and the relationships between the buildings. Deep setbacks, wide side yards, and porches contribute to the residential ambiance which is significant in this sub-area.

5.2 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to maintain the diverse mix of land uses in this part of the Avenue as well as its more open character in comparison to the northern part.

5.3 Land Uses

a) The present land uses should be maintained. In particular, residential uses should not be converted to commercial or retail uses. Current zoning should be maintained.

b) There should be no parking lots facing Germantown Avenue. Parking should be at the rear of the buildings.

5.4 Design Elements

The guidelines which apply to Germantown Avenue as a whole apply to this area. These guidelines can be described best by considering them element by element.

5.4A Site Layout

- a) The present building-to-street relationship should be maintained. If a building is demolished, the new building should be built to the same line as the one it replaces. If the lot is greater than 5000 square feet, the structure should be built to the property line on Germantown Avenue and any side streets, covering no more than 75% of the total area. The rear of the site should be used for parking.
- b) There should be no parking lot driveways on this part of Germantown Avenue other than those already existing. All parking driveways for new developments should be located at the rear of buildings and off side streets or existing alleyways.
- c) The unique character of this area is derived from the deep setbacks and wide side yards which contribute to the residential ambience of this sub-area. This should be encouraged in any new development.

5.4B Building Massing

- a) All new buildings on Germantown Avenue should be no more than two stories high unless they are set back a least 15 feet from the property line. In this case, they may be three stories high.
- b) The present side yard spaces should be retained if new buildings are constructed.
- c) Roof slopes for new structures should reflect the varied architectural character of Chestnut Hill.

5.4C Building Facades

- a) The buildings housing first floor retail uses should be divided into units of no more than 20-foot street frontages.
- b) Buildings on Germantown Avenue should have entrances at no more than 20-foot intervals center to center facing the Avenue.

5.4D Sidewalks

The guidelines for the design of sidewalks are the same as for Germantown Avenue as a whole.

5.4E Landscaping

The general guidelines for landscaping found in Section 2 apply to this sub-area. Particular attention should be paid to these additional guidelines:

- a) For residential uses, setbacks from the lot lines should be heavily landscaped with a mixture of evergreens and deciduous vegetation as well as ground covers.
- b) Commercial uses should provide planting boxes and beds under windows and on available ground space.
- c) Every effort should be made to preserve existing stone retaining walls and their appropriate landscaping.

6.0 SOUTHERN GERMANTOWN AVENUE

6.1 Description

Southern Germantown Avenue consists of the 7600 to 7900 blocks of Germantown Avenue. These are the blocks from the viaduct of the abandoned railroad up the hill to Willow Grove Avenue. In addition, the block of Winston Road between Mermaid Lane and Moreland Avenue shall be considered as part of the Southern Germantown Avenue section of the GACA. The boundaries of this area are on the west side, southern Germantown Avenue which consists of conventional strip destination shops with parking and landscaping in the front and I or on the sides of existing buildings. Minimal screening of parking exists. The mass of the buildings on the west side is substantially greater than on the east side. The east side of Germantown Avenue consists of a mixture of residential, industrial and commercial uses. Buildings are of a more pedestrian scale and, with the exception of one apartment complex, do not have parking in front. Residential uses on the east side enjoy varying degrees of setback from property lines fronting on Germantown Avenue.

6.2 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to improve upon the present unique qualities of this sub-area while rectifying some of its problems. The greatest asset is the relative openness. The goal, therefore, is to enhance this openness while recognizing this sub-area's function as a gateway to the more densely developed northern sub-areas.

6.3 Land Uses

The land uses in this area should comply with the zoning code.

6.4 Design Elements

The design guidelines which apply to the GACA as a whole apply to southern Germantown Avenue. Design should reflect the area's function as a transition between the green, open space of Fairmount Park's Cresheim Valley and the more densely developed commercial zone north of Willow Grove Avenue. Design should develop a sense of increasing openness as one proceeds south on Germantown Avenue, and conversely, a sense of enclosure as one progresses north "up the Avenue" to denser development. Design should be sensitive to combining open space and generous landscaping to preserve existing expansive views. Because of the transitional function of this area, each block requires separate discussion.

1) Site Layout: East Side

a) 7600 Block

The Mermaid Inn and adjoining buildings should be preserved. The existing public transit building should be retained. Parking in this area should be in the rear of buildings and screened from adjacent properties. Public monuments, plantings, and parks should remain. All surrounding open space fronting on both Germantown Avenue and Winston Road should remain.

b) 7700 & 7800 Blocks

The present relationships of buildings to the street should be retained. With the exception of the existing apartment complex site, new buildings should be constructed on existing

building lines and in no case have parking in front. All new parking should be provided at the rear of the property. The setbacks of any new construction should be sensitive to adjoining properties.

c) 7900 Block

Present building-to-property lines must be maintained. Sensitivity to the historic character of this area is required. Existing open space should be preserved.

2) Site Layout: West Side

a) 7600 & 7700 Blocks

New construction should have all parking in the rear. Buildings should have a minimum 10 foot planting strip in the front and be generously landscaped. Mass of building should be sensitive to east side structures.

b) 7800 Block

New construction should be set back from front property lines by a minimum of 10 feet and be generously landscaped. Corner properties should have a minimum of 8 feet of planting strip along side street frontage. Parking should be well-screened and placed in the rear of all buildings. Spaces between buildings should provide pedestrian walkways to Germantown Avenue and not be used for parking lot entrances.

c) 7900 Block

New construction should be to existing building lines. Empty spaces between the buildings should be landscaped and well-maintained.

3) Site Lay-out: Winston Road between Mermaid and Moreland Avenues.

Guidelines to be written

6.4B Building Massing

No new buildings should be more than 100 feet in frontage on Germantown Avenue, nor more than three stories high.

6.4C Building Facades

a) The building facades facing Germantown Avenue should be divided into no more than 30 foot units with entrances nor more than 30 feet apart, center to center. b) The units should be created by breaks in the facade such as cornice line, color, facing material, visible column spacing and/or projecting vertical line of brickwork.

c) New structures or alterations should be of natural materials sensitive to surrounding structures.

6.4D Sidewalks

When any sidewalk is remade or a new one created, the guidelines in Section 2.3F pertain to this sub-area of the GACA. In addition, every effort is required to preserve the distinctive grassy areas surrounding the sidewalks of Southern Germantown Avenue.

6.4E Landscaping

The guidelines for landscaping for this sub-area are those for the GACA as a whole. To enhance the feeling of openness so desirable to this sub-area, it is extremely important that set-backs, empty spaces between buildings, and side yards should be landscaped with a mix

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of evergreen and deciduous vegetation as well as ground covers. Landscaping in this sub-area should model itself on the natural character of the Wissahickon Woods.