

PKNA POSITION ON DEVELOPMENT

Approved by Community Vote
at the
03-03-2020 Regular Monthly Meeting

Summary Statement

The Penn-Knox section of Germantown in Northwest Philadelphia contains many historic and architecturally significant buildings and institutions. The Penn Knox Neighborhood Association (PKNA) is committed to preserving the historic and architectural integrity of the neighborhood, while encouraging development that meets community goals and fulfills the recommendations of the [2035 Plan for Development in Northwest Philadelphia](#). The PKNA has been an active voice in Penn-Knox and the broader Germantown community since 1959. The PKNA proactively obtains input from its community members on zoning issues, as well as their vision for the future of the Penn-Knox neighborhood and Germantown community as a whole.

To guide debate and decisions concerning land use, parking, signage, and population density, especially with respect to the character and caliber of new development, whether new construction or alteration of existing structures, PKNA has developed an organizational position on development. The following list of values and priorities will guide the PKNA's recommendations on specific zoning variances:

- Single Family Dwellings and Multi-Family Properties Owner-Occupied or Owned/Managed by a Neighborhood Resident are encouraged
- Low Population Density
- Limited Curb Cuts
- Sensible On- and Off- Street Parking
- Preservation of Green Space and Mature Trees
- Enforcing L & I Regulations and Philadelphia City Codes: [Click HERE for Philadelphia City Code \(§14-303, Subsections \(11A\) and \(12\)\)](#)
- Respect for Historic and Aesthetic Integrity of Property
- Prevention of "Demolition by Neglect"
- Restricting Commerce to Sites Already Zoned for Commercial Use
- Development that Balances the Viability of the Commercial Corridors with Respect for the Neighborhood Residents
- "By Right" Usage Respectful of Surrounding Structures
- Balancing the Needs of Residents with those of Existing Institutions

In the majority of zoning cases, the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA), the City Planning Commission's neighborhood planner for Northwest Philadelphia, and our city councilmember have supported the Penn-Knox position.

An applicant may appeal the decision of the ZBA in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. In these circumstances, Penn-Knox has historically opted to retain professional consultants and legal counsel on behalf of the community. Penn-Knox will continue to defend the neighborhood's quality of life through all necessary appeals, as it has in the past. Examples include [Germantown Boys & Girls Club](#), and also the adjoining properties at 131, 143, & 151 W. Coulter St. now owned by the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf (131 & 143 W. Coulter) and a private homeowner.

PENN-KNOX shares its bounds with several other RCO's including Penn Area Neighbors Association, South Lower Germantown Civic Association, West Central Germantown Neighbors, West Cheltenham Neighbors Association, and Baynton Hill Neighbors. Since implementation of the RCO process in August 2012 and the growth of new zoning groups in Germantown, Penn-Knox has developed mutually supportive partnerships with neighboring RCOs. Adjacent and overlapping RCOs provide presence and support before the ZBA.