

Preserving Desirable Features of E Mt Airy's Character

Understanding Available Tools to Help

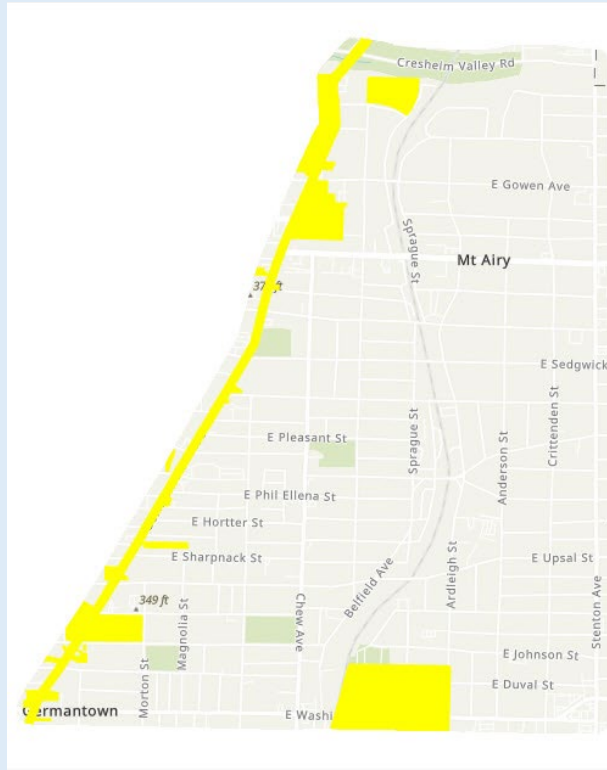
Historic Designation

Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NCO)

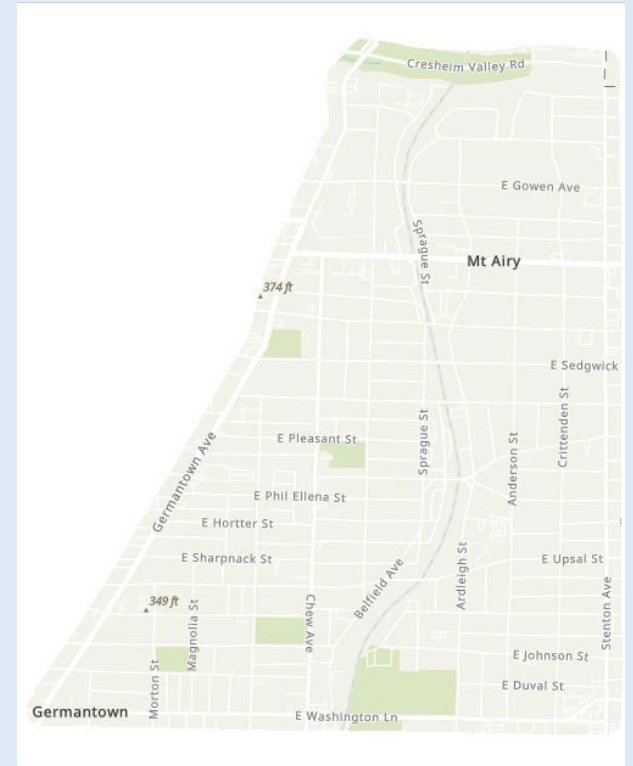


- Historic Site
- Historic District

Understanding



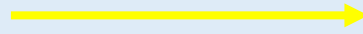
Understanding



E Mt Airy's Overlays

A zoning overlay district adds additional regulations over an existing zoning district

§ 14-530. /EDO, Eighth District Overlay District.

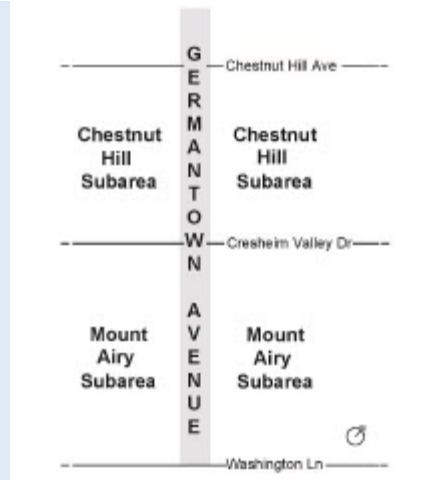


RSA5's Minimum Lot Area

- Prior to April 2021: 1,440 sf
- After April 28, 2021: 960 sf
- Districts 4,5,8,9 and part of NE Phila Still require 1,440 sf minim lot size

§ 14-503. /NCA, Neighborhood Commercial Area Overlay District.

(3) Germantown Avenue. 355



RSA5 Zoning Districts

- Residential Single Family (RSA)
- RSA5:
 - Frontage: 16-ft
 - Min Lot Area: 1,440 sf
 - Front Set Back: Depends on neighbors
 - Side Yard Setback: None
- Most common residential district in E Mt Airy

§ 14-510. /WWO, Wissahickon Watershed Overlay District.

Neighborhood Conservation Overlays *

- Recognizes that a particular neighborhood has integrity of form and streetscape that warrant conservation
- Regulates significant work to a building façade (that is visible from a public right-of-way), replacement of existing buildings, and construction of new structures
- Does not regulate interiors or use
- Does not stop demolitions
- Maintains the public streetscape and building form (i.e. setbacks, cornice lines, landscape features) and visual qualities/ characteristics of the district

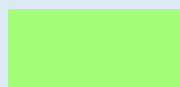


Can NCOs Help?

Fitting New Buildings into Older Neighborhoods - RSA5 Challenges in E Mt Airy

❑ Building boom in some parts of E Mt Airy

Relatively recent development projects

 Project

❑ New RSA5 Development Concerns

- New Buildings Height
- Little/No Front Setbacks for RSA5 Properties
- No Side Yard Setbacks for RSA5 Properties
- Front Porch Character
- Narrow Street Widths
- No – Few Street/ Yard Trees



Can NCOs Help?

Fitting New Buildings into Older Neighborhoods - Example RSA5 Challenges in E Mt Airy

When New Meets Old

200 Block E Slocum



Oct 17, 2023 ▾

265 E Slocum St

2686902.65, 273781.54, 341.82

Can NCOs Help?

When New Meets Old

200 Block E Slocum

Oct 17, 2023 ▾

265 E Slocum St



3 Different Front Setbacks – Same Block

Can NCOs Help?

When New Meets Old

200 Block Phil Ellena

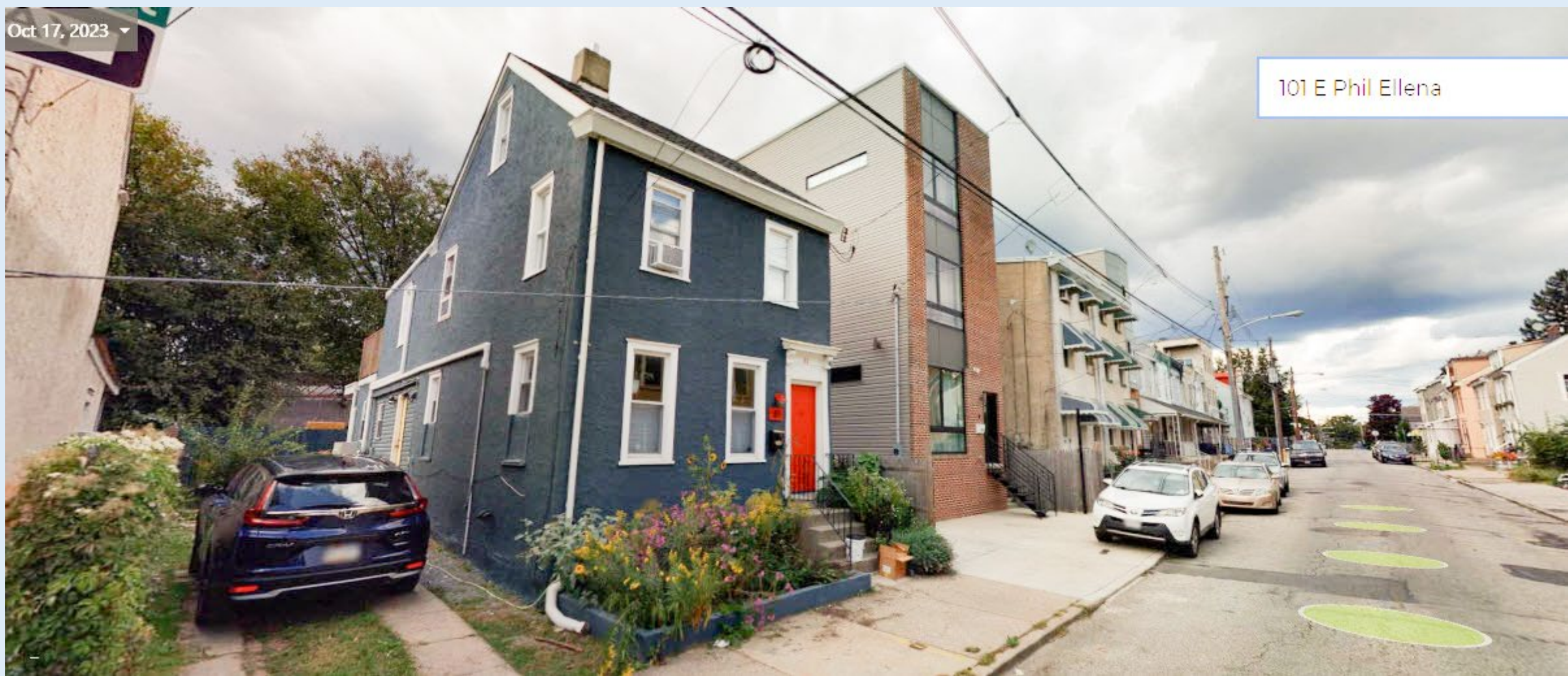


New 3-story home next to older 2½ - story home

Can NCOs Help?

When New Meets Old

100 Block Phil Ellena



New 3-story home next to 2½ story older home

Can NCOs Help?

When New Meets Old

Unit Block Montana



***6 New 3-story homes next to 2½ story older homes
Off street parking in rear, no room for street or yard trees***

When New Meets Old

Unit Block Montana



***6 New 3-story homes. No front setback, rear off-street parking.
No street trees or room for natural space for yard trees***

Can NCOs Help?

When New Meets Old

Unit Block Montana



***6 New 3-story home next to 2½ story older homes
Older homes have porches and front setbacks, new homes do not***

NCO Example

CHAPTER 14-500. OVERLAY ZONING DISTRICTS

§ 14-504. /NCO, Neighborhood Conservation Overlay District. 380

(11) Strawberry Mansion. 392.1

(a) Purpose.

The Strawberry Mansion /NCO is intended to maintain the predominantly two- and three-story rowhome neighborhood character and architectural heritage of the Strawberry Mansion section of Philadelphia. The design of the new buildings shall be consistent with the character defining features of this overlay district, in terms of height, massing, rooflines or cornices, vertical and horizontal articulation, porch construction, fenestration proportions, and building materials.



Provisions tailored to Strawberry Mansion's character

- Building Heights
- Porches
- Roof Decks
- Height and Density Bonuses
- Design Standards
 - Materials
 - Porch Enclosures
 - Utilities
 - Screening of Trash and Recycling Enclosures
 - Sheds

Can NCOs Help?

Neighborhood Conservation Overlays



NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION OVERLAYS

FACT SHEET

APPLICATION PROCESS

- 1 Neighbors or a community group initiates the process and must provide proof of interest by the affected residents (either minutes from their public meeting or signatures from 30% of the affected property owners)
- 2 Nominating party submits to a background survey of the proposed /NCO which includes an existing conditions study for each block with photographs, maps or diagrams, and written descriptions of the attributes of the neighborhood
- 3 Process includes the creation of community-based design guidelines for the proposed district
 - Guidelines address such items such as materials, setbacks, massing
 - Guidelines are written in conjunction with the Philadelphia City Planning Commission (PCPC)
- 4 Once guidelines are approved and design standards are set, City Council introduces legislation and votes to create the district
- 5 Any building permit applications for that district must receive Certificate of Compliance from the PCPC before building permit can be issued. For all building permit applications, the PCPC uses the guidelines approved for that particular district

INTRODUCTION

The role and the nature of zoning as a regulatory tool continues to evolve. Citizens, elected and city government officials, as well as developers have begun to give increased consideration to a neighborhood's physical development because of environmental concerns, interest in historic preservation, the increasing complexity and magnitude of development proposals, and renewed emphasis on urban design that create pedestrian-scale urban landscapes. Neighborhood groups have also evolved, becoming more knowledgeable and involved in the development process. As civic organizations look at their neighborhoods and evaluate their individual needs, a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NCO), can help guide changes and new development in their communities.

OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Created by City Council in 2004 for residential areas only; 2012 code changes allow for other uses
- Recognizes that a particular neighborhood has integrity of form and streetscape
- Regulates significant work to a building façade (that is visible from a public right-of-way) including existing buildings, and construction of new structures
 - Does not regulate interiors or use
 - Does not stop demolitions
- Maintains the public streetscape and building form (i.e. setbacks, cornice lines, landscape features) and visual qualities/ characteristics of the district

Pros & Cons of NCOs?

REQUIREMENTS

- Cannot overlap with an existing or proposed municipal historic district
- Maximum size is 25 blocks
- Minimum size is 2 blocks by 2 blocks
- 70% of land must be residentially zoned and contain a residential use
- No more than 20% of the land may contain vacant lots
- Must possess a consistent architectural character as a result of a concentration of residential buildings of similar character or a continuity established by an overall plan

Fitting New Buildings into Older Neighborhoods - Example RSA5 Challenges in E Mt Airy

- Narrow streets, street pavement widths vary from 16-ft to 40 ft
- Older 2-2½ story houses being replaced with 3-story houses.
- No 3rd story additional setback if only adjacent building has 2-2½ stories
- Many older homes, built before 1933, have no front setbacks
- Many detached and semi-detached houses being replaced with row houses without side yard setbacks



Ian Hegarty, AICP

Senior Environmental Planner at Philadelphia City Planning Commission

