

Garden Court Community Association

Zoning Committee

Values Statement
2017

About the Zoning Committee

The Garden Court Community Association Zoning Committee was created to represent the interests of local community members in the real estate development process. The Committee is open to all members in good standing of the Garden Court Community Association.

About this document

This document provides an overview of the Committee's vision for the Garden Court neighborhood, and outlines our shared values and priorities for ensuring community-driven development without displacement. The values presented in this document were determined through a survey, open to all members of the Committee, followed by an open discussion. This document names aspects of development that the Committee deems either beneficial or detrimental to the neighborhood and its current residents, and details their potential impact on the neighborhood traits for which there is strong shared value.

Our values and priorities

We aim to maintain low density (single family housing and in some cases small multi-family housing) on residential/rowhome blocks while encouraging the clustering of higher density and mixed-use development on specific blocks where the zoning and/or development precedent aligns with more dense housing and commercial uses.

The Committee recognizes a number of core characteristics that we seek to preserve. A primary characteristic is the diversity of people who live here. The demographics of the neighborhood are not static, of course, but throughout its history, the neighborhood has been home to residents that are diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, income levels, and ideologies. In the interest of maintaining our diversity, we actively encourage development that:

- respects the affordability needs of residents, including designated affordable housing,
- provides opportunities for older adults to age in place in the neighborhood,
- provides for the accessibility needs of persons with physical limitations,
- and offers family-friendly design options.

We seek to preserve the integrity of our built environment. Much of the architecture of the neighborhood was built to withstand many generations of use. In addition, each block was designed with continuity and cohesiveness in mind. In the interest of maintaining our neighborhood's character, we actively encourage development that:

- uses high-quality materials,
- is built to last for use by multiple generations,

- and maintains reasonable visual continuity and character of a block, with special attention to defining features of adjoining structures, including, but not limited to: matching the setbacks, windows, rooflines, backyards, trim, porches, materials, and aesthetics.

We seek to preserve our green space and promote environmentally friendly practices. In addition to our parks, Malcolm X Park and Barkan Park, many residents have access to green space at their homes. We want future residents to be able to enjoy this amenity moving forward. In the broader interest of preserving green space for future generations, we support construction and land use that protects the natural environment. In the interest of expanding green space and promoting environmentally friendly practices, we actively encourage development that:

- maintains front, side, and back yard space consistent with adjoining properties,
- in the case of a large development, designates a significant portion of open space as green space,
- and incorporates green building practices, including, but not limited to: stormwater catchment systems, solar panels, and energy efficient design.

We seek to preserve the ease of mobility in our neighborhood. Neighborhood residents are able to use public transportation, walk, bike, and drive as primary forms of transportation. This versatility supports a wide variety of lifestyle choices, physical abilities, and needs. In order to preserve the ease of mobility in our neighborhood, we actively encourage development that:

- Takes parking needs for nearby residents and development residents into consideration,
- provides convenient and secure bicycle storage,
- and, in the case of large developments with commercial space, prioritizes the needs and desires of local residents within walking distance.

All of these values are of course interwoven. In addition to the values named above, the Committee places value on the preservation, improvement, or expansion of:

- alignment with the Philadelphia 2035 University Southwest District Plan,
- locally-owned businesses,
- diversity of housing stock,
- diversity of owners and renters,
- and, resident engagement in the community.

Note

This values statement is not intended to encompass all possible Committee priorities. It is designed to serve as a guideline for the Committee and Board when engaging in negotiations for future development projects. It is a living document and may be updated periodically to better represent evolving community needs.