

**Private Taking, Public Good?
Penn' s Expansion in West Philadelphia from 1945 to 1975**

A senior thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in
American History

by

Adam B. Klarfeld

Philadelphia, Pa

April 9, 1999

Faculty Advisor: Mark Frazier Lloyd

Course Director: Robert F. Engs

Table of Contents:

Acknowledgments	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter I, A Man's House Is His Castle	3
Chapter II, Penn and Philadelphia After World War II	15
Chapter III, Expansion Explodes in the 1960's	37
Chapter IV, From Condemnation to Admiration, The Story of the 3400 Block of Sansom Street	55
Chapter V, University City Urban Renewal Area Number Three	73
Conclusions	89

Acknowledgments

I have been extremely fortunate to have so many people help me out on this project. Al Pace, the Director of the City's Department of Records, was kind enough to teach me the ins and outs of doing deed research in a large City. Laura Walsh, of the Redevelopment Authority, helped me dig through mounds of storage boxes to find the RDA files on the blocks that I was studying. I also must thank Sydney Daniels for proofreading this entire paper, as well as my computer experts, Jason Aminto and Bill Jakobowski, who discovered my lost work many times. I'd also like to thank our course director Dr. Engs for his patience and guidance in directing our entire class. The amount of attention he gives to each student is amazing, and I will always remember our summer outings.

My deepest thanks to the entire Archives and Records Center of the University. Tucked away in Franklin Field are some truly great people. First, I'd like to thank them for granting me one of their summer fellowships for research in American History. Having the summer to do some of the laborious research made this entire project feasible. Secondly, I'd like to thank Curtis and Marty for their support and stories. Last but not least, I would like to thank my Faculty Advisor, Mark Lloyd, who spent countless hours discussing, proofing, and researching my topic. Besides keeping me on target, Mr. Lloyd taught me a thing or two about life along the way.

Introduction

For one who is aware of the conventional wisdom surrounding the expansionary years of the University of Pennsylvania, it is difficult to fully appreciate the spacious pedestrian campus filled with old trees and beautiful greens. University lore is full of stories about greedy University officials bulldozing peaceful neighborhoods in the name of expansion. The University's use of the local government's powers of eminent domain to expand past its land locked borders in the 1950's and 1960's has been criticized by many. This right of the government to acquire private property with just compensation for the public good has always been controversial and recently has been used to explain the poor relationship the University has with its neighbors. According to the theory, the University's contacts influenced the City of Philadelphia to displace thousands in an effort to please a non-tax paying entity. As a result, lingering resentment still prevents good relationships between the University and the community.

This explanation seems to leave out many details if the elected officials finally decided on the eminent domain process on the City Council. If the community was outraged, did they elect new representatives or fight the University in the courts? This question is especially interesting considering the high value that Americans have placed on private property throughout American History, which yields the question of how did the role of

government evolve into allowing the eminent domain process to become such a powerful force by the late 1950's and how does this fit with the Penn experience?

As the University moves through another aggressive era of campus development, numerous journalists have written scathing reports on the University's expansion in the 1960's and its effect on the community at large. According to a November 1997 *Pennsylvania Gazette* article, "[Penn] has gone on colossal building binges, ripping up whole neighborhoods like some crazed Eastern European dictator, displacing residents and businesses for its own high-minded imperial aims."¹ Furthermore, an article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* last spring further criticized the University's growth history especially with regards to race. According to the article, Penn's expansion completely wiped out an area "east of 38th Street, where a black middle class was solidly entrenched."² This element of race in the 1960s reinforces the argument of an unfair process sparking a curiosity as to the racial makeup of the University community at the time in order to compare this with its effect on displacement and lingering resentment.

The University's students, with a long history of criticizing their institution also have the reputation for distorting myths to epic proportions. Recent reports in the student newspaper, the *Daily Pennsylvanian*, warn the University Community of a "bad precedent" in Penn's growth policies. A

¹ Samuel Hughes, "The Philadelphia Story," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 1997 p. 25.

² Larry Fish, "Penn, reexpanding, hopes it learned a lesson," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 May 1998, sec 1A, p. 12.

recent Editorial and Opinion article by Tony Smith criticized the University's role in community displacement for the University City Science Center (UCSC) and the University City High School. According to Smith, the University's role in developing a new high school was a welcomed advance onto the community for the University's benefit. Views such as expressed by Smith show the current skepticism for public projects in the name of a public good.

This feeling is completely natural and consistent with American value of individualism. We never want to be told what we can and can not do, and the idea that anyone can take our property, especially our homes away, directly opposes the constitutional freedoms we learned in grade school. However there must be legitimate times when a public good must take priority over personal interests. For example, the building of major highways and public schools would not be possible without some form of a condemnation process. Furthermore, it's unfair to judge the University's era of expansion benchmarked by today's values and opinions on government.

Since the nation's current viewpoints on eminent domain have clearly changed over the past forty years, it would be interesting to see how the nation has evolved from no restrictions on property rights to zoning laws to widespread use of eminent domain in the name of urban renewal. The political environment surrounding this process can give us an interesting perspective on American History. Through Penn's eyes, we can see how the different groups involved reacted to the decisions of major institutions during Penn's great era of expansion, 1945 to 1975.

Chapter 1:

A Man's House Is His Castle

When the framers of the United States Constitution met in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787, they could not have envisioned Benjamin Franklin's University 30 blocks away and 200 years later. The impact of our forefather's Fifth Amendment, and more specifically the "takings clause", ensured the University an avenue to expand beyond its land-locked borders. Although deeply rooted in the Magna Carta (1215), this amendment, guaranteeing that private property would not be taken for "public use without just compensation", served as testament to the American commitment to private property and, more broadly, to individualism and unobtrusive government. Throughout American history events have affected the public's attitude towards the role of government, therefore resulting in its long-term evolution from the time of Franklin to the peak of urban redevelopment in the 1960s and also to its fall in the 1970s. Beginning with the Progressive Era at the turn of the century, the role of the government steadily grew, thus becoming more involved with society as the times deemed appropriate. Changing attitudes towards property rights mirrored the parent issue of the appropriate size and role of government. The struggle in deciding between the benefit of the individual or the group challenges one of the strongest values in American culture of individualism. Caught in between, the University of Pennsylvania experienced how explosive and dynamic this issue can cause.

The Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century forever altered the shape of American cities as well as the nation's attitude towards government. New technologies quickly created manufacturing hubs in major cities, creating frenzy, while millions

headed to the city. Production became increasingly specialized, thereby raising greatly the technical efficiency of manufacturing; efficiency was also enhanced by the fact that large agglomerations tended to build near each other. Centralization lowered communication and distribution costs, which only increased the rate of urbanization. The new large industries now required a much larger labor force to work in the new, large-scale mechanized production process, which was deeply rooted in the division of labor. This made cities highly concentrated with large numbers of the working class.³

Conforming to the national trend, Philadelphia quickly became an industrial hub. While the City's new industrial power rested in the iron, steel, railroad and coal industries, textiles and carpets, were the city's largest staples. At the end of the nineteenth century, Philadelphia produced more textiles than any other American city.⁴ This large fundamental change in the economics of the city forever changed the makeup and appearance of the city. According to Philadelphia historians Nathaniel Burt and Wallace Davies:

The impact of this explosion of industry and technology almost obliterated Penn's green country town, the redbrick cultural capital, in a smog of steam and smoke, of endless gridirons of worker's housing, of railroads and factories, freight yards and warehouses.⁵

This new American city was growing too quickly to cope with the sudden shift in emphasis to industry.

In addition to the larger concentration of native Philadelphians, other changes in the national and local demographics would increase its overall urbanization. The same period of time witnessed a massive increase in immigration from abroad, and those

³ Michael S. Gibson and Michael J. Langstaff., *An Introduction to Urban Renewal* (London : Hutchinson, 1982), 19.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 481.

people quickly went to work in the city's vastly growing industries. During the Progressive Era, more immigrants arrived than during any other period in American History. Between 1890 and 1914, more than fifteen million immigrants moved to the United States.⁶ The same period corresponds to Philadelphia's greatest numerical population increase, which relates to the impact of the new immigrants on the City's population.⁷ The new Philadelphians settled in some of the "shabbiest" sections of the city along the Delaware River.⁸ In addition, tens of thousands of African-Americans fled the Jim Crow caste system of the South for better economic opportunities in the North. In twenty years, the City's Black population more than doubled as it grew from 63,000 in 1900 to 134,000 in 1920.⁹ The new arrivals, in the midst of urbanization and immigration, made the scramble for affordable housing in an already tight market impossible. Unable to cope with the sudden influx of people, Philadelphia, like many other cities in the industrial North, quickly became overcrowded with unsanitary slums.

The city's troubles cannot be solely based on the changing demographics. Corrupt contracts constantly befuddled any progress in the improvement of sewage disposal, the water supply, and road paving.¹⁰ According to Burt and Davies, "Articles on 'election frauds,' 'political bandits,' the 'Republican Tammy,' and the 'Sad Story of Philadelphia' appeared with embarrassing frequency in the national periodicals. Lincoln Steffens, in a 1903 article for *McClure's Magazine*, called Philadelphia the "worst

⁵ Nathaniel Burt and Wallace E. Davies, "The Iron Age, 1876-1905," *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History* (New York: WW Norton and Company, 1982), 473. Russell F. Weigley, editor.

⁶ Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998), 77.

⁷ Burt and Davies, 526.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 527.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 531.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 496.

governed city in America.”¹¹ State Insurance Commissioner Israel Durham created and maintained an effective Republican machine that manipulated public jobs and public contracts for his own economic gain. Although Philadelphia stood out for the publicity given to its corruption, the city was not alone. City bosses around the country produced a level of corruption in every facet of local government rule.

The deplorable urban conditions nationwide, combined with corrupt politicians, fueled an entirely new political group known as the Progressives, who rallied around poor city conditions in order to change the role of the government. According to historian Robert Harrison, “The Progressive Era, roughly from 1900-1917, saw the first widespread recognition of the need for government intervention to cope with the problems of a modern industrial society...”.¹² Teddy Roosevelt embodied the Progressive movement which called for more regulatory legislation, slum housing clearance, and an end to child labor. The new problems of an industrial society quickly changed the role of the government. No longer the defender of laissez faire economics, the United States government fundamentally evolved into taking a much more active role as society changed too.

The Progressives also successfully initiated a larger government role in the realm of property rights. The increase in manufacturing plants in American cities created unique living problems as businesses and residents suddenly became intertwined, and proponents of Progressive ideas hailed zoning, for the first time, as the solution. In 1916, New York City successfully passed the first comprehensive zoning laws in the country.¹³ Not only would New York’s zoning laws prevent unhealthy and unnatural neighbors,

¹¹ Ibid., 537.

¹² Robert Harrison., *State and Society in Twentieth Century America*. (New York: Longman, 1992), 9.

restrictions on building height and setback controls would maintain sufficient light and air, allowing cities to escape their dark and dreary settings. Ten years later the Supreme Court upheld the basic constitutionality of local zoning in *Euclid v. Ambler Realty Company* (1926). For the first time on a widespread scale in American history, zoning established the principle “that the interests of private property owners must yield to the interests of the public.”¹⁴

The true irony behind zoning stood in its bipartisan support. Social progressives and conservatives found themselves supporting the same evolutionary step in government roles for opposite reasons. Liberals encouraged zoning to fight poverty and increase health, while conservatives saw zoning as a means of exclusion with regards to race and income level in order to maintain their property values. The significance of the bipartisan support shows how broad the support was for this big change in the role of government; now, not only was the government taking on a completely new responsibility, but all sides of the political spectrum seemed to support it.

The overall increasing dependence on government was also the result of an overall feeling of vulnerability in the psyche of the ordinary American. Two economic realities of the era contributed to this feeling, and therefore served as a catalyst for an evolving government. First, the largest economic depression of the 19th Century hit hard beginning in 1893. Although not as severe as the Great Depression would be forty years later, similar economic conditions produced comparable results with the strong desire for larger government to protect the common man. According to Progressive Era historian

¹³ Charles M. Haar and Jerold S. Kayden, *Zoning and the American Dream, Promises Still to Keep* (Chicago: Planners Press, 1989), ix.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Steven Diner, “The Depression caused many comfortable citizens to question the nation’s economic and political system.”¹⁵

The second economic impact of the period was the rise of big business. Between 1897 and 1904 numerous mergers and acquisitions completely transformed American businesses, thereby creating virtual monopolies and resulting in higher prices in many industries for the average consumer. John D. Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Company created the new business plan that monopolists would later copy. First, Rockefeller horizontally integrated his firm by buying up crude oil refineries across the nation, and by 1870 Standard Oil refined 1/10th of the nation’s crude oil. As such a large player in the railroad distribution network, Standard Oil could force the railroads to lower his shipping costs, and therefore reduce the final price to the consumer. Standard Oil was also vertically integrated, owning oil fields and pipelines while even controlling their own marketing plan.¹⁶ Numerous others followed Rockefeller’s plan in their own industries, such as Gustavus Swift who maintained a large monopoly in the meat industry by controlling its processing and distribution channels.

The combination of the Depression and the restructuring of business produced a sense of vulnerability in the ordinary American; Harrison feels that Journalist Mark Sullivan’s *Our Times* best explains this fear. According to Sullivan, by 1900 the average American felt “that he was being ‘put upon’ by something he couldn’t quite see or get his fingers on...that his freedom of action, his opportunity to do as he pleased, was being frustrated in ways mysterious in their origin and operation.”¹⁷ This intangible feeling pushed the common man to listen more than ever to social critics such as Mary Lease,

¹⁵ Diner, 20.

¹⁶ Diner, 15.

¹⁷ Quoted in Harrison, 85.

Jane Adams, Hazen Pingree, and others who were calling for a more activist government.¹⁸

The accomplishments of the Progressive Era created a platform from which a larger and more involved government could grow. The Progressives worked to defeat the large trusts, regulate the railroad industry, and enacted the first organization to regulate food and drugs. They also lobbied successfully for the passage of the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution which created a progressive income tax amendment by establishing different marginal tax rates according to levels of income. The idea that the rich should pay a proportionally higher amount in taxes was an extremely progressive idea and a significant event in the changing role of government as a redistributor of income. The Seventeenth Amendment, the direct election of Senators, further popularized American government by making the elected representatives in Washington more responsive to the people. In addition, this Amendment helped to create “Pork Barrel” politics as senators used the federal government to pay for local projects to satisfy their constituents.

Another significant event in the evolution of a more obtrusive government was the passage of the 18th Amendment banning the sale, consumption and transfer of alcohol. According to Harrison, the amendment “brought an unprecedented level of federal intervention into the lives of American citizens...”¹⁹ For the first time since Reconstruction, the federal government “fundamentally altered social and economic relationships.”²⁰ In addition, the government was delegated the responsibility of its enforcement. The federal resolution transmitting the amendment to the states passed

¹⁸ Ibid., 28.

¹⁹ Harrison, 144.

²⁰ Ibid.

during World War I, partially due to anti-German sentiment as beer was largely associated with Germany, was mainly due to the peak of Progressivism. According to Harrison, the Progressive Era culminated in American intervention in the First World War.”²¹ Harrison sees Wilson’s new liberal world order as a “progressive crusade” abroad as well as at home in the war welfare state where the government dictated to businesses what could be manufactured and what could not.

Uncertainties surrounding the post War world created a backlash against progressive government and launched the nation into ten years of conservatism in search of ‘normalcy.’ Contributing to the paranoid times was the successful Bolshevik Revolution which created a Communist scare nationwide. This paranoia, which would eerily repeat itself in many ways following World War II, directly produced an “anti-immigration sentiment and the passage of the immigration acts of 1921 and 1924 establishing controls and quotas...”²² Labor strikes across the country were seen as the products of Communist infiltration as the nation’s paranoia set it. The American desire for isolationism is best seen in the rise and prominence of the Ku Klux Klan. The Klan, with its vocal opposition to Communists and Immigrants, in addition to their violent hatred towards Blacks, Jews, and Catholics, reached a peak in 1924 with around 5 million members at the height of Post World War I isolation.

The stock market crash in October of 1929 ended the domination of conservatism in American politics, therefore sparking the evolution of the role of government more so than any other event in the Twentieth Century. The ensuing depression left millions out of work, and an overall sense of fear began to settle in a similar manner to the aftermath

²¹ Harrison, 10.

²² Neil A. Wynn, *From Progressivism to Prosperity: World War I and American Society* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 214.

of the economic troubles of the 1890' s. Although many economists and historians have concluded that the crash was the result of structural imbalances in the domestic and world economy, a strong case at the time was made for scapegoating government policies during the 1920' s. The lack of regulation of financial institutions and the easy money supply of the Federal Reserve Bank was seen as a significant contributor to the collapse of the market.²³ The fear and despair for the future, combined with failed government policies, produced the most significant change in the American attitude towards the role of government.

President Hoover' s efforts to turn the economy around were far less popular than Franklin Roosevelt' s offer of a New Deal, which promised an entirely new role for government. In July of 1932, in accepting the nomination of the Democratic party, Roosevelt said, "I have...described the spirit of my program as a ' new deal' , which is in plain English for a changed concept of the duty and responsibility of government toward economic life."²⁴ FDR' s victory, coupled with Hoover' s lame duck Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) initiative, displayed this "need for direct federal intervention."²⁵ The RFC spent \$2 billion in order to rescue banks and other financial institutions directly.

Roosevelt sought to apply many of the lessons from his experience in wartime mobilization as the Assistant Secretary of the Navy in order to improve the nation' s economic situation. FDR saw the impact of government on the economy during the war and extrapolated these lessons into his New Deal policies. According to Harrison, "The legislation of 1935 established the lasting character of the New Deal, forging a new

²³ Harrison, 169.

²⁴ Robert Eden. *The New Deal and Its Legacy: Critique and Reappraisal* (New York : Greenwood Press, 1989), 195.

relationship between government and people.”²⁶ FDR’s convincing victory in 1936 ‘emphatically demonstrated’ the popularity of his programs with the American people. Roosevelt’s New Deal, built off the ideals from the Progressive Era, was a major step in the evolution of the role of American government. Due to the bleak economic situation, Americans were more willing than ever to reject laissez faire philosophy and adopt policies involving government intervention.²⁷ This giant evolutionary step, changing American government into a social and economic problem-solving machine, was vital to the expansion of the University of Pennsylvania. In later chapters, we will see this enlarged role of government in Penn’s development. The Great Depression, therefore, served as a major catalyst to the government’s involvement in the history of the University, as well as the city of Philadelphia.

In order to fulfill FDR’s promise of a new deal, government grew at astonishing rates. Closely mirroring the changing role of government with changing patterns of American values, property rights were greatly affected by the period. Slum removal and redevelopment continued to place the public good above private property. According to New Deal historian Robert Eden, the New Deal “involved a considerable interference with private property. It operated on the assumption that government is entitled to interfere with property, and, to some extent, redistribute property.”²⁸ Roosevelt tried to tackle urban issues in his New Deal policies, thereby raising the level of government involvement in city planning to an all time high. He established the Public Works Administration (PWA) to deal with capital improvements and the National Planning

²⁵ Harrison, 174.

²⁶ Harrison, 206

²⁷ James W. Ely, Jr., *The Guardian of Every Other Right: A Constitutional History of Property Rights*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 119.

²⁸ Eden, 192.

Board to coordinate long-range development; the Tennessee Valley Authority was also created to implement a broad regional plan. In addition, federal housing insurance and public housing became important in city redevelopment.

The Second World War ended the Depression, but not the new consensus that government should intervene, when necessary, in the economy. Returning soldiers and a new economic boom created new problems for governments to solve, especially since a severe housing shortage became a prominent issue as new families blossomed. The government's success in pulling the nation out of the Depression, and winning World War II, only increased people's confidence and faith in the government's new role. With the war finished in Europe, Americans returned their attention to conditions at home, especially to the troubles of the American City.

Harry Truman succeeded Roosevelt, and carried the New Deal torch to a new generation, and with the passage of the Housing Act of 1949 allocated significant federal funding for urban renewal. The legislation set the path for the typical redevelopment strategy in the U.S. for the next twenty years as blighted urban areas would soon be replaced with new construction. The broad philosophy of the program believed that an injection of public money could revitalize formerly blighted areas.

Early public housing and urban renewal programs were clearly an outgrowth of the nation's newly embraced role for American government to improve society, sometimes came at the expense of the individual. Immediately following the War, the New Deal attitude, calling for broad

government action to enact these initiatives would serve as the foundation for public opinion for the next twenty years.²⁹

²⁹ Conrad Weiler, *Philadelphia: Neighborhood, Authority and the Urban Crisis* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 104.

Chapter 2

Penn and Philadelphia after World War II

Pennsylvania's cities were no exception to the deplorable conditions common in urban America after World War II; in Philadelphia, in 1950, "70,000 dwellings lacked a bath or were dilapidated, and overcrowding affected a huge proportion of the inner-city housing supply."³⁰ In the same year, 13.8% of the city's total population resided in living units considered to be overcrowded.³¹ Much of the city's housing stock had been built in the nineteenth century, therefore making age another "significant variable related to deterioration."³² Showing the government's new role in solving the problems of society, the Pennsylvania State Legislature passed the Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945 in order to combat blight in the State's cities. The law established redevelopment authorities across the state with the great task of urban renewal. The authorities would be given the power of eminent domain, as well as the right to manage property, borrow funds, and issue bonds. Under the supervision of Mayor Bernard Samuel, Philadelphia established its Authority in March 1946. Unsure of their powers and responsibilities, the newly formed Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia began a tour of the nation to visit similar authorities across the country.³³ Urban renewal was the ubiquitous challenge for American cities after the

³⁰ Joseph S. Clark, Jr. and Dennis J. Clark, "Rally and Relapse, 1946-1968," *Philadelphia: A 300-Year History*, 669.

³¹ Conrad Weiler, 103.

³² Clark and Clark, 669.

³³ Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia Minutes, 28 March 1946. Files of the Redevelopment Authority, 1234 Market Street, Philadelphia hereafter known as RDA PH.

war, and luckily for the RDA of Philadelphia, they could observe other cities and their experience.

The establishment of the RDA was not the city's first experiment in curing urban blight or city planning in general. The Philadelphia City Planning Commission was established by city ordinance on April 13, 1929 in order to plan the development and growth of the city.³⁴ Established in 1937, the Philadelphia Housing Authority, used government subsidies to build housing "units through private contractors and administered the projects on completion and occupancy."³⁵ Basically, the Philadelphia Housing Authority helped finance the private contraction of low-income housing. Recognizing the similarities in goals between the PHA and the RDA, the leaders of both organizations met in May 1946 to organize close relationships.³⁶

While the RDA was defining its role, the University of Pennsylvania looked to expand its own. Sydney Martin chaired the Architect's Committee, which the Trustees established in order to study the physical needs of the University and the means to achieve them. The Trustees approved the conclusions of the committee, on October 25, 1948. Known as the '1948 Martin Report', the committee's recommendations set up the basic outline for the next 20 years of expansion. The Report sought to use the city's expanded powers of eminent domain in order to acquire the remaining property bounded by 32nd Street, Walnut street, Hamilton Walk, and 40th Street.

³⁴ Margaret Tinkom, "Depression and War, 1929-1946," *Philadelphia: A 300 Year History*, 604.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 669.

³⁶ Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia Minutes. 4 June 1946. RDAPH.

Woodland Avenue and Locust Street would be closed making the campus more pedestrian oriented, and creating a central pedestrian walk.³⁷

Not only were the boundaries of the future campus determined, but also a number of building priorities were established. The conclusion of the Martin Report called for classroom and research facilities for the pure and applied sciences to be located at the southeast corner of 33rd and Walnut Streets. In addition, a new Wharton building located between Locust Street and Woodland Avenue and between 36th and 37th Streets would provide space for classrooms and research facilities for the business school. A new library was also high on the priority list for the committee, but they felt that funds could be more easily acquired for the other two buildings first.³⁸ The report also recommended an addition to the University's hospital for an in-patient hospital facility.

Only two years later, the committee's vision would come to fruition in the beginnings of its implementation. After announcing a \$32 million development program in 1948, construction began in May 1950 with the widening of 33rd Street which was financed completely with city funds.³⁹ The University Alumni Magazine, The *Pennsylvania Gazette* also reported that construction of the four buildings recommended in the Martin Report would take priority: The Thomas S. Gates Memorial Pavilion of the medical center, a Physics building at the southeast corner of 33rd and Walnut Streets, a new

³⁷ University of Pennsylvania Report of the Trustees Committee for the Physical Development of the University, October 25, 1948. UARC, UPA 1.51.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

library at the southeast corner of Walnut and 36th Streets, and a new Wharton building located south of Locust between 36th and 37th Streets. These four buildings were given priority in 1948 in the Martin Report as well as by University President Harold Stassen.⁴⁰

Regarding the new Wharton and science buildings, planning turned into action on May 16, 1951 when the City Council passed an ordinance approving the Redevelopment Authority's acquisition of two sites for the physical expansion of the University. Only five years after the Authority's creation, and four years since their first act of taking of land, the RDA officially began a fifteen-year relationship with Penn that would forever change the face of the University. The first resolution in the ordinance approved the clearing for the Wharton building bounded by Locust on the north, Woodland Avenue on the south, 36th Street on the east, and 37th Street on the west. The second resolution approved the clearing of property from the southeast corner of Walnut and 33rd Streets for the new Physics building, currently known as David Rittenhouse Laboratories.

According to the 1950 U.S. Census Report, the taking and clearing of land for the Wharton Unit displaced 36 people living in six dwelling units; all 36 residents to be displaced were White tenants.⁴¹ The University already owned most of the block following an aggressive buying campaign in the area since 1926 (deeds). In total, 13

³⁹ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, "Work On New Campus Under Way," vol. 48, no. 10 (June 1950), 8. UARC.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Brunsmann, Howard G., compiler. *United States Census of Housing: 1950. Block Statistics*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Blocks, Census Tracts. Vol. V, Part 143. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1952. Part 45 (map) and page 67.

families were displaced while receiving “adequate and fair values for their properties,” according to Francis J. Lammer, the Executive Director of the RDA.⁴²

Demolition work for the new Wharton building began on the south side of Locust street began in the fall of 1950. According to the *Gazette*, the entire block was removed except for the Psi Upsilon Fraternity located at the intersection of 36th Street and Woodland Avenue, more commonly known as the “Castle”. A new residence hall was built for the Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity on the north side of Locust Street and its existing building demolished. Other fraternities such as the Delta Upsilon house was not be relocated. The first buildings demolished were known as “The Barracks”, which were row buildings facing Locust Street that served as low-rental dormitories for Penn students.⁴³ Officially, the D. Wellington Dietrich Memorial Hall, the new prized possession of the Wharton School, was formally dedicated on October 24, 1952.⁴⁴

A new building, the second building in the \$32 million dollar development program, was estimated to cost \$2.7 million. Consistent with the Martin Report’s idea of functional groupings, the new Physics building was placed near the Moore School for Electrical Engineering, the Towne School, and the John Harrison Laboratory of Chemistry. According to Acting University President William DuBarry, the new facility “will foster a working partnership of the pure and applied sciences, already of long standing on this

⁴² *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “City to Aid Expansion,” Vol. 49, no. 10 (June 1951), 12. UARC.

⁴³ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “A Progress Report in Pictures,” Vol. 49, no. 2 (October 1950), 12. UARC.

⁴⁴ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “Dietrich Hall Dedicated,” Vol. 51, no. 4 (December 1952), 15. UARC.

campus.”⁴⁵ Although originally approved in 1949 with the other structures, troubles with site clearance delayed the construction of the Physics building. The acquisition of six properties on Chancellor Street, with the help of the RDA, finally made construction possible.⁴⁶ Mark Taylor’s property, however, which he had owned since 1922, remained the final acquisition piece for the project. Taylor’s asking price of \$16,000 was significantly than the average price of properties on the block ranged, which from \$12,000 to \$13,000. The University offered \$12,000 for the middle row house on the block, but the RDA brokered deal settled the property for \$13,700.⁴⁷ The Baton Construction Corporation won the contract to build the new Physics building in February of 1953. By the fall of 1954, the Physics building had been completed and formerly dedicated as the David Rittenhouse Laboratories.

The RDA was extremely excited over the two building projects, hailing them as “great successes” in its annual report for 1958. The Authority was especially careful to point out that the University completely paid for the acquisition costs itself.⁴⁸ In addition, the Authority gained respect and notoriety for exercising their eminent domain powers in a manner that benefited the City by increasing the University’s physical capital and prestige without great objections to the necessary displacement. According to the

Evening Bulletin:

⁴⁵ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “Contract Awarded for Physics Building,” Vol. 51, no. 7 (March 1953), 19. UARC.

⁴⁶ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “Physical Facilities,” Vol. 51, no. 7 (March 1953), 15. UARC.

⁴⁷ *Evening Bulletin*, 22 June 1952. “Holdout Home Owner Yields; Penn Begins \$2,500,000 Job.” Urban Archives inside the Paley Library, Temple University hereafter known as the Urban Archives. (Pennsylvania University: Development.)

It was a graphic demonstration of teamwork which already exists between higher education and government, between the academic gown and the taxpayers of the town – the surest way for this nation to respond to the educational alert.⁴⁹

This early positive press and a good working relationship between the RDA and Penn ensured the future cooperation between two major institutions in Philadelphia.

Besides the new construction projects, the 1948 Martin Report implicitly required more government help in the establishment of a mostly closed campus between 32nd and 40th Streets. At the time of the Martin Report's approval, three surface trolley lines– 11, 34, and 36– ran above ground from 36th and Ludlow, south on 36th Street, and southwest on Woodland Avenue between 36th and 40th (behind the Wistar Institute and the new Dietrich Hall of the Wharton School, across the corner of the Quad and the Vet School), cutting through the majority of campus and creating classroom disruptions as well as a general nuisance. The Martin Report's vision for a more enclosed pedestrian campus needed the above-ground trolleys rerouted from the heart of campus; the City Planning Commission agreed. In a confidential report on the problems associated with the trolleys, the Commission essentially supported the University's expansionary plans detailed in the 1948 Martin Report. According to the Commission:

University expansion is of great interest and importance to the city, both economically and culturally. It is certainly to our advantage to have the University, a growing institution of increasing prominence and reputation, attracting visiting leaders in all fields, and extending the name and credit of the city in which it is located.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia. *Annual Report for 1958*, p. 24 RDAPH.

⁴⁹ As quoted in *RDA Annual Report for 1958*, 6.

Even though the University's new construction in West Philadelphia proved that Penn had no intentions of moving, the Planning Commission still suggested that the issue of 'transit location' could also play a vital role in the University's proposed plan to begin a second campus in Valley Forge to avoid the congested city. The Commission's report also listed safety concerns and property values as justification to reroute the trolleys. In conclusion, the report validated the \$6 million project with the overall benefit of easing traffic flow around the area.⁵¹

On Tuesday November 7, 1950 Philadelphia voters went to the polls to decide on two referendums which could help pay for the Commission's proposal. Four municipal bond proposals were voted on, totaling \$15,580,000, two of which directly affected West Philadelphia.⁵² Three of the four passed, by ratios of 4 to 3, but one was defeated by about 2,500 votes. The first was a \$7,250,000 bond for three construction projects, the largest of which was the completion of the Market Street subway in West Philadelphia at a cost of \$5 million. This money would be used to move the elevated subway underground from 30th Street to 44th Street, terminating the above ground line which had previously run directly north of the University. The second bond referendum did not concern West Philadelphia or the University. The third bond issue was for a \$6 million project to be used to extend the

⁵⁰ The City Planning Commission. Confidential Report on the Philadelphia Trolley Corporation, 10 September 1947. Development Program (Committee on Physical Development) II. 1945-1950. UARC, A4:0029.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵² *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 6 November 1950, "Election Facts For State, City," sec. 1A, p. 1.

subway-surface lines from the present above-ground portal at 36th and Ludlow Streets to a point near 40th Street and Woodland Avenue. The fourth municipal bond issue, which was defeated, called for \$1 million in city money to purchase trackless trolleys for operation on Frankford Avenue between City Line and Bridge Street.⁵³

The success of the third bond issue meant that the new trolley network would stay underground as far as 40th and Woodland, bypassing the University's current and proposed campus. At a secured site across from the Woodland Cemetery, the City Planning Commission wanted the trolleys to rise out of the ground and continue on Baltimore and Chester Avenues into Southwest Philadelphia. Although the community would be less congested for a few blocks, the University was obviously the largest benefactor of this major public works project. Without the trolley lines crisscrossing the University's campus, Penn was free to continue plans for the kind of enclosed University that the Martin Report envisioned. The true significance of the project lies in the large amount of taxpayers' money, which voted on directly by the residents of Philadelphia, mainly benefited the University. Its passage signifies excellent relations between the University and the City for the improvement of both. This major event dispels some of the conventional wisdom, and even scholarly work, that sees the expansion of the University as the result of overlapping influences with city organizations. According to Conrad Wieler, Penn's expansion was largely due to "a prestigious Ivy

⁵³ Philadelphia Inquirer, 8 November 1950, "Voters Reject Trolley Loan," sec. 1A, p. 2.

League school with friends and alumni in important positions throughout the city.”⁵⁴ The six million dollar loan to reroute the trolleys underground, which equals \$39.12 million in today’s dollars, shows that Penn had the support of the ordinary citizen to achieve its goals. The citizen’s support of the project is a good indicator that the relationship between the University and the city was extremely positive in the early 1950’s.

In addition to the positive relationships with the City’s government agencies, Penn looked to enroll the Commonwealth’s support in its expansion plans. In a November 1956 letter, President Harnwell initiated contact with the General State Authority (GSA) requesting funds for a new library in the Penn-owned area bounded by Locust Street, Woodland Avenue, Walnut Street and 36th Street. Harnwell estimated the cost of a new library at \$12.8 million.⁵⁵ The GSA derived its power from Public Law 545, which empowered the Authority to construct buildings and then lease the facilities back to the universities at a substantial subsidy.⁵⁶ The new library would displace residents in 21 of the 30 buildings within the boundaries of the project. According to the 1950 Census Report, 22 dwelling units would be vacated, of which only eight were owner-occupied. The new library would displace no minorities.⁵⁷ According to Harnwell’s letter, the library “will replace a block

⁵⁴ Wieler, 144.

⁵⁵ Gaylord Harnwell (November 7, 1956). Letter to K. R. Burke. UARC, UPA 4, 0098.

⁵⁶ Scott Cohen, “*Urban Renewal in West Philadelphia: An Examination of the University of Pennsylvania’s Planning, Expansion, and Community Role from the Mid-1940’s to the Mid-1970’s*, a Senior Honors Thesis,” 6 April 1998, 39. UARC.

⁵⁷ 1950 US Census Report, 67

of antiquated, irreparable, eyesore structures with a park area dominated by a beautiful, modern, tree-fringed building.”⁵⁸

In order to convince the agency of the University’s significance to the state, the University outlined their great need for an enlarged library due to the skyrocketing enrollment figures. According to the proposal, an increase in physical plant could yield a 50% increase in enrollment in the next fifteen years. With the “contemplated growth”, Penn forecasted increased academic excellence attracting all kinds of people to the Commonwealth.⁵⁹ In September 1957, the GSA allocated \$4 million dollars for the construction of a new library, literally paving the way for the one of the most significant pieces of development in the University’s history.

With Commonwealth financing set for the library, the University could now move onto other issues. Long aware of the housing shortage problems for women students on campus, University trustees seriously began considering proposals to cure the problem in early 1954. Sydney E. Martin, Chairman of the Operations and Plant Committee, ruled inadequate the most obvious solution in renovating current West Philadelphia housing.⁶⁰ The Trustees were interested in facilities that could “compete successfully with the quadrangle type dormitories existing at other girls’ colleges,”⁶¹ however, space and money created formidable hurdles. In February, President

⁵⁸ University of Pennsylvania. (December 1956). “Request for Construction of Educational Facilities,” 1. UARC, UPA 4, 97.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Trustees Minutes, vol. 26-- 3, January 8, 1954. UARC.

⁶¹ Trustees Minutes, vol. 26-- 60, March 12, 1954. UARC.

Harnwell outlined a possible solution for purchasing or leasing the Roosevelt Hotel located at 23rd and Walnut Streets. Harnwell stressed the “great need to solve the problem of adequate housing for women’s students.”⁶²

The issue remained a complicated challenge throughout the year with much time dedicated to it by the Trustees with little closure. President Harnwell’s suggestion to purchase the Roosevelt was eventually deemed as an insufficient long-range plan by the Trustees since it did not fit into the 1948 Martin Report, and attention was directed to other options. The Martin Report had recommended an entire section of campus strictly for women where 38th Street would separate the genders of the University; however, Harnwell, who was committed to a coeducational University, never supported a divided campus, and therefore worked hard to find adequate and alternative plans.

By the end of 1954, G. Holmes Perkins, Dean of the University’s Graduate School of Fine Arts and Chairman of the City Planning Commission, successfully organized an initiative between the City and the University for a new women’s residence. The early successes of the Physics and Wharton building had previously solidified the relationship that provided the Authority with the University to combat blight and rejuvenate a major section of the city. Senator Myers, Chairman of the RDA, inquired into the University’s interests in developing “the two blocks bounded on the east by 32nd Street, on the west by 34th Street, on the north by Chestnut Street, and

⁶² Trustees Minutes, vol. 26-- 58, February 24, 1954. UARC.

on the south by Walnut Street.”⁶³ The Senator estimated the total acquisition costs at \$600,000 for the University. Excited about the prospects of adding another portion of land to the size of the University, the Trustees immediately passed a resolution to inform the RDA of its great interest in acquiring the land and to express its appreciation.⁶⁴ According to Perkins the “casual” conversation between the interested parties produced an agreement in a week.⁶⁵ While these interviews and the Trustee’s Minutes chronicle the events leading to construction, they sometimes fail to tell the entire story. Since Harnwell never had any intentions of a women’s campus he easily could have negotiated a deal with the RDA without the knowledge of the Trustees, who were pulled away from the original Martin Report by what sounded like a fantastic, yet fortuitous, opportunity.

Nevertheless, two years later in December 1956, President Harnwell was pleased to report that the City Planning Commission had approved the University’s planned acquisition of the block. Final approval rested with City Council, which heard the issue in March 1957.⁶⁶ In February, the Trustees decided on the architectural firm of Eero Saarinen and Associates of Detroit, Michigan, to design the new women’s dormitory.⁶⁷ Four months later, the Trustees earmarked the \$640,000 bequest of Robert C. Hill for “expenditure for the acquisition through the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority... with

⁶³ Trustees Minutes, vol. 26-- 130, December 10, 1954. UARC.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Weiler, 144.

⁶⁶ Trustees Minutes, vol. 26-- 319, December 14, 1956. UARC.

⁶⁷ Trustees Minutes, vol. 26-- 344, February, 15, 1957. UARC.

the understanding that if this recommendation is accepted, the memory of Mr. Hill should be there memorialized in some appropriate fashion.”⁶⁸

Penn had fulfilled its side of the bargain by beginning development plans and raising the necessary money. The City would prove to have a slightly more difficult time in fulfilling theirs. In late February 1957, the *Bulletin* reported that Penn’s plans for expansion on the block in question faced a significant amount of public protest at an open hearing before the City Council.⁶⁹ According to the *Bulletin*, more than 150 property owners or residents of the two-block area “raised such a fuss ... that at times speakers could not make themselves heard.”⁷⁰ At the meeting, which was sponsored by Penn and the RDA with the blessing of the Mayor’s office, the residents articulated their problems with the project detailing the lack of time and information given to them from City officials. Even Harry Norwitch, Councilman for the City’s Third Councilmanic District, which included Penn, commented that this was the first time that he had heard about any such proposal.⁷¹ Executive Director of the RDA Francis J. Lammer flatly said that if the properties could not be acquired by negotiation they would be condemned. President Harnwell also spoke in front of the Council estimating that enrollment at Penn would double in the next ten years and the

⁶⁸ Trustees Minutes, vol. 26-- 386, June 7, 1957. UARC

⁶⁹ *Evening Bulletin*, 27 February 1957, “150 Neighbors Fight Building Plan of Penn, Drown Our Speakers At Protest Session of Council Unit,” (Pennsylvania University: Building and Construction 1957) Urban Archives.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

University desperately needed space.⁷² City Council did not resolve anything at the open meeting except for future hearings tentatively scheduled for March 18th. The reporter from the *Bulletin* seemed to sympathize with the group reporting that some of the residents had lived on the same block for fifty years, however an editorial in December 1957 praised the RDA for assisting those who were displaced for the project. The *Bulletin* concluded, “It is fortunate that assistance in finding new homes is available for those who might have considerable difficulty if they had to face the situation alone.”⁷³

After the first City Council hearing regarding the acquisition of the two blocks, the *Bulletin* reported that the 150 people made up of residents and property owners affected by the expansion proposal created a formal committee to block the expansion.⁷⁴ According to the *Bulletin*, the residents felt “that they [were] being pressured and that their houses are not blighted.”⁷⁵ At the March 18th meeting, the Committee remained adamant and vocal in their stand. Their petition called Penn’s proposal, “altogether un-American, pseudo-legal, dishonest destruction of valuable taxpayers’ properties... to build a rooming house for out-of-town girl students.”⁷⁶ At the meeting, the RDA announced that the total cost to buy the properties would

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ *Evening Bulletin*, 28 December 1957, “Redevelopers Ask Rent of Home Owners,” (Pennsylvania University: Building – Construction Program 1957) Temple Urban Archives.

⁷⁴ *Evening Bulletin*, 6 March 1957, “150 Map Fight On Penn Plan,” (Pennsylvania University: Building – Construction Program 1957) Urban Archives.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ *Evening Bulletin*, 19 March 1957, “Residents Yield on U. of P. Tract,” (Pennsylvania University: Building – Construction Program 1957) Urban Archives.

be \$2,340,000 with an additional \$197,000 to tear the 139 buildings down. Penn would pay for \$592,000 of the costs with the \$1,945,000 difference to be paid by the Federal, State and City governments.

According to the *Bulletin*, the major issue for the protest committee was not the actual loss of their homes; Police Sergeant Bernard Martin, Chairman of the committee, stated that the problem was financial. The group's major question was, "Will we receive an adequate fair price for our properties?"⁷⁷ Why were the owners most concerned about their reimbursement and not so concerned with the actual loss of property? It is partially clearer when looking at the statistics from the 1950 U.S. Census Report.⁷⁸ According to the census, out of the 82 total properties which stood on what is presently Hill House, only eleven of them were owner occupied. Ten properties were vacant and the other 61 properties were renter-occupied.⁷⁹ Many owners were going to lose a substantial real-estate business, but it is also clear why most of the protestors were not concerned about losing their actual homes. Two weeks later, the *Bulletin* reported that the committee had met with Lammer "to reach some agreement on price." Although some members vowed to continue fighting Penn's expansion by legal measures, most did not. Mrs. Margaret Dufour of 3332 Chestnut pointed out that the group was mainly concerned with compensation values,

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ 1950 U.S. Census, 67

⁷⁹ Ibid.

and summed up many of the owners opinions stating, “When you put a price on a house, you can’t fight condemnation.”⁸⁰

The bill approving the original proposal for Hill House came up for a final vote in June 1957. On June 13, Mr. Rose of the Fourth District “called up” the ordinance approving the RDA’s plans for the redevelopment of the blocks bounded by Chestnut, Walnut, 32nd and 34th Streets. Bill number 1102 passed by a margin of 14 to 1 with the only nay vote coming from Norwich.⁸¹ The very next bill voted on at that meeting was on an ordinance to “strike and vacate Woodland Avenue between 34th and Walnut Streets to 37th and Spruce Streets,” which would allow the block to be developed undivided by the major through-street. Again, Norwich was the sole nay vote out in the passage of the ordinance.⁸² Norwich’s vote might have reflected the seriousness of those property owners vowing to fight the condemnation process, however his vote could also have been a small token (since the vote was unanimous besides Norwich) for his constituents against the RDA, Penn or the process as a whole.

By the end of 1957, the RDA had settled or condemned all the real estate on the site of the present day Hill House. After looking at the deeds in the Department of Records at City Hall, it is apparent that most of the residents were satisfied enough with their settlements not to pursue litigation. Only a handful of properties had their titles transferred after the

⁸⁰ *Evening Bulletin*, 2 April 1957, “U of P Neighbors Decide to Fight Evictions After All,” Temple Urban Archives, Pennsylvania University: Building –Construction Program 1957.

⁸¹ Journal of the Council of the City of Philadelphia, 1 (1957): 566 (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Press).

condemnation date in December 1957. This simply validates previous conclusions that the property owners were receiving fair market value for their property.⁸³

Two further bills were approved by City Council in 1960 concerning the site of the future women's dormitory. Bill number 50, brought up for a final vote on May 10, 1960, was an ordinance to close Woodland Avenue, Moravian, and Ionic Streets between 32nd and 34th Streets. The previous ordinance, which only closed Woodland Avenue, was superceded by the new, more inclusive ordinance. The other bill, signed on October 27, 1960, approved the amendments to the design and function changes of Hill House; both bills passed City Council unanimously, including Norwich's significant vote. Norwich could have voted against the proposals to make a statement, and remain consistent with his earlier voting behavior, but his apparent change of heart also could have come from other reasons. First, the residents of the blocks in question had already been displaced therefore could not vote in that district. Or secondly, they had settled somewhat more amicably than expected with the University and lingering sentiments did not exist. Either way, Norwich's sensitivity to the public mood proves that the surrounding "community" was not upset with the University's expansion in the area by way of the City's powers of eminent domain.

Regardless, in the fall of 1961 the Women's Residence Hall opened at Penn in time for classes. The same week, after Penn completed this

⁸² Ibid.

expansionary project displacing an entire block with the eminent domain powers of the RDA and the City, the *Evening Bulletin* commented in an editorial that “Any expansion of Penn, is an expansion of Philadelphia, and a vote of confidence in the future.”⁸⁴ In its annual report, the RDA reported that the new women’s dormitory “will help transform an aging area of Philadelphia into a rallying point of civic renaissance.”⁸⁵ Except for a small minority, the overall majority of the city and the University were extremely enthusiastic about the project.

The Annenberg School for Communications and the Stouffer Triangle

Two short years after the Hill House project moved through City Council with only minor objections, City Councilman Harry Norwitch, the Representative from West Philadelphia, introduced Bill number 3421 on November 5, 1959 which called for the approval of land clearance for the new Annenberg School of Communications. In a letter to the City Council dated November 5, 1959, the chairman of the RDA lobbied the council and explained the project further. According to Lammer, “The Annenberg School of Communications, to be financed out of a generous private grant, is part of the University of Pennsylvania’s continuing effort to expand its physical plant and teaching facilities.”⁸⁶

⁸³ Philadelphia Department of Records. Plan # 19s15. Philadelphia City Hall.

⁸⁴ *Evening Bulletin*. 5 September 1961, “Penn’s Expansion Good for City,” (Pennsylvania University: Building –Construction Program). Urban Archives

⁸⁵ Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia, *Annual Report for 1958*, 28. RDA PH.

⁸⁶ Journal of the Council of Philadelphia

Bounded on the north by Walnut Street, on the east by 36th Street, and on the west by 37th Street, Annenberg sat in the middle of two census blocks. Combined, the census counted 80 dwelling units for the two blocks with only three left vacant. Only nine were owner occupied, while 68 were tenant occupied. The construction of the new center would displace only one non-white dwelling unit out of the 77 that were occupied (1.3%).

Six months after City Council unanimously passed the ordinance the RDA began acquiring the properties on the south side of Walnut Street. In less than three months the Authority had formally bought all of the remaining properties. The properties ranged in price from \$30,000 to \$49,500. No owners held out past August 13, 1960, indicating that the RDA's offer was close enough to the fair market value of the property. Penn had purchased three properties on the street in 1952, which contributed to the process as well.⁸⁷

With a similar role to the Annenberg project, the RDA helped the University acquire land for a new men's dormitory in the area bounded by Spruce Street, Woodland Avenue and 38th Street. Besides the dormitory, the new development would also include a new cafeteria. Once again, Lobbying for City Council approval Francis Lammer Executive Director of the RDA explained the project's purpose to the Council. According to Lammer, "The Men's dormitory triangle is part of the University's long-range development program to meet the growing demand for higher education and to allow the

⁸⁷ Philadelphia Department of Records. Plan # 19s 15. Philadelphia City Hall.

University to continue to play its valuable role in the growth of Philadelphia.”⁸⁸

According to the 1960 census, the project would displace only 47 people from 20 dwelling units. At the time of the survey, only three of the units were owner occupied while 16 were renter occupied with one left vacant. Out of the 19 occupied units, non-whites only occupied two. After the Council’s decision, little, if any, public dissent was reported by the City’s major newspapers.

By the end of the 1950’s, the University had established excellent relationships with the necessary government agencies of the city. In addition, the displaced residents from the University’s expansion displayed a minor amount of dissent considering the sacrifice they were making for the public good. In addition, the average citizen of Philadelphia also supported the University’s initiatives by voting for large municipal bonds and spending millions to place the trolleys underground through campus. The popularity of the expansion of the University was best seen in the actions of the elected representatives on City Council, who voted for every proposal in which the city could support the University. From the RDA’s perspective, the Authority found a great private developer in West Philadelphia, while Penn satisfied its landlocked expansionary plans and the City gained prestige as the University’s grew. As the decade closed, the Commonwealth government also

⁸⁸ Journal of the City Council of Philadelphia.

entered the scene as the General State Authority financed a cheaper and acceptable venue for building the University's capital stock.

Even at this initial stage in the University's physical expansion program, interesting political developments had already taken place. The government's role in Penn's development goals by the end of the 1950's moved away from passive support, as in their simple acquisition of land during the Wharton and Physics building projects, to a more active role as the City helped pay for the University's land acquisition such as in the case of the women's dormitory. The decade also witnessed the increase in government support to a level where the state even helped finance the actual construction projects. This strong public support, combined with little dissent from the displaced created a euphoria at the end of the 1950's, and became the backbone for future University expansion with the help of the RDA's powers of eminent domain and the vast economic support of government offices.

Chapter 3

Expansion Explodes in the 1960's

With solid government relationships in place, the University was poised to enter its greatest period of growth to date. The timing of this period in the University's development, on the heels of the Martin Report at the end of World War II, were not was not a coincidence. During the era immediately following the war, American universities vastly expanded as the direct result of three major phenomena. First, more Americans in record numbers were attending college. Due to the baby boomers and the GI Bill, enrollment in colleges and universities grew at an unprecedented rate. Secondly, the Cold War fever of the 1950's and 1960's created a massive technological scramble by the government which directed them to university research. Finally, effective New Deal policies and a successful war campaign gave Americans a renewed sense of confidence in their government following the Great Depression. These three factors gave universities the needs and the means to expand at a record pace.

The end of World War II brought mixed feelings to the American psyche. On one hand they had a newfound sense of economic security as a result of the recent economic boom. On the other hand, the United States had to deal with the invisible enemy of Communism. Americans were absolutely terrified by the evil myths of Communism, and the events in early 1950 only seemed to compound these fears. In January 1950, Alger Hiss, a one-time state department official, was convicted of perjury for "having passed classified information to a Communist agent."⁸⁹ In addition, the Soviets ended the American nuclear monopoly, and Truman 'lost' China to the communists. Combined,

these events contributed to the already “paranoid” times and pushed the country further in competition with the Communists.⁹⁰

Truman’s Containment Doctrine defined America’s commitment to competition with Communism on a worldwide scale, which quickly turned the struggle into a battle of right vs. wrong. According to American policy makers, the Soviet system “require[d] the dynamic extension of their authority and the ultimate elimination of any opposition to their authority.”⁹¹ Since Americans believed that Communism would expand at all costs, the American viewpoint maintained that democracy must triumph over Communism at all costs, creating a national obsession with fighting Communism that spread to all facets of life. Perceiving communist ideology as a full-scale attack, American Presidents looked to create a comparative advantage in every realm available to them in order to stop, what they viewed as the Soviet push for world domination.

President Franklin Roosevelt started a massive investment in human capital on June 22, 1944, when he signed the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act. The bill, simply known as the GI Bill, offered 15 million W.W.II veterans the opportunity for higher learning at the expense of the government.⁹² Millions of veterans took advantage of the new policy, which pushed college enrollment to all time highs. Although the direct effects of the bill only lasted a few years, the bill forever changed the demographics of colleges around the country. No longer was a college degree only available to the rich and privileged as the GI’s forged an entirely new sense of who could and should attend

⁸⁹ Rosemary Foot, *The Wrong War: American Policy and the Dimensions of the Korean Conflict, 1950-1953*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 42.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Walter A McDougal. *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter With the World Since 1777*, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 168.

⁹² Roger L Geiger. *Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities Since World War II*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 40.

college. This change in American society would affect the growth rate of colleges for years to come, as the bill shattered everyone's prejudices about who should go to college.

The United States also invested heavily in scientific research by funneling large amounts of money into American universities. According to historian Richard Geiger, "By 1950 the AEC (Atomic Energy Commission) was spending \$97.6 million for research at nonprofit institutions. Some \$80 million was designated for large, self-contained, university-administered laboratories (and included capital costs)."⁹³ In addition, the National Institute of Health was founded in 1947 "to improve the health of the people of the United States through the conduct of researchers, investigations, experiments..."⁹⁴ NIH allocations grew from \$8 million to \$74 million from 1947 to 1954, the first seven years of its existence. It was only logical for the government to turn to the existing infrastructure of university laboratories for their primary scientific research. During the war, General Eisenhower was impressed by the close working relationship between the military and university researchers. According to Eisenhower:

Close integration of civilian and military resources will not only directly benefit the Army, but indirectly contribute to the nation's security, as civilians are prepared for their role in an emergency by the experience gained in peace.⁹⁵

The launch of Sputnik on October 4, 1957 intensified the pressure for increased research at America's universities. The threat of being outgunned by the Soviets was an anxiety that many politicians targeted. John F. Kennedy manipulated and exploited this fear of a 'missile gap', claiming that "the Soviets not only had nuclear capability, but that they had more missile

⁹³ Geiger, 22.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 180.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

capacity than the United States did.”⁹⁶ Walter Lippman claimed that this was one of Kennedy’s three major platforms in running for President a few years later even though he had seen classified documents dispelling the legitimacy of any gap between the two countries.⁹⁷ Regardless of Kennedy’s motives, the “missile gap” became a major fear for Americans, significantly impacting universities. According to American historian Paul Conkin, “Little Sputnik provoked an extended critical examination of American achievements in almost all areas, particularly education.”⁹⁸ Significant legislation passed quickly to aid universities in order to reduce this gap. The National Defense Education Act of 1958 “offered loans for college students (partially forgiven for those who became teachers), fellowships for graduate students, and support for languages and area studies.”⁹⁹ After Sputnik, “national spending for basic research approximately tripled as proportion of GNP, as did total University R&D.”¹⁰⁰ Federal funded programs left extra money for overhead purposes, which helped to fuel university expansion. In 1957 alone, the NIH research budget more than doubled to \$85 Million.¹⁰¹ According to Geiger, “Sputnik superimposed upon existing expansionary tendencies, gave a powerful impetus to university research that carried onward for about ten years.”¹⁰²

⁹⁶ Richard Reeves, *President Kennedy: Profiles of Power* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 17.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17 and 37.

⁹⁸ Conkin, Paul T. *Big Daddy From the Pedernales: Lyndon Baines Johnson* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1986), 143.

⁹⁹ Geiger, 165.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

The University of Pennsylvania would also see a dramatic increase in federal funds over the period with a dramatic bump in government support directly following the Soviet launch of the Sputnik Satellite. Since the University first received government money for research projects in the 1930's, the government had steadily increased its yearly contribution to the University. The Gazette reported in the late 1960's that World War II greatly increased the flow of federal funds to the University, as "The campus became a major center for the training of military personnel."¹⁰³ The University spent \$1 million in the 1947-48 fiscal year, while in the 1960-61 year Penn spent \$15,000,000 of the government's money. By 1968, the figure would double to nearly \$30 million.¹⁰⁴

In addition to communism and its effect on institutions of higher learning, the post W.W.II change in U.S. demographics had another dramatic impact on the growth of universities. Returning from abroad, young U.S. soldiers came home and started families during a period of substantial economic growth, resulting in the national phenomenon known as the "baby boom." Early on, University of Pennsylvania officials took note of these upcoming birth trends. Gaylord Harnwell, President of the University, commissioned a complete study during the 1954-55 academic term to assess Penn's growth potential and growth needs in the coming decade. According to the report, the University would experience an application increase of

¹⁰³ Mary Ann Meyers, "Federal Dollars at Pennsylvania: In 1965-66, Uncle Sam Provided 24 Per Cent of the University Budget," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 65, no. 7 (April 1967), 9. UARC.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.

around 4% to 5% per year. The report estimated that by 1975, Penn and other universities could experience a 100% increase in applicants.¹⁰⁵

The significance of the report lies in the University's commitment to an organized and logical expansion process. Harnwell and the University launched a massive fundraising initiative, but their ambitious plans would never have come to fruition without government help. Finally, the different pieces to the post W.W.II dynamics puzzle began to fit together with federal money targeted at the Cold War projects while serving a dualistic purpose. On one hand, the Federal government supplied a massive amount of money in research projects, however room for overhead costs left universities enough money to pay for their expansion in new classrooms, laboratories and even dormitories. As we have already seen, local and state government augmented the federal grants in the overall expansion of the University, and Penn took advantages of the new opportunities. The Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia and the General State Authority served as great facilitators to the expansion of the University while grants from the federal level provided additional support.

Lyndon Johnson's succession to the White House proved to be a major blessing to universities. Johnson's strong belief in education yielded many significant programs, including his Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, which increased federal funds for construction projects on universities.¹⁰⁶ In 1964, LBJ signed the OEO Work-Study Program, and authorized the

¹⁰⁵ Gaylord P. Harnwell, University of Pennsylvania Report of the President: 1955, 7. UARC, UPI 25.1.

Educational Opportunity Grants where the Federal government paid for up to half of the scholarships targeted towards disadvantaged students. According to Conkin, “These loans (\$700 million in 1966) helped boost college enrollments in the late sixties...”¹⁰⁷

Of course, much of this would not be possible without a larger and more intrusive government. Ever since Roosevelt’s New Deal policies, Americans had a renewed faith in their government. The U.S. had won the war not only in Europe, but also the domestic war against the Great Depression. The Economic boom of the 1950’s reaffirmed this confidence, pushing the size and growth rate of government in the U.S. to all time levels. Even President Eisenhower, who campaigned in 1952 that four more years of democratic leadership would lead to socialism, signed legislation expanding the government’s scope and responsibilities.¹⁰⁸ Without this faith in, and the growth of government, the development and expansion of America’s universities would not have been as successful or as widespread as it was. In the face of a changing world and domestic society, this larger and more active government set policies and made decisions that would forever alter the face of higher education.

Confronted with the changing dynamics of universities across the nation, the Trustees appointed Dr. Gaylord Harnwell in May 1953 to guide the University through the changing times. As we have seen, Harnwell

¹⁰⁶ Geiger, 165.

¹⁰⁷ Conkin, 228.

successfully orchestrated the good working relationship between government agencies and the University in the 1950's. In order to diagnose fully the university's needs, both structurally and academically, Harnwell commissioned *The Educational Survey* in early 1955. Thirty-two faculty members and outside consultants worked on the survey to plan the University's ability to cope with the changing dynamics of higher education in America. Harnwell articulated the mission of the survey in his yearly address to the Penn community in the *Gazette*:

Essentially the University is placing its objectives, its faculty, its physical resources, and its performance in teaching, research and public service upon the table, to be reassessed in a spirit of critical objectivity.¹⁰⁹

Although the survey took three years to complete, as we have seen, the University did not delay any construction plans. During the second half of the 1950's, the University constructed the Physics building, a Wharton building, the Library, and the new Women's Residence Hall in addition to numerous smaller projects, which didn't require the government's help in acquiring land. In December 1958 President Harnwell discussed the results of the Educational Survey in his annual report of the University. Besides making specific academic recommendations for specific departments and programs, the survey proposed the establishment of an integrated development plan.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Roark, Johnson, Cohen, Stage, Lawson and Hartman, *The American Promise: A History of the United States* (Boston: Bedford Books. 1998), 1059.

¹⁰⁹ Dr. Gaylord Harnwell, "Transition and Tradition," *Pennsylvania Gazette* 54, no. 8 (April 1956), 13.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

The Plan was subsequently forged by the deliberations of the trustees faculty, and administration in many joint committee sessions during the intervening years. It is an all-inclusive and imaginative plan in which the University is conceived of as a single albeit complex, entity whose strength lies in its capacity for growth in response to essential social needs.¹¹¹

The plan arranged two stages of development periods. Stage one was planned to continue from the time of presentation to 1965, while stage two would run from 1965-1975. The development plan also called for a separate real estate corporation to hedge the University's potential risks.¹¹² Harold Taubin, the former planning chief of Savannah, Georgia, was hired to lead the University's planning office. The office would be assigned the responsibility of facilitating Penn's plan for expansion, while serving as the liaison between the University and the West Philadelphia Corporation (WPC).¹¹³ The WPC was organized in 1959 by the major institutions in the area to facilitate urban renewal in West Philadelphia. Acting as a liason between the government, the community and the universities, the WPC tried to infuse citizen participation in the renewal plans.

In order to accomplish these objectives, and fulfill the vision of the Martin Report, the University needed to acquire the rest of the property located within the designated area of the report. A massive construction plan would soon be implemented using the resources of the General State Authority; but first, the physical acquisition of the property needed to be made with the help of the Redevelopment Authority.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Trustees Minutes, vol. 27—478, May 19, 1961. UARC.

¹¹³ *Evening Bulletin* 23 December 1959, "Harold Taubin to Head U. of P. Planning Office," (Pennsylvania University: Planning Office) TUARC..

One of the first major steps in achieving the goals of the integrated development plan was the four-building Social Sciences Center beginning at the northwest corner of 37th and Locust Streets. The Center was designed to provide the finest research and instruction facilities for the Psychology department, the School of Social Work, and the Graduate School of Education. Fitting with the overall objectives of the Integrated Development Plan, the Center worked towards the “creation of a green and congenial campus, grouping of related activities in logical and functional patterns...”¹¹⁴ The General State Authority helped to construct the Center and provided \$5,740,530 of the funds, and the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health donated \$400,000 each towards the construction costs of the project.

The newly designated block for various departments at the University began at the northwest corner of 37th and Locust Streets moving westward along Locust to 38th Street, turning north to Walnut Street where the property line moved eastward to 37th Street, where it turned south towards the place of beginning. The project displaced 346 persons from 172 housing units. Forty-two of these units were owner occupied (24.4%) with only 9 units occupied by non-whites (5.2%). The average prices of properties facing 37th Street was \$14,000, while the rest of the block averaged \$11,000.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “On An Empty Block On Walnut Street,” vol. 62, no. 1 (October 1963), 24. UARC.

¹¹⁵ Wayne F. Daugherty, Compiler, U.S. Census of Housing: 1960. City Blocks, Philadelphia, Pa. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1962. Part 3 (map) and p. 52 (statistics). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962.

The remaining property bounded by 32nd Street, 40th Street, Hamilton Walk, and Walnut Streets resided in the city's designated Urban Renewal Area Unit Number 4 (See Appendix A). When the RDA first articulated its goals in rejuvenating the city, the Authority along with the City Planning Commission divided the city into project areas, which were further divided these areas into units in order to organize their efforts around the needs of specific areas. University City was divided into five units; Unit Number 4 contained most of the present day campus of the University of Pennsylvania.

Similar to the other projects, the Redevelopment Authority needed the approval of the Philadelphia's City Council, in order to acquire this large tract of land. Placing the ultimate decision of renewal by eminent domain ensured the entire process still remained a public policy issue. If public support ever wavered or waned politicians would be forced to recognize this and affect the policy accordingly. Logically, the Council required a solid understanding of the block before making any decisions, and the RDA hired an outside consulting firm to complete an overall survey of the area. In January 1962, Walker & Murray Associates, Inc. completed an in-depth study for University City Unit Number 4, at a cost of \$242,462, which federal funds completely covered.¹¹⁶ The boundaries of the unit began at the southwest corner of 34th and Sansom Streets moving west along Sansom, north on 36th Street to Chestnut Street where the line followed a westward

route to 38th Street. The project line moved south to Walnut Street and then west to 40th Street. At 40th and Locust streets, Unit Number 4 moved east to 39th Street, south to Spruce Street, then followed the northern side of Spruce to 37th Street where it moved north, and eventually it moved northeast to its original point.¹¹⁷

In total, the project covered 49.31 acres occupying 396 buildings. 341 of the buildings acquired were zoned residential with 221 structural deficiencies (64.8%). The residential buildings housed 1,160 dwelling units with 965 labeled structurally deficient in some way. Out of the 55 nonresidential buildings, 23 had some sort of deficiencies (41.8%). Overall, the report listed eight general categories for poor conditions. The project area was characterized as overcrowded with high dwelling unit density, and inadequate building maintenance was said to have a “blighting influence.” The streets were considered to be “unsafe, congested, poorly designed, or otherwise deficient...” The report elaborated on the condition of the streets, chastising them for being unable to cope with current traffic volumes. The report also criticized the availability of off street parking as well as the lack of park and recreation space. Overall, the Report concluded that, “The entire area is characterized by improper and uneconomic land utilization, resulting in unsatisfactory living conditions and economic decline.”¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia, *Survey and Planning Application. University City – Unit Number 4*, January 1962, Form H-6100.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Form H-6101.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Form H-6101 page 2 of 2.

The survey also researched the demographics of the area from the 1960 U.S. Census Report. In total the project area was made up of 1,249 people who were to be displaced and 99 of the reported total had business interests, but were not residents. Out of the 1,046 people who were to be displaced, only 104 were considered to be nonwhite by the census; in other words, less than 1% of the persons who were to be displaced were minorities. The Survey was careful to point out that “The boundaries of the area were determined without consideration of the race, religion, color or national origin of the residents.”¹¹⁹ Although this sentence seems fairly innocent, the demographics of the University City area as a whole vary dramatically between specific project areas. By making it clear that the boundaries of the project area were drawn up for the best redevelopment for the area, the RDA is making a clear statement about how they view the area.

The Survey also estimated the gross cost of the project at \$8,536,307. The great majority of the total cost was made up of the actual acquisition costs which the survey estimated at \$6,876,000. The survey assumed Federal grants would pay for approximately two-thirds of the total cost (\$5 million) in addition to providing a one time \$352,100 relocation grant. Displaced families were given \$150, and individual householders received \$50 in order to find and move to a new residence. Local money paid for one-third of the total project cost, which was estimated at \$2.3 million.¹²⁰ In less than five months, the outside consulting company had prepared a convincing case for

¹¹⁹ Ibid., Code Number R-103, page 1.

redevelopment in the University City Area. However, the City Planning Commission and the University needed to support the plan before presenting it to the overriding and final decision maker in the City Council.

On November 18, 1965, the City Council approved the initial urban renewal plan for University City No. 4. This ordinance was enormous in its scope concerning the development and expansion of Penn, filling in every major missing piece of Penn's landscape between 34th and 40th Streets. The ordinance authorized the RDA's acquisition and the transfer of the properties for the purpose of development for the University.¹²¹ After five years of planning on the part of numerous groups, the project was begun immediately. Only two weeks after City Council passed a city ordinance authorizing redevelopment of University City Number four, the *Bulletin* reported that the RDA began the necessary court proceedings to acquire the land by condemnation.¹²²

The displaced businesses of the area organized themselves into the University City Shopping Center Association, and successfully lobbied the Authority and the University to redevelop the block west of 40th Street between Walnut and Locust Streets.¹²³ Since most of the opposition to the University's expansion came from businesses in the area, the new strip

¹²⁰ Ibid., Code Number R-121.

¹²¹ Journal of the City Council of Philadelphia, 2(1965): 1179.

¹²² *Evening Bulletin*. 30 November 1966, "Authority to Condemn Land for University City," (Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Misc. 1966), Urban Archives.

¹²³ *Evening Bulletin*. 15 November 1966, "Five Chosen To Redevelop W. Phila. Site." (Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, Misc. 1966), Urban Archives.

shopping center ensured a limited amount of controversy and allowed the Authority and the University to focus on acquiring the residential property.

By December 1, 1966 the RDA had condemned or acquired all of the property in the Unit 4 project area. By October 1968 the largest construction project in the history of the University was well under way. According to the *Gazette*, the ultimate goal of the project was to provide residence facilities for 5,100 students by the 1970-1971 academic year at a cost of \$56 million dollars.¹²⁴ Graduate dorms were to be built in the block bounded by 36th, 37th, Sansom and Chestnut Streets. In addition, the structures provided “dining and activities facilities, underground parking, and storage and retail areas.”¹²⁵ By this time, the entire block had been cleared and construction began with the appropriate ceremonies. At the same time, construction had begun on the site bounded by 38th, 40th, Walnut and Spruce Streets. The future Superblock would house three 25-story, and three 4-story undergraduate residences; In addition to a dining facility that would serve meals to 1,500 students daily.

Once again, the government provided a massive subsidy for the construction of the facilities. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Facilities Authority (PHEFA), established in early 1968, issued revenue bonds in order to raise the necessary money. According to the *Gazette*, the buildings would remain the property of PHEFA for forty years while they leased the buildings

¹²⁴ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, “Pennsylvania’s ‘Biggest’ Hole,” vol. 67, no. 2 (October 1968), 6.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

to the University, and then the buildings would become the property of the University.¹²⁶

The development of Superblock, bounded by 38th, 40th, Spruce, and Walnut Streets, displaced 1,220 people from 447 dwelling units (See Appendices B and C). The area fit the normal demographic and owner patterns of the rest of the modern day campus. Only 20 of the dwelling units were owner occupied (4.5%), while 368 were renter occupied with 13 vacant units. Out of the 438 lived-in dwelling units, non-whites occupied only 18 of them (4.1%). The average property values of the block in 1950, since the 1960 Census did not report the block's property values, ranged from \$10,000 to \$15,000 according to their location.¹²⁷ The most expensive property in 1950 faced the busy traffic center of 38th Street and the Redevelopment Authority paid more than \$40,000 for some of these properties on the block in 1966.¹²⁸ The large compensation figures partially indicate the rising prices of real estate in the area, but more significantly, they show how the commitment the Authority, and therefore the University, to providing more than adequate compensation for those displaced by University expansion and urban renewal.

The block designated for high rise residences for graduate students displaced 345 persons in the block bounded by 36th, 37th, Sansom, and Chestnut Streets. Twenty-nine of the 164 occupied dwelling units on the

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ 1950 U.S. Census, 67.

¹²⁸ Philadelphia Department of Records. Block # 19s12, Property # 100. Philadelphia City Hall.

block were owner occupied (17.7%) with an average property value of \$14,000 each. The higher percentage of owner occupied properties was not the only difference in this block compared to the other blocks the University acquired in the 1960's. The block also saw a higher percentage of minorities occupying dwelling units, 14%, than most of the other blocks.¹²⁹ This pattern fits with the overall picture of University City as property values closer to Market Street, tended to decrease while the number of minorities tends to increase.

The political development surrounding Unit 4 was the culmination of the governmental role in the University's expansion. The bill City Council unanimously passed in November 1965, which approved the RDA's proposal for the area, gave the University a blank check to build at free will. The RDA's plan was extremely vague; the most detailed restriction for specific blocks came under the heading of "educational building."¹³⁰ This "Blank Check" that the City signed was a giant leap from the original relationship it had with the University for many reasons. When the RDA first condemned land for University use in the early 1950s, as in the Wharton and Physics projects, the University had to provide a detailed use for each specific site cleared with government help. In addition, the University covered the entire cost of the land acquisition process. By the late 1950's, the city government was already assisting Penn in the cost of acquiring land as in the example of the Hill House project. By City ordinance, agreeing to pay one-third of this extremely high cost of clearing the site for construction. For University City

¹²⁹ 1950 U.S. Census, 67.

Unit 4, the government not only approved and helped pay for land acquisition, but by way of the GSA and the PHEFA were financing their construction at an extremely reduced cost to the University. While the large amount of government support facilitated the University's expansion, it ultimately led to one of the more embarrassing PR moments in the history of the expansion era.

¹³⁰ Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia, Urban Renewal Plan Number 4, 1965 RDAPH.

Chapter 4:

From Condemnation to Admiration: The Story of the 3400 Block of Sansom Street

Nowhere on Penn's campus did the University overplay its hand more so than on the 3400 block of Sansom Street. Critics of the University's development see this block as a successful example of residents standing up for their rights and fighting an impersonal system perpetrated by unfair eminent domain practices. Today, its tree-lined streets, original brownstone architecture, and upscale restaurants have made the block a staple of campus. President Judith Rodin even recently hailed the block as an example for the future development of the University. It is truly ironic that one of the school's most prized possessions, considered to be a living model for future development, was actually the result of poor planning and sheer luck. Corruption, over-extension of City and University resources, and an extremely successful grass roots community action group highlight the sensational story of the block.

On November 18, 1965 the City Council of Philadelphia approved the initial Urban Renewal Plan for University City Planning Tract No. 4, thus binding this historic block with most of the remaining undeveloped portion of campus (see Appendix A). The ordinance authorized the Redevelopment Authority's acquisition of the block and the transfer of the property to the University for development.¹³¹ The Redevelopment Authority first articulated its acquisition plan for the block in January 1962 in its Survey and Planning Application for University City Urban Renewal Area No. 4.

Overall the survey commented that, “The entire area is characterized by improper and uneconomic land utilization, resulting in unsatisfactory living conditions and economic decline.”¹³²

The ordinance, officially labeled bill number 1346, approved the RDA’s Urban Renewal Plan which authorized the acquisition of the lot between the Van Pelt Library and the Law school, and its transfer of property to the University. Vague plans for an educational building bounded by 34th Street on the east, Sansom Street to the north, 36th Street to the west, and Walnut Street to the south were included in the RDA’s proposal.¹³³ According to the RDA commissioned survey, 34 of the 51 total structures on the lot had some form of deficiencies, which justified their renewal plans for the block.¹³⁴ The RDA formally condemned the block in December 1966, which was thirteen months after the City Council’s approval of the plan (see Appendices D and E). Most of the homeowners of the 3400 block of Sansom had negotiated purchase agreements with the RDA before the condemnation date, indicating their relative willingness to part with their properties.

Only two owners on the 3400 block of Sansom settled after the RDA’s condemnation date. Benjamin and Lillian Brasler settled with the Authority on June 8, 1967, six months after the RDA condemned the property, indicating some form of litigation.¹³⁵ The other owner who settled after the

¹³¹ Journal of the City Council of Philadelphia, 2(1965): 1179.

¹³² Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia, *Survey and Planning Application University City-Unit No. 4 Urban Renewal Area*, January 1962.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., Project Area Conditions Map Code No.R103(6)

¹³⁵ Philadelphia Department of Records. Block # 19s16. Property # 43. Philadelphia City Hall.

condemnation date was probably the most noteworthy homeowner on the 3400 block of Sansom Street, G. Holmes Perkins. Perkins not only owned property on the block, but also served as the Chairman of the City Planning Commission and the Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. In addition, Perkins' architectural firm prepared the survey plans for the entire University City Unit Number 4 Redevelopment Area. With inside information from many different perspectives, Perkins could financially profit from his many conflicts of interest. According to the deeds, Perkins bought 3416 and 3418 Sansom in 1958 and 1959 for a total of \$18,750.¹³⁶ Technically the city's plans would not be made public until 1962 which gave Perkins prior and asymmetric information on which properties were slated for condemnation. According to the *Evening Bulletin*, Perkins refused the RDA's offer of \$26,500 for the two properties in early 1968.¹³⁷

Although Perkins abstained from voting on issues involving the block, he held positions where he could influence decisions that could help him profit financially from redevelopment. Known as land speculation, investors purchased properties in areas thought to be slated for urban renewal since they would be guaranteed a buyer in the RDA, who would pay fair market value for the property. In November 1965 rumors of land speculation in the University City area prompted Jason R. Nathan, regional director of the Federal Urban Renewal Administration, to ask the Authority to investigate.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, plot numbers 51 and 52.

¹³⁷ *Evening Bulletin*, 4 February 1968, "Perkins Wears 3 Hats in W. Phila. Renewal," (Pennsylvania U. – Building Construction, 1968), Urban Archives.

Although no scandal flared in the 1965 newspapers, the threat could have scared away Federal support for the city's projects, motivating the Authority and Perkins to keep relations amicable. An *Evening Bulletin* editorial welcomed the probe, concluding, "... urban renewal should be, like Caesar's wife, beyond reproach."¹³⁸

The University did not immediately focus its development plans on the 3400 blocks of Sansom and Walnut Streets, so construction on the site remained dormant for the next three years. While Penn worked steadily with the RDA and funding agencies to acquire and build on both sides of Walnut Street as far west as 40th Street, including the "Superblock" area, it appears that no plans were proposed for the campus gateway at 34th and Walnut Streets. This proved to be a huge strategic misjudgment on the part of the University administration.

While settlement on the Sansom block proceeded relatively quickly with minor delays, the businesses on the north side of Walnut Street remained unwilling to sell, and never did settle amicably with the Authority. Some business owners were confident enough to invest more in their current properties even after the buildings became subject to demolition in the RDA's initial report in 1962, and by a City Council Ordinance in January 1963 that requested federal funds for further survey and planning.¹³⁹ The ordinance was clear in its intentions, and declared that the project area "[was] a slum,

¹³⁸ *Evening Bulletin*, 26 November 1965, "Land Speculation in Urban Renewal," (Redevelopment Authority- Misc. 1968), Urban Archives.

¹³⁹ *Journal of the Philadelphia City Council*, 1(1963): 132.

blighted, deteriorated or deteriorating area appropriate for an urban renewal project.”¹⁴⁰ In spite of this, the *Evening Bulletin* reported that Louis J. Weisenthal began renovating ten of the stores he owned on the north side of Walnut in March of 1964. Weisenthal’s capital improvements increased the RDA’s expenses, according to Theodore Liebert, the project coordinator of the Authority. Furthermore, there was no law preventing Weisenthal from any extra improvements which severely limited the Authority’s ability to curb the property enhancements. These renovations only increased the costs to the City, they did not change the acquisition price for the University since Penn’s purchase price was reportedly based on the “reuse value of the land, not what it costs the authority to acquire it.”¹⁴¹

According to the *Bulletin*, Penn finally informed the RDA in 1969 that the University no longer had the funds to build a large educational building on the site as originally planned.¹⁴² In November, the University accepted a proposal from a private developer, Fox and Posel, for a commercial development building on the site where the University would rent space. According to John Ballard, the University’s attorney, the ten story high-rise building would not be used solely “for university use, but for commercial office-space affiliated with and related to the campus.”¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ *Evening Bulletin*, 1 March 1964, “Owner Renovates Buildings Scheduled for Bulldozing,” (Pennsylvania – Building Construction 1964), Urban Archives.

¹⁴² *Evening Bulletin*, 21 October 1973, “To High-Rise Commercial Use,” (Sansom Street), Urban Archives.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

At a December Board of Trustees' meeting, Ballard presented a major problem, which he correctly predicted would stand as an obstacle to the deal.¹⁴⁴ Gustave Amsterdam had numerous conflicts of interests with the new proposal for the site. Not only was he a sitting Trustee member of the University, but he also served as the Chairman of the RDA, as well as the chairman of the Bankers Securities Company, which acquired another large Philadelphia real estate firm, Albert M. Greenfield Company in 1969. It was a Greenfield official who introduced the proposed redevelopers, Fox and Posel, to the University with the intentions of underwriting the deal. In December 1969, Amsterdam was cited for his conflict of interest by a grand jury in a different redevelopment project. Amsterdam resigned from his position as the Chairman of the RDA, only four days after Ballard first discussed the issue at the Trustees' meeting.¹⁴⁵ Since the developers stood to make a profit, and Amsterdam was connected directly to the developers as well as the University, ostensibly Amsterdam had everything to gain while the University and the City were seen as pawns. Although Amsterdam stepped down from his position at the RDA, he still retained two of his conflicting positions, serving as a University Trustee and as the Chairman of the Banker's Securities Company.

While the University pondered over the acquired site on the northwest corner of 34th and Walnut Streets, a new administration under Martin Meyerson took control in 1970. Meyerson inherited a rapidly growing

¹⁴⁴ Trustees Minutes, vol. 33—60, December 19, 1969. UARC.

University, but he also received the massive debt that came with it. The University ran an operating deficit of \$1,749,000 in the fiscal year ending in June 1969, the year before Meyerson's term began.¹⁴⁶ The financial report for that year concluded that the reviewers of the University's finances were "... seriously concerned about the financial future of this University...".¹⁴⁷ The poor financial state of the University was compounded by the decrease in support from the United States Federal Government. According to the financial report ending the fiscal year in June 1971, "Receipts from the U.S. Government for training and research projects declined in 1970-71 for the first time in over twenty years."¹⁴⁸ Although the decrease in funds only amounted to around \$3 million dollars, the trends in increased debt combined with less support forced Meyerson to make the University's finances his top priority. With little money to work with, Meyerson was forced to abandon the University's original plans for the site at the northwest corner of 34th and Walnut Streets, thus returning to the proposed commercial site underwritten by a private redeveloper.

One of the new issues with the proposal from a private redeveloper was whether or not the new commercial office building would "fit with the 'institutional land use' which the land was condemned for in 1966."¹⁴⁹ The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), who financed part of

¹⁴⁵ *Bulletin*, "To High-Rise Commercial Use."

¹⁴⁶ University of Pennsylvania, *University Financial Report*. 30 June 1969, p 9.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 1970-71, 6.

¹⁴⁹ *Bulletin*, "To High-Rise Commercial Use."

the project, presented no initial opposition to the changes approving the new development plan for the 3400 blocks of Sansom and Walnut Streets in May 1972. HUD claimed that the changes could be classified as 'minor', and therefore were not necessary to be presented at a public hearing. Members of some of the City's agencies disagreed. Charles Kupper, the RDA's director for the Walnut-Sansom project, became a major opponent of the proposed change in plans. According to the *Bulletin*, Kupper, in a September 29, 1972 letter to Lynne Abraham, then the executive director of the Authority (now the City's District Attorney), claimed that "Penn itself will have little use for the building in the foreseeable future."¹⁵⁰ Kupper felt that a non-Penn affiliated building would be inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood, and Abraham agreed. Kupper and Abraham's public comments against the University signaled a fundamental change in the relationship between the University and the City. No longer could the University benefit from the City's "old boy" network with its almost incestuous relationship with the University. A fledgling and little known, but well informed community group agreed with the RDA and filed a lawsuit in federal court against HUD in June 1972 challenging their distinction that the change in developers was a minor alteration to the original plan. Forced to choose sides, the RDA criticized the University, thus siding with their tenants of the block.

For the first time, the RDA did not support the University wholeheartedly. The watershed event in the changing relationships between

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

the city and the government was the election of the former Police Commissioner Frank Rizzo to City Hall as Mayor in 1971. Rizzo gained the reputation of being a tough, no nonsense type of leader while serving as the City's Police Commissioner during the nation's race riots of the 1960's. Although some of his tactics were questionable, such as removing the Internal Board of Review on police brutality, Rizzo was given much of the credit for Philadelphia's avoidance of the kind of violence that broke out in other cities. The new Mayor, with his take-charge attitude, filled the city's bureaucratic positions with his own followers. The shake up in the City administration would produce significant results as disagreements flared on the 3400 block of Sansom Street.

The Sansom Committee, organized in 1970, was a coalition of the residents and business people on the 3400 block of Sansom and Walnut Streets who sought the retention of the condemned block. After successful condemnation proceedings in 1966, the RDA remained the owner of the two blocks while waiting for the University to submit an appropriate redevelopment plan. In the meantime, the RDA began renting the properties on the 3400 block of Sansom Street that they had claimed were 'deficient' to a completely new group of residents, most of whom had never lived on the block; many of these new tenants had ties with the University. Elliot Cook, the committee's chairman and owner of La Terrasse Restaurant, graduated in 1964 with an undergraduate degree from Penn. In fact, out of 12 new residents of Sansom Street, nine had connection similar to Cook's with the

University. The group as a whole was well-educated and claimed to be long-time residents of University City (see Appendix F). Cook summarized the group's viewpoint in the *Evening Bulletin*, "We don't object to the university taking down buildings for academic facilities... we do object to the University destroying a neighborhood to turn it over to a private developer to build a non-university commercial high rise." According to the *Bulletin*, the committee's first official action was a letter dated November 28, 1970 to University President Meyerson, asking Penn "to rehabilitate the block rather than tear it down and redevelop it."¹⁵¹ Meyerson and the University were strapped financially and therefore continued with the plans under a private redeveloper.

By September 1972, the Committee's lawsuit in June had convinced HUD to reverse its previous decision. HUD agreed with the Committee, and concluded that the new change in development plans were 'major,' thereby rejecting its previous position that the changes were only "minor". This re-designation was significant enough to warrant another City Council review and vote which could easily have resulted in public embarrassment for Penn. The cases of Penn officials with numerous conflicts of interest combined with city officials publicly criticizing the project, could have produced a situation where public support, and therefore City Council's support, could falter for the first time in the University's expansionary years.

¹⁵¹ *Bulletin*, "To High-Rise Commercial Use."

The University exacerbated the already tense relations with the Sansom Committee in June 1972, by attempting to demolish Potter Hall, located at 120 S. 34th Street, in order to begin the development project. Potter Hall was a former religious convent that Penn purchased in August 1951 and initially used as a women's dormitory.¹⁵² The University later used the property for administrative purposes, although it had been boarded up for six months by the time the University wanted its demolition. The fact the University was going forth with construction infuriated the Sansom Committee, and prompted the committee to file an injunction on the basis that a renovation plan had not yet been finalized. Regarding the injunction case, the *Evening Bulletin* reported:

Sugarman's case (the Committee's attorney) against Penn is that the university wants to proceed with demolition of Potter Hall without admitting that its original plan to put up an academic building has been junked for a purely commercial development.¹⁵³

The University accused Sugarman and the Sansom Committee of stealing University correspondence, and therefore obtained "purloined" evidence. Henry Sawyer, the lawyer representing the University, filed a \$100,000 damage suit against the Committee for using "physical confrontations, threats, vilification, baseless and harassing litigation," in addition to the previously mentioned accusation of stealing property. Sawyer was a prominent Philadelphia trial lawyer who previously won a major case involving prayer in school before the U.S. Supreme Court. Although Penn had

¹⁵² Philadelphia Department of Records, Block Number 19S16, Property Numbers 38, 39, 40,41. Philadelphia City Hall.

intimidating representation and owned the deed to the building, the Sansom Committee's arguments prevailed and Judge Newcomer issued a temporary restraining order against the demolition of Potter Hall.¹⁵⁴

Debate continued for the next year and a half regarding the eventual outcome of these blocks. The Sansom Committee contended that the University could not transfer its developer status, as stated in the original City ordinance, to a new and different private redeveloper without the approval of City Council. When Penn had agreed in 1960 to transfer to Drexel University a portion of the property acquired in the Hill House project, city approval was required.¹⁵⁵ In addition, Penn faced the contention that they were redeveloping Sansom Block for non-educational purposes, as it was only planning to rent some of the space in the building. The final issue dealt with the impact of the new building on the surrounding area. The Sansom block, with its unique position as the final block scheduled for demolition, had a powerful argument in the preservation of historic West Philadelphia: University construction had already replaced much of the former area with little redevelopment of existing structures.

On February 5, 1974 the City Planning Commission agreed with the Committee and voted to rehabilitate, rather than tear down, the properties of Sansom Street. Under the Rizzo administration the new Planning Commission, without Perkins and Bacon sided once again with the tenants as

¹⁵³ *Evening Bulletin*, 14 June 1972, "Penn Battles Resident Over Renewal Tract." (Sansom Block), Urban Archives.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

opposed to the University. Penn had clearly lost their “inside track” with regards to City politics. The final agreement brokered by the City Planning Commission and Judge Newcomer allowed the University to build a 600,000 square foot building beginning at 3401 Walnut Street. In order to prevent the block from feeling too commercialized, the University agreed to occupy 51% of the new building. According to the *Bulletin*, the Sansom Committee saw these concessions by the University as insufficient. Functionally, they argued that an 11-story building would completely block out any sunlight. They were primarily concerned with the loss in aesthetic value that a giant high rise would create. Cook commented in the *Bulletin*, “Our differences are aesthetic, I don’t want the last piece of West Philadelphia left on campus to be plowed under.”¹⁵⁶ Regardless, the University demolished the properties on the north side of Walnut in September 1974 to make way for the new Penn building.

The apparent agreement of winter 1974 seemed only to intensify the battle between the community group and the major institutions of the city. In May 1974 the RDA informed Cook that on June 15th, the Authority would terminate his lease. After closely inspecting Cook’s lease, the Authority concluded “that the lease did not provide for use as a restaurant.”¹⁵⁷ The *Bulletin* also reported that the Department of Licenses and Inspections cited

¹⁵⁵ *Evening Bulletin*, 17 December 1960, “Redevelopers Approve Drexel Taking Penn Tract,” (Redevelopment Authority – Misc. 1960), Urban Archives.

¹⁵⁶ *Evening Bulletin*, 6 February 1974, “Planners Vote to Rehabilitate, Not Raze, Penn Campus Block,” (Sansom Block), Urban Archives.

¹⁵⁷ *Evening Bulletin*, 2 June 1974, “French Café At Penn Gets A Reprieve,” (Sansom Block), Urban Archives.

19 code violations for the restaurant. According to the *Bulletin*, in an open letter to the University community Cook claimed that because Penn officials have been “stymied in their efforts to destroy the 3400 block of Sansom Street... (they are now) moving through City Hall connections to close La Terrasse.”¹⁵⁸ Judge Newcomer forced both city organizations to withhold any action against Cook for 60 days in a late May decision.

The survival of La Terrasse came before a public hearing of the Philadelphia Zoning Board on January 26, 1975. The most notable and influential defender of the restaurant was Edmund N. Bacon, who had served as the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Planning Commission from 1949 to 1970. In front of the Zoning Board Bacon commented, “La Terrasse is a very valuable and irreplaceable element in the University community.”¹⁵⁹ For the first time in 18 years, Bacon called for individual interests to be placed above the University’s. This incident exemplifies the fundamental change in the accepted definition of a public good. The process was becoming more egalitarian, and therefore more complex than during Penn’s golden era of expansion. The University could not influence elected officials as they had previously. Sensitive to the voters, and therefore to the beliefs of the common citizen, city planners took new consideration for the individual in the growth of a major institution in the City. The Rizzo appointed zoning board agreed

¹⁵⁸ *Evening Bulletin*, 26 January 1975, “Zoners Slate Hearing On Restaurant’s Fate,” (Sansom Block), Urban Archives.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

with Bacon and ruled against the University ensuring Cook's participation in future agreements and arguments with the University.

The University's continuing financial troubles prevented serious consideration for plans regarding the 3400 blocks of Sansom and Walnut. For the next five years the tenants on Sansom Street would pay rent to the RDA, while a vacant lot sat on the site where the former shops and stores of Walnut Street resided. Finally, in August 1980, the RDA and Judge Newcomer brokered a new settlement between the Sansom Committee and the University, which approved a re-designed structure for the site directly south of the Sansom Street properties. According to this first consent decree, Penn would pay the Redevelopment Authority \$697,000 for title to the land of the 3400 block of Walnut.¹⁶⁰ On January 12, 1981, Newcomer signed another consent decree between all of the involved parties which gave the Sansom Committee members two years to buy the properties on Sansom Street and two more years to renovate them. In June 1985, a modification to the urban renewal plan of University City Unit Number 4 was approved by the City Planning Commission which authorized the University's new development plans.¹⁶¹ Soon thereafter, construction began on the 3401 Walnut building, but the continuing issue of sunlight had not been fully addressed to the satisfaction of the Sansom Committee. Originally the 3401 Walnut building was designed to be as tall as its neighbor to the west, the Franklin Building.

¹⁶⁰ 1980 Consent Decree, RDAPH.

The finally under construction building was only five stories instead of eight, but this was not short enough to satisfy the Committee. The Sansom Committee once again turned to Judge Newcomer for a temporary restraining order, but Newcomer rejected the request and construction continued to completion.

After more than a decade of intense arguing, a few of the Sansom Committee members began purchasing their properties in early 1983. The first member to purchase property was Neil Welliver, who acquired 3406 Sansom Street on February 2, 1983 for \$34,500. As the Co-Chairman for the Fine Arts Department at the University, Welliver was the exact objective of the 1948 Martin report as well as the 1961 Plan for Integrated Development. Ironically the plans, which called for more faculty housing near campus, would be partially realized on a block the University once had condemned. Judith Wicks, the current owner of the White Dog Café, purchased 3420 Sansom on February 25, 1983 for \$25,000.¹⁶² Elliot Cook, the owner of the La Terrasse restaurant and Chairman of the Sansom Committee, saw the dividends of his hard work on April 5, 1983 when he purchased 3430-3436 Sansom Street for his restaurant for \$145,000.¹⁶³

The story of Sansom block is an incredible story with many fascinating components— scandals, a victorious small political action group over the

¹⁶¹ Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia, *Sixth Modification to the Urban Renewal Plan, University City Unit No. 4*, RDAPH. Any modification to the Urban Redevelopment Areas is presented by the Redevelopment Authority and must be approved by the Planning Commission.

¹⁶² Plan # 19s16 Property # 50.

status quo, lawsuits, etc– but it clearly stands out as the end of an era in the expansion of Penn. A number of factors contributed to this result. First, after more than a decade of rapid expansion using the city’s powers of eminent domain and state funding for construction, the University at the end of the Harnwell administration found itself overextended and unable to pay the operations and maintenance costs of the new buildings as they were proposed. Scrambling to protect their hard won redevelopment rights, the Harnwell administration looked to private redevelopers for assistance. Once the University moved into the private sector, those who sought financial gain began to exert their influence. This helped to create the questionable climate surrounding the block which the Sansom Committee used to their advantage.

Its loud public assertions to the contrary, the Sansom Committee was clearly not a representative of the West Philadelphia community and not committed to residential community values. After 1966 the 3400 blocks of Sansom and Walnut Streets had no owner-occupied dwelling houses. The residents who represented the actual “neighborhood” had sold their property years before the litigation began over development. The new residents of the 3400 block of Sansom were tenants of the RDA and for the most part business owners. The fact that they were also members of the University community, rather than the neighborhood communities that surrounded

¹⁶³ Ibid., Property # 100. Cook eventually sold his four properties to University City Associates on 1/2/90 for \$140,811.82 along with his own debt of \$1.825 million.

Penn, further deviates them from the typical displaced owner of the University's expansion.

The conflict between the Sansom Committee and both the University and several government agencies was a clash of two privileged, well-educated, well-financed interests. Its appearance of a David challenging Goliath was only partly true, but it nevertheless revealed that taking private property for the "public good" no longer enjoyed broad political support. Immediately, their claims to representation of the common good were challenged. And in the debate which followed, it became clear that the entire notion of Urban Renewal had fundamentally changed between 1965 and 1975.

Chapter 5:

University City Urban Renewal Area Number Three

While the physical expansion of the University was generally limited to the boundaries set forth in the 1948 Martin Report, Penn's interests moved beyond the area bounded by 32nd Street, Walnut Street, 40th Street, and Hamilton Walk. In 1963, Penn joined 24 other interested institutions on the Eastern Seaboard, in the creation of the University City Science Center (UCSC) for the practical application of scientific research. With the eventual goal of a large research center located in University City, the UCSC planned their construction on both sides of Market Street from 34th to 40th Streets in University City Urban Renewal Area Unit No. 3. Once again, the close working relationships between the City and the University was predicted to have mutual benefits. The University would have a prestigious research center contiguous to its borders bringing the highest caliber of scientists to the school while the RDA would have a partner to assist in the renewal of a deeply blighted area. The City would also benefit from an increase in prestige as well as new manufacturing as a result of the science center's innovative research. While the premise was similar to the redevelopment projects on campus, the differences in racial make-up of the area produced a completely different path to development.

University City Urban Renewal Area Unit Number Three was the redevelopment site contiguous to Penn's redevelopment area in Unit Number

Four. Bounded by Powelton Avenue, Lancaster Avenue, 34th Street, Chestnut Street, 39th Street, and State Street (see Appendix G), Unit No. 3 was strikingly similar in its physical makeup to its counterpart to the south. According to a 1961 RDA survey of the area, 565 of the 628 residential buildings had some sort of deficiency (90.0%).¹⁶⁴ The area's residential units were crowded and in poor shape. According to the survey, "Over 35% of originally single family structures have been converted to rooming houses and multi-family units."¹⁶⁵ The survey considered 1,012 of the 1,210 (83.6) dwelling units in the area to be deficient in some way. In addition, the area's businesses were not in much better shape, as the survey considered 54 of the 110 nonresidential buildings to be deficient (49.1%).¹⁶⁶

The real difference between the two urban renewal areas was visible in the racial make-up of the two areas (see Appendices H and I). Penn's expansion affected a population that was less than ten percent African-American, while the African-Americans made up a majority of the population in Unit Three. According to the RDA survey, which drew its information from the 1960 census, 543 out of the 987 families (55%) were "non-white."¹⁶⁷ The specific blocks targeted for the UCSC was even more African-American. 77.6% of the population to be displaced by the UCSC was non-white.¹⁶⁸ Much of the criticism targeting the University's involvement in the project centered

¹⁶⁴ Redevelopment Authority of Philadelphia, *Survey and Planning Application University City-Unit No. 3 Urban Renewal Area*, June 1961, RDAPH.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Form H6101.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ See Appendix H

around this issue of race. The displacement of a largely poor non-white population for the benefit of major institutions was the central issue and the largest hurdle in the redevelopment of Unit Three.

Unlike the community response to Penn's expansion, residents of Unit Three quickly mobilized to voice their concerns. Almost immediately after the RDA survey was completed and made public, the Citizens Committee for University City Area 3 established themselves to ensure community involvement in redevelopment plans. The *Bulletin* reported that the group was not opposed to redevelopment in the area but was mainly interested in an active voice. They issued a statement on March 20, 1962 saying:

We believe that we have both the right and the responsibility to participate in the decision-making process at all levels of our city government and most certainly in these crucial decisions affecting our lives and our properties.¹⁶⁹

In addition, the committee's statement articulated their complete opposition to any massive clearance, claiming that substantial housing did exist in the area.

Attempting to appease the community, the West Philadelphia Corporation (WPC) in its monthly publication provided information on the urban renewal process in order to dispel many of the myths associated with it. According to the WPC, the institutions of the Corporation would make up less than half of all the institutional land in Unit Number 3. The WPC also

¹⁶⁹ As quoted in the *Evening Bulletin*, 21 March 1962. "Residents Demand a Voice In University City Plans," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Box 293A.

tried to stress their commitment to citizen participation and the city's commitment to displaced residents.¹⁷⁰

Despite these assurances from the WPC, Robert Geddes, the architect who the RDA hired to present a survey and plan for the area, suggested total demolition of residential structures in May of 1963.¹⁷¹ The Science Center was not the only institution interested in redeveloping portions of Unit Three. Presbyterian Hospital wanted land for its expansion to create a Medical Center in University City while the City's school district sought a substantial amount of land for a new high school to ease the overcrowded schools in West Philadelphia. Both of these projects were seen as directly benefiting the citizens of Unit Three, but the total demolition of the residential buildings was still unacceptable to the citizens.

Shortly after Geddes' plans were announced, the Citizens Committee for Area 3 took their complaints directly to City Hall. Staging a sit-in inside the Mayor's office, the Committee eventually won significant concessions from the Mayor, the RDA, the City Council and the City Planning Commission on May 16, 1963. According to the agreement, the recently submitted plans for Unit 3 would not be recognized without citizen input. The RDA also agreed to save as many houses as possible in future redevelopment plans.¹⁷² In early 1964 another agreement was finalized

¹⁷⁰ *University City News*, 1 February 1962. "The Mythology of University City," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Box 293A.

¹⁷¹ *Daily Pennsylvanian*, 23 January 1967. "Redevelopment Uproots People as it Eliminates Blight," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Box 293A.

¹⁷² Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations-University City High School / University Related Programs. Box 256, Folder 7. UARC.

between the RDA and the Citizens Committee for Area 3, allowing 7.6 acres would be rehabilitated for residential owner occupied housing between 36th and 37th Streets, and between Lancaster and Filbert Streets.¹⁷³

Now known as the University City Citizens Development Corporation (UCCDC), the former Citizens Committee sought to develop their own renewal plans for the area. The Committee's President, lawyer and developer John Clay, hired an architect and put up the required \$5,000 forfeitable bond with the RDA. Clay's architect completed a new proposal in July 1965, which called for the complete destruction of the 7.6 acres, to be replaced by a high-rise apartment building. Clay's proposal was the exact opposite of the objectives that the Citizens Committee, of which he was supposedly representing, agreed upon with the mayor two years earlier. The RDA rejected the proposal in favor of its previous agreement, deciding that the new property values for the completed high rise would be unaffordable to the current residents.¹⁷⁴ In an ironic twist, the RDA decided in favor of the area residents, while John Clay sought to move them out of the area through redevelopment.

While the RDA sought federal funding for their rehabilitation plans, the Philadelphia School Board condemned the properties in the 7.6 acres for a much needed high school in the area.¹⁷⁵ The School Board wanted the new school to serve as a math and science magnet school drawing 75% of the

¹⁷³ *Daily Pennsylvanian*, 24 January 1967. "Redevelopment Uproots People as it Eliminates Blight," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Box 293A. UARC.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

students from the area, while 25% would be bussed in from other parts of Philadelphia. Recognizing the real benefits that science students could have with the vast resources of the UCSC nearby and the positive press for the University, Harnwell strongly supported the school. Penn faculty advised from the beginning on the special curriculum and the school while Harnwell used his unique city contacts to expedite the land acquisition process. Immediately before the School Board condemned the property, Harnwell wrote Gustave Amsterdam, Chairman of the RDA and a Penn Trustee, expressing the WPC's viewpoint that the land should be used for the new high school.¹⁷⁶ Although Amsterdam might not have agreed with Harnwell, probably due to his signature on the 1963 agreement with the Citizens Committee, he was at least aware of the School Board's desires and intentions to the land.

Regardless, the School Board's equal powers of eminent domain left the RDA powerless. Understandably, John Clay and his Citizen's Committee were extremely upset with the School Board's somewhat surreptitious action. According to Leo Molinaro, the Executive Director of the WPC, the RDA planned on acquiring and selling the property to Clay in August 1966, one month after the School Board condemned the property themselves.¹⁷⁷ The quick and sudden change in the redevelopment plans confused the affected

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Letter from Dr. Gaylord Harnwell to Gustave Amsterdam, 27 June 1966. Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations – University City High School / University-Related Schools Program. Box 256, folder 7. UARC.

residents, as the major institutions in the area, as well as their own leader, competed for the land. Since the residents were only aware of the original agreement from the 1963 sit-in which had left rehabilitation in the hands of the residents, they were baffled. The signatures by the leaders of almost every city agency involved with urban renewal assured them of this in writing (see Appendix J). The Philadelphia School Board, with its close relationships with the University and the WPC, was seen as a perpetrator of their original agreement. The University was therefore seen as the enemy, leading to a negative view of Penn and its administration. The residents felt betrayed by the institution who pledged to support them.¹⁷⁸

The School Board's notice of condemnation to the residents in July 1966 was seen by many in the community as "cold" and uninformative. According to an official with the Richardson Memorial Church at 60th and Walnut Streets, the letter gave the residents sixty days to move without telling them "much else."¹⁷⁹ In addition, the superficial support from City Councilman George Schwartz only contributed to a growing fire. The residents were well aware that the councilman was publicly supporting the residents while privately "telling the [School] Board and the Redev. Authority

¹⁷⁷ Letter from Leo Molinaro to Dr. Gaylord Harnwell, 9 June 1966. Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations – University City High School / University-Related Schools Program. Box 256, folder 7. UARC.

¹⁷⁸ *Daily Pennsylvanian*, 25 January 1967. "Residents Fear Science School Will Threaten Their Children's Education," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Box 293A.

¹⁷⁹ Letter from Dick at Richardson Memorial Church to Mayor's Assistant, 22 August 1966. Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations – University City High School / University-Related Schools Program. Box 256, folder 7. UARC.

to go ahead.”¹⁸⁰ This convinced the residents that the major institutions in Philadelphia were conspiring against them. Mayor Tate, whose signature was on the 1963 agreement, was also lukewarm in his support. In a letter to Dick Dilworth, the President of the School Board, Tate explained the nature of the 1963 agreement while strongly urging the School Board “to give careful consideration to the local community interests.” Tate made the letter public at a news conference the next week. Although Tate at least nominally supported the residents, his lack harsh criticism of the School Board still left the residents with their previous sentiments.

While the residents had legitimate complaints regarding their treatment by the City, they also had justified reasons to be upset with their leadership. John Clay sold them out for his own personal gain by proposing a complete demolition of the site in favor of a high rise housing complex that would be unaffordable to the residents it displaced. In short, Clay, an African-American and area resident, attempted to used the negative consequences of urban renewal for his financial gain. Clay further exacerbated the community’s situation as he continued to play on the resident’s fears of institutional displacement while threatening the City and the Federal government with race riots. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) also vowed to defend the residents, and joined Clay in criticizing the institutions involved. According to William Mathis, head of the local chapter of CORE, “This is just an effort of the white power structure to move poor

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

people-- especially black ones-- around as they wish.”¹⁸¹ Since racial tension filled the air of American cities throughout the summer of 1966 as riots erupted across the nation, Clay was successful in sabotaging the government’s plans. Memories of the Watts riots in the summer of 1965 and the smaller North Philadelphia riot of 1964 were vivid reminders to Philadelphia and national officials of the dangers inherent in an unfair or ill-informed policy.

Threatening to withhold federal money for any redevelopment project, HUD forced the RDA and the School Board into discussions on a compromise. By October 1966 an agreement was reached to satisfy HUD, which reduced the amount of land given to the School Board. According to this agreement, the School Board would reduce the amount of land for the high school by 2.2 acres, to be used solely for residential development. The School Board was relieved that construction could begin to solve the immediate problem of overcrowded schools in West Philadelphia.¹⁸² In addition, the RDA finally agreed to find 7.6 acres for residential living within two blocks of their current residences. Excited to see progress from a two-year delay, the WPC actively supported the compromise guaranteeing its eventual realization.

Meanwhile, the fear of racial tensions had slowed progress on the physical expansion of the University City Science Center. The UCSC had

¹⁸¹ *Evening Bulletin*, 12 October 1966. UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Clippings VIII, Box 294.

¹⁸² Letter from Richardson Dilworth to Gustave Amsterdam, 17 October 1966. Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations – University City High School / University-Related Schools Program. Box 256, folder 7. UARC.

begun leasing its first unit at 34th and Market Streets since May 1965 from the RDA after the Authority purchased the old Stephen Greene Company building for \$820,000. On November 24, 1965 City Council approved the RDA's recommendations for the eventual construction of the UCSC on both sides of Market Street between 34th and 40th Streets, therefore creating a wealth of optimism around the project.¹⁸³ According to a December 1965 *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial, "No project attempted since 1950 has been more important to maintaining the vitality of the city and providing a solid foundation for continued and rapid development." The editorial concluded that, "All Philadelphians can watch this project with pride."¹⁸⁴

Although support for the new Science Center was strong, especially from the *Inquirer* and the *Bulletin*, public outcries and the fear of racial tension stalled the UCSC's construction plans. The University's support for the Science Center came under attack from two perspectives. On one hand the community criticized the University for displacing poor African Americans for their gain, while students protested the University's support of classified research at the Center, which became increasingly unpopular as the war in Vietnam progressed. Reverend Thomas Johnston, a community activist and local clergyman, accused the University of supporting the tax paying Science Center as justification for its own physical expansion in Unit

¹⁸³ Ordinance of the City Council, 24 November 1965, 1407.

¹⁸⁴ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 3 December 1965, "Big Step for Science and the City," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Clippings VI 1965, Box S294.

4 which would not increase the City's tax base.¹⁸⁵ Students and other protestors of the war viewed the Science Center's involvement with the Air Force's Spice Rack program as morally wrong for the University since Penn owned a majority of the Corporation's stock.¹⁸⁶

While protest over the University's morality regarding classified research at the UCSC eventually forced the abandonment of many projects including the Spice Rack, it was the issue of race which proved to be a larger stumbling block for the development of the Science Center. In 1966, HUD formulated a new policy that held up renewal funds "in an area of racial tension which [threatened] to produce violence."¹⁸⁷ By September 1966, the entire UCSC project on Market Street was in jeopardy, as the federal government feared violence.

One month later an agreement between the RDA and the School Board, which HUD accepted finally allowed development plans to continue for the University City High School and the UCSC, and soon construction finally began on a desperately needed new school. Heavily influenced by Penn faculty, the new school would have a completely different style and curricula. No set periods or bells would constrain learning while students

¹⁸⁵ *Daily Pennsylvanian*, 13 October 1965. "Clergyman Attacks Univ. Failure to Relate Planning to Neighbors," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Clippings VI 1965, Box S294.

¹⁸⁶ *Evening Bulletin*, 14 May 1967, "University City Science Center Defies Protestors, Continues Seeking War Contracts," UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Folder 5, Box 294.

¹⁸⁷ *Evening Bulletin*, 14 September 1966. UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Clippings VII, Box 294.

could move through the program at their own individualized pace.¹⁸⁸ George H. Love, the coordinator of the school for the Philadelphia School District, asked Harnwell for a more formal role in the University's support of the school. Love requested faculty, facilities and graduates to be admitted to the University. Harnwell responded with promises for support although it was clear that the School Board and not the University would control the school.¹⁸⁹

Planning and construction continued for three years, to prepare the school for its opening in the fall of 1971, however, more controversy and disagreements threatened the unique nature of the new high school. By October 1969, an open conflict between the advisory committee and the Superintendent resulted in Dr. Kenneth George, an assistant professor of science education at the University and Penn's representative on the advisory committee for the high school, threatening to quit the board.¹⁹⁰ Apparently a conflict with the teacher's union over who would teach at the school created the rift between George and the Superintendent. The advisory committee obviously wanted the best faculty available from the district, while the Teacher's Union demanded the current policy of seniority to direct which teachers could teach at the new school. George's threat to leave the advisory

¹⁸⁸ *Evening Bulletin*, 1 October 1968, "New High School Started in University City Area," Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations – University City High School / University-Related Schools Program. Box 256, folder 7. UARC.

¹⁸⁹ Letter from George H. Love to Dr. Gaylord Harnwell, 27 November 1968. Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations – University City High School / University-Related Schools Program. Box 256, folder 7. UARC.

committee added to the myth that the University simply wanted to completely control the new school.

By 1971, more pressing issues threatened to delay further the opening of the school. George and the advisory committee had recommended a student population of 1300 to open the new school to ensure that the program would begin effectively but the School Board wanted to open at the full capacity number of 2600. A compromise was eventually reached allowing 2000 students to enroll in the fall, however, by May 1971 there existed an extreme shortage of trained teachers to implement the program; These disagreements eventually forced Dr. George to quit the committee. Since George could not control the future of the school, even with altruistic intentions, he opted out of any input at all.

Despite the community's view to the contrary, Meyerson replacement of George on the committee signified the University's commitment to the new high school despite its earlier differences. Meyerson's move proves that the University never had any intentions of controlling the school outright, even as a ploy to recruit more faculty and staff families to the area with better schools. The University's involvement with the school from start to finish was a sincere effort to improve the community, while George's head-strong actions created unnecessary bad blood between Penn and the surrounding community. The University City High School only contributed

¹⁹⁰ Letter from Francis M. Betts III to Dr. Gaylord Harnwell, 7 October 1969. Martin Meyerson Papers. Community Relations – University City High School/ University-Related Schools Program. Box 256, folder 7. UARC.

to the misconceptions that existed over the institutions who were displacing residents. The issue of race, in a period of American History where race issues were top priority, only added fuel to the displacement fire.

The Science Center still had many more obstacles to overcome in order to see its massive construction project come to fruition. The escalating war in Vietnam created an escalating war on the home front targeted at military research. The UCSC became an easy target since it was not only seen as a corroborator to the war efforts in Vietnam, but it also planned to displace thousands of poor African-Americans in Unit 3. Therefore the UCSC could link students with community protestors. Frustration turned into action in February 1969 as student demonstrators staged a six day sit-in at College Hall, the University's main administration building. Organized by different student groups including the Students for a Democratic Society, the students articulated seven demands to the administration. The protestors demanded that secret military research was immoral under the banner of higher education in light of the war in Vietnam. President Harnwell and the University trustees eventually agreed and issued a statement on the fifth day of the protest containing an amendment to the Science Center's codified policy. According to the *Bulletin*, the Science Center would not undertake a contract "where the needs for secrecy are so extreme as to forbid revelation of its very existence and where its general objectives and content cannot be

revealed.”¹⁹¹ President Harnwell even went as far as to suggest that the Science Center adopt a policy where no contracts would be taken “whose purpose is the destruction of human life or the incapacitation of human beings.”¹⁹²

The second issue attracting the attention of the student demonstrators was the issue of displacement of Area Three for the Science Center project. For the first time in the expansionary era of the University, un-effected students were protesting the administration’s policies. While the student activists did not convince the University to abandon the Science Center altogether, they were successful in lobbying the University administration and trustees to set aside a portion of the proposed Science Center in Unit 3 for public housing near 40th and Market Streets. During the sit-in, the Renewal Housing Inc. (RHI), a composite group representing the surrounding community, met with the University trustees to find land in the area for the construction. The University also agreed to establish a \$10 million community development fund to assist the RHI in supporting the community. After listening to the final settlement the student protestors cheered in victory. Ira Harkavy, a noted Penn student activist claimed that the student protestors had “won more than any other college movement in history.”¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ *Evening Bulletin*, 2 February 1969, “Penn Sit-Ins Join Negroes Asking ‘Return’ of 106 Acres,” (Pennsylvania University: Students, Sit-ins), Urban Archives.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ Judith Ann Fowler, “Six Days in College Hall: ‘A Strange War in Which All Sides One,’” *Pennsylvania Gazette* 67, no. 6 (March 1969). UARC.

The agreements with the students as well as community groups finally allowed construction to continue for the UCSC project. Although construction moved at a slow pace, even threatening its relationship with the RDA, by 1975 the UCSC was hailed as “an economic asset to Philadelphia” by the local newspapers.¹⁹⁴ The Associated Press also wrote a complementary article on the UCSC, which appeared in newspapers across the country. The article called the former 19 acres of “dying buildings” revitalized by a major think tank.¹⁹⁵ The extremely positive press seemed to show how valuable the UCSC was to Philadelphia, dwarfing its troubled past. However lingering feelings of resentment remained from the residents of Area III, especially aimed at the University that they share a community with. Much of the resentment was augmented by the lack of communication between the University and the residents. However, the displacement of poor African Americans without initially providing adequate alternatives was a justifiable cause for protest. Ironically, the AP article reported that the UCSC was currently working on a \$53,000 contract to study race relations for the U.S. Army. If anyone had the necessary first hand experience to complete this research, it was the Science Center.

¹⁹⁴ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 February 1975, “Science Center: An Idea That Works,” UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Clippings VIII, Box 294.

¹⁹⁵ *Stamford (CT) Advocate*, 26 April 1965, “Once a decaying area now a major ‘think tank,’ ” UARC, UPF 8.5 News Bureau - University City Project. Clippings VIII, Box 294.

Conclusions

The end of the University's expansion was not the result of the Sansom Block or the UCSC project. Although the Sansom fiasco did show the University's dwindling needs in terms of land, urban renewal, and therefore the necessary funds, was already on the decline nation-wide for a variety of reasons. After nearly twenty years of experience, many involved in the programs saw that renewal did not rid American cities of the ghetto, it simply displaced it. Since the new housing was often too expensive for the old residents to afford, renewal displaced the residents to other blighted areas in the city. This is precisely the project that John Clay proposed in 1965 for Unit Number 3.

The second contributor to the decline in urban renewal was the increasing American presence in Vietnam, which severely limited the federal government's ability to support urban renewal. The high costs of war forced the federal government to abandon many of Johnson's Great Society programs which were targeted towards domestic issues in general. Although Johnson was already out of office, the U.S. Congress in August of 1969 voted to reduce the amount of federal subsidies to city redevelopment agencies previously funded through sections 235 and 236 of the U.S. Housing Act.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ *Evening Bulletin*, 25 August 1969, "Amsterdam Hits Cutbacks In Federal Housing Funds," (Pennsylvania Univ.: Building—Construction Plans, 1959-1963). Urban Archives.

The more significant impact of the Vietnam war on urban renewal came in its effect on the nation's opinion of the role of its government. While the ability of the government to solve society's problems originally produced the program, the fact that public opinion controlled government action ultimately led to its decline. The economic effects of the war were clearly significant but the intangible psychological effects on urban renewal were even greater. The Vietnam war with its poorly articulated goals, high costs, and indigestible casualty rate helped to reduce the confidence in government necessary for successful urban renewal plans. The nation was tired of seeing what the government could do and therefore looked to limit its role.

The election of Richard Nixon in 1968 did more for the decline of urban renewal than anybody else. Ending the domestically liberal regime of Johnson and any hope that the Great Society could be revived, the conservative Nixon quickly reduced the level of federal government's domestic expenditures. While national plans to improve the cities had been bipartisan in nature, many believed that a Democratic President was absolutely vital. Immediately preceding Kennedy's election in 1960 Pennsylvania Senator Joseph S. Clark said that "University City will never become a reality" unless John F. Kennedy is elected to the White House.¹⁹⁷ In some ways the election of the conservative Nixon in 1968 was a backlash against the programs that Senator Clark discussed in 1960 even before urban renewal reached its peak.

The Watergate scandal in 1974 provided the final blow to the American psyche with regards to their faith in general in the government. Stories of deceit and abuses of power in many ways validated many the big brother concerns of student protestors at Penn in 1968 as well as across the country. Although a Jimmy Carter, a Democrat was elected to the Presidency following the Nixon/Ford administrations, the popularity of Reagan and Bush confirms the American trend of less government in their lives. From the beginning of the Great Depression in 1929 to the Vietnam War, Americans steadily demanded the increase in the role of government. Now, in less than six years, the cycle would reverse ending with the decline urban renewal and the end of an exciting expansionary period of the University.

While urban renewal was destined to end in University City eventually, Penn's experience highlights many of the ubiquitous problems of the era, teaching the University a great lesson along the way. Sparked by national events, activism on the University's campus showed their increased awareness of the community. The six day protest highlighted the Harnwell administration responsiveness to the demands of the University's students. The college hall sit-in further upholds this thesis in showing how little angst was created in the displacement necessary for the present day campus. At the same time as hundreds of poor blacks were being displaced north of campus, hundreds of others were displaced across the 38th Street bridge.

¹⁹⁷ *Evening Bulletin*, 18 October 1960, "Clark Calls Kennedy Victory Vital to University City Plan"

The late 1960's witnessed a large restructuring of University dormitory life as Penn acquired all of the land between 38th Street, 40th Street, Walnut and Spruce Street. The charged atmosphere of the times surely would have created an eighth demand for the College Hall protestors, but clearly displacement issues south of Market street were incredibly quiet. This upholds the notion that homeowners were given fair market value and renters found adequate housing elsewhere.

The intrinsic value of American individualism and their unalienable right to their property would never be able to succeed without fair compensation in order to acquire property for a university. It is incredibly easy to empathize with unfair displacement regardless of where your actual home is. This fact of American life not only explains the emotional outcry over the displaced West Philadelphia residents north of Market Street but also the lack in outcry over the displaced residents of Superblock for example. Since these residents displayed little protest, it was difficult for others outside of the University community to hear their problems and sympathize. This explains much of the ease in acquiring property for the development of the University.

The lingering community resentment towards the University is complicated and cannot simply be seen as the direct result of displacement as previously suggested. The Sansom Block experience proved that the University had overplayed their hand and tried to accomplish more than they

(Pennsylvania Univ.: Building—Construction Plans, 1959-1963). Urban Archives.

were able to. By acquiring more land than they were able to develop, the University created justifiably more resentment than displacement for significant construction projects. An empty, undeveloped lot, is hardly ever viewed as a public good. Walter Palmer, a former resident displaced by Penn's expansion and a professor of Social Work at the University, called this process is called "landbanking". According to the *Inquirer*, "landbanking is buying and clearing properties for which there is no immediate use."¹⁹⁸ The newspaper reported in May of 1998 that "Its effect has been to surround Penn with parking lots and to create ill will among those displaced."¹⁹⁹

The second major reason for lingering resentment towards the University was a direct result of who was displaced. Even though the University had the best intentions for the school, the community and Philadelphia as a whole, Penn's expansion did involve the displacement of poor African-Americans. While as we have seen much of the location was determined by areas with significant blight and a close proximity to Penn, the fact that this was happening during the height of the civil rights movement, brought an increase of attention to an already explosive subject. African-Americans for just reason were weary of the establishment and the fact that the faceless University could align itself with another faceless institution, the City, for condemnation purposes understandably created room for resentment. This theory also explains the community's resentment

¹⁹⁸ Larry Fish, "Penn, reexpanding, hopes it learned a lesson," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 4 May 1998, sec. 1A, p. 12.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

towards the University with regards to the University City High School. Since African-Americans were weary of the intentions of any institution, Penn's involvement in the public high school simply created suspicion despite the University's truly altruistic aims. When the University could not control the project, even with its good intentions, the community was reaffirmed of their belief that the University was only there to manipulate the situation for their benefit and had no interest in the surrounding community.

The data seems to support these conclusions. While, University City was not a homogeneous area, it was also not very integrated. After closely studying three portions of campus and then comparing their racial characteristics with the amount of dissent it becomes apparent how pervasive the issue of race becomes for the idea that lingering resentment is the result of displacement. According to the most recent U.S. Census before condemnation, 1960, the block bounded by 34th Street, Walnut Street, 36th Street, and Chestnut Street, was almost a completely white neighborhood. Non-whites only lived in six of the 89 total dwelling units on the block, or 6.7% (see Appendices D and E). The area known as "Superblock" was also very similar in its racial makeup. In the block generally bounded by 38th Street, Spruce Street, 40th Street and Walnut Street, non-whites only lived in 18 of the 411 dwelling units, or 4.4% (See Appendices B and C) The mainly white residents of both areas, part of Urban Renewal Area Unit 4, displayed little public resistance to their displacement for the expansion of the University.

Some may argue that just because a historian in the 1990's could not read about displacement in the newspapers of the 1960's, does not necessarily prove that the people were not upset. The answer to this goes back to the discussion on the American sense of individualism. Since the process of eminent domain was a political process involving the entire City, the press covered heavily the actions of City Hall. Even if there was a remote sense of discontentment, the press would have discovered and reported the stories. Displaced residents from the expansion of a powerful institution, such as the University, would make an excellent human interest story regardless of what decade it took place because of the American sense of individualism.

While the White neighborhoods displayed little resentment to their displacement, the African-American neighborhoods did. The blocks which would be displaced for the University City Science Center in Unit 3 were extremely different in their racial makeup compared to the area a few short blocks away in Unit 4. According to the 1960 Census, non-whites lived in 333 of the 429 occupied dwelling units, or 77.6% (See Appendices H and J). These blocks near Market Street also tended to be much poorer. The close proximity to the former elevated subway probably created the lower property values allowing a poorer population.. So when eminent domain paid them fair market value, the displaced residents who were largely African-American, could only afford housing conditions similar to their current situation. Not only did they have justified psychological fears in the expanding institutions, but since these residents in Unit 3 would be worse off

than before, they had concrete reasons for being upset. Now these displaced residents could be forced deeper into poorer sections of the City, like Mantua, but with a flood of others in the same situation, overcrowding would be worse than before. However, the fair and equal compensation paid to the middle class white neighborhoods gave these residents the ability to flee the City for the suburbs following the national trend of the times.²⁰⁰

Although not as simple as outlined in today's conventional wisdom, the displacement caused from the University's expansionary era is partly responsible for the uneasy relationship between Penn and the surrounding community. Still, the justification for these large private sacrifices can be seen in the public benefit from an institution that became a first class global institution as a result of the planning and growth strategies of this time. Learning from its mistakes, the University, according to alumna and President Judith Rodin, "Penn has learned that it is of the community, not the community."²⁰¹ The results have been noticed around the community. According to Barry Grossbach a long-time resident of the Spruce-Hill neighborhood (between 40th and 47th Streets), "The neighborhood has been much more positive about the administrative effort they have seen coming from the University recently."²⁰² This delicate challenge of trying to maintain a world class university inside a larger community is not easy, but the University now has the benefit of history to plan its future.

²⁰⁰ Samuel Hughes, "The Philadelphia Story," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 1997, 27. UARC.

²⁰¹ Larry Fish, "Penn reexpanding..."

²⁰² Ibid.