

DAG Statement on PHA Plans for Sharswood Neighborhood

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PHA's HUD Choice Neighborhood Transformation Plan for the Blumberg public housing site and surrounding Sharswood neighborhood is complex, ambitious and enormous in scale, with the potential to create a model mixed-income, mixed-use neighborhood.

The plan has many aspects and goals that DAG supports, especially its stated goal of protecting neighborhood character. DAG is, however, greatly concerned that the published information available is largely silent on two major areas of our interest: preservation and neighborhood design.

There is concern that the demolition program will not leverage historic resources to their fullest potential, and that a broader focus on preservation would better integrate the historic character of the neighborhood with the proposed mixed-income, mixed-use development.

Additionally, since this project may well become the template for further, much-needed intervention in North Philadelphia, it is vital that it address such important design questions as house types, street patterns, infill vs. clearance, community facilities, relation to the adjacent commercial corridors and the neighborhood's visual and spatial identity.