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## West Philadelphia Compromise

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The Philadelphia School Board now has before it a compromise plan for its proposed Science High School in West Philadelphia that, if approved, would get the long-delayed renewal of this area off dead center.

The plan would trim only two acres from the 16-acre site the Board has wanted. Homes in this two-acre area would be rehabilitated, instead of destroyed, and made available as needed to residents displaced by school construction. Together with other relocation services and facilities, the plan appears to meet the legitimate objections of some residents of the area as fully as possible without blocking the much-needed school altogether.

Proposed by the Redevelopment Authority with the backing of civic leaders, the compromise is of far broader interest, however, since it also promises to unblock progress on the adjacent University City Science Center. The Center plans have been brought to a virtual halt since 1963, largely because of neighborhood fears that housing needs were being overlooked. The school site protest has been symbolic of these fears. Much more will have to be done to insure that as the Science Center develops, adequate housing is made available not only for those who are displaced but for those who should be attracted to this region by the promise of new jobs and an improved environment.

Civic and church organizations in the area have shown an interest in the housing problem and might well explore the possibility of forming a nonprofit housing group to help meet low-cost residential demand.

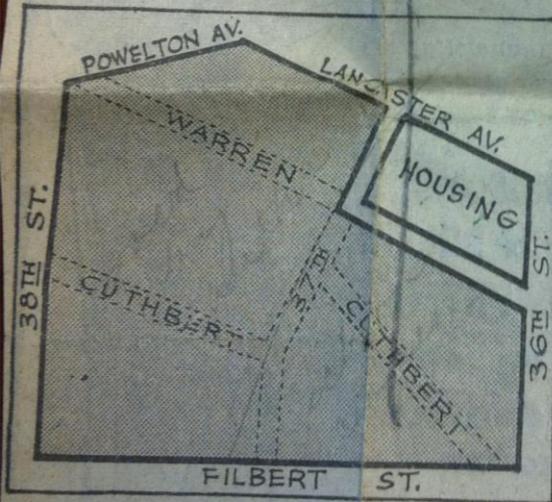
The immediate need, however, is for a prompt School Board decision on its site requirements. A half dozen major research companies which had been interested in the Science Center project have already given up and gone elsewhere because of the delays. Together they would have generated a thousand new jobs and paid more in taxes than all the properties in the proposed renewal area now contribute. A new school, new jobs, more tax revenues and rehabilitated homes can bring the people of West Philadelphia—and the entire region—enormous benefits. It's time to get on with it.

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Shaded area shows school site.

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