

# HISTORIC SOUTH WALKING TOUR

After the building of the train station in 1876 and the incorporation of the town in 1893, Swarthmore attracted commuters and boomed with diverse development. See many styles of architecture dating from before the turn of the 20th century and learn about the unique history of several of the Borough's churches, schools, and residences. Notice that there are no "Streets" in Swarthmore; with very few exceptions, the roads are "Avenues," most of which in the central area are named after colleges.

**Themes:** History, Architecture

**Amenities:** Benches

**Surface:** Paved, 2.0 miles long.

**Slope:** Mostly Flat, 43 ft elevation gain

**Hazards:** Uneven Sidewalks, Street Crossings

**Emergencies:** Call 911

**Difficulty Rating:** No Sweat - I exercise for fun, not to win contests. I like to explore at an easy pace, stopping to snap photos and smell the roses. Varied terrain doesn't scare me, but let's not do anything too extreme.

**Resource(s) shown on the map:**

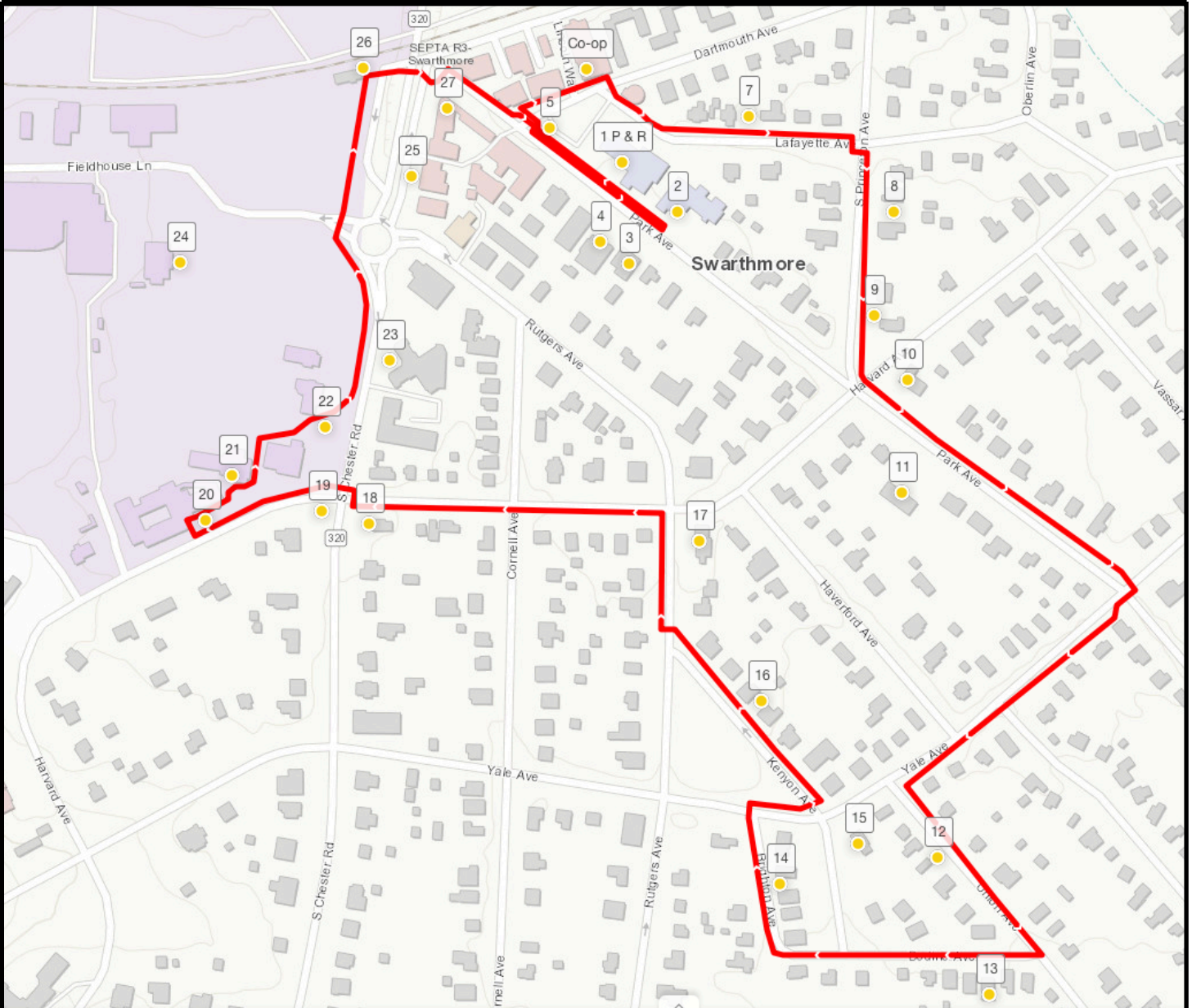
**Borough Hall P & R:** Metered parking lot and street parking, free on Saturday and Sunday. Borough's restrooms are open during Borough Hall or Library hours 7 days, with a water fountain and restrooms in the hallway and benches outside.

**P:** Street parking on Lafayette Avenue, free with a 2-hour limit.

Swarthmore Senior Citizens Assn.

<https://swarthmoreseniors.com>

7/23/2020



## Waypoints Shown On The Map:

**1. Borough Hall P & R:** The same year the Borough was incorporated in 1893, a large public building was constructed at the corner of Park and Dartmouth Avenues, the site of the current parking lot. The impressive stone and shingle building served as Borough Hall and library from 1908 to 1950 when a fire caused considerable damage. After the fire, a new borough hall was built on the site adjacent to the old one. The building, opening in 1952, was designed by local architect George Ewing in the Postmodern style. In 1996, extensive renovations and an addition provided expanded offices, fire house, and a special place at the entrance for the 1910 fire bell that was located in the former hall's bell tower (see interpretive sign post). Metered parking lot and street parking, free on Saturday and Sunday. Hallway water fountain and restrooms are open during Borough Hall or Library hours seven days. Benches outside.

**2. United Methodist Church:** The oldest part of this Gothic Revival building dates to 1893 and is located closest to Park Avenue. This portion is now used as a chapel. As the congregation flourished in the early 1900s, an addition was constructed in 1925 with classrooms and a larger sanctuary. The sanctuary was further expanded in 1963.

**3. Ingleuek: 120 Park Avenue,** now a private residence, was the site of the Ingleuek Tea House from 1918 to 2000. The restaurant was first established by the Kurtzhalz family in 1916 at 315 Lafayette Avenue, now also a private residence. Famous for its butterscotch rolls, the Ingleuek employed many locals and students, most notable being author James A. Michener, Swarthmore College class of 1929. After suffering a major fire in 2000, the building was restored to its 1905 pre-Ingleuek Queen Anne Shingle Style. Ingleuek is the Scottish spelling of Ingleook.

**4. 118 Park Avenue:** Designed by William Cyril Stanton in the Mission Style in 1908, this building was the former home of the Swarthmore Woman's Club. The Woman's Club was organized in 1898 and was important in the establishment of many Borough organizations. Today's Swarthmore Garden Club grew out of the Club's popular annual fall flower shows, while the Swarthmore Player's Club formed in 1911 after a performance on the stage of the Woman's Club. Sold in 1990, the building is now used as a ballet school.

**5. War Memorial:** The War Memorial, erected in 1920, commemorates Swarthmoreans who died in World War I and World War II, as well as the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Every Memorial Day, the names of those killed in action are read, followed by a parade to East Lawn Cemetery at the end of Park Avenue where many of the veterans are buried. The Silver Dollar Band, comprised of Swarthmore volunteers, provides music.

**6. Swarthmore Co-op:** Founded in 1937, the Swarthmore Co-op is the third oldest community-based food market in the United States. It operated in a former garage from 1937 until 2003 when the building was demolished and the new building was constructed. The garden outside is one of 13 in the Borough planted and maintained by the Swarthmore Horticultural Society.

**7. 311, 307, 301 Lafayette Avenue:** The houses on these three lots, originally owned by the College Tract Development Company, were built by John Cass and designed by his son Arthur C. Cass. Arthur Cass was a Swarthmore College graduate and worked as an architect in New York City. The houses share a similar use of gabled dormers and fish scale shingles, but 311 Lafayette demonstrates the stronger hand of the architect in its more distinctively ordered design. Since 1919, one family has owned this house.

**8. 105 & 109 South Princeton Avenue:** Constructed in 1891-92, the Queen Anne house at 105 South Princeton and a smaller but similar house at 109, built about 1891, were both designed by architect Samuel Milligan for C.B. Parker, an early developer in the Swarthmore Improvement Company. An original carriage house exists at the end of the driveway between the two houses.

**9. 119 & 123 South Princeton Avenue:** The houses at 119 and 123 South Princeton were constructed of similar materials producing very different designs. The 119 house, with its porch and dramatic porte cochere, was built about 1890 as the home of Edward Hicks Magill, second president of Swarthmore College, who served from 1870-1889. The much larger Romanesque-styled house at 123 South Princeton has a bold, stone corner turret that originally was capped by a domed roof. The first owner was J. Simmons Kent, president of both the Swarthmore Improvement Company and the Swarthmore Construction Company. The land known as the College Tract was sold to the Swarthmore Improvement

Company and was laid out in streets named after colleges.

**10. The Sundial House, 203 Park Avenue,** was created by Wilson Eyre (1858-1944), one of Philadelphia's most influential architects and founder/editor of *House & Garden* magazine. The residence displays Eyre's interest in the English Arts and Crafts designs of Philip Webb and Richard Norman Shaw. The dramatic low roof, asymmetrical entrance, and decorative sundial make this a unique house in Swarthmore and one of the town's most significant buildings. Of note is the second owner of the house, Louis E. Wheelock, who was the patent holder and designer of the Whitman Sampler candy box used from about 1920 to the early 1990s.

**11. 206 Park Avenue:** The First Church of Christ Scientist first held services in January 1930 at their new church at 306 Park Avenue. The building was designed by noted architect William Pope Barney. In 1998, the building was sold and converted to a residence.

**12. Historically Black Neighborhood:** About 1890, African American families started moving to the town from Maryland. This area, composed of Union, Brighton, Kenyon, and Bowdoin Avenues, was the predominant Black neighborhood in Swarthmore, with its own church and community center, known as Jones Hall. Swarthmore, originally a segregated town, gradually integrated, beginning with school desegregation in 1939.

**13. Wesley AME Church:** After the Wesley African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1921, the cornerstone laid in 1927 and the church was built. It was constructed by local Swarthmorean Carroll Thayer, who was the town's most prolific builder: about 150 buildings between 1906 and 1938. The church's nave is a story-and-a-half space with timber beams and stained glass windows.

**14. Brighton Avenue:** The frame vernacular houses built on Brighton, Yale, and Kenyon Avenues were built between 1895-1905 as rental homes for employees of the Grange. The Grange was a hotel and farm owned by the Gilpin family at the southern end of Cornell and Rutgers. After the Grange was destroyed by fire in 1937, the area was cleared for residential development.

**15: 514 Yale Avenue:** Although there is a 2017 house now at the corner of Yale and Kenyon Avenues, a neighborhood business—Bachman's

Market—once operated for decades in this location. With a traditional shopkeeper's apartment upstairs, and a butcher, deli shop-market on the first floor, a grocery store continuously operated here from at least the early 1920s until 2011. In 2011, the popular Countryside Market was destroyed by fire and the site leveled.

**16. 237 to 227 Kenyon Avenue:** These Queen Anne houses were built in 1894 for Frederick Simons, an important Swarthmore developer who also constructed the well-known Victorian resort hotel, the Strath Haven Inn (replaced by Strath Haven Condos). Across the street is Umoja Park, once the site of the Yale Avenue School. The school building was built in 1891 with a second floor funded and used by a church. In 1893, the Union Church built a new building on Park Avenue, later transferring it to the United Methodist Church in 1901.

**17. Rutgers and Harvard Avenues:** From 1892-1896, four buildings near this intersection were used by Swarthmore Preparative School until the school moved to South Chester Road. The Harvard Square Apartments was the main school building and a dormitory, while the Victorian next to it on Rutgers was a dormitory for boys. Two other buildings on Harvard were also part of the school.

**18. 201 South Chester Road:** At the corner of Harvard Avenue is a late Queen Anne residence with a steeply pitched roof and hand-crafted Mercer tile ornamentation. It was designed in 1906 by Howard Green, a Swarthmore College graduate and local merchant.

**19. 200 South Chester Road:** In 1907, the Preparative School erected a Colonial Revival home for the headmaster. It was designed by Morgan Bunting, a Philadelphia architect who designed a number of schools for the Society of Friends early in his career. Used as a private residence for many years after the school closed in 1933, it was purchased by the Headstrong Foundation in 2017 as a temporary residence for those seeking cancer care in the Philadelphia area.

**20. Swarthmore Presbyterian Church:** The original portion of the Presbyterian Church was constructed in 1896. It was designed by renowned Rose Valley architect William Lightfoot Price in a vernacular medieval style after a chapel in Brittany. While an addition on the east end in 1922 replaced

Price's architectural tower, his gothic stone arches are clearly visible from Harvard Avenue.

### **21. Former Swarthmore Community**

**Center:** Once used as a gymnasium and pool by the Preparative school, this building was designed by Morgan Bunting's firm, Bunting and Shrigley in 1903 in the rustic Shingle Style with Tudor Revival details. It was purchased by Swarthmore College after the school closed, and later leased to a non-profit Community Center in 1978 for many events and programs until 2020. Behind the building is a north-south pathway that travels between the former Preparative school buildings and a group of 2017 college residences designed by Digsau, a distinguished, contemporary architectural firm in Philadelphia. [The 3 new dorm buildings to not show on some verions of the map.].

**22. Harvard and South Chester Road:** In 1896, the Swarthmore Preparative School relocated to this area and built dormitory classrooms, a headmaster's residence, and a gymnasium. The three stone buildings that face South Chester Road together were built between 1896 and 1901. When the boys preparatory school closed in 1933, they were acquired by Swarthmore College for dormitory use.

**23. III South Chester Road:** Designed by Philadelphia architect William Macy Stanton, the 1930 Swarthmore Apartments has a cross-shaped plan placed diagonally to South Chester Road. At the top of the building, note the Mercer tiles and stylized nature-themed panels.

**24. Swarthmore College Barn:** A reminder of Swarthmore's farming beginnings, the barn was built in 1879 as part of the college's fully operational farm so that the students might have "the advantages of healthful country living." Produce from the farm fed the early

student body; an original tenant house is still in use on Field House Lane.

**25. South Chester Road Businesses:** The commercial buildings on the South Chester Road in the Town Center Business District developed over time. The three-story building with swag ornamentation at the cornice is the Beaux Arts Shirer Building. It was built in two sections, one in 1902, the other about 1922 that also joined the sections. The Shirer Building is bookended on the block by two other buildings, built in 1926: a grand Italian Renaissance bank building and a Tudor Style structure with storefronts and apartments.

**26. Train Station:** Swarthmore originally was known as Westdale after artist Benjamin West's whose birthplace is located off North Chester Road. The Borough was renamed Swarthmore in 1870 after Swarthmore College was founded. Constructed in 1876, the station was expanded about 1900 when another gable was built. A grade-level crossing for North/South Chester Road was replaced by an underpass in 1931.

**27. Michael's Corner:** The Tudor style, mixed commercial and apartment building that wraps the corner of South Chester Road and Park Avenue was built in 1925-26 by the Philadelphia firm of Stuckert and Company. It replaced the 1892 Hannum and Hartnel Building, the first commercial building in the town. The name of the building refers to Michael's College Pharmacy, which occupied the corner storefront from 1934 to 2004, and retains its neon sign high on the corner near the eave. With a luncheonette and soda fountain, Michael's was a popular local hangout for many years.

Swarthmore Senior Citizens Assn.  
Feedback to SwarthmoreTrails@gmail.com