

HISTORIC NORTHEAST WALKING TOUR

The homes in the northeast sector of Swarthmore reflect builders from several time periods: the West Hill Land Development Company in the 1880s on Elm and North Chester Roads; Riverview Estates in the 1920s on Ogden, Riverview, and Thayer; and William Witham in Swarthmore Hills during the 1950s. The diverse architectural styles range from Victorian to Colonial Revival Styles. Interesting historical facts are told along the way.

Themes: History, Architecture

Surface: Paved; 1.7 miles long.

Slope: Inclines, Flat Sections. 98 ft elevation gain.

Hazards: Uneven Sidewalks, Street Crossings

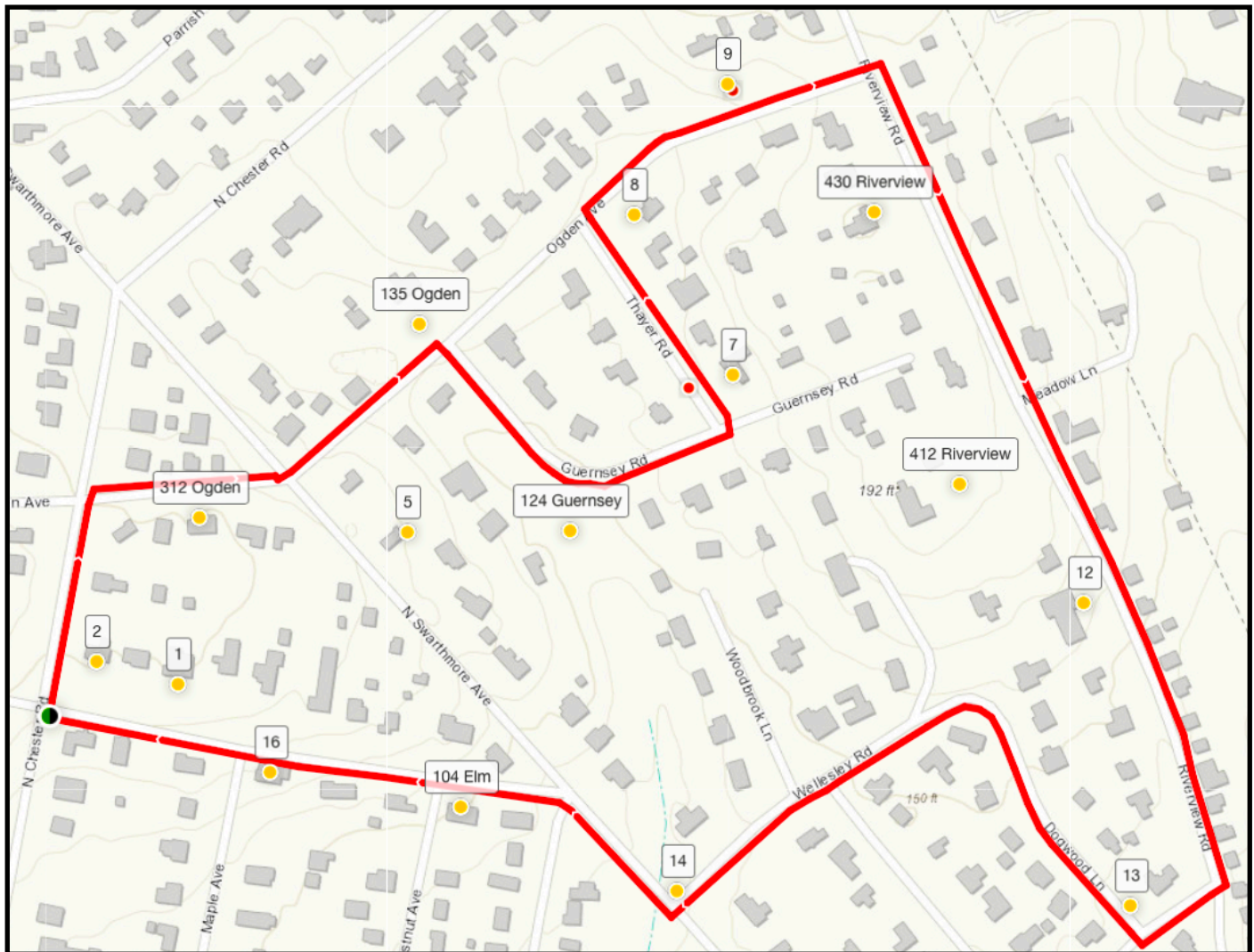
Emergencies: Call 911

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.

Swarthmore Senior Citizens Assn.

<https://swarthmoreseniors.com>

7/23/2020



Waypoints shown on the map:

- 1. 307 Elm:** The fine Stick Style house is an example of many homes built in the area by the West Hill Land Development Company in the 1880s. Built in 1881, the house retains much of its early details, including a sunburst design on the west side. Frederick Simon, who built the Strath Haven Inn in 1892 and one of Swarthmore's most prominent citizens, once lived here.
- 2. 315 Elm Avenue:** The house on the corner, 315 Elm Avenue, a three-story, Italian Renaissance Revival home

built in 1896, was designed by the Philadelphia firm of Keen and Mead. The contractor was Isaac Walker, who also built the Swarthmore Presbyterian Church.

- 3. 312 Ogden Avenue:** This house was built in 1957 for David S. Cowden, a Swarthmore College professor. His architect brother designed the residence with the assistance of H. Mather Lippincott, Jr., an architect who lived in Rose Valley. The Pennsylvania fieldstone house was originally a one-story house; a second story was added later.

4. Zimmer House: The **135 Ogden Avenue** residence was built by Carroll Thayer in 1918 for the Zimmer family. George Zimmer commuted to work in New York City. His wife Agnes, active in many community organizations, led Girl Scout troop 16 from its 1922 founding to 1943 and chaired the garden section of the Woman's Club. Their daughter Irma lived in the home from 1916 to 2005 and raised chickens in the backyard. Irma taught history at Swarthmore High School, served on Borough Council for 10 years, and co-founded the Swarthmore Senior Citizens Association.

5. Ogden Quarry: In the 19th century, Charles G. Ogden inherited 85 acres of farmland east of Swarthmore Avenue. Ogden operated a coal and lumber yard just north of the railroad tracks at the end of Riverview Road as well as a quarry to the east of Swarthmore Avenue. Filled for housing construction along Swarthmore Avenue, remnants of the quarry's steep embankments can be glimpsed behind the houses on Guernsey Road.

6. Emmons Pond, 124 Guernsey lawn: Known as Glove Lake in the 1800s, the pond was later improved with stone retaining walls and a diving board. About 1920, Emmons allowed public use of the swimming pool, which was free to families who bought milk from his Riverview Farm dairy. In 1953, the pool was filled in when the home at 124 Guernsey was built. Today, the pool's stone walls can be seen on three sides of the flat lawn area.

7. Guernsey and Thayer Roads: Developed by Louis Cole Emmons in the 1920s, the Guernsey and Thayer Road names are associated with him. Emmons raised Guernsey cows on his Riverview Farm, and he used local contractor Carroll Thayer to construct his houses. Emmons hired prominent architects to design the houses in the Pennsylvania Farmhouse, Tudor Revival, and Country French Styles seen throughout the Guernsey-Riverview area. 401 Thayer is designed in the distinctive French Chateau Style.

8. 100 Ogden Avenue: Built by Riverview Estates developer Louis Emmons in 1929. It was designed by architect John Linerd Conarroe who also designed one of the homes on Thayer Road about the same time. Note the circa 1930 lamppost at the end of the driveway, one of three remaining in the neighborhood.

9. 9 Ogden Avenue: The large stone home on a 1.65-acre lot was built about 1916 by Carroll Thayer, the local builder responsible for building more than 150 homes in Swarthmore. Servants quarters were added later, as well as a stone garage and the attached charming archway in 1933. Art and Margie Baker, owners from 1969 to 2016, added a greenhouse, and once maintained a small vineyard on the hillside and bottled their own wine. The hillside has been used as the neighborhood sledding hill for decades.

10. Pownell House, 430 Riverview Road: More than a century ago, Riverview Road was named for the views of the Delaware River. The house at 430 Riverview Road, built by Vincent Pownell in 1910, was designed by the famed architect Frank Furness's firm Furness, Evans & Co. The former porte cochere, now enclosed, can be seen beyond the majestic beech tree. Pownell built a family complex surrounding his house. His parents' 10 Ogden house was constructed in 1914; his Walton in-laws' at 490 Riverview about 1917. In 1922, he

built a house for his daughter as a wedding gift at 6 Ogden, and then built a stone rental house at 8 Ogden in 1926.

11. Riverview Farms Estate, 412 Riverview Road: Louis Cole Emmons purchased about 85 acres from Charles Ogden and razed the Ogden house. In its place, he built a large estate house (412 Riverview Road) in 1916 that had a ballroom on the third floor. Surrounding the house was a carriage house, a reflecting pool, manicured gardens, and a large orchard fronting on Riverview Road. Nearby, Guernsey purebred cows grazed in pastureland in the property that once had over 100 specimen trees in an arboretum.

12. Riverview Farms Barn, 400 Riverview Road: Emmons raised a prize-winning, federally-accredited herd of 80 Guernsey cows. He built a large barn with 2-foot thick Wissahickon schist stone walls. While the Dutch gambrel roofed former creamery can be seen at the far end of the L-shaped structure, the second story of the barn was dismantled in the 1950s and moved to Chester County.

13. The Hills: The Hills' residential area (encompassing Forest, Dogwood and Woodbrook Lanes) remained primarily farm and pastureland until the 1940s. From 1980 to 1941, the extensive property was also used for the Country Week Picnic, hosting about 200 Philadelphia mothers and preschool-age children who arrived by train for an afternoon "in the country" each summer. By the 1950s, William E. Witham started building mostly Colonial Revival Style residences on the open space.

14. The Hills: Used as farm and pastureland throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, the residential area known as "The Hills" (as noted on the entrance pillars) was the last to be developed of the Charles Ogden 85-acre parcel. Built primarily in the 1950s by William E. Witham, the development featured many Colonial Revival Style houses. In the center of the development, overhead electric lines ran through the backyards of the houses, rather than along the street. Just inside the entrance on Swarthmore Avenue is the creek that ran to the former Emmons pond at the end of Guernsey Road. Another tributary of the pond still flows from the 18th century springhouse located next to Swarthmore Avenue near Cedar Lane.

15. The Onyx House: 104 Elm was built by Steuber & Newberg in 1922 for the Onyx family in the Renaissance Revival Style. From 1932 to 1934, it was the home of the Swarthmore Fruit and Vegetable Buying Group, which became the Swarthmore Co-op in 1937. The Co-op is the third oldest community-based food market in the United States.

16. Scott House: The **214 Elm Avenue** residence was built for E. Irvin Scott and his wife about 1886. Scott and his brother founded Scott Paper Company. In 1902, the house was extensively remodeled by Philadelphia architect Francis Caldwell. In the 1920s, there were extensive pleasure gardens with specimen trees below the house near Maple Avenue. Pathways with flower borders led to pergola structures and an arbor covered with roses.

Swarthmore Senior Citizens Assn.
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