

NSO PennTracks West Philly

Overview:

This tour will take you through beautiful Victorian neighborhoods to great ethnic restaurants and a great park—all in Penn's backyard. Welcome to West Philly! West Philadelphia began as the site of summer homes for colonial elites and then became Philadelphia's first suburb in the late 19th century after the creation of the electric streetcar. Lined with Italianate, Victorian, and Queen Anne "cottages," the neighborhoods today house faculty and students of Drexel University and the University of Pennsylvania.

Why You Should Return:

Go to any of the rooftop lounges in the high rise College Houses, and you'll see that Penn's neighborhood is a sea of green, thanks to its tree lined streets, small gardens and Clark Park. Part streetcar suburb, part international food court, the collection of architecture, and cuisine make West Philly worth exploring. This is your new neighborhood, so you should take advantage of it!

Transportation:

Walk to the corner of 40th and Spruce to start your tour.

Emergency:

In case of emergency, contact 911. Report emergency to NSO staff.

1 The Woodlands | 4000 Woodland Avenue

This National Historic Landmark is a fantastic federal-style mansion surrounded by a beautiful, botanical garden. The Woodlands is perhaps most famous for its Victorian cemetery. Here lie many famous Colonial American and Civil War fellows, as well as members of old Philadelphia families. Thomas Eakins, Joseph Campbell (of soup fame), and Samuel Gross are also buried here.

2 Woodland Terrace | Off Baltimore between 40th and 41st streets

This small neighborhood is on the National Register of Historical Places. Here you will see Italianate style houses. This distinct architecture became popular during the 19th century and spread from England to the United States and Australia. Believe it or not, Penn students live in these beautiful homes!

3 Clark Park | 43rd and Baltimore streets

Clark Park is one of the great public spaces of West Philadelphia. In the warm months it hosts community festivals and a weekly farmer's market. The park boasts the world's only life-sized statue of Charles Dickens, a secret community garden, and a fountain that served the Civil War hospital that was on this site.

4 University of the Sciences | 600 S. 43rd Street

At the southern end of Clark Park is the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, which contains the oldest school of pharmacy in the Western Hemisphere (founded in 1821). USciences is home to over 2,000 students studying in a variety of health sciences

5 Baltimore Avenue | Between 45th and 48th streets

This street is an old turnpike that went from Philadelphia to Baltimore and is one of the major arteries through West Philadelphia. The trolleys that still run down the street are what made this neighborhood the most desirable suburb of Philadelphia in the decades after the Civil War because the streetcars provided easy access to jobs in Center City.

Great restaurants pepper the historic avenue including the popular Ethiopian eatery – Dahlak on 47th Street. If you are more in the mood for a delicious Vietnamese meal, then you can try Vietnam Cafe which is practically right next door. For brunch, try the Gold Standard Cafe. In addition, the area boasts Thai, Indian, Caribbean, and bar food.

6 Garden Court | 47th looking down Larchwood and Osage streets

The Garden Court neighborhood is on the National Register of Historic Places, and is one of the most charming residential areas in all of Philadelphia. The homes on Larchwood and Osage Avenues are simultaneously suburban and urbane, and they provide attractive city living for many Penn faculty and staff. The homes were designed in the 1920's and were among the first housing developments in Philadelphia to take into account the family automobile.

7 St. Andrew's Collegiate Chapel | Spruce Street between 42nd and 43rd streets

Philadelphia Divinity School, now recognizable as St. Andrew's Collegiate Chapel, was founded in 1921. The site was the location of the developer Clarence Clark's mansion. Clark, after whom Clark Park is named, developed what is now known as 'beige block,' among many other investments. The original plan for the Divinity School called for a quadrangle which would have filled the entire square block; however, only six buildings were completed. The site now houses the Penn Alexander School and the Parent Infant Center.

Of Additional Interest

A West Philly Restaurants | 44th and 45th Street Between Spruce and Walnut Streets

West Philly has no shortage of great restaurants. On 44th street enjoy local flavors at TacoTacoMexican or Local 44 and stop by Penn favorite Lil Pop Shop for dessert. One block up you can find authentic Mexican food at Don Barriga, Ethiopian food at Abyssinia, Argentinian food at Jezabel's, and Lebanese food at Manakeesh, all within a block!

B Malcolm X Park | 5100 Pine Street

Formerly named Black Oak Park, Malcolm X Park is an urban area that welcomes people of all ages. The park is famously known for its lively jazz festival, which is an annual summer event. Conveniently located next to Baltimore Ave, the park is surrounded by plenty of great restaurants and family orientated activities suitable for everyone.

C Paul Robeson House | 4951 Walnut Street

The Paul Robeson House was the home of internationally renowned American bass-baritone concert singer, actor of film and stage and lawyer Paul Robeson, from 1966 until 1976. In the heart of West Philadelphia, the Robeson House produces, presents, promotes traveling lectures, concerts, and exhibits so that learning about Robeson is accessible to all ages and cultures.

See www.visitphilly.com/guide-to-west-philadelphia for more information.

West Philly

