

# Why the age of the Main Line matters (for better or worse)

The age of the Main Line is one of the most important things to consider if you are looking at living here. On the positive side, many of our houses were built from local **stone** and visitors (and relocators!) often comment on how beautiful those traditional homes are. We do have a few brick homes and some homes with siding, but they are newer and only common in certain neighborhoods. On the other hand, while the **charm of established neighborhoods and plantings and old, stately homes** appeal to many people, you will find some older homes with **small closets and kitchens which don't open directly onto family rooms**. Obviously, those homes that have been renovated to reflect modern tastes are much more expensive than those that “are just awaiting your personal touch” (realtor-speak for “needs updating”).

**So, recognize that this is NOT the land of the subdivision. There are very few developments with cul-de-sac upon cul-de-sac with small 12 year-old trees plopped down in the front yard with sidewalks in front of every house.** I find the lack of that kind of housing is one of the biggest challenges for some of my relocation buyers. People moving from areas which were more recently developed according to city plans may be looking for that newer construction single home, with the kitchen opening onto family room and a big master bathroom with large closets. Unless you head all the way out to Malvern or West Chester (or toward Collegeville to the northwest or Media/Glen Mills to the southwest), that kind of housing is very hard to find on the Main Line.

The physical layout reflects the history as well—**our streets are not laid out in a grid**. Many roads were originally traveled by horses and were the most direct route between points and may have had to circumvent creeks, rocky outcroppings or other natural features of the landscape. So, navigating can be difficult, at best. We also have many roads that seem to have several branches (like Bryn Mawr Avenue) as well as many streets which make 90 degree turns and keep the same name, while the continuation of the original road changes names. Then there are the Gulphs—Old Gulph, New Gulph, Upper Gulph and South Gulph roads, many of which intersect at more than one point. Similarly, we have some towns that don't have their own zip codes (like Rosemont and Penn Valley) that stump the navigation system every time. Another thing to understand about these towns is that their boundaries are often non-distinct.

Sometimes just driving through an intersection takes you from one town to the next, so all of them share services and resources along Lancaster Avenue (and its mostly parallel sidekick, Montgomery Avenue). Another thing you'll notice is the influence of the early Welsh settlers in names of communities (Bryn Mawr) and streets (Clwyd Rd.). Another influence is the American Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers. From very old burial grounds and Friends' meeting houses to Quaker schools, there is evidence of this group who came to America looking for religious freedom.