



Haverford Township Historical Society



PILLARS OF HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP'S COMMUNITIES

By Richard D. Kerr

It is not uncommon today for someone in Haverford Township to notice a square stone masonry pillar on a corner somewhere and wonder what it is. They are not as common as they used to be nearly a century ago, but there are enough of them still around to arouse curiosity as to why they are where they are, and what their purpose is. People have come up with a number of clever theories.

The right answer is that they were erected as markers and “symbols of substance” by real estate subdividers. Their purpose was to identify and give a sense of permanence to nascent neighborhoods that started out as nothing more than marked-out streets and empty building lots.

The largest number of such stone pillars appears to have been built for the early neighborhood of Brookline. A pair of 1907 photographs on pages 106 and 107 of the Haverford Township Historical Society’s pictorial history book Haverford Township (in Arcadia Publishing’s “Images of America” paperback series) shows new sidewalks on either side of a largely empty Brookline Boulevard. They led from Darby Road and the Brookline Station of the Ardmore trolley line. Each sidewalk was flanked by a pair of these stone pillars, announcing to any arriving prospective buyers that they had indeed arrived.



A recent photo of the Brookline pillars at Edgewood Road and Kathmere Road.

Brookline was somewhat unique in being served by the Philadelphia and West Chester Traction Company, and also the Philadelphia and Western Railway at the other end. Another pair of pillars, with the distinctive pointy-topped Brookline style, stands at the intersection of Edgewood and Kathmere roads. They flank an old paved walk angling through the Cadwalader Tract, to where an iron pedestrian overpass bridge once connected to the P&W's original Beechwood Park Station. Another pair of Brookline pillar survives today at the intersection of Darby Road and Strathmore Road.



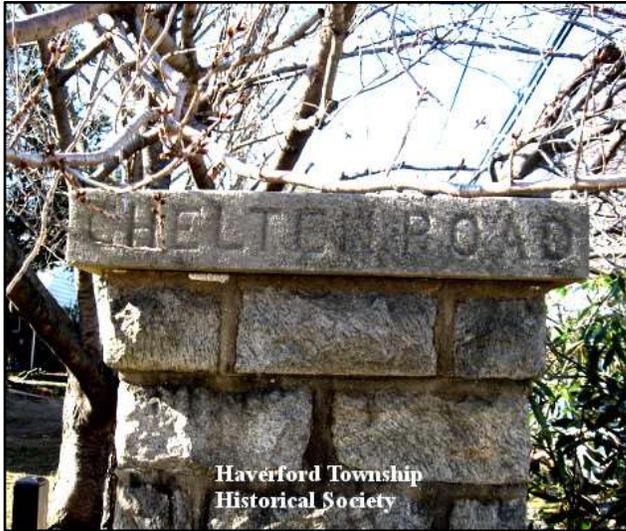
These two Brookline pillars still serve at Darby Road and Strathmore Road.

Other pillars on the periphery of the Brookline subdivision existed as well, but are now gone. An old photograph shows one across Mill Road from the Haverford Township Free Library.

Across Darby Road from the Brookline neighborhood was another, smaller subdivision, somewhat triangular in shape, named "Llanerch Manor." It, too, was served by the Brookline trolley station. Today, examples of its different, smooth-capped style of pillar still stand. There is one on either side of Chelten Road, and one at the intersection of Manor Road and Darby Road.



A pair of Llanerch Manor pillars stand at Chelten and Darby Roads, across from Brookline Fire Company.



Detail of Chelten Road pillar inscription and the pillar at Manor and Darby roads.

The final pair of the nine extant pillars known to be in Haverford Township is not neighborhood-related. This pair flanks the Darby Road entrance to the now-gone old police station, at the Veterans Field site where the new township building stands, as well as the Skatium.



Pillars flanking the entrance to Veterans Field, the new township building and the Skatium.

All of these “pillars of our community” help to confirm the popular saying that Haverford Township is indeed “a township of neighborhoods.”

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