MAP 2: North Walk

Along the North Walk, you will discover uptown Waterloo, complete with first-class shopping and eating establishments. Explore a variety of heritage buildings that have true character and catch the reading bug at the library.

Length: This walk takes about 30 minutes.
Market Hotel
Built in the 1850s in Georgian-Mennonite style, this building was originally the Market Hotel, serving, as its name implies, as a market and hotel. Later, this Waterloo landmark housed the John Forsyth Co., which made shirts, pyjamas and undergarments.

Carnegie Library and Carnegie Green
Thanks to a grant from American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, the Carnegie Library was built in the early 1900s at the corner of Albert and Dupont streets. The Classical Revival-style building features many significant details, including ornamental brickwork and pediment over the entrance and cornerstones that read “Carnegie” and “1903.”

Snyder-Seagram House
This home was built in 1903 for Herbert Snyder, owner of Snyder Brother’s Furniture. It was given to Joseph Seagram’s grandson, J.E. Seagram, as a wedding present in 1929. The home is unique because it was made of poured concrete.

Huether Hotel
The Huether Hotel is a Waterloo landmark built in the 1880s that features an elaborate Victorian façade. Inside, the Lion Brewery Restaurant has a massive arched-stone vaulted ceiling, as well as two display cases highlighting “hide tunnels” that may have been used to smuggle alcohol during the Prohibition Era.

Old Post Office
The former Waterloo Post Office and Custom House was completed in 1913 at a cost of $50,000. It features typical federal post-office architecture that’s Romanesque in style with rounded arches on the main façade. This Heritage Landmark also has an imposing clock tower that has been shortened over the years because of decay and fire.

Waterloo Hotel
Hotels have sat on the northeast corner of King and Erb streets since 1835. The first, called Farmer’s Hotel, later Bowman House, was destroyed in an 1850 fire, rebuilt and then burned down again in 1889. The current building first opened its doors in 1890 as Zimmerman House.

Old Train Station
This old train station was constructed in 1910, replacing the original station house, in the typical style of Grand Trunk Railway stations. It was the site of many local historical events, including being the departure place of troops serving in the First and Second World Wars. The building is now an upscale men’s clothing store called Paul Puncher Menswear.

Button Factory
The Button Factory was built in 1886 to house a growing business that employed more than 100 button makers working with imported shells and ivory nuts. The building is an example of late-19th-century Industrial architecture, featuring large windows to maximize natural light. The invention of plastic and zippers precipitated the closure of the factory in 1945. Today, it’s home to the Waterloo Community Arts Centre, which offers classes in all artistic disciplines.

Snyder-Hahn Building
Built in 1857 by Jacob Bricker, this architecturally significant building first served as a pharmacy under proprietor J.S. Hoffman. Over the years its ownership passed through the hands of several prominent figures, including Moses Springer, Waterloo’s first mayor, Simon Snyder and Melvin Hahn. The Snyder-Hahn building has retained some of its original features, including bark-covered beams behind the dispensary, ornamental brick work and an early tin ceiling complete with connections for gas lights. This site is also important locally because it was there, in 1888, that the idea of the Dominion Life Assurance Co. first was tossed around.
Molson’s Bank
Molson’s Bank, now the Bank of Montreal, is the oldest establishment of its kind in Waterloo. Dating to 1914, this Heritage Landmark is an architectural gem with its Ionic columns, recessed transom, pediments, keystones, eared trim and more. It’s built on land that was used as a public square for a century, but was sold to the bank when its former owner, William Snider, tired of paying taxes on property that was used for civic purposes.

Bahnsen-Bierstock-Marsland House
This Tudor Revival-style home was built in 1924 by John Bahnsen, the manager of the Globe Furniture Co., which was a world leader in furniture manufacturing at one time. Now the house is owned by the Marsland family.

Waterloo Public Library
The main branch of the Waterloo Public Library was built on Albert Street in 1966. About 1,600 people visit it each day to use its adult, children’s and reference departments, as well as its auditorium. Waterloo has had a library since 1876, with the original one serving as a resource for mechanics.

Looking Outward and Inward (at the Waterloo Public Library)
The Looking Outward and Inward sculpture by artist Susan Low-Beer is an ambiguous and contradictory piece that explores the relationship between men and women, as well as the male and female in everyone.

Marsland Building
Across the street is the Marsland Centre, which is located on the site of the city’s first City Hall. Later, City Hall was housed in this building until moving to its current home on Regina Street.

Waterloo Dark Wall Mural
The Waterloo Dark wall mural can be seen by passersby on King Street.

Memorial Park
Memorial Park, located beside Knox Presbyterian Church on Erb Street West, was created in 1924 to honour Waterloo’s fallen soldiers. The Cenotaph stood there from 1957 to 1993, when it was moved to a park beside City Centre to make way for a parking garage at the Marsland Centre.

Visit the City of Waterloo’s website at www.waterloo.ca to learn more about what’s happening here. This dynamic and innovative community offers a multitude of recreational, cultural and historical opportunities for residents and visitors.