



Our Dilworth Alleys

The four unique types of alleys in Dilworth are part of the character and fabric of our historic neighborhood. Dilworth was created as a Charlotte's first street car suburb in the early 1890s when Edward Dilworth Latta and his partners formed the Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company or 4Cs. They planned a development named Dilworth on 442 acres of farmland just south of Second Ward along the brand new streetcar line. The auction of the "suburban" lots was held in conjunction with the grand opening of Dilworth and Latta Park on May 20, 1891. Auctioneers sold the lots from horse drawn carriages riding through Dilworth's dirt streets which were laid out in a grid of straight streets and square blocks.

The alleys were defined in the grid section of Dilworth in the original deeds to allow vehicle access to the rear of the lots. Described as a 10 foot alley reservation at the rear of the lots, two alleys running parallel to the streets were described, along with two perpendicular side-by-side alleys in the center of the block, altogether forming an H. The private alleys were to be shared by all residents of the block and the center 20 foot alley combination allowed horse drawn wagons to make a wide turn as they crossed from one alley to the other, delivering ice, coal, milk and other goods. This H-shaped alley was defined on the square blocks bounded by South Boulevard on the West, Lennox Avenue on the East, Kingston Avenue (or Park Avenue or Renssalaer Avenue) on the North, and Tremont Avenue on the South.

The Olmsted Brothers created a naturalistic design plan in 1912 for Dilworth's expansion eastward. The street layout changed from straight streets and blocks to curving streets which matched the landscape, as did the alleys. The alleys in this curvilinear section of Dilworth were drawn on the plat maps creating publicly used alleys. They still exist in several blocks bounded by East Boulevard, Dilworth Road West, Magnolia, Lennox, East Tremont and East Worthington Avenues.

The third type of Dilworth alley is another reservation described in the 4Cs original deeds in the 1920s. These private alleys can be found on miscellaneous blocks in Dilworth between Dilworth Road East and Charlotte Drive. The fourth type of alley is a public 10 foot alley, and those were platted just north of East Boulevard between Kenilworth Avenue and Garden Terrace. They are still very much in use today.

Over time, lot sizes and block arrangements did away with the alley requirement for vehicular access, and wider lots provided side yards for driveways. Some of the alleys, particularly the private ones, have become overgrown or contain large trees, but our old Dilworth alleys are a unique characteristic of a neighborhood that we all know and love.