

# Dilworth Methodist Church South

*Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission  
Designation Report*



Prepared by  
Verity Works, LLC

## **I. General Information**

- A. Historic/Current Name of Property: Dilworth Methodist Church South/Leluia Hall
- B. Physical address: 1829 Cleveland Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203
- C. Tax parcel Number of Property: 12105301
- D. Applicant Name: ON CLEVELAND LLC
- E. Applicant Address: 1712 Winthrop Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203
- F. Applicant Phone Number: (704) 941-8652
- G. Applicant Email Address: [tonidandel@mac.com](mailto:tonidandel@mac.com)

## II. Abstract

### A. Summary of Property's Significance and Degree of Integrity

Dilworth Methodist Church South (also referred to as Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church South) at 1829 Cleveland Avenue is a church building in the Dilworth Historic District (listed 3/4/1987) in Charlotte, North Carolina. Dilworth Methodist Church South was constructed in 1915. As part of the Dilworth Historic District, the church is closely associated with Charlotte's first streetcar suburb, developed between 1891 and 1941. Dilworth Methodist Church South is also significant for its connection to architect Marvin W. Helms. Marvin Helms is one of Charlotte's most notable and important turn-of-the-century architects. Dilworth Methodist Church South is the first known and documented building completed by Marvin Helms. Dilworth Methodist Church South is an excellent example of the popular Colonial Revival style. The building's developmental history is closely associated with Methodism and the Nazarene faith in Charlotte. Both occupants of the building are important in telling the religious history of early twentieth-century Charlotte. The exterior of the building is in good condition, and the building retains a high degree of exterior integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Dilworth Methodist Church South is being proposed for designation for property tax deferral purposes and to recognize its architectural and associative significance. The exterior of the building and the entirety of the land listed under Tax Parcel Number 12105301 is recommended for designation.

### B. Property and Boundaries

The property is located at 1829 Cleveland Avenue, Charlotte, North Carolina with tax parcel identification number 12105301. The lot is bounded by East Worthington Avenue to the southwest, Euclid Avenue to the south, and East Boulevard to the northeast. The property occupies the lot at the intersection of Cleveland Avenue and East Worthington Avenue. The church property is surrounded by a mixture of one and two story residential and commercial buildings.

The proposed designation boundary for the property is the parcel occupied by the building. This proposed boundary follows the original lot lines of 1829 Cleveland Avenue and the property retains its integrity of location and setting at the corner of Cleveland Avenue and East Worthington Avenue.

### C. Integrity Statement

- **Location - High:** The church building remains in its original location, and the building has not been moved or significantly altered from its original footprint.
- **Design - High:** The building retains its overall form and is identifiable as an early twentieth-century church. A small rear addition to the property in ca. 1999 does not negatively impact the original core, and it was scaled to complement the size of the church building. The building's integrity of design is reinforced through its remaining character-defining features of the Colonial Revival style. The scale and proportionality of the front facade portico, pediment, and entrance have been maintained throughout the building's history. Extant details such as front facade Doric columns, entry and pediment fanlights, window and transom openings, arch keystones, belt coursing, and the cupola add to the building's integrity of design.
- **Setting - High:** The building possesses integrity of setting because it remains in the Dilworth neighborhood, surrounded by residential buildings without large-scale intrusions or overdevelopment. The church building remains in its original location, and its setting retains original suburban characteristics such as gridiron road ways with standard lot sizes and setbacks, and sidewalks. In this setting, the church building (although now a restaurant) retains its sense of how it was used and accessed in relation to the surrounding built environment.
- **Materials (exterior) - High:** The physical elements of the building's exterior cohesively reinforce its original design as a Colonial Revival-stylized church. The building retains its original brick veneer and slate roof. Its front facade entry ensemble, consisting of wood columns supporting a wood portico and decorative pediment, remains. The building retains two original fanlights at the front pediment and front door. The building's current windows and transoms are modern copies of original windows and transoms. Current windows are wood and match the size, configuration, and type of the original windows and transoms. It is unclear when the current windows were installed. The building's decorative wood cupola also remains at the roof ridge.
- **Workmanship (exterior) - High:** The Colonial Revival design and the typical church building form are evident at the building. Because the physical materiality of the building remains, the workmanship of Marvin Helms and contractor S.I. Vaughan can be seen across the exterior of the building. This integrity connects the building to popular styles and construction techniques used throughout the early twentieth century.
- **Feeling - High:** The remaining elements of the building's design contribute to its expression of the early stages of development in the Dilworth neighborhood. The building's scale and Colonial Revival style reinforce the feeling of the larger suburban environment and its history as a streetcar neighborhood in Charlotte.

- **Association - High:** Because the church building has remained in its suburban environment, it retains integrity of association to the development of the Dilworth neighborhood throughout the early to mid-twentieth century. In addition, its remaining physical elements of design and style associate it with Charlotte-based architect Marvin Helms and his notability as a prolific architect. Because the building is recognizable as a church it also retains integrity of association with the many different congregations that used it for worship since 1915.

### **III. Historic Background**

- A. **Property History:** The historic Dilworth Methodist Church South was designed by architect Marvin W. Helms and constructed by S.I. Vaughn in 1915 to provide a place of worship for the Methodist residents of Charlotte's Dilworth suburban neighborhood. It is the earliest of the extant church buildings in the Dilworth Historic District and is an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style of architecture. From 1926 to 1973, the building also served as a house of worship for the Nazarenes of Charlotte. This congregation was the only one of its kind in the city for decades and occupied the building longer than any other tenant.
- B. **Date(s) of Construction:** 1915
- C. **Date(s) of Additions and/or Alterations:** A rear addition was completed in ca. 1999

## Chain of Title

Transaction Date	Grantor(s)	Grantee(s)	Book	Page(s)
October 28, 2022	CRD DILWORTH III, LLC	ON CLEVELAND, LLC	37742	722
February 23, 2022	OSPREY PROPERTIES GROUP, LLC	CRD DILWORTH III, LLC	37089	126
August 28, 2008	John L. Duncan and Patricia C. Duncan	OSPREY PROPERTIES GROUP, LLC	24080	598
February 18, 1998	Marion F. Redd	John L. Duncan and Patricia C. Duncan	9504	286
July 14, 1989	Jane B. Redd	Marion F. Redd	6066	503
November 11, 1988	Greenway Nursery, Inc.	Jane B. Redd	5899	858
December 30, 1987	Trustees of the Greater Providence Baptist Church	Greenway Nursery, Inc.	5671	782
April 25, 1973	The First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte	Trustees of the Greater Providence Baptist Church	3562	25
October 25, 1967	Trustees of the First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte	The First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte (nonprofit)	2905	195
July 9, 1926	Trustees of Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church South	Trustees of the First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte	633	150
March 16, 1909	Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Charlotte	Trustees of Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church	242	303
January 13, 1897	Indenture on behalf of the Trustees of Trinity M.E. Church of Charlotte with the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church loaning \$150 and mortgaging the corner parcel and authorizing the trustees to build a house of worship for the Atherton Church.		116	282
June 4, 1896	B.D. Heath and wife	Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Charlotte	110	571
May 20, 1891	Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company	B.D. Heath	87	501, 510, 512

## IV. Assessment

### A. Statement of Significance:

#### Development of the Dilworth Suburb

Dilworth Methodist Church South (1829 Cleveland Avenue) is the oldest church building in the Dilworth Historic District (listed 3/4/1987). Dilworth is Charlotte's first streetcar suburb and contains a large collection of nineteenth and early-twentieth-century architecture. The Dilworth suburb was developed between 1891 and 1941.<sup>1</sup> Dilworth neighborhood encompasses approximately 63 blocks on about 395 acres of land. Although the Dilworth suburb was developed on the southeast periphery of Charlotte, it is now considered to be in the core of the city. The suburb was the work of Edward Dilworth Latta, entrepreneur, industrialist, developer, and New South advocate.<sup>2</sup>

As an entrepreneur, Edward Latta was involved in a variety of commercial pursuits throughout the latter decades of the nineteenth century. He parlayed his success into many industries, including the acquisition of a gas franchise and streetlight contract. Latta purchased a 442-acre farm just to the south of Charlotte and introduced the concept of the streetcar suburb to the city in 1891. The construction of Atherton Mill (1893) and Charlotte Trouser Company (1894) promoted other businessmen to view the Dilworth area as both a neighborhood and industrial center. In 1895, six other factories were built in the corridor. Employees of these businesses created a buyer-ready housing market that created residential growth as well. This demand provided the necessary push to make Dilworth a successful neighborhood.<sup>3</sup>

In 1907, Dilworth was annexed into the City of Charlotte. This annexation created additional growth in the neighborhood and led to the desire for auxiliary functions. Areas such as Latta Park, a ninety-acre amusement complex, and the municipal fairgrounds with race track and ball fields, filled this void and provided entertainment for residents of the neighborhood. As the area grew in population, so too did the demand for expansion and additional buildings such as churches and other services.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 2. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 97. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 98. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

<sup>4</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 99. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

In 1911, land to the east of the new neighborhood became available through City of Charlotte leases ending that year. Edward Latta purchased the land and began his second venture into development. Latta was put in contact with the Olmsted Brothers, the premiere landscape architects of the period, to assist in developing the land. This tract included 300 acres in an hourglass shape at the east end of Latta Park and the grid section of Dilworth. The final 1912 Olmsted plan included a curving drive connecting the two sections. The drive branched out in the southern part to form a loop for the streetcar line. The streetcar line then came down East Boulevard to Latta Park, and followed the two main drives in the southern section, and looped back to the main drive to the northern section.<sup>5</sup> The Olmsted plan for the northern section did not come to fruition, and the majority of this section was laid out in 1920 and developed in the 1930s. Throughout the 1950s, the area remained popular, and residential houses continued to be built as infill. Although mid-century developments encroached on the neighborhood, blurring once-distinct lines, Dilworth is a well-maintained neighborhood that underwent a period of rehabilitation during the preservation movement of the 1970s and continues to serve Charlotte today.<sup>6</sup>

### Churches of Dilworth Neighborhood

Seven church buildings are included in the Dilworth Historic District boundaries. Due to age, only four church buildings are listed as contributing to the district. Dilworth Methodist Church South (also referred to as Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church South) was constructed in 1915 and is the oldest of the extant churches in the district and the only church building constructed in the Colonial Revival style.

The other three contributing churches located in the Dilworth Historic District are First Christian Church (now First Church of Christ, Scientist) (ca. 1925), Dilworth United Methodist Church (1925), and St. Patrick's Cathedral (1938). Both First Christian and Dilworth United Methodist were completed in 1925/1926, following nearly two decades of sustained growth within the Dilworth neighborhood. Dilworth United Methodist Church is a large stone church complex completed in the Gothic Revival style. First Christian Church is a brick building in the Neo Classical Revival style. St. Patrick's, completed in 1938, was also finished in the popular Gothic Revival style. The other churches in the Dilworth Historic District, considered non-contributing due to age, include the 1950 Temple Israel, the 1950s Convent Presbyterian Church,

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<sup>5</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 100. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 100-101. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

the 1953 Greek Orthodox Central, and the 1967 Hellenic Center.<sup>7</sup> All extant buildings would likely be considered historic in their own right today.

The church building itself is significant as the earliest surviving church building in the Dilworth neighborhood. It played a crucial role in formulating religious life within the neighborhood, which evolved into a collection of larger church buildings with larger

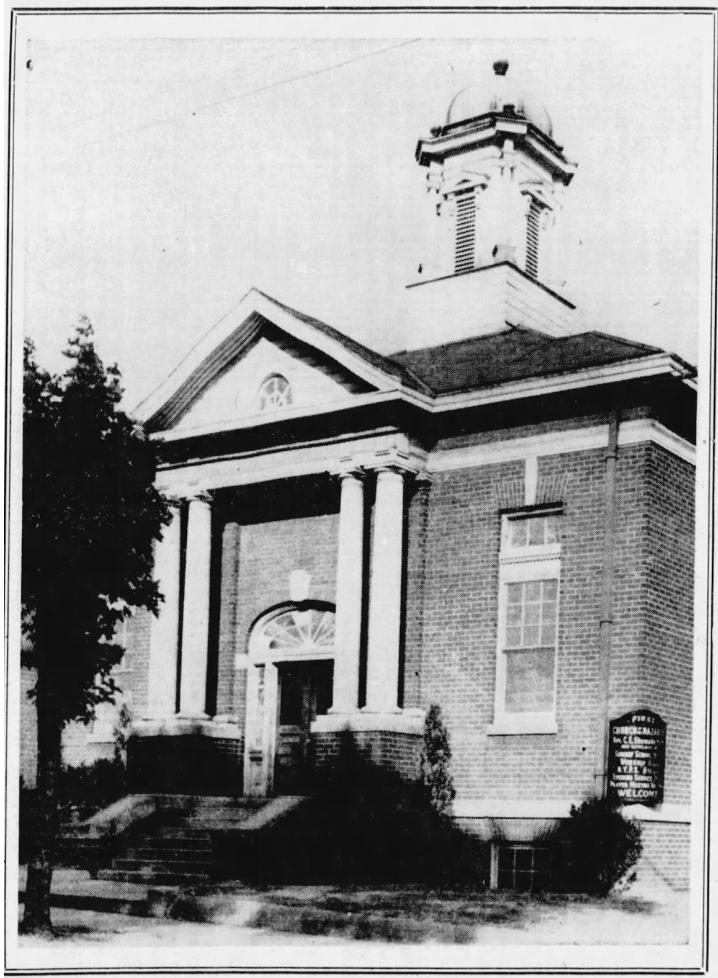


Figure 1. 1939 view of 1829 Cleveland Avenue as the First Church of the Nazarene.

congregations. Dilworth Methodist Church South stands as an early example of church buildings within Charlotte's streetcar neighborhoods. The added convenience of a neighborhood church contributed to the popularity of suburban life throughout the early twentieth century.

<sup>7</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 10. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

### Dilworth Methodist Church South Development:

The site and lot of the church building (Lot 20/Square 23) were originally purchased in 1891 by B.D. Heath from Edward Latta's Charlotte Consolidated Construction Company.<sup>8</sup> It was not until 1896 that B.D. Heath and his wife deeded the property to the Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Charlotte.<sup>9</sup> Construction of the original frame church building on the site began in late 1895 and was completed in April 1896.<sup>10</sup> The original church building, known as Atherton Methodist Church, was linked to Atherton Mills, a mill complex adjacent to the Dilworth neighborhood. Atherton Methodist Church was the first permanent church building constructed in the Dilworth suburb.

The origins of the first church building are complex, but it was intended to serve as a mission church for Methodism in Charlotte. In January 1897, the Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal, "holding property for Atherton Methodist Episcopal Church," entered into an indenture with the Kentucky-based Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, whereby the Board of Church Extension loaned the trustees \$150.<sup>11</sup> A resolution passed at the quarterly conference of Trinity Methodist Episcopal authorized the Trinity trustees "to borrow money to accept a conditional donation from the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, not exceeding the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars for the purpose of building a house of worship for Atherton Church..."<sup>12</sup> The original deed and indenture provide insight into how Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church orchestrated and financed the purchase of the land and construction of the church building.

In addition to the involvement of Trinity and the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, other local Methodist congregations were involved in funding a mission church in Dilworth. In March 1896, a mass meeting of Charlotte Methodists took place at Tryon Street Methodist to survey mission work in the city. Reverend Dr. Brooks stated, "the object of the meeting, the work that the Methodists had before them, and asked the congregation to contribute \$1,000 for the erection of two chapels, one at Atherton; the other on Eleventh Street."<sup>13</sup> At the meeting, it was noted that the chapel at Atherton was already under construction,

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<sup>8</sup> Deed of Sale from Charlotte Consolidated Company to B.D. Heath, May 20 1891, Charlotte Mecklenburg County Deed Book 87, Pages 501, 510, 512.

<sup>9</sup> Deed of Sale from B.D. Heath and Wife to Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Charlotte, June 4, 1896, Charlotte Mecklenburg County Deed Book 110, Page 571.

<sup>10</sup> "The Methodists at Atherton," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), March 4, 1896, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Indenture Deed on behalf of Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Charlotte and Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, January 13, 1897, Charlotte Mecklenburg County Deed Book 116, Page 282.

<sup>12</sup> Indenture Deed on behalf of Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Charlotte and Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, January 13, 1897, Charlotte Mecklenburg County Deed Book 116, Page 282.

<sup>13</sup> "Two New Churches," *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), March 17, 1896, 1.

and additional funding was needed to complete it.<sup>14</sup> It is surmised that Atherton Methodist Church was a Methodist mission church with direct backing from Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church and other Charlotte Methodist congregations.

It is highly likely that Atherton Methodist was linked to the Atherton Mill. In 1892, local businessman D.A. Tompkins (1851-1914) purchased land on the southern edge of the Dilworth development for the site of a mill. The cotton mill was in operation by April 1893. Tompkins purchased additional land in Dilworth and constructed mill cottages for workers.<sup>15</sup> Given the proximity of the Atherton Mill and the fact that the church building was part of a push to expand Methodism in Charlotte, Atherton Methodist Church was likely constructed for the mill workers and their families.

The 1897 indenture noted above was produced several months after the church building had been completed. The indenture recorded that a building already existed on the property stating, “all of the described real estate...one lot fifty feet on Worthington Avenue and one hundred and fifty feet on Cleveland Avenue together with the house of worship recently built thereon, situated in Dilworth...”<sup>16</sup> This record is corroborated by newspaper articles in March and April 1896. Several articles in *The Charlotte Observer* noted “weather-boarding...being put on,” in early March 1896.<sup>17</sup> Newspaper accounts in April reported on a Bible that was presented to “the new Methodist chapel at Atherton,” noting that the couple that presented the Bible “[had been] present when Mr. Butt preached the first sermon in the Atherton church.”<sup>18</sup> Based on this information, the church building was likely completed in early April 1896.

For unknown reasons, the Atherton Church name was removed shortly after the church was established. As early as 1897, the church was referred to as the Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>19</sup> According to City directories and local newspapers, Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church was located on Worthington Avenue, the same location as the Atherton Church building. In addition, Atherton Church was not publicly documented as being associated with that location beyond 1896. It is surmised that the congregation became more synonymous with the Dilworth neighborhood as it grew in popularity and size. Because the property was owned and controlled by the larger Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church, associating the church building with the Dilworth development and Methodism was advantageous for establishing firm religious roots in the area.

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<sup>14</sup> “Two New Churches,” *The Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), March 17, 1896, 1.

<sup>15</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. “Dilworth Historic District.” 98. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

<sup>16</sup> Indenture Deed on behalf of Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church of Charlotte and Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, January 13, 1897, Charlotte Mecklenburg County Deed Book 116, Page 282.

<sup>17</sup> “Church Affairs of the Day,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC) March 8, 1896, 6.

<sup>18</sup> “A Bible to the Atherton Church,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC) April 23, 1896, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Maloney’s Charlotte City Directory, Maloney’s Directory Company, 1897. Duke University. Duke University Archives. <https://lib.digitalnc.org/record/25471?ln=en&v=pdf>

An early congregant of Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church was William Franklin Graham Sr., the father of internationally-renown evangelist and Charlotte native Billy Graham. Billy Graham recounted his father's involvement with the church stating, "One of my earliest recollections is Daddy's attending the Dilworth Methodist Church. As an eighteen-year-old in 1908, he had driven his horse and buggy three miles one Sunday night to attend an evangelistic meeting in the one-room Butt's Chapel (where the Dilworth Methodist Church met then) at the edge of Charlotte."<sup>20</sup> Although Billy Graham grew up in a Presbyterian Church, he noted that his father's pathway to finding religion at Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church had a profound impact on his own life and understanding of faith and religion. Although the frame church building that William Franklin Graham Sr. attended would be replaced by the current brick church building, the Dilworth Methodist congregation continued to be instrumental in Charlotte's religious history. It is significant that the Dilworth Methodist congregation and site of the earliest Dilworth church building played a small role in the life of Billy Graham, Charlotte's most influential religious figure.

In March 1909, the Trustees of Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church transferred the property to the Trustees of Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church. This transfer is significant because it indicates that Dilworth Methodist Episcopal had established a large enough congregation to become an independent church, no longer under the guidance of Trinity Methodist Episcopal. This change coincided with the early success of the Dilworth development and an overall economic boom that occurred in Charlotte throughout the early years of the twentieth century. The success of the original 1891 Dilworth development led to an expansion of the neighborhood in 1911/1912.<sup>21</sup> The spatial growth of Dilworth transformed the built environment of the area, adding large curvilinear sections for new housing and residents. By 1911, the pressures of this growth sparked questions about the future of Dilworth Methodist Episcopal. The answer was to build a new church.

As early as July 1911, the Dilworth Methodist Episcopal congregation was poised to construct a new church building elsewhere in the Dilworth neighborhood. The church "[had] purchased the vacant lot on the corner of Kingston and Cleveland avenues in Dilworth on which to build a new house of worship..."<sup>22</sup> Comparing the proposed lot with the original church property, the editor of the *Charlotte Observer* expressed an opinion stating, "It is considered by many to be the best location for a church in that section of the city, being much more favorably situated than the lot on which the present Methodist church now stands."<sup>23</sup> Relocating the church to Kingston and Cleveland avenues did not come to fruition, and the Dilworth Methodist Episcopal congregation waited another three years before resurrecting plans for a new church

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<sup>20</sup> Billy Graham, *Just as I Am: The Autobiography of Billy Graham*, (HarperCollins, 2007), 22-23.

<sup>21</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. "Dilworth Historic District." 3. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

<sup>22</sup> "Will Build New Church," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), July 16, 1911, 6.

<sup>23</sup> "Will Build New Church," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), July 16, 1911, 6.

building. Although a new church was not constructed in 1911, the growth of Methodism in Dilworth continued to parallel the growth of the development itself.

In general, Charlotte's population was on the rise throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1900, the city's population was just over 18,000.<sup>24</sup> By 1920, that number had risen to 46,338.<sup>25</sup> By 1930, Charlotte had over 82,000 residents, nearly doubling its population in a single decade.<sup>26</sup> The city's strong connections to textile and other types of manufacturing, coupled with suburban developments such as Dilworth, provided the jobs and housing necessary for sustained growth. Charlotte Methodists aimed to attract and convert the city's growing population. Commenting on religion and growth in the city, the *Charlotte Observer* noted, "In promoting our commercial enterprises we should not neglect to advance the religious interests of our community... There is no surer method to make Charlotte among the first cities in North Carolina in point of citizenship and no better investment for the future welfare of our town, than to aid in the erection of splendid, worthy church homes for people."<sup>27</sup> Charlotte Methodists shared this sentiment and eagerly targeted Dilworth throughout the early 1910s. The failure of Dilworth Methodist Episcopal to secure a new location and church building in 1911 remained a sore spot within the Methodist community.

In 1914, presiding Methodist elder of the Charlotte district, Reverend Plato T. Durham, characterized Dilworth Methodist Episcopal as "one of the tragedies of Methodism in Charlotte."<sup>28</sup> Reverend Durham noted, "it [the church] struggled along, eking out an existence, ever since it was erected..." and commented on the poor condition of the church building.<sup>29</sup> Reverend Durham appealed to the pride of the congregation, saying, "Dilworth didn't have a church that would command the respect of respectable people..." and lamented "the crying need of Churches in both of these [Dilworth and Elizabeth] thriving suburbs."<sup>30</sup> Essentially pleading with the Dilworth congregation and Charlotte Methodists, Reverend Durham stated, "the Methodists of Charlotte ought never to be allowed to rest until they built a suitable church in Dilworth."<sup>31</sup> Reverend Durham's impassioned plea kick-started a years-long building campaign

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<sup>24</sup> "Population Statistics," The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Story, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://www.cmstory.org/exhibits/hornets-nest-appendix/population-statistics>.

<sup>25</sup> "Population Statistics," The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Story, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://www.cmstory.org/exhibits/hornets-nest-appendix/population-statistics>.

<sup>26</sup> "Population Statistics," The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Story, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://www.cmstory.org/exhibits/hornets-nest-appendix/population-statistics>.

<sup>27</sup> "Will Build New Church," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), July 16, 1911, 6.

<sup>28</sup> "Two New Churches are Recommended," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC) January 22, 1914, 1.

<sup>29</sup> "Two New Churches are Recommended," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC) January 22, 1914, 1.

<sup>30</sup> "Two New Churches are Recommended," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC) January 22, 1914, 1.

<sup>31</sup> "Two New Churches are Recommended," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC) January 22, 1914, 1.

that resulted in the beginning of construction on Dilworth Methodist Church South in early January 1915.

The last services in the original frame church building were held on December 27, 1914. The following day, Monday, December 28, 1914, the original church was torn down, “to make way for a handsome brick church to be erected on the old site - one which is to wipe out the reproach of being the ‘tragedy of Methodism’ as Dr. Durham styled the Dilworth church.”<sup>32</sup>

The cornerstone of Dilworth Methodist Church South was laid in late January 1915, and the building was completed in July/August of that year. On August 13, 1915, *The Charlotte Observer* noted, “The Church is a brick structure and cost \$8,000,” continuing, “The building has a seating capacity of about 500 and has half a dozen Sunday school rooms. It has a gallery, and is electrically lighted.”<sup>33</sup> By replacing the original Atherton Methodist, Dilworth Methodist Church South became the first of the twentieth-century church buildings in the Dilworth suburb.

The 1915 church building was only occupied by a Methodist congregation until 1926. In 1926, the Methodists moved to a larger Gothic style church campus at 601 East Boulevard named Dilworth Methodist Church (the building is currently known as Dilworth United Methodist Church). The decades-long growth of Methodism in the Dilworth suburb was supplemented by the introduction of the new church building in 1915 and the sustained success of Dilworth as a desirable residential area in Charlotte. The East Boulevard site was purchased in 1922 when it became apparent that a building of larger capacity was required for the congregation.<sup>34</sup> The new Dilworth Methodist Church also benefited from shifts within Charlotte’s Methodist community. In July 1925, the two largest Methodist congregations in the city, Trinity and Tryon Street, adopted a resolution to merge as one congregation. The resolution also earmarked \$75,000 from the sale of the Trinity Methodist Episcopal property for the construction of Dilworth Methodist Church.<sup>35</sup> By 1926, Dilworth Methodist Church had a membership of more than 600. A significant number of congregants transferred from Trinity Methodist Episcopal following its merger with Tryon Street.<sup>36</sup> With an expanding congregation and a new, larger building, Dilworth Methodists moved from their humble building at 1829 Cleveland Avenue and forged a new path.

In July 1926, the trustees of Dilworth Methodist Church South deeded the property to the First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte.<sup>37</sup> The First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte

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<sup>32</sup> “Farewell Services in Dilworth Methodist Church To-morrow,” *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), December 26, 1914, 3.

<sup>33</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 13, 1915, 6.

<sup>34</sup> “Dilworth Methodists Give Thanks Today on Site of Their New \$200,000 Building,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 9, 1925, 27.

<sup>35</sup> “Dilworth Methodists Give Thanks Today on Site of Their New \$200,000 Building,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 9, 1925, 27.

<sup>36</sup> “Dilworth Methodists Give Thanks Today on Site of Their New \$200,000 Building,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 9, 1925, 27.

<sup>37</sup> “Growth and Progress of the Churches of Charlotte,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), March 20, 1938, 9.

congregation occupied the building until 1973. This nearly 50-year span makes the First Church of the Nazarene the longest tenant of the building. When the First Church of the Nazarene was established in Charlotte, it was the only one of its denomination in the city.

The Church of the Nazarene is connected to a late-nineteenth-century religious revival that culminated in the organization of several different independent factions closely connected to Methodism. The spiritual vision of early Nazarenes was derived from the doctrinal core of John Wesley's preaching. The holiness movement began in the 1830s, but by 1900, the movement had splintered.<sup>38</sup> In October 1907, the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America and the Church of the Nazarene merged in Chicago, Illinois, at the First General Assembly.<sup>39</sup> In April 1908, a congregation organized in Peniel, Texas, drew into the Nazarene movement the key officers of the Holiness Association of Texas. In October 1908, the Second General Assembly was held at Pilot Point, Texas, the headquarters of the Holiness Church of Christ. The "year of uniting" ended with the merger of this southern denomination with its northern counterpart. With the Pentecostal Church of Scotland and Pentecostal Mission unions in 1915, the Church of the Nazarene embraced seven previous denominations and parts of two other groups. The Nazarenes and The Wesleyan Church emerged as the two denominations that eventually drew together a majority of the holiness movement's independent strands.<sup>40</sup>

The movement and Church of the Nazarene spread throughout the United States, including North Carolina. In Charlotte, the earliest documented mention of the Nazarene congregation stems from a former pastor of a Charlotte Wesleyan Methodist Church, Reverend W.F. Stamey. In December 1923, a public dispute between Rev. Stamey and the Western Conference of the Methodist Church led to his resignation as pastor. Rev. Stamey announced that he intended to organize a church of the Nazarene faith in Charlotte. However, officials of the Nazarene faith declared that Rev. Stamey did not have the authorization to establish a Nazarene church in Charlotte.<sup>41</sup> It was not until 1925 that a Charlotte chapter of the Nazarene Church was established, and Rev. Stamey was not involved. Between 1923 and 1925, the first Nazarene congregation in the state was established in Greensboro, North Carolina.

The state's first Nazarene congregation in Greensboro was established concurrently with the movement's beginnings in Charlotte. The Greensboro congregation benefited from a direct connection to Reverend J.W. Short, the superintendent of the Indiana district of the Church of the Nazarene, and a native of Greensboro.<sup>42</sup> The First Church of the Nazarene in Charlotte was formed on November 15, 1925, but it did not have its own building. Reverend J.W. Short and Reverend C.M. Harrison conducted revival services that led to 43 charter members establishing

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<sup>38</sup> "Our History," Church of the Nazarene, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://nazarene.org/our-history/>

<sup>39</sup> "Our History," Church of the Nazarene, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://nazarene.org/our-history/>

<sup>40</sup> "Our History," Church of the Nazarene, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://nazarene.org/our-history/>

<sup>41</sup> "Minister's Declaration Declared Unauthorized," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), December 1, 1923, 5.

<sup>42</sup> "Rev. J.W. Short to Hold Revival," *Greensboro Record* (Greensboro, NC), November 10, 1925, 4.

the First Church of the Nazarene in Charlotte. Initially, the congregation held its services in a tabernacle building at 800 Central Avenue.<sup>43</sup>

The first pastor of The First Church of the Nazarene in Charlotte was Reverend O.L. Maish (Orville) of Indiana. In early 1926, the young congregation and itinerate pastor planned to erect a church building on Thomas Avenue.<sup>44</sup> The Thomas Avenue building was not constructed, and the congregation continued to meet at the temporary building on Central Avenue from January until July 1926. During this interim period, the congregation continued to hold revival services to attract newer members and raise additional funding for a permanent church building. The Nazarene revivals were “conducted by a party of six workers from God’s Bible School,” in Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>45</sup> Established in 1900 by Martin Wells Knapp, the Bible School was a product of the holiness movement that established the Nazarene faith. Martin Knapp began a monthly periodical *The Revivalist* in 1888 that garnered an audience of approximately 20,000.<sup>46</sup> The popularity of his religious periodical prompted Knapp to open a training school for gospel workers of the holiness movement.<sup>47</sup> The school was well known to those in the Nazarene faith, and students and workers from the school were instrumental in spreading their faith in North Carolina.

The establishment of the Nazarene faith in Charlotte appears to be linked to the success of the movement in Indiana. Reverend J.W. Short was the superintendent of the Indiana district and had a direct connection to Greensboro, North Carolina, because he was born there. Reverend O.L. Maish was from Indiana and was selected by Reverend Short to oversee success in Charlotte. In November 1925, *The Charlotte Observer* claimed, “The Nazarene denomination is about 30 years old and has established churches in every state in the United States except North and South Carolina.”<sup>48</sup> It was a point of emphasis for the church to expand into North Carolina, and the Indiana delegation was selected based on previous connections to the area.

On July 9, 1926, the Trustees of Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church South deeded the 1829 Cleveland Avenue property to the Trustees of The First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte for \$18,500. The price also included the parsonage situated on the same lot as the church.<sup>49</sup> The parsonage was a one-story frame residential building located at 1811 Cleveland

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<sup>43</sup> “New Church is Growing,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), January 17, 1926, 10.

<sup>44</sup> “New Church is Growing,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), January 17, 1926, 10.

<sup>45</sup> “Crown Not Heroes of Past, Says Cox,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), July 9, 1926, 7.

<sup>46</sup> “Our Story,” God’s Bible School & College, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://www.gbs.edu/about-us/our-story/>

<sup>47</sup> “Our Story,” God’s Bible School & College, accessed December 18, 2025, <https://www.gbs.edu/about-us/our-story/>

<sup>48</sup> “Nazarene Church Revival Will Go Through Sunday,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), November 12, 1925, 7.

<sup>49</sup> “Nazarenes Buy Dilworth M.E. Church Here,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), July 11, 1926, 6.

Avenue, just northeast of the church building.<sup>50</sup> This purchase solidified the establishment of the Nazarene faith in Charlotte. Combined with what occurred concurrently in Greensboro, North Carolina, the church building at 1829 Cleveland Avenue housed one of the first Nazarene congregations in the state.

In 1938 and 1939, *The Charlotte Observer* completed an exposé chronicling the “Growth and Progress of the Churches of Charlotte.” The First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte was covered extensively and was hailed for “[growing] rapidly in the 12 1/2 years since its organization.”<sup>51</sup> It was noted that the church had added members and boasted a large Sunday school department. In 1938, the First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte remained the only one of its denomination in the city.<sup>52</sup> Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the First Church of the Nazarene congregation continued to grow, experiencing the typical comings and goings of pastors and members. The congregation held revivals and various teaching series to attract people to the Nazarene faith. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the Nazarenes sustained growth in Charlotte. The First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte was regarded as the “mother church” of Charlotte’s five Nazarene churches and others in North Carolina.<sup>53</sup> In 1973, having outgrown the church building at 1829 Cleveland Avenue, The First Church of the Nazarene moved to a new church building it constructed at 701 Scaleybark Road. The new church building included a day care center and kindergarten intended for more than 700 occupants, and a sanctuary for 440 people.<sup>54</sup>

After the Nazarenes moved, the building was occupied by The Greater Providence Baptist Church from 1973 through 1987. The church building also housed Greenway Gardens and Nursery (including the Redd Sled Christmas Shop) throughout the 1990s. In 1992, Greenway Gardens was awarded the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission Adaptive Reuse Award for its renovation of the building.<sup>55</sup> In 1999, Bonterra, a restaurant, opened in the former church. It quickly became a local favorite and occupied the building until December 2021. In early 2022, a new restaurant group purchased the building with plans to install a surf-and-turf restaurant.<sup>56</sup> Work at the building between 2022 and 2025 was limited to the interior and the site. Exterior work did not alter existing character-defining features, and the

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<sup>50</sup> The building is recorded on a 1959 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map but it is no longer extant. The location of the building was a parking lot prior to its reuse as the site for a relocated commercial building.

<sup>51</sup> “Growth and Progress of the Churches of Charlotte,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), March 20, 1938, 9.

<sup>52</sup> “Growth and Progress of the Churches of Charlotte,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), March 20, 1938, 9.

<sup>53</sup> “Assembly Planned,” *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), August 18, 1973, 4.

<sup>54</sup> “Church Open House,” *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC) August 11, 1973, 4.

<sup>55</sup> “Restaurant to Replace Garden Shop,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), March 4, 1998, 6D.

<sup>56</sup> Katie Peralta Soloff and Ashley Mahoney, “Leluia Hall replaces Bonterra in Dilworth,” Axios Charlotte, last modified August 12, 2022, <https://wwwaxios.com/local/charlotte/2022/08/12/leluia-hall-replaces-bonterra-in-dilworth-305464>.

current exterior of the building appears as it did in 2022. Leluia Hall opened its doors in May 2025.

Historically, as noted above, the tax parcel upon which the Dilworth Methodist Church South is situated (Tax Parcel Number 12105301) contained the church building and a parsonage that was located on Cleveland Avenue immediately east of the church. The 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map included as Figure 1 in the appendices to this report evidences the presence of that second structure with a street address of 1909 Cleveland Avenue. The 1914 Charlotte City Directory identifies that second structure as the parsonage of the Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church (South), then occupied by the church's pastor Reverend J. Osborne Ervin and his wife Stella. As of 1926, immediately prior to the acquisition of the property and its two buildings by the First Church of the Nazarene congregation, the second structure was still being used as the Methodist Church's parsonage, then occupied by Reverend George D. Herman. Over the years, as the street addresses for the parsonage and church changed to 1811 and 1813 Cleveland Avenue respectively and then to 1823 and 1829 Cleveland Avenue respectively – as shown on the 1929 and 1959 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map included as Figures 2 and 3 in the appendices hereto – subsequent congregations used the second building alternatively as a parsonage, a Sunday School classroom building, and a fellowship hall until at least 1989. Based upon a comparison of available Charlotte city directories and aerial photography, it appears the parsonage was demolished and replaced with a paved parking lot sometime between 1989 and 1993.<sup>57</sup>

The former parsonage site remained a parking lot until September 2024, when the current owners of the 1829 Cleveland Avenue property relocated a threatened local historical landmark to the site. Like the Atherton Methodist Church building that originally occupied the property, the Leeper and Wyatt Store – constructed circa 1903 at 1923 South Boulevard in Charlotte, a mere 750 feet away from the 1829 Cleveland Avenue property – had been linked with the adjacent Atherton Mills complex. The store served the millworkers and other Dilworth residents as a grocery store for more than fifty years. The Charlotte City Council recognized the local historic and architectural significance of the Leeper and Wyatt Store building by designating it as a local historic landmark in 1989. Despite that designation, the store – the oldest extant retail brick commercial building in Dilworth's first business district – was slated for demolition in 2022 to make way for a high-rise apartment tower. In 2023, working with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission and the Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Department, the owners of the 1829 Cleveland Avenue property acquired the Leeper and Wyatt

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<sup>57</sup> *Charlotte, North Carolina, City Directory 1914*, vol. 16 (Asheville, NC: Piedmont Directory Company, 1914), 202, 214, 539; *Charlotte, North Carolina, City Directory 1926*, vol. 26 (Asheville, NC: Commercial Service Company, 1926), 267, 385, 962; *Hill's Charlotte (Mecklenburg County, N.C.) City Directory 1933*, vol. 2 (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Company, 1933), 202, 482, 620; “Alphabetical List of Names” at 235, and “Street and Avenue Guide” at 79, both in *Hill's Charlotte (Mecklenburg County, N.C.) City Directory 1960* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Company, 1960); “Street and Avenue Guide” at 100, in *Hill's Charlotte (Mecklenburg County, N.C.) City Directory 1971* (Richmond, VA: Hill Directory Company, 1971); “Alphabetical Directory” at 217, and “Street Directory” at 75, both in *1989 Charlotte, North Carolina, City Directory, Vol. I* (Richmond, VA: R.L. Polk & Company 1989); Mecklenburg County Time Machine Aerial Photo Viewer, <https://maps.mecklenburgcountync.gov/timemachine/#35.22798785924774/-80.84409713745119/15/1761070814000>, accessed January 9, 2016.

Store building and secured the necessary approvals and permits to move the structure to the former parsonage site.<sup>58</sup>

The 1829 Cleveland Avenue property owners are currently pursuing an adaptive reuse plan that will repurpose the property into a sister restaurant for the adjacent Leluia Hall restaurant now operating in the former church building. Although it differs in several respects from the parsonage that occupied that space for some eighty years, the presence of the Leeper and Wyatt Store building does not adversely impact the setting and feeling of the former church building. Rather, as historically and architecturally significant structures from a common era, each a cherished Dilworth institution that served the same community – whether spiritually or commercially – for generations, the two early-twentieth-century structures and their newly achieved proximity evidence and reinforce the history of a once-small town that quickly and dramatically emerged as a model New South industrial city.

The developmental history of 1829 Cleveland Avenue is a reflection of Charlotte's early twentieth-century religious history. The building is associated with the beginnings of Methodism in the Dilworth neighborhood and the foundation of the Nazarene faith in Charlotte and North Carolina. The building's earliest history, from the frame 1895 church to the 1915 brick church, is representative of the growth of Charlotte's first residential suburb and the attempts of the city's Methodists to establish a congregation in that area. This associative history is important because it highlights the building as the oldest church building in the Dilworth neighborhood and the successes of Methodism in the suburb, culminating in the larger 1925 Dilworth Methodist Church. 1829 Cleveland Avenue is also notable for being occupied by the Nazarene congregation for nearly 50 years, the building's longest tenant. The church building served as the first permanent home for the First Church of the Nazarene of Charlotte, which at the time was a minority congregation compared to the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist congregations and churches in the Dilworth neighborhood and throughout Charlotte. Although the building has not served in a religious capacity since 1987, its associative history looms large in Charlotte's twentieth-century narrative.

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<sup>58</sup> William H. Huffman, "Survey and Research Report for the Leeper and Wyatt Store Building," Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, December 5, 1988, <https://mecknc.widen.net/s/hbhpqtblhh/leeper-and-wyatt-store-sr>, accessed January 9, 2026; "An Ordinance Designating a Property Known as the 'Leeper and Wyatt Store Building' . . . as Historic Property," Ordinance No. 2711-X, Ordinance Book 38, Page 161, Real Estate Book 6127, Page 463, September 18, 1989, <https://mecknc.widen.net/s/jqqjzrf2fx/leeper-and-wyatt-store-ord>, accessed January 9, 2026; Chase Jordan, "A move for the ages: Historic Dilworth building saved and moved up the street," *Charlotte Observer*, September 15, 2024, 26A; Gordon Rago, "'Soul of this city,'" *Charlotte Observer*, February 20, 2022, A3, A4; Gordon Rago, "Developer explores plan to save historic Charlotte building," *Charlotte Observer*, March 12, 2023, 25A; Gordon Rago, "Couple behind Supperland hopes to save South End landmark," *Charlotte Observer*, May 23, 2023, 5A.

## Architects and Architecture

Dilworth Methodist Church South was designed by architect Marvin William Helms (Marvin Helms) and built by S.I. Vaughan. The church building was designed and constructed in the Colonial Revival style. Marvin Helms (1883-1960) was a native of Mecklenburg County and a lifelong resident of Charlotte. Helms worked independently in the latter half of his career but was closely associated with the architectural offices of Oliver Duke Wheeler (Oliver Wheeler) and Charles Christian Hook (C.C Hook) throughout his formative years. Helms's nearly 60-year architectural career places him among Charlotte's most prolific and important twentieth-century architects. Dilworth Methodist Church South is the first known and documented project completed by Marvin Helms. The building derives a major component of its significance for its association with Marvin Helms.

Marvin Helms was born in Charlotte on November 25, 1883, to Henry Jackson Helms (1861-1943) and Susan Matilda Marze Helms (1860-1939). As one of six children in the Helms family, Marvin established his pathway to architectural success at a young age. Helms was listed as a draftsman in the 1900 Federal Census at only 16 years old.<sup>59</sup> Although he was recorded as still living with his parents, it is likely that Helms apprenticed in Oliver Wheeler's (1864-1942) architectural firm. It is unclear if Helms ever received a formal education in architecture. In 1903, he married Leona Beatrice Harmon (1886-1962). The couple's wedding announcement noted, "Mr. Helms is a young architectural draftsman, at present in the employ of Wheeler & Runge, the architects."<sup>60</sup> Wheeler, Runge, and Company was established in 1903 under Oliver Wheeler and Neil Runge and lasted until 1905 when it was reorganized as Wheeler, Runge, and Dickey to add partner D. Anderson Dickey. This partnership lasted until 1908.<sup>61</sup> Helms's early experiences in this professional environment directed his later success.

Helms worked under Oliver Wheeler's guidance from at least 1903 to 1918. The early Wheeler, Runge, and Company completed four North Carolina courthouses and two other



Figure 2. *Marvin Helms as a young architect in 1917.*

<sup>59</sup> United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 1900. T623, 1854 rolls.

<sup>60</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), November 12, 1903 5.

<sup>61</sup> Catherine W. Bishir and Angie Clifton, "Wheeler, Runge, and Dickey (1905-1908)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000260>.

buildings from 1903 to 1905.<sup>62</sup> Wheeler, Runge, and Dickey produced several residential projects, a courthouse, a church, and a bank building from 1905 to 1908.<sup>63</sup> Helms undoubtedly participated in these projects as a junior member, assisting Wheeler in various architectural capacities. Oliver Wheeler, a native of Freedom, New York, removed an earlier practice from Atlanta, Georgia, to Charlotte when he was commissioned to complete Trinity Methodist Church (no longer extant). Through his many partnerships, Wheeler had a prolific architectural career in Charlotte, greater North Carolina, and other adjacent states. Wheeler was especially well known for economical courthouse designs (he completed nine between 1899 and 1913) and a variety of other commercial and residential building types.<sup>64</sup>

Wheeler partnered with Eugene John Stern in 1909 to create the Wheeler and Stern architectural firm (the last partnership of his career).<sup>65</sup> Marvin Helms's fledgling career began under Wheeler and Stern with two individual commissions. Helms's first documented project came in 1914. *The Charlotte News* reported, "Mr. Marvin W. Helms of the firm of Wheeler & Stern, architects, has returned from Statesville [NC], where he secured the contract for the plans for a new school building to be erected there as soon as the plans can be completed."<sup>66</sup> The newspaper article also noted "Dilworth Church" as a previous commission connected to Helms. The editor stated, "The plans for this building [the church] were prepared by Mr. Helms personally, and he is taking a great deal of interest in the construction of the building, notice of which has already appeared in these columns."<sup>67</sup> It is unclear if the Statesville school project was ever completed, but Helms's involvement with the design and construction of Dilworth Methodist Church South is well documented. Helms worked diligently throughout 1914 to 1915 to see the project to its completion. As noted, the church building was completed in July/August 1915. Dilworth Methodist Church South was not only the first of several important early twentieth-century churches constructed in the Dilworth neighborhood, but it was the first documented building that Marvin Helms individually designed and constructed.

Similar to many upstart careers, benevolence likely played an important role. Helms's connections to the church as a member probably assisted in his securing the contract. He also resided across the street from the church site at 1806 Cleveland Avenue for a period of time (no

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<sup>62</sup> Catherine W Bishir and Angie Clifton, "Wheeler, Runge, and Company (1903-1905)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000258>.

<sup>63</sup> Catherine W. Bishir and Angie Clifton, "Wheeler, Runge, and Dickey (1905-1908)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000260>.

<sup>64</sup> William B. Bushing et al. "Wheeler, Oliver Duke (1864-1942)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000257>.

<sup>65</sup> Catherine W. Bishir and Angie Clifton, "Wheeler and Stern (1909-late 1910s)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000259>.

<sup>66</sup> "Architects of Charlotte Get School Plans," *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), December 27, 1914, 5.

<sup>67</sup> "Architects of Charlotte Get School Plans," *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), December 27, 1914, 5.

longer extant).<sup>68</sup> Whatever the circumstance, the completion of Dilworth Methodist Church South kick-started Helms's trajectory of architectural success and professional standing within the Charlotte architecture scene. In 1918, three years after the construction of Dilworth Methodist Church South, Helms migrated to the office of C.C. Hook. Helms worked as an architect for C.C. Hook until 1944, when he started his own architectural firm.<sup>69</sup>

C.C. Hook (1870-1938) was Charlotte's first full-time professional architect, moving to the city as a young man in 1890. Born in Wheeling, West Virginia, he graduated from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, and made his way to Charlotte.<sup>70</sup> Hook's career included three partnerships - Hook and Sawyer, Hook and Rogers, and Hook and Hook (son) - and work on his own. It is estimated that his total building production (both personal and firm related) is between 800 and 1,000 projects. Hook is regarded as one of Charlotte's most prolific turn-of-the-century architects.<sup>71</sup>

Hook introduced Charlotte to the Colonial Revival style of architecture. His experiences at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago inspired his affection for the classical style that he became known for throughout North Carolina and other adjacent states.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps Marvin Helms's delicate execution of the Colonial Revival style at Dilworth Methodist Church South placed him on Hook's radar. Although the circumstances surrounding Helms's employment by Hook are unknown, a majority of Helms's career took place under Hook. Marvin Helms was not a partner of the firm but completed projects as Hook's equal. Although both had an affinity for the Colonial Revival style, their most notable project together, Dilworth Methodist Church (formerly Dilworth Methodist Episcopal Church), was decidedly Gothic.

As early as 1921, *The Charlotte Observer* commented on the collective agreement of Methodists in the Dilworth neighborhood that a larger church building was needed. At the time, it was estimated that about 650 Methodists lived in Dilworth, and about 350 belonged to Dilworth Methodist Church South (the building at 1829 Cleveland Avenue).<sup>73</sup> As a member of the church, Helms had a strong connection to the needs and desires of Dilworth-area Methodists. He leveraged these connections to secure the contract for Hook and himself. By 1924-1925, the design and planning stages of the project had been completed. The new church building was

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<sup>68</sup> Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920. (NARA microfilm publication T625, 2076 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>69</sup> "Architect Helms to Move Office," *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), June 21, 1951, 3.

<sup>70</sup> Michelle Ann Michael and Catherine W. Bishir, "Hook, Charles Christian (1870-1938)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000211>.

<sup>71</sup> Michelle Ann Michael and Catherine W. Bishir, "Hook, Charles Christian (1870-1938)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000211>.

<sup>72</sup> Michelle Ann Michael and Catherine W. Bishir, "Hook, Charles Christian (1870-1938)," 2009, <https://ncarchitects.lib.ncsu.edu/people/P000211>.

<sup>73</sup> *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), May 23, 1921, 3.



Figure 3. Postcard view of Dilworth Methodist Church designed by C.C. Hooks and Helms.

designed “[to] resemble the Westminster Abbey.”<sup>74</sup> The Gothic Revival building was completed in October 1926 at 601 East Boulevard. *The Charlotte Observer* lauded Helms's architectural skill, observing, “Mr. Helms planned the building years ago and thus time and consideration to details allowed him to perfect every point. The proportions from the outside are in strict accord with the symmetrical and stately architectural lines.”<sup>75</sup> The design was borrowed from late English Gothic cathedrals (Westminster Abbey included), and features a five-bay by seven-bay nave with three-story crenelated towers flanking three central double doors with arched transoms. The foundation is rusticated stone, and the walls are smooth stone.<sup>76</sup> The church building was also notable as a product of North Carolina. It was designed by a Charlotte architect, constructed by Charlotte contractor J.A. Jones Company, and comprised of North

<sup>74</sup> “Dilworth Methodists Give Thanks Today On Site of Their New \$200,000 Building,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 9, 1925, 27.

<sup>75</sup> “Dilworth Methodist Church is Made-In-Carolina Building,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), December 5, 1926, 35.

<sup>76</sup> Virginia Oswald. 1987. “Dilworth Historic District.” 9. *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. On file at Historic Preservation Office, Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Raleigh, NC.

Carolina building materials.<sup>77</sup> Helms would also design and supervise the construction of a large educational building and other annexes on the Dilworth Methodist Church site.

Helms's architectural dexterity was on full display with the completion of Dilworth Methodist Church. At a relatively early point in his career, Helms proved his proficiency in designing in popular architectural styles and managing large-scale projects. Both church buildings are the best of their respective styles in the Dilworth Historic District. Helms's completion of both Dilworth-area churches positioned him as a capable, standout architect at a sizable Charlotte firm benefitting from the city's explosion in population and spatial growth. Helms's success in the 1920s propelled his career well into the 1950s.

A year after completing the Dilworth Methodist campus, Helms designed the Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon House at 800 Mt. Vernon Avenue in the Dilworth neighborhood (extant). Bishop Mouzon was elected to the office of bishop in May 1910 and is regarded as an important figure of early twentieth century Methodism.<sup>78</sup> Bishop Mouzon commissioned Helms to design his new home in 1926, and the Mouzon family moved to Charlotte in 1927, when the bishop was assigned the episcopacy of the Carolinas.<sup>79</sup> The Bishop Mouzon House is an excellent example of the Tudor Revival style and retains character-defining features such as faux half-timbering, a gambrel slate roof with corbeled overhanging eaves, ganged divided-lite windows, and an



Figure 4. *Current view of the Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon House.*

<sup>77</sup> "Dilworth Methodist Church is Made-In-Carolina Building," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), December 5, 1926, 35.

<sup>78</sup> Dr. William H. Huffman, "Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon House: Historical Overview" (designation report, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1992), 4.

<sup>79</sup> Dr. William H. Huffman, "Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon House: Historical Overview" (designation report, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission, 1992), 6.

asymmetrical form composition. The residence is a testament to Helms's architectural acumen outside large-scale church and commercial projects. Throughout his career, Helms was commissioned to design and oversee the construction of residential projects for Charlotte's upper-middle and high-end earning social classes. The Bishop Mouzon House was designated as a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission historic landmark in 1993 for its association with Bishop Edwin D. Mouzon and Marvin Helms.

Based on currently known commissions, it is surmised that the Great Depression (1929-1939) dampened Helms's prospects for large, multi-year projects. The Bishop Mouzon House was likely not Helms's first residential project, but the early to mid-1930s represented an uptick in his involvement with residential buildings. Throughout this time period, Helms completed several residential designs across Charlotte. Searching for additional work, Helms also participated in the Historic American Building Survey (HABS) program from its beginning in 1933 until at least 1934. HABS was a New Deal-era program that sought to alleviate the economic struggles of architects, providing survey work of the country's historic resources. HABS documentation (on file at the Library of Congress) includes drawing sets and photographs from seven Charlotte-based survey projects attributed to Helms.

Helms and the C.C. Hook firm escaped the latter part of the Depression years with a sizable commission in late 1937. The firm earned a contract for a \$300,000 addition to the Belk Brothers building in downtown Charlotte. The original department store building was constructed on East Trade Street in 1910 by the J.A. Jones company. Helms and both C.C. and Walter Hook (his son) were commissioned to design an addition to the East Trade Street building that spanned the entire depth of the block, reaching to East Fifth Street. The realized addition (completed in August 1938) was an impressive five-story wing with a large basement and entrance at East Fifth Street.<sup>80</sup> The steel-framed building had brick veneer at side elevations and an imposing stone facade overlooking East Fifth Street. The facade featured unbroken, full-height stone pilasters, curved windows, and a typical metal storefront system with expanses of fixed display windows surmounted by corresponding transoms and cloth awnings. Overall, the department store addition represented a step toward modernistic stylization reminiscent of the stripped-down and streamlined Art Deco. Although the design and execution of the Belk Brothers Department Store addition cannot be attributed to Helms alone,



Figure 5. 1938 photograph of the Belk Brothers building addition facing East Fifth Street.

<sup>80</sup> "Belk's Charlotte Store is One of Carolina's Finest," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 24, 1938, 17.

he is credited as an assisting architect for the project. The Belk Brothers Department Store and other buildings on the block were demolished in 1989 for the construction of the Bank of America Corporate Center, which was completed in 1992.

In 1944, Helms started his own architectural firm, five years after the death of C.C. Hook in 1938. The 1940s and 1950s defined Helms's architectural career as a church designer. Although Helms continued to work on residential and commercial commissions, the 1940s and 1950s represented a shift in his focus back to the buildings that propelled him into the profession. Throughout the 1940s, Helms mostly worked on church building additions or standalone buildings for church education or housing. Helms completed the aforementioned educational building for Dilworth Methodist Church between 1941 to 1942.<sup>81</sup> In 1945, *The Charlotte Observer* recorded several church projects that Helms participated in. Helms was involved in the enlargement and remodel of First Wesleyan Methodist church (Bruns Avenue), "worked over" the Kilgo Methodist building (Belvedere Avenue), and completed work for the Mouzon Memorial church.<sup>82</sup> In addition, Helms worked on an extensive remodeling campaign for First Baptist church at 318 North Tryon Street.<sup>83</sup>

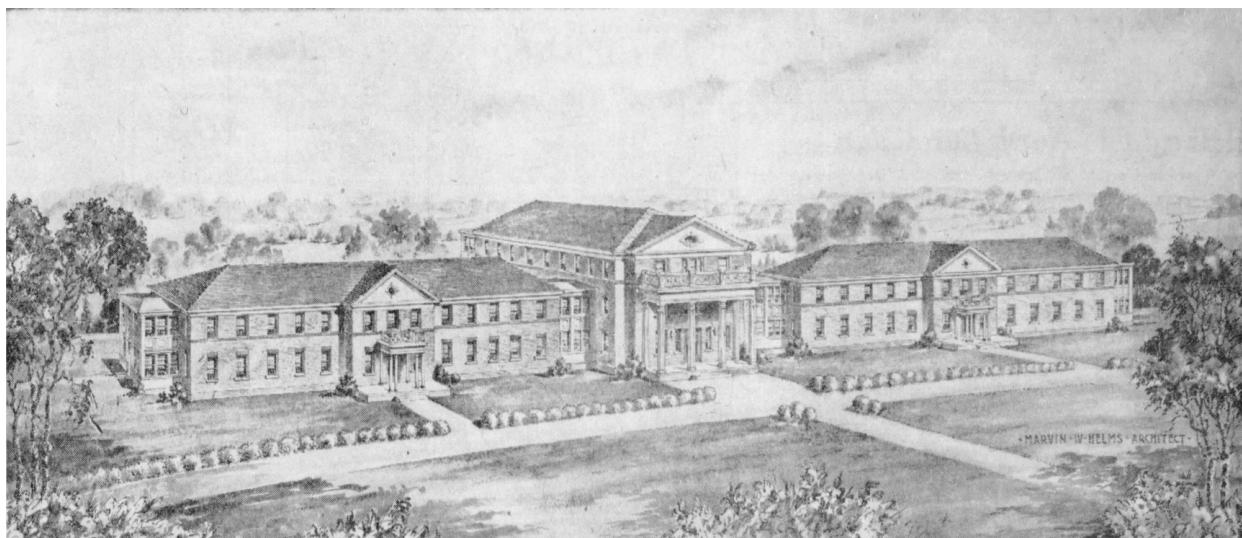


Figure 6. Marvin Helms 1947 rendering of the Methodist Home for the Aged complex.

True to his Methodist roots, Helms designed and worked on the Methodist Home for the Aged complex throughout the late 1940s. The central building was designed to be constructed first, with dormitory wings added on each side. The main building functioned as administrative offices, a central dining room, a kitchen, and a hospital clinic. The building also included 12 rooms for aged Methodists. The building was completed in 1948.<sup>84</sup> Helms designed the complex

<sup>81</sup> "Church Work to Begin Soon," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), February 22, 1941, 4.

<sup>82</sup> "Church Plans are Completed," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), June 8, 1945, 17.

<sup>83</sup> "Church Project in Last Stages," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), November 3, 1945, 10.

<sup>84</sup> "Methodist Home for the Aged," *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), February 6, 1947, 5.

in the Neo-Classical style with giant order columns supporting a two-story portico and balcony at the main facade of the building. The facade also included a decorative pediment and circular window. The building was surmounted by a hipped roof with dormers. Both wings were constructed later and complemented the classical design. The complex is no longer extant.

At some point in the 1940s or 1950s, Helms became associated with the Duke Endowment program for rural churches. The Duke Endowment was founded in 1924 by James B. Duke, the founder of the American Tobacco Company and an original investor in what would become Duke Energy.<sup>85</sup> The circumstances surrounding this connection remain unclear, but Helms worked on a number of church projects that received funding through the Duke Endowment.<sup>86</sup> In 1951, the aging Helms also brought on his grandson, Marvin H. Saline (forming Helms & Saline), to assist with the overflowing church work.<sup>87</sup> Throughout the 1950s, Helms completed a number of church projects in Charlotte and neighboring towns/cities. A sample size of church projects includes Green Memorial Baptist Church (1952), Eastway Baptist Church (1957-1958), Chantilly Baptist (1959), and Greenland Avenue Baptist Church (1959).<sup>88</sup>

Marvin Helms died on December 3, 1960, after a battle with stomach cancer. The 77 year old Helms never retired from architecture and effectively worked in the field his entire adult life. *The Charlotte Observer* eulogized Helms as the “Designer of 800 Churches,” noting, “Among the Charlotte churches he designed are Dilworth Methodist, where he was a member; Green Memorial Baptist, Calvary Methodist, Enderly Park Baptist, and Hickory Grove Baptist.”<sup>89</sup>

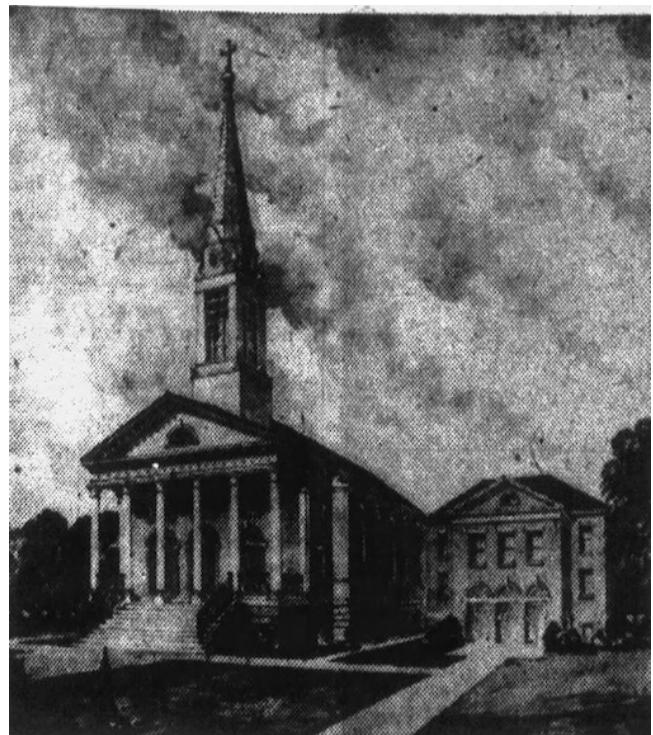


Figure 7. 1952 photograph of Green Memorial Baptist Church.

<sup>85</sup> “Celebrating 100 Years,” The Duke Endowment, accessed November 11, 2025, <https://www.dukeendowment.org/about/history-legacy#decade-1920s>

<sup>86</sup> “Commission: Bishop’s fame makes house historic,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), January 17, 1993, 42.

<sup>87</sup> “Architect Helms to Move Office,” *Charlotte News*, (Charlotte, NC), June 21, 1951, 3.

<sup>88</sup> This short list was produced from historic newspaper research. Additional research is required to understand the full breadth of Helms’s church work. Creating this list would benefit from deed research and combing other historic repositories.

<sup>89</sup> “Marvin Helms, Designer of 800 Churches, Dies,” *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), December 4, 1960, 9F.

Helms is entombed in the Forest Lawn Mausoleum within the Forest Lawn West Cemetery, a structure he designed in 1947.<sup>90</sup>

Helms's six-decade architectural career makes him one of the most prolific architects in Charlotte's history. He designed in a variety of types and styles and completed residential, commercial, institutional, and ecclesiastical buildings. His extant projects, such as Dilworth Methodist Church South, Dilworth Methodist Church, and the Bishop Mouzon House, are excellent examples of their style and represent Helms's breadth of architectural knowledge and skill. The fact that Dilworth Methodist Church South is Helms's first documented commission adds another layer to its significance of association with the architect. Because many of his designs no longer exist, Dilworth Methodist Church South is an important tangible link to the early career of one of Charlotte's most notable and prolific architects. Dilworth Methodist Church South began Helms's illustrious career and earned him professional recognition that lasted throughout his lifetime.

## B. Architectural Description/Significance:

Dilworth Methodist Church South is a one-story masonry building with a basement. The building, constructed in 1915, was completed in the Colonial Revival style. In plan view, the symmetrical footprint consists of front and rear elevations of one bay that extend outward from the three recessed bays at side elevations. The northwest-facing main facade consists of three bays. This facade is dominated by a classically-stylized portico with a pedimented gable with a decorative fanlight window supported by four round Doric columns that rest on brick bases. The



Figure 8. Current photograph of the southwest elevation.



Figure 9. Current photograph of building window and belt coursing.

<sup>90</sup> "The Beginning of Construction of the Forest Lawn Mausoleum," *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), June 15, 1947, 22.

classical pediment features a raking cornice, a horizontal cornice, and a Doric frieze with decorative triglyphs above each column. This portico frames a centrally-located double door entrance with fixed, three-lite over panel sidelites. A large fanlight with intricate trim completes this entrance ensemble. This front facade opening is surmounted by a large archway with a decorative keystone. The central bay is reinforced by brick pilasters with Doric capitals that extend to the underside of the portico. Other bays to the left and right feature large vertically-oriented window openings occupied by nine-over-nine double-hung windows with three-lite fixed transoms. The front facade also includes cast concrete belt coursing and a water table that continues at the building's other elevations.

The southwest and northeast side elevations are symmetrical with the same fenestration and detailing. Both elevations consist of five bays. As noted, the northern and southernmost bays project outward from three recessed bays that comprise the middle, nave portion of the church. The projecting portions include one window opening matching windows at the front facade. The three recessed bays include nine-over-nine double-hung windows with fixed fanlight transoms. All windows have decorative keystones that sit under decorative belt coursing that extends from the front facade.

The main core of the building is surmounted by a hipped slate roof. The roof has a slight overhang at the eave at all elevations and is finished with a wood board soffit. The roof features a domed cupola with pedimented openings with applied corbels and freestanding Doric columns. The cupola sits atop a wood base that is clad in metal. This roof feature is located at the northwest hip of the roof closest to the front facade of the building and adds to the overall Colonial Revival appearance of the church building.



Figure 10. Current photograph of cupola.



Figure 11. Current photograph of the ca. 1999 rear addition.

In ca. 1999, a rear addition was completed for a restaurant. This square-shaped addition rests on a brick foundation at the same height as the church. An enclosed hyphen connects the two portions. The exterior is differentiated through its use of stucco rather than brick. The addition includes windows that replicate the nine-over-nine with three-lite transom configuration like the church. The addition is surmounted by a flat roof that is separate from the main building.

The Colonial Revival architecture of the building remains intact and apparent. The building's integrity of exterior character-defining features reinforces its architectural significance. Dilworth Methodist Church South is the only example of the Colonial Revival style utilized at a religious building in the district. The building's integrity of design and overall form highlight its scale, compatible with the residential nature of the Dilworth streetcar neighborhood. The church building is not only an excellent representation of the Colonial Revival style, but it also stands as a link to the bucolic nature of the Dilworth Historic District, representing the early stages of religious architecture in the neighborhood.

## **V. Supporting Documentation**

1. Photographs
2. Floor Plan
3. Site Plan
4. Tax Map
5. Historic Documentation

## VI. Bibliographical/Source Citations

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Figures:

Figure 1. "Growth and Progress of Churches in Charlotte." *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC) July 2, 1939.

Figure 2. "Marvin W. Helms." *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), March 18, 1917.

Figure 3. "Dilworth Methodist Church." ca. 1930. Postcard. E.C. Kropf Co.

Figure 4. Google Street View of 800 Mt. Vernon Avenue, Charlotte, NC, accessed November 26, 2025.

Figure 5. "Belk's Charlotte Store is One of Carolina's Finest." *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), August 24, 1938.

Figure 6. "Methodist Home for the Aged." *Charlotte News* (Charlotte, NC), February 6, 1947.

Figure 7. "Green Memorial Baptist Opening Is Set Sunday." *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), January 12, 1952.

Figure 8. Photograph courtesy of Verity Works, LLC.

Figure 9. Photograph courtesy of Verity Works, LLC.

Figure 10. Photograph courtesy of Verity Works, LLC.

Figure 11. Photograph courtesy of Verity Works, LLC.



1. Looking southeast, the front northwest facade of the building.



2. Looking south, the north corner of the building and the northwest and northeast elevations.



3. Looking south, view of building and surrounding buildings (including the Leeper and Wyatt Store building to the left of the church) on Cleveland Avenue.



4. Looking northwest, view of the northeast elevation.



5. Looking southwest, view of a previous addition at the rear of the building.



6. Looking northeast, the southwest corner of the building.



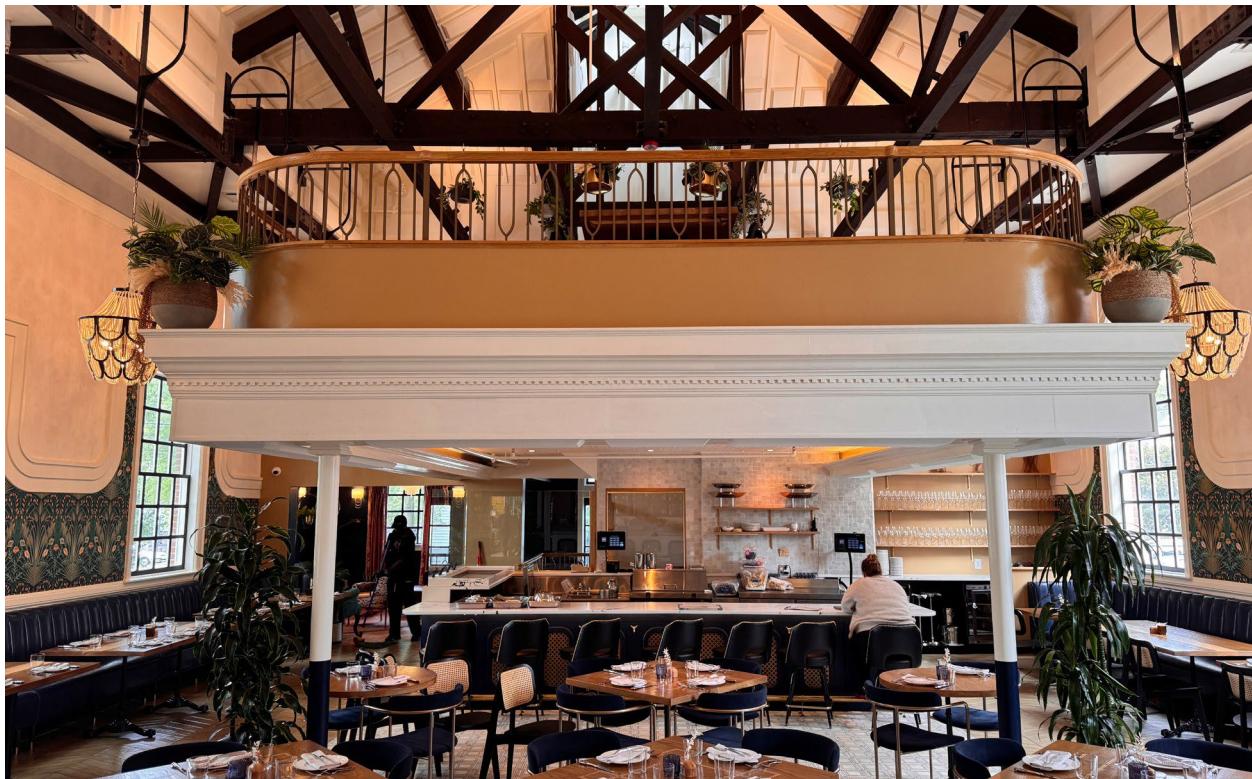
7. Looking northeast, the southwest elevation of the building.



8. Looking north, the southwest elevation from East Worthington Avenue.



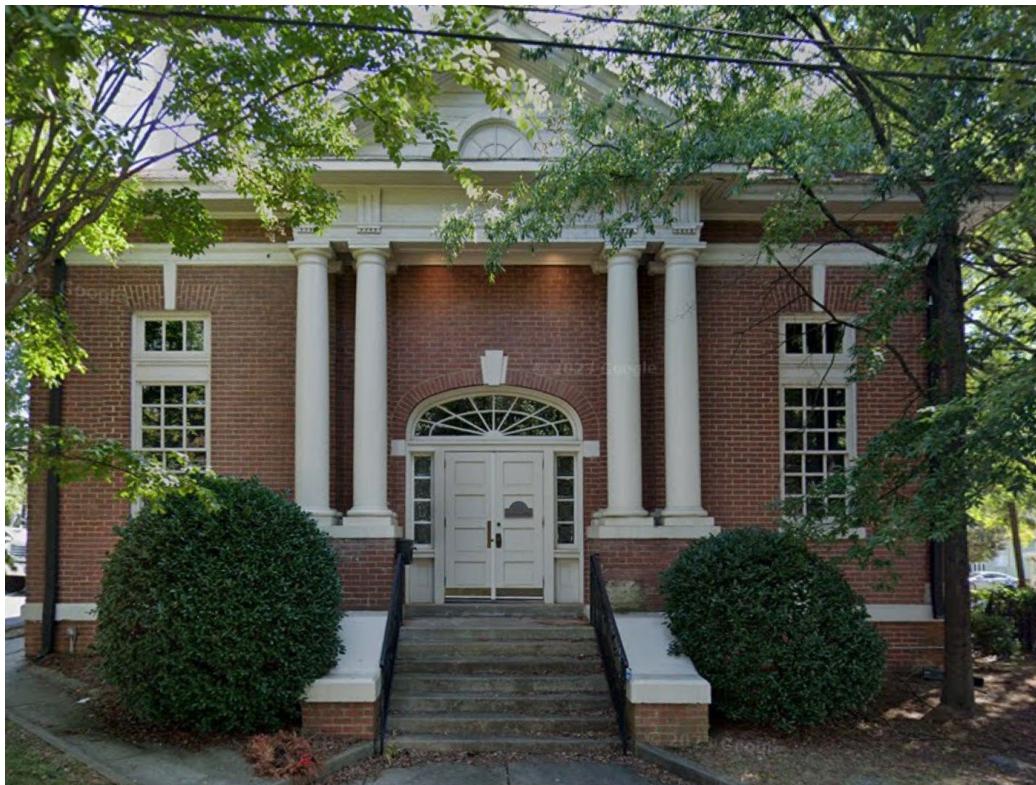
9. View of typical exterior window.



10. Looking northwest, the main dining space of the interior from the main bar to the front of the building.



11. Looking southeast, view of the main bar area within the main dining space.



1. View of front facade in 2022.



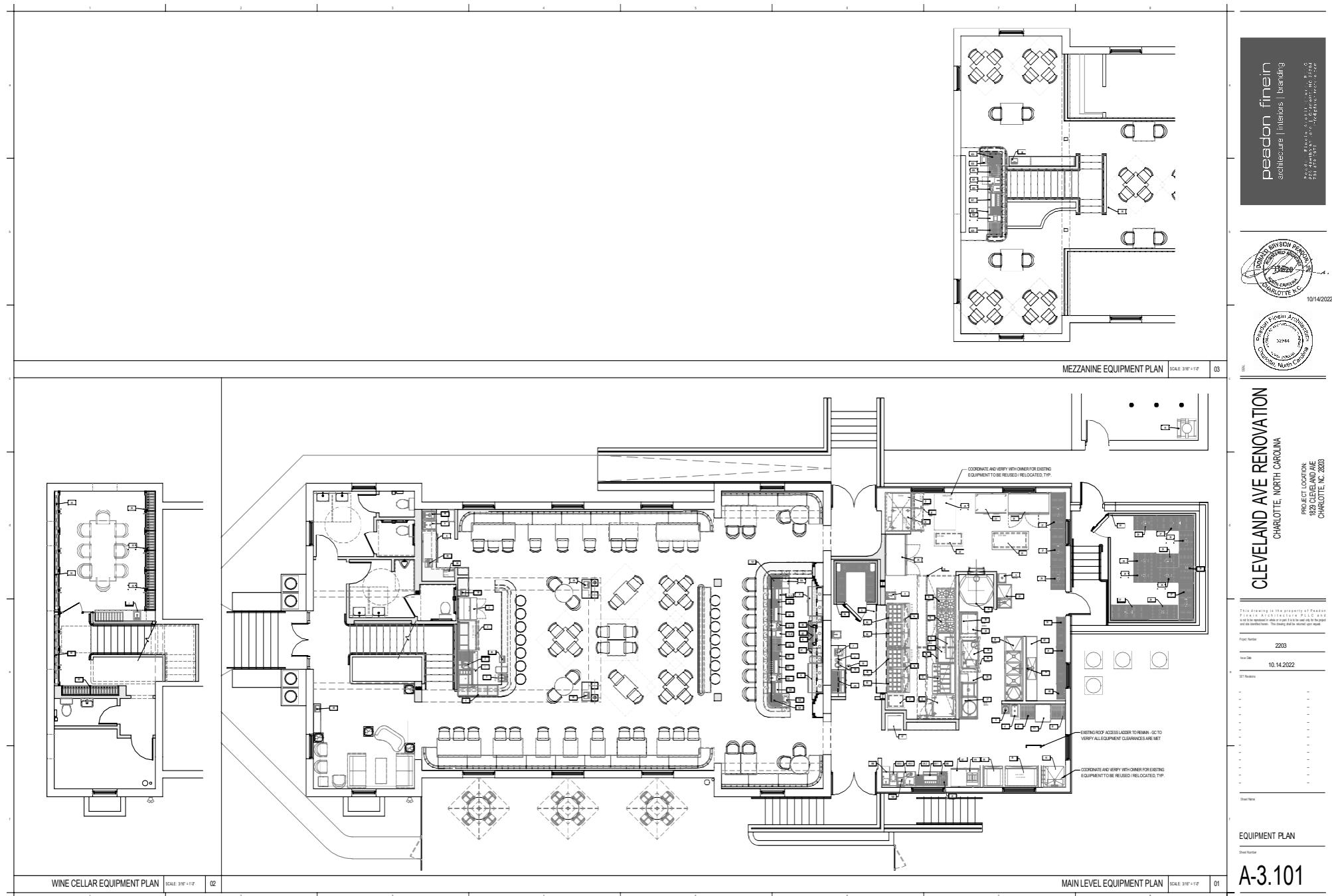
2. View of northeast elevation in 2022.



3. Additional view of northeast elevation and addition in 2022.



4. View of southwest elevation in 2022.



**CLEVELAND AVE RENOVATION**  
CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

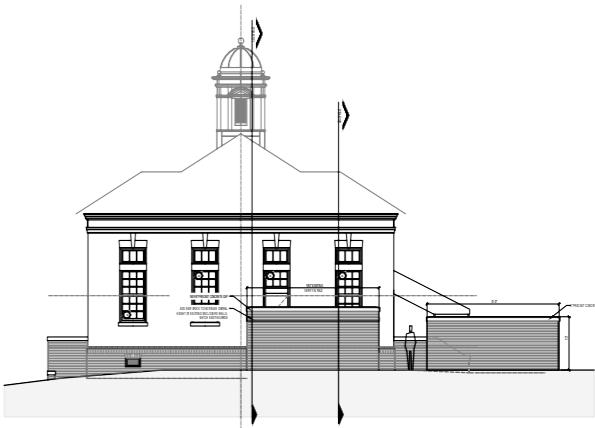
PROJECT LOCATION:  
1820 CLEVELAND AVE  
CHARLOTTE, NC 28203

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and the architect.

Project Number: 2203  
Issue Date: 10.14.2022  
S27 Rev 001

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Sheet Number:

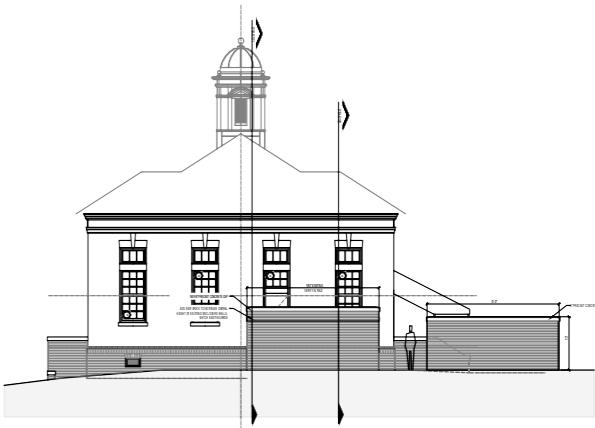
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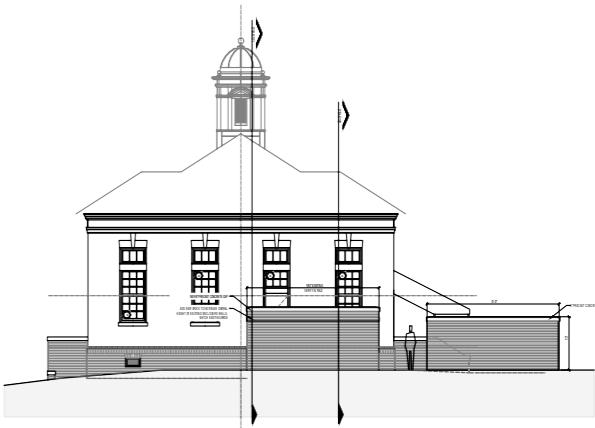
REAR ELEVATION | SCALE: 18' = 1'-0" | 03



FRONT ELEVATION | SCALE: 18' = 1'-0" | 01



LEFT SIDE ELEVATION | SCALE: 18' = 1'-0" | 04



RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION | SCALE: 18' = 1'-0" | 02

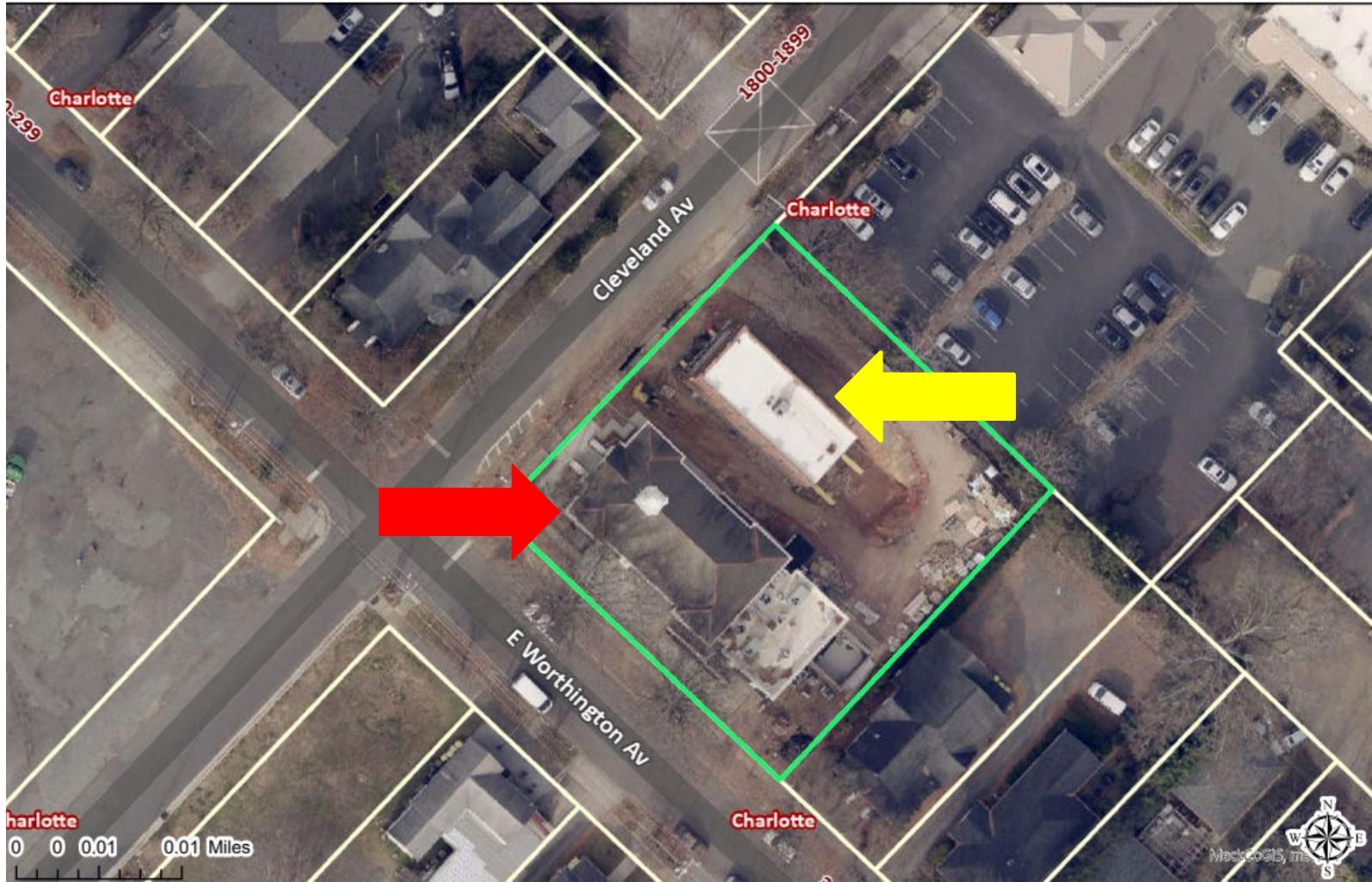
## **Polaris Map – Mecklenburg County, North Carolina**

Date Printed: 1/20/2026 11:37 AM



## Polaris Map – Mecklenburg County, North Carolina

Date Printed: 1/20/2026 11:17 AM



Dilworth Methodist Church South (red arrow) and Leeper and Wyatt Store (yellow arrow)

**MECKLENBURG COUNTY, North Carolina**  
**POLARIS 3G PARCEL OWNERSHIP AND GIS SUMMARY**

Date Printed: 10/09/2025

**Identity**

Parcel ID	GIS ID
12105301	12105301

**Postal Address on property (Only 1 shown)**

1829 CLEVELAND AV CHARLOTTE NC 28203
--------------------------------------

**Property Characteristics**

Legal Desc	L18-20 B23 M230-60
Land Area	0.517 GIS AC
Fire District	City Of Charlotte
Special District	NA
Account Type	Nc Corp
Municipality	Charlotte
Land Use	Commercial

**Land Analysis - Jurisdiction**

Charlotte	0.517 GIS AC (100.00%)
-----------	------------------------

**Land Analysis - Zoning**

NC(HDO)	0.000 GIS AC (0.00%)
NC(EX) HDO	0.517 GIS AC (100.00%)

**Land Analysis - Other**

Layer	IN	OUT
Utility ROW	0.000 GIS AC (0.00%)	0.517 GIS AC (100.00%)
Railroad ROW	0.000 GIS AC (0.00%)	0.517 GIS AC (100.00%)
FEMA Floodplain	0.000 GIS AC (0.00%)	0.517 GIS AC (100.00%)
Post Const Buffers	0.000 GIS AC (0.00%)	0.517 GIS AC (100.00%)
SWIM Buffers	0.000 GIS AC (0.00%)	0.517 GIS AC (100.00%)

**Site Location**

ETJ Area	Charlotte
Historic District	Yes
Census Tract #	34.02
Inside BIP Opportunity Area	No

**Ownership**

Owner Name	Mailing Address
ON CLEVELAND LLC	912 EAST PARK AV CHARLOTTE NC 28203

**Deed Reference(s) and Sale Price**

Deed	Sale Date	Sale Price
37742-722	10/28/2022	\$3,847,000.00
37089-126	02/23/2022	\$3,800,000.00
24080-598	11/17/2008	\$0.00

**Situs Addresses tied to Parcel**

1823 CLEVELAND AV CHARLOTTE NC
--------------------------------

**Environmental Information (View map to verify)**

FEMA Panel	3710454300K (02/20/2014)
FEMA Flood Zone	OUT
Comm Flood Zone	OUT
Water Quality Buffer	OUT
Post Construction District	Central Catawba
Stream Watershed District	UPPER LITTLE SUGAR

East View on 12/26/2024



*This map or report is prepared for the inventory of real property within Mecklenburg County and is compiled from recorded deeds, plats, tax maps, surveys, planimetric maps, and other public records and data. Users of this map or report are hereby notified that the aforementioned public primary information sources should be consulted for verification. Mecklenburg County and its mapping contractors assume no legal responsibility for the information contained herein.*



Figure 1. 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission  
Landmark Designation Report - Dilworth Methodist Church South  
1829 Cleveland Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203

January 2026

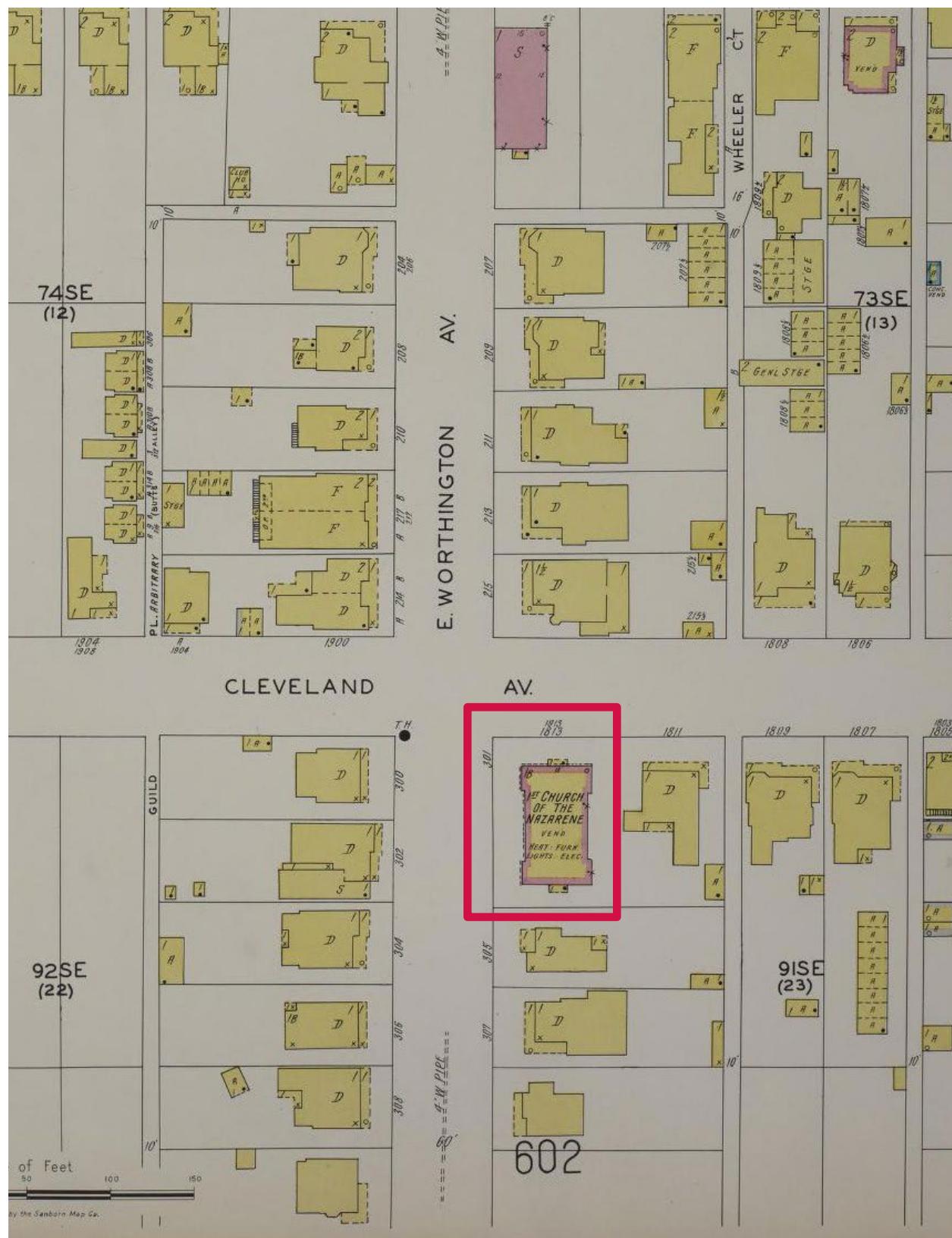


Figure 2. 1929 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

# VERITY WORKS

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission  
Landmark Designation Report - Dilworth Methodist Church South  
1829 Cleveland Avenue, Charlotte, NC 28203

January 2026



Figure 3. 1959 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

# VERITY WORKS

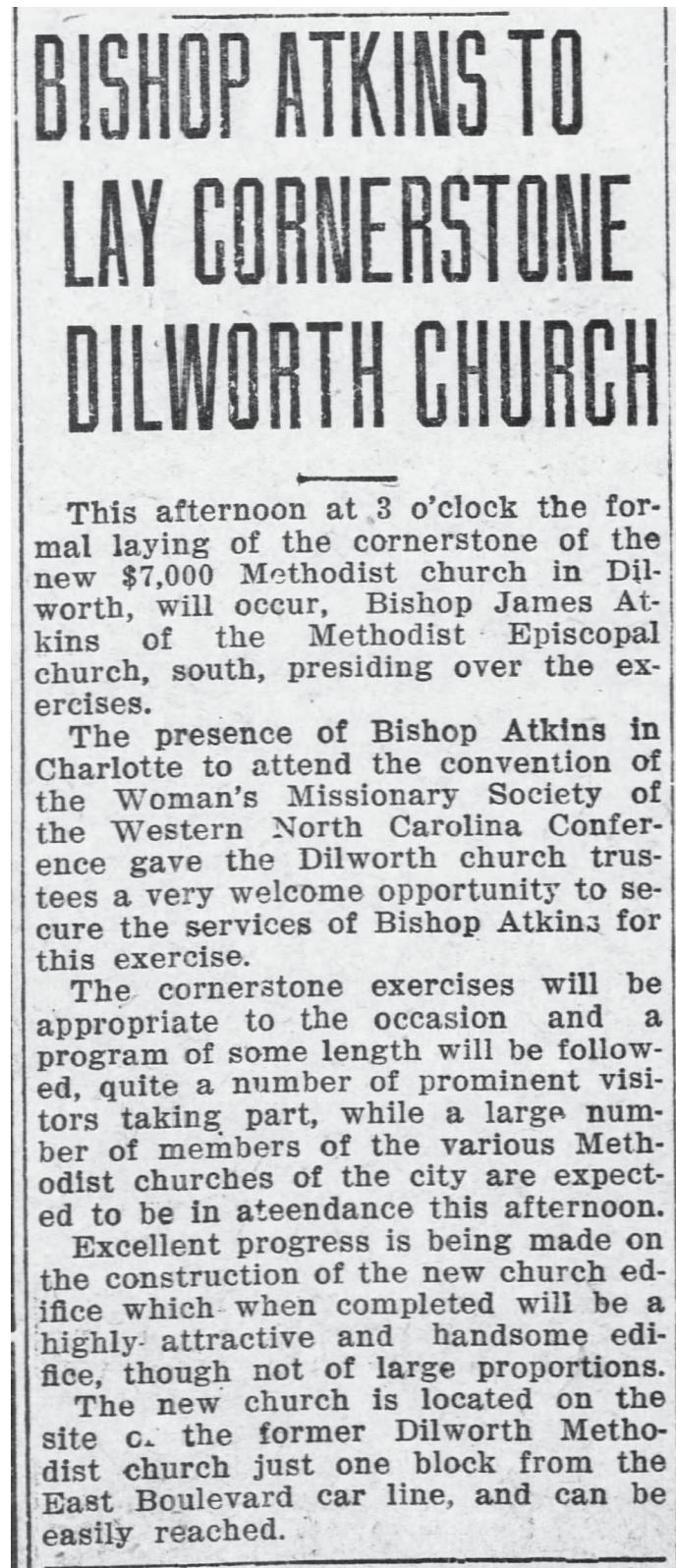


Figure 4. *Charlotte News* article January 31, 1915.

# LAID CORNERSTONE METHODIST CHURCH IN DILWORTH

Several hundred people were present Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock when Bishop James Atkins presided at the exercises attendant upon the laying of the cornerstone of the new Dilworth Methodist church at the intersection of Cleveland and Worthington avenues.

The new edifice when completed will take its place among the numbers of handsome suburban churches of which this city now boasts. The new church will represent an outlay of approximately \$8,000 when finished, and will be both comfortable and attractive.

Bishop Atkins read the usual ritualistic service from the church discipline for laying of cornerstones and also delivered a brief address suited to the event, in which he addressed himself in high terms to the energy of the members and friends of the church who had undertaken the task of raising a new house of worship on the site of the old one, more in keeping with the demands of the place.

Others in attendance at the exercises were the pastor of Dilworth Methodist church, Rev. J. O. Ervin, and Rev. T. F. Marr, pastor of Trinity Methodist church.

After the singing of hymns and the pronouncing of the benediction the exercises were brought to a close.

Figure 5. *Charlotte News* article February 1, 1915.

**UNION SERVICE IN  
DILWORTH CHURCH**

Methodists to Occupy Newly Equip-  
ped Edifice for First Time Sun-  
day—Mr. Adams to Preach.

Sunday night will be an occasion memorable to the members of Dilworth Methodist Church. Some weeks ago the new structure was completed and this week the new carpet and seats are being placed in position. Although services have been held in the new edifice for the past month, the first services in the completely equipped structure will be held Sunday. The congregations of Westminster Presbyterian and Pritchard Memorial Baptist Churches will join in a union service Sunday night. The sermon will be preached by Rev. W. Hooper Adams of Westminster congregation.

The church is a brick structure and cost \$8,000. The architecture is Co-Jumbian within and without. Mr. Marvin Helms is the architect. Work was begun by the forces of Contractor Vaughan four months ago and steady progress resulted in the handsome building that delights the hearts of all Dilworth Methodists. The building has a seating capacity of about 500 and has half a dozen Sunday school rooms. It has a gallery, and is electrically lighted. Two graceful columns add to the attractiveness of the front. The carpet and seats now being placed cost about \$1,000.

Figure 6. *Charlotte Observer* article August 13, 1915.



Figure 7. *Charlotte News* photograph of Marvin Helms March 18, 1917.

# Marvin Helms, Designer Of 800 Churches, Dies

Marvin W. Helms, a man who designed about 800 churches and related buildings in 50 years as an architect, died Saturday at his home on 1001 E. Blvd.

He was 77.

Among the Charlotte churches he designed are Dilworth Methodist, where he was a member; Green Memorial Baptist, Calvary Methodist, Enderly Park Baptist and Hickory Grove Baptist.

At the time of his death, he was associated with his grandson, Marvin H. Saline, in the architectural firm of Helms and Saline. He had previously worked with C. C. Hook.

5

The funeral will be held Monday at 3 p.m. at Dilworth Methodist Church.

He is survived by his wife; two daughters, Mrs. Harold Saline and Mrs. E. P. Johnston of Charlotte; two sister, Mrs. E. F. Rob-



MARVIN HELMS

ertson and Mrs. C. S. Jarrell of Charlotte; two brothers, T. Edward and John T. Helms of Charlotte.

Figure 8. *Charlotte Observer* Marvin Helms obituary December 4, 1960.

**VERITY  
WORKS**