

METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY



Metropolitan Historical Commission
Metropolitan Historic Zoning Commission
Sunnyside in Sevier Park
3000 Granny White Pike
Nashville, Tennessee 37204
Telephone: (615) 862-7970

To: Metropolitan Council
From: Metropolitan Historical Commission, Staff
Date: October 10, 2023
Re: ORDINANCE NO. BL2023-5

An ordinance to amend the Geographic Information Systems Street and Alley Centerline Layer for the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, by renaming Due West Avenue, between Gallatin Pike and Fernbank Drive, to “Montague Way”. (Proposal Number 2022M-003SR-001).

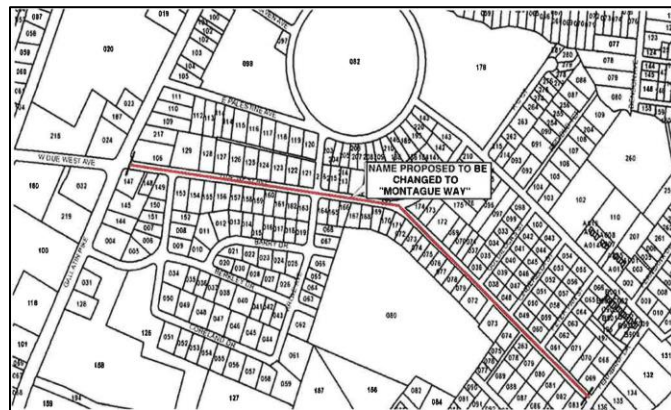


Figure 1: Parcel map showing location of Due West Avenue. Exhibit for 2022M-003SR-001.
Source: Metropolitan Planning Department.

The original name of the subject portion of Due West Avenue, also known as East Due West Avenue, was “Belle Camp Highway” (Figs. 1 and 2).¹ The plat for Map of Montague Subdivision, recorded May 7, 1919, shows Belle Camp Highway running from the Gallatin Turnpike easterly to Milliken Bend then turning southward and continuing southeasterly to its

¹ Davidson County, Tennessee, Plat Book 421, p. 129.

terminus with Fernbank Drive near the Cumberland River, the same route the road follows today. Also shown on the plat is Due West Avenue, found on the west side of Gallatin Turnpike, almost directly across the intersection from Belle Camp Highway and the Nashville-Gallatin Interurban Railway's Due West Car Station.²

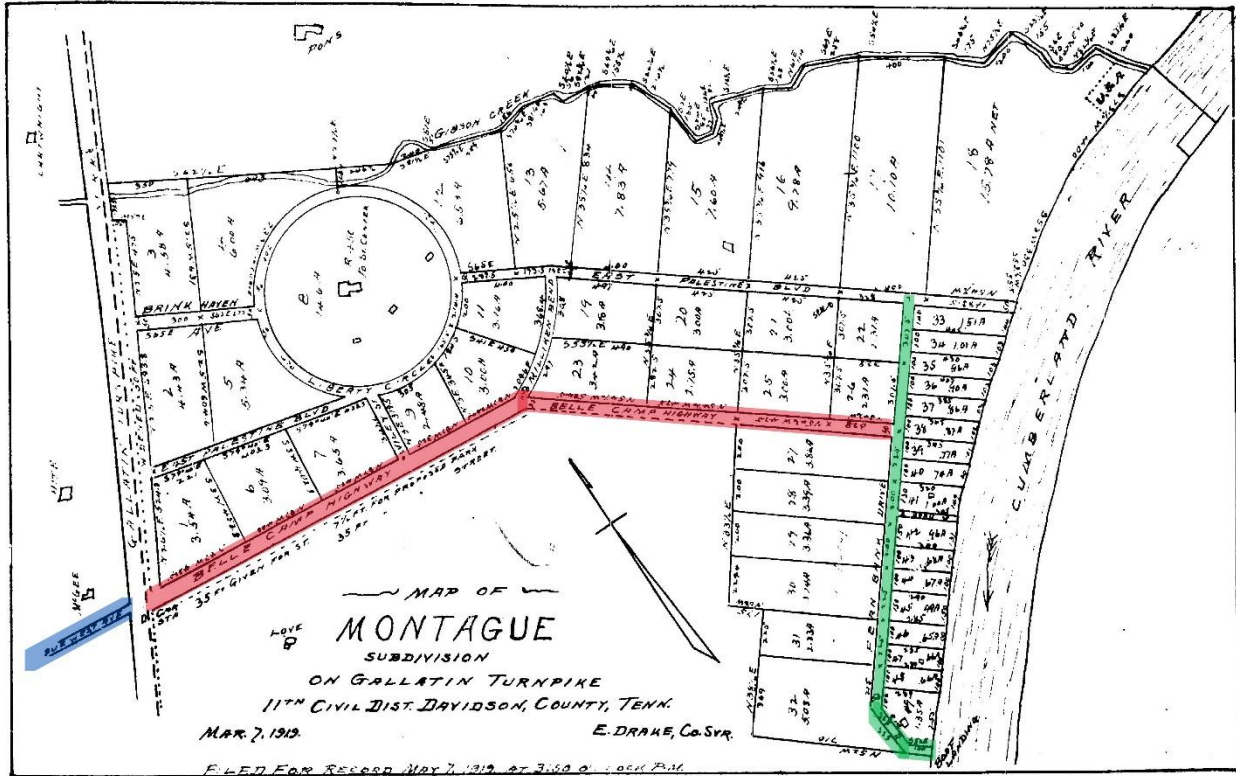


Figure 2: Map of Montague Subdivision, 1919. Due West Avenue (blue), Belle Camp Highway (red), Fern Bank Drive (green). Source: Metropolitan Government Archives.

Less than a year earlier, in July 1918, Hugh Cormack Anderson, Thomas McCorrey, Charles Ross, Montague Sutton Ross, Cecil Ross, J. E. Smith, and Charles U. Coggin, chartered the Montague Realty Company. Hoping to capitalize on the eventual construction of a bridge across the Cumberland River, the firm planned to develop housing lots here for workers at the Du Pont gunpowder plant at Old Hickory. However, when the war ended and the plant stopped production, the company shifted its focus to marketing property for summer camps and cottages.

² The Car Station is not named on the Map of Montague plat but is identified as the Due West stop on Map of Due West Montague recorded in 1920 (see footnote 3). For a history of Due West Avenue, please see the report submitted to the Metropolitan Council on October 9, 2018, concerning the renaming of Old Due West Avenue to Skyline Ridge Drive (BL2018-1333): [https://filetransfer.nashville.gov/portals/0/sitecontent/HistoricalCommission/docs/Reports/ORD%20NO%20BL2018-1333 Old%20Due%20West%20Ave%20to%20Skyline%20Ridge-posted.pdf](https://filetransfer.nashville.gov/portals/0/sitecontent/HistoricalCommission/docs/Reports/ORD%20NO%20BL2018-1333%20Old%20Due%20West%20Ave%20to%20Skyline%20Ridge-posted.pdf) Additionally, Historical Commission staff submitted a report on May 30, 2017, concerning the renaming of Due West Avenue to West Due West Avenue (BL2017-717).

Reportedly, the Montague Realty Company and subdivision were named for Montague Sutton “Monty” Ross (1880-1972), who was a Nashville attorney and an owner of Montague Realty Company. His brothers Charles and Cecil were also listed among the ownership group. In May 1919, the company purchased 190 acres between Gallatin Pike and the Cumberland River, recorded the first plat for Montague, and soon held the first auction of lots.³ Eventually, as the area developed and gained popularity, businesses along Gallatin Pike assumed the Montague name, including the Montague Drive-In Theater, Montague Pharmacy, Montague Barber Shop, and Montague Market, while the Montague-Madison Fire and Police Department served the community, by subscription, supplementing county services prior to the creation of Metro Government.

The original design for the section of Belle Camp Highway from Gallatin Turnpike to Milliken Bend was a wide boulevard with two 35-ft lanes divided by a 7 1/2-ft “park” or median. At the intersection with Milliken, the boulevard design narrowed to a 25-ft road before expanding to a width of 50 feet at the intersection with Fernbank Drive.⁴

Despite several plats showing plans for the boulevard, the wide, picturesque road did not materialize in the end. When a group of citizens petitioned for acceptance of Belle Camp Highway as a county road in 1922, the road was only 50 feet at its widest point:

Belle Camp Highway, which begins at a point on the Gallatin Pike at Due West Avenue, and runs 15 feet each side of a dividing line, 1847 feet to Millixins [sic] Bend; thence in a southeasterly direction 12 ½ feet each side of a dividing line, 1009 ½ feet to a point; thence in the same direction 25 feet each side of a dividing line, 728 feet to Fernbank Drive.⁵

The residents were motivated to “respectfully petition the recommendation by the Superintendent of Highways, and the acceptance by the County Court” of Belle Camp Highway as one of the official county roads of Davidson County due to concerns about seasonal beach traffic through Montague:

³ Debie Oeser Cox, “Montague,” *Nashville History*, 7 February 2015, <https://nashvillehistory.blogspot.com/2015/02/montague.html> (accessed 6 October 2023). W.B. Holcomb et ux to Montague Realty Co., Deed Book 518, p. 667, recorded May 5, 1919, instrument dated April 8, 1918. Louise Davis, “Monty Ross: The Man Who Made the Jury Cry,” *Tennessean*, 16 February 1969, p. 115.

⁴ Montague Park, subdivision of Tracts 27-32 inclusive in Plan of Montague, Plat Book 421, p. 141, recorded September 24, 1919. Map of Due West Montague, Showing Tract No. 1 and Subdivision of Tracts No. 6 and 7 in Plan of Montague, Plat Book 421, p. 153, recorded March 9, 1920. These earlier plats indicate different widths for the north lane. Map of Due West Montague, as surveyed May 7, 1926 and subdivision of Tract No. 1 into 8 lots, Plat Book 547, p. 115, recorded May 8, 1926. This plat shows Belle Camp Highway “to be 72.5 feet wide” indicating a 30-ft north lane, 35-ft south lane, and 7.5-ft median.

⁵ Davidson County Court, Quarterly Minutes Book N, p. 200, recorded January 2, 1922.

Your petitioners would further show that many people own summer homes along Fernbank Drive and the Cumberland River, in what is known as the Montague Subdivision ... said road known as Belle Camp Highway is the most direct route to be traveled by the persons living in this subdivision, and it is a much-used thoroughfare, in addition, by reason of the fact that it leads to a beach which is much used by the general public, and the only beach that is in close proximity to the City of Nashville; that at times in the summer months hundreds of people have to travel this road in order to reach the Cumberland River and the Montague Beach.⁶

As requested, the County Court of Davidson County accepted Belle Camp Highway for maintenance during its Quarterly Session in January 1922.⁷ Just five years later, during its Quarterly Session in July 1927, the Davidson County Court changed the name of Belle Camp Highway (aka Avenue), running from Gallatin Pike to Fernbank Avenue, to “Due West Avenue,” presumably for continuity with the road west of Gallatin Pike as well as the familiar Due West stop along the Nashville-Gallatin Interurban.⁸ By this renaming, the full length of Due West Avenue, from Dickerson Pike to Fernbank Drive, was officially 2.8 miles.⁹ In the decades since 1927, several sections of Due West Avenue have been renamed to include cardinal directions (North, West) to distinguish some sections from others.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Davidson County Court, Quarterly Minutes Book P, page 478, recorded July 5, 1927.

⁹ 1931 Davidson County Road Book, p. 28.