

Coming Street YWCA (1964)

NO. 106 COMING STREET

CHARLESTON, SC



BVL HISTORIC
PRESERVATION RESEARCH

MAY 2025

BVL HISTORIC PRESERVATION RESEARCH

COMING STREET YWCA (c. 1964)

NO. 106 COMING STREET
CHARLESTON, SC

The one-story concrete block and brick building at No. 106 Coming Street was erected in 1964 as the headquarters for the Coming Street branch of Young Women's Christian Association of Charleston, also known as the Coming Street YWCA and later, the YWCA of Greater Charleston. The building remained the Coming Street YWCA's headquarters from 1964 to 2014.¹

CONSTRUCTION & EVOLUTION

Between November of 1963 and June of 1964, the Coming Street branch of the Young Women's Christian Association of Charleston (also known as the Coming Street YWCA) demolished their former headquarters at No. 106 Coming Street and began construction of a modern one-story facility.² Originally, the Coming Street YWCA was founded in 1907 as an auxiliary group of the Colored Young Men's Christian Association of Charleston, located on Cannon Street (also known as the Cannon Street YMCA), to advocate for and support Black women in the Charleston area.³ In 1911, the group acquired a nineteenth-century single house at No. 106 Coming Street to be used as their headquarters under the name "Colored Young Women's Christian Association of Charleston" and established a community center that became vital to the area's Black residents throughout the Jim Crow and Civil Rights eras (Figures 1 and 2).⁴ In 1920, the Coming Street YWCA was subsumed under the national YWCA organization and became an official branch of the YWCA of Charleston, which served as the city's YWCA headquarters and was a White-only institution.⁵

By 1961, however, the facilities of both the Coming Street YWCA and the YWCA of Charleston were in poor condition, and each could not accommodate its growing membership.⁶ In June, plans were introduced to erect new buildings for both entities using national and local funds.⁷ The Coming Street YWCA immediately initiated a "Building Fund Pledge" and hosted several

1 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book 0447, Page 352, Charleston, SC;

2 "Board Approves YWCA Branch, Apartment Units," 1963 November 19, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

3 "Origin of the Coming Street 'Y.'" YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906 - 2007. Avery Research Center. Charleston, SC.

4 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book W25, Page 180, Charleston, SC; "Letter from James Simons to Felicia Goodwin, January 28, 1911." YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906-2007. Avery Research Center. Charleston, SC.

5 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book D31, Page 5, Charleston, SC.

6 "Planning and Work Bear Fruit," 1963 November 27, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

7 "YWCA Buys Land for Expansion," 1961 June 16, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.



Figure 1: c. 1941 photo of the former Coming Street YWCA headquarters (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 2: 1940s photograph of girls at the former Coming Street YWCA headquarters (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)

events to raise money for the demolition of the single house they occupied and the construction of a new center.⁸ On the list of those who pledged to serve as financial sponsors were some of the city's leading Black businesses, such as the Fielding Home for Funerals and H.A. DeCosta & Co., as well as locally known Black civil rights activists, such as Dr. Thomas Carr McFall (1908-1969), the first Black councilman of the South Carolina State Hospital Advisory Council to the State Board of Health. Former chairwoman of the Coming Street YWCA Mamie Garvin Fields (1888-1987), J. Michael Graves (1915-1996), and Wilmot J. Fraser (1905-1979), known throughout the Lowcountry as founders of pioneering education programs for the area's segregated children and some of Charleston County School District's first Black educators, were also on the list.⁹

In addition to demolishing the existing headquarters, the Coming Street YWCA purchased an adjacent alleyway and a neighboring single house at No. 102 Coming Street, which they also planned to demolish to expand the lot (Figure 3).¹⁰ By June of 1964, both No. 102 Coming Street and No. 106 Coming Street were razed, and construction began on a modern facility recessed within the newly enlarged property.¹¹ With an estimated cost of \$70,000, the building was funded by member donations collected through the Building Fund Pledge and the United Fund, a national non-profit organization that provided financial assistance for impactful community projects known today as United Way.¹²

Completed by September of 1964, the new 5,155-square-foot headquarters was designed by local architectural firm Cummings & McCrady and it was built by Canady Construction Co. (Figure 4).¹³ The Coming Street YWCA was erected of concrete block with a brick veneer and contained a formal lobby, classrooms, administrative offices, a large multi-purpose room for dances and events, and a catering kitchen (Figures 5-7).¹⁴ The project also provided plans for a swimming pool and an outdoor recreation space.¹⁵ The pool, however, was never completed.

A photograph of the completed building was published in the *Evening Post* on September 12, 1964, and further confirms the building's original design (Figure 8). Pictured is the building's asymmetrical facade with an off-center portico capped with a flat roof and outlined in a concrete trim, iconic features of 1960s architectural trends. The portico shielded the main entry, which contained stone paving, full-height glass doors, and metal storefront windows. The building's 6/6 wooden sash windows were capped with jack arches and fronted with iron grills. Additional photographs in the Coming Street YWCA's collection at the Avery Research Center also depict early interior details (Figures 9-11). The building's interior finishes included a large marbled front desk, painted concrete block walls, multi-colored tile floor, drop ceilings, and profiled window and door casings, most of which survive today. A Sanborn Fire Insurance map recorded the building's footprint in 1967 and confirms that, in addition to its original architectural characteristics, the building's footprint has remained unchanged (Figure 12).

8 "Board Approves YWCA Branch, Apartment Units," 1963 November 19, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC; "YWCA Branch Sets Womanless Wedding," 1964 April 7, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

9 "Building Fund Pledges," 1962. YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906 - 2007. Avery Research Center, Charleston, SC.

10 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book C74, Page 272-273, Charleston, SC; Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book T80, Page 27, Charleston, SC.

11 "YWCA Buys Land for Expansion," 1961 June 16, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC; "2 Buildings Will Be Remodeled," 1964 June 25, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC; "Building Permits," 1963 November 14, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

12 Preliminary Plans Drawn for New YWCA Building," 1961 July 20, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC

13 "2 Buildings Will Be Remodeled," 1964 June 25, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC; "Official Opening," 1964 September 12, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

14 Jones-Branch, 16; "Origin of the Coming Street 'Y.'" YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906 - 2007. Avery Research Center. Charleston, SC; "Campaign Opens Today for New YWCA," 1962 March 23, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC; "Official Opening," 1964 September 12, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

15 "Dedication of Branch 'Y' Set Sunday," 1964 September 11, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

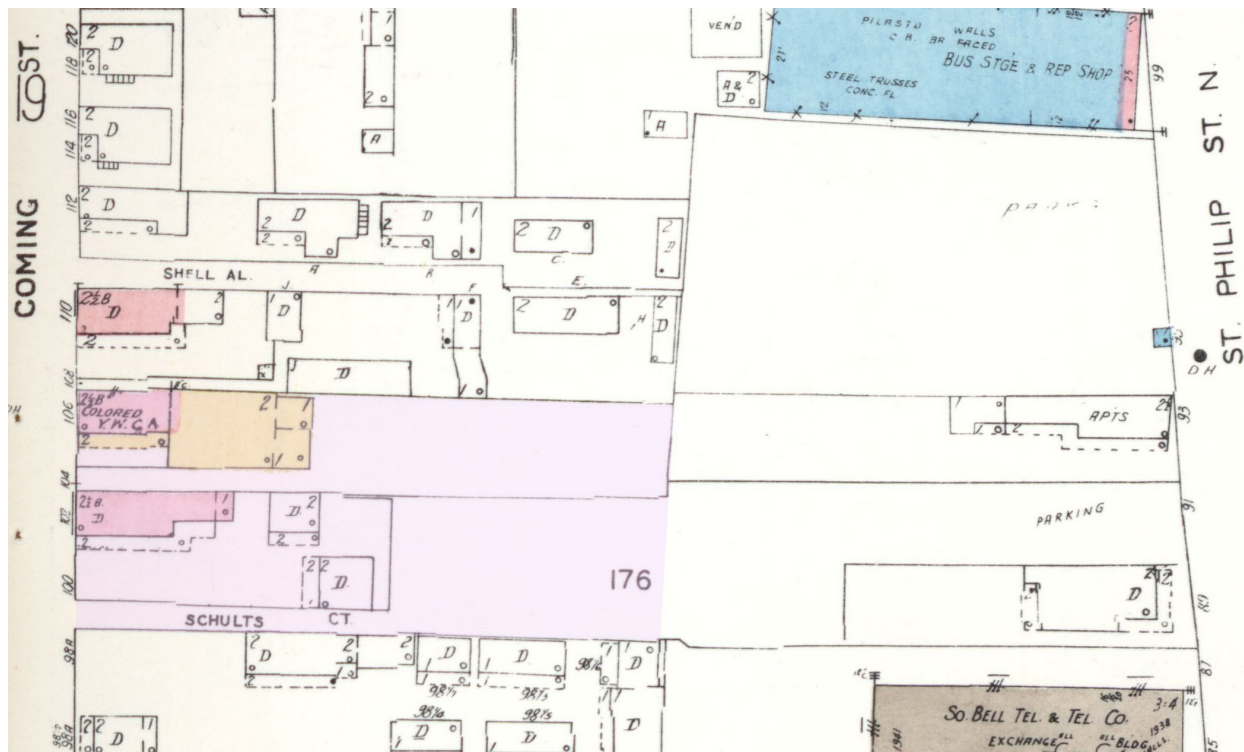


Figure 3: 1955 Sanborn Fire Insurance map; The approximate 1960s enlarged property boundaries are denoted (Charleston County Public Library)

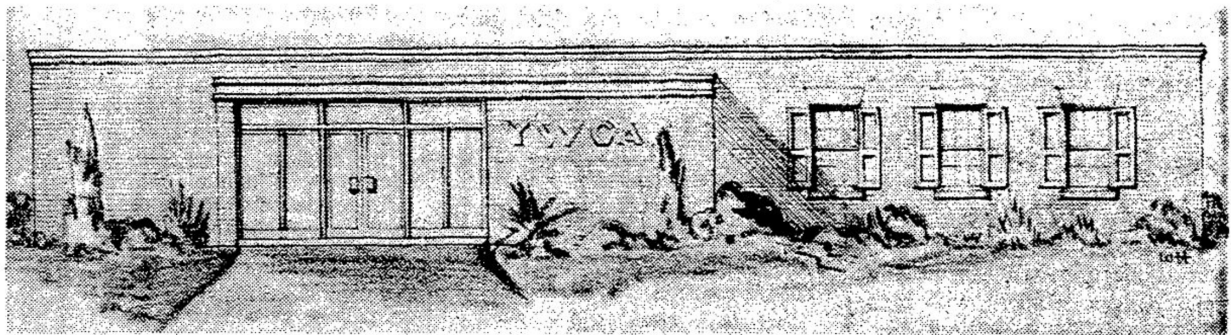


Figure 4: 1963 rendering of the Coming Street YWCA designed by Cummings & McCrady (*Evening Post*, 1963 November 27, Charleston, SC)



Figure 5: 1960s photograph of the new Coming Street YWCA facade (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 6: c. 1964 photograph of the Coming Street YWCA facade, looking southeast (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)

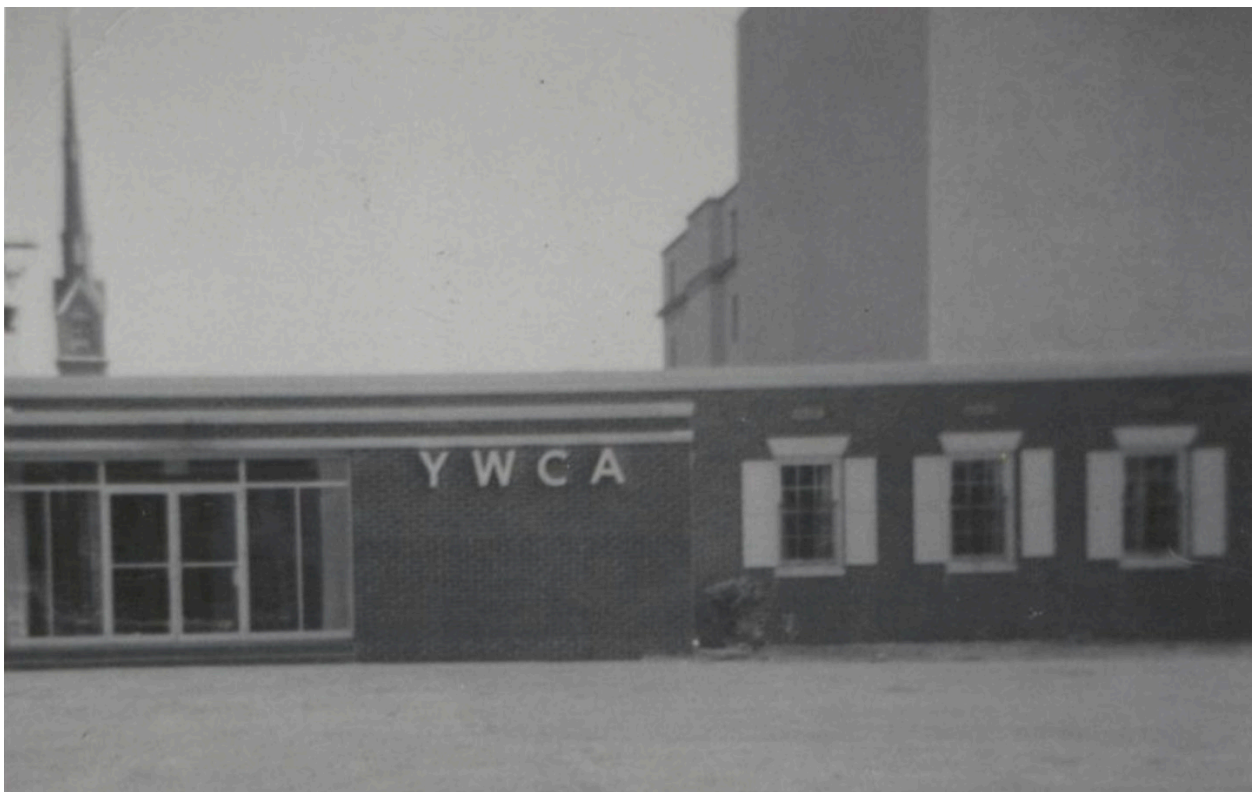


Figure 7: 1960s photograph of the Coming Street YWCA facade (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)

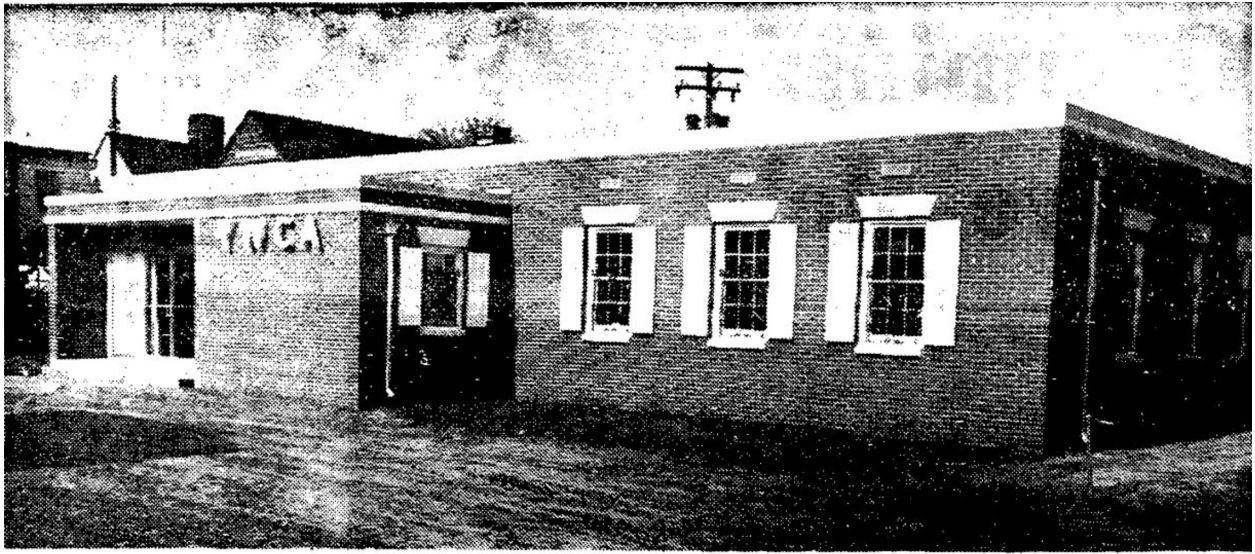


Figure 8: 1964 photograph of the Coming Street YWCA published in Charleston's *Evening Post* shortly after its construction. (*Evening Post*, 1964 September 12, Charleston, SC)



Figure 9: 1970s photograph capturing the “Little Miss YWCA Pageant” in the multi-purpose room within the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 10: undated photograph of the reception area within the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 11: 1970s photograph of children participating in the day camp held within the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)

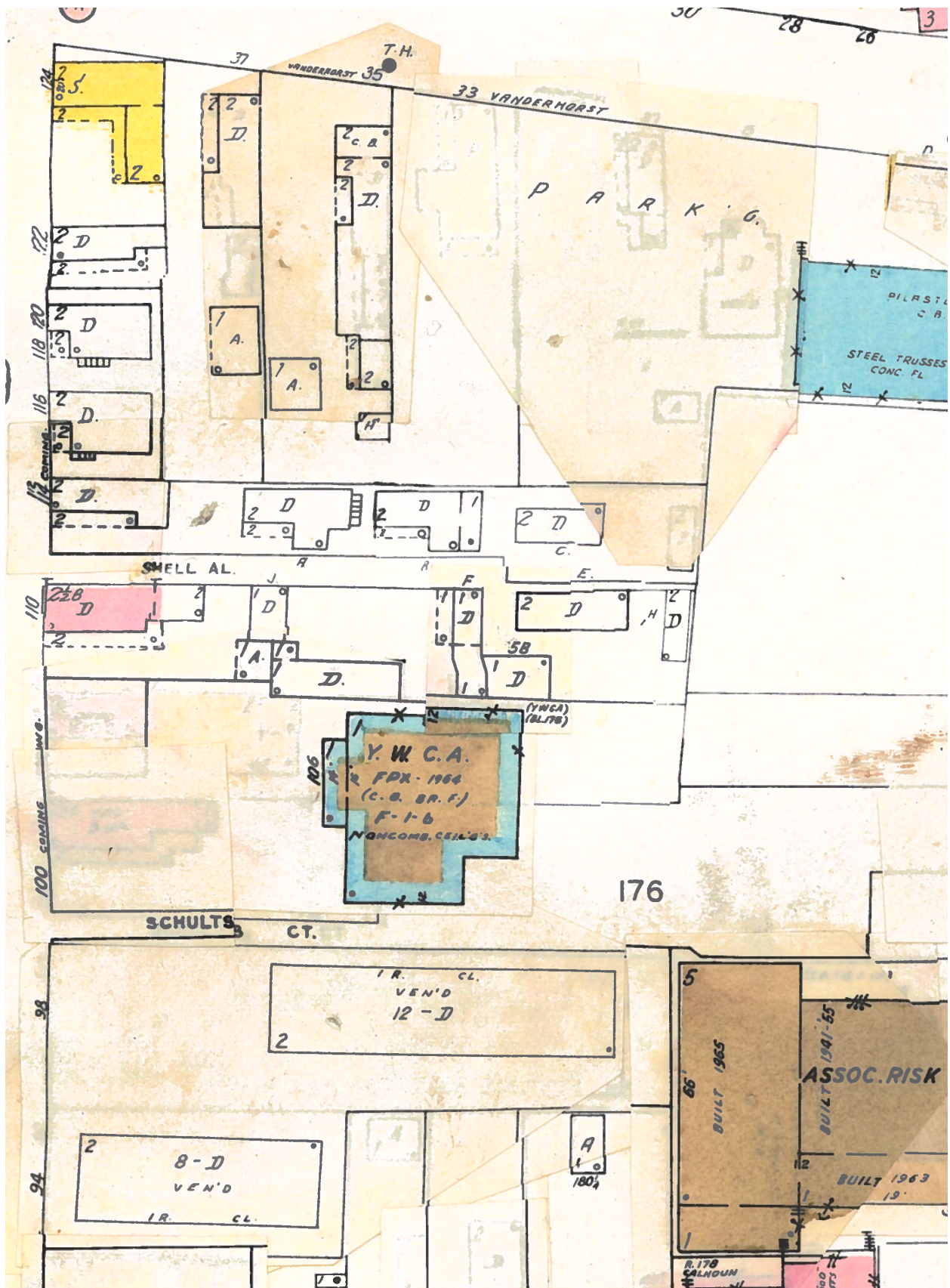


Figure 12: 1967 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (Charleston County Public Library)

The construction of the Coming Street YWCA was part of a larger project to update YWCA facilities in Charleston. At the same time, an additional building for the central branch of the YWCA was constructed at No. 21 George Street. Also designed by Cummings & McCrady, the new George Street facility was similar to the Coming Street YWCA in its general form, yet Colonial Revival in style, featuring a classically-inspired door surround with pilasters, a pediment, and iron railing (Figure 13).¹⁶ This building was demolished in the early 2000s.¹⁷

An aerial of the College of Charleston campus in 1971 captures the Coming Street YWCA and the original green space that was established in the front (west) and rear (east) yards for recreational programming (Figure 14). Both yards, however, were fully paved by 1983 to accommodate additional parking as confirmed by a 1980s photograph of children playing in front of the building on pavement (Figure 15). In 1989, the parking lot was further enlarged to the north when the Coming Street YWCA purchased an empty parcel behind No. 112 Coming Street.¹⁸ A few years later, in 1991, a small rear parcel of No. 110 Coming Street was also conveyed to the Coming Street YWCA, shaping the property into its current form (Figure 16).¹⁹ Despite the loss of the property's green space, an original pierced brick wall that bounded the recreational yard along Coming Street and an iron sign fixture still survive.

Building permits archived in Charleston's Record Management Division and applications found in the city's Board of Architectural Review files confirm that minimal work has been done on the building since its construction. Alterations include the addition of carpet in the hallway and select spaces, as well as the removal of the ceiling in the large multi-purpose room. A mural was added to the walls of one of the building's classrooms and likely dates to 1997 when the Coming Street YWCA initiated a mural project to promote peaceful and positive after-school activities.²⁰

No. 106 Coming Street was sold from the Coming Street YWCA to 106 Coming Street LLC for \$8.25 million in 2014, ending the organization's century-long occupancy on the property.²¹ The current owner, College of Charleston, purchased the property from 106 Coming Street LLC for \$27.9 million in 2025.²²

ORGANIZATION: *The Transition from Coming Street YWCA of Charleston to Coming Street YWCA of Greater Charleston*

After the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Coming Street YWCA became a leading force in Charleston's Civil Rights movement, and by 1969, it became the city's official YWCA headquarters following the YWCA of Charleston's break from the national organization over integration policies. In June of 1963, the national YWCA organization issued an "Urgent Memo on Civil Rights," urging YWCA branches throughout the country to desegregate all YWCA facilities in support of the proposed

16 "Planning and Work Bear Fruit," 1963 November 27, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC; "Preliminary Plans Drawn for New YWCA Building," 1961 July 20, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC; "Campaign Opens Today for New YWCA," 1962 March 23, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

17 Lane, Lois. "Public Pools in Charleston." Lois Lane Properties, July 10, 2015, accessed April 28, 2025.

18 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book L182, Page 273, Charleston, SC.

19 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book K125, Page 354, Charleston, SC.

20 "School Mural Paints Image of Peace," 1997 October 28, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

21 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book 0447, Page 352, Charleston, SC.

22 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book 1291, Page 721, Charleston, SC.

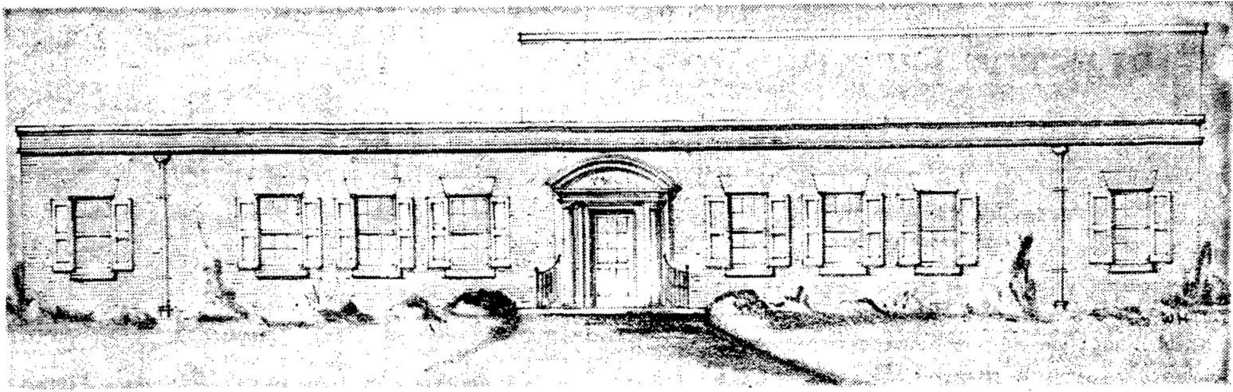


Figure 13: 1963 rendering of the proposed YWCA of Charleston building designed by Cummings & McCrady (*Evening Post*, 1963 November 27, Charleston, SC)



Figure 14: 1971 aerial depicting the southern portion of the Coming Street YWCA property (College of Charleston Special Collections)



Figure 15: 1980s photograph of children playing in the enlarged parking lot in front of the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)

federal civil rights legislation.²³ Two months later, the YWCA of Charleston on George Street wrote a letter to the national YWCA organization rejecting the mandate for integration and demanding autonomy from the Coming Street YWCA.²⁴ The YWCA of Charleston remained segregated after the Civil Rights Act was passed in July 1964, underscoring the need for the modern, dedicated facility for the Coming Street YWCA that was under construction at that time.²⁵

In May of 1966, the YWCA of Charleston published a notice of intent to sever ties with the national YWCA organization, citing their criticism of the new policies on proposed racial integration and formally initiated the required three-year process to disaffiliate.²⁶ In addition to integration, national YWCA initiatives called for inclusiveness and admittance of women from diverse religious backgrounds, which further compelled the YWCA of Charleston to disaffiliate. In March of 1967, for example, the president of the YWCA of Charleston told the *News & Courier* that the new policies “were not in keeping with [their] Christian commitments” and that full racial and religious integration would further weaken their mission.²⁷ The Coming Street YWCA, however, remained open to all women.

Rather than integrate with the Coming Street YWCA, the YWCA of Charleston officially withdrew from the national organization in March of 1969 and changed its name to the Charleston Family ‘Y’ shortly thereafter.²⁸ With the YWCA of Charleston’s disaffiliation, the Coming Street YWCA became the only branch associated with the national YWCA organization and it was tasked with increasing its membership to qualify as a central branch.²⁹ It was also forced to formally acquire the title to No. 106 Coming Street, which remained subsumed under the YWCA of Charleston’s landholdings.

At this time, the Coming Street YWCA was under the new leadership of Christine Osburn Jackson (b. 1928), who would later recall her first years on the job as consumed by the “racial struggle” with the “all-white YWCA of Charleston.”³⁰ Under her stewardship, the Coming Street YWCA immediately initiated an extensive membership campaign, hosting several drives and events between 1967 and 1969 (Figure 17). In a letter to the membership titled “Freedom at last for the Negro Women of Charleston’s Branch YWCA,” national activist and former chairwoman of the Coming Street YWCA Mamie Garvin Fields (1888-1987) urged members to pledge their support for the maintained affiliation with the national YWCA and, in turn, separate itself from the “shackles of noninclusiveness.”³¹ Another prominent activist and leader within the Coming Street YWCA who initiated similar calls to action was Septima Poinsette Clark (1898–1987), who would

23 Jones-Branch, 15.

24 “Charleston YWCA Refuses To Agree To Integration,” 1963 August 16, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

25 Jones-Branch, 15; “YWCA Committee to Name Negro,” 1963 October 2, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

26 “YWCA Here May Cut National Ties,” 1966 May 4, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC; “YWCA Members to Vite on Ending National Ties,” 1967 March 7, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

27 “YWCA Effort to Cut Ties with national Body Fails,” 1967 March 18, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

28 “New YWCA Group to Buy Building,” 1969 June 10, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC; “YWCA of Charleston Adopts New Name,” 1972 November 6, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

29 “Letter from Christine O. Jackson to Coming Street Y.W.C.A. Members, September 27, 1967.” YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906 - 2007. Avery Research Center. Charleston, SC.

30 “Charleston’s Christine Jackson Reflects on Legacy of MLK, Civil Rights Movement,” 2021 January 17, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

31 “Freedom at last for the Negro Women of Charleston’s Branch YWCA,” 1967. YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906 - 2007. Avery Research Center. Charleston, SC.



Figure 17: late 1960s flyer for a membership drive at the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)

continue to serve on the branch's executive board throughout her lifetime (Figures 18 and 19). In a 2004 tribute before Congress, Representative James Clyburn praised Jackson's "tenacity" and that of her fellow YWCA leaders for steering the all-Black branch to national affiliation during "the turbulent 1960s", crediting them with advancing "its mission of equality and empowerment" amid persistent segregation.³²

By June of 1969, the Coming Street YWCA changed its name to the YWCA of Greater Charleston to further distinguish itself from the former YWCA of Charleston, and by August, formally purchased No. 106 Coming Street under the new organizational name.³³ The following March, the 700-member YWCA of Greater Charleston was awarded a charter as a central branch of the national YWCA organization.³⁴ On March 7, 1970, Jackson told Charleston's *Evening Post* that the branch was officially "open to any woman" and the center formally revised its governing documents to clearly state their dedication in bolstering "the barrier-breaking love of God" by bringing together "women and girls of diverse backgrounds...in the struggle for peace and justice, freedom and dignity for all people."³⁵

EVENTS & USE

Once the doors opened within the new facilities at No. 106 Coming Street in September of 1964, the Coming Street YWCA offered a diverse array of classes for citizens of all ages, such as sewing, dressmaking, general tutoring, self-defense, and adult education, as well as civic services such as marriage, financial and legal counseling (Figures 20-21). A kindergarten and a day camp were also established, allowing children to engage in community service, field trips, dance classes, barbecues, and pageants (Figure 22-23).³⁶

The building also served as a gathering space instrumental for lectures, informative panels, and meetings related to community activism during the Civil Rights movement. In May 1966, for example, the Coming Street YWCA hosted an educational event at their facility regarding the Civil Rights Act and associated laws, where local Black community leaders informed the membership on the legislation and its impact on education, housing, healthcare, employment, and the judicial system.³⁷ In July 1967, amidst the YWCA of Charleston's disaffiliation, Jackson represented the Coming Street YWCA at the Southern Leadership Conference in Charleston and was one of three women to share the stage with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who addressed a crowd of 3,000 on the urgent fight for racial justice.³⁸ It is highly probable that Coretta Scott King, Jackson's first cousin, visited the Coming Street YWCA at this time. Shortly thereafter, the director of the national YWCA's Office of Racial Integration, Dorothy I. Height (1912-2010), spoke at a membership drive at the Coming Street YWCA about the importance of the YWCA in advancing women's rights. Height, known as a primary organizer of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom,

32 Congressman James E. Clyburn Tribute To Christine Osburn Jackson. E1845 108th Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record*, Vol. 150, No. 127. *Extensions of Remarks*. October 8, 2004.

33 "New YWCA Group to Buy Building," 1969 June 10, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

34 Charleston County Deed Office, Deed Book C93, Page 47, Charleston, SC.

35 "Document A: Statement of Purpose," 1971. YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906 - 2007. Avery Research Center. Charleston, SC.

36 "YWCA Kindergarten," 1967 November 1. YWCA of Greater Charleston, Inc., Records, 1906 - 2007. Avery Research Center. Charleston, SC.

37 "YWCA Branch Sets Civil Rights Law Discussion," 1966 May 16, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

38 "FLASHBACK: Dr. King visited Charleston in 1962, July 1967," 2018 April 4, *WCSC*, Charleston, SC.



Figure 18: 1965 photograph of Septima Clark (left) at the Coming Street YWCA Christmas Party (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 19: c. 1980s photograph of Coretta Scott King speaking at a Coming Street YWCA event. Septima Clark is sitting second from the right (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 20: 1960s photograph of YWCA members attending a sewing class inside the building (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 21: 1970s photograph of a karate class held within the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 22: 1970s photograph of day camp participants in front of the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)



Figure 23: 1970s photograph of children in front yard of the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture)

also served as the president of the National Council of Negro Women.³⁹

During the Hospital Strike of 1969, when the Black personnel of Charleston's Medical University of South Carolina demanded better wages and work conditions, the Coming Street YWCA likely served as a meeting place for the protesters. Many first-hand accounts of the strike claim that the classrooms and large meeting room at No. 106 Coming Street were used to organize people and accommodate informational gatherings, playing an integral role in the dissemination of information and mobilization of concerned citizens.⁴⁰ One such group that likely met at the Coming Street YWCA during the strike was the "Charleston Area Community Relations Committee," which was established by a group of citizens dedicated to improving race relations in Charleston. By 1988, a new group was formed to advance the committee's mission and used the Coming Street YWCA as its headquarters.⁴¹ The facility continued to be a meeting place for committees and formal bodies dedicated to ending racism throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.⁴² It is highly probable that Coretta Scott King also visited the Coming Street YWCA during the strike, as she was heavily involved in the movement. Coretta Scott King continued to speak on race relations and civil rights issues at events hosted by the Coming Street YWCA at churches and large banquet halls in Charleston for the next few decades.⁴³

In 1972, the Coming Street YWCA hosted one of the nation's first annual celebrations of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday, organizing a formal ball, lectures, and church services in his honor.⁴⁴ One year later, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday Observance" was designated as a city-wide holiday.⁴⁵ Although Martin Luther King, Jr. Day did not become a federal holiday until 1986, the Coming Street YWCA became integral to the initiative by urging U.S. Congress to recognize King's January 15th birthday as early as 1973.⁴⁶ By the beginning of the 1990s, the organization also added a parade to the holiday's agenda, a tradition which continues in Charleston today.⁴⁷

After 50 years of programming and events within the c. 1964 building, the Coming Street YWCA formally placed the property on the market in 2014 in search of a larger, more centralized facility to expand its services.⁴⁸ The organization remains active today as the YWCA of Greater Charleston.

39 "Rights Leader to Address YWCA Meeting," 1968 April 20, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

40 "Coretta Scott King to be Guest at Tribute For," 2004 October 7, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

41 "Racial Panel to Remain Independent," 1988 January 27, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.

42 "Make Commitment to Fight Racism," 1992 May 27, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

43 Taylor, Kerry. "Coretta Scott King Visits Charleston." *The Charleston Hospital Workers Movement, 1968-1969*. Online Exhibit. Charleston, SC: Lowcountry Digital History Initiative, November 2013. Accessed May 2, 2025; "Coretta Scott King to be Guest at Tribute For," 2004 October 7, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

44 "YWCA Announces MLK Events, Honorees for 53rd Annual Celebration in Charleston," 2024 December 25, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC; "Birthday Commemoration Planned," 1972 January 12, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

45 "Events Honor King," 1973 January 13, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

46 "Events Honor King," 1973 January 13, *News & Courier*, Charleston, SC; U.S. Congress. House. *A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to make the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., a legal public holiday*. HR 3706. 98th Congress, 1983-1984. Introduced in House July 29, 1983, Passed in House November 2, 1983.

47 "Charleston's Christine Jackson Reflects on Legacy of MLK, Civil Rights Movement," 2021 January 17, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

48 "YWCA on move; building up for sale," 2014 September 30, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

BVL HISTORIC PRESERVATION RESEARCH

COMING STREET YWCA
NO. 106 COMING STREET
CHARLESTON, SC

SIGNIFICANCE EVALUATION

The building at No. 106 Coming Street is significant for its associations as the headquarters for the Coming Street YWCA, a community organization that advocated for racial justice and helped shape public policy in Charleston during and after the Civil Rights movement. The one-story community center collectively embodies the work of Black women from all socioeconomic backgrounds, including teachers, homemakers, mothers, and activists, and their quest for equal opportunity during a time of vast segregation. The Coming Street YWCA not only hosted diverse programs and lectures to combat racial segregation in education, recreation, and business but it also served as a gathering place for meetings related to the Civil Rights Act, the Hospital Strike of 1969, and some of the nation's first Martin Luther King, Jr. commemorations. In addition, a number of Charleston's leading female civil rights activists of the midcentury, including Septima Poinsette Clark (1898–1987), Mamie Garvin Fields (1888-1987), and the Coming Street YWCA's long-standing director, Christine Jackson (b. 1928) all worked directly from the building to secure and protect equal rights during a tumultuous time in American history.

Jackson, serving as executive director of the Coming Street YWCA from 1966 to 2003, emerged as a prominent voice for Black women in Charleston throughout her 37-year tenure (Figure 24).¹ An Alabama native, Jackson was deeply connected to the Civil Rights Movement, both personally and politically. As Coretta Scott King's first cousin, she shared close family ties with the King family, and her parents and husband were jailed alongside Dr. King during his marches across Alabama in the late 1950s and early 1960s.² At her 2003 retirement celebration, Coretta Scott King joined in honoring Jackson, while Representative James Clyburn praised her before Congress, crediting her "strength and steadfastness during [those] difficult times that built the foundation for the YWCA's continuing success" as she "actively registered voters, taught parenting to teenage mothers, provided after-school programs" at the Coming Street YWCA to further the civil rights

¹ "At 94, Charleston civil rights leader Christine Jackson still inspiring generations of women," 2023 March 5, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

² "Charleston's Christine Jackson Reflects on Legacy of MLK, Civil Rights Movement," 2021 January 17, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC; U.S. Congress. Senate. *TO REQUEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NAME S-1022 (Washington Street) from L-4349 (Laurens Street) North to the end of state maintenance IN Charleston COUNTY "Christine Jackson Road" AND ERECT APPROPRIATE MARKERS OR SIGNS AT THIS LOCATION CONTAINING THE DESIGNATION. S 775.* 118th Cong., 125th sess. Introduced in House May 9, 2023; "At 94, Charleston civil rights leader Christine Jackson still inspiring generations of women," 2023 March 5, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC; "Retired Educator Rev. E L Jackson Dies in Hospital," 1991 July 19, *Evening Post*, Charleston, SC.



Figure 24: 1990 photograph of Christine Jackson standing in front of the Coming Street YWCA sign (*News & Courier*, 1990 February 3, Charleston, SC)

of Black women throughout Charleston County.³ Nearly twenty years later, the *Post & Courier* echoed Clyburn's words, reporting that "generations of African American girls and women sought refuge and strength from the Coming Street YWCA since 1907" as Jackson "helped put [the organization] at the forefront of local efforts to push for voting rights, civil rights, and more equal pay."⁴ On May 12, 2023, the City of Charleston dedicated the intersection of Coming and Duncan streets directly in front of No. 106 Coming Street as "Christine O. Jackson Way" in honor of Jackson's longstanding service to the organization.⁵

As the sole remaining headquarters of the Coming Street YWCA and the best representative example of the organization's legacy, No. 106 Coming Street survives as a testament to the work of one of the first "colored branches" to be recognized in the national YWCA organization. The building serves as an enduring symbol of the success and resilience of the Coming Street YWCA organization during its century-long occupancy of the property.

No. 106 Coming Street appears much as it did when it was dedicated in 1964, despite minor cosmetic updates, such as removing the original "YWCA" letters from the main elevation and repainting the exterior jack arches and windowsills (Figure 25). The building's character-defining features of mid-century architecture remain, including the overall form, design and footprint, brick veneer, metal storefront windows, and wooden window sash. In the interior, the building's painted cinder block walls, window and door casings, tiled floors, and important design elements, such as the marbleized front desk in the lobby and a late-twentieth-century mural, remain intact, representing the occupancy and legacy of the 1964 Coming Street YWCA.

3 Congressman James E. Clyburn Tribute To Christine Osburn Jackson. E1845 108th Cong., 2nd sess., *Congressional Record*, Vol. 150, No. 127. *Extensions of Remarks*. October 8, 2004; "Retired Leader Remains Focused on Y Mission," 2003 October 22, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

4 "Civil rights leader Christine Jackson honored by city of Charleston as a 'towering force'," 2020 July 31, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

5 "Charleston Honors Living Civil Rights Legend Christine Jackson with New Street Signs," 2023 May 12, *Post & Courier*, Charleston, SC.

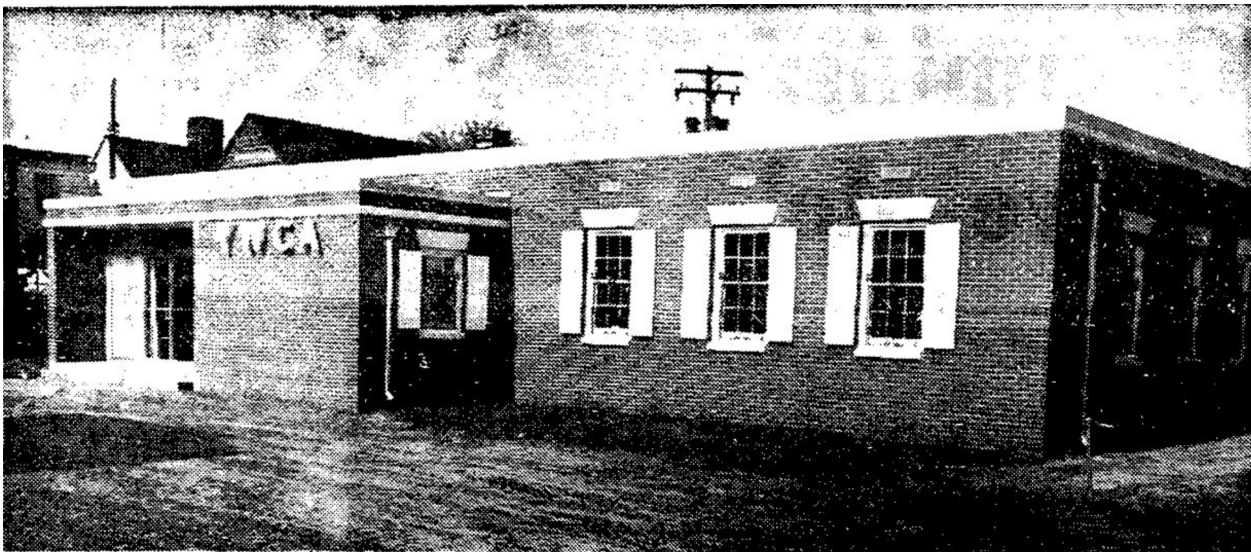


Figure 25: (top) two 1960s photographs of the Coming Street YWCA (Avery Research Center for African American History and Culture and *Evening Post*) ; (bottom) 2025 photograph of the Coming Street YWCA (BVL HPR)