

Charleston Place Development Records, 1976-1991

Descriptive Summary

Title and Dates:

Charleston Place Development Records, 1976-1991

Creator:

City of Charleston Office of Downtown Revitalization

Kenneth A. Gifford, Executive Director, circa 1977-August 1980

Lawrence O. Thompson, Executive Director, 1981-1987

Quantity:

5 cubic feet

Forms of Materials:

Correspondence, legal documents, contracts, meeting notes, photographs, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, meeting minutes, maps, schematics, reports, and other printed materials.

Processed by:

Meghan Zimmerman, 2024

Location:

06-C-010 through 06-C-014

Abstract

This collection contains records pertaining to the development of Charleston Place from 1976 through 1991. The Charleston Place Hotel opened in 1986 at 205 Meeting Street, spanning the blocks between Meeting to King streets and Market to Hasell streets. The hotel and its adjoining convention center represented one of the first major projects undertaken during the early years of Mayor Joseph P. Riley's tenure as mayor of the City of Charleston. The development was controversial, complicated, and punctuated by several lawsuits. After these significant legal and logistic challenges, the facility finally opened to the public in 1986.

The economic revitalization of King Street was one of the first initiatives undertaken by Mayor Joseph P. Riley (1975-2016), and the addition of a hotel and conference center was a cornerstone of the plan. When Mayor Riley took office, King Street was economically depressed, and he identified a need to reinvigorate the city center. These records trace the development of Charleston Place and the role it played in the overall revitalization of the King Street business corridor. These records are reflective of the work of the Office of Downtown Revitalization.

Background Information

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, a fifth generation Charlestonian, came into office in 1975. He would go on to serve a total of ten terms as mayor of Charleston from 1975-2016. During this time, he focused his efforts on several key projects that contributed to the economic revival of Charleston. His earliest projects included Charleston Place, the development of Waterfront Park, and the construction of numerous municipal parking garages across the city, all undertaken to pump new life into the struggling downtown Charleston economy.

The effort to revitalize the peninsula of Charleston started with Mayor J. Palmer Gaillard, who served as the mayor from 1959-1975. Mayor Gaillard's records reference subjects such as the Department of Planning and Redevelopment, urban renewal, and the Workable Program for Community Improvement, all indicative of the City's interest in redeveloping aspects of the City's physical spaces in the heart of the civil rights movement. The efforts continued when Mayor Riley created the Office of Downtown Revitalization in 1977 with the goal to revive the city's central business district and to preserve the commercial buildings that occupied King and Meeting streets. Through the Office of Downtown Revitalization, the City pursued Urban Development Action Grants (UDAGs) that awarded federal funding to the city for purposes of revitalization. The Charleston Place project was the recipient of UDAG funding, as well as a variety of other complex funding sources.

Charleston Place, which started out as the Charleston Center Project, was one of the earliest major downtown economic revitalization efforts undertaken after Mayor Riley took office. The structure is located on the block enclosed by King, Market, Hasell, and Meeting streets. The heart of the project was the planned hotel and attached conference center. Due to the large scale of the project, it would go on to have several smaller projects attached to it. These projects included the Hasell Street Garage, the rehabilitation of Meeting Street structures (referred to as the Streetscape Project in these records), public right-of-way improvements, and retail spaces.

The project was not without controversy. When the proposed development became public knowledge, neighborhood and preservation groups pushed back and even filed suits to attempt to stop the project by preventing the use of federal funds from being used in construction of a private entity. The National Center for Preservation Law, the Preservation Society of Charleston, Harleston Village Association, and the Charlestowne Neighborhood Association all protested the project. This was in part due to the historical concerns that it brought: some worried that the large building would damage the historic city's charm; property owners expressed concern about the potential for demolition or loss of property to eminent domain effort; others felt the scope of the project was too large in scale.

Despite criticism, financial woes, and legal action, planning for the Charleston Center Project continued. The City of Charleston used a variety of companies to help with construction and planning. The Holywell Corporation served as the original project developer; however, after several financial hurdles and other disagreements, Theodore Gould (President of Holywell Corporation) left the project six years into it. As a result, the City turned to a new development company, Rainbow Square, led by David Cordish. Rainbow Square and the Cordish Company ultimately saw the project to fruition in partnership with another developer, the Taubman Company. In addition, a new architect, John Carl Warnecke, reimagined the project and brought about design changes that were more acceptable to some of the project's detractors. The new Charleston Center plans saw major changes that aimed to mirror Charleston's historic architecture, including bringing the original ten-story building down to eight stories. With new members added to the team and an altered design, and renamed as The Charleston Place, the complex opened to the public on November 22, 1986.

Scope and Content Note

The bulk of records in this collection cover the coordination, planning, and development efforts for what started out as Charleston Center, but ultimately became The Charleston Place. The records largely range

from the years 1977-1986, the period during which the hotel and surrounding streetscape alterations were completed. These records reflect the work of the Office of Downtown Revitalization and its first two executive directors, Kenneth A. Gifford, Executive Director, circa 1977-August 1980, and Lawrence O. Thompson, Executive Director, 1981 to 1987, and include correspondence, legal documents, contracts, meeting notes, photographs, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, meeting minutes, maps, schematics, reports, and other printed materials.

The photographs were originally placed in plastic folders within a presentation folder. They have been removed and include images of the construction site and surrounding area from pre-construction through early construction, circa 1980-86.

The records are organized topically by series and within each series alphabetically then chronologically. The series are as follows:

- I. General Planning
- II. Environmental Impact Statements
- III. Financing
- IV. Organizations, Committees, & Boards
- V. Streetscape Project
- VI. Construction Contracts
- VII. Hotel, Convention Center, & Retail Interior & After Construction Planning
- VIII. Events and Public Relations
- IX. Lawsuits
- X. Photographs

Acronyms

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
BAR	Board of Architectural Review
EDA	Economic Development Administration
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
HCF	Historic Charleston Foundation
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
LDC	Local Development Corporation
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
SFEIS	Supplement to Final Environmental Impact Statement
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
UDAG	Urban Development Action Grant

Notes to Researchers:

Files labeled as “Design and Planning” contain general information on the progress/ developments of the project. They contain meeting notes, strategies, discussions of design, etc.

Box Folder

Series I: General Planning

1 1 ACHP Reviews & General, 1977-1986
2 ACHP & SHPO Design and Review for Charleston Center, 1982
3 Agreement & Option, 1983
4 Aluminum One Piece, Post/Column design choices, nd
5 Acquisition of Property for Charleston Center, 1977-1983
6 Architectural Design Proposal for Downtown Revitalization, Report of the Status of, Carl Feiss, 1981
7 Background Data Report for Charleston Center, 1977
8 Brick Selection for Charleston Center, 1981-1985
9 Charleston Center Appraisal & Trusthouse Forte Pro Forma, nd
10 Charleston Center Land Acquisition, 1981
11 Charleston Center Schematics, 1979-1981
12 City Traffic and Parking, 1976-1981
13-17 Comments/Reviews of Design for Charleston Center, 1981-1984
18 December 9, 1983, Special City Council Meeting
19-25 Design & Planning of Charleston Center, 1977-1982
2 1-3 Design & Planning of Charleston Center, 1983-1985
4 Downtown Revitalization- Background information, 1980 Progress Report, 1979-1980
5-6 Inspection, Review (EIS, BOA, B.O.A., and Historical Preservation), 1977-1979
7 Lawrence O. Thompson Notes/Memoranda, 1982-1983
8 Plans for the Charleston Place Tower, 1985
9 Presentation of Charleston Place Plans, 1981-1984
10 Tourism Management, 1981

Series II: Environmental Impact Statements

11 ACHP and SHPO Visit/Review of MOA, 1982
12 Archaeological Testing/ Survey, 1978-1985
13 Comments on Supplement to Final Environmental Impact Statement, 1979
14 Draft EIS, 1978
15-16 Draft EIS, 1979
17 EIS Correspondence & General, 1978-1981
18 Final EIS, 1979
19 Historical Significance of Buildings & EIS, nd
20 HUD R04 EIS1978
21 MOAs and related documentation (City, ACHP, SHPO, HUD, EDA, and Holywell), 1979-1982
3 1 Monitoring Section 6. MOA Charleston Center, 1982
2 Objection to Release of Funds & Environmental Certification, 1979
3 Response to Supplement to Final Environmental Impact Statement Comments, 1979
4 Second Supplement to Final EIS, 1983
5 Supplement to EIS, 1979

Series III: Financing

6 Budgeting and Financing for Charleston Center, 1978-1984

Box Folder

3 7 General Obligation Bond, Series 1982, 1982
8 Hawk, Nancy, Release of Funds of the Charleston Center, 1984
9 Loans for Charleston Center, 1979-1983
10 UDAG and EDA Grants, 1977-1987

Series IV: Organizations, Committees, & Boards

11 BAR General & Review of Charleston Center Project, 1980-1985
12 BAR Meeting Minutes, 1980-1981
13 Charleston Artist Guild, 1982
14 Coordination Committee, 1981
15 David L. Rawle Associates, 1981-1985
16 General Information of Environmental, Historical, and Other Organizations, nd
17 Historic Charleston Foundation Advisors, 1979-1982
18 "Learning From Charleston," potential book project, 1980
19 National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1984
20 Plant a Tree Program, 1984
21 The Preservation Society of Charleston, 1977-1982
22 SHPO, General & Correspondents, 1981-1982
23 Washington Light Infancy, 1981-1983
24 Zoning Board of Adjustment, 1981-1986

Series V: Streetscape Project

25 Charleston Center Project & D.R. Allen & Son, Inc., 1981-1982
26 Demolition of building for Charleston Center and preservation of artifacts, 1980-1981
27 Dumas Building, 1981
28-29 Hasell Street Garage and Meeting Street Restoration Bid, Contracts, &
Correspondence, 1981-1985
4 1 Hasell Street Garage and Restoration, 1978-1985
2 Marianne's Restaurant (Relocation/Restoration), 1981-1986
3 Market Street Widening, 18278-1981
4 Meeting Street Restoration, 1979-1985
5 Relocation and Demolition of 244-246 King Street, 1981
6-8 Streetscape Project, General, 1978-1986

Series VI: Construction Contracts

9 Charleston Center Consultants, Employees, Contractors, 1980-1986
10 Contract: City of Charleston and Edward Pinckney Associates, 1980
11 Contract: City of Charleston and Holywell Co., 1981
12 Contract: City of Charleston and Robert Schlau (Consultant), 1981
13 Contracts and Construction Subcommittee, 1981-1983
14 Development: Morse/Diesel, Inc., 1981
15 George Hyman Construction Company, 1977
16 Holywell Corporation- Correspondence, 1977-1983
17 Holywell Corporation- Employment Issues, 1980-1982
18 Holywell Corporation- Engineering Contracts, 1981-1982
19 Holywell Corporation- Financial Information, 1978-1983
20 Holywell Corporation- Financing, 1981-1983

Box Folder

4 21 Agreement: LDC and City of Charleston, 1984
22 Report of Condition Survey, Charleston Place, 1984
23 Sanitary & Storm Lines, 1982
24 Special Conditions on Charleston Center Construction, nd

Series VII: Hotel, Convention Center, & Retail Interior & After Construction Planning

25 Certificates of Occupancy for Charleston Place, 1986
26 Charleston Place- Conservation Plan Review by ACHP and SHPO, 1986-1987
27 Charleston Place- Correspondence, 1984-1986
28 Charleston Place- Grand Opening Planning, 1986
29 Charleston Place- Hotel Financial Projections, 1977-1980
30 Charleston Place- Omni Hotel, 1985-1986
31 Charleston Place- Profitability Study, 1977-1985
32 Interior Design of Charleston Place, 1984
33 Naming of Charleston Place & Rooms, 1981-1985
34 Retail in Charleston Place, 1982

Series VIII: Events and Public Relations

36 ACHP Public Hearing January 20, 1979
37 Groundbreaking for Charleston Center, 1981-1985
38 Garden Theater, 1978
39 Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, 1978-1985

5 1 King Street Mile, 1984-1991
2 Newspaper clippings on Charleston Center Project, 1979-1984
3 Opposition to Charleston Center, 1976-1983
4 Public Relations and Charleston Center, 1978-1986
5 Spoleto Festival USA, 1982
6 St. Mary's Catholic Church, 1978-1981

Series IX: Lawsuits

7 *Betty K. Goldberg, et. al. vs. City Council of the City of Charleston*, Common Pleas Case No. 78-1454, 1979
8 *City of Charleston vs. National Center for Preservation Law, et. al.*, Civil Action No. 80-136-1, 1980
9-10 *Clark Enterprises, Inc. vs. Holywell Co. & Theodore B. Gould*, Civil Action No. 83-0031-A, 1981-1983
11 *H. Phillip Troy vs. Mayor and City Council of the City of the City of Charleston*, Common Pleas Case No. 79-CP-10-1909, 1980
12 *Indigo Realty Company, LDI. vs. City of Charleston*, Civil Action No. 81-1514, 1984
13 *Karesh, et. al. vs. City Council of the City of Charleston*, Civil Action No. 79-CP-10-126. 1978
14 List of Action- Charleston Center Corporation, 1982-1983
15 *Market St. Construction vs. John Carl Warnecke*, Civil Action No. 85 CV 75731 DT, 1984-1987
16-17 *National Center for Preservation Law, et. al. vs. Moon Landrieu, et. al.*, Civil Action No. 80-0514(Federal Suit), 1980

Box Folder

5 18-19 *National Center for Preservation Law, et. al. vs. Moon Landrieu, et. al.*, Civil Action No. 80-0871-1(Hotel Lawsuit), 1978-1980

Series X: Photographs

- 20 Photo: Alleyway
- 21 Photo: Building Façade
- 22 Photo: Charleston Center Site View from Meeting St.
- 23 Photo: Hasell St. from Meeting St.
- 24 Photo: Intersection of W. Market St. and Meeting St.
- 25 Photo: King St.
- 26 Photo: King St. View from South of Liberty Street Intersection
- 27 Photo: Meeting St.
- 28 Photo: 209 Meeting St.
- 29 Photo: 215 Meeting St.
- 30 Photo: 231 Meeting St.
- 31 Photo: 233 Meeting St.
- 32 Photo: 233-235 Meeting St.
- 33 Photo: 235 Meeting St.
- 34 Photo: Meeting St. Block
- 35 Photo: Meeting St. Facades from Hasell St. Intersection
- 36 Photo: Old J.C. Penny Co.
- 37 Photo: Rear of 242-240 King St., 1978
- 38 Photo: Rear of 209 Meeting St. Wall, in Background 232 King St., 1978
- 39 Photo: Rubble Behind 207 Meeting St., 1978