

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Young Women's Christian Association Complex
other names/site number Thomas, Stevens House

2. Location

street & number 345-347 West Hancock St. not for publication
city, town Athens vicinity
state GA code GA county Clarke code GA059 zip code 30601

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u> </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Elizabeth A. Lyon 3/26/87
Signature of certifying official Elizabeth A. Lyon Date
Historic Preservation Section, GA Department of Natural Resources
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Amy Schlegel 5/12/87

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling

RECREATION: sports facility

SOCIAL: civic

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE: professional

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Greek Revival

Other: eclectic

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

Stevens Thomas House:

foundation brick

walls wood

roof metal

other wood portico

YWCA Athletic Building:

concrete

brick

not visible

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

Description

The Young Women's Christian Association Complex in Athens consists of three buildings located on a large corner lot just west of the central business district. The buildings included are an antebellum, two-story, wood-framed house (the Stevens Thomas House) used first as the boarding home and later for offices of the YWCA, its associated c. 1900 servants' house, and the YWCA Athletic Building (gymnasium) built in 1913.

The Stevens Thomas House, dating from 1849-1850, is a high-style, Greek Revival structure with a full-width front portico. The plan is four-over-four rooms with a central hall, with a number of rear wings of various dates. The house retains its historic interior finishes including plaster walls, window and door moldings, mantels, and its original central stair. In 1911-1912 the house was rotated 90° from its original position fronting Pulaski Street to its present position facing Hancock Street. This was done to allow room to build the YWCA Athletic Building. Directly behind the house in the southwest corner of the property is a one-story, wood-framed servants' house dating from about 1900. It was moved from the western edge of the original property to the southwestern corner in 1912 at the same time the big house was moved.

The YWCA Athletic Building rests on the eastern portion of the property but is set back on the rear of the lot. Built in 1913, it is a two-story, brick, eclectic-style building with Neoclassical stylistic influences. In style and massing it resembles many small town libraries or other public buildings of the era. It has a central front projecting portico with a classically detailed entrance, prominent corner quoins, round windows, and a prominent overhanging cornice. On the interior, the building originally contained a large, open gymnasium area, an office, and a kitchen on the main floor, a three-sided mezzanine above, and a swimming pool and changing rooms on the lower level. Recently there have been major changes to the interior due to a certified rehabilitation of the building for offices. The mezzanine has been extended over the gymnasium, leaving a small, central atrium. The space on all three levels has been subdivided for offices. The swimming pool has been covered. Many of the original interior features, including the main staircase, pressed metal ceilings, and original windows have been retained.

The YWCA Complex site includes a parking lot directly in front (on the north side) of the athletic building in the northeast corner of the property. Additional parking on the west side of the Stevens Thomas House is not on the nominated property. A minimum of landscaping exists on the property, consisting of oak, pecan and dogwood trees.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Entertainment/Recreation
Social History

Period of Significance

1849-1850,
1913-1937

Significant Dates

1849-1850,
1913

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Orr, Fred J. (1874-1935) Architect

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Young Women's Christian Association Complex is significant in architecture, entertainment/recreation, and social history.

In terms of architecture, the property is significant at the state level for its two landmark structures, the Stevens Thomas House and the YWCA Athletic Building. The Stevens Thomas House is one of the finest remaining Greek Revival houses in Athens. Built c. 1849-50, it was selected for documentation in 1936 by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS). Some of its important features and details include: symmetrical arrangement and massing, monumental front portico, flush weatherboarding on the front facade, symmetrical arrangement of windows and doors, classically inspired details (columns, cornices, moldings), and its four-over-four room arrangement with central hall. The YWCA Athletic Building is significant architecturally due to its classically inspired eclectic styling which includes its portico, quoins, and modillioned cornice. Its massing suggests a public building of the era: a small, monumental, solid structure similar to many Carnegie libraries. Its unusual window arrangement would indicate that it had a purpose different from most "public" buildings, in this case allowing light for the gymnasium and swimming pool. Its significant remaining interior details include the pressed metal ceiling, stairs, remaining open space concentrated in its atrium, and massive columns. It is also significant for having been designed by architect Fred J. Orr (1874-1935), an Athens native, who was Athens' early 20th century "leading architect," later practicing in Atlanta and, at his death, as an architect for the Federal government.

The YWCA Complex is significant in terms of entertainment/recreation and in social history because it was the headquarters for the Athens YWCA (later YWCO) from 1913 to 1980. The Young Women's Christian Association emerged from two organizations founded in the 1850s in London and New York City. The YWCA name was first used in 1859. 1906, the same year the Athens YWCA was formed, saw the formation of the YWCA of the U.S.A., uniting all separate associations. The organization's efforts during the fifty years preceding the founding of the Athens Association had concentrated on many issues concerning women, including: decent housing (with the first boarding house in 1860), working conditions, physical health and welfare, human dignity and racial equality, and adult education. They worked with teenagers and families. One of their goals was "to meet the ever-widening professional and emotional interests of young women." They were the first

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Cawthon, William L., Jr. "Stevens Thomas - Ross Crane District." Historic Property Information Form, August 29, 1983. On file at the Historic Preservation Section, Department of Natural Resources, Atlanta, Georgia; and additional material submitted with the application in the tax files.

Communications National Board, YWCA. "The Story of the YWCA," a six page article published by the board from their New York City offices.

National Board, YWCA. Year Book...1912-1913. New York: National Board, YWCA, 1913.

Richardson, Mrs. J. C. Historian of the YWCA/YWCO, Athens, Georgia. Telephone interviews with Carolyn Brooks, December, 1985 and Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., January 15, 1987. Mrs. Richardson is writing a history of the Athens YWCO.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # GA-1113
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository:

Historic Preservation Section, Georgia
Department of Natural Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property one acre

UTM References

A 17 2810000 31759940
 Zone Easting Northing

C _____

B _____
 Zone Easting Northing

D _____

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is marked with a heavy black line on the enclosed site plan/sketch map. It is designated on the Clarke County, Georgia Tax Map 17-1-A-2 as Block E, parcels 1 and 1-A.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is all the property that has been associated with the YWCA since its association with this site in 1911.

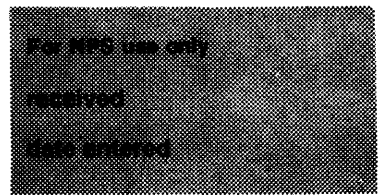
See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kenneth H. Thomas, Jr., Historian, Historic Preservation Section
 organization Georgia Department of Natural Resources date March 30, 1987
 street & number Suite 1462, 205 Butler Street telephone (404) 656-2840
 city or town Atlanta state GA zip code 30334

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Description Item number 7 Page 2

The complex is situated in a mixed residential and commercial area. Adjoining it on the south is the Ross Crane House (National Register), an antebellum house now adaptively reused as the SAE fraternity house. To the west of the house, across the parking lot, are several historic houses. North, across Hancock Street, is a church, and east across Pulaski Street are nonhistoric commercial buildings.

Preliminary Certifications

On December 7, 1983, this property received a preliminary certification of significance from the Preservation Services Branch, National Register Programs Division, National Park Service, Southeast Regional Office. On August 12, 1985, the completed rehabilitation of both buildings was found to meet the Secretary of Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" by this same office.

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For NPS use only

received

date entered

Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 2

organization in the national to offer sewing machine instructions to women in 1872 or to officially train women to be nurses (1893), and even to teach women to use the typewriter. One goal was to help young women prepare for the job market.

It was in this context of a national organization of women with a track record of positive activities that a group of socially prominent Athens women met on May 1, 1906 to form the Athens Association. From 1906 to 1911 they met and held their activities at various places in Athens, the last being a house which they sold in October, 1911 when they bought the Stevens Thomas House to be their boarding home. The headquarters remained downtown until 1925. The Thomas House was turned, and the new Athletic Building built and dedicated September 11, 1913. The Thomas house served first as a boarding home in the YWCA tradition, with the new building housing the recreational activities, including a swimming pool, gym and gallery for 300, which doubled as a meeting space for over 700. The new building was also used for many public events, dinners, banquets, civic luncheons, etc., besides YWCA events. The "Y" had a famous basketball team, taught ballroom dancing, held teen parties, and in 1946 started a swimming program for young girls. From c. 1925 to 1980, the Thomas house served as headquarters and for some programs, as well as a boarding home.

In 1909, shortly after it was formed, according to national statistics, the Athens YWCA was the third oldest association in Georgia of the five then existing. It ranked behind Atlanta (1902) and Savannah (1904), and was followed by Augusta (1909) and Columbus, newly formed. Athens' membership totaled 270 (ranking fourth in the state) and divided its activities between "religious," "social," and "physical" areas. Only Athens and Atlanta had a boarding home at that time. The University of Georgia had a separate YWCA facility.

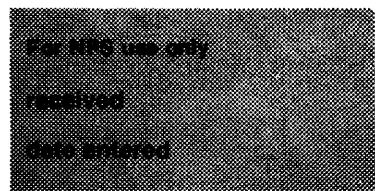
YWCA activities remained centered in this complex after it de-affiliated with the national association in 1968 over integration and became the Young Women's Christian Organization (YWCO). It moved to new facilities in 1980 when it sold the complex.

In this area it is significant at the state level because the nominated property's YWCA Athletic Building appears to be the oldest building built in Georgia for YWCA purposes that has survived. The Stevens Thomas House appears to have the earliest use as a YWCA facility of any remaining structure in Georgia that was adapted for YWCA purposes.

The historical associations of this property with the YWCA make it eligible for the National Register under Criteria A. Its architectural significance makes it eligible under Criteria C. In terms of Criteria Consideration B--moved buildings--a portion of the nominated property known as the Stevens Thomas House was moved, but in the historic period. In 1911, when the house was purchased for the YWCA, it was rotated 90° so that it faced West Hancock Street rather than Pulaski Street. According to Sanborn Maps, dating from both before and after, it still remained in the same general location on the property on which it was built. The contributing tenant house was moved from its original position directly behind the house on the western border of the lot to its new location in the southwest corner of the lot, again placing it behind the main house. This move made it possible for the YWCA Athletic Building to be built on the land. It also allowed

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Continuation sheet Significance Item number 8 Page 3

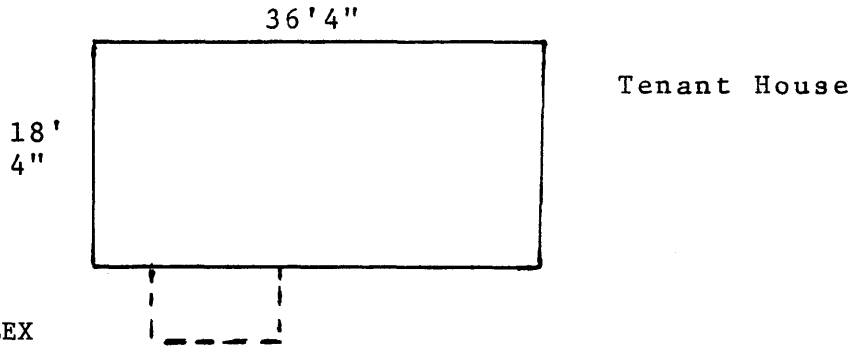
the adaptive reuse and preservation of the original antebellum house. The move took place seventy-five years ago and thus does not detract from the property's eligibility. The house has rested longer in its current location than it did in its original one, and has always been associated with the Athens YWCA in this position.

Stevens Thomas - Ross Crane Historic District: Stevens Thomas House
Athens, Georgia

Floor Plan of First Floor
August 1983

Scale: 16' = 1"

Scale is close, but
not exact. Windows
and doors not to
scale.



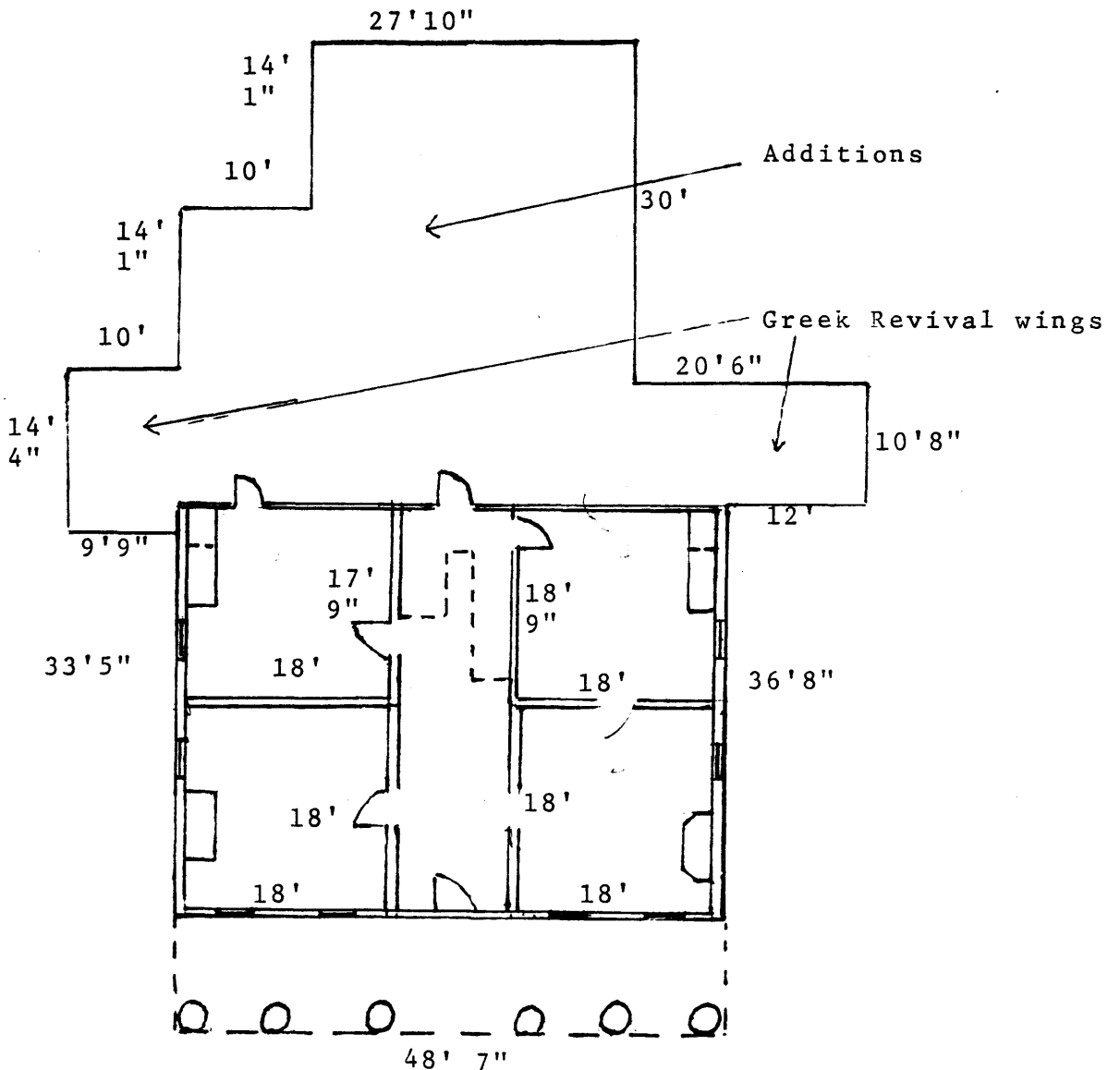
Floor Plan
YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION COMPLEX
Athens, Clarke County, Georgia

Scale: not to scale

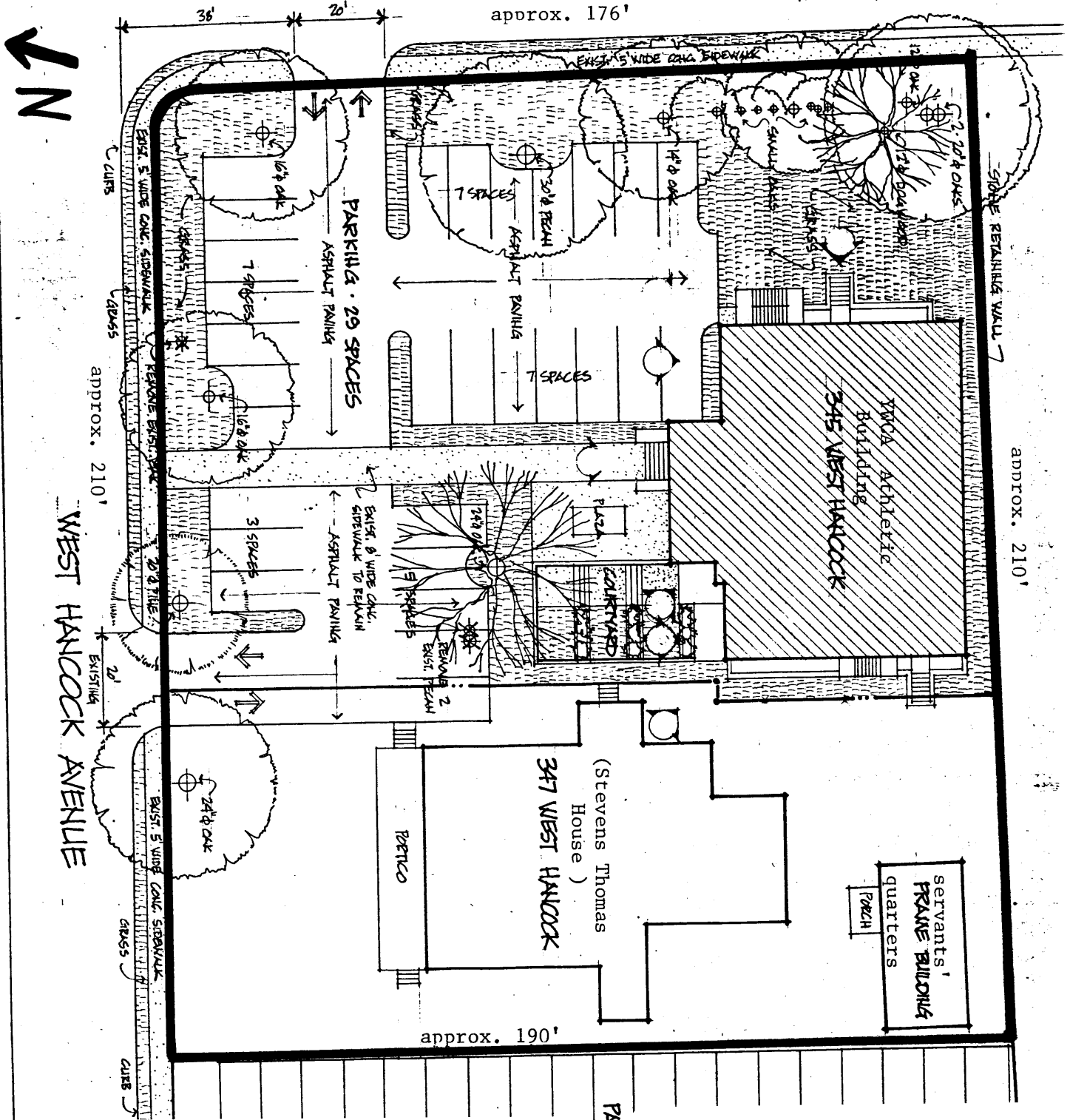
Source: William L. Cawthon, Jr., consultant

Date: 1985

Key: This is the first floor plan for
the Stevens Thomas House.



PULASKI STREET



Sketch Map

YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION COMPLEX

Athens, Clarke County, Georgia

Scale: as marked on the map

Source: W. Lane Greene, Architect

Date: 1985

Key: The nominated property is marked by a heavy black line. The three contributing resources are marked directly on the map.

The boundary measurements are taken from the Clarke County, GA Tax Map No. 17-1-A-2 where this property appears as parcels 1 and 1A in Block E.