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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in How to Complete National Register Forms Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Atalaya and or common Atalaya Castle

2. Location

street & number Huntington Beach State Park NA not for publication city, town Murrells Inlet S.C. vicinity of state South Carolina code 045 county Georgetown code 043

3. Classification

Table with 4 columns: Category, Ownership, Status, Present Use. Includes options like district, building(s), structure, site, object, public/private/both, occupied/unoccupied/work in progress, accessible (yes/restricted/no), agriculture/commercial/educational/entertainment/government/industrial/military, museum/park/private residence/religious/scientific/transportation/other.

4. Owner of Property

name Brookgreen Gardens (under lease to S. C. Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism) street & number U. S. 17 city, town Murrells Inlet NA vicinity of state South Carolina 29576

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Georgetown County Courthouse street & number Prince & Screven Street city, town Georgetown state South Carolina 29440

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

South Carolina Inventory of Historic Places title has this property been determined eligible? yes X no date 1984 federal X state county local depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives & History city, town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

# 7. Description

**Condition**

excellent  
 good  
 fair

deteriorated  
 ruins  
 unexposed

**Check one**

unaltered  
 altered

**Check one**

original site  
 moved      date

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

Atalaya is located approximately one hundred and fifty yards from the ocean within the boundaries of Huntington Beach State Park near Murrells Inlet in northeastern Georgetown County, South Carolina. This single story masonry structure was the winter home of Archer Milton and Anna Hyatt Huntington. Atalaya was designed by Mr. Huntington and was meant to resemble the Moorish style of architecture found along the Spanish coast. Built by local laborers under the direction of contractor William Thompson between 1931 and 1933, the building has been little altered over the years. Although it is situated today between the day-use parking area and a campground, efforts have been made to retain the integrity of the setting by limiting development in the immediate area.

Additional Information

Atalaya is built in the shape of a square with the outer measurement of each wall being two hundred feet. It is a single story brick building and has a flat asphalt and gravel roof with a parapet of simple decorative brickwork. There are twenty-five chimneys located throughout the house capped with copper hoods which rotate with the winds. The exterior walls are stuccoed, while the inner courtyard walls have untooled mortar joints. All exterior walls are sprayed with a gray cement coating to help the building blend in with the environment.

The eastern elevation faces the ocean and consists of three bays. The recessed center bay is fronted by a semicircular patio, which fills in the recession between the center and end bays. Entrance is through the center bay which has two single doorways. The center bay has three windows, while the southeast has eight and the northeast has six -- all at random intervals. The southern elevation has seven windows randomly spaced along its run and a door which opens into an inner courtyard. Windows are randomly spaced on the northern elevation. A projection on this side has public restrooms accessible only from the inside. A gate on this elevation opens into a small courtyard. The western elevation has a large double gate which opens onto an entrance courtyard. This was the main entrance when the Huntingtons occupied the house. There are two small inner courtyards to either side of the entrance which contain storage sheds.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates** 1931–1933      **Builder/Architect** William Thompson/Archer Huntington

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Atalaya is significant for its unusual architectural style seldom found in this country, and as winter home of world famous sculptor, Anna Hyatt Huntington, and her philanthropist husband, Archer Milton Huntington, the designer of Atalaya. It is located approximately one hundred and fifty yards from the Atlantic Ocean within the boundaries of Huntington Beach State Park. The single story masonry structure was conceived by

Mr. Huntington and was meant by him to resemble the Moorish architecture of the Spanish Coast. Atalaya was built between 1931 and 1933 by local laborers under the direction of contractor William Thompson. Little alteration has taken place on the home and it looks much as it did when completed.

## Additional Information:

On January 24, 1930, Archer Milton and Anna Hyatt Huntington acquired four plantations consisting of 6,635 acres from the FMC Corporation Hunting Club.<sup>1</sup> It was their idea to establish a wildlife and nature preserve which would act as a backdrop for Mrs. Huntington's sculptures and those of other modern sculptors.<sup>2</sup> Their dream became a reality the following year when Brookgreen Gardens (listed in the National Register, April 15, 1978) was incorporated as a nonprofit institution under the laws of South Carolina.<sup>3</sup>

While the gardens at Brookgreen were being developed the Huntingtons wanted to be nearby, so they moved into the two-story hunt club house on Magnolia Island (present day Huntington Beach State Park) opposite the entrance to Brookgreen. They enjoyed living among the dunes and they decided to build a house of their own design. It was named Atalaya which translates from Spanish to English as "Watchtower." Mr. Huntington, a well known and respected Hispanic scholar, called upon his background for the design<sup>4</sup> of Atalaya which he based on the Moorish architecture of the Spanish coast.

The effects of the Depression had been devastating to the economy of the local community and in an effort to help alleviate this the Huntingtons hired local laborers.<sup>5</sup> It is believed that these laborers, under the direction of contractor William Thompson, carried out the verbal instructions of Mr. Huntington since no blueprints were used to build Atalaya.<sup>6</sup>

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1 Acre

Quadrangle name Brookgreen, S. C.

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

Latitude 33°30'30"

Longitude 79°4'8"

A 

Zone	Easting			Northing							

B 

Zone	Easting			Northing							

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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**Verbal boundary description and justification** The boundary of the Atalaya nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism topographic map drawn on a scale of 1" = 400'. The boundary includes Atalaya and one acre of land around it.

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	NA	code	county	NA	code
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state	NA	code	county	NA	code
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# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Daniel Ray Sigmon, Historic Researcher

organization S. C. Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism date March 20, 1984

street & number 1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 110 telephone (803) 758-3622

city or town Columbia state South Carolina 29201

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Charles E. Lee  
State Historic Preservation Officer

date 8/2/84

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

Entered in the  
National Register

date 9/7/84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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The main courtyard formed by the building is dissected by a covered walkway of open decorative brickwork, which has brick arches equally spaced along both walls of the walkway and each arch has a concrete flower box at its base. The walkway has as its centerpiece a forty foot brick tower that doubled as a water tower for the household. A sidewalk runs around the perimeter of this courtyard. A raised patio is located in the center of the eastern elevation and has two sets of steps which provide access to the roof. Windows are randomly spaced all around the courtyard side of the building. All the windows in the building proper are covered with grillwork fashioned by Tito and Rogers of Miami, Florida.

There have been few alterations to the fabric of the house since its construction. The oceanside doors have been replaced because of exposure to salt and wind action. A concession shed was added in 1981 to accommodate crowds for special events. The stable in the rear is now the park shop and the former power plant now serves as barracks for seasonal employees.

Interior:

The house contains thirty rooms which are connected by an inner hall that runs the length of the northern, southern and eastern elevations and contained the living quarters of the Huntingtons and their servants. The Huntingtons occupied the rooms of the southeast and southern portion of the house. In the southern wing was Mrs. Huntington's studio, which contains a large skylight. The dining room and kitchen were located in the northeast side of the building, while the servants' quarters ran along both sides of the inner hall of the northern elevation.

Surroundings:

The grounds around Atalaya are sufficient for protecting the integrity of the site. The lawn to the east runs to the dunes which act as a barrier between the house and the public beach. On the west the grounds border a dirt road to the campground and a large wooded area. There is a ranger's trailer visible from the building, but it is to be moved according to the park master plan. A 50 site campground borders the south boundary but is screened somewhat by pines and shrub vegetation. A public parking lot, concession and public day use area are directly adjacent to the northern line of the nomination area and constitute the most serious intrusion.

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The building when completed served as the Huntingtons' winter home when visiting Brookgreen. Mrs. Huntington did several animal studies in her studio here.

During World War II, Atalaya was occupied by troops from the 455th Bombardment Squadron U. S. Army Air Corps from Myrtle Beach Air Field.<sup>8</sup> Following the war the Huntingtons made only a few trips to Atalaya and after Mr. Huntington died in 1955, the house was never used again by the family. The house suffered structural damage during hurricane Hazel in 1954.<sup>9</sup> During this same period the two sections from the old hunt club house which were placed on the north side of Atalaya to house employees in 1932, were removed.<sup>10</sup> In 1960 South Carolina State Parks leased the property containing Atalaya, and is now responsible for its preservation and maintenance.

Architecture:

Atalaya represents an unusual architectural style seldom found in this country. It was an expression of Mr. Huntington's love of the Hispanic culture he so admired.

Sculpture

Anna Hyatt Huntington was one of America's foremost sculptors. Her works are exhibited today in this country and Europe.<sup>11</sup> She was internationally known as an animalier of outstanding achievement.<sup>11</sup> Her best known works are Joan of Arc, The Cid and Don Quixote. It was at Atalaya that Mrs. Huntington did a study piece of Rocinante, Don Quixote's mount.<sup>12</sup>

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FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>A. Hyatt Mayor, Joseph Veach Noble, Beatrice Gilman Proske, Gurdon L. Tarbox, Jr. and Robin R. Salmon, A Century of American Sculpture; Treasures from Brookgreen Gardens (New York: Abbeville Press, 1980), p.97.

<sup>2</sup>Mayor, et al., Century, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup>South Carolina, Statutes at Large (1932) 37:695.

<sup>4</sup>The Brookgreen Bulletin, Winter 1974, pp. 3, 5.

<sup>5</sup>Bulletin, p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Mayor, et al., Century, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup>Mayor, et al., Century, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup>Mayor, et al., Century, p. 106.

<sup>9</sup>Mayor, et al., Century, p. 107.

<sup>10</sup>Bulletin, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>Doris E. Cook, Woman Sculptor: Anna Hyatt Huntington (1876-1973) (Hartford, Connecticut, privately printed, 1976), pp. 1,2.

<sup>12</sup>Bulletin, p. 4.

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