



Atalaya Castle

Archer Huntington purchased Brookgreen and three adjoining plantations in January 1930 as a site for a winter home and as a setting for Mrs. Huntington's sculpture work. Construction of the house began the following winter. The home was named "Atalaya," a Spanish term for watchtower. A noted authority on Spanish culture, Archer Huntington designed the house after the Moorish architecture of the Spanish Mediterranean Coast.

Construction of Atalaya began in 1931, apparently without detailed written plans. Workers alternated between construction on Atalaya and Brookgreen Gardens over a two- to three-year period. Mr. Huntington insisted that local labor be utilized in its construction to provide work opportunities for local residents during the Great Depression.

The outer walls of the building form a square, with the east side facing the ocean. Within the walled structure, there are two grassy, open inner courtyards with a main entry court on the west side. The living quarters consist of 30 rooms around three sides of the perimeter. The one-story brick building is dominated by a square tower that rises nearly 40 feet from a covered walkway and bisects the inner court. It is functional in design, having once contained a 3,000-gallon cypress water tank. Water drawn from an artesian well was then pumped into a 10,000-gallon concrete cistern where the sand settled. From there, it was pumped into the tower tank. The height of this tank gave the water enough pressure to flow through the house.

The covered walkway of open brickwork is lined with archways and planters on both sides. Living facilities, including the dining room, sunroom, library and bedrooms, occupied the ocean-facing side of the house. The southern wing housed Mr. Huntington's spacious study, his secretary's office and Mrs. Huntington's studio. The studio, with a 25-foot skylight, opened onto a small, enclosed courtyard where she worked on her sculptures. Due to her passion for sculpting animals, Mrs. Huntington had facilities such as horse stables, a dog kennel and a bear pen included in the construction. The Huntingtons resided in the house during the colder months of the year, usually from November until March or April.

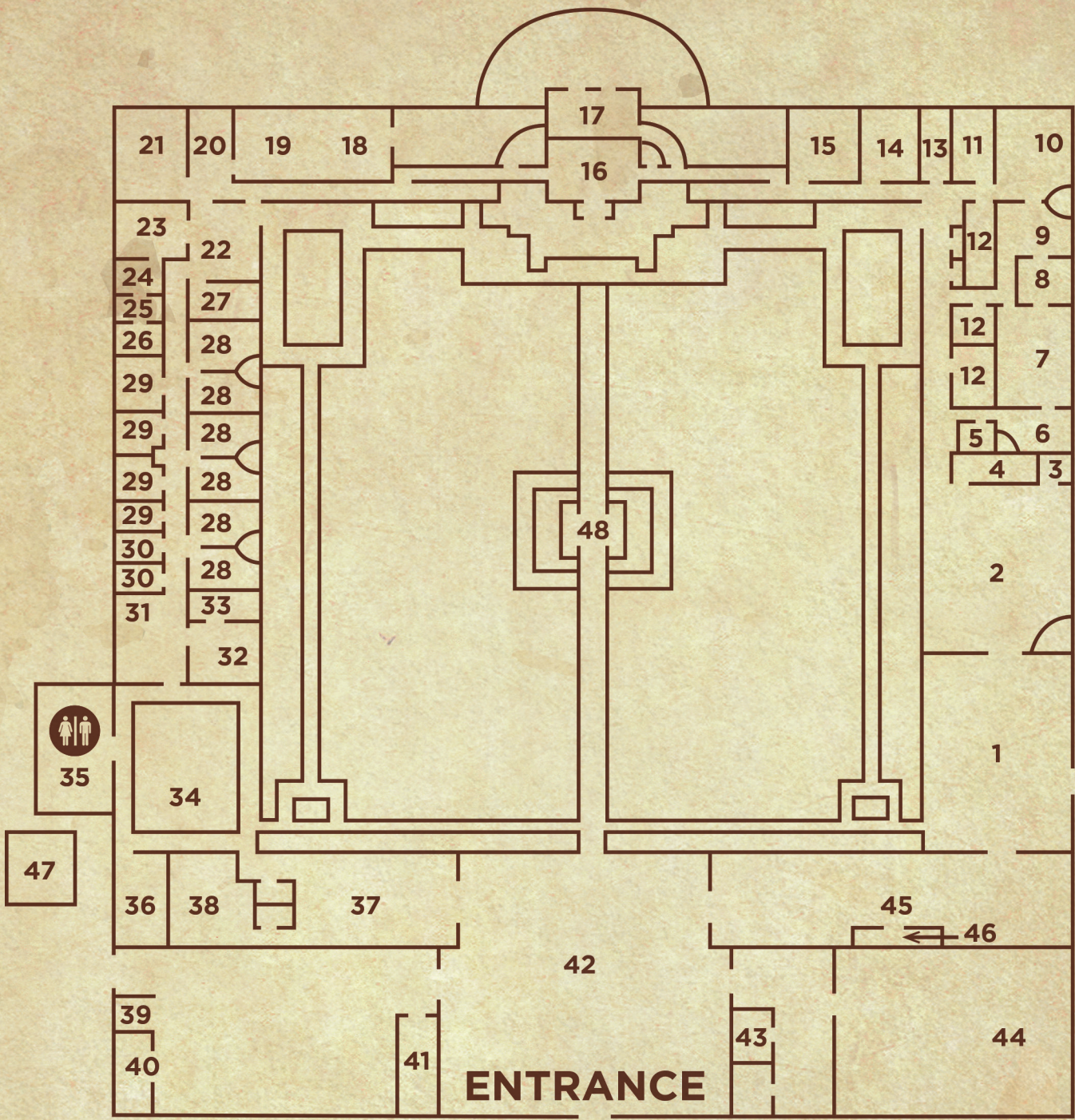
Heating was done entirely by using coal room heaters and wood-burning fireplaces. Ramps led from the courtyards up to each entry door, and wood was hauled in using small carts. Grillwork—designed by Mrs. Huntington—and shutters were installed on each window to protect against hurricane-force winds.

After Mr. Huntington's death in 1955, most of the furnishings from the house were sent to the Huntington home in New York City. The equipment from Mrs. Huntington's studio was transferred to the new studio at Brookgreen Gardens. The 2,500-acre tract, including Atalaya, was leased to the state by the Brookgreen Trustees in 1960. Mrs. Huntington died at her Connecticut home in 1973. In tribute to Mrs. Huntington, the annual Atalaya Arts and Crafts Festival is held in the Castle during the fourth weekend of September.

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Atalaya Castle Map



Location Reference

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Outdoor Studio | 13. Secretary's Bath | 25. Pantry | 37. Garage |
| 2. Indoor Studio | 14. Secretary's Quarters | 26. Walk-In Icebox | 38. Generator Room |
| 3. Studio Bathroom | 15. Library | 27. Cook's Quarters | 39. Incinerator |
| 4. Studio Storage | 16. Foyer | 28. Staff Quarters | 40. Woodshed |
| 5. Office Storage | 17. Sunroom | 29. Storage | 41. Oyster Shucking Room |
| 6. Secretary's Office | 18. Breakfast Room | 30. Staff Bath | 42. Paved Courtyard |
| 7. Mr. Huntington's Study | 19. Dining Room | 31. Laundry Room | 43. Bear Pens |
| 8. Wardrobe Room | 20. Food Service Room | 32. Housekeeper's Quarters | 44. Dog Kennels |
| 9. Mr. Huntington's Bath | 21. Staff Living Room | 33. Housekeeper's Bath | 45. Horse Stables |
| 10. Master Bedroom | 22. Food Preparation Room | 34. Laundry Drying Yard | 46. Tack Room |
| 11. Mrs. Huntington's Bath | 23. Kitchen | 35. Laundryman's Quarters | 47. Underground Cistern |
| 12. Clothes Storage | 24. Pantry & Storage | 36. Wood/Coal Storage | 48. Watchtower |

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