

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | <b>DATA SHEET</b> |
| RECEIVED         | SEP 29 1977       |
| DATE ENTERED     | FEB 23 1978       |

**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**

X

HISTORIC John Calvin Owings House

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

787 West Main Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Laurens

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#5

STATE

South Carolina

VICINITY OF

CODE

045

COUNTY

Laurens

CODE

059

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

John Calvin Owings, II

STREET & NUMBER

787 West Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Laurens

VICINITY OF

STATE

South Carolina

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Laurens County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

Public Square

CITY, TOWN

Laurens

STATE

South Carolina

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Inventory of Historic Places in South Carolina

DATE

1973 (update)

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

CITY, TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

# 7 DESCRIPTION

## CONDITION

EXCELLENT  
 GOOD  
 FAIR

DETERIORATED  
 RUINS  
 UNEXPOSED

## CHECK ONE

UNALTERED  
 ALTERED

## CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE  
 MOVED DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

EXTERIOR: The John Calvin Owings House, built ca. 1896, is a 2½ story structure built in the Queen Anne Style. The house is set on a low, brick foundation. Exterior wall material is clapboard and shingle siding set in imbricated pattern. The steep, slate, hipped roof features cresting and finials. There are four projecting gables with decorative bargeboards and boxed cornices. Three of the five interior chimneys have corbeled caps. Encircling the side and front facades is a large one-story portico characterized by turned posts and balustrade, pendants in segmental arches, and bracketed cornice. A projecting shingled pediment sits atop the portico at the front entrance. The front entrance door is of oak with beveled glass, above which is a colored glass transom (colored glass transoms are also found in parlor windows). The majority of windows in the structure are 1/1.

Projecting front gable includes a second-story portico with horseshoe arch and spindle decoration. Gable end has double windows with multi-paned transoms which are surmounted by a small single window. A three-story circular turret projects on the east (left) side of the house, and an octagonal oriel flanks the west (right) side.

A brick kitchen to the rear of the structure was originally a separate building; however, several years after the house was built, the breezeway between the kitchen and the house was enclosed.

INTERIOR: The first floor of the Owings House consists of a central hall, back hall, two parlors with sliding doors, a dining room, two bedrooms, a butler's pantry, bath, and kitchen area. The second floor has a central hall, back hall, five bedrooms, and two baths.

The main feature of the interior is the central hall on the first floor. Outstanding are the oak paneling, the stairway with a square paneled newel post topped by an urn, latticework, windowseat niche, and original light fixtures with etched globes.

There are twelve individual fireplaces in the house, many of which feature glazed tile and mirrored overmantels.

Oak, the dominant wood throughout the structure, is found in the paneling, wainscoting, cornices, and some ceilings. Floors are of heart pine. Original lighting fixtures and wooden louvered blinds also characterize the interior.

SURROUNDINGS: There are four outbuildings included within the nominated acreage. All are in fair condition and appear to be contemporary with the house.

# 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 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/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> ART                     | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING            | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC                  | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE                | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY             | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS          | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY               | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT    | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION              |   |  |

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|                |                   |  |
|----------------|-------------------|--|
| SPECIFIC DATES | BUILDER/ARCHITECT | John Calvin Owings<br>George F. Barber and Company |
|----------------|-------------------|--|

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## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built ca. 1896, the John Calvin Owings House is one of the most outstanding examples of Victorian (Queen Anne) architecture remaining in the city of Laurens, South Carolina. Owings, the builder of the house, played a prominent role in the political and economic activities of the city. The house is still in the possession of the Owings family.

John Calvin Owings was born October 24, 1857. As a young man he moved to Laurens and eventually formed a partnership with Charles B. Bobo, establishing the mercantile firm of Owings & Bobo. Mr. Owings was a life deacon in the First Baptist Church as well as a trustee for the Laurens City School District. He was also a member and director of the Chamber of Commerce and served as Mayor of Laurens from 1916-1918.

Ca. 1895, Mr. Owings had George F. Barber & Co., architects from Knoxville, Tennessee design a house to be built on West Main Street in Laurens. (J. C. Owings, II, grandson of the original owner/builder, has in his possession the original set of drawings and plans for the structure). Upon the death of Mr. Owings in 1953, the house was passed to his son, G. Edwin Owings and has since been deeded to his son, John Calvin Owings, II.

ARCHITECTURE: The John Calvin Owings House is an outstanding example of Queen Anne architecture. Characteristic of this style and of the Owings House is the blending of exterior surface materials (clapboard & shingle siding), high multiple roofs, turrets, oriels, cresting, turned spindles, and rambling porches. Significant in the interior is the oak paneling, staircase, mantlepieces, and latticework.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview with John Calvin Owings II, Laurens, South Carolina, May, 1977.

Information supplied by James Brownlee, Clerk & Treasurer, City of Laurens, 1977.

Obituary. "Funeral Rites for J.C. Owings Held on Tuesday." Laurens Advertiser, April, 1953.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A 17 405560 3817220  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

That parcel containing five (5) acres being bounded on the north by West Main Street, on the east by the property of Bailey Williams, on the south by the property of Mary Owings, and on the west by the property of T. C. Owings.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

(Mary Ann Eaddy/Steve Smith: Historic Preservation Div.)

Ruth K. LaForge, Preservation Planner, Upper Savannah Council of Governments

ORGANIZATION

South Carolina Department of Archives and History

DATE

August 18, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 11,669 Capitol Station

TELEPHONE

(803) 758-5816

CITY OR TOWN

Columbia

STATE

South Carolina

# 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

*Charles E. Lee*

TITLE

Charles E. Lee  
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

9/8/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

*Charles E. Lee*  
 DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 2-23-78  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

2-23-78