

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination FormSee instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For NPS use only
received
date entered 6/22/82

## 1. Name

historic Hightower Hall

and/or common Hightower Hall

## 2. Location

street & number York County Road 165, approximately 1 mile southeast  
of its intersection with S.C. Highway 322. N/A not for publicationcity, town McConnells ☒ vicinity of ~~congressional district~~

state South Carolina code 045 county York - code 091

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	NA in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	NA being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property

name R. Fisher Draper

street &amp; number Route 1

city, town McConnells ☒ vicinity of state South Carolina 29726

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. York County Courthouse

street &amp; number South Congress Street

city, town York state South Carolina 29745

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Inventory of Historic Places  
title in South Carolinahas this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ nodate 1975 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records South Carolina Department of Archives and 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

Hightower Hall is a two-story frame residence, built ca. 1853 for John Simpson Bratton, II. The contract between Bratton and his builder, O. P. Cranford (or Crawford), described in detail the house as it was planned and built. The contract specified that Mr. Bratton was to build the foundation and basement walls and to provide the materials for the rest of the house, which Mr. Cranford (or Crawford) was to complete.<sup>1</sup> Hightower Hall, an interpretation of the Italian Villa style, is located in York County on a large farm near McConnells.

Hightower Hall has a rectangular plan, with a projecting three-story square tower on the facade (southwest elevation). The house is weatherboarded with a raised brick basement. The facade has a single eight-over-eight window in the basement of the tower with twin brick staircases rising on either side of the tower to approach twin one-story porches on either side of the tower. These porches rest on high brick piers and feature chamfered square posts, sawn brackets, stickwork friezes, and sawn ornament in their balustrades. Siding is flushboard under these porches. The three-bay facade has the tower centered and a single eight-over-eight sash window with louvered shutters in the flanking bays on each floor. The tower has single entrances with transoms on each side of its first story, opening onto the porches; each other exposed face has a single eight-over-eight window.

The main body of the house has a low hip roof, with sawn brackets under its projecting eaves. The roofing is asphalt shingle. Two brick chimneys pierce the center of the roof. The tower roof is similar to the roof of the main house, with sawn brackets under its projecting eaves.

The northeast elevation of Hightower Hall has a one-story porch with chamfered posts and sawn brackets, similar to but less elaborate than the southwest porches. Siding is flushboard underneath the porch. A one-story frame building on a brick basement, believed to be the original kitchen, is attached to this porch on the northwest side. The side elevations of Hightower Hall are two bays wide.

Interior: Hightower Hall has a central-hall, double-pile plan with the hall extended to the southwest into the tower. The walls of the first floor hall and the stair are plastered with marble pilasters simulated in trompe l'oeil painting. The stair rises at the east end of the hall, opposite the tower. A plaster ceiling medallion is centered in the hall; this is attributed to Richard Hare.<sup>2</sup> The four rooms of the first and second floors have pine floors, two-panel doors, plaster walls, and wooden mantelpieces and baseboards. The tower, which has its own stair leading to the third level, rises ten feet above the main roof of the house. The tower was reportedly designed as an observation platform so that Mr. Bratton could watch over his plantation.

Surroundings: An unidentified Englishman reportedly designed the gardens of Hightower Hall.<sup>3</sup> The plantation includes four original outbuildings, two barns and two slave cabins.

## 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) local history

**Specific dates** ca. 1853 **Builder/Architect** Cranford (or Crawford)

### Statement of Significance (In one paragraph)

Hightower Hall, located in the vicinity of McConnells in York County, South Carolina, was built for John Simpson Bratton, II, a locally prominent planter and politician, ca. 1853. The residence is a significant vernacular interpretation of the Italian Villa style. In addition, Hightower Hall is significant for the hand painted mural in its first floor central hall, which simulates marble pilasters.

Additional Information: John Simpson Bratton, II, a member of the prominent area Bratton family, was apparently a successful planter. In 1850, three years before he constructed his new plantation home, the twenty-eight year old Bratton owned \$9,000 worth of land and eight slaves. By 1860, Bratton had been in his fine new home approximately seven years and had acquired thirty-eight slaves and real estate valued at \$24,000.<sup>4</sup> Bratton served in the South Carolina House of Representatives for two terms, was postmaster of Brattonsville, and was a member of the Soldiers Board of Relief during the Civil War.<sup>5</sup> He died in 1888.<sup>6</sup>

Architecture: Hightower Hall, built ca. 1853, is a significant vernacular rendition of the Italian Villa style that was popular in the United States from 1837 to ca. 1860. The style had its origins in the vernacular farmhouses of the northern Italian peninsula, whose asymmetry and picturesqueness were appreciated by the eighteenth-century Grand Tourers. The first expression of the style in Northern Europe was John Nash's Cronkhill at Salop, England, built in 1802. The style was introduced into the United States in 1837 at Bishop Doane's house in Burlington, New Jersey, designed by architect John Notman. A. J. Downing popularized the style in his publications, Cottage Residences (1840) and The Architecture of Country Houses (1850).

The style was characterized by picturesque compositions, with a tall square tower rising above the main mass of the building. Deep, bracketed eaves, verandas or loggias, homogenous wall surfaces, and low-pitched roofs further characterized the style. Hightower Hall's most prominent feature, its three-story tower, identifies its stylistic sources. The house features, also, the low-pitched roof, the deep eaves, the brackets, and the verandas common to the style. Other examples of the Italian Villa style in South Carolina include the Williams House in Laurens (ca. 1850) and the Wofford College Old Main (designed by E. C. Jones, built 1854).

Hightower Hall is also noteworthy for its trompe l'oeil painting, simulating marble pilasters, in its hall. A similar painting scheme is found at Alison Plantation (ca. 1854) in York County. This was a mode by which a builder of limited skill could approach the effects of the more luxurious lowcountry plantation houses.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 23.9

Quadrangle name Rock Hill

Quadrangle scale 1:62500

UMT References see continuation sheet

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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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 Hightower Hall nomination is shown as the red line on the accompanying York County tax map number 410, drawn to a scale of 330 feet to the inch, and includes the house and a sufficient amount of associated property to maintain integrity of location and setting.

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

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

state	code	county	code
N/A		N/A	

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title John Wells, Suzanne P. Wylie

Linda VanderBroek, Intern  
Catawba Regional Planning Council

organization S.C. Department of Archives and History date December 14, 1981

street & number 1430 Senate Street telephone (803) 758-5816

city or town Columbia state South Carolina 29211

## 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*, May 4, 1982

title Charles E. Lee  
State Historic Preservation Officer

date

For NPS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

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

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received

date entered

Continuation sheet Hightower Hall

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Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States: South Carolina [York District]. Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications.

Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States: South Carolina [York District Slave Schedules]. Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications.

Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: South Carolina [York District]. Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications.

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Rainey, Joe. York, S.C. Interview, 8 October 1980.

York Bicentennial Committee. We the People: York, South Carolina's Salute to Americans. 1976.

York, S.C. York County Library. Bratton Family Papers.

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



**National Register of Historic Places  
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Continuation sheet    Hightower Hall

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Page 1

Latitude-Longitude coordinates

- A.   N 34° 52' 58"    W 81° 10' 51"
- B.   N 34° 52' 46"    W 81° 10' 43"
- C.   N 34° 52' 45"    W 81° 10' 54"
- D.   N 34° 52' 57"    W 81° 11'  3"

Hightower Hall  
Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>"Articles of Agreement for Building a Dwelling House Between John S. Bratton and O. P. Cranford," 30 May 1853, Bratton Family Papers, York County Library, York, S.C.

<sup>2</sup>York Bicentennial Committee, We the People: York, South Carolina's Salute to Americans, 1976.

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Joe Rainey, York, S.C., 8 October 1980.

<sup>4</sup>Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: South Carolina [York District] (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications), microcopy 432, roll 860; Population Schedules of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: South Carolina [York District Slave Schedules] (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications), microcopy 432, roll 868; Population Schedules of the Eighth [1860] Census of the United States: South Carolina [York District] (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications), microcopy 563, roll 1228; Population Schedules of the Eighth [1860] Census of the United States: South Carolina [York District Slave Schedules] (Washington, D.C.: National Archives Microfilm Publications), microcopy 653, roll 1238.

<sup>5</sup>Walter B. Edgar, ed., Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives, vol. 1 (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), pp. 389, 392; Bratton Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, S.C.

<sup>6</sup>"Death of Col. John S. Bratton," Yorkville Enquirer (York, S.C.), 25 January 1888, p. 2.