America at Work

Form 10-300 (July 1969)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM

STATE: South	Carolina	
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	FOR NPS USE ONLY	

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The United States Coast Guard Station on Sullivan's Island is the oldest extant life saving installation on the South Carolina coast. It is a compact and unique collection of functional nautical architecture.

Layout: The district is a five-acre rectangular plot of land which lies on Sullivan's Island about four thousand feet southeast of Fort Moultrie. The narrow piece of beachfront which is part of the property is a strip of sandy, tidal flats lying directly west of an offshore submerged jetty. ▶Five simple structures are arranged on the level grassy area inland from the beach. oldest buildings are arranged in a trapezoid which sits parallel with the beach toward the inland boundary of the property. boathouse which was built ca. 1891 to protect rescue boats from the weather is now unused. Directly east of the boathouse is the administration building which is a larger structure also built in 1891 and now houses radio equipment and recreation rooms. Both of these buildings back onto Ion Avenue to the north. The garage to the west (built in 1891 as a carriage house) and the raised Spanish-American War bunker to the east (which dates from 1898) sit further apart and closer to the shore. These buildings are spatially interconnected by a paved drive and a parking area which lies between the bunker and the garage. A narrower paved walk runs from the parking area out to the modern (1962) triangular lighthouse which sits closest to the shore.

ArchitectureThe administration building is the largest of the buildings and one of the original grouping. It is rectangular in shape with a small entry porch on the north wall and a singlestory addition on the east wall. The one-and-one-half story white clapboard structure sits on raised foundations which have been covered by wood latticework. The facade, on the south, features a single-story porch with a shed roof. The porch columns rise from the floor to the roof, but a solid wooden "railing" encloses them for two to three feet above the floor. A short balustraded flight of stairs approaches the porch. Above the shed roof, the gable roof is interrupted by three dormer windows, two shed and a central triangular gabled one. A low glassed-in watchtower, completely circled by an exterior and heavily-railed catwalk, has been built at the center of the roof's crest. The roof pediments on the east and west ends of the building have been elaborated with simple, carved, T-shaped support bars and scalloped wooden shingles. There is a single chimney on the east wall.

The white clapboard garage is similar in style to the administration building. The four garage bays face east. Centrally located above each of these doors on the gable roof are unshuttered windows with arched tops set in gabled dormers. On the north wall, there is a hooded pediment with carved brackets over the entrance

PERIOD (Check One or More as A	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
☐ 15th Century	17th Century	🔀 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable	e and Known) land acq	uisition: 1891, 18	3 <mark>96; buildings:1891,189</mark> 8,
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Che	ck One or More as Appropri	iate)	
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Prehistoric	Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
☐ Historic	☐ Industry	lasophy	
Agriculture	Invention	Science	
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☐ Conservation	Music	Transportation	

The life saving station is an early example of public and institutionalized concern by the state for the general safety of its citizens. It is also, incidentally, a curious and unique example of early functional design.

Social/Humanitarian Significance: The Sullivan's Island Coast Guard Station is the oldest extant life saving installment on the South Carolina coast. Shortly after the Civil War, the Federal government recognized its obligation for the personal safety of citizens in the port area of Charleston with the establishment of the now-defunct Morris Island Station. When the main shipping channel into Charleston was altered about twenty years later, the citizens of the immediate area indicated their reciprocal acceptance of that principle. In 1891 the nearby summer village of Moultrieville deeded five acres of land to the United States government for the express purpose of establishing a life saying station, and again in 1896 an additional acre to compensate for loss of land by erosion. (It is significant that this action coincides closely with the dates of the establishment of the earliest quasi-public hospitals in the city of Charleston.) It likewise represents part of the ongoing concern of the Charlestonians for the improvement of conditions in the shipping industry which was one of their major sources of prosperity and importance.

The life saving station is one of a very few remaining examples of such installments and it attractively demonstrates the distinctive and specialized functions of the group of buildings, both individually and collectively.



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Flias B. Bull, Historical Researcher (Carol Stevens Archives) ORGANIZATION Regional Planning Commission Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester 2 Courthouse Square CITY OR TOWN: Charleston As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is: National State Local Name Charles E. Lee Title Director, S.C. Department of Archives and History Keeper of The National Register						<u> </u>		7			10	-cuis I E		
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Rosa Lee Boatright, Realty Specialist, 7th Coast Guard U. S. Coast Guard Minni	STREET CITY OR As the tional 89-66 in the evaluation of the level N Name	Elias B. ZATION R Berkeley AND NUMBE 2. COURT TOWN: Charlest E Liaison e designated Historic Pr 5), I hereby National R ated accordi by the Natio of significa Value of significa Charles Director	Bull, Regiona (Charles Charles	Squa Squa CER iaison on Act this p nd cert criter Service is nom ite	Officer for of 1966 (If property for tify that it ria and proce. The remination is	I Res Comments to the New York Took Took Took Took Took Took Took T	Searc missi er Law usion seen ses set	he	I hereby Nationa Chief, C	certify 1 Regist Office of	that this part of Archeolog	ER VERI	Jan.	CODE 1973 CODE 45 N

Form 10-300o (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE .	
South Caroli	na
COUNTY	
Charleston	
FOR NPS USE O	NLY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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(Number all entries)

7. Description

door.

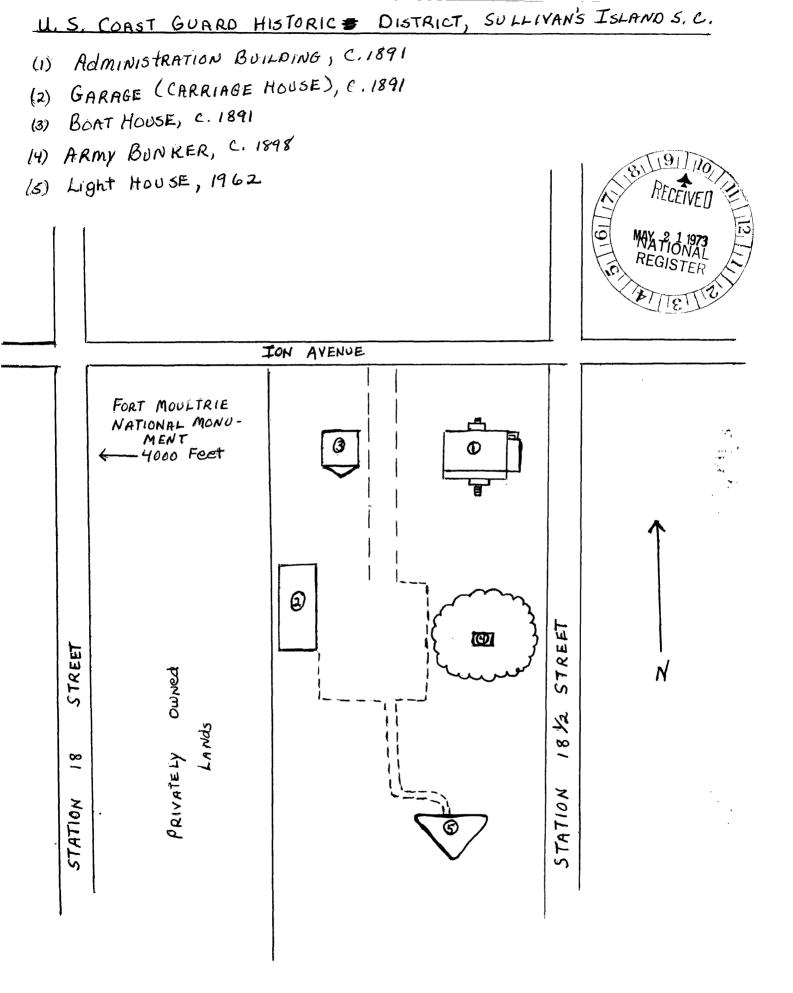
The boathouse is a square, single-story, clapboard structure with a medium bell-shaped hip roof which is decorated by a centrally placed round cupola topped by a weathervane. The south side of the building has a pair of wooden double doors which can be approached by a gently sloping concrete ramp. The sides of the building are unadorned except for two groups of paired, narrow, unshuttered windows; the back, except for narrow entrance doors.

The bunker was built to provide a measure of protection to Sullivan's Island during the time of the Spanish-American War. The main body of its construction lies beneath the raised dirt mound which was built to protect ammunition storage. A concrete lookout booth atop the mound is the only visible structure.

The modern lighthouse, which holds the most powerful light on the eastern seaboard, is the newest building on the site. It is triangular in shape and has aluminium siding.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE				
COUNTY	JUN	1	9	1973
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ENTRY	NUMB!	ER		DATE

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	SOURCE:							
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	TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS							
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	2. North arrow.							
	3. Latitude and longitude reference.							

PROPERTY OF THE REGISTER

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

National Register Amendment Page 1

OMB No. 1024-0018

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District name of property

Charleston, South Carolina county and State

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District Sullivan's Island, Charleston County, South Carolina

The U.S. Coast Guard Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on June 19, 1973 (National Register Reference Number 73001703). The historic district is significant for its association with early efforts by the federal government to improve the safety of coastal navigation. Currently, the district features five contributing properties built between circa 1891 and 1962, including the oldest surviving U.S. Life Saving Station on the South Carolina coast. This amendment seeks to add one contributing property (signal tower) to the historic district and identify the National Park Service (NPS) as owners of approximately one acre within the historic district.

The signal tower, located near the southeast corner of the garage, is within the bounds of the historic district but is not identified as a contributing resource in the original nomination. Signal towers were an essential component of Coast Guard stations, facilitating communication between the station and distant ships. The signal tower in the Sullivan's Island Coast Guard Historic District was constructed in 1938 from standard plans developed by the Coast Guard.

-	•
State/Federal Agency Certification As the designated authority under the National Hi as amended, I hereby certify that this determination of eligibility meets the document properties in the National Register of Historic and professional requirements set forth in 36 coproperty meets does not meet the Nation that this property be considered significant locally. (See continuation sheet for additional content of the content	nomination request for tation standards for registering Places and meets the procedural CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the al Register Criteria. I recommend nationally statewide
Signature of certifying official	Date
State or Federal agency and bureau	
In my opinion, the property meets doe criteria. (See continuation sheet for addi	s not meet the National Register tional comments.)
Signature of commenting or other official	Date

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET	U.S. Coast Guard Historic District name of property Charleston, South Carolina county and State
National Register Amendment Fage 2	
State or Federal agency and bureau	
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):	
Signat	ure of Keeper Date of Action

OMB No. 1024-0018

NPS Form 10-900-a (8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District name of property

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Charleston, South Carolina county and State

National Register Amendment

Page 3

Number of Resources within the Historic District

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
1	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 5

Descriptions of Contributing Properties

Sullivan's Island Coast Guard Historic District is a rectangular, five-acre tract between Ion Avenue and the Atlantic Ocean that is approximately one-half-block wide. All of the contributing properties in the district are located behind the primary dune, in proximity to Ion Avenue. The station house, boathouse, garage, and signal tower are laid out in an L-shaped court loosely organized around the bunker/sighting station. The lighthouse, which lies nearest the ocean, is located approximately 100 feet southeast of the bunker.

Signal Tower, 1938: This is a pyramidal, open-truss structure constructed of L-shaped steel beams and measuring roughly 45 feet tall and 9½ feet square at the base. The tower comprises six, cross-braced vertical bays that diminish in size toward the top. It is surmounted by a steel cross bar and telescoping mast. The most's rope and pulleys are missing and the ladder, which ascends the northwest side, is missing rungs because of significant deterioration. A similar signal tower was constructed by the Coast Guard at the Ocracoke Light Station.

Descriptions of Previously Listed Contributing Properties

Sullivan's Island Coast Guard Station, circa 1891: This is a one-and-one-half-story, five-bay, double-pile building that provided quarters for U.S. Life Saving Service and U.S. Coast Guard personnel. The station house is set on concrete piers and clad in wood shingles with decoratively sawn, octagonal-butt shingles in the gable ends. The front and rear elevations are largely symmetrical with center entrances and paired sash windows throughout. A one-bay, gable-front porch frames the main entrance on Ion Avenue. The rear elevation is sheltered by a full-width, shed-roofed porch. Both porches feature chamfered posts. Cross gables and shed-roofed dormers appear on both sides of the side-gable roof. King-post trusses and sawn brackets support each gable end. A square, pyramidal-roofed

Inited States Department of the Interior [ational Park Service

VATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

National Register Amendment Page

OMB No. 1024-0018

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District name of property

Charleston, South Carolina county and State

cupola is centered on the ridge and has exterior observation decks enclosed with metal pipe railings.

The main floor of the station house is divided between public rooms and living quarters by the center passage. The northeast end of the station features the living and dining rooms and the kitchen and pantry. A shed-roofed addition on the northeast gable end reconfigured the shape of the kitchen and created a utility room, which opens onto the living room. The southwest end of the house contains two bedrooms, two bathrooms, closets, and a set of stairs. The second floor features three bedrooms, one bathroom, and twelve small closets. Molded surrounds frame interior doorways and windows throughout the station. The station house has served as park quarters since 1978. However, Hurricane Hugo significantly damaged the building and NP3 is currently rehabilitating the station house. (IDLCS 13034)

Boathouse, circa 1891: Located southwest of the station house and oriented to the Atlantic, the boathouse is a one-story, two-bay, rectangular building that measures approximately 25½ x 40½ feet. It is a board-and-batten building set on concrete piers with a concrete boat ramp and two, strap-hinged, vertical-plank, double doors on the southeast facade. The Ion Avenue entrance features a similar double door and a four-panel wood door. Paired four-over-four sash windows admit light along the sides of the building. The flared hip roof features exposed rafter ends and is surmounted by an octagonal cupola with a flared conical roof. Tongue-and-groove floors, walls, and ceiling line the open interior plan. The boathouse is used as a park workshop by the NPS. (IDLCS 13035)

Garage, 1938: The garage is a one-and-one-half-story, four-bay, Colonial-Revival-style building that measures approximately 32 x 42 feet. The frame structure is clad in wood shingles and set on a continuous concrete foundation. The northeast or main facade is comprised of four wood-and-glass-panel garage doors. A six-over-six sash window on the southwest facade lies opposite each garage door. The side-gable roof features a dormer with a round-arch window over each of the front and rear bays. Decorative details include corner posts, partial returns, and wood fan motifs above the gable-end windows. The interior open plan remains intact although the second floor had been altered in 1970 for use as a classroom and storage space. It currently serves as office space. Asbestos siding was added to the first floor interior walls (c. 1970s) for fire protection. A similar garage was constructed by the Coast Guard at Ocracoke Light Station on North Carolina's Outer Banks. (IDLCS 13033)

Bunker/Sighting Station, 1898: The bunker is a two-story concrete building set in a grass-covered earth mound. It measures roughly 80 feet in diameter and 17 feet tall. The northwest facade of the building is exposed and features the entrance, a window, and a concrete stair that leads to the second level. Navigational equipment is contained in the flat-roofed second level. Partially exposed, the

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

National Register Amendment Page 5

OMB No. 1024-0018

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District name of property

Charleston, South Carolina county and State

second level is surrounded on three sides by a vertical-plank wood fence. The NPS stores flammable materials in the lower level. (IDLCS 13031)

Lighthouse, 1962: This is an approximately 150-foot-tall, aluminum tower with a triangular plan. The shaft includes casement windows at each story on the northwest side and is set on a two-story base. The lens room is surrounded by large glass windows. The Sullivan's Island lighthouse, currently operated by the Coast Guard, is distinguished from other coastal lighthouses by its paint scheme; the upper seven stories are black with the remaining eight painted white.

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

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OMB No. 1024-0018

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District name of property

Charleston, South Carolina county and State

Property Owner

Pursuant to Congressional authorization, the U.S. Coast Guard, in June 1990 (U.S. Public Law 99-637) transferred approximately one acre to the National Park Service "for purposes of [use as a] maintenance workshop, storage, and seasonal housing in connection with the administration and protection of Fort Sumter National Monument." The transferred property consists of the northern one-fifth of the U.S. Coast Guard Historic District, Charleston County, South Carolina, and includes the station house, boathouse, garage, bunker/sighting station, and signal tower. The lighthouse is the only contributing property, listed in the historic district, retained by the Coast Guard.

name National Park Service	
street & number P.O. Box 37127	telephone
city or town Washington	state DC zip code 20013-7127

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District name of property

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Charleston, South Carolina county and State

National Register Amendment

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Form Prepared By

name/title	Robert W. Blythe, Historian; Steven H. Moffson, Architectu	Maureen A. Carroll, Historian; ural Historian
organizatio	on National Park Service, Sout	theast Regional Office
date Februa	ary 20, 1994 8, 1995	
street & n	umber 75 Spring Street, S.W.	telephone (404) 331-5988
city or to	wn Atlanta	state GA zip code 30303

Photographs

U.S. Coast Guard Historic District Charleston County, South Carolina Photos: Maureen Carroll and Steven Moffson Location of Negatives: NPS, SERO January 1993

- 1. Station House with Lighthouse, view from N.
- 2. Station House, view from S.
- 3. Boathouse, view from S.
- 4. Garage with Signal Tower in background, view from N.
- 5. Bunker/Sighting Station, view from N.
- Signal Tower and Garage, view from SE.

