

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation 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 Sabine Pass Lighthouse

and/or common

2. Location

street & number on the eastern side of the Sabine Pass on _____ not for publication
Lighthouse Bayou
city, town near Sabine Pass, Texas _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 7th--John Breaux
Cameron vic.
state LA code 22 county Cameron Parish code 023

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name State of Louisiana, Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism
Office of State Parks
street & number P.O. Drawer 1111

city, town Baton Rouge _____ vicinity of _____ state LA 70821

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cameron Parish Courthouse

street & number

city, town Cameron _____ state LA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title La. Historic Sites Survey _____ has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes no

date 1981 _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records La. State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Baton Rouge _____ state LA

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

The Sabine Pass Lighthouse is located on marshy land on the east side of the Sabine Pass on Lighthouse Bayou. There are no roads leading to it, and the easiest way to reach it is by boat from the town of Sabine Pass, Texas. For that reason, despite the fact that it lies in Cameron Parish, Louisiana, the lighthouse has traditionally been considered as part of the Sabine Pass/Port Arthur community. (Photo 2)

The lighthouse, which resembles a rocket ship, is an octagonal, brick structure with huge brick buttresses at its base. The tower features a heavy, Greek Revival-influenced, brick cornice with dentils surmounted by four layers of brick molding. There is also a brick band below the cornice that forms a crude entablature. At the top of the tower is a cylindrical room with an iron balustrade and a lantern room that retains the skeleton of a domed roof and a balustrade. Access to the top of the tower is provided by a helix-shaped cast-iron staircase. The central pole runs the full height of the staircase and extends far into the ground. (Photos 1, 3, 4)

Until 1976, when a marsh fire swept the area, there were several other buildings on the site. Today, besides the ruins of the lightkeeper's house, the only support building standing is a small brick storage house. This structure has a brick floor and a tin roof and is almost completely hidden by foliage (Photo 5). Adjacent to the brick storage house is a heavy timber boat rack.

The lighthouse is in deteriorating condition. Its copper roof has been destroyed, its windows and doors are open to the elements, and the spiral staircase is rusting badly. In addition, there is a sizable crack in the brick near the top of the tower. Nevertheless, the building could well be stabilized and saved.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input 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 | | |

Specific dates 1856

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph) Criterion C

The Sabine Pass Lighthouse was completed in 1856 for a reported cost of \$30,000. The light, which was discontinued during the Civil War, was relit afterwards and continued to guide maritime traffic until 1952, when it was decommissioned by the Coast Guard. In 1971, Lamar State College in Beaumont, Texas took possession of the lighthouse and planned to use the site for field research. Upon choosing another location for their activities, they returned the building to the United States government. In 1974, the State of Louisiana took possession of it. The Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, Office of State Parks, has plans to stabilize and partially develop the site. It would continue to have no road leading to it, but would be accessible by boat.

The Sabine Pass Lighthouse is significant in the areas of architecture and engineering because it is one of very few extant brick structures of its type in Louisiana. During the nineteenth century, the federal government tried to build brick lighthouses on the state's shoreline, but they invariably sank into the marshy soil. Four of them remain, and two of these are in a much more deteriorated condition than the one at Sabine Pass.

The Sabine Pass Lighthouse is of an apparently unique design on the Mississippi/Louisiana/Texas coast. In about 1855, three octagonal, brick lighthouses with flared octagonal bases were built in Texas and Louisiana. Of these, the Louisiana structures at Barataria and Timbalier Bays are no longer extant, but the one at Port Aransas, Texas is still standing. Although the Port Aransas structure resembles the one at Sabine Pass in shape and has similar architectural detailing, the flared base at Port Aransas is much less pronounced than the buttressed one at the Sabine Pass Lighthouse.

The State Review Committee requested that a statement be added pointing out that the Sabine Pass Lighthouse was historically a navigational aid in trade and westward migration in southeast Texas and southwestern Louisiana.

9. Major Bibliographical References

United States Department of Transportation, Coast Guard. Lighthouses and Lightships of the Northern Gulf of Mexico. 1976.

Numerous newspaper clippings on file in the Louisiana State Historic Preservation Office.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property approx. 2.4 acres

Quadrangle name Sabine Pass Quad.

Quadrangle scale 1" = 62500

UMT References

A

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

B

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G

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| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

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| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Zone | | Easting | | | | Northing | | | | | | | | |

Verbal boundary description and justification

Please refer to sketch map

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

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kirk Carney, Assistant Secretary, Office of State Parks, Department of Culture, Recreation, And Tourism, State of Louisiana

organization

date August 1981

street & number P.O. Drawer 1111

telephone 504-925-3830

city or town Baton Rouge

state LA 70821

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title Robert B. DeBlieux
State Historic Preservation Officer

date November 2, 1981

For NCRS use only

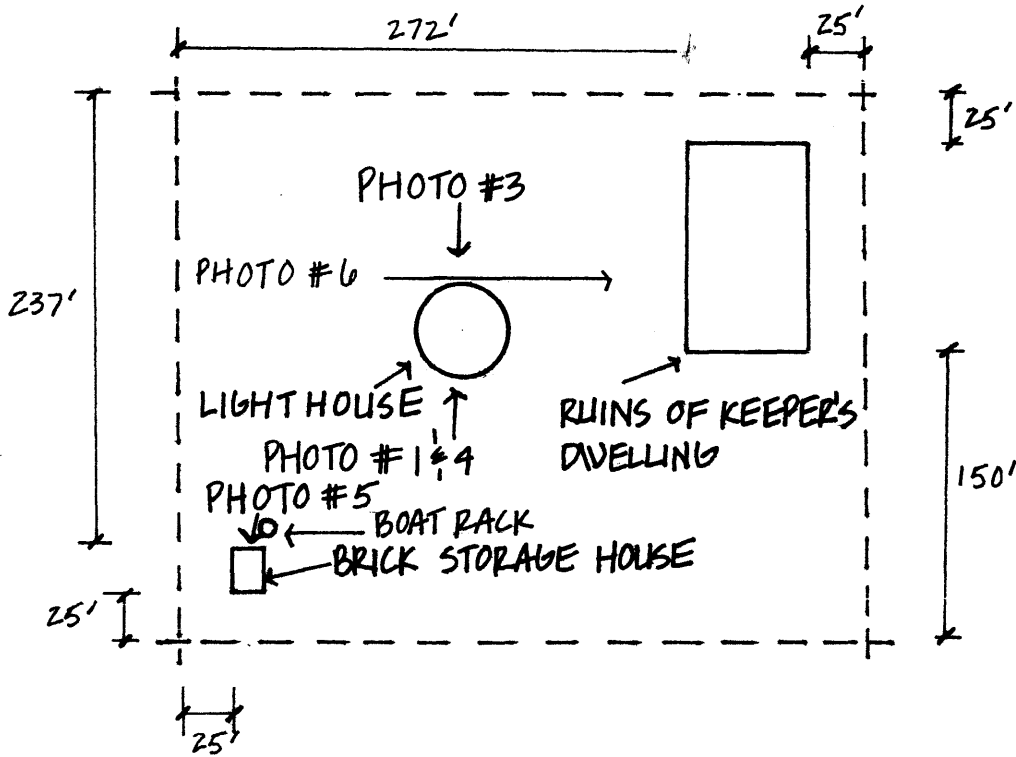
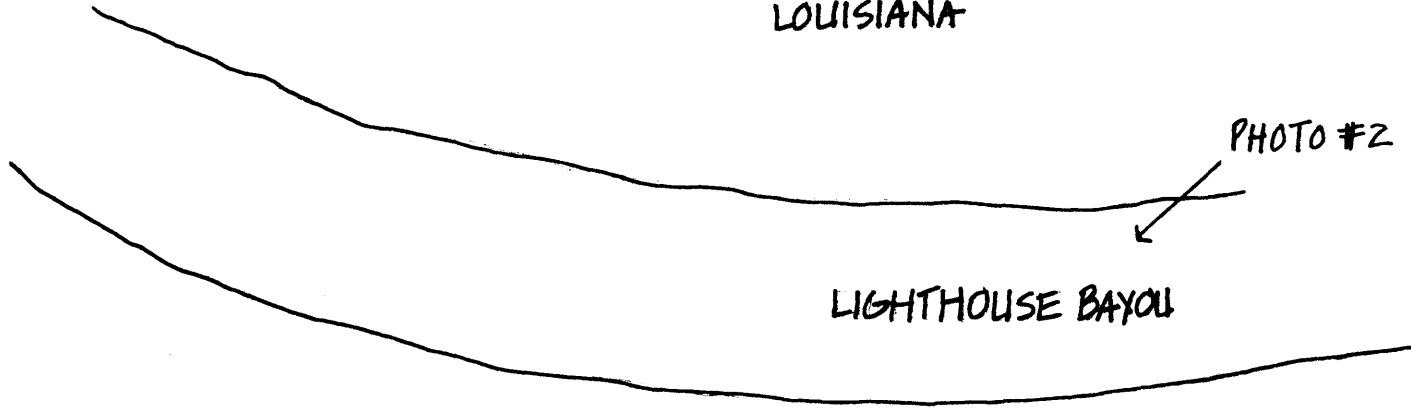
I hereby certify that this property is eligible for the National Register.

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

Chair of the National Register

SABINE PASS LIGHTHOUSE LOUISIANA

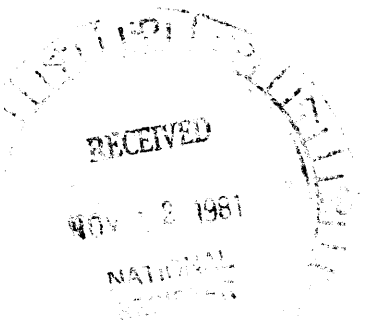


BOUNDARY LINES ARE PARALLEL TO BUILDING FACADES, DISTANCES AS SHOWN.

SCALE 1"=100'

N

DEC 17 1981



TO SABINE RIVER