

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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JUN 17 1980

DATE ENTERED

OCT 22 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 29/47

NAME: Historic: Faro del Puerto de Ponce
Common: Cayo Cardona Light

LOCATION: On Cardona Key on the west side of the entrance to Ponce Harbor on the south shore of Puerto Rico. On position 17° 57' 3" N - 66° 38' 08" W.

CLASSIFICATION: Unoccupied. Unrestricted access.

DESCRIPTION: Fair. Altered. Original site.

Cayo Cardona is located on a small 6 acre key west of Ponce Harbor. The light, built in 1889, guides the entrance to the Port of Ponce, as a 6th order red fixed light.

Structurally, it followed the same construction as three other minor lights on the south shore and south east shore: Punta Figuras, Punta Mulas, and Puerto Ferro. It lacks, though, the distinctive decorative elements of non-existing Punta Higuero or ruinous Guánica. Nevertheless, it possessed a charm of its own: a petite neo-classic symmetrically balanced official design.

Cayo Cardona's dwelling was designed of stone and brick for one 2nd class keeper. A 10 mt. circular tower was attached to its south facade. It is an approximately 16.2 x 10 x 5.5 mts. structure. Its main entrance is on the north facade which opened into a room arrangement similar to the other minor structures which will be described in further detail. The fact that no plans of this structure have been found, and that its interior has been closed off with cement makes it difficult to describe. Only secondary references, a late 19th century photo of the site, and official references to the similar or identical design of the minor lights allows a reserved description of this particular site.

The c. 1898 photo depicts a simple neo-classic building with a rather elaborate cornice and a simple roof parapet. Contrary to other minor lights, the tower is cylindrical, crowned by another cornice less elaborated than the dwelling's. It is mentioned that the structure was painted white and light blue.

The tower cast-iron stairway led to an octagonal glass, copper, and cast-iron lantern with vertical bars and a cast-iron balustrade surrounding an exterior cement gallery.

The original illuminating apparatus, still in use, is an 1888, 6th order fixed red lenticular Sautter, Lemonnier & Cie. lens. It is 30 cm. in diameter. The lens has 4 panels; 5 elements in each panel of the central drum; 5 prisms on each panel above the central drum and 2 below. It was held in place by a cast-iron pedestal. The original light was colored by a red chimney.

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The original light characteristics were modified in 1922 and 1938. In 1962 it was electrified and, apparently, unmanned.

SIGNIFICANCE: Together with Guánica Light it is the western minor light which connects Cabo Rojo and Isla Caja de Muertos Lights and guides the entrance to a port that, during the course of last century, exported millions of pounds of sugar particularly to the United States. Architecturally, it is significant that it is the only 6th order lighthouse with a cylindrical attached tower. Also, the original brick roof and firewood beams are practically intact.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA: Area nominated: 6 acres (the entire Cardona Key).
Boundary description: beginning at a cement monument marked "X" on the north shore of the Island and bearing S 14° 21' W from the center of lighthouse tower 181.9 ft; thence N 14° 21' E 15 ft to a point in the low water mark; thence following said low water line in a westerly, south westerly, south easterly, easterly, north easterly, westerly and S 14° 21' W 15 ft to the point of beginning.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS: v. attached pocket #8 "Cayo Cardona Light".
Enclosures are: Quadrangle; plan area nominated; c. 1898 photo; 1978 photos; original site drawings photos.