

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

Point Sur Light Station
historic name Point Sur Light Station
other names/site number

MAY 7 1990

2. Location

street & number (Morro Rock, located on Point Sur, 0.5 miles west of Hwy 1) Big Sur, 6 miles south.
city, town west of Hwy 1 Big Sur, 6 miles south.
state CA code CA county Monterey code 053 zip code 93940-1497
N/A not for publication
 vicinity

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
		Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	5	3 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district		sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	2	structures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure		objects
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	7	3 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Light Stations in California

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Kathryn Guatieri Signature of certifying official Date 11-5-90
California Office of Historic Preservation State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

John A. [Signature] Signature of commenting or other official Date 7/19/91
U.S. Department of Transportation State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. *Autewilletta [Signature]* 9/3/91
 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:)

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: water related.

Domestic: institutional housing.

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Transportation: water related.

Vacant.

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Renaissance

Other: Lighthouse

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone--Sandstone

walls Stone--Sandstone

roof Wood Shake

other Wood

Weatherboard

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Point Sur Light Station is located atop Morro Rock--a steep, island-like landform at the edge of the mainland beach. The lighthouse itself is located on a ledge 240' above the ocean. The other six major buildings of the station are grouped together nearby at the top of the 350' rock. The station's massive stone Romanesque buildings located at the top of the hill give the appearance of a medieval hilltop village when viewed from Highway 1. Point Sur is one of the most historically intact light stations in California and the West coast. All the original major buildings are extant. The architectural integrity of the complex is high as well. The integrity of the lighthouse itself is complete (except for the lens) and is in excellent repair. The only structures no longer standing are the landing and boat house at the base of the hill, and the incline railway used to transport supplies from the landing to the light station at the top of the hill.

1. LIGHT TOWER/FOG-SIGNAL/LAMP OIL ROOM (1889)--STRUCTURE:

The lighthouse, located at the edge of a 240' cliff overlooking the Pacific Ocean, is a striking example of a late 19th century Richardsonian Romanesque stone building. The central feature, the square lighthouse tower topped by its cylindrical lantern room, is 42' high. The lower portion of the light tower is cut stone (quarried on the site), with arched doorways and windows. Stone arches, keystones, and lintels are outstanding features, as is the ornamental dentil stonework cornice. The cylindrical iron, brass and glass lantern room sits atop the stone tower and contains an outside parapet gallery with an iron balustrade around its perimeter. A circular iron stairway provides access to the lantern room from the ground floor.

The one-and-a-half story fog-signal room, attached to the west side of the light tower, has an arched doorway with rectangular windows. Its peaked, gable roof is covered in red shake shingle. A single one story room, attached to the east side of the light tower contains the lamp oil room. The windows and roof in this room are identical to those of the fog-signal room. The entire sandstone structure is a single unit with the larger fog-signal room facing the sea and the smaller oil room tucked against the cliff. The architectural integrity of the structure is intact with the exception of the removal of the 1st order Fresnel lens in 1979.

2. KEEPER'S RESIDENCE (1889, 1902)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

A two story, rectangular building with a hip roof and central chimney. The first floor is constructed of the same dressed sandstone found on other buildings on the site. The dwelling was originally constructed in 1889 as a one story "hoist house" for the funicular railroad that terminated at the site. After construction of the wagon road in 1902, the funicular was abandoned and the hoist house was expanded into a dwelling. Historic photographs

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show the 1902 second story addition to be of a half-timber design. Today, the second story is covered in horizontal shiplap siding. Outstanding architectural features still existing include the Richardsonian stone arch entranceway, the stone arch window on the front facade, and the exposed joist ends between the first and second floors on the east and west facades. The interior contains many intact architectural features including wood panelling and a split run stairway with a massive carved wood balustrade and railing. A small shed roof laundry room has been added to the rear of the structure. Double windows are found on the east, south and west facades of the first level. The second story addition has one freestanding, double-hung window on the north, east and south facades, and two sets of paired, double-hung windows on the west side. All openings on the first floor are boarded over. The original doors and windows are still in place however. The entrance door has a semi-circular top with fourteen lights. The three lights on each side of the door complete the arch begun at the top. The exterior of the building is very solid; however, some repairs are needed on the interior.

3. ASSISTANT KEEPER'S DWELLING (1889)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

A two-and-a-half story, residential triplex built primarily of sandstone. The building's massive stone form and its decorative stone keystones and lintels place it stylistically with the other Richardsonian Romanesque sandstone structures on the site. However, there is no characteristic semi-circular arched entryway found in the others. There are additionally some Gothic features found in the building not shared with other station buildings. The steep roof, the irregular cross-gable plan, the tall brick chimneys and the building's general verticality would appear more comfortable on a 19th century Gothic structure. Three of the four chimneys are brick, the other is a metal cylinder. Wood dormers pierce the roof gables. The roof has red composition shingles in a diamond pattern. The east corner of the building contains a covered entry and sandstone entry steps. A double basement, also with walls of sandstone, was constructed under the building. Freestanding double-hung windows are found on each floor on each facade. The southwest and northeast facades contain symmetrical fenestration.

The architectural integrity of the building is mostly retained. However, a small wood frame, flat roofed, one-story addition and stairway have been added on the northwest corner and a tall, narrow, two story, wood frame addition has been added to the southwest corner. The interior of the building needs repairs in places, but much of the interior decoration and design is intact--including several Eastlake spindle fireplace mantels. The building is presently unoccupied.

4. BARN (1900)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

The barn is a large, rectangular, two story, wood frame building constructed to fit into the sloping hillside. Its hipped gable-end, shingle roof carries a cross gable on the northeastern side. This cross gable opens onto the roadway with a doorway to the upper level which consists of a single large room. This second floor was used as a recreation room. It has a green linoleum floor in fair condition. A door at the north end has been converted to a double-hung window. An additional double-hung window is found on the south

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side as well. Access to the attic is provided by ports in the recreation room ceiling. The first floor, downslope, was the large open area used to store animals. Fenestration on this level includes a large opening (formerly containing the barn door) and three small windows, now sealed, for stables originally on the lower level, and two larger window openings (also sealed) facing the ocean. The roof of the building consists of wood shingles stained dark red. The siding is horizontal weatherboard painted white. The foundation is wood piers on stone.

The architectural integrity of the structure is very good, although some modifications have been made over the years. Sometime around 1930 the interior of the barn was converted to two floors in order to create a second story storage/recreation room and a first floor garage. The original barn doors had access to a porch on the west side. These doors were replaced by a garage door, now also missing. The porch on the side is gone; only pier supports remain. The building is generally in good condition, although the southwest corner, next to the drop-off, is beginning to sag somewhat.

5. BLACKSMITH/CARPENTER'S SHOP (1900)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

The shop is a rectangular, one story, wood frame building surmounted by a hipped gable-end, shingle roof. The wood shingles have been stained dark red. There is no chimney, though there is a large fume hood in the ceiling inside the center of the building. The building has double doorways on the south side, off center, and windows on all four sides. The sides are sheathed with horizontal wood siding painted white. The foundation is concrete, poured over solid rock. There is no decoration or ornamentation on this utilitarian building.

The building retains most of its architectural integrity. The structural condition is very good although the interior floor needs repair.

6. OIL HOUSE (1920)--CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

The oil house is a small rectangular, one story, storage building located near the lighthouse at the 240' elevation level. Walls, floor, and roof are all made of concrete. The building contains a steel door and one window. The roof is flat.

The architectural integrity of the building is complete. The condition of the building is good, although paint and cosmetic repairs are needed.

7. CISTERN (1888)--CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURE:

The cistern is a cement plastered brick structure with a capacity for 69,800 gallons of water. The visible dome projecting above the ground is painted white. The structure is in very good condition, although some cracks are noticeable. The cistern was last used in 1975.

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8. BARRACKS (c. 1940)--NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

This one story, rectangular, cinder-block building was built as a barracks in World War II. It is non-contributing due to its recent construction and character.

9. PUMP HOUSE (c. 1940)--NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

This small, one room, wood frame structure was constructed during World War II. It is a non-contributing building due to its recent construction and character.

10. GARAGE (1930'S-40'S?)--NON-CONTRIBUTING BUILDING:

This one story, wood frame, shed structure is located next to the Assistant Keeper's quarters and was used to store two automobiles. It is a non-contributing building due to its recent construction and character. It also does not contribute to Point Sur's significance of being a self-sufficient, late 19th century/early 20th century light station.

The Point Sur Light Station consists of two contributing structures, five contributing buildings and three non-contributing buildings.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Maritime History
Transportation
Architecture
Commerce

Period of Significance

1889-1940

Significant Dates

1889

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Point Sur Light Station meets the requirements for registration as defined in the multiple property submission "Light Stations in California." The station's significance is evaluated with respect to the historic context Maritime Transportation in California: 1842-1940. The station derives significance under Criteria A and C. Criteria A is satisfied by the association of the complex with California's critical reliance on maritime transportation and the aids that made navigation possible. Criteria C is met by the large number of well designed, original buildings remaining in an unaltered state. When viewed together, the complex gives an accurate portrayal of the design and construction of a late 19th century California light station. The three sandstone buildings--built from rock quarried on the site--further represent a fine example of late 19th century Romanesque architecture. Point Sur is one of only several light stations on the West Coast to contain all of its significant original buildings.

The station fully meets registration requirements for its property type. It contains an intact lighthouse tower and associated historical buildings. The Point Sur Station, in fact, greatly exceeds registration requirements: Its intact, well constructed tower is designed to hold a 1st order Fresnel lens, all of the original station buildings are present, and the architectural integrity of almost every structure is complete (or nearly so). The seven historic buildings remaining at Point Sur represent the necessary structures to complete a late 19th century/early 20th century light station. These include: lighthouse and fog-signal, Keeper's quarters, Assistant Keeper's quarters, carpenter and blacksmith shop, barn, oil house, cistern. There is only one modern, non-contributing, major building on the site and it is located to the rear of the historic buildings (two minor non-contributing buildings are also located nearby). The station's location at the top of a steep rock "island" at the edge of the mainland beach gives cohesiveness to the station's buildings. The only original structures no longer standing are the landing wharf and boathouse, both located at the bottom of the rock and technically not part of the light station operations at the top of the hill.

The Point Sur Lighthouse was established to aid maritime traffic along the Central California Coast. Point Sur was an important departure point for ships travelling between San Francisco and points south. Until its construction in 1889 there was no lighthouse between Piedras Blancas and Monterey, a distance of 60 miles. The lighthouse additionally warned mariners of nearby reefs, offshore boulders, and swift currents. In 1873 the SS Los Angeles broke up in the surf at Point Sur.

Two years later the vessel Ventura wrecked

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at the same location, spilling a cargo of silks, linens, farming tools and wagon parts. These, and a series of less spectacular wrecks, prompted the federal government to establish a lighthouse and fog-signal at Point Sur. Constructing the station on a 300' high, sheer cliff rock, proved to be a massive undertaking. All equipment and supplies had to be brought in by surf and eventually hauled up to the top of the rock. Sites for the major buildings had to be blasted out of rock. A quarry was established to provide stone for the buildings. An incline railroad carried material from the landing to the top of the site.

The particular significance of the individual structures and buildings on the site are as follows:

LIGHTHOUSE TOWER/FOG-SIGNAL BUILDING (1889)

The lighthouse tower is of significance as the principal element of the light station. Attached to it is the fog-signal building and the lamp oil room. The structure fully meets requirements of its property type; it is a substantial structure built to contain a Fresnel lens (in this case 1st order) and its architectural integrity is complete (except for the lens). The structure is similar to many other lighthouses built in California, but in many ways it is unique as well. Its squat shape together with its large 1st order lens categorize it with the other major California lighthouses built on major headlands along the coast. This was a building type well suited to California's harborless shoreline. Outside the state few lighthouses were built in this configuration. The Point Sur light is unique in California, however, in that it is built in the Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style. This style was no doubt chosen because the only available building material at this inaccessible location was sandstone quarried on the site. Richardsonian Romanesque was the currently fashionable building style for stone buildings of the time. Many such public buildings (including lighthouses) remain in the East and Midwest--less so in California. It is interesting to observe that the strong winds and isolation of Point Sur have preserved the pristine golden color of the sandstone while most other Richardsonian Romanesque buildings in other locations have suffered the ravages of air pollution to one degree or another.

KEEPER'S QUARTERS (1889)

The Keeper's quarters is significant as a contributing element of the light station complex. The building meets the requirements for registration of its property type. The building was built in two stages. It was first constructed as the "hoist house" to the station's funicular railway in 1889. When the wagon road to the top of the hill was completed in 1902 the funicular was abandoned. A second story was added to this substantial and architecturally distinguished structure and the use was changed to "Keeper's quarters." The exterior therefore is composed of two portions: the first story, stone, Richardsonian Romanesque structure, similar in style to the other 1889 stone buildings on the site (i.e. tower, Assistant Keeper's house, etc.) and the top, wood frame story, simpler and similar in style to the other buildings on the site built at the turn of the century (i.e. barn, shop). The architectural integrity is complete except for the

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addition of a small laundry room at the rear of the building. Outstanding architectural features include the Richardsonian Romanesque arches over the recessed entryway and front window, and the exposed joist ends between the first and second floors. Like the design of the lighthouse, the Richardsonian Romanesque features of this building are unique in California light station construction. Although the interior of the structure has been remodeled somewhat over the years (mostly in the kitchen and bathroom), it still contains many outstanding architectural features intact from the 1889 and 1902 construction periods.

ASSISTANT KEEPER'S QUARTERS (1889)

The Assistant Keeper's quarters is significant as a contributing element of the light station complex. The building meets the requirements for registration of its property type. The Assistant Keeper's quarters is the third stone building in the station built in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. Unlike the others, however, there are some Gothic features found throughout the building. The steep roof, the irregular cross-gable plan, the tall brick chimneys, and the building's general verticality all would be suitable features found on a Victorian Gothic building of about the same time period. A number of Gothic Keeper's houses were built in California and throughout the country.

This building was built as a triplex for the Keeper's family and two Assistant Keepers' families. When the hoist house was converted to the primary Keeper's quarters in 1902 another Assistant Keeper was employed at the station. The importance of the station is reflected in having four personnel to man the operations and in having such substantial, well designed living quarters for the families.

Most of the architectural integrity of this building has been retained. However, a small, wood frame, flat roofed, one story addition and stairway have been added on the northwest corner and a tall, narrow, two story, wood frame addition has been added to the southwest corner. The interior of the building needs repair in places, but much of the interior decoration and design is intact; including several Eastlake spindle fireplace mantels.

BARN (1900)

The barn is significant as a contributing element of the light station complex. It meets requirements for registration of its property type. Barns were an important component of isolated light station complexes. Today, very few of them remain.

Until 1919 there were no connecting roads to Carmel from Point Sur. Barnyard animals (together with vegetable gardens) provided a significant portion of the light Keepers' diets. At Point Sur the Keepers continued to keep cows long after commercial milk deliveries became available. Sometime in the 1930's, however, the need for a double garage became more important than the need for fresh milk and the barn became used to store cars instead of cows. This was accomplished primarily by installing plywood garage doors in place of the barn door. With a new, clean use on the ground floor a flooring was added in the loft to create an upstairs recreation room.

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Sometime between 1935 and the present the side porch that extended over the cliff was removed. This may have occurred at the time of conversion from a barn or it may have been the result of a more recent erosion in the side of the hill. Aside from these aforementioned modifications, the barn retains most of its original turn-of-the-century appearance.

BLACKSMITH/CARPENTER'S SHOP (1900)

The blacksmith/carpenter's shop is significant as a contributing element of the light station. It meets requirements for registration of its property type. Carpenter and blacksmith shops were important components of 19th century/early 20th century light stations--especially in the more remote locations like Point Sur. Few such shops remain in existence today. Point Sur's blacksmith/carpenter's shop retains most of its architectural integrity and the exterior condition of the structure is very good.

OIL HOUSE (1920)

The oil house is significant as a contributing element of the light station. It meets requirements for registration of its property type. It is structurally similar to the other light station oil houses built in the early 20th century. Its fireproof concrete and iron construction and its unadorned design reflects its utilitarian purpose. Like oil houses at other light stations it is located near enough to the lighthouse to be convenient, but far enough away to avoid hazards. The architectural integrity of the Point Sur oil house appears complete.

CISTERN (1888)

The cistern is significant as a contributing element of the light station. It meets requirements for registration of its property type. Its condition is very good and its integrity is complete. This structure is additionally significant because it predates the construction of the station by one year. It was built in 1888 to supply water for the year long construction effort of the station.

Since its establishment in 1890 this station has had continual importance and significance. Significance has not been shown to be exceptional in the last 50 years, however, although the light station continues to play a role in maritime transportation and navigation.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Woodward, Jim. California Department of Parks and Recreation. Historic Structure and Archeological Survey of Point Sur Sun-State Historic Park. Sacramento: July 1987.
California Department of Parks and Recreation. The History of Big Sur. Sacramento: 1986.
U.S. Lighthouse Board, Annual Report, various dates.
Gibbs, Jim. West Coast Lighthouses. Seattle: 1974.
Holland, F. Ross. Americas Lighthouses, Their Illustrated History Since 1716. Brattleboro: 1972.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 37 acres

UTM References

A

1	0
5	9
8	6
2	6

4	0
1	8
3	8
5	5

Zone Easting Northing

C

1	0
5	9
8	9
0	0

4	0
1	7
9	2
5	5

B

1	0
5	9
9	1
0	0

4	0
1	8
1	2
5	5

Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

Approximately 52 acres at Big Sur were granted by the federal government to the state in 1984 "for public park and public recreation purposes." The land now owned by the state includes 27 acres of Morro Rock. The federal government retained ownership of 2 parcels on the hill for continued use by the U.S. Coast Guard. The northern 10 acres of the promontory, including the lighthouse and oil house, were reserved for continual operation of the lighthouse.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Point Sur Light Station embraces the buildings and immediate setting historically associated with the complex.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jack Bookwalter

organization Sonoma State University date October 6, 1989

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city or town Santa Rosa state CA zip code 95407

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Point Sur Light Station
6 miles south of Big Sur, CA
Monterey County

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