

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JUN 17 1980

DATE ENTERED OCT 22 1981

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 35/47

NAME: Historic: Faro de Punta de la Tuna
Common: Punta Tuna Light

LOCATION: On Point Tuna, south easterly point of Puerto Rico, easterly side of Port Maunabo. On position 17° 59.4' N - 65° 53.1' W.

CLASSIFICATION: Occupied. Restricted access.

DESCRIPTION: Very good condition. Altered. Original site.

It was constructed in 1893 as a 3rd order lighthouse that showed a white light with a group of two flashes. It served as the most eastern primary light that terminated the Island's southern light belt, and at the same time, was the southern light that formed the Island's eastern light belt. This was formed by another primary light, Cabo San Juan, and 3 minor lights (Puerto Ferro, Punta Mulas, and Isla Culebrita). The structure, built around the tower, was the dwelling for one 1st class and a 3rd class keeper. The main entrance of the brick and stone building, 27.7 x 12.4 x 5.5 mts., faces east. The interior responds to the already described arrangements: originally, it opened directly into a vestibule, 6.2 x 4.65 mts., where the entrance to the tower is found. (A small hall at the entrance was built afterwards, perhaps in the 1950's). At both sides of the vestibule there were two corridors: one led to the storeroom that connected with the oil room behind the tower; another led into the engineer's room. The vestibule also connected both keeper's quarters, which were identical: one 4.65 x 4.65 living room, one 3.6 x 4.65 mts. dorm and another 3.46 x 4.65 mts.; one small 3.2 x 1.9 storeroom; one kitchen-dining area 3.6 x 3 mts, and the bathroom 1.5 x 3.6 mts.

The octagonal tower's base is a square 3.9 mts. It opens to a 2.5 mts in diameter cast-iron winding stairway that goes 14.5 mts. up to a cast-iron, copper, and glass 3rd order lantern. The tower has a cement gallery with a cast-iron balustrade.

The original illuminating lenticular lens, still in use, is a Barbier, Bernard & Cie. 1891 3rd order flashing instrument with 1 mt. in diameter. The lens has 6 flashing panels. Each panel in the central drum has 7 elements. Each panel above the central drum has 11 prisms and 4 below. The flashes are produced by the entire revolving lens.

The original clock work was a revolving mechanism in use until 1939. The original ball bearing mechanism was changed in 1927 for a semicircular groove raceway. The clock cord descended through the iron column in the center of the tower's stairway. It had a 200 lb. weight.

Surprisingly, the original lantern and cast-iron balustrade, lens, parts of the revolving mechanism, clock work and cord, clock weight

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are in situ. Furthermore, the clock work is in working condition including the ball and friction governor. Also, most of the original wood work in the interior of structure, excluding beams and windows, are the original ones.

The alterations done to the building are almost identical to those at Cabo Rojo and Cabo San Juan. Changes in light characteristics were made in 1914, 1927, 1935, 1964, and 1970 when light range was increased to 25 miles.

The decorative elements in the gray and white structure once more respond to neo-classicism: proportionate, unelaborate cornice, and a plain pediment. The most striking decoration is the tower's bracketed cornice. The stark building dramatically contrasts with its lush tropical surrounding. The lighthouse is positioned in the tip of a rock which cliffs plunge into the sea from 22 mts. The Caribbean Sea embraces the rock and its structure at west, south, and east.

SIGNIFICANCE: The light signals the most south-eastern point of Puerto Rico. Architecturally and mechanically it almost remains as originally built. And, considering its natural multi-faceted scenario, makes it a unique site within the actual system.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA: Area nominated: 4.5 acres. Boundary description: beginning at a point N 13° 30' E 100 ft from NE corner of dwelling; thence N 14° W 335 ft to a point; thence N 50° 15' W 144 ft to a point; thence S 66° 30' W 285 ft to a stone; thence S 66° 30' W 125 ft to high water mark; thence along high water mark SE to end of point; thence along high water mark to point of beginning.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS: v. attached pocket #11 "Punta Tuna Light".
Enclosures are: Quadrangle; plan area nominated; c. 1898 photo; 1978 photos; blue copies original site drawings; alterations' drawings.