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FILE NO. 207

REPORT OF INSPECTION OF
CABRILLO NATIONAL MONUMENT

Sept. 11 to 15, 1934

By

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Branch of Plans and Design

B&W Scans

4-28-2005

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ARNO B. CAMMERER,
Director.

ON MICROFILM

Office of Chief, Western Division
Branch of Plans and Design
San Francisco, Calif.
September 26, 1934

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN
SAN FRANCISCO

September 26, 1934

The Director
National Park Service
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Director:

In accordance with your memorandum of August 26, written while you were at Zion National Park, regarding the desirability of an early inspection and furthering of the plans for Cabrillo National Monument, I have the following to report.

On September 9 at the close of a trip on which I had accompanied Chief Architect Vint to Yosemite, General Grant, and Sequoia National Parks, I took with me RCN Landscape Architect H. C. Fowler and proceeded to San Diego, Mr. James S. Langdon having come from San Francisco to Los Angeles and joined us there. We arrived in San Diego Tuesday afternoon, September 11, and remained there until the morning of Saturday, September 15. During this time we spent most of the time at Cabrillo National Monument, taking measurements, photographs and making rough sketch plans, and at the same time attempting each day to contact a few of the individuals and organizations interested in the monument. Mr. John Davidson, curator of a Junipero Serra museum, and his wife, Mrs. Winifred Davidson, Historian for the San Diego Historical Society, were contacted several times and rendered us constant assistance in matters of securing historical data, early photographs, contacting interested individuals, and talking with the son and niece of one of the early lighthouse keepers. Senator Wright entertained us at lunch at the Cuyamaca Club at which Mr. John Davidson was also present and discussed the various efforts and lines of thought put forth by San Diego individuals for the development of the monument and offered every assistance from the local groups.

Mr. Guy Fleming of the California Division of Parks unfortunately met with an automobile accident the evening of our arrival in San Diego and was unable to accompany us to the monument. However, I talked with Mr. Fleming at his home at "Terry Pines" on Friday, September 14, at which time he offered valuable suggestions as to the suitable plant materials for use at Cabrillo and volunteered every cooperation from the State Park organization.

Mr. P. T. Prinn, one of Mr. Merriam's inspectors for State Park work in Southern California, accompanied us to the monument on one occasion and we found that his ideas for the development of the area coincided very closely to what we had in mind.

At the time of our arrival there, Colonel Ruhlen, Post Commander at Fort Rosecrans, was absent on vacation and Lieutenant Griffin was contacted and offered his assistance and lent us a survey rod. Colonel Ruhlen returned to San Diego before our departure and was contacted at Fort Rosecrans.

We visited the office of the California Division of Highways and the San Diego Chamber of Commerce on one occasion each. There were other individuals that have expressed interest in the development at Cabrille and because of the necessity for spending most of the daylight hours taking measurements at the lighthouse, we were unable to spend more time in contacting these.

The Old Spanish Lighthouse.

Measurements were taken of the old lighthouse from which Mr. Langdon is now working up complete measured drawings which will serve a two-fold purpose: (1) the basis for preparation of plans for repairs and alterations to the lighthouse to insure its proper preservation, and (2) to add this interesting building to the collection of drawings prepared under the Historic American Building Survey. Plans and data were taken in accordance with the procedure and methods adapted for the Historic American Building Survey program. The lighthouse has undergone many changes from its original state. From early photographs and reports of the Lighthouse Service we were able to visualize very closely how the original building looked. In addition to alterations made by a succession of lighthouse keepers, the building has suffered much from the carving of initials and other minor offenses by the visiting public.

The following brief description will give you a fairly complete picture of the present condition of the structure.

(a) Basement. The basement was excavated to give 6 feet of head-room in the clear. The original basement floor was of Mexican tiles brought from a nearby fort and later replaced by concrete which is now largely crumbled away. The floor joists are 3 x 8 and placed 16 inches on center and are in sound condition. The sub-flooring is of rough 1 inch boards, laid diagonal, and because of their variety of widths (8, 10, 12, 14 and 16 inches), I am inclined to believe they are the original boards, as that variety of lumber is not now easily available. The basement walls are of the original cut sandstone and have undergone several plastering jobs. The plaster is now in poor condition and should be removed so that several of the original sandstone blocks can be replaced. The foundation requires a small amount of repairs in three places. The basement is now closed to the public and is reached either through the outside stairs (visible in the photographs) or by means of the spiral stairway which extends from the tower to the basement. In the basement walls, as in other parts of the building, there are electric conduits installed by the army during the War at which time the lighthouse was used as a signal station. These conduits are so rusted as to be past their serviceability, and should be moved and the entire lighthouse rewired for electric service.

(b) First Floor. The floor boards are of 1 x 5 T&G flooring in fair condition. In the ultimate restoration of the lighthouse to its original condition, this flooring should be replaced by random width boards, such as were used in the 1850's.

All doors, windows, and woodwork are in poor condition and not of the original type. These should all be replaced, including 12 light window sash, the present sash being 4 light type which have, in recent years, replaced the original sash.

The interior finish of walls and ceilings has undergone several states of development, the walls having suffered greatly from the carvings and writing of names and initials. It is in poor condition which would warrant the removal of all plaster, leaving furring strips, and the replacement with a rough trowel finish.

The first floor consists of two large rooms, a small interior hall and the spiral stairway to basement and to upstairs tower. At the south end of the building there is a fireplace on both the first and second floors of which indoor photographs are attached.

The south end is now devoted to the selling of post cards, curios, and confections. A discussion with the niece and son of one of the early lighthouse keepers brought out the fact that, in the early days, the lighthouse keeper's wife sold shells, moss baskets and photographs in this room, so that its present use seems to be that to which it was formerly devoted.

The north room on the first floor was used at various times as the dining room and as a bed room. It contains a flue which is in need of repairs and around which there are evidences of several fires. As with the rest of the building, these rooms should be rewired for future electric service.

(c) Second Floor. In fairly recent times, the walls and ceiling of both upstairs rooms have been done over in 1" x 6" panelling, as shown in one of the interior photographs attached. The son of one of the early lighthouse keepers stated that while he lived there as a boy, his father did these walls and ceilings over with wall paper mounted on muslin cloth.

The two main rooms each contain a window, as shown in the end elevation photographs and the south room a fireplace, also shown in photograph.

Directly opposite the spiral stairs to the front of the second story, there is a small room which was used by the watchmen on duty while the light was burning. This room was sealed in about four years ago, and should be reopened.

(d) The Tower. The tower is reached to within six feet of the top by means of the spiral stairway. From that point on, a ladder-like flight of steep wooden steps lead through a 24" x 30" trap door and into the tower.

Except for the roof, the present tower retains little of its original likeness. Panels and sash differing from the original have been installed all around the 10-sided tower. Early photographs will enable duplication of the original type. The metal framework of the tower is the original installation, and in need of scraping, painting and some repairs. The observation platform has a metal floor, cast in 10 pieces to form a circle. Action of fog, salt breezes and general deteriorating effects of time have rusted the platform badly. It would need replacing, together with a new hand-railing, if the public is to be allowed access to it.

(e) Miscellaneous. The present roof is of shingle. Copy of the original specifications of the Treasury Department state the roof was of tin, painted red. Similar but more lasting effect could be gained by replacing the present shingle roof (which is in poor condition) with one of flat galvanized iron, properly painted.

Minor repairs are needed about the top of both chimneys.

The front porch and steps are at present of wood. The original plan had a flight of stone steps leading straight down from the front door.

The Grounds.

The present extent of the monument is approximately three quarters of an acre.

Some thirty years after the lighthouse was built, the basement cistern which stored the roof run-off having proved an insufficient water supply, the entire front yard of the lighthouse was paved with concrete as a watershed, which drained into two large underground cisterns. The concrete watershed is virtually all crumbled away, and it is proposed to clean up the debris, and preserve one of the cisterns (the lower one, to which the pump was attached) as a matter of historical interest.

It is proposed to surround the edge of the property with a low masonry wall to match the excellent one installed around the edge of the loop road by the State highway department. The wall would be 9" high and 18" wide, and 645 feet long. It would serve to prevent further sloughing of the earth banks into the highway drainage ditch, and allow planting to stabilize the decomposed sandstone of which the ground at this point is composed.

The ground surrounding the lighthouse needs clearing of rubbish, some regnading, and planting in native trees and shrubs to prevent the sand from blowing away. Pockets would have to be dug for the plants and some top soil hauled in.

The most suitable development seems to be an informal one, consisting of necessary paths, planting, view-terraces and a place for future commemorative plaque to Juan Cabrillo.

Water Supply.

There is great need for a water supply at the monument, for drinking and sanitation purposes. There is at present a 1" water line running under the road, which serves the army search light nearby. The army officials stated this yielded only a trickle of water. The pipe connects with a 4" water line approximately 4800 feet north of the light house, adjacent to the highway. It would entail further study to know whether it is more advisable to run a larger pipe line from the 4" line to the monument, or to install a tank and booster pump near the light house and utilize the present 1" pipe line. The source of supply for these water lines is through Fort Rosecrans and to the City of San Diego water mains.

Maps also show power and telephone cables to be located underground near the lighthouse, and these could be tapped to serve the monument.

Sanitation.

There exist no sanitary facilities at the monument. While working at the monument on a week day afternoon, in the course of one hour eight persons asked me about comfort station facilities. This serves to illustrate the acute need of same.

The monument area is so small there is no place to place comfort stations thereon without detracting materially from the appearance of the lighthouse itself. A review of all possible sites showed the best one to be west of the lighthouse, below the highway guard wall, which would be below the horizon from the monument, while actually only 80 feet from the lighthouse. A small level spot already exists suitable for it. We propose a double comfort station, with steps leading from either end, up to the road, cutting through the encircling wall.

The proposed location is outside present boundaries, and entails either extension of boundaries or a working agreement with the War Department.

Parking Areas.

Present parking is along either side to the State highway encircling the monument, which constitutes its south terminus. Just south of the monument is a large flat knoll adequate to park several hundred cars. The War Department is agreeable to part of this being used for parking, and propose to develop it as an S.E.R.A. project. Colonel Ruhlson has requested Superintendent White to furnish posts from Sequoia National Park to fence in the parking area. The War Department has certain defence facilities in the hill beyond this point and desire to restrict the area open to the public.

Monument Boundaries.

The present monument boundaries were arbitrarily set some years ago when a society desired space to erect a commemorative shaft or memorial to Juan Cabrillo. This was long before the area came under the National Park Service and bears no relationship to its development as a National Monument. In providing the essential public facilities to serve a large visiting public, it is going to be necessary to utilize so much area outside the monument boundaries for such things as parking areas, water tank and comfort stations, that some consideration should be given to the desirability of requesting an extension of the boundaries.

Prints are attached hereto showing existing boundaries and suggested boundaries sufficient to allow for anticipated needed development.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

In view of the possibility of performing certain improvement work at Cabrillo National Monument through the use of a stub CCC camp from the State Park camp at Guaymas, I have endeavored to pick out certain improvement projects suited to ECW labor and within usual ECW appropriation limitations. This will not, to any great extent, obviate the work outlined in the Six Year Outline submitted by Superintendent White on June 1. I feel that the amounts set forth are very accurate estimates of the amounts needed to bring the monument into good, usable condition.

For instance, it would certainly require \$8,000 to \$10,000 to put the lighthouse in first-class shape. Within ECW building allotment limitations of \$1,500 we would only do the more outstanding repair work needed to put it in safe and usable condition.

The work is on such a limited area that I would suggest a stub camp of not over 30 men, which would release an actual working crew of possibly 24 men. Moreover, the work would have to be more fully and carefully supervised than in the usual stub camp.

1. Repairs to Lighthouse Materials \$1,000 Supervision \$500

This project would include the more acutely needed repairs, including some sash, woodwork, plastering, foundation repairs, roof and chimney work.

2. Landscaping Materials \$ 600 Supervision \$200

Includes purchase of some native trees and shrubs from nurseries, transplanting trees from other areas and hauling in of top soil for planting pockets.

3. Grading, Walks, Walls. Materials \$4,000 Supervision \$1,000

This item includes 645 feet of low retaining walls around monument, regrading of area, and installation of foot paths.

4. Comfort Station.

Materials \$1,300 Supervision \$200

The most acutely needed facility at the monument.

5. Water System.

Materials \$3,000 Supervision \$1,000

To provide drinking fountains, water for sprinkling, water for comfort station facilities.

6. Sewer System.

Materials \$4,000 Supervision \$1,000

To provide sewage disposal from comfort stations.

Other future development such as picnic areas, I would leave for the future, pending possible extension of boundaries, as the present area provides no possibility of picnicking.

There is so much work needed on the lighthouse, that it should be kept in mind for any possible future Public Works or other building funds.

It is urgently requested that all possible aid be given to securing the stub camp for this monument, as the Exposition to be held in San Diego will bring tens of thousands of visitors to the area, and present facilities are entirely inadequate for even the normal number of visitors. The interest of the San Diego people in developing this area is unsurpassed by any I have yet encountered.

Respectfully submitted

W. G. Carnes
Chief, Western Division

cc Chief Architect
Supt. John R. White
BOW Lands. Arch. Fowler

WGC:MFW



North elevation of Lighthouse.
Outside stairs to basement may be seen at
lower right-hand corner of building.



South elevation of "Old Spanish Lighthouse."
Note amount of old advertising and
initial carving to be removed.



East elevation of "Old Spanish Lighthouse".
The wooden porch and steps should be replaced
by stone steps. In the foreground are remnants
of the concrete watershed which once covered
the entire front yard.

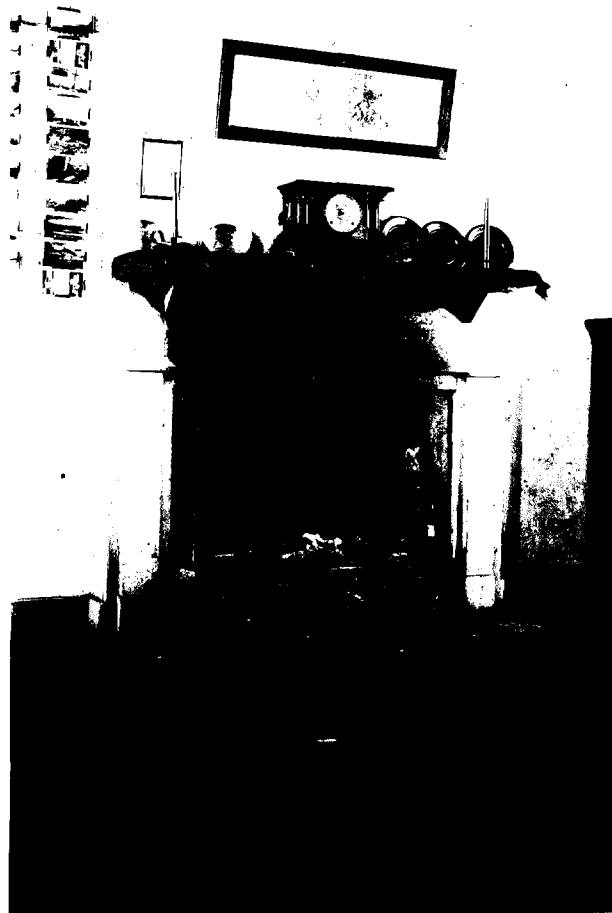


West elevation of Lighthouse.

The wall shows marks of where the old kitchen lean-to joined the main building. The close proximity of the State Highway (visible in lower part of picture) makes it inadvisable to attempt restoration of the kitchen.



Close-up of photo of the outside stairway
to basement, located at northwest corner
of building.



The first floor fireplace, in the south room. This room devoted to sale of pictures, souvenirs and confections. It was so used by the wife of one of the early lighthouse keepers.



The second floor fireplace, located in the south room. Note the badly defaced walls and ceiling.

