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

---

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Cape Spencer Lighthouse

AND/OR COMMON

---

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

---

CITY, TOWN

Yakutat

---

VICINITY OF Cape Spencer

---

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

---

STATE

Alaska

---

CODE

230 (Skagway-Yakutat Southeast Alaska)

---

COUNTY

230

---

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>PRESENT USE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>—DISTRICT</em></td>
<td><em>PUBLIC</em></td>
<td><em>OCCUPIED</em></td>
<td><em>AGRICULTURE</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>—BUILDING(S)</em></td>
<td><em>PRIVATE</em></td>
<td><em>UNOCCUPIED</em></td>
<td><em>COMMERCIAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>STRUCTURE</em></td>
<td><em>BOTH</em></td>
<td><em>WORK IN PROGRESS</em></td>
<td><em>EDUCATIONAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>SITE</em></td>
<td><em>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</em></td>
<td><em>ACCESSIBLE</em></td>
<td><em>ENTERTAINMENT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>OBJECT</em></td>
<td><em>IN PROCESS</em></td>
<td><em>YES: RESTRICTED</em></td>
<td><em>GOVERNMENT</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>BEING CONSIDERED</em></td>
<td><em>YES: UNRESTRICTED</em></td>
<td><em>INDUSTRIAL</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>NO</em></td>
<td><em>TRANSPORTATION</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

United States Coast Guard/17th District

---

STREET & NUMBER

Federal Building

---

CITY, TOWN

Juneau 99801

---

STATE

Alaska

---

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

United States Coast Guard/17th District

---

STREET & NUMBER

Federal Building

---

CITY, TOWN

Juneau 99801

---

STATE

Alaska

---

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey

---

DATE

1970

---

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 323 East 4th Avenue

---

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

---

STATE

Alaska

---

Senators: Mike Gravel/Ted Stevens

Congressman: Don Young
### DESCRIPTION

**CONDITION**

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR

**CHECK ONE**

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- FAIR

**CHECK ONE**

- DETERIORATED
- RUINS
- UNEXPOSED

- UNALTERED
- ALTERED

- ORIGINAL SITE
- ORIGINAL SITE
- MOVED

---

**DESCRIPT THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Cape Spencer Light Station is located on the outermost large islet south of Cape Spencer, Southeast Alaska. On concrete foundations, the light and fog-signal building is a one-story, rectangular, reinforced concrete structure (51' x 62') with a square, concrete tower (14' x 14') and lantern rising 25 feet above the center of the flat roof. The lantern is circular with diamond-shaped glass panes. The light and fog-signal building also provided quarters for keepers. The lighthouse structure has never been rebuilt, and remains on its original site.

Other structures at the station included a steel derrick and gasoline hoist; one small air hoist; a wooden boathouse with a medium hipped roof; blacksmith shop; a landing platform; fuel cylinders; and a tramway leading from the lighthouse to the landing platform. Most of these structures still remain on the rock.

Originally, the lighthouse displayed a flashing white light (110,000 c.p.) about 105 feet above water. The intensity of the light was later increased to 200,000 candlepower; and still later, to 500,000 candlepower. The station also included a radiobeacon with a range of 200 miles or more.
Marking the entrance to Cross Sound, the Cape Spencer Light Station was an important navigational aid on the Southeast-Southcentral Alaska shipping lanes. The light station was also the first in Alaska with radiobeacon facilities. A significant structure in the history of Alaska commerce, transportation, and communications, the Cape Spencer lighthouse should be entered on the National Register of Historic Places.

As early as 1903 commercial interests and officers of the Lighthouse Service recommended a light and fog-signal station at Cape Spencer with the justification that the bulk of Alaska commerce was moving westward through Cross Sound. As vessels were often forced to wait until storms and fogs subsided before entering the sound, it was imperative that a light and fog-signal station be established at Cape Spencer. However, it was not until 1923 that Congress finally approved the establishment of the Cape Spencer Light Station and appropriated funds for construction.

In May 1924 construction of the station began. Due to weather conditions and the problems of landing supplies and materials on the rock, construction was slowed considerably. The station was lighted for the first time on December 11, 1925. About six months later a radiobeacon -- the first in Alaska -- was placed in operation at the station, ready at any time to guide vessels into Cross Sound.

The Cape Spencer Light Station still functions as an important navigational aid in Alaska. Due to rising maintenance costs, however, the keepers were removed and the station automated in 1974.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Alaska Division of Parks, Aids to Navigation in Alaska History. Anchorage: Alaska Division of Parks, 1974. (pamphlet)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY __1__

UTM REFERENCES

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Rock islet, approx. 1 acre, southern approach to Cross Sound

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

FORM PREPARED BY

C. M. Brown, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

STREET & NUMBER

323 E. 4th Avenue

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska

DATE

March 11, 1975

TELEPHONE

274-4676

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 National Park Service.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

DATE 9/20/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 12/14/75

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 11/26/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
**1 NAME**

**HISTORIC** Cape Spencer Lighthouse

**AND/OR COMMON**

**2 LOCATION**

Cape Spencer, south islet entrance to Cross Sound, Icy Straits

**CITY, TOWN**

X VICINITY OF Glacier Bay

**COUNTY** Skagway-Yakutat Divis. National Monument

**STATE** Alaska

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

**PHOTO CREDIT** U. S. Coast Guard

17th Coast Guard District, Fed. Bldg.

**DATE OF PHOTO** N.D.

NEGATIVE FILED AT Juneau, Alaska 99801

(probably after 1971)

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Aerial view of all features, facing Northwesterly

**PHOTO NO.** AK 1