

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

NUMBER 24

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

PHOTOGRAPH KEY

Leslie Fox - MHC - 1981

1) Light tower

2) Close-up, light tower

3) House, light tower

4) Oil house

HISTORIC NAME: Marblehead Light

TOWN: Marblehead

LOCATION: on Marblehead Neck

COUNTY: Essex CODE: 009

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Sixth

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Essex County Courthouse (Book 283, p. 290)

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

See attached site plan - the nomination

includes the light tower and oil house
and the land to the water's edge.

LAT./LONG.: 42°30'19"N 70°50'3"W

UTM COORDINATE: 19/349/500/4706/800

USGS QUADRANGLE: BOSTON, MA; NH; CT; RI; ME

SCALE: 1: 250,000

ACREAGE: less than one acre

OWNER(S): Tower: First Coast Guard District

408 Atlantic Ave., Boston, MA 02210

Town of Marblehead owns land surrounding
tower as part of Hovey Park, including oilhouse

STATUS: Unmanned/Active

SKETCH MAP



RECORDED BY: N. Salzman

ORGANIZATION: MHC

DATE: July 16, 1981

Marblehead Light, Marblehead

SITE DESCRIPTION: Marblehead Light, Marblehead, is located on the north point of Marblehead Neck at the east entrance of Marblehead Harbor. It is set in Chandler Hovey Park, a town park in a residential neighborhood. It has long been a prominent landmark in a famous yachting area. Across the harbor is the downtown area of Marblehead. From the lens room of the tower, Boston Harbor can easily be seen--including the Lighthouses: Boston Light, Graves Light, and Minots Ledge Light. Marblehead Light has been regarded by navigators as a prominent landmark while en route southerly or northerly.

MAJOR ELEMENTS: The site includes the tall Eiffel-like tower (1895) and an intact brick oil house (1835?).

Tower - central cast iron stair column braced by eight piles 11'10" apart at the ground. Four sets of horizontal pipe/braces connect these piles. Diagonal crossbracing with iron tie rods and turnbuckles stabilize the structure. The piles are supported on eight concrete squares 30" wide. The base of the pile is 22" in diameter with a 4" flange. The central column is connected to the outer pilings by horizontal pipes, 15' from the corners, and 9 1/2" from the center column. These are spaced every 30" around the column.

Central Column Tower - Base: Concrete, bolted through a 1" thick, 6 1/4" flange
Rings: 3" X 72" diameter. First section consists of four rings, cast iron, 47 1/2" high with a 3/4" overhanging flange
Threshold: placed over the concrete base and flange, cast iron in diamond pattern (18" X 40"), the bottom step measures 10" X 40"
Door frame: example of Second Empire/Neo-Grec detail; compares with typical government style as in the War, State, Navy Building in Washington, D.C., and in several lifesaving stations.

Windows - glass blocks have replaced sash. Inside dimensions 17 1/2" X 32 1/2"; with wooden frame: 21" X 36".

INTERIOR

Stairs - Central 36" X 36" shaft carrying an enclosed spiral stairway. 105 steps around a central core made by stacking each step/core unit. A platform, followed by 21 steps.

Lamp Room - At the lamp room level, a double metal door opens out onto the lower balcony. Doors are closed by a long bar fitting into brackets. The octagonal balcony floor measures 28" at center, 36" diagonally to the posts. Width between railings is 69". There are no supporting brackets. The railing is simple with vertical balusters 5 1/2" apart and set within horizontal rails 5" below the top rail. From the outside a cornice articulates the overhanging top balcony. Ladder leads to the lens room, iron with 6 steps 24" X 2 1/2". All metal trap door.

Lens Room - Standard form with 8 sides, 77" diameter. Lower panels, 43" high, of cast iron. Air vents on every other lower panel with intact fittings. Hatch scuttle to balcony. Glass panes measure 31" X 35". Roof begins to slope 9" above glass panes, rather than at lintel. Surmounted by ball ventilator and lightning rod. Balcony simple form, round with cast diamond pattern floor. Simple post with two flat 2" X 5/16" iron rails 7" from bottom and 8 1/4" from top rail. Distance between rails, 29 3/4". Top rail 38 1/2" from deck. Post on hexagonal base. Top rail meets post with a 2 1/2" square base. Attached to this is a round decorative bail with a concave neck growing out of an hexagonal base.

Oil House - standard brick oil house with slate roof; set back from lighthouse. Excellent condition.

Light Characteristics: Green light set on wedge shaped table; 10 mile range; C5 filament now changed to C8; 373mm reduced to 300mm; Candlepower 6600 reduced to 5016; Single lantern replaced by duplex lantern.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY:

- 1833 - Town of Marblehead buys land from Jos. W. Green and Ephraim Brown for \$375 (3 acres, 3 1/2" rods). Congress appropriated \$4500 for the erection of buildings and "small light".
- 1880 - view of tower blocked by cottages.
- 7/10/1883 100' mast with auxiliary light set up.
- 1895 - cast iron lighthouse built. Tall, 105' shaft supported by a system of strong bracing on 8 pilings, 84' high, only one of its kind in New England. Surmounted by lamp room and lens room. Total height above sea level = 130'. Painted White. Dwelling and barn and oil house on property.
- 1933 - painted red, later painted green
- 1980 - sandblasted and painted brown at a cost of \$100,000.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Marblehead Light, Marblehead, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship as well as significant associations with the development of aids to navigation in Massachusetts. Constructed in 1895, it is the only light in New England to exhibit a skeletal cast iron form with Second Empire/Neo Grec detail. It meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the state level as well as survey criteria 1a, 1e, 3a, 4a.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

MAY 4 1987

Section number 1 Page 174Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Lighthouses of Massachusetts TR
State MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

Cover Substantive Review

Keeper

< 50

1. Cleveland LEDGE Light Station

Keeper

Substantive Review

Attest

2. Highland Light Station (Cape Cod Light)

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

3. Gay Head Light

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

4. Edgartown Harbor Light

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

5. Derby Wharf Light Station

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

6. East Chop Light

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

7. Eastern Point Light Station

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

8. Long Island Head Light

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

9. Long Point Light Station

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

10. Marblehead Light

Keeper

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Marblehead Light (Lighthouses of Massachusetts TR)
Essex County
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 4/28/82
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88
Date Due: 6/18/87
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 6-15-87
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT

Entered in the
National Register

Federal Agency: _____

- ☒ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent ☐ deteriorated
☐ good ☐ ruins
☐ fair ☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☐ altered

Check one

☐ original site
☐ moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title date

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



MARBLEHEAD LIGHT

MARBLEHEAD, MA. #24

Lighthouses of Mass. TR

PHOTO #2 OF 4

7
marblehead lt.



MARBLEHEAD LIGHT

MARBLEHEAD, MA #24

lighthouses of MA/PA

PHOTO # 3 OF 4

6

base

Marblehead Lt.



MARBLEHEAD LIGHT

MARBLEHEAD, MA #24

Light houses of. May 19

PHOTO #4 OF 4

14

oil house
Marblehead It.

Missing Core Documentation

Property Name County, State	Multiple Property Name	Reference Number
Marblehead Light Essex County, Massachusetts	Lighthouses of Massachusetts TR	87001479

The following Core Documentation is missing from this entry:

☐ Nomination Form

☒ Photographs (missing #1)

☐ USGS Map



Reference is made to Act of 74th Congress, Public No. 81.

Office of The Supt. of Lighthouses.
Second District - Chelsea, Mass.

MARBLEHEAD LT. STATION.
TRANSFER OF LIGHTHOUSE
RESERVATION TO WAR DEPT.

Scale: As shown Approved: 7/16/35.
Geo. S. Conant Superintendent.
Drawing: H. G. SK. 125.

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000282