

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Item number 7

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1. NAME: Historic - Newport Harbor Lighthouse  
Common - Newport Harbor Light Station
2. LOCATION  
  
North end of Goat Island, Newport Harbor  
Newport, Rhode Island  
Newport County
3. CLASSIFICATION  
  
Category - structure  
Ownership - public  
Status - unoccupied  
Accessible - yes, restricted  
Present Use - government, transportation, other: active  
lighthouse
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY  
  
U. S. Government, Department of Transportation  
First U. S. Coast Guard District Headquarters  
150 Causeway Street  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION  
  
Recorder of Deeds  
Newport City Hall  
43 Broadway  
Newport, Rhode Island 02840
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS  
  
none

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7. DESCRIPTION

Condition - good / altered / original site

Newport Harbor Light stands at the end of Goat Island along the northern entrance to the harbor on a 20-foot-square granite pier. Although the station was established in 1838, the original lighthouse was replaced by the present structure in 1856. The light is still active.

The freestanding octagonal white tower, which measures 29 feet from the base to the lamp, is constructed of roughly cut granite blocks. Two window openings pierce the sides of the tower; one at the second floor and the other at the third floor. Both windows originally had six-over-six sash but these have been replaced with small fixed glass blocks.

At the top of the tower is an octagonal cast-iron lantern, painted black. A band of iron around the lantern's bottom half supports twelve panes of triangular glass above, each held in place with iron frames. A balustrade surrounds the lantern gallery, and a cast-iron ventilator with a lightning rod spike caps the structure.

A heavy iron door on the south side of the tower opens on to a circular stairway, which leads to the lamp and lens in the lantern. The green fourth-order fixed light, 33 feet above the water level, can be seen for 11 miles.

Originally, the tower was attached to a two-story stone keeper's dwelling. The house was torn down in 1922 after it was struck by a submarine.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

Period: 1800-1899, 1900-                      Specific Dates: 1865

Established in 1823 at the north end of Goat Island, Newport Harbor Light is significant as the fourth lighthouse to be built in Rhode Island, and for its association with Newport's maritime economy. Although Beavertail Light, which was established at the south end of Conanicut Island in 1749, was the first lighthouse used by ships en route to the agricultural markets of Newport, Newport Harbor Light was the first of three to be established within the harbor itself. The present tower, which dates from 1865, is a well-known landmark that is visible from the town of

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Newport and by those crossing the Newport Bridge. As such, it serves as a highly visible reminder of the city's maritime economy. The light is architecturally significant as a unique example in Rhode Island of an early nineteenth century rusticated stone light tower.

A light was first established at the entrance to Newport Harbor on the Northern end of Goat Island in 1823. Because of a need for more powerful and better situated light, a second tower was built in 1838 on a nearby breakwater. Both the tower and the breakwater were built by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers under the direction of Lt. George W. Cullum. The original tower was moved to Prudence Island in 1851 where it still stands as an active light.

The 1838 light remained active until 1865 when it was replaced by the present tower with an attached keeper's dwelling, constructed at the northern end of the same breakwater on which the second light stood. Three years later the 1838 light was taken down.

The 1865 tower still survives but the two-story gable-roofed stone dwelling does not. It was taken down shortly after its foundation was severely undermined when struck by a submarine from the U. S. Naval Torpedo Station on Goat Island on November 9, 1921. With the razing of the keeper's quarters, the light was electrified and its operation turned over to military personnel at the torpedo station. It was automated in 1963 and remains an active light.

Although the tower stands on its original site at the end of the breakwater, the area between it and the shore was recently filled in when the Goat Island Sheraton Hotel was built. This is now a small grassy park, which allows easy access to the light.

10. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Acreage: less than one acre  
Quadrangle name: Newport, RI  
Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000  
UTM References: A 19 305720 4595940

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Verbal Boundary Description: The Newport Harbor Lighthouse sits on the end of a pier which extends from the north end of Goat Island. The property nominated here is the twenty-foot-square end of the pier on which the light sits. This boundary encompasses the resource only; the setting of the lighthouse is Narragansett Bay.

Period of Significance: The period of Significance extends from 1865, when the light tower was constructed, to 1938.

Level of Significance: State

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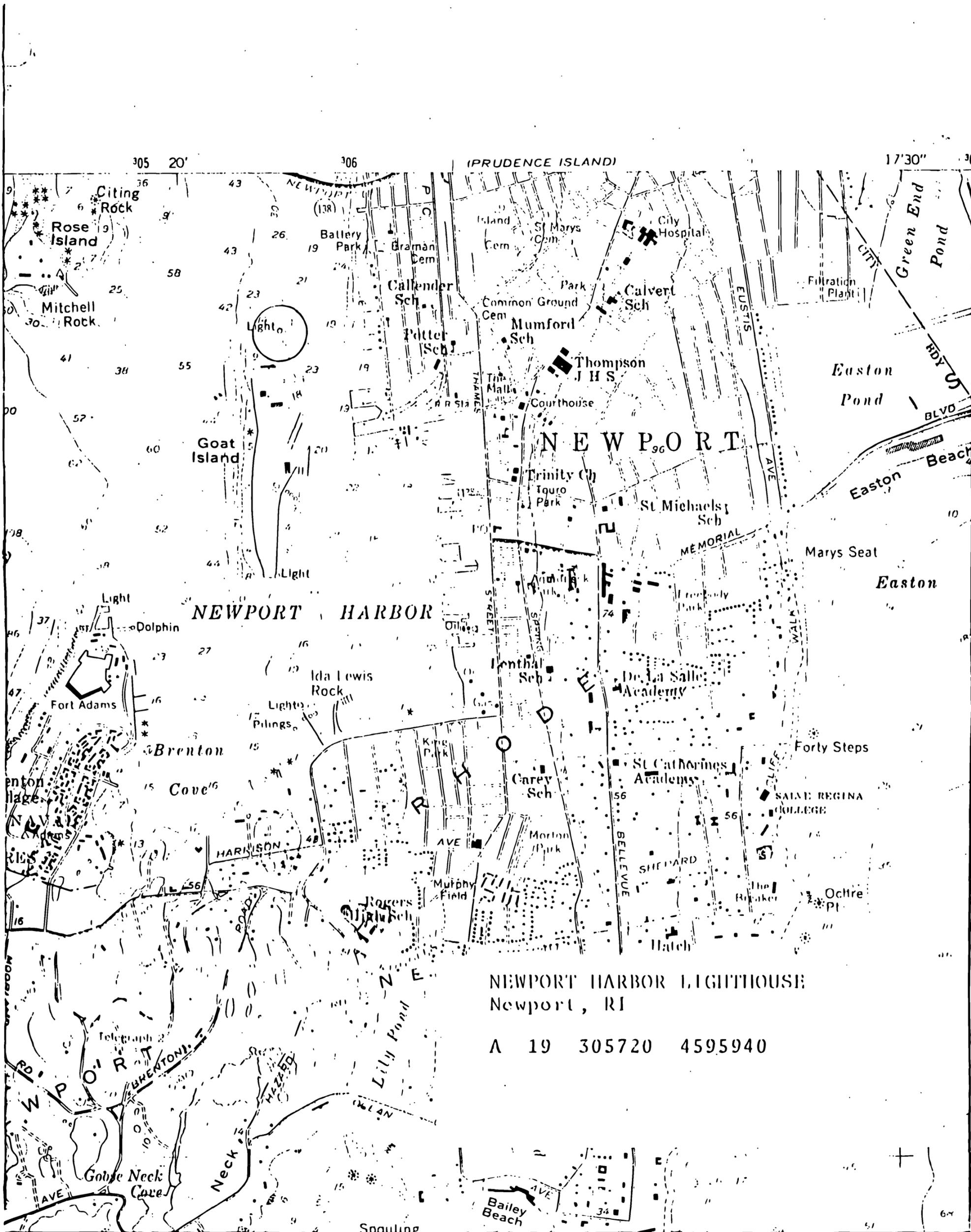
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Level of Significance:  
SHPO ~~FPO~~ Certification:  
*Frederick Williamson*



NEWPORT HARBOR

NEWPORT

(PRUDENCE ISLAND)

NEWPORT HARBOR LIGHTHOUSE  
Newport, RI

A 19 305720 4595940

Bailey Beach