

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

NUMBER 5

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

PHOTOGRAPH KEY

Leslie L. Fox, MHC, July 1981

1. Tower from north

HISTORIC NAME: Borden Flats Light Station

TOWN: Fall River

LOCATION: Taunton River

COUNTY: Bristol CODE: 005

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 10th

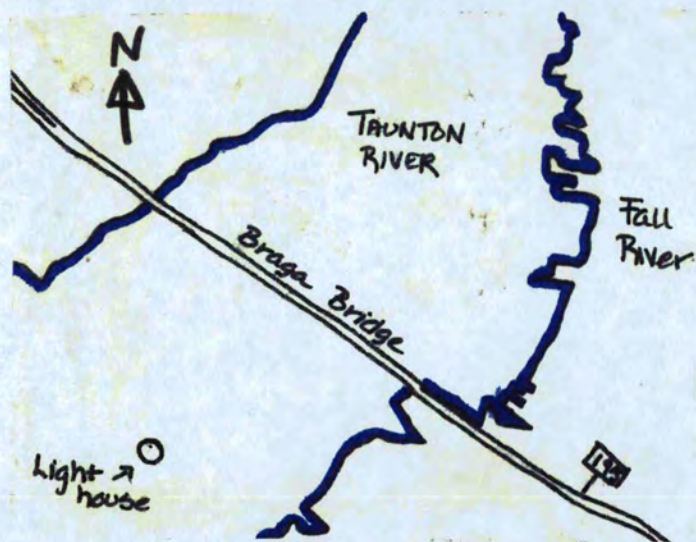
LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Bristol County Southern District Registry of Deeds

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nomination is confined to the light and its man-made foundation

SKETCH MAP



LAT./LONG.: 41° 41' 15' N / 71° 10' 29' W

UTM COORDINATE: 19/318/800/4619/100

USGS QUADRANGLE: Prov. RI., Mass., Conn.

SCALE: 1:250,000

ACREAGE: 8.8 acres (underwater ledge)

OWNER(S): U.S. Coast Guard, First District
408 Atlantic Ave.
Boston, MA 02110

STATUS: Active/Unmanned (operated by U.S. Coast Guard, Group Bristol, RI)

RECORDED BY: L. Fox/N. Salzman

ORGANIZATION: MHC

DATE: August 1981

Borden Flats Light Station, Fall River

SITE DESCRIPTION: The Borden Flats Light Station, a caisson constructed lighthouse, was built on a reef at the mouth of the Taunton River, which also comprises part of Fall River. The name "Borden Flats" was derived from the Borden Family, who owned extensive textile mills along the edge of the river and were one of Fall River's wealthiest families. The Braga Bridge, Rt. 195, passes almost directly above the lighthouse, and just beyond this bridge is Battleship Cove, a large tourist attraction in the city. Large stone and wooden piers are located on both sides of the river on either side of the lighthouse. The lighthouse is not easily visible to anyone other than mariners because the bridge passes overhead and there are no shore roads (view is blocked by warehouses and mills).

MAJOR ELEMENTS DESCRIPTION: The single tower (1881) is located at this site and occupies 650 square feet.

Exterior: The cast iron cylindrical caisson, or shell, was sunk and firmly secured with cement on the reef at midpoint in the river. In fact, about 15' of cement comprises the foundation of the structure, most of which is below the water line. Because of the dangerous reef surrounding the tower, approach can only be made from one side (the north).

Porch: From a wide, cement platform that encircles the entire tower, an iron ladder leads up to the "porch". The "porch" is open, with a roof covering 1/3 of the tower. At one end, there is a large storage closet and at the other end is the door leading inside the tower. The roof of the "porch" is constructed of steel supported by 24 concrete beams, some of which have been recently repaired.

1st window: One window (blocked by a sheet of plywood) is situated directly opposite the ladder that leads to the "porch." Its interior measurements are 24" X 46", and it has a 38" panel with a 4" bracket that is 6 1/2" deep. The pediment is 43 1/2" wide and 23" up to the peak. The molding juts out 3 1/2" and it is 4" high.

Door: A wooden door opens onto a steel door which in turn opens into the entranceway, and yet another door (which is paneled). This last door opens into the first floor of the tower. It measures 72" high X 35" wide. The doorway is iron and 11" deep.

Arch: Inside the tower, there are two recessed arches with shelves, and the recessed window. (All in all, three similar arches.) Each arch is 52" high and the two with 15" deep. The third arch, above the window, is 17 1/4" deep and are set in 8" from the wooden frame of the window.

1st Floor: The steel ceiling of the first floor is made of twelve panels fitted together to form a circular shape as in other lighthouse ceilings. An iron shaft, originally used to house the large clockwork, runs from the center of this floor up through the other floors to the lens room.

Stairs: A circular steel staircase begins on the far side of the first floor and is 38 1/2" wide, taking up about 1/4 of the entire floor space.

Basement: A small door under the staircase opens onto a seven step curved ladder down to a half basement. Each riser on the ladder measures 12". The basement is 7 1/2" high and was probably used to house the fuel tank and for water storage. The exterior wall is 8' thicker here than on the first floor.

Stairs: From the first floor, there are nine steel steps 32" wide, "9 deep on the near end and 14 1/2" deep on the far end, which is against the wall. The steps lead up to the first landing (2nd floor). Another nine steps lead to the second landing, or the third floor. The latter landing has no wooden floor like the first and second floor. Instead, its steel segmented construction is exposed. The upper two floors were probably the keeper's quarters. Another window is located on the third floor.

- Lamp Room: a fourth set of nine stairs leads to the lamp room, which is very similar to the lamp rooms in the Cape Cod lighthouses. That is, a false porthole is found immediately at the top of the stairs, just before entering the room. It has a wooden frame. Two standard portholes are then located inside the lamp room, whose walls are covered with vertical wooden sheathing. A stove pipe, an original item, was found in one corner.
- Lens Room: A seven step curved iron ladder leads to the lens room, through an iron trap door. The lens room is ten-sided, with none of the window panes blacked out. All are visible to navigators. The panes (which are not original) were installed quite recently. They are made of lexan, but fit the standard lighthouse lens room window - 26 1/2" X 36 (interior measurements) and 28 1/2" X 38 2/8" X 1/4" thick (exterior measurements).
- Walls: The walls of the lens room are covered with the same vertical wooden sheathing as the lamp room.
- Vents: Five air vents are located in the walls around the room; four have been permanently covered.
- Balcony: A wooden half door opens onto a steel half door, and then onto the balcony, which is 50" deep. It has an iron railing and balusters that are 41" high. A large brass bell, 100 years old, blocks the balcony on the Fall River side. It is fully automated, as is the lens inside.
- Roof: The metal roof has a metal lining as well, made up of a series of triangular segments. The tower is grounded by a strap running down the side of the lighthouse and then into the river bottom.

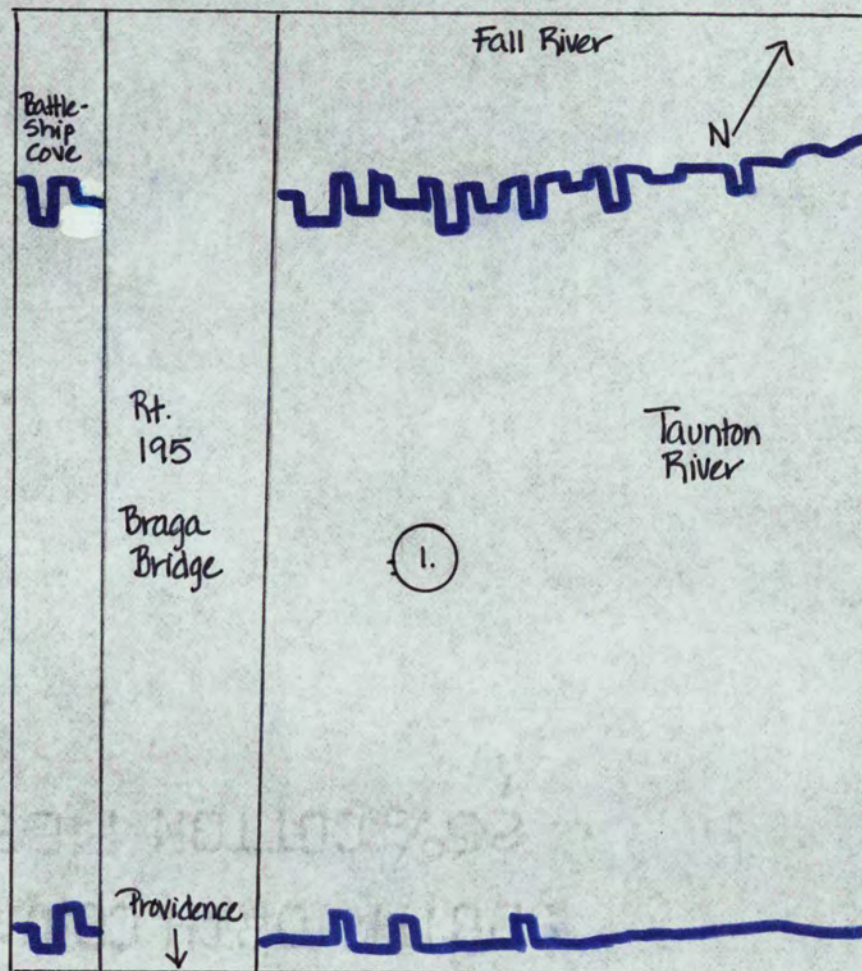
CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY:

- 1180 - The site was purchased by the U.S. Government.
- 1881 - The present lighthouse was constructed at a cost of \$24,000.
- 1957 - The tower was electrified.
- 1963 - The station was fully automated and unmanned.
- 1977 - The light was modernized with a plastic lens.
- 1981 - The exterior was repainted, interior sections were rewired, and parts of the tower were stripped for reconstruction. Its brass bell is still in operation (100 years old).
- 1983 - Fog signal changed to an electronic horn.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Borden Flats Light Station possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, and workmanship as well as important associations with the development of aids to navigation in Massachusetts. Constructed in 1881, it is one of the earliest and best maintained caisson type light stations in the state, preserving many of its original features and Italianate design elements intact. Additionally, it remains an active aid, necessary for navigators to avoid the reef on their approach to an active port. The Station meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the state level. It also meets survey criteria 1b, 1d, 1e.

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION



Borden Flats Light Station

1. Tower

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received MAY 4 1987
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 374

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Lighthouses of Massachusetts TR
State MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

- 100 21. Hospital Point Light Station *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 9/28/87*
Attest
22. Graves Light Station *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 9/28/87*
Attest
23. Annisquam Harbor Light Station *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 6/15/87*
Attest
14. The Beacon *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 6/15/87*
Attest
- 7-100 25. Bird Island Light *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 9/28/87*
Attest
26. Borden Flats Light Station *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 6/15/87*
Attest
27. Boston Light Station *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 6/15/87*
Attest
- 100 28. Brant Point Light Station *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 9/28/87*
Attest
29. Butler Flats Light Station *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 6/15/87*
Attest
- 100 30. Cape Poge (Pogue) Light *Entered in the National Register* *for* Keeper *Melores Byers 9/28/87*
Attest

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Borden Flats Light Station (Lighthouses
of Massachusetts TR)
Bristol County
MASSACHUSETTS

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

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

Entered in the National Register
Federal Agency: USCG

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: _____



LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

AUG 1981

BORDEN FLATS LIGHT STATION
FALL RIVER #5

45

PHOTO #1 OF 1

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000282