

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS  
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

NUMBER 4

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

PHOTOGRAPH KEY

1. BIRD ISLAND LIGHT

HISTORIC NAME: Bird Island Light Station

TOWN: Marion

LOCATION: An island due south of Butler Pt. on  
east entrance to Sippican (Marion)

COUNTY: Plymouth CODE: 023 Harbor

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 10th

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

Plymouth County Courthouse

(Book 134, p. 270 (1819))

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Bird Island: the lighthouse is the  
only standing structure

SKETCH MAP



Bird Island Lighthouse

Buzzards Bay  
1-2-A

LAT./LONG.: LAT 41 40'9"N LONG 70 43'4"W

UTM COORDINATE: 19/357/000/4614/200

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

SCALE: 1:250,000

ACREAGE: 3 acres

OWNER(S): Town of Marion  
Town Hall  
Marion, Massachusetts

(Maintained by the Sippican  
Historical Society)

STATUS: \_\_\_\_\_

Unmanned/Active

RECORDED BY: N. L. Salzman

ORGANIZATION: MHC

DATE: July 1981

Bird Island Light, Marion

SITE DESCRIPTION: Bird Island Light, Marion, is located on an island (at high water) on the east side of the mouth of Sippican Harbor, opposite the town of Marion. This island is covered with low scrub and rocks and otherwise serves as a tern nesting ground.

MAJOR ELEMENTS DESCRIPTION: The extant element is a privately maintained conical tower (1819).

TOWER: conical masonry tower painted white; 30' above water; 25' tower.  
Originally it was attached to a stone dwelling  
Door: modern steel.  
Windows: at level 2.  
Balcony: projects beyond tower with no coving or brackets  
beneath. Typical triple railing with vertical grid between  
posts; knob ornaments at top of post.  
Lantern: typical cast iron design with tower portion of iron and  
incorporating a scuttle door; unusual diagonal astragals between  
window posts. Surmounted by typical conical roof. Only base to  
ventilator remains, vent ball and lightning rod gone.

LIGHT CHARACTERISTICS: F1 W 6 sec.  
INTERIOR: not accessible

#### CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY:

- 3/5/1819 - George and Betty Blankinship sold land to U.S. Government for \$200.
- 6/19/1819 - Commonwealth of Massachusetts cedes jurisdiction to U.S. Government.
- 1819 - tower constructed; attached to stone dwelling. Although important at the time of its construction, its role gradually diminished because Sippican Harbor was frozen over and therefore during much of the winter.
- 1938 - Hurricane washed away outbuildings.
- 1939 - Sold to town after being declared surplus.
- 7/9/1976 - restored by town and Sippican Historical Society with local contributions (\$13,000). Light restored, automatic beacon installed and tower painted.
- 1981 - Tower was vandalized. Tower again restored by Historical Society (\$1000).

#### LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bird Island Light, Marion, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship as well as associations with the development of aids to navigation in Massachusetts. Constructed in 1817, it is an early masonry tower and although its outbuildings were destroyed in 1938, it remains a locally important navigational landmark in a picturesque position. The light meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the state level. It also meets survey criteria 3a and 4a.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Bird Island Light (Lighthouses of Massachusetts TR)  
Plymouth County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 4/28/82  
Fed. Reg. Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Due: 6/18/87  
Action: \_\_\_\_\_ ACCEPT \_\_\_\_\_  
 RETURN 6-15-87  
\_\_\_\_\_ REJECT \_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Agency: USCG

- 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 Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use
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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
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- 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 \_\_\_\_\_

**X 13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs *Please provide original photo*
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed *S. Byer* Date 6-15-87 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS  
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

LIGHTHOUSE INFORMATION FORM

NUMBER 4

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
80 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02116

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CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 10th

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

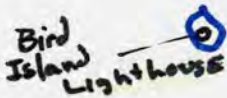
Plymouth County Courthouse

(Book 134, p. 270 (1819))

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Buzzards  
Bay  
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LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bird Island Light, Marion, possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship as well as associations with the development of aids to navigation in Massachusetts. Constructed in 1817, it is an early masonry tower and although its outbuildings were destroyed in 1938, it remains a locally important navigational landmark in a picturesque position. The light meets criteria A and C of the National Register of Historic Places on the state level. It also meets survey criteria 3a and 4a.



BIRD ISLAND LIGHTHOUSE BUZZARDS BAY MASS.  
THE BLACK MARK IS SIXTEEN FEET ABOVE  
THE TOWER FOUNDATION AS PER LETTER 2-11-79  
FROM DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE LIGHT HOUSE SERVICE.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National 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 Group

Name Lighthouses of Massachusetts TR  
State MASSACHUSETTS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Bird Island Light (Lighthouses of  
Massachusetts TR)  
Plymouth County  
MASSACHUSETTS

Working No. 4/28/82  
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/2/88  
Date Due: 10/30/87  
Action:  ACCEPT 9-28-87  
 RETURN  
 REJECT  
Federal Agency: USCG

- 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 Public Acquisition	Status Accessible	Present Use

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	Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	
	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	
	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

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

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**8. Significance**

Period      Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates                      Builder/Architect  
Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- summary paragraph
- completeness
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- applicable criteria
- justification of areas checked
- relating significance to the resource
- context
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- other

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**9. Major Bibliographical References**

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**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_  
UTM References \_\_\_\_\_

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Verbal boundary description and justification

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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**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

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**13. Other**

- Maps
- Photographs
- Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet*



LIGHTHOUSES OF MASSACHUSETTS  
THEMATIC GROUP NOMINATION

"Bird Island"  
lighthouse,  
entrance to  
Marion Mass  
harbor.

Lighthouses of Ma., TR

Built 1819  
closed 1933

NEGATIVE  
AT MASS. HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION

H. S. Triple  
P.O. Box 134  
Marion  
Mass 02738

MHC

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

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000282