

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED AUG 5 1981

DATE ENTERED SEP 1 1 1981

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Fire Island Light Station

AND/OR COMMON

Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Robert Moses Causeway

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Bay Shore

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

X VICINITY OF

02

STATE

New York

CODE

36

COUNTY

Suffolk

CODE

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)

National Park Service, North Atlantic Region

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston

VICINITY OF

Massachusetts

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Land Acquisition Division, National Park Service, North Atlantic Region

STREET & NUMBER

15 State Street

CITY, TOWN

Boston,

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

U.S. Coast Guard, 3d Dist., "Fire Island Station Annex" Civil Plot Plan 03-5523

DATE

18 June 1975, revised 8-7-80

X FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS National Park Service, North Atlantic Regional Office

CITY, TOWN

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Fire Island Light Station is situated 5 miles east of the western end of Fire Island, a barrier island off the southern coast of Long Island. It consists of a lighthouse and an adjacent keeper's quarters sitting on a raised terrace. The lighthouse tower, completed in 1858, is a conical tower with hyperbolic curved profile becoming cylindrical near the top. The height of the tower, from foot to cornice, is 140 feet, with an additional 24 feet to enclose the watch room and the lantern. The focal plane of the light is approximately 168 feet above sea level. The diameter of the tower at its base is 32 feet; at its top, 15 feet. The cornice is of granite and was originally in the Doric order with six pilasters, now missing or covered with concrete. It supports an iron-railed projecting gallery. The tower is constructed of brick. By 1876 it was coated with a cement wash, giving it a cream color. In 1891, it was covered with asphalt paint, overpainted with white to produce four horizontal black and white stripes. The tower was coated with reinforced concrete in 1912 and painted with the same stripes. There is a hollow central column of cast iron, which originally contained the clock weights, and a spiral staircase with cast iron open-work treads. The original light was a first order revolving catadioptric system with Fresnel lens, visible for 21-23 nautical miles from 15 feet above sea level. A Funck mechanism was installed in 1869. Whale oil was used until 1867; lard oil until 1884; mineral oil (kerosene) until 1907; incandescent oil vapor until 1939; electricity thereafter. A Western Union telegraph service was installed in 1878; telephone in 1898; wireless telegraphy experiments were conducted in 1901.

The adjacent Keeper's residence, which also contained the oil storage rooms, was completed in 1859. It was originally connected to the tower by a covered passage, now missing. The two-story building now contains thirteen rooms divided into two apartments, plus full attic and basement. It is faced with rough coursed granite. The terrace on which both structures sit is approximately 15 feet high and faced with stone, the stone coming from the first Fire Island lighthouse and keeper's house (1826). Parts of the south and east walls of the terrace were replaced in 1901. The terrace measures 148 feet north to south, by 97 feet east to west. There is a small metal shed on the northeast corner of the terrace.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES 1858-59

BUILDER/ARCHITECT J.T.Morton, construction supv.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The current Fire Island lighthouse was completed in 1858 to replace the first Fire Island light, which had been put into service in 1826 and whose foundation is about 200 yards southwest of the current station. In 1826, the light was at the western tip of Fire Island, adjacent to Fire Island Inlet, which connects the Atlantic Ocean with Great South Bay. Littoral drift causes Fire Island to "migrate" westward at the rate of about one mile every 25 or 30 years, so that now the site of the lighthouse is five miles east of the current inlet.

The Federal government took jurisdiction over lighthouses on August 7, 1789, in one of the earliest assertions of federal power over the powers of the separate states. The first Fire Island light was constructed during a wave of lighthouse building in the 1820's and 30's; and the second, during a wave of building and renovation in the 1850's. The ultimate goal was to make the Atlantic coast a lighted highway of commerce, and the Fire Island lights filled the gap between the Montauk Point Light to the east and the Sandy Hook Light to the west. As New York emerged as the most important American port in the transatlantic trade, the Fire Island light emerged as the most important light station on the East Coast, since it was the first landfall for ships approaching New York harbor on the Atlantic routes. A shoal about a mile off-shore was the cause of numerous shipwrecks. Thus the second Fire Island light was 80 feet taller and had a more powerful light than its predecessor and than the neighboring lights to the east and west. Its finely proportioned curved profile and its original Doric details gave it architectural distinction.

Fire Island Light Station also served important non-navigational functions in the nineteenth century, with the keeper and his assistants serving as "mayors" of Fire Island, assisting baymen, and serving as inn-keepers to rich urbanites seeking primitive recreational experiences away from the city. The Fire Island Light Station was decommissioned by the Coast Guard in 1974.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

National Archives and Record Service, Record Group 25.
 Francis Ross Holland, Jr., America's Lighthouses, Their Illustrated History since 1716 (Brattleboro, Vt., 1972).
 Henry Bang, The Fire Island Lighthouse (to be published, 1981).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

UTM NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/3
 UTM REFERENCES

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

A 18 650625 4499225
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 C _____

B _____
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING
 D _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated structures occupy a site measuring approx. 148 by 97 feet and sit in a tract of 90 acres bounded on the north by Great South Bay, on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, on the west by Robert Moses State Park, and on the east by Robert Moses State Park-East Unit.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Steven Kesselman, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Fire Island National Seashore

DATE

April 17, 1981

STREET & NUMBER

120 Laurel Street

TELEPHONE

(516) 289-4810

CITY OR TOWN

Patchogue

STATE

New York

12 CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES

NO

NONE

Ann Webster Jink
 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Historic Preservation Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The evaluated level of significance is National State Local.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

F. R. Holland, Jr.
 Assistant Director,
 Cultural Resources

DATE

JUL 31 1981

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William H. Brown

DATE

9.11.81

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER