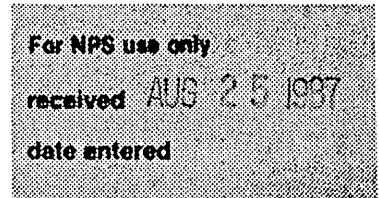


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NAME: Nayatt Point Lighthouse

LOCATION: Nayatt Point
Barrington, Rhode Island
Bristol County

CLASSIFICATION:

Category - building(s)
Ownership - private
Status - occupied
Accessible - yes, restricted
Present use - private residence

OWNER OF PROPERTY:

Leonard H. and Barbara S. Lesko
Lighthouse
Nayatt Point
Barrington, Rhode Island 02806

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Registry of Deeds
Barrington Town Hall
283 County Hall
Barrington, Rhode Island 02806

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

None

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DESCRIPTION

Condition - good / altered / original site

Nayatt Point Light is located on a 1/2-acre site at the western tip of Nayatt Point, on the east side of the entrance to the Providence River. The lighthouse consists of a brick keeper's dwelling attached to a brick tower, both painted white. No longer active, it is now used as a private residence.

The complex plan of the dwelling comprises three connected sections laid out at right angles to each other, each of which was constructed at a different period. In the center is the oldest part which consists of a 34-by-20-foot, one-and-a-half-story section, running north and south between two end wings, along with a 14-by-12-foot, 1-story ell of the same period off the back. Although the ell still stands, it has been incorporated into part of a more recently added wing on the east end and is difficult to distinguish. Built in 1828, this center section and the ell served as the keeper's quarters for an earlier freestanding tower constructed in the same year nearer the western tip of the Nayatt Point. The one-and-a-half-story section of the oldest part features a chimney at each gable end and two dormers on the west side, while the chimney that was originally at the east end of the ell is now in the center of the newer east wing.

A one-story brick wing added in 1856, off the northwest corner of the center section, connects the original dwelling to the east side of the present tower. A shingled second story, with a center chimney and a gable roof with flared overhanging eaves, was added c. 1905.

A second two-story wing, the first floor of which was built in 1875, has been added on to the east end of the original ell at the back of the dwelling. Initially this involved the lengthening and widening of the ell with a one-story brick addition in 1875. A full length clapboarded second story was added at a later date, probably in the early 20th century. A doorway in the center of the ell's north side now serves as the building's main entrance.

The most recent addition consist of two small one-story cement block sun rooms that have been built on either side of the tower off the north and south ends of the front of the west 1856 wing; these were constructed in the mid-20th century.

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The three-story square brick tower is attached to the west gable end of the west wing. Built in 1856 to replace the earlier freestanding tower, it retains most of its original features. At the top is a cast-iron lantern and ventilator, mounted on a wooden base, and an iron balustrade which surrounds the outer edge of the gallery.

A doorway on the tower's south side leads to a cast-iron circular stairway which climbs along the tower's brick circular walls to the lantern room. The lens and lamp were removed when the light was deactivated.

Along with the various additions, the interior of the dwelling has also undergone extensive alterations. The two-story, brick-and-shingle wing attached to the tower now contains a modern kitchen and dining room on the first floor with bedrooms above. The original keeper's dwelling is now a living room. Except for some bricks on the inside of the tower which are crumbling, the condition of the structure is excellent.

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SIGNIFICANCE

Period: 1800-1899

Specific Dates: 1828, 1856

Established in 1828 on the entrance to the Providence River, the Nayatt Point Lighthouse is significant as one of the few surviving structures directly related to the early nineteenth-century maritime trade of Providence. From the time of its establishment until it was deactivated in 1868 the light served to warn whaling ships, fishing boats and coastal freighters en route to Providence of sandbars and rocks between Nayatt Point and Conimicut Point, directly across the river. The light is also important in that the original 1828 section of the house is the oldest surviving keeper's dwelling in Rhode Island. Finally, it is the only lighthouse in the state which, for a period of twenty-two years after it was deactivated, continued to be used as a residence for the keeper of another nearby offshore light.

The first light was mounted on a freestanding octagonal tower built to the west of the present tower. The keeper lived in a small dwelling nearby which was also constructed in 1828. In 1856 the dwelling was enlarged with a two-story wing, and a second tower, attached to the new addition, was built to replace the original light.

The station remained active until November 1, 1868, when it was replaced by an offshore beacon east of Conimicut Point at the west side of the river's entrance. However, since the beacon had no living accommodations, the dwelling at Nayatt Point was kept as quarters for the keeper who rowed a mile across the river to the new light.

By 1870 the dwelling at Nayatt Point was in poor condition. Instead of making the needed repairs, the Lighthouse Board proposed selling the structure and building quarters at the Conimicut beacon. With the completion in 1874 of the new quarters, the Nayatt Point Lighthouse was placed under the supervision of a custodian but it was reoccupied the following year when the dwelling at the beacon was destroyed by an ice floe. At that time the Nayatt Point dwelling was repaired and enlarged in order to provide accommodations for the beacon's keeper and an assistant who had been hired to insure continuous operation of the Conimicut Light. Finally in 1890, after an entirely new tower with keeper's quarters was constructed at the site of the Conimicut beacon to replace the earlier tower, the Nayatt Point Lighthouse was sold for \$4,000 at public auction. The light has been used as a private residence since that time.

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (see nomination form)

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

acreage: .57 acre

Quadrangle name: Bristol, RI Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

UTM References: A 19 305390 4621670

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property occupies all of lot 64, Barrington Town Assessor's Plat #5; this boundary includes the entire resource.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State
SHPO CERTIFICATION: *Therese Williams*

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:

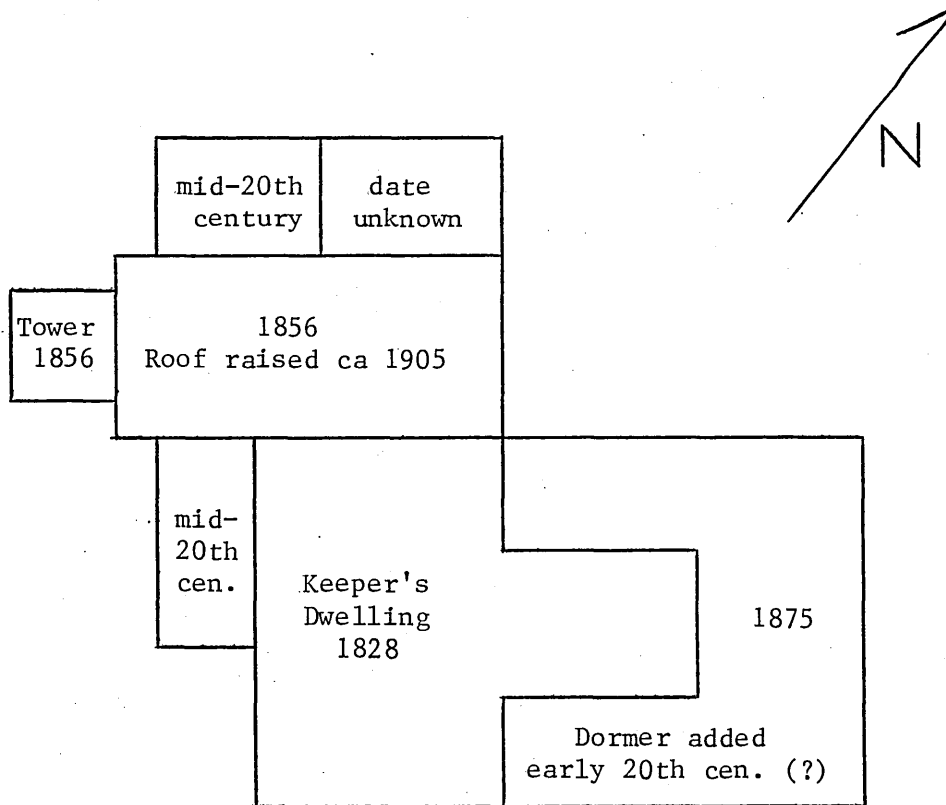
The period of significance extends from 1828, when the earliest part of the complex was constructed as a keeper's house, to 1890, when the Nayatt Light ceased to serve any function in the system of navigational aids for Narragansett Bay. Between 1868 and 1890, Nayatt point was not an active light; it was replaced by an offshore beacon east of Conimicut Point. However, the complex served between 1868 and 1890 as a residence for the keeper and assistant keeper at Conimicut and was thus clearly integrated into the Bay system of navigational aids.

The lighthouse keeper's house was constructed in several stages, each stage of construction creating a new element in the complex. But each stage is still clear and distinguishable from others and each retains sufficient integrity. The 1828 center section, for example, is still clearly distinguished from the 1856 light tower. The entire property retains integrity from its 1890 date; the only major additions since 1890 are the two small 1-story, flat-roofed sun rooms built on the side of the tower. While these additions do not contribute to the historic character of the lighthouse, they also do not cause irreparable harm to the overall integrity of the structure. Two more minor alterations since 1890 are the addition of a dormer on the 1875 section of the keeper's dwelling and the c. 1905 raising of the roof of the 1856 section. Like the sun rooms, these alterations do not contribute to the light's historic character, but they also do not alter the basic character and significance of the light.

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NAYATT POINT LIGHTHOUSE
Barrington, Rhode Island

Sketch Plan showing Building Chronology -- not drawn to scale

Lighthouses of Rhode Island Thematic Group
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

December 1987