

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

FEB 16 1989

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Browns Point Lighthouse and Keeper's Cottage
other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number 201 Tulalip N.E. not for publication
city, town Tacoma vicinity
state Washington code WA county Pierce code 053 zip code 99207

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	2	2 buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site		sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	3	1 structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object		objects
		5	3 Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Jacob E. Moran
Signature of certifying official
Washington State Office of Archaeology & Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

2/7/89
Date

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Melvin Byrum
Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action 3/29/89

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: water-related

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: water-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals:

Classical Revival

Modern Movement: Moderne

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls wood: weatherboard

roof other: composition shingle

other concrete

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Browns Point Lighthouse and associated structures are located on a three acre beachfront site on the northern tip of Browns Point in Pierce County, at the eastern entry to Commencement Bay. The property includes eight structures associated with the operation of the light, dating from 1903 until the 1950s, as well as 1,000 feet of beach and a grassy lawn which rises gently above the shore of Puget Sound. The site, once part of the Puyallup Indian reservation, commands a sweeping view of Commencement Bay and Tacoma.

The first light structure on the point, erected in 1887, was a fixed white light lens lantern placed on a white post 12 feet above sea level and 50 yards from the low water end of shore. In 1903, a second light station was built, a wooden structure measuring 34 feet high with a gabled hood and resting on a concrete base. That light was replaced by the current concrete tower in 1933 (described below).

The original lighthouse keeper's cottage, also built in 1903, still stands and retains outstanding integrity. The cottage, located about 300 feet east (and uphill) of the light, is a detached one and one-half story frame structure, distinguished by its vernacular Neoclassical character. The structure measures approximately 30 feet by 20 feet, rests on a raised concrete basement, and is faced with clapboard siding and corner boards. The side-gable roof, covered with composition shingles, has a medium pitch and features boxed eaves (to simulate a full cornice) with gable returns on the side elevations. A plain frieze board runs beneath the cornice across the house at the top of the first floor. A single brick chimney rises from the rear slope of the roof near the ridgeline.

The front (north) facade of the structure features a central, glazed, single-leaf door with sidelights, sheltered by a portico with full entablature (including dentillated cornice) and paired pillars. The original railing was replaced by the current railing with cross members sometime in the 1970s. To either side of the portico are double-hung wood sash windows with two-over-one lights (replacing the original two-over-two). The windows are framed with wood surrounds with projecting hood moldings and sills. A gable-roofed dormer, with paired sash windows, projects from the front slope of the roof just above the portico. The dormer has a boxed cornice, a sunburst moulding in the gable end, and the windows are framed by engaged pilaster-like mouldings.

The east and west side elevations are distinguished by large Palladian windows in the upper gable ends. The windows feature a rounded central light, with double hung, one-over-one, wood sash, flanked by two shorter rectangular windows with double hung, one-over-one, wood sash. The Palladian groups are framed by moulded surrounds, and the sills of the windows rest on the frieze board which runs around the house. Complementing the Palladian motif are triangular windows located in the corners of the gable ends, with muntins radiating in

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a sunburst motif. The first floors of the side elevations are punctuated by two symmetrically placed windows, with two-over-two, double hung sash, framed by molded surrounds. The rear elevation includes several wood sash windows and a nonhistoric shed roof porch, which shelters the single leaf rear door.

The first floor interior of the cottage features a central hall with a straight-reverse stairway that rises to the upper level. Parlors are located to either side of the front hall, and are entered through panelled doors with moulded surrounds. The stairway features a bannister with panelled newel post and turned balusters. The upper level of the cottage includes an alcove at the stair landing, and two bedrooms. The bedroom walls and ceilings are finished with tongue and groove boards. The interior retains good integrity, although the rear kitchen has been altered.

The lighthouse built in 1933 to replace the wooden structure still stands on the property. The white rectangular tower, constructed of poured concrete, rises 34 feet high and measures nine and one-half feet square. Vaguely Modernistic in style, the tower is composed of intersecting blocks upon which a smaller, recessed parapet block is set. The lantern and foghorn are mounted on the parapet block, although the originals were replaced in 1963, and the horn is controlled by a distant lighthouse on Maury Island. The tower is entered by a single leaf door, and is punctuated by windows on both the lower and upper levels. The tower rests on a concrete platform, which is reached by a shallow set of concrete steps. A concrete, flat-roofed generating house, measuring 13 feet by 17 feet, was built at the same time, and is located immediately to the west. Both the lighthouse and the generator house are boarded up today.

A variety of ancillary structures, dating from various periods in the history of the facility, still stand on the grounds. The original kerosene oil house, built in 1903 but no longer used, is a frame, gable-roofed shed that measures eight feet by 12 feet. The shed is faced with corrugated metal siding and has a corrugated metal roof. The structure is entered through a central door in the gable end. The door is framed by a classical surround with full entablature, complementing the design of the lightkeeper's house. The oil house was moved from a location immediately west of the lighthouse to a new site, with a concrete pad foundation, just east of the boathouse.

The original boathouse, also constructed in 1903, is located on the beachfront north of the light. Now used for storage, the boathouse is a frame structure with a gable roof, with boxed eaves and frieze board, and clapboard siding with cornerboards. The building measures 40 feet long and 16 feet wide, and is entered through sliding, panelled, double doors that are reached by a concrete ramp that leads up from the water's edge. A rear single leaf door is located on the south side, and a window has been boarded up. Another contributing property is the electrical power house, built in the 1920s, which stands immediately to the rear of the lightkeeper's house. The gable roof structure measures eight and one-half feet by 12 1/2 feet and is sided in shingles. The shed is no longer in use.

Non-historic (and noncontributing features) include the crew quarters built in the early 1950s and now vacant. The one room frame structure measures 20 feet by 21 feet and is sided in shingles. A two-stall detached garage, measuring 24 feet by 20 feet, is in

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private use. A restroom facility, measuring 12 feet by 16 feet, was recently installed by the parks department to accommodate park visitors.

Both Pierce County Parks and Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma have alternately assumed responsibility for the lighthouse grounds including the buildings since 1964 under an agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard. Picnic tables dot the grounds and it remains a favorite spot for beachgoers. The keeper's house is currently rented to private individuals and their yard is fenced for privacy.

Resource Count

Contributing Buildings: Lighthouse Keeper's Cottage
Boathouse

Contributing Structures: Light Tower
Oil House
Generator House

Noncontributing Buildings: Crews' Quarters
Restrooms

Noncontributing Structures: Garage

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

MARITIME HISTORY
ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1903-1939

Significant Dates

1903, 1933

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Browns Point Lighthouse, Lightkeeper's Cottage, and ancillary structures are significantly associated with transportation and commerce in Commencement Bay, and have served as integral parts of the federal system of navigational aids on Puget Sound since 1903. Architecturally, the cottage is a well preserved example of standard federal design from the period, reflecting the diminutive Neoclassical idiom favored for small residential buildings. Today, the lighthouse grounds retain good integrity, reflecting several phases of the site's history, and are maintained as a public park through the joint cooperation of local parks agencies, the United States Coast Guard, and the Browns Point community.

Historical Background:

Captain George Vancouver and his party are believed to have been the first Europeans to disembark at Brown's Point, coming ashore in May, 1792, during their exploration of Puget Sound. Vancouver wrote that "having passed around the point, we found the inlet to terminate here in an extensive circular, compact bay, whose waters washed the base of Mount Rainier". Impressed by the site, Vancouver remained to share a meal with a group of local Puyallup Indians. Six decades later, with the arrival of American settlers in the area, the Browns Point vicinity (together with a large part of northwestern Pierce County) became part of the 23,000 acre Puyallup Indian reservation, established by the Treaty of Medicine Creek in 1854. The Browns Point area remained reservation property until the late 19th century, when some of the Puyallup lands began to be sold.

Despite its strategic location at the entrance to Commencement Bay, it was not until the late 19th century that the first beacon was erected at Browns Point. In December, 1887, a fixed white light lens lantern was placed on a white post as a navigational aid for ships entering the bay. The development reflected the growing importance of Tacoma and its harbor, by then the terminus of the Northern Pacific Railroad and a growing commercial center in the region.

As shipping activity increased on Puget Sound waters, the Browns Point light station became an important beacon. The light was particularly critical to the "Mosquito Fleet," the hundreds of boats that constituted the short-haul transport system for goods and people prior to the advent of the automobile, trucks and buses. The establishment of a station

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Kellogg, Caroline, "Browns Point Lighthouse: Sentinal for Mariners," Tacoma News Tribune, February 16, 1975
"Land Condemned for Lighthouse," Tacoma Daily Ledger, February 7, 1900.
"Old Browns Point Lighthouse to be Only Memory Soon," Tacoma Daily Ledger, June 4, 1933.
Heilman, Bob, Tacoma Daily Ledger, "Browns Point Lighthouse Keeper...Tells of Early Days on Sound," January 6, 1930.
Morgan, Murray, Puget's Sound: A Narrative of Early Tacoma and the Southern Sound, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1979).

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of property 2.5 acres

Quadrangle Name: Tacoma North Quadrangle Scale: 1:24000

UTM References

A

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5	2	3	9	1	0	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is included in the Browns Point Lighthouse Park and is described thusly: beginning at the northwest intersection of "A" Street and the Park drive parking lot, proceed west along the north edge of the drive and continue west until the shore; follow the shoreline approximately 1000 feet; proceed southerly to point of beginning.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The nominated property is coterminous with the Browns Point Lighthouse Park, and includes the remaining 3-acre site which retains integrity from the period of significance.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill Barkley; edited by Leonard Garfield

organization Points N.E. Historical Society date August 1988

street & number 6602 Spring Street N.E. telephone (206) 927-3329

city or town Tacoma state Washington zip code 98422

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also influenced the location of two docks built nearby: one on the west built by Jerry Meeker, a famous Puyallup Indian, landowner and the developer of the adjacent Browns Point community; and another dock on the east side cove built by Scotsman Captain Matthew McDowell, for his fleet of passenger ships, moored below his home and property.

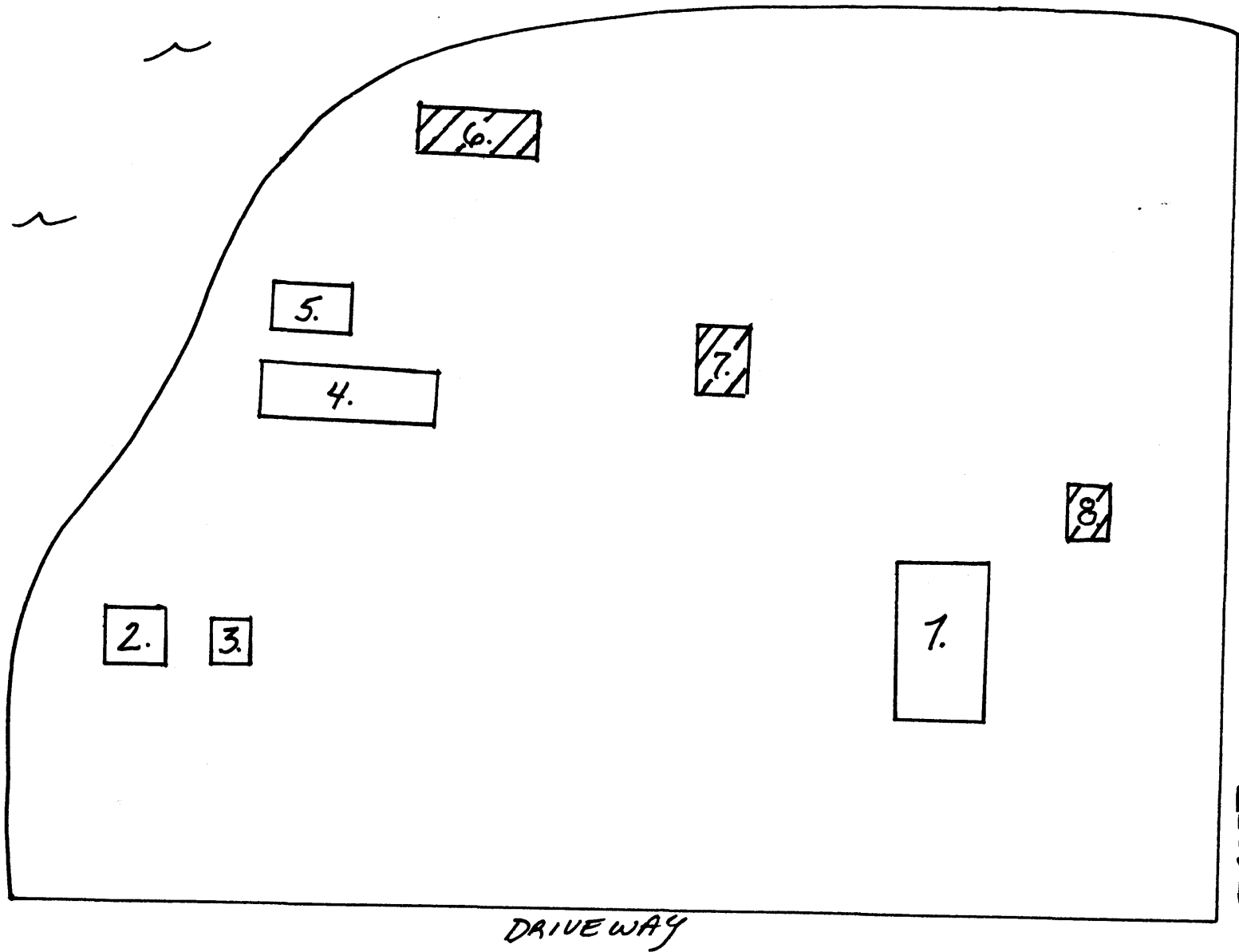
In 1901, the federal government, recognizing the importance of the site as a point of entry into Tacoma Harbor, planned for a more substantial facility, complete with boathouse and keeper's cottage. At that time, Browns Point property was condemned and two property owners received \$1,500 each for the land needed to build a lighthouse. The condemnation was done in accordance with the 1877 Dawes Severalty Act which gave individual land allotments to Indians who had patent deeds to property within the boundaries of the Puyallup reservation.

In October, 1903, the new wooden lighthouse structure was completed under the direction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and was opened at ceremonies presided over by Government Officer Charles C. Calkins (formerly navigating officer aboard Admiral Dewey's flagship Olympia at the battle of Manila Bay). Captain Calkins appointed Oscar V. Brown as the official lighthouse keeper, and Brown served in the position until he retired in 1939.

The light was initially lit with kerosene, then with acetylene light, and the lighthouse bell, cast in Philadelphia in 1852, was operated by clock weights wound by hand every 90 minutes until 1922 when electric power was installed. The old bell was donated to the College of Puget Sound in Tacoma. In 1933, the wooden structure was razed and burned, soon replaced by a new Modernistic style concrete tower, measuring 34 feet high, and a power generator. The tower remains in good condition, although the original light and foghorn were replaced in the 1960s.

Following Oscar Brown's distinguished service, numerous lighthouse keepers served Browns Point for eight hour watches, until 1963, when the U.S. Coast Guard replaced the three-man crew with automated equipment. Candlepower was stepped up from 5,000 to 11,000 and a more powerful foghorn was installed. Still used today, the foghorn is operated by the Point Robinson lighthouse on Maury Island. The present lighthouse also serves as a triangulation point for the U.S. Coast Guard and Geodetic Survey.

A series of lighthouses were constructed under the auspices of the federal government in the early 20th century along the waters of the Puget Sound, and all the other extant facilities are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The property at Browns Point shares many of the same associations as those, and is distinguished by a keeper's cottage executed in the Neoclassical idiom favored by the federal government during the period. The lighthouse, cottage, and ancillary structures retain good integrity and still convey their historic role in assisting the maritime commerce on the Puget Sound.



BROWNS POINT LIGHTHOUSE AND LIGHTKEEPERS' COTTAGE, Tacoma vicinity, Pierce Co., WA

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Keeper's Cottage (Contributing) | 4. Boathouse (Contributing) |
| 2. Light (Contributing) | 5. Oil House (Contributing) |
| 3. Generator House (Contributing) | 6. Restroom (Noncontributing) |
| 7. Crew's Quarters (Noncontributing) | 8. Garage (Noncontributing) |

NOT TO SCALE