

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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AUG 29 1988

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 Whitehead Lifesaving Station

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location South Side, Whitehead Island

street & number South Side, Whitehead Island

N/A not for publication

city, town Sprucehead

X vicinity

state Maine

code ME

county Knox

code 013

zip code 04859

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
<u>1</u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> 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.

Signature of certifying official

James J. Fitzpatrick  
Maine Historic Preservation Commission

S.H.P.O

Date

8/26/88

State or Federal agency and bureau

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:)

Beth R. Savage

10/12/88

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Defense/Coast Guard Facility

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Domestic/Camp**7. Description**

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Stick/EastlakeColonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone/Granitewalls Wood/WeatherboardWood/Shingleroof Asphaltother Decorative brackets and sawndetails on 1874 building**Describe present and historic physical appearance.**

The Whitehead Lifesaving Station is comprised of two contributing buildings and one contributing site, all of which are located on the narrow rectangular parcel historically associated with the complex. There are no noncontributing buildings or structures.

**1874 TYPE DWELLING/BOATHOUSE**

Built in 1874, this combination dwelling and boathouse is the original building erected at the time the station was established. It is an ornate one-story with attic frame structure covered by a gable roof and sheathed in wood shingles and decorative board and batten siding. On the first story the rectangular block is punctuated by a large opening on the north end, single six-over-six windows on both sides and a second pair on the south, ocean side. The upper story has paired windows in each end with pointed arch upper sash. Decorative exterior woodwork includes chamfered and sawn brackets, exposed chamfered purlins, collar braces and narrow board and batten sheathing with the boards terminating at the bottom edge in round sawn members. The interior consists of two open spaces, one on each level.

**CHATHAM TYPE DWELLING**

In 1922 a new dwelling was added to the station as a replacement of the small 1874 building. Unlike its Stick Style counterpart, which was converted solely to use as a boathouse, this new structure is a relatively plain two-story block with a five-bay facade and an entrance porch. The building, which is sheathed in weatherboards and covered by a gable on hip roof, rests on a tall concrete foundation punctuated by windows. Six-over-six windows are used throughout. Square paneled posts support the flat roof of the porch. The interior is unadorned.

**DRILL FIELD**

The drill field is a small open space located about midway between the 1874 and 1922 buildings. Although the exact date of its first use has not been established it is reasonable to assume that it was laid out about 1874. Originally equipped with a pole that served to represent a ship's mast, the site now bears only the base of that pole although the immediate physical surroundings remain unchanged.

**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)

Architecture

Maritime History

Period of Significance

1874, 1922

1874-1938

Significant Dates

1874, 1922

1922

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Chandler, Francis W. (attributed)

Mendelheff, Victor (attributed)

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

Established in 1874 on an island at the southwesterly approach to Penobscot Bay the Whitehead Lifesaving Station consists of the original 1874 building, which is the least altered and best preserved of its type in Maine, as well as a large dormitory added in 1922 and the intervening drill field on which regular practice excercises were undertaken. Taken together, the property represents an important but increasingly threatened aspect of the state's maritime heritage. It meets criteria A and C.

Although the history of organized efforts at lifesaving in the United States can be traced to the eighteenth century, the United States Lifesaving Service was not officially established until June 18, 1878. However, in 1848, Congress had appropriated funds for the construction of stations along the New Jersey coast, and subsequent legislation during the next three decades provided for the establishment of both manned and unmanned stations from Texas to Maine. Throughout the history of the Lifesaving Service it is credited with saving more than 175,000 lives.

Maine's first five lifesaving stations were built in 1873 and 1874. The westernmost section of the State was served by Fletcher's Neck Lifesaving Station (NR, 11/1/74) and the easternmost by the Quoddy Head Station in Lubec. Between these two stations, both located on the mainland, were three island outposts including those at Browney's Island, Cross Island and Whitehead. Stations were subsequently erected in 1879, 1880, 1883 and 1886. Two facilities were built during the 1890's. In all, twelve stations (four of which contained two separate buildings) were established in Maine between the years 1873 and 1929. Of these sixteen structures constructed at the twelve sites, eleven still survive in various states of preservation and reuse, but only one continues to be utilized by the Coast Guard in its original capacity.

The original station design as seen at Whitehead, otherwise known as the 1874 Type, is strongly believed to have been the work of Francis W. Chandler (1844-1926) who was employed in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department at this time. Chandler's architectural background included periods of time spent at MIT, study in Paris and at the office of Ware and Van Brunt in Boston. From 1871 to 1875 Chandler was employed by the Treasury Department. He subsequently removed to Boston

See continuation sheet

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

York, Wick. "The Architecture of The U.S. Life-Saving Stations." The Log of Mystic Seaport. V.34, No. 1. Mystic, CN: Mystic Seaport Museum. 1982.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Maine Lifesaving Stations." Unpublished manuscript prepared for the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Augusta, 1987.

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**

Acreage of property Approximately 4 acres

**UTM References**

A	1 9	4 8 9	3 9 0	4 8 6 9	4 2 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing	
C	1 9	4 8 9	3 2 0	4 8 6 9	0 9 0

B	1 9	4 8 9	4 5 0	4 8 6 9	4 1 0
	Zone	Easting		Northing	
D	1 9	4 8 9	3 1 0	4 8 6 9	2 3 0

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

See map Section 7 page 2

See continuation sheet

**Boundary Justification**

The boundary of the Whitehead Lifesaving Station embraces the buildings and immediate physical setting historically associated with the complex, and that further retain the integrity from the period of significance. Adjacent buildings are not associated with the station and the wooded areas represent new growth.

See continuation sheet

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title	<u>Kirk F. Mohny, Architectural Historian</u>	date	<u>July 1988</u>
organization	<u>Maine Historic Preservation Commission</u>	telephone	<u>207 289-2132</u>
street & number	<u>55 Capitol Street</u>	state	<u>Maine</u>
city or town	<u>Augusta</u>	zip code	<u>04333</u>

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where he taught and practiced architecture until 1911.

In 1922 a new two-story dwelling was built at the Whitehead station and the original building was converted to a boathouse. Designated as the Chatham Type because of its first use on Cape Cod in 1914, this was the last new design introduced to the Service before it merged in 1915 with the Revenue Cutter Service to become the Coast Guard. This station is presumed to have been designed by Victor Mendelheff who became the Service's architect in 1896.

A significant part of the crew's daily routine was devoted to lifesaving drills. One such drill was practiced on the grounds and involved the use of a wreck pole which simulated a ship's mast and a breeches bouy which when attached to a vessel acted as an elevated lifeline. Although the drill pole is no longer standing the field itself remains a visible -- and important -- part of the station's historical significance.

The lifesaving station on Whitehead was still in use as late as 1944 when the Coast Guard conducted a survey of the island. However, it was probably closed shortly thereafter during consolidation of the service. The station was subsequently sold to a private citizen in whose ownership it remains.

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