

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	
DATE ENTERED	

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

## 1 NAME

HISTORIC Sandy Hook Light

AND/OR COMMON Sandy Hook Light

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Fort Hancock

CITY, TOWN Sandy Hook

STATE New Jersey

\_\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 3

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF  
 CODE 34

COUNTY Monmouth  
 CODE 25

## 3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
___ DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	___ AGRICULTURE	___ MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	___ PRIVATE	___ UNOCCUPIED	___ COMMERCIAL	___ PARK
___ STRUCTURE	___ BOTH	___ WORK IN PROGRESS	___ EDUCATIONAL	___ PRIVATE RESIDENCE
___ SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	___ ENTERTAINMENT	___ RELIGIOUS
___ OBJECT	___ IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	___ GOVERNMENT	___ SCIENTIFIC
	___ BEING CONSIDERED	___ YES: UNRESTRICTED	___ INDUSTRIAL	___ TRANSPORTATION
		___ NO	___ MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Lighthouse

## 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Rear Admiral Richard Ross, United States Coast Guard, Commander, 3rd Coast Guard District

STREET & NUMBER U.S. Custom House

CITY, TOWN New York

\_\_\_ VICINITY OF New York

STATE

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Monmouth County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN Freehold

STATE New Jersey

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE 1935, 1937

FEDERAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ COUNTY \_\_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress Annex/ Division of Prints and Photos

CITY, TOWN Washington

STATE D.C.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sandy Hook Light is still housed by the original tower, built by Isaac Contro in 1764. The octagonal structure is nine stories (103') tall and tapers from a base diameter of 29' to a 15' diameter on the top level. The lighthouse is built of brick on a masonry foundation, which walls are 7' at the base. The interior diameter of the tower is constant while the width of the walls tapers. The exterior has been whitewashed.

The lighthouse is entered through a vestibule on the south side and the visitor then proceeds down a short, vaulted hall to the circular iron stairs by which the ascent to the beacon is made with the aid of a rope guy attached with iron rings to the interior wall. The tower is pierced by 13 windows, positioned in a spiral fashion. There are no windows on the north, northeast, south, or southeast sides. The windows are recessed at a standard distance from the exterior wall surface, and as the visitor ascends, their sills which are capped with masonry blocks, grow progressively more shallow.

The circular stairway terminates on the level just below the beacon platform. An iron ladder passes through the brick vaulted ceiling to the glass and steel superstructure which houses the beacon. The 45,000 candlepower beacon is approximately 4' wide and 8' high. The light itself is housed within thick circular glass lens. A circular walkway surrounds the this cupola, with its copper domed roof.

The Sandy Hook Light is located within Fort Hancock Military Reservation in the middle of the peninsula, approximately one mile from the northern tip. New York City is directly to the north, across Lower New York Bay. Approximately 10' southwest of the tower is the former lightkeeper's house, a two-and-a-half story frame house with a hip roof. It has been converted into officers' quarters but is presently unoccupied.

# 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 type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1764      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Sandy Hook Light

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The tall, white lighthouse at Sandy Hook, New Jersey was the fifth lighthouse to be built in America, when erected in 1764, and today is the oldest standing light tower in the United States. Originally called the "New York Lighthouse," its unfailing beam has befriended innumerable vessels as they have passed in or out of New York.

Sandy Hook Light is presently maintained by the United States Coast Guard within the Fort Hancock military reservation.

### HISTORY

In 1761, the merchants of New York City financed a lottery to raise sufficient funds to erect a lighthouse on Sandy Hook, to guide ships past the New Jersey Shoal into New York harbour. Built by Isaac Contro by June 11, 1764, the 105' brick and masonry lighthouse was called the "New York Lighthouse." The cost of construction was defrayed by a 22¢ per ton tax levied on ships entering the harbour.

During the Revolution, the Americans put the light out of operation in March, 1776, so that the British could not benefit from it. However the enemy soon repaired the beacon and despite an attempt to destroy it by cannon fire, by an intrepid band in small boats, the light has remained lit except during the blackouts of the Second World War.

In addition to shining its beacon at night, the lighthouse communicated with lookouts on Staten Island during the day by flying a series of varicoloured shapes on top of the tower, which indicated inbound vessels at the Narrows.

Sandy Hook Light was ceded to the Federal Government in 1789. In 1823 a light ship, the Sandy Hook, was put into operation, to facilitate shipping. A light ship is still in use today, and the lighthouse is no longer listed by the Coast Guard as a seacoast lighthouse. Nonetheless, Sandy Hook Light and its fellow lights at Navesink still shine, warning mariners of the dangerous shoals of the New Jersey coast.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

John T. Cunningham, The New Jersey Shore (New Brunswick, 1958).  
 George Putnam, Lighthouses and Lightships of the United States (Boston, 1933).  
 Edward R. Snow, Famous Lighthouses of America (New York, 1955).  
 U.S. Coast Guard, Historically Famous Lighthouses (Washington, 1957).

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.6 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	1	8	5	8	4	5	7	0	4	4	7	9	2	7	0		
	ZONE		EASTING			NORTHING				ZONE		EASTING			NORTHING		
C									D								

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION The Sandy Hook Light is situated on a triangular plot of land in the fork of two roads which provide access to Fort Hancock (roads A & B in the enclosed sketch map). Beginning at the junction of Roads A & B, proceed north along the east curb of Road A for 375', thence due east to the west curb of Road B, thence south 375' along said curb to the point of origin.

These boundaries enclose the lighthouse and the keeper's house while excluding the post-historic features of the military reservation.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Review Task Force

ORGANIZATION Historic Sites Survey

STREET & NUMBER 1100 L. Street, NW.

CITY OR TOWN Washington

DATE 6/16/73  
 TELEPHONE 202-523-5464  
 STATE D.C.  
 Landmark Designated: JAN. 29, 1964 date  
 Boundary Certified: George J. ...  
May 23, 1987

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL    STATE    LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER	
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION	DATE <u>12/7/73</u>
ATTEST:	DATE
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER	

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

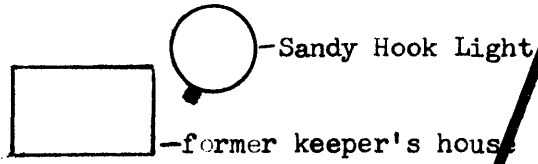
(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))



Road A

Road B



Landmark Boundary  
shown in red.

not drawn to scale