



U.S. Coast Guard Historian's Office

Preserving Our History For Future Generations

Cut-off Channel Range Front Light Station's National Register of Historic Places Nomination

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Cut-off Channel Range Front Light Station

other names/site number: also called New Cut-off Channel, Craighill Channel Upper Front Range, Fort Howard, and North Point Lighthouse. (BA-1552)

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2. Location

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street & number: N/A not for publication: N/A

city or town: near Fort Howard. vicinity X

state: Maryland code: MD county: Baltimore code: 005

zip code: N/A

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3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination 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,



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the property meets the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant statewide. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Captain, U. S. Coast Guard,

Chief, Office of Civil Engineering 2/22/02

Signature of certifying official Date

Department of Transportation, U.S. Coast Guard

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

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I, hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register _____

___ See continuation sheet.

___ determined eligible for the _____

National Register

___ See continuation sheet.



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___ determined not eligible for the _____

National Register

___ removed from the National Register _____

___ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private

___ public-local

___ public-State

X public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

___ building(s)

___ district

___ site

X structure

___ object

Number of Resources within Property



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Contributing Noncontributing

_____ buildings

_____ sites

1 _____ structures

_____ objects

1 0 Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Light Stations of the United States

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6. Function or Use

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Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: transportation Sub: water-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: transportation Sub: water-related

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7. Description

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Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions):

No Style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions):



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foundation: stone

roof: metal

walls: brick

other:

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property.)¹

Description Summary

The Cut-off Channel Front Range Light Station is a two-story octagonal brick tower built on the former stone foundation of the 1822 North Point Lighthouse. The light is located in the top of the brick tower at an elevation of 15 feet above the water. It works in tandem with the rear range light guiding vessels into a cut-off channel into the Patapsco River inside Seven Foot Knoll Lighthouse, cutting several miles off the route to Baltimore. The front range light is located within 350 feet off North Point; 1.3 miles southeast of the rear range light, on the north side of mouth of Patapsco River, near Fort Howard, Baltimore County, Maryland. It is owned and managed by the U.S. Coast Guard in District 5. Access to the station is via boat.

General Description

Existing Structures

In 1886, the new Cut-off Channel Range Front light was built on a 30-foot square, stone foundation pier originally built for the 1822 North Point Lighthouse. The foundation pier is capped with concrete. The two-story 22-foot-tall 12-foot square brick tower with truncated corners, has a round arched door opening on the east (landward) side and similarly arched windows on the south facade and similar window niches on the north and west principal facades. The south window has been filled to look like the niches. The window was a two-over-two round head double-hung sash unit. There are three windows and one niche on the second-story. They are simple rectangular openings found only on the principal facades. They have jack arch lintels. The truncated corner facades have no fenestration. The door and window heads and arches are decorated with molded brick. The door, located on the east side, is a four-panel wooden bull nosed arched door. There are two stone steps and a stone threshold below the door. The sills of the door, window, and niches are stone masonry.



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The upper east and west windows still have their original wood bi-fold storm shutters. These shutters are missing on the east window, but its original two-over-two window sash is in good condition. The sash on the west window has been removed and replaced with plywood. The ceiling on the second-level is tongue-and-groove board. A decorative brick belt course is located approximately mid-height of the tower between the two stories. A similar decorative brick belt with the same pattern is found around the upper two-thirds of the lower level but is interrupted by the fenestration. At the roofline are four corbel brick courses; the top course is rounded. The roof is a shallow pyramid standing seam metal roof surmounted with a ventilator ball and lightning conductor spike. The range light is mounted on the exterior wall just above the top of the decorated brick belt between the first and second story. An exterior ladder from the foundation/pier level up to a small metal balcony with rail provides access to the range light. The brick tower is painted red with a white band one-third of the height in width located in the middle of the tower. The door is also painted white.

The floor of the lower interior level is brick masonry pavers laid in a herringbone pattern. The wood wallboards have been removed exposing the brick walls. The ceiling is tongue-and-groove board. A set of stairs leading to the second-level are located against the west and north wall. It is made of wood treads and risers, round wood balusters, and a half-round wood handrail. A closet is set under the stairwell. It is made from the same material as the ceiling. The door is missing. A sash storm pane is stored here. The range beacon is mounted on a wood pedestal next to the south window.

Previously Existing Structures

A keeper's quarters was built on shore in 1885, but abandoned in 1893 when a storm washed away the connecting bridge to the lighthouse. The lighthouse was fitted with a keeper's quarters and a boat. One report states the lighthouse was torn down in the late 1930s, and the present brick tower was built in 1938 to replace it. The present tower appears to be the original 1886 tower. The confusion is apparently due to differences given for the height of the tower over time. The height of the tower is given in the 1896 Light List as 18 feet and in the 1994 Light List as 22 feet.²

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8. Statement of Significance

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Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)



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A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes

B removed from its original location

C a birthplace or a grave

D a cemetery

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure

F a commemorative property

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions):

Maritime History

Transportation

Architecture

Period of Significance: 1886-19293

Significant Dates: 1886, 1929

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above): N/A



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Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Known Design Source: none

Architect/Builder: unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property.)

The Lighthouse is significant for its association with federal governmental efforts to provide an integrated system of navigational aids and to provide for safe maritime transportation in the Chesapeake Bay, a major transportation corridor for commercial traffic from the early nineteenth through twentieth centuries. The lighthouse embodies a distinctive design and method of construction that typified range light construction on the Chesapeake Bay during the second half of the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century.

History

Congress appropriated \$25,000 on March 3, 1885, for range lights to be erected at the "new cut-off from Craighill Channel, approaches to Baltimore." Work on the front beacon and dwelling began in September 1885. It was first proposed to use the rear tower of the old North Point Range as the front beacon for the new Cut-off Channel Range Light Station, but careful examination showed it was unsuitable for the purpose. Plans were, therefore, drawn up for a new brick tower, octagonal in shape, to be built on the old stone foundation of the North Point Lighthouse. The onshore dwellings for both the front and rear range were built according to a cottage plan, similar to those constructed at Cape Henry Light Station, Virginia. Workmen were transported from Baltimore and back by the steam launch Nettle. Both beacons were first lighted on January 15, 1886, even though all the work on the dwellings was not yet complete. All work was completed by the end of June. The "locomotive head-lights" were white, and the front range was 25 feet above the water.⁴

In 1888, about 200 feet of pipe was laid to drain the cellar of the dwelling. Two new boat davits were erected and various minor repairs were made. The owner of the adjoining land declined to allow the light keeper access over his property so the gate opening to this land was closed, and the gate moved near the waterfront where the Government owned a right of way. In 1890, the roof of the dwelling and one boat davit was repaired and a new "boat-hoister" installed. A 450-linear-foot picket fence with two double and two single gates was built; brick walks were laid between and around the buildings and to the edge of the lot; 100 feet of drain pipe was installed; roof, gutters and down spouts were repaired; papering was removed from the walls and painted; and 17 window and 2 door screens were installed. The station was described as "in excellent condition."⁵



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On August 28, 1893, a "severe storm" carried away the timber and stone bridge, which connected the front beacon, located about 850 feet offshore, with land, and washed out the strip of land originally purchased for a means of communication between the beacon and the keeper's dwelling onshore. Instead of rebuilding the bridge and purchasing a new right of way, it was decided to fit the beacon for the occupancy of the keeper. To make room for the keeper's quarters, the lamp was moved from inside the tower to an exterior iron platform. In addition, a "suitable" boat and boat landing with davits was fitted to the foundation pier. These changes were completed in October 1893. In 1894, an iron oil house with a capacity for 55 five-gallon cans was erected. In July 1902, a new summer kitchen was installed and minor repairs made. The light was supplied with electricity on November 28, 1929 and has been unmanned since.⁶

The "locomotive" type light is now replaced with a DCB 24. The light characteristic is fixed red.⁷

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Clifford, Candace. 1994 Inventory of Historic Light Stations. Department of Interior, National Park Service, History Division, Washington, D.C., 1994.

de Gast, Robert. The Lighthouses of the Chesapeake. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1973.

Holland, F. Ross, Jr. Maryland Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay: An Illustrated History. Maryland Historical Trust, Crownsville, Maryland, in press.

Turbyville, Linda. Bay Beacons: Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay. Eastwind Publishing, Annapolis, Maryland, 1995.

U.S. Lighthouse Board. Annual Reports, 1885-1902. Department of Commerce and Labor, Washington, D.C., 1885-1902.

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

___ previously listed in the National Register



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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

Name of repository: National Archives; Library of Congress; National Maritime Initiative, National Park Service; U.S. Coast Guard Headquarter, Historian's Office, Washington, D.C.

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10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of Property: Less than one acre

USGS Quadrangle: Sparrows Point, MD

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing

18 374900 4339430

Boundary Description:



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All that area encompassed within the square footprint of the 1822 stone foundation/pier of the North Point Front Range Light Station. The boundary is coterminous with the foundation.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary incorporates the entire foundation pier of the 1822 North Point Range Light upon which the 1938 New Cut-off Front Range tower was built.

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11. Form Prepared By

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name/title: Ralph E. Eshelman, Maritime Historian; originally prepared for the Maryland Historical Trust as part of a multiple property nomination for Maryland Lighthouses; reformatted in May 1998 by Candace Clifford, NCSHPO consultant to the National Maritime Initiative, as part of a multiple property documentation form for U.S. Coast Guard-owned light stations; edited and revised in August 2002 by Jennifer Perunko, NCSHPO Consultant, National Maritime Initiative, National Park Service

organization: Eshelman & Associates

date: March 13, 1996

street & number: 12178 Preston Dr.

city or town: Lusby state: MD zip code: 20657

telephone: 410-326-4877

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Property Owner

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name: U. S. Coast Guard, Fifth District

street & number: Federal Building, 431 Crawford Street



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city or town: Portsmouth state: Virginia zip code: 23705-5004

telephone: (757) 398-6351

Notes:

1 The following description and associated photographs were reviewed in August 2002 by a US Coast Guard Aid to Navigation team responsible for the property. A document verifying that the description and associated photographs reflect the current condition of the property is on file with the Office of Civil Engineering, US Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, DC.

2 Robert de Gast, *The Lighthouses of the Chesapeake* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1993), p. 99 gives the height of the tower as 27 feet. This apparently led him to believe a new shorter tower was built in the 1930s. Clifford gives the date for this tower as 1938. Linda Turbyville, *Bay Beacons: Lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay* (Eastwind Publishing: Annapolis, 1995), p. 27 disputes such a date.

3 The period of significance is based on the period during which the light station was "manned;" i.e., from completion of construction until automation.

4 Lighthouse Board, Annual Report, 1885, p. 49; and 1886, p. 48.

5 Lighthouse Board, Annual Report, 1888, p. 83; and 1890, p. 99.

6 Lighthouse Board, Annual Report, 1894, p. 97; 1895, p. 101; and 1902, p. 126; and "Chesapeake Bay Lighthouses," Gredell & Associates, Structural Engineers, Wilmington, Delaware, 1991, p. 55.

7 Candace Clifford. 1994 Inventory of Historic Light Stations. Department of Interior, National Park Service, History Division, Washington, D.C., 1994, p. 126.

NPS Form 10-900 USD/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86) OMB No. 1024-0018

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



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