NPS Form 10-900-a
(3-82)

OMB No. 1024-0018
Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only
received AUG 25 1987
date entered

NAME: Dutch Island Lighthouse

LOCATION: South end of Dutch Island
Jamestown, Rhode Island
Newport County

CLASSIFICATION

Category - building(s)
Ownership - public
Status - unoccupied
Accessible - yes, unrestricted
Present Use - park, other: abandoned

OWNER OF PROPERTY

State of Rhode Island
Department of Environmental Management
83 Park Street
Providence, RI

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

Registry of Deeds
Jamestown Town Hall
71 Narragansett Avenue
Jamestown, RI 02835

REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

none

DESCRIPTION

Condition - deteriorated / altered / original site

Dutch Island Light stands on a small rock outcropping at the southern tip of the island and marks the entrance to Dutch Island Harbor at the west side of Jamestown. The site is no longer active or used.

Although a light was first established on the island in 1826, the present structure dates from 1857. The tower, a small one-story cement fuel storage outbuilding, a cement cistern, and part of a boat launching ramp are the only structures on the site which survive today. A keeper's dwelling attached to the tower, also built in 1857, and a boathouse were torn down after the light was automated in 1947.

The two-story brick dwelling featured a two-bay-by-two-bay square plan with six-over-six windows, topped with a hipped roof and a center chimney. Attached to the back of the dwelling was a small one-story, hip-roofed addition with an attached shed roof addition, both clapboarded. Built in the Greek Revival Style, it closely resembled the dwelling at Lime Rock in Newport Harbor, which was also comleted in 1857.

The surviving tower, 13-feet-square in plan and painted white, is also constructed of brick. It stands three stories high with window openings in the west and east side of each level. Those on the first and second floor of the east side have been bricked over.

A recently installed iron door on the north side leads to a wooden stairway which connects a single room at each of the three levels. The inside walls are finished with lath and plaster.

The lantern is of the same design as the one used at Newport Harbor. Painted black, it features a surrounding band of iron at the bottom half with twelve triangular panes of glass above, each held in place by a cast-iron frame. An iron balustrade surrounds the square gallery deck while a cast-iron ventilator, with a lightning rod spike at the top, caps the lantern. The lamp has been removed, but when it was active the fixed white light was 54 feet above sea level and could be seen for eleven miles.

The tower and its outbuilding is deeteriorated. The tower is unsecured, some of the panes of glass in the lantern have been

broken, and the window sash are missing from the top floor, leaving the openings uncovered. Inside, the effects of weather, birds, and vandals are evident. Much of the plaster and lath has either fallen down or been torn down. The roofing over much of the outbuilding has blown off and its windows and doors no longer survive.

SIGNIFICANCE
Period: 1800-1899 Specific Dates: 1827, 1857

Established in 1827 as the sixth lighthouse in Rhode Island, Dutch Island Light is significant for its role in the history of commerce and transportation in the state. The light was only the second to be built on Narragansett Bay and although the present lighthouse replaced an earlier one on the same site, the station served longer than any other presently deactivated light in the state. The light served to guide ships entering Dutch Island Harbor at the west end of Jamestown, including the Jamestown-to-Saunderstown ferry and was an important navigational mark for vessels trying to avoid Dutch Island while travelling up the Bay's west passage.

In 1825 the State of Rhode Island ceded to the United States government land at the southern tip of Dutch Island for establishing a lighthouse. Construction began soon after, and the light was first lit on January 1, 1827. During an 1844 inspection of the light, the Lighthouse Service superintendant described its condition as "the worst constructed of any in the state." Six years later and again in 1855 it was reported to be in poor condition and badly in need of repair. Instead of undertaking the necessary work, Congress appropriated $4,000 for a new tower and dwelling, both completed in 1857. The earlier structure was then torn down.

Numerous minor repairs and additions took place over the years. In 1867 a new cast-iron deck plate gallery and a wrought iron railing were installed at the top of the tower. A boathouse, also built in 1867, was destroyed by a storm two years later. Another was built in 1894 and still another in 1939. None of these survives, but part of the launching ramp for the most recent boathouse, located on a small cove to the north of the light, remains. In 1878 the station was equipped with a machine operated fog bell mounted outside the lantern on the gallery deck.

The light was unmanned and automated in 1947, and the keeper's dwelling was torn down shortly thereafter. In 1979, after 152 years of service, the station was deactivated and the property and remaining buidings passed to the Department of Environmental Management of the State of Rhode Island which has been responsible for the site since that time. The light has been abandoned since 1979, but the surviving buildings at the station, as well as Dutch Island itself, have been included in

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the recently created Bay Islands State Park.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
Acreage: Less than .5 acre
Quadrangle Name: Narragansett Pier
Quadrangle Scale: 1:24,000

UTM References: A 19 299290 4596350

Verbal Boundary Description: The nominated property is Jamestown Assessor's plat 9, lot 807, which encompasses the entire resource and its immediate setting.

Level of Significance: State
SHPO Certification:

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PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The period of significance extends from 1857, the date of construction, to 1878, when the last significant alteration (installation of a fog bell) was completed.