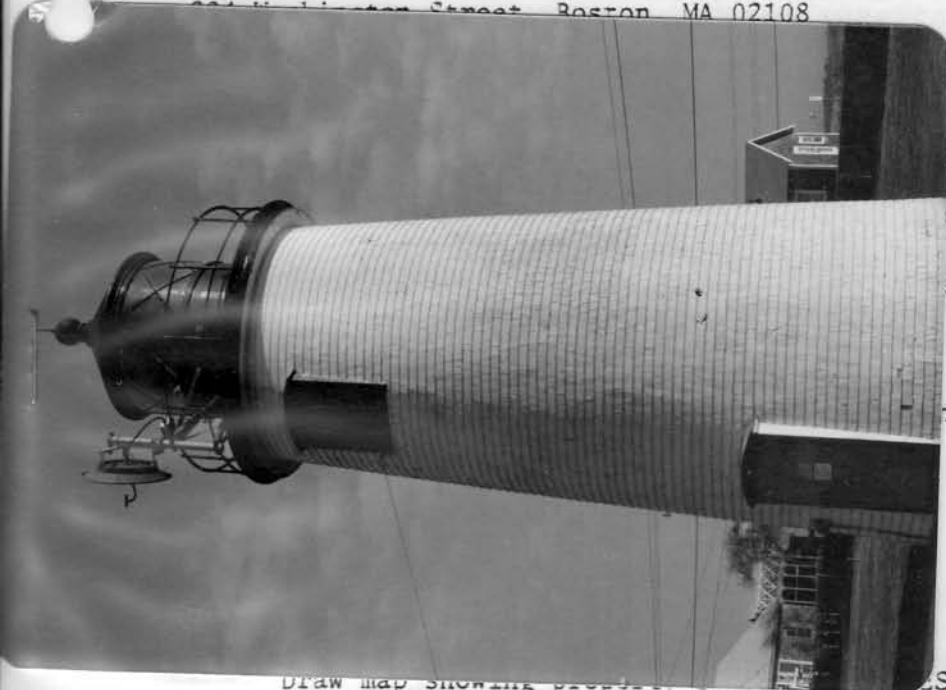


FORM B - BUILDING

Area	Form no.
	357

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
224 Washington Street Boston MA 02108



City Newburyport

Address Plum Island

Historic Name _____

Original Lighthouse

Present Lighthouse

Ownership: Private individual
 Private organization _____

Public U.S. Government

Original owner U.S. Government

Draw map showing property location in relation to nearest cross streets and other buildings or geographical features. Indicate north.



DESCRIPTION:

Date 1898

Source Currier, History of Nbpt.

Style _____

Architect Unknown

Exterior wall fabric Wood Shingle

Outbuildings _____

Major alterations (with dates) _____

Moved _____ Date _____

Approx. acreage 2.13 acres

Setting located in the compound of the Parker River Wildlife Refuge

Headquarters at the mouth of the Merrimack River.

Recorded by Scott Ackerly

Organization Office of Community Development

Date 11-8-80

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (describe important architectural features and evaluate in terms of other buildings within community)

The lighthouse is as it was rebuilt in 1898. Today it has a cylindrical shaped base narrowing at it rises. The exterior is covered with shingles. There are two windows and a door in the base. These each have a frame which is topped by a thin Italianate arch with a dentil molding. This is the only noteworthy architectural detail on the building. The building is well maintained and is still operated by the United States Government.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE (explain the role owners played in local or state history and how the building relates to the development of the community)

The first lighthouse at the mouth of the Merrimack River was built on Plum Island in 1783, by private contributions from the merchants of Newburyport. In 1786, this lighthouse was destroyed in a storm and the United States Government constructed two new lighthouses. President Washington appointed Abner Lowell as the lighthouse keeper on June 10, 1790. For the next 47 years, three generations of the Lowell family would fill the same post. Abner was followed by his son Lewis Lowell and by Lewis' son Joseph Lowell. One of the 1786 lighthouses was destroyed by fire in 1856.

Plum Island is a barrier reef and therefore subject to changing land masses caused by the ocean waves and the current at the mouth of the Merrimack River. By 1874 the land mass had changed so that the remaining lighthouse had to be moved. This was accomplished in that year. In 1898, this lighthouse was rebuilt. Today the lighthouse appears much as it did in 1898. It is still functioning.

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