

Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex, 6204 Hylan Boulevard, Staten Island
Built: Lighthouse, 1864; Keeper's House, 1868; Carriage House, 1869
Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island Block 7644, Lot 100 in part

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 7644, Lot 100 in part, consisting of the land on which the buildings are situated.

On September 13, 1966, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Prince's Bay Lighthouse and Keepers House. The hearing was duly advertised according to the provisions of law. No one testified for or against designation at that hearing.

On October 22, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on the Backlog Initiative Items in the Borough of Staten Island, including the Prince's Bay Lighthouse and Keepers House, (Item 3-Borough of Staten Island Group 3, G). The hearing was duly advertised according to the provisions of law. The owner, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, sent a letter of support. At that hearing six people testified in favor of the proposed designation of the Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, the Preservation League of Staten Island, the National Lighthouse Museum, the New York Landmarks Conservancy, the Four Boroughs Neighborhood Preservation, and the Victorian Society of New York. The Commission also received several letters in favor of designation.

Summary

The Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex is one of New York City's oldest surviving lighthouse complexes. For over 100 years it served a critical role in guiding ships sailing along the coast of Staten Island bound for ports in New York and New Jersey. Prince's Bay Lighthouse and Keeper's House is the only lighthouse complex within the five boroughs to be constructed largely of rusticated brownstone. The Lighthouse Complex was built as part of the federal government's



efforts to provide an integrated system of navigational aids throughout the United States in the early 19th through 20th centuries. The federal Lighthouse Board, charged with expanding and upgrading navigational aids along America's coasts, appropriated \$30,000 to build Prince's Bay Lighthouse in 1864. The complex replaced an earlier wood lighthouse originally located on the site that was deemed obsolete. The Lighthouse was built to provide safe maritime transportation in New York Harbor, which contained the nation's leading port from the early 19th through the mid-20th centuries. It is one of eight extant lighthouses in Staten Island and the second oldest in the borough.

The Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex, historically known as the Red Bank Lighthouse, is located on the shore of Prince's Bay near the southern tip of Staten Island and stands on one of the highest bluffs on the southern shoreline. The vernacular with Italianate style elements two-story brownstone Keeper's House was built in 1868 next to the Lighthouse and connected by a 15-foot long passageway. An additional, one-story fieldstone Carriage House was built in 1869, just west of the Keeper's House. The Lighthouse was fitted with a 3.5 order Fresnel lens, and in 1890 was refitted with a fourth order lens that showed a white flashing light.

The Lighthouse served as the primary navigational aide for the local maritime traffic, fishermen and oystermen working the oyster beds along Arthur Kill and Raritan Bay. Oyster farming was a major industry for Staten Island during the 1800s and fueled the growing economy.

The Lighthouse was decommissioned in 1922, and was purchased in 1926 by Mount Loretto, the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin. The institution, which started as an orphanage for street boys, maintained the Lighthouse and surrounding land near the cliffs, removed the lantern and replaced it with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was used it as a summer retreat for Archbishop of New York, Cardinal John J. O'Connor from 1988 until his death in 2000, and dedicated in his honor in 2007.

In 1999, the Trust for Public Land, New York State purchased the lighthouse property and 194 acres on the Raritan Bay side of Hylan Boulevard. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation manages the property as a nature preserve, the Mount Loretto Unique Area. The Prince's Bay Lighthouse is a prominent and dramatic feature on Staten Island, overlooking Raritan Bay, and represents the maritime industry that once thrived on Staten Island.

Building and Site Description

The Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex is located along the South Shore of Staten Island on a high bluff overlooking Raritan Bay. The Complex contains three primary structures; the Lighthouse, constructed in 1864; the Keeper's House, constructed in 1868, which is connected to a one-story, 15-foot long passageway and the Carriage House constructed in 1869.

The Lighthouse is approximately 40 feet tall, and is constructed of rusticated brownstone. The Lighthouse is circular in plan and vertically organized according to the tripartite division of the classical column—base, shaft and capital. The Keeper's House is a vernacular with Italianate style elements two-and-a-half-story, rusticated brownstone dwelling, with an attached one-story, 15-foot long connecting passageway. The Carriage House is a one-story fieldstone structure with Italianate style elements.

Lighthouse tower:

Historic Features: 40 foot tall rusticated brownstone circular lighthouse tower; rusticated brownstone base and wide brownstone water table; tower base is 14 feet 6 inches in diameter and tapers to 11 feet in diameter under coping tower; three windows at the southern exposure, two possibly historic multi-paned windows at second and third landings; coved brownstone cornice with a cast-iron gallery and railings with ball finials

Alterations: one window replaced; lantern room removed; part of lantern gallery infilled with metal; small beacon light; non-historic light fixtures between first-and-second-level at southern and eastern exposures

Keeper's House:

Front (South) facade

Historic Features: two-and-a-half-story rusticated brownstone dwelling; wide rusticated brownstone base, and wide stone water table; open-gable roof; wood architrave cornice on the east and west facades; projecting brownstone entrance with angled pediment and flared eaves; segmental-arched transom at main entrance; multi-pane windows at first and second floors, with brownstone lintels and sills; 1868 brownstone date plaque above second-floor windows; small multi-pane center gable window with brownstone lintel and sill

Alterations: main entrance double-leaf door replaced; second-story windows replaced; metal balcony added and center window converted to doorway at second story; aluminum screen door; gable window replaced; electrical conduit above second-floor windows; non-historic light fixtures at first floor above main entrance, and at both, east and west corners of façade at second floor; satellite dish at southeast corner of second-floor balcony; metal gutters and leader; both chimneys replaced; raised angled bluestone step and deck with concrete base, runs from the first-floor window to lighthouse tower

East facade

Historic Features: two-and-a-half-story rusticated brownstone façade partially obscured at first floor by historic one-story, 15-foot long passageway that leads to Lighthouse tower; wide rusticated brownstone base, and wide stone water table; windows at first and second floors have rusticated brownstone lintels and stone sills

Alterations: one-story addition with stone base and wood clapboard façade; wood cornice; wood door with aluminum screen door and metal mesh screen insert; two, small one-over-one windows, non-historic light fixture; large, raised bi-level wood deck, and banister; wood post footings; wood lattice work infill; concrete step; wood stairs and railings; metal gutters and leader

North facade

Historic Features: two-and-a-half-story rusticated brownstone façade; wide rusticated brownstone base, and wide stone water table; open-gable roof, and wood architrave cornice; small multi-pane, center gable window with brownstone lintels and sills; façade partially obscured at first floor by historic one-story addition with rusticated brownstone base with wide stone band, contains center basement window with brownstone lintel and sill; first-floor multi-pane center window with brownstone lintel and sill

Alterations: large, raised bi-level wood deck, and banister; wood post footings; wood lattice work infill; concrete step; wood stairs and railings; basement window infilled with wood and capped metal pipe; center window replaced; non-historic light fixture in architrave; metal fuel tank rests on concrete slab; raised concrete storm cellar with metal hatch; electrical conduit pipes; metal gutters and leader; one-story angled wood addition with concrete base; raised angled concrete deck; four tall sliding-glass doors; wide wood cornice and metal gutters; non-historic light fixture above; chimney replaced

West facade

Historic Features: two-and-a-half-story rusticated brownstone façade; wide rusticated brownstone base, and wide stone water table; multi-pane first-floor window with rusticated brownstone lintel and sill; two, second-story multi-pane windows with rusticated brownstone lintels and sills; wood architrave cornice

Alterations: one-story wood angled addition with concrete base; six tall sliding-glass doors; wide wood cornice with metal gutters; non-historic light fixture above doors; chimney replaced

Passageway:

South facade

Historic Features: one-story 15-foot long and six-foot wide passageway, with rusticated brownstone base and wide stone water table; center multi-pane window with rusticated brownstone lintel and stone sill; wood cornice

North facade

Historic Features: one-story, 15-foot long and six-foot wide passageway, with rusticated brownstone base and wide stone water table; wood cornice window with rusticated brownstone lintel and stone sill; wood cornice

Alterations: façade painted; window replaced; one-story addition; domed metal exhaust vent at roofline

Carriage House:

North facade

Historic Features: one-story fieldstone structure, gable roof with deep wood eaves; segmental-arched entrance; first-floor multi-pane wood window with wide stone lintel and stone sill; brownstone 1869 date plaque, below second-floor gable window

Alterations: façade repointed; secondary entrance infilled; window replaced

Front (east) facade

Historic Features: one-story fieldstone structure, gable roof with deep wood eaves; segmental-arched entrance; segmental-arched multi-pane wood window

Alterations: portions of façade repointed; wood garage entrance extension; non-historic garage-door; main entrance door replaced; electrical conduit; non-historic light fixture above garage door

West facade

Historic Features: segmental-arched multi-pane wood window; brick end-wall chimney; remainder of the façade is partially obscured by bushes.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Prince's Bay¹

Prince's Bay, a few miles east of the southern tip of Staten Island, is a gently curving inlet of the Raritan Bay. Its brackish waters are created by the joining of the fresh waters of the Raritan River, the Arthur Kill, and Lemon Creek, with the salt waters of the Atlantic Ocean.

Long before Europeans settled on Staten Island, Native Americans knew the inlet as a fine fishing ground, especially for its shellfish including both clams and oysters. By the 19th century, Prince's Bay had become the focal point of a major oyster industry. Prince's Bay oysters were sought out by discerning diners throughout the nation and even as far away as London, England.²

It is not known who gave Prince's Bay its name, or exactly when. The name appears on maps created during the American Revolution. The inlet may be named for the Prince of Orange (1650-1702), the Dutch soldier-prince who ascended the throne of England as William III in 1689. He and his wife Mary ruled England as joint sovereigns.³

The Prince's Bay Lighthouse, sitting on its high bluff, marks the western point of the bay.⁴ This land had been a part of the holdings of Cornelius Dissoway Sr., (d.1785), a direct descendant of Mark Dissoway (Dusochany, Dusway), who petitioned successfully for land grants in 1684.⁵ Cornelius Sr.'s property was inherited by his two sons, Cornelius and Israel R. In 1801, the brothers partitioned their property; Israel received the land on which this lighthouse complex is located. Israel R. Dissoway was a cabinet maker and farmer who married Ann Oakley; together they had four children. Several, but not all, of the 18th and early 19th -century residents in the Prince's Bay area owned slaves, the 1820 Federal census documents that Israel Dissoway owned one male slave.⁶

Israel's widow, Ann sold eight-and-three-quarter acres of land to the United States Lighthouse Service in 1826.⁷

A lighthouse had been erected and was in operation on this site by 1828. Situated on an 85 foot bluff, called "Red Bank," at Prince's Bay that was used to guide vessels from the mid-channel of the Raritan River out to New York Bay. The original lighthouse was a 30-foot high wood structure, constructed on a rubble stone base and exhibited a fixed light from a total of 106 feet above sea level. In 1857 this lighthouse was upgraded with a 3.5-order Fresnel lens displaying a flashing white light every two seconds. The Fresnel Lenses could be easily adapted to project a more intense light that could be viewed from further distances, and could be adjusted to make it an easily recognizable beacon.⁸ By 1863, a wood-framed tower was built to temporarily replace the original tower due to its poor condition.

The Design and Construction of the Prince's Bay Lighthouse and Keeper's House

The Prince's Bay Light House Complex was built as a part of the federal government's efforts to provide an integrated system of navigational aid throughout the country. Starting in 1852, the federal Lighthouse Board undertook an ambitious program to expand and upgrade navigational aids along all of America's coasts. Prince's Bay Lighthouse was built in 1864 with \$30,000 the board appropriated to replace the earlier wood lighthouse that was deemed obsolete. Once the construction of the more substantial 40-foot tall round rusticated brownstone tower was completed, the Fresnel lenses from the wood lighthouse were transferred from the temporary tower.⁹ The Prince's Bay Lighthouse provided navigational aid to boats in the New York Harbor from 1864 to 1922 during its heyday as the nation's leading port. It is one of eight extant Lighthouses in Staten Island and the second oldest in the borough.

The Prince's Bay Lighthouse is terrestrial (onshore) of standard design. It is conical in shape, being wider at the base at 14 foot 6 inches in diameter, and narrowing under the coping tower to 11 feet. The Lighthouse contained a cast-iron staircase that wound around the central pillar, leading up to the lantern room, which is no longer extant.

The Keeper's House was constructed next to the tower in 1868. The two-story vernacular house has Italianate style elements with rusticated brownstone. It has an open-gable roof; wood architrave cornice on the east-and-west facades and a projecting brownstone entrance with angled pediment with a segmental-arched entrance and flared eaves. A 15-foot long and six-foot wide brownstone passageway connects the cottage to the lighthouse, which doubled as an oil storage room. A one-story fieldstone carriage house was built in 1869, is similar in design, echoing the open-gable roof and deep eaves and segmental-arched entrances.

History of the Lighthouse Service¹⁰

The growth and prosperity of the United States depended on the safe navigation of waterways leading to the busiest port cities, including New York City. Lighted beacons helped to safely guide water crafts along coastal waters. The first lighthouse was erected in 1716, on Great Brewster Island, one of the Boston Harbor Islands in Massachusetts. Prior to the founding of the United States, navigational aids were built, owned, operated, and financially supported by individual colonies or territories. Operating independently of a centralized governing body, the lighthouses lacked operational uniformity, which impacted the safety of the mariners, their ships, and cargo.¹¹ In 1789, President George Washington urged Congress to make lighthouses a national priority. Congress passed the "Lighthouse Bill," which placed all existing lighthouses under federal control on August 7, 1789. It also created an administrative unit of the federal government to address navigation aids along American coasts. The 1789 act placed the care and administration of the Lighthouse Establishment under the Treasury Department. As the first Secretary of the Treasury duty was passed to Alexander Hamilton, designated as the first superintendent of Lighthouses, who directed

personally all the details of lighthouse work. During the early years President George Washington took an active role in overseeing the national lighthouses.¹²

The Lighthouse Service was later transferred to the Commissioner of Revenue, and then to the Treasury Department. Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin took an active role in lighthouse administration and during his tenure from 1801 to 1814 one or two lighthouses were constructed per year. During this era, cut stones and bricks were used for the first time, allowing taller and stronger towers to be constructed.¹³

The U.S. Congress divided the country into eight lighthouse districts in 1838, and gave a naval officer in each district the job of examining each lighthouse and making recommendations for new ones. The Third Lighthouse District consisted of parts of New Jersey, New York, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Each year the Lighthouse Service reported to Congress on its accomplishments for the year. The country was later divided into 12 new lighthouse districts, each with an inspector responsible for overall construction, maintenance, and purchasing. In 1886 the lighthouse districts were increased to 16. One of the densest concentrations of lights along the East Coast was where the Atlantic Ocean joined New York Bay.

A special committee of professionals, appointed by Congress conducted an investigation into the lighthouse system and found it was completely insufficient in 1851. And in 1852, Congress created a nine-member Lighthouse Board, comprised of experienced military officers, engineers, and seamen that took charge of the Lighthouse Service and immediately embarked on an ambitious program aimed at expanding and upgrading navigational aids along all of America's coasts. As a part of the renovation most lighthouses were fitted with new Fresnel lenses, some of these lenses that were installed before the Civil War are still in use today. Under this program other lighthouses received upgrades in the form of new foundations or protection from coastal erosion, but the Prince's Bay Lighthouse was completely rebuilt.

History of Lighthouse Design

Lighthouses are objects of navigation, serving as a guide to vessels. Each lighthouse built in the United States is unique, early mariners used landmarks to guide them during the day; consequently lighthouses in daylight hours are called "day-marks." At night lighthouses are identified by their unique light pattern, called light signatures or light characteristics, and each one is different. Some light signatures are fixed, others flash or pulsate, while others have different color spectrums. How far a light can be seen rest on several factors, the strength of the light and the height above sea level. Lighthouses in this country were built in many different shapes, sizes and heights. Shapes including: cylindrical, conical, square, and octagonal, with towers that stand as high as 208 feet. The Prince's Bay Lighthouse is a conical example of lighthouse design with a 40 foot tower.

Some lighthouses on the northeast coast, including Prince's Bay Lighthouse, were located to take advantage of naturally elevated sites, allowing for the light to be placed higher above the water.¹⁴ Lighthouses are typically measured by their focal plane, which is an imaginary line drawn straight out from the middle of the light or optic, to the water's surface.¹⁵ The focal plane Prince's Bay's tall tower and siting on a bluff created a focal plane of 106 feet above the water.

Most lighthouses can be categorized by construction method, shape, building material, or foundation types. The lighthouse type can also be classified as terrestrial or aquatic, i.e., onshore or offshore types. Some light towers are stand-alone structures, while others are attached or integral to the keeper's quarters or fog-signal building. A completely equipped light station on land often consisted of a keeper's quarters, oil house, fog-signal building, workshop, water supply, privy, landing wharf, boathouse, barn, roads, walks, and fences.

The tower served principally as a support for the lantern, which housed the optic or the lenses. The lantern was typically constructed of cast iron in a round, square, octagonal, or hexagonal

shape, and surrounded by a stone or cast-iron gallery. Access to the lantern room was via stone, wood, or cast-iron stairs that either wound around a central column or spiraled along the interior sides of the tower walls.

Before the mid-19th century, lighthouse construction technology required solid rock or other stable foundation soils. Masonry towers were constructed of rubble stone, cut stone (dressed stone), brick, and concrete. Nearly 20 percent of all historic lighthouse towers extant are made of stone and approximately 32 percent are made of wood. The oldest standing masonry light tower in the United States is the 85-foot-tall Sandy Hook Lighthouse (1764), New Jersey, built of cut stone. The Staten Island Lighthouse (1912), designated a New York City Landmark in 1966, has an octagonal tower and is constructed of brick. Towers of stone and brick were typically built in the form of the frustum of a cone (a conical or pyramidal shape left by cutting off the top portion at a plane parallel to the base). Masonry walls of lighthouses are typically several feet thick at the base and decrease in thickness upward, the Prince's Bay Lighthouse is of this typology.¹⁶ Prince's Bay Lighthouse and Keeper's house is only lighthouse complex within the five boroughs to be constructed largely of rusticated brownstone. The New Dorp Lighthouse (1854) designated a New York City Landmark in 1967, is 40 feet tall, and constructed of wood, it is square in shape, centered on a wood Keeper's House that is one-and-a-half stories tall. While the former North Hook Beacon, now the Jeffrey's Hook Lighthouse (1880), designated a New York City Landmark in 1991, is a standard design, cast-iron conical tower.

Prince's Bay Lighthouse housed a Fresnel lens that displayed a flashing white light. Invented in 1822 by French physicist Augustin Fresnel, the Fresnel lens design allowed the construction of lenses of large aperture and short focal length without the mass and volume of material that would be required by a lens of conventional design, allowing the light from a lighthouse equipped with one to be visible over greater distances.¹⁷ There were some initial reservations by the government because of the cost of importing the lenses from France. However, the Fresnel lenses did their jobs so well that the light could be seen from dozens of miles away, and soon became standard equipment in lighthouses throughout most of the world.¹⁸

New York Waterways¹⁹

Prince's Bay Lighthouse is on the Raritan Bay, which is located in the southern portion of "New York Bay," a collective term for the waters leading from the Atlantic Ocean to the port of New York. It consists of the Lower Bay and Upper Bay, connected by the Narrows—a tidal strait separating Staten Island from Long Island. "New York Harbor" refers both to Upper New York Bay and to the waterfronts at the southern end of Manhattan Island and in nearby cities in New Jersey, such as those on the Hudson River.²⁰

New York Harbor provided a safe haven for vessels during bad weather. Its geographic location was also ideal for taking advantage of transatlantic, coastal, and inland trade.²¹ By the late 1700s into the early 1800s, New York Harbor was the nation's leading port, surpassing both Boston and Philadelphia in both cargo and passenger traffic. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 turned this port into a national economic engine. By 1870, around the time Prince's Bay Lighthouse was built, New York's ports were the busiest in the Western Hemisphere.²²

The growth of inland navigation was greatly stimulated by the advent of the steamboat and river steamers; the river steamers reduced travel time from New York to Albany via the Erie Canal, travel that once took days was reduced to several hours to reach northern connections.²³ A steam route from New York Bay to Philadelphia up the Raritan River from New York Bay increased New York shipping interest, however, river channels were hampered by delays due to by ice, fog and wind conditions.²⁴ Goods and services traveling east past Sandy Hook Lighthouse, were also guided by the Prince's Bay Lighthouse, going towards points north and east.

Oyster Farming

The Raritan Bay and nearby tributaries were known for abundant, high-quality shellfish and especially oysters.²⁵ Oyster farming, fishing, and clamming were among Staten Island's main occupations, particularly along the south shore in Pleasant Plains (Prince's Bay) and Tottenville, from the 17th century to the early 1900s. A 1911 map indicates that the waters off the shore of Prince's Bay had two "Water Grants" given to Bernard Reilly and James E. Dougherty in the 1880s. The grants likely gave them right to farm the rich oyster beds that were common off of Staten Island. The oyster industry was quite successful on Staten Island and some of those who pursued it became wealthy, while others were able to support their families in a comfortable manner for many years. Many large homes were built by successful oyster captains and oystermen. Many successful oyster captains hired free African-Americans from Maryland to prepare the beds and plant the oysters. Starting in the 1830s and 1840s these free African-Americans and their families began to settle in in Staten Island creating the small community of Sandy Ground. The Prince's Bay Lighthouse guided the ships of the fishermen and oystermen that sailed along the coast of Staten Island.

Light Keepers

Lighthouse keepers' lives were often isolated, lonely, routine, and sometimes dangerous. Keepers had many responsibilities. Everyday tasks included maintaining the light, cleaning the lens, and operating the fog signal. In addition, keepers frequently had to row to the mainland for supplies, to work in severe climates and through harsh storms, and often to conduct heroic rescue missions. A keeper's salary varied greatly from one lighthouse to the next, and could be quite small, considering the risks associated with the job. In 1867 an Act of Congress fixed the average annual salary of a lighthouse keeper at \$600.²⁶

By 1852, the newly formed Lighthouse Board began distributing written instructions to lighthouse keepers. These instructions described the duties, rules, and regulations associated with the job. The board's instructions stated, "The Keeper is responsible for the care and management of the light, and for the station in general." Keepers were required to promptly report shipwrecks, and the manual reminded them that "it is the duty of light-keepers to aid wrecked persons as far as lies in their power."²⁷ The first head light keeper of Prince's Bay was Abel Rawson, (1828 to 1840). William G. Davison was in charge of the light from 1886 to 1917, longer than any other keeper.²⁸ There were a total of 18 head light keepers until the lighthouse was deactivated 1922, at that time the head light keeper was John F. Anderson, (1917 to 1922).

Subsequent History

Prince's Bay Lighthouse was deemed unnecessary and deactivated in August 1922, due to the installation of acetylene lights in Raritan Bay, making the Prince's Bay Lighthouse obsolete. The Mission of Immaculate Virgin for the Protection of Homeless and Destitute Children (known as Mount Loretto) purchased the eight-acre parcel of land that included the lighthouse, carriage house, and the keeper's cottage from the U.S. Department of Commerce in 1926.²⁹

Mount Loretto³⁰

The Mission of Immaculate Virgin for the Protection of Homeless and Destitute Children was founded by the Reverend John Christopher Drumgoole in 1871, on Lafayette and Great Jones Street.³¹ In 1882, the Roman Catholic Mission acquired 258 acres of farmland and underwater lots on the site of the old Bennett farm along Raritan Bay and Prince's Bay. In an era of intense bigotry and racism, Father Drumgoole admitted children of all colors and creeds into his care. In 1883 Mount Loretto was established, initially serving boys it expanded to serve girls in the mid-1890s, and by 1887, Mount Loretto cared for 1,600 children in two homes. By 1910 Mount Loretto served 2,800

children. In addition to a basic education, the mission contained a trade school that provided training in several areas: carpentry, printing, tailoring, and electrical work for boys, and sewing, cooking, typing, stenography, and some gardening for the girls.³² The dairy farm was the mission's first and most profitable enterprise, which had one of the largest pasteurizing plants in the region.³³

By 1947, the mission spread over 700 acres and housed 700 boys, 360 girls, 85 Franciscan nuns, and five priests. By that time, it had already been the home of over 50,000 children and was the largest of the nine New York Catholic Charities' orphanages. Mount Loretto was cultivated into the most productive dairy farm on Staten Island, the largest in the state and the third largest in the country.³⁴

After its purchase in 1926, Mount Loretto used the lighthouse complex as a director's residence. The lantern was replaced by a statue of the Virgin Mary named "Star of the Sea."

The U.S. Coast Guard constructed a new lighthouse in 1953 on the mission's property, southeast of the Lighthouse. The U.S. government paid the Mission \$32 per year to place the range light on the small piece of land.

In 1998, the Trust for Public Land negotiated a contract with the Archdiocese of New York to purchase the waterfront portion of the Mount Loretto property south of Hylan Boulevard. In 1999 the Trust purchased 194 acres, including the lighthouse complex, from the Archdiocese of New York. At the time of purchase, an endowment for the care of the area was created by the Archdiocese. The agreement mandated that the State, in turn, would purchase three parcels of land from the trust in three phases and use the property for a public park. The lighthouse and its surrounding property was the last parcel purchased by the state.³⁵

The Prince's Bay Lighthouse, Keeper's House and Carriage House are now located in what is now known as the Mt. Loretto Unique Area, a 241 acre nature preserve that is managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. From 1988 until his death in 2000, Cardinal John O' Connor used the Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex as a summer retreat. The 148 year old Lighthouse was dedicated in honor of the late Archbishop of New York, in 2007.³⁶

Report Prepared by
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Research Department

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of this building, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Prince's Pay Lighthouse Complex has a special character and special historical and aesthetic interest and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds that, among its important qualities, that the Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex is one of New York City's oldest surviving lighthouse complexes; that for over 100 years it served a critical role in guiding ships sailing along the coast of Staten Island bound for ports in New York and New Jersey; that the Prince's Bay Lighthouse and Keeper's House is the only lighthouse complex within the five boroughs to be constructed largely of rusticated brownstone; that the Lighthouse complex was built as part of the federal government's efforts to provide an integrated system of navigational aids throughout the United States in the early 19th through 20th centuries; that the federal Lighthouse Board, charged with expanding and upgrading navigational aids along America's coasts, appropriated \$30,000 to build Prince's Bay Lighthouse in 1864; that the complex replaced an earlier wood lighthouse originally located on the site that was deemed obsolete; that the lighthouse was built to provide safe maritime transportation in New York Harbor, which contained the nation's leading port from the early 19th through the mid-20th centuries; and that it is one of eight extant lighthouses in Staten Island and the second oldest in the borough; that the Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex, historically known as the Red Bank Lighthouse, is located on the shore of Prince's Bay near the southern tip of Staten Island and stands on one of the highest bluffs on the southern shoreline; that the vernacular with Italianate style elements two-story brownstone Keeper's House was built in 1868 next to the Lighthouse and connected by a 15-foot long passageway; and that an additional, one-story fieldstone Carriage House was built in 1869, just west of the Keeper's House; that the Lighthouse was fitted with a 3.5 order Fresnel lens, and in 1890 was refitted with a fourth order lens that showed a white flashing light; that the Lighthouse served as the primary navigational aide for the local maritime traffic, fishermen and oystermen working the oyster beds along Arthur Kill and Raritan Bay; and that oyster farming was a major industry for Staten Island during the 1800s and fueled the growing economy; that the Lighthouse was decommissioned in 1922, and was purchased in 1926 by Mount Loretto, the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin; that the institution, which started as an orphanage for street boys, maintained the Lighthouse and surrounding land near the cliffs, removed the lantern and replaced it with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary; and that it was used it as a summer retreat for Cardinal John J. O'Connor from 1988 until his death in 2000; that in 1999, the Trust for Public Land, New York State purchased the lighthouse property and 194 acres on the Raritan Bay side of Hylan Boulevard; that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation manages the property as a nature preserve, the Mount Loretto Unique Area; that the Prince's Bay Lighthouse is a prominent and dramatic feature on Staten Island, overlooking Raritan Bay, and represents the maritime industry that once thrived on Staten Island.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a landmark the Prince's Pay Lighthouse Complex Borough of Staten Island, and designates Staten Island Tax Map Block 7644, Lot 100 in part, consisting of the land on which the buildings are situated as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Adi Shamir-Baron, Frederick Bland, Wellington Chen, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, Jeanne Lufty, Commissioners

Notes

¹ This section adapted from the following source: *Holden's Staten Island: The History of Richmond County* edited and compiled by Richard Dickenson (Staten Island, New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2002).

² This section adapted from the following sources: Mark Kurlansky, *The Big Oyster: History on the Half Shell* (New York: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2006), 248.

³ This section adapted from the following sources: National Park Service, US Coast Guard, Department of Reference Legacy Resource Program, and US Lighthouse Society, *History of the Lighthouse Service and Lighthouse Construction Types*, Part II, August 1997, 1-10, <https://uslhs.org/sites/default/files/attached-files/HistoricLighthousePreservationHandbook.pdf> ; *Holden's Staten Island*, 369.

⁴ Seguine Point is the eastern point. The bluff Prince's Bay Lighthouse is situated on a part of the "terminal moraine," the southern terminus of the Wisconsin Glacier that receded 10,000 years ago, are the tallest ocean-facing bluffs in New York State. This section adapted from the following sources: Dr. Alan I. Benimoff, *The Geology of Staten Island*; U. S. Department of the Interior, *U. S. Geological Survey: Geology of National Parks*, <https://3dparks.wr.usgs.gov/nycp/arks/loc7.htm>, accessed from the internet 04/19/2016; Dr. Alan I. Benimoff, *The Geology of Staten Island*, <https://csivc.csi.cuny.edu/geology/filed/sigeo.htm>, accessed from the internet 04/19/2016.

⁵ This section adapted from the following sources: Rosalie Fellows Baily, *Pre- Revolutionary Dutch Homes and Families: In Northern New Jersey and Southern New York*, (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1936), 127-129; David T. Williams "The Church of St. Andrew, Richmond, Staten Island: Its History, Vital Records and Gravestone Inscriptions," (published under the auspices of the Staten Island Historical Society 1991), 198

⁶ This section adapted from the following source: 1820 Federal Census-Westfield Pages 5-9, Staten Island, Richmond County, New York.

⁷ This section adapted from the following sources: Office of the Richmond County Clerk, Division of Land Records, Deeds and Conveyances, November 18, 1826, Liber O, pages 398 to 402; Edward Heydecker, *General Laws of New York: New Revisions of the Statutes*, (Albany, New York: Mathew Bender, 1900), 114.

⁸ This section adapted from the following source: Daniel E. Dempster, Todd Berger, *Lighthouses of the Great Lakes*, (Minneapolis, MN: Voyager Press, 2002) 34.

⁹ The original beacon's light was first shown in 1828 and consisted of 11 lamps set in 14-inch reflectors. In 1837, a Navy Commission recommended that additional westward reflectors be added to the beacon. The Navy had noticed that the light emitted from the Prince's Bay Lighthouse was only visible from a north-northeast to south-southwest direction, which was only useful for ships traveling to and from New York City. The recommendation was adopted shortly thereafter. This section adapted from the following source: "North America, Nova Scotia, New Foundland," *The Atlantic Navigator*, (London: James Imray & Son, 1854), 509.

¹⁰ This section adapted from the following sources: Ray Jones, Bruce Roberts, Cheryl Shelton-Roberts, *American Lighthouses: A Comprehensive Guide to Exploring Our National Coastal Treasures* (Augusta GA: Morris Book Publishing, 2012), 7; Ralph Eshelman, *American Lighthouse Construction Types*, part of the draft Maritime Heritage of the United States National Historic Landmark Theme Context Study for Lighthouses, National Maritime Initiative, National Park Service, 1995.

¹¹ This section adapted was from the following source: Eagle Bluff Lighthouse Museum, <http://eagleblufflighthouse.doorcountyhistoricalsociety.org/president-george-washington-and-lighthouse-legislation/#sthash.EqskNTzc.dpuf>, accessed from the internet 05/19/2016.

¹² Washington realized that safe navigation was crucial to trade, and that the ports of New York, Boston and Philadelphia were important to this effort. Washington authorized repairs of existing lighthouses, allocated funds, and commissioned several new lighthouses. The Cape Henry Lighthouse in Virginia built in 1792, and the first land-based lighthouse at Montauk Point, New York completed in 1796, by New York contractor John McComb, Jr., was commissioned by President Washington, the construction was overseen by Alexander Hamilton. This section adapted from the following sources: Marilyn Turk, "George Washington's Lighthouses," *Pathways of the Heart*, <http://pathwayheart.com/george-washingtons-lighthouses/>, accessed from the internet 05/19/2016; http://www.lighthousefoundation.org/museum/natlighthouseaday_info.htm

¹³ 1820-1852 was a period of inactivity, the Treasury Department; auditor, Stephen Pleasanton, prided himself in returning funds appropriated for the construction and repair of lighthouses to the treasury unspent. This did little to improve lighthouse technology and design. With shipping increasing throughout the world, an optical system was desperately needed whereby the light could be cast many miles out to sea, providing ample advanced warning of either danger or safe harbor.

- ¹⁴ This section adapted from the following source: <http://www.lighthousedigest.com/Digest/database/uniqueighthouse.cfm?value=421>, accessed from the internet 04/29/2016.
- ¹⁵ This section adapted from the following source: <http://www.us-lighthouses.com/faq.php>
- ¹⁶ This section adapted from the following sources: Dr. Robert Browning, *Lighthouse Evolution & Typology*, <http://www.uscg.mil/history/web/lighthouses/LHevolution.asp>; accessed April 28, 2016. Politics, special needs, cost, geography of the site, and available technology at the time of construction all influenced lighthouse design.
- ¹⁷ This section adapted from the following sources: <http://uslhs.org/history/fresnel-lenses>; <http://www.terrypepper.com/lights/closeups/illumination/fresnel/fresnel.htm>;
- ¹⁸ This section adapted from the following sources: Ray Jones, *American Lighthouses: A Definitive Guide*, (Connecticut: The Globe Pequot Press, 1998) 10-20.
- ¹⁹ This section adapted from the following sources: National Park Service: Annual Report of the Light-House Board, 1876), <https://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/131lighthouse/131setting.htm>, accessed from the internet 05/23/2016.
- ²⁰ This section adapted from the following sources: Truman R. Strobridge, *Chronology of Aids to Navigation and the United States Lighthouse Service 1716 to 1939*, http://www.uscg.mil/history/articles/h_USLHChron.asp, accessed from the internet 05/19/2016; *Annual Report of the Lighthouse Board 1876*, Third Lighthouse District Map 1876, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/131lighthouse/131locate2.htm>, accessed from the internet 05/19/2016.
- ²¹ This section adapted from the following source: <https://www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/131lighthouse/131setting.htm>, accessed from the internet 05/19/2016.
- ²² Albion, 96; New York was the breadbasket of the Atlantic, shipping wheat to Europe, the West Indies and down the coast and by the end of the American Revolution, the New York port was fourth in terms of cargo tonnage. It soon became the marketplace for a variety of goods, especially cotton.²² New York created a three cornered trade in the “cotton triangle,” capitalizing on the commerce between the southern ports and Europe collection heavy tariffs.
- ²³ This section adapted from the following source: City of New York, Works Projects Administration, *A Maritime History of New York*, (New York: Doubleday, 1941), 122, 151.
- ²⁴ Albion, 35.
- ²⁵ Barnett Shepherd, *Tottenville, The Town the Oyster Built: A Staten Island Community, Its People, Industry and Architecture*, (Ohio: Book Masters Inc., 2008), 37-38.
- ²⁶ This section adapted from the following sources: George R. Putnam, *Lighthouses and Lightships of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933), 238; and Francis Ross Holland, Jr., *America’s Lighthouses: An Illustrated History* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1988), 43.
- ²⁷ This section adapted from the following source: The Lighthouse Board, Instructions to the Employees of the Lighthouse Service, 1881 quoted in J. Candace Clifford and Mary Louise Clifford, *Nineteenth-Century Lights: Historic Images of American Lighthouses* (Alexandria: Cyprus Communications, 2000), 185.
- ²⁸ This section adapted from the following source: <http://www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=583>
- ²⁹ This section adapted from the following source: Office of the Richmond County Clerk, Division of Land Records, Deeds and Conveyances, May 11, 1926, Liber No. 622, pages 179-181.
- ³⁰ This section adapted from the following source: Ecology and Environment, INC. Feb 2009. 1-23.
- ³¹ He reached out to the Franciscan Sisters of Buffalo to help staff the center. This section adapted from the following source: “Mount Loretto,” *Staten Island Sunday Advance*, March 27, 1988, D1.
- ³² This section adapted from the following source: Fiftieth Annual Report of the State Board of Charities, *“Institutions and their Problems,” Vol.1*, February 1917, 81.
- ³³ This section adapted from the following source: The Field Illustrated “Modern Dairy Buildings,” vol. 26, (January –December, 1916), 340-342.
- ³⁴ At peak production, 1,000 quarts of milk were produced daily. The mission dairy farm operated at the peak efficiency for several decades, as other local dairies began to serve Staten Island, the dairy farm would eventually close in 1967. During the 1960s Mount Loretto de-emphasized its identity as a Catholic orphanage and became a foster care agency in cooperation with the City. By 1964, the orphanage no longer cared for children under the age of six; <http://nycedges.blogspot.com/2010/11/mtloretto-staten-island.html>; accessed from the internet 05/04/2016.
- ³⁵ This section adapted from the following sources: Office of the Richmond County Clerk, Division of Land Records, Deeds and Conveyances, Corrected Deed part of Block: 7644 Lot: 1 Parcel C, January 8, 2001, Reel 10815

pages 195to 203; Block: 7644, Lot: 1, Parcel C, changed to Block: 7644, Lot: 100, Department of Finance, Tax Maps Historical Alterations Books, Section 31 Vol. 1 page 463, June 21, 2002.

³⁶ This section adapted from the following sources: “Mount Loretto Lighthouse shines once again,” *Staten Island Advance*, November 05, 2007, http://www.silive.com/news/index.ssf/2007/11/mount_loretto_lighthouse_shines.html, accessed from the internet 05/18/2016; “100 Acres on Staten Island Protected (NY),” *The Trust For Public Land Media Room*, November 05, 2007, <https://www.tpl.org/media-room/100-acres-staten-island-protected-ny>, accessed from the internet 05/18/2016.



Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex
6204 Hylan Boulevard
Borough of Staten Island
Tax Map Block 7644 Lot 100 in part
Photo: Sarah Moses 2016



Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex
East Elevation
Photo: Theresa C. Noonan 2016



Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex
Northeast Elevation
Photo: Sarah Moses 2016



Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex
North Elevation
Photo: Sarah Moses 2016



Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex
South and West Elevations
Photo: Sarah Moses 2016



Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex
Carriage House
Photo: Sarah Moses 2016



Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex
c. 1885
Photo Source: National Archives

Prince's Bay Lighthouse Complex I LP-0392

