

**Historic Preservation Plan for
The Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station
Swan's Island, Maine**

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope of Report

In 1994, when the Town of Swan's Island acquired the Burnt Coat Light Station from the US Government, the Town agreed to maintain and preserve the structures and the property for the public benefit, and to follow historic preservation standards under the supervision of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.¹ The Town has commissioned this Historic Preservation Plan to carry out its obligations under the 1994 Deed.

The Historic Preservation Plan has been financed with the assistance of a grant from the Hart Family Fund for Small Towns, administered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Assistance was also provided by the Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation and by the Friends of the Swan's Island Lighthouse.

Appropriate planning should always precede preservation work, capital projects, or any intervention. The expenditure of financial resources on an historic site should be well protected with the knowledge that all items are chosen correctly. This Historic Preservation Plan for the Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station provides an important planning tool and was prepared to provide a focus and direction for future intervention at this historic site. In general terms, this plan provides an overview of the historical development and significance of this site, an assessment of the existing conditions, recommendations for planning for its future adaptive use, and for prioritization of repairs as well as maintenance guidelines and cost estimates for future work. This Preservation Plan is purely an architectural and landscape assessment and does not include any evaluation of the structural stability of the buildings. In fact, it has been recommended by HBA that a structural condition assessment be completed for all the buildings and that these recommendations be added as a supplement to this Preservation Plan. This Preservation Plan is therefore intended to guide the future exterior and interior work and provide ideas on how the Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station can be used and enjoyed by the community and visitors to Swan's Island. In addition to the architectural assessment, Cindy Brockway of Past Designs has provided a strategic plan for landscape with some illustrations, and Daedalus Projects have provided a budget for the recommended prioritized scope of work and adaptive use options.

This report concludes the planning phase of the project but does not generate the documents required to execute the repairs and renovations mentioned herein. Such documents, namely drawings and specifications that would be the basis of bidding contracts and permits would be prepared subsequent to this report. This report sets priorities and provides a road map for the public use and enjoyment of the Light Station for future generations. The aim is that the information provided will help the community focus on priorities and successfully seek funding to support the proposed uses.

¹ Quitclaim Deed from US Coast Guard to Town of Swan's Island, dated July 20, 1994, recorded at Book 2340, page 001, Hancock County.

**Historic Preservation Plan for
The Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station
Swan's Island, Maine**

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank all the members of the Swan's Island community who have contributed to this report. During Annabelle Radcliffe-Trenner's visit to the Island in August, many community members participated in discussions regarding the future of the Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station and their commitment to this project. In particular, we wish to thank Selectman Dexter Lee, Selectman Carroll Staples and Chief Selectman Nancy Carter for their contributions and ideas as well as the Light House Committee members, in particular Eric Chetwynd and his wife Fran who accommodated Annabelle Radcliffe-Trenner and gave her a wonderful tour of the Island with an opportunity to meet so many from the community and listen to their thoughts and ideas for the future. This was indeed a collaboration of many and, in particular we wish to thank those who attended the Wednesday evening meeting, which included Kim Colbeth, a teacher, Donna Wiegler who is researching the oral histories, and Candis Joyce, the Librarian. Other contributions and thoughts were given at a Library Community meeting and afterwards at the quarry where younger members also gave some of their thoughts about the Light Station. Indeed this plan could not have been completed without the input of everyone on the Island and there appears a genuine interest and commitment to preserving this historic site. We would also like to thank Amy Cole-Ives for her input, historic research and photographs as well as Charles Petronis from the US Coast Guard who provided background information on the period of US Coast Guard occupation of the Light Station.

Conditional Statement

This Preservation Plan should be considered a living document and one that is subject to reevaluation and revisions from time to time as future discoveries both physical and documentary come to light and as programmatic realities evolve. The statements and opinions expressed herein are solely for the use and information of the Town of Swan's Island and their Light House Committee. The opinions reflect the professional judgments of an architect qualified in the field of historic preservation performing services that are usual and customary. Conclusions drawn in this report are based on those conditions and surfaces that were accessible to the unaided visual observation of the architect. No warranties or guarantees can be inferred from or implied by the statements or opinions contained in this report. In particular, it should be noted that no structural engineering assessment was completed at the time of this Preservation Plan. However, as funds are available, this should be one of the first priorities prior to any further repairs.

Property Description and Setting

Burnt Coat Harbor Light Station is located on Hockamock Head on the south side of Swan's Island. The Light Station is at the most southerly point and faces Harbor Island across the deep water channel into Burnt Coat Harbor. The Light Tower was constructed in 1872 and included an upper light tower and a lower light tower, as well as a Keeper's dwelling. The Keeper's dwelling and the Light Tower remain in the center of the landmass facing out to sea to the southwest. The Oil House is located to the northwest and the Bell House is located further to the south. The Light Station buildings are reached along a small narrow road that enters the park along the ridge of the point running from the north to the south. The road descends to reach the small parking area. Currently there are no services except for electricity to the Light Tower building.