NPS Form 10-900-a
(8-86)

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 02000866 Date Listed: 08/23/02

Avery Point Lighthouse	New London	CT
Property Name	County	State

N/A
Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for Beth A. Savage — 8/23/02
Signature of the Keeper — Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

8. Statement of Significance: Area(s)

"Military" is not justified as an applicable area of significance under criterion A.

This was confirmed with John Herzan, National Register Coordinator, CTSHPO by telephone.

DISTRIBUTION:
National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without attachment)

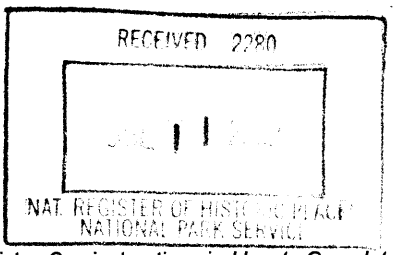
NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

Sub Rev



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item be marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name AVERY POINT LIGHTHOUSE

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number On Long Island Sound at 1084 Shennecossett Road ☐ not for publication

city or town Groton ☐ vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county New London code 011 zip code 06340

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility 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, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

07/09/02

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

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 certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

☒ entered in the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
☐ See continuation sheet.
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.
☐ removed from the National Register.
☐ other, (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

8/23/02

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☐ private
- ☐ public-local
- ■ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☐ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ■ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION: water-related

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

NOT IN USE

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Colonial Revival

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE
walls CONCRETE
roof METAL
other STONE: Marble

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

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

- ■ **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 a ll the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, 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
MILITARY

Period of Significance
1943

Significant Dates
1943

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

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Alfred Hopkins and Associates, architect
R. E. Carrick Company, builder

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Building 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:

Connecticut Historical Commission,
59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, CT 06106

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	18		4577885				
1	~~19~~	745 780	~~4677 690~~	3			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Bruce Clouette, Historian

organization Public Archaeology Survey Team, Inc. date December 6, 2001

street & number P.O. Box 209 telephone 860-429-1723

city or town Storrs state CT zip code 06268

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items
(Check with SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name University of Connecticut, Avery Point Regional Campus

street & number 1084 Shennecossett Road telephone 860-405-9019

city or town Groton state CT zip code 06340

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

Description:

The Avery Point Lighthouse, built in 1943, overlooks the rocky shore of Long Island Sound at the southern tip of the peninsula in Groton, Connecticut, known as Avery Point, that forms the eastern side of the entrance to New London Harbor (Photographs 1 and 2). The lighthouse consists of an octagonal concrete-block tower, 26 feet tall, surmounted by an eight-sided lantern constructed of wood; the lighthouse's overall height is 41 feet, including the poured concrete slab foundation. The tower measures 14 feet across at the base and somewhat less at the top because of a slight batter (1/8" to the foot). The tower's concrete-block walls are gray-brown in color, with a coarse surface created by exposure of the underlying aggregate. Window and door sills and headers are a lighter-colored cast concrete, as is a coping course at the top of the tower. The entrance, with its panel-and-glass wood door, is at the base of the north side (Photograph 3); the south side has two windows, while the east, west, and north sides each have one. Most windows are boarded up, but some remain open, with expanded-metal screens protecting six-pane wooden casement sash (Photograph 4). The deck at the top of the tower is surrounded by a railing of white marble balusters that were salvaged from a garden or terrace on the property at the time the lighthouse was built.* The lantern, 7 ½ feet in diameter, has glazed arched openings and a steep concave eight-sided galvanized-iron roof topped by a wooden ball finial (Photograph 5); the corners of the lantern are treated as pilasters, with applied moldings forming the capitals.

The interior of the tower is open for the first 17 feet, above which a watch deck is reached by means of a straight iron ladder (Photograph 6). The interior finish is plain, with simple board window surrounds and plaster walls (Photographs 7 and 8).

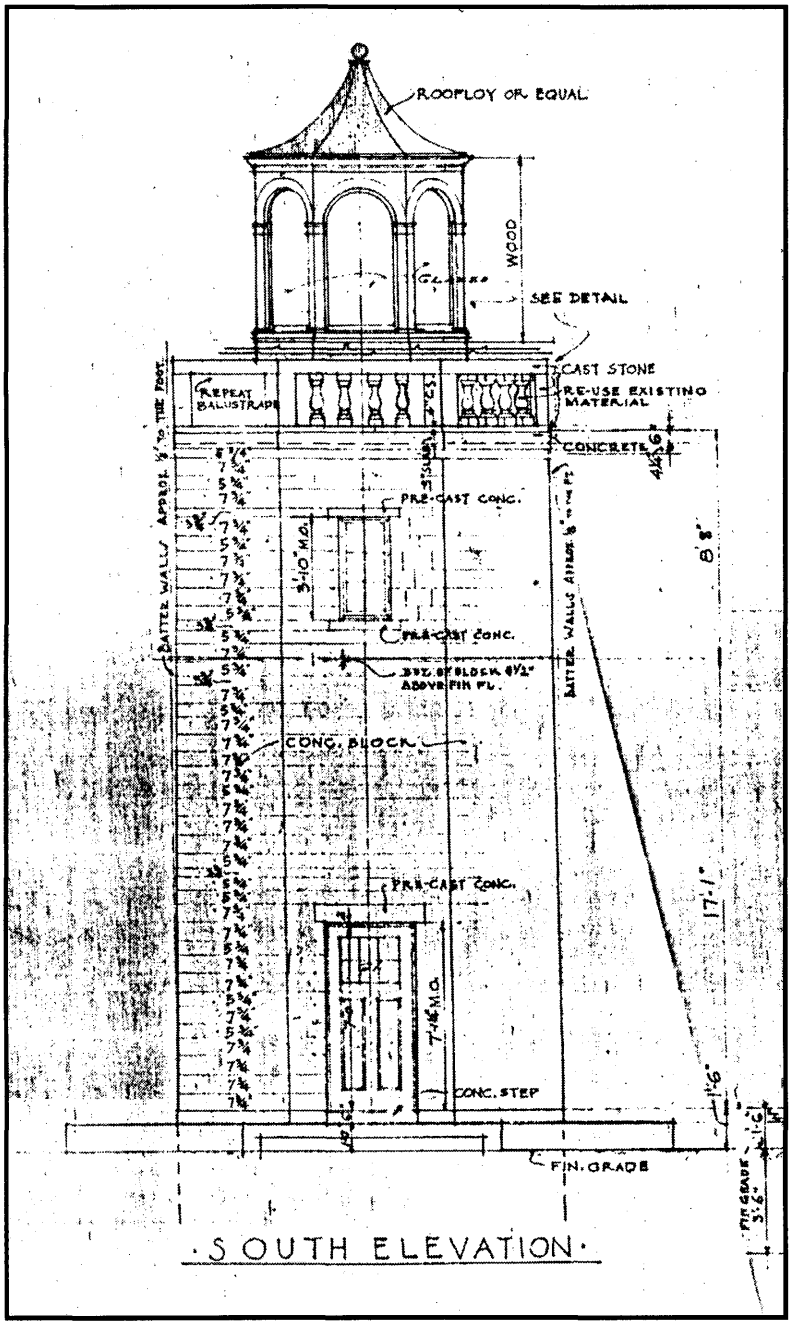
Originally the lighthouse had a fixed white light created by an array of eight hanging 200-watt bulbs, one shining through each arched opening in the lantern. The lights were controlled by an electro-mechanical timer and so needed little attention unless a bulb burned out. The array created a 100-candlepower beacon that was visible for up to seven miles at night. The plane of the light was 55 feet above mean sea level. In 1960 the light was changed to flashing green and the candlepower increased to 200. The lighting apparatus was removed from the lantern after the light was discontinued in 1967.

There are no storage buildings, signaling apparatus, or other ancillary structures associated with the lighthouse. At the time of its construction, the lighthouse shared the Avery Point peninsula with a major U. S. Coast Guard training facility, so there would have been no need for storage or maintenance facilities dedicated solely to the lighthouse. Today, the several remaining concrete-block buildings of the Coast Guard training center form part of the University of Connecticut's Southeast Regional Campus. In addition, the campus includes modern classroom and research buildings and the mansion and stables of the former Morton Plant estate (1904), known as Branford House, both of which are stone buildings elaborately detailed in the Tudor Revival style (Photograph 2, background).

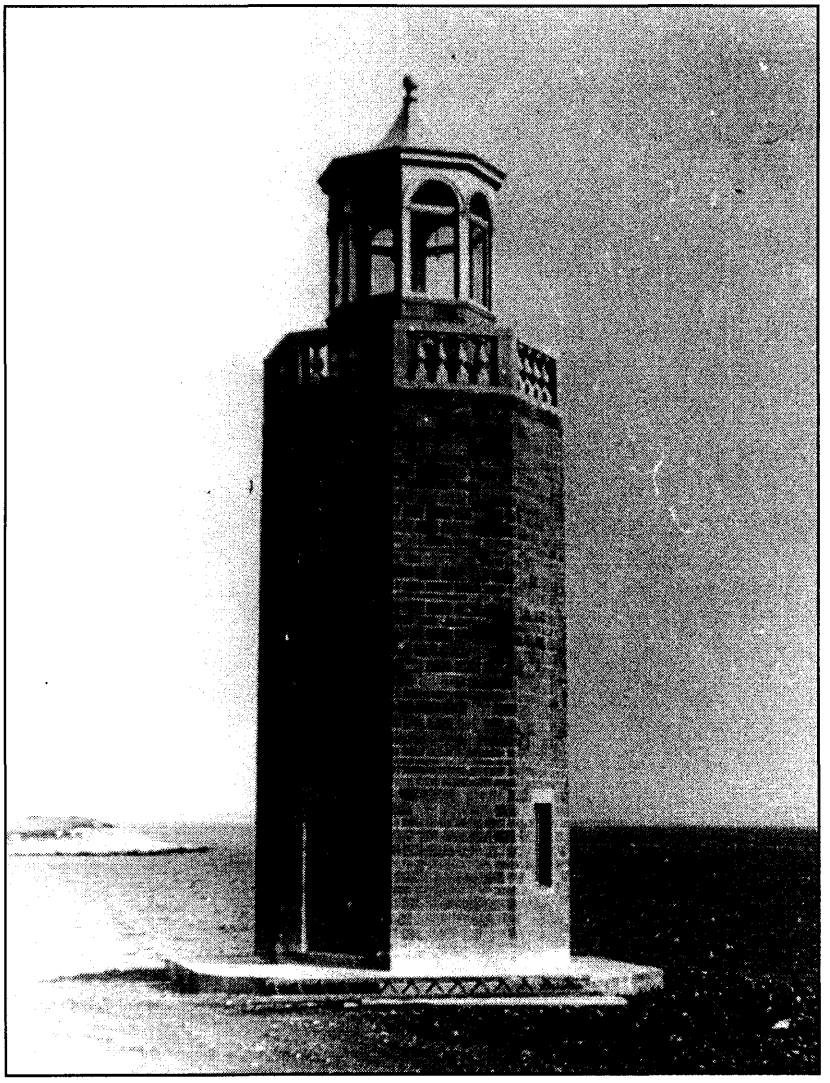
---

*The original gardens surrounding the Morton Plant mansion were designed and planted by Guy Lowell and Andrew Sargent in 1916. Tons of additional marble remnants, similar to the lighthouse's balustrade, were recovered from the Sound in 1980 (*New London Day*, December 12, 1980).

Detail from plans by Alfred Hopkins and Associates, 1942 (South Elevation):



Photograph of lighthouse, 1945, north elevation, camera facing southeast (National Archives RG 26).



Summary Statement of Significance

The Avery Point Lighthouse has local historical significance because for nearly 25 years (1944-1967) it served as a beacon guiding small craft and other vessels navigating the waters around New London Harbor; this maritime association is particularly important to Groton because of the community's long history of involvement with the sea, including fishing, trade, shipbuilding, and defense facilities (National Register Criterion A). The lighthouse was established by the U.S. Coast Guard at the request of the State of Connecticut and was especially useful for vessels entering the cove east of Avery Point or navigating Pine Island channel. The lighthouse also has historical significance as part of a major U.S. Coast Guard facility, a training center that provided technical education to enlisted personnel in life-saving, aids-to-navigation, coastal defense, and other Coast Guard missions. Established in 1942, the center educated thousands of members of the Coast Guard until its relocation in 1967. During World War II, 100 new people arrived each week for 13-week-long courses, and even after the war, more than 3,000 people graduated annually. According to current plans, the lighthouse is the only major structure from the training center era that will be left after the university modernizes and expands its facilities.

As of this writing, the Avery Point Lighthouse is the last lighthouse to have been built in Connecticut.

Historical Background

The lighthouse was built in 1943, shortly after the Coast Guard had opened its Avery Point training center. Prior to this, the Coast Guard had conducted technical training at Fort Trumbull, on the New London side, for cooks, electricians, radio maintainers, and pharmacist's mates, but by 1940 the facility had become inadequate. The Coast Guard wanted to find suitable quarters in the vicinity of New London, where the service had its academy, not only for the expansion of the Fort Trumbull-based programs but also to consolidate other technical training, such as that for gunner's mates, machinists, and radio operators. The plan was for the State of Connecticut to purchase the 70-acre Branford House estate from the heirs of Morton F. Plant for $85,000 and in turn convey it to the Federal Government. Although the latter's initial request for $3 million for the center was defeated in Congress in April 1941, the Coast Guard and the State moved ahead, and eventually a smaller appropriation was approved that allowed construction to begin. Using Branford House as the administration center of the complex, the Coast Guard erected numerous additional buildings for use as classrooms, laboratories, and barracks, along with ancillary buildings such as a mess hall, auditorium, hospital, recreational center, and steam plant. Most of these buildings utilized concrete-block construction and were expected to have a lifetime of 20 to 25 years. The new training center was officially placed in operation on August 1, 1942, and within a few weeks some 3,000 men arrived. The center trained Coast Guard personnel in all the service's normal and wartime technical duties, including some 500 pharmacist's mates who served aboard destroyer-escorts and transports and 6,000 motor machinist's mates who operated landing craft from Normandy to Guadalcanal. Appropriately for a base with a lighthouse, the center also operated an aids-to-navigation training program.

After the war, the center operated at a less harried pace but nevertheless graduated thousands of trained specialists every year. The center added to its curriculum as new technologies, such as radar and loran, emerged, and the

programs were offered not only to members of the Coast Guard but also to officers and enlisted personnel from other United States military services and from other countries. The Coast Guard relocated its training programs in 1967 and the land was conveyed back to the State; however, the Coast Guard continued to use part of the facility as its Research and Development Center. The establishment of the Coast Guard training facility at Avery Point was cited in the Connecticut Historical Commission's historic-context report for the Eastern Coastal Slope Region (Herzan 1997) as an important development in the area's modern period (1930 - present).

When the State of Connecticut offered to assist the project by obtaining the land, it proposed conveying it to the Federal Government under a statutory power, first enacted in 1929, that allowed the State Treasurer, with the approval of the Governor, to make such grants for the purpose of erecting "beacon lights" and other aids to navigation. The statute obliged the Treasurer to include a reversion clause in the deed to the effect that, should the Government fail to erect the aid to navigation, the State would resume possession of the land. It is not clear why Governor Robert Hurley chose to invoke this statute rather than ask the General Assembly for a special act, but it is probably safe to assume that he acted to accommodate the wishes of local boaters, fishermen, or other maritime interests.[2] Although the Federal Government established lighthouses on its own initiative in the case of major landfall lights or markers for especially dangerous hazards, many other lights, perhaps a majority of all lights, were established as a result of lobbying by local citizens who wished to assist a particular area's commerce and other maritime activities. Thus, although the specific mechanism of the Avery Point Lighthouse's establishment was somewhat unusual, the overall process--the Federal Government responding to state and local interests--was common. The light was intended to particularly benefit small boats seeking to enter Baker Cove on the east side of Avery Point. It also served, in conjunction with the New London Ledge Lighthouse and the light on Pine Island (also erected as part of the Coast Guard training center), to mark a major entrance to New London Harbor from Fishers Island Sound.

Stylistically, lighthouse architecture has followed the general trends in American building. The nation's first lighthouses were plain masonry towers. During the Victorian period, Gothic bargeboard, Second Empire mansard roofs, and other ornamental flourishes appeared. Although a few turn-of-the-century lighthouses were built with some Classical Revival or Colonial Revival detailing, overall the movement from the late 19th century onward marked a return to a simple, utilitarian appearance. The Avery Point Lighthouse, constructed at a time when resources were scarce, falls within the latter category; concrete-block construction was inexpensive and quick, particularly if no additional exterior finish was called for. However, the unique circumstances of this lighthouse, built on the grounds of a former captain of industry's estate, where apparently some marble balusters were available for re-use, allowed for a little decorative elaboration when it came to the lantern. At the time the lighthouse was built, the Coast Guard referred to its railing balusters and arched windows as providing "a touch of Williamsburg."[3] Besides relieving the plainness of the structure, these Colonial Revival-style details related the lighthouse and the

---

[2]The increase in candlepower in 1960 is known to have been in response to a request by a local group, the Shennecossett Yacht Club; *New London Day*, March 18, 1959.

[3]*Groton Station News*, March 31, 1943.

training center to the 1932 buildings at the Coast Guard Academy on the other side of the Thames River, which also had a Colonial theme. Its octagonal plan echoed not only the precedence of the nation's earliest masonry-tower lighthouses but also a tradition of lighthouse-building dating back to Classical times.

A misunderstanding has arisen that the Avery Point Lighthouse was built for commemorative purposes. The story dates from as early as 1955, when an article in the *U.S. Coast Guard Magazine* asserted that the lighthouse's purpose of serving "as a reminder of the illustrious names from the past" appeared in the deed from the State of Connecticut.[4] However, that language does not appear in the deed, which instead refers to "the promise of the United States of America to erect and maintain on or over the land hereinafter described beacon lights or other buildings and apparatus to be used in aid of navigation." (Groton Land Records, Volume 104, page 388). Prior to the conveyance, Admiral R. R. Waesche stated in a letter to the U.S. Attorney General that "actual use of the property will be made to accommodate two bona fide navigational lights [the Avery Point Lighthouse and a light on Pine Island],"[5] so it is clear that even before construction began, the Coast Guard intended to establish an actual operating light at this location. The fact that the Avery Point Lighthouse appeared in the Coast Guard's *Notice to Mariners* in 1944 and continuously thereafter in the *List of Lights* with an official Light Number confirms that the lighthouse was considered a functional aid to navigation throughout the period of its operation.[6]

---

[4]Robert Miller, "Background on Groton," *U.S. Coast Guard Magazine* (December, 1955): 15.

[5]R. R. Waesche [Rear Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard] to J. R. McDonald, U.S. Department of Justice, November 7, 1941.

[6]The misunderstanding has been perpetuated by some secondary works on maritime history, e.g., Kenneth G. Kochel, *America's Atlantic Coast Lighthouse: A Traveler's Guide* (1994), and Stan Gaby, *The Orient Point Passage* (1984).

Groton and the Sea

The Town of Groton has a long maritime history. Originally Groton was part of New London, but by 1705 the population on the east bank of the Thames River had reached the point where the General Assembly established it as a separate town. In addition to the farming families that occupied the interior of the town, Groton's early inhabitants included mariners, fishermen, and shipbuilders in the communities that grew up along the town's several coves and tidal rivers. In 1868 the U.S. Navy established its first facility in Groton, a navy yard on the east bank of the Thames River that later became one of the nation's most important submarine bases.

Today Groton has, in addition to the Avery Point Lighthouse, one other historic lighthouse within its borders, the 1860s Noank Lighthouse, listed on the National Register as part of the Noank Historic District.

Bibliography:

Alfred Hopkins and Associates. "Light Station, U.S. Coast Guard Training Station, Avery Point Connecticut." Architectural drawings, five sheets, 1942.

Connecticut, State of. Deed to the United States, March 12, 1942, Groton Land Records, Vol. 104, pp. 388-93.

Herzan, John. *Historic Preservation in Connecticut.* Volume V. *Eastern Coastal Slope: Historical and Architectural Overview and Management Guide.* Hartford: Connecticut Historical Commission, 1997.

Miller, Robert. "Background on Groton," *U.S. Coast Guard Magazine* (December, 1955): 12-15.

"New Lighthouse Ready But Will Not be Used," *Groton Station News (U.S.C.G. Training Center)*, March 31, 1943.

Norden, James F. "Avery Point Lighthouse (c.1943)," HABS-format report, typescript, December 12, 2000.

Rosenthal, Captain J. S. "U.S. Coast Guard - Avery Point," *Connecticut Circle* (August, 1946): 33-36.

Stark, Charles R. *Groton, Connecticut, 1705-1905.* Stonington, Conn: Palmer Press, 1922.

U.S. Coast Guard. Avery Point Training Station. Facilities Inventory Schedule. Undated manuscript.

_____. *Light List of the United States, Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, January 1945.* Washington: Government Printing Office, 1945.

_____. "Long Island Sound - New London Harbor - Avery Point - Light Established," ***Notice to Mariners*** (May 3, 1944), 576.

_____. Historian's Office, Washington, D.C. Avery Point Lighthouse file.

_____. Photographs of Avery Point Lighthouse, Lighthouse Survey, 1945. Record Group 26, National Archives.

Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property includes the lighthouse and the land on which it stands within a perimeter that extends 50 feet from the foundation in each direction. The nominated property is a portion of the parcel known as 1084 Shnnecossett Road and recorded in the Groton Land Records, Volume 242, pages 632-38.

Boundary Justification:

By including only the lighthouse and its immediate setting, the nominated property reflects the extent of the historic transportation-related resource. The university buildings immediately adjacent to the lighthouse include modern educational buildings and the former Plant family mansion, neither of which directly support the area of significance for which the structure is being nominated. There are no ancillary structures related to the lighthouse.

All Photographs:

1. Avery Point Lighthouse
2. Groton, New London County, Connecticut
3. PAST, Inc. Photograph
4. July 2001
5. Negative filed with PAST, Inc., Storrs, Connecticut

Captions:

1. West elevation, camera facing southeast.

2. South elevation (Branford House, former Plant mansion, in background), camera facing north.

3. Detail of entrance at base of tower, north elevation, camera facing south.

4. Detail of typical window (west elevation, camera facing east).

5. Detail of lantern and balustrade, camera facing east.

6. Interior, showing ladder leading up to watch deck, camera facing southwest.

7. Interior, watch deck, camera facing south.

8. Interior, lantern stage, camera facing east.