

Avery Point Lighthouse History

The Avery Point Lighthouse is located on the University of Connecticut's Avery Point Campus in Groton, Connecticut. The campus was originally the site of a 72-acre estate of Morton F. Plant, a wealthy industrialist, philanthropist and yachtsman who was also influential in local development in the early 1900's.

After the death of Morton Plant, his estate was sold to the State of Connecticut at an auction in 1938.

In March of 1942 the property was sold by the State of Connecticut to the United States Government. The Quit Claim Deed stipulated that the "United States of America [will] erect and maintain on or over the land beacon lights or other buildings and apparatus to be used in aid of navigation." The Deed further required that the lights, buildings and apparatus be constructed within five years.

Near the beginning of World War II the United States Coast Guard occupied the site and established the Coast Guard Training Station. Throughout the years thousands of Coast Guardsmen received training at various occupational schools at the facility.

Shortly after the Coast Guard moved into the facility, they built what is known as the Avery Point Lighthouse which entered full service in 1944.

The fifty-five foot octagonal shaped structure, which overlooks Long Island Sound near the Thames River, was constructed of sand/concrete cement blocks and has a wooden lantern room.

According to Kenneth G. Kochel in his book *America's Atlantic Coast Lighthouses*, "the tower [the Avery Point Lighthouse] was built as a memorial tower and as a symbolic representation of the Coast Guard's lighthouse keeping responsibilities." It was the last lighthouse built in the State of Connecticut.

The light appears in the United States Coast Guard's "List of Lights" from 1945 through 1967. Initially the beacon was a fixed white pattern. In the 1950's the pattern was changed to flashing green as part of a cluster of 8 lights. The number of lights visible varied with the angle of approach and distance.

In 1967 the Coast Guard moved its facilities from Avery Point and the lights in the tower were extinguished. In December 1968, the State of Connecticut again became the owner of the property. Subsequently the University of Connecticut established an extension program at this location.

Maintenance and upkeep of the lighthouse was largely discontinued over the years. The structure is now in dangerously poor condition and in need of complete restoration.

Avery Point Lighthouse Society (APLS)



APLS was established in February, 2000 with the goal of saving, restoring, relighting and functionally maintaining the Avery Point Lighthouse. The society is a non-profit organization comprised of ordinary citizens from southern eastern Connecticut who are working closely with representatives of the University of Connecticut at Avery Point and staff members of the American Lighthouse Foundation of Wells, Maine.

APLS is actively seeking funds. Although there is no official estimate for restoring the facility, some have indicated costs could exceed \$150,000. Immediate funding of \$25,000 must be raised to: a) stabilize the structure from further deterioration; and b) to conduct an initial engineering study.

APLS also invites volunteers to assist in a variety of activities associated with this historic project. Some of the activities where assistance is needed include, but is not limited to, publicity, historical research, art and photography. Donations of labor and materials are also welcomed.

Avery Point Lighthouse Society

**PO Box 1552
Groton, CT 06340**

<http://apls.tripod.com>

APLS1941@aol.com

Please contact APLS if you wish to
BECOME A MEMBER OF THE TEAM.

Tax-deductible donations to save, restore and relight the

Avery Point Lighthouse can be sent to:

Avery Point Lighthouse Society

PO Box 1552, Groton, CT 06340

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Tele No. (Optional) _____ **e-Mail (Optional)** _____

DIRECTIONS

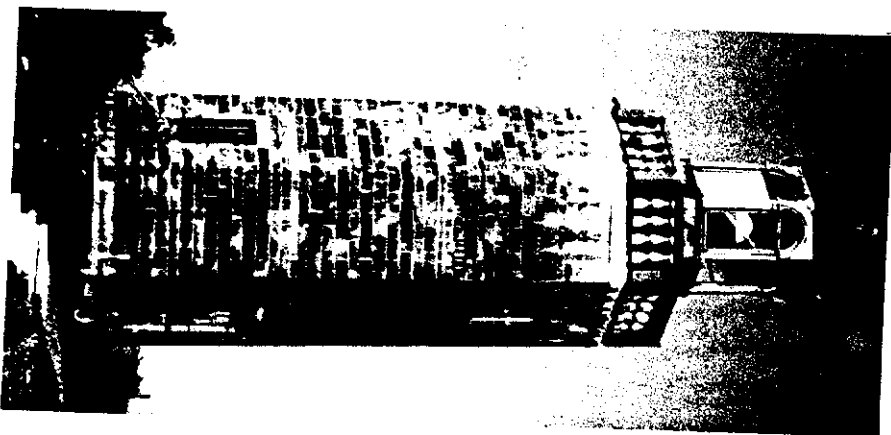
The Avery Point Lighthouse is located on the University of Connecticut's Avery Point Campus on Shennecossett Road in Groton, CT. Map coordinates are 41 deg. 19 min. N. lat., 72 deg. 4 min. W. long.

- I-95 to Groton—take Exit 87 (the Clarence B. Sharp Hwy/Ct 349)
- At 2nd traffic light turn right. Turn left at next traffic light.
- Follow road for approximately 1.2 miles (past Pfizer and golf course)—to the Avery Point campus. Enter campus - follow road past police station and park. The lighthouse is situated toward the east, beyond the library and in back of the mansion.

NOTE: Although the interior of the lighthouse is not accessible, the public is welcome to visit and photograph the outside.

**Please help in the Saving,
Restoring and Relighting
of the
Avery Point Lighthouse**

**Help Save,
Restore & Relight
The
Avery Point Lighthouse**



Groton, Connecticut