

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Avery Homestead  
other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 20 Avery Hill Road  NA not for publication  
city, town Ledyard  NA vicinity  
state Connecticut code CT county New London code 011 zip code 06339

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	_____	_____ sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	_____ objects
		<u>3</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources in Ledyard, Conn Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official *John W. Shannahan* Date 10/23/92

State or Federal agency and bureau John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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:) \_\_\_\_\_

*Beth A. Savage* 12/14/92

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

## 6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/ animal facility/  
storage/field

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure  
DOMESTIC/secondary structure

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite

walls weatherboard

roof asphalt shingle

other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Avery Homestead is located on the west side of Ledyard in a historic rural setting that has changed very little since the eighteenth century. The house faces south from a commanding position on the east side of Avery Hill Road (Photograph #s 1, 2, 3). It overlooks a sweep of stone-walled pasture land to the south which extends all the way to Stoddards Wharf Road, part of the more than 120 acres originally associated with the farmstead, of which about 100 acres are in a land trust. The road, which swings by the west side of the house, follows the same path that was laid out in 1773. Several outbuildings define the immediate farmyard: a gable-roofed, two-story barn to the southeast of the house and a smaller shed to the immediate east of the house (Photograph #4). A farm pond, historically an ice pond, is located beyond the barn in a small valley formed by Billings-Avery Brook, which runs behind the house to the Thames River approximately one mile to the west.

The farmhouse is a two-story Colonial (c. 1696-1725) with an extended rear ell on the east side. About 1870, the original kitchen ell was removed and now stands as the separate building to the east of the house. It was replaced with the present ell at that time. Its extended wing, an open shed until 1965, now serves as a shop and office.

The main block, built in the double-cube form of the Georgian, was extended about five feet to the rear with a two-story addition in the 1780s, which gives the house a slight saltbox appearance. The low, granite-block foundation is more exposed on the west end where the ground slopes away from the house, allowing for a full-height door at the cellar level.

It is possible that the main block was enlarged from a one-room, one-story house, the present east end, a not uncommon practice in Ledyard, given some of the physical evidence such as the differences in fenestration patterns and early tool marks. The evolution to a two-room, two-story house, however, was accomplished by 1726 since it is known that the parlor was used as a meeting room for church services that year. Although changes in fenestration about 1780 are apparent (windows were added when the main block was widened and the large gable windows are replacements), the original fenestration pattern is quite different on the east gable elevation. At that end, there are two original windows at the first floor, while the other end has the more conventional center stack of single windows found in one-room-deep houses. Further evidence is found in the uneven spacing of the five-bay facade and the slightly off-center placement of the front door and the chimney above the ridge. Perhaps the most incontrovertible evidence for the early

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Avery Homestead, Ledyard, Connecticut

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building history is the pitsaw marks found the full length of the exposed chimney girt in the hall; other exposed framing and sheathing, such as that of the attic, has the more typical marks made by a waterpowered up-and-down saw.

The stone stack supports four fireplaces, located in the parlor, the hall, the hall chamber, and one in the cellar. There is a smoke chamber in the stack in the attic. The opening of the cooking fireplace in the original kitchen in the hall is especially large (68" x 50" x 18"), with a bake oven in the rear wall of the firebox. None of the flues have narrow throats and/or smoke shelves, a further indication that the main block was complete at least before the Revolution.

The framing system is unusual, with double longitudinal summer beams extending from the end girts to the chimney girts in both the hall and the parlor. Corner and intermediate posts are flared in gunstock pattern. The walls are sheathed with vertical planking except in the attic gables, where the planks are laid horizontally, alternating the taper. Framing is cased in the parlor and exposed in the hall, where the summers are adzed and roughly chamfered. It is here that the pit-sawn chimney girt is exposed. The framing of the attic is conventional: equally spaced rafters, 50 inches on center, mortised and tenoned at the ridge. Given the age of the house, principal rafters and purlins might have been expected, but such a system was apparently not used in Ledyard. At one time a large weaving loom was installed in the attic; it is now set up in west end of the cellar.

The main barn is oriented with its ridge running north to south. The animal floor below the main floor at grade opens to the south into a stone-walled pen. It is built conventionally with a braced bent system of framing, sheathed with vertical boards. There is a hipped-roof cupola at the center the ridge, possibly a later addition. The barn, known to have been standing by 1870 since it appears in an old photograph of that period, may date back to the eighteenth century, but a more exact date of construction is impossible to determine. The smaller shed, the former ell of the house, is also gable-roofed and is at least contemporary with the enlargement of the main block about 1780.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
AGRICULTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

c. 1696 - c. 1870  
c. 1696 - c. 1930  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The Avery Homestead is significant as a rare survival of a late-seventeenth and early eighteenth-century farmstead, a significance enhanced by the exceptional integrity of its rural setting. The picturesque interrelationship of the house, farmyard, and outbuildings, which is set off by the broad sweep of the associated pasture and crop land, is especially evocative of eighteenth-century lifeways. The main house, essentially complete except for its appendages by about 1725, and achieving its unique form by about 1780, is probably the oldest surviving building in Ledyard. It is distinguished by its state of preservation and exceptionally fine craftsmanship.

The historic context for this farmstead is identified in the Multiple Resource Nomination Form as E-I., Agriculture, and exceeds the level of registration requirements for the property-type, Eighteenth-Century Farmsteads.

The farmstead achieves further historical significance for its association with the Avery family, early settlers of Groton and Ledyard, and its local importance in the ecclesiastical development of the community. Except for a brief period in the mid-1800s, the house has been owned by family members for three centuries. The original house was built about 1696 by William Morgan at the time of his marriage to Margaret Avery. They were descendants of New London proprietors James Morgan and James Avery, who took up land grants in Groton in the mid-seventeenth century. James Avery came to Boston with Winthrop's company in 1630; the Morgans, from Wales, arrived there in 1636. After North Groton became a separate parish in 1726, the house was one of those used as a place of worship until the meetinghouse was built. It was then owned by Deacon William Morgan, Jr., who sold it in 1745 to John Wood. It returned to Avery ownership in 1754 and has remained in the family since that time.

Because of this continuous association, the history of the property is well documented. The family has all the land deeds, records of changes to the house, and the original map for the layout of Avery Hill Road in 1773. Theophilus Avery, who owned the farm from 1757 to 1798, added the five-foot extension to the main block and probably built the kitchen ell which is now a separate building. A second Theophilus Avery, the grandson of the earlier man of that name, was the owner from 1852 to 1880. He built the present kitchen ell and the attached shed on its right elevation. He also installed some Victorian features in the house, including a balustrade in 1871 on the front staircase, a feature removed by the present owner, Amos G. Avery, who has skillfully restored the interior.

See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Multiple Property Documentation Form that accompnys this nomination (Section I).

### 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 Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

### Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

### Specify repository:

Avery Archives in possession of Amos G. Avery (current owner)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of property 22

### UTM References

A 18 746640 4593230  
Zone Easting Northing

C 18 747050 4593060  
E 1 8 7 4 6 6 0 0 4 5 9 2 2 0 0

B 18 747050 4593370  
Zone Easting Northing

D 18 746840 4592820  
F 1 8 7 4 6 5 0 0 4 5 9 2 6 5 0

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property is described in the land records located in the Town Clerk's office in the Ledyard Town Hall in Volume 70:371 and Volume 14:501.

See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

The nominated property includes all the land and buildings from the period of significance that remain associated with the Avery Homestead.

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant

organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 4/25/92

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