

Coney Island Lighthouse

4598 Beach 46th Street, Brooklyn
Tax Map Block 7037, Lot 40

Built: 1890

Architect: Attrib. Edward L. Woodruff (Keeper's House)

Style: Utilitarian (Lighthouse) and Queen Anne (Keeper's House)

Proposed Action: Propose for Calendarling October 20, 2026



Coney Island Lighthouse, 2025, LPC

For more than 135 years, the Coney Island Lighthouse has helped mariners navigate New York harbor. Located in Seagate, a residential neighborhood at the west end of the Coney Island peninsula in Brooklyn, it was built to guide ferries, tugboats, barges, and sailing vessels. The proposed landmark site incorporates an iron-framed lighthouse tower and a two-story Queen Anne-style keeper's dwelling. Completed in the summer of 1890, these structures are among the oldest on Coney Island.

Colonel David Porter Heap, Major of Engineers for the Third Lighthouse District, planned the station. The two structures are more or less identical to others built by the United States Lighthouse Service in the late 1880s: the Throgs Neck Lighthouse tower at Fort Schuyler in the Bronx, demolished in 1906, and the Gould Island Keeper's House in Rhode Island, status unknown, likely designed by civil engineer Edward L. Woodruff.

The lighthouse tower was fabricated by the Phoenix Iron Company in Trenton, New Jersey. Approximately 70 feet tall, it dominates the waterfront site. Resting on a square concrete foundation, it features an 87-step stairway cylinder that supports an octagonal gallery and lantern, where a fourth order Fresnel lens with a range of approximately 14 nautical miles was originally installed. A full-time light keeper occupied the adjacent residential structure, a brick cottage containing six rooms. Wrapped with wood shingles, this attractive and well-preserved example of the Queen Anne style has a steeply pitched asymmetrical roof, a substantial rounded corner bay, dormer windows, and a recessed porch.

A succession of lighthouse keepers has tended the Coney Island Lighthouse since 1890. The most recent was Frank Schubert, who worked and lived here for 43 years, from 1960 to 2003. He was the last of the United States Coast Guard's civilian lighthouse keepers. Still owned and operated by the Coast Guard, the lighthouse tower is now automated and contains a radio beacon for the calibration of navigational signals, while the keeper's dwelling is leased to the Seagate Association, a local homeowner's group. These rare, distinctive and well-preserved structures are reminders of the crucial role that the Coast Guard has played in the city's maritime history and the importance of New York harbor as a significant gateway to the nation.

(Proposed) Coney Island Lighthouse | LP-2697

