



NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES

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June 4, 2012

Rita Walsh
Nicole Benjamin
Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.
101 Walnut St
PO Box 9151
Watertown, MA 02471-9151

Re: RPR #3280

Dear Ms. Benjamin;

Thank you for requesting a determination of National Register eligibility for the property listed below. As requested, the Division of Historical Resources' Determination of Eligibility Committee has reviewed the *DHR Inventory Form* prepared by you; based on the information available, the DOE Committee's evaluation of National Register eligibility is:

| TOWN/CITY | PROPERTY | DETERMINATION |
|-----------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Exeter | Exeter Great Dam Project Area | Eligible-District |
| Exeter | Great Dam | Eligible |

A copy of the DHR evaluation form is attached for your use. Please refer to the "Follow-up" section for an explanation of the additional data needed for the "more information" request. The inventory data and the evaluation will also be added to the statewide survey database for historic properties in New Hampshire.

Please contact Mary Kate Ryan at 271-6435 or MaryKate.Ryan@dcr.nh.gov if you have questions.

Sincerely,

Christina St.Louis
Program Specialist

Enclosure

cc: Elizabeth Muzzey, Director / State Historic Preservation Officer
NOAA



NH Division of Historical Resources
Determination of Eligibility (DOE)

Date received: May 14, 2012

Inventory #:

Date of group review: May 23, 2012

Area: Exeter Great Dam Project Area

DHR staff: Laura Black

Property Name:

Town/City: Exeter

Address: Roughly bounded by the areas and streets bordering the Exeter River, bounded on the north by the high tide mark between the Exeter River and Squamscott River and Gilman Park to the south.

County: Rockingham

Reviewed for: R&C PTI NR SR Survey Other
Agency, if appropriate: NOAA

Individual Properties

NR SR
 Not evaluated for individual eligibility
 Eligible
 Eligible, also in district
 Eligible, in district
 Not eligible
 Incomplete information or evaluation

Districts

NR SR
 Not evaluated @ district
 Eligible
 Not eligible
 Incomplete information or evaluation

Integrity: ALL ASPECTS Location Design Setting Materials
 Workmanship Feeling Association

Criteria: A. Event B. Person C. Architecture/Engineering
 D. Archaeology E. Exception

Level: Local State National

IF THIS PROPERTY IS REVIEWED IN THE FUTURE, ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

The project area—up and downstream of proposed work to the Exeter Great Dam—includes properties adjacent to the Squamscott, Exeter, and Little rivers with direct or visual potential impacts.

The Great Falls/Squamscott Falls area has been the town's municipal, commercial, and industrial center since the 17th century. The Great Falls area was dominated by the operations of the Exeter Manufacturing Company from 1828 through the late 20th century. The existing dam was constructed by the company in 1914, continuing a water control system in place for over 200 years. Smaller mills, industries, and support businesses were also located in the area, and residential development in the Great Falls area was generally tied to the mills and manufacturing. Gilman Park was established in 1891 along the Exeter River. Transportation infrastructure has evolved over time and currently includes the 1935 String Bridge, the sensitively rebuilt Great Bridge (ca. 2000), and early 20th century footbridges associated with Phillips Exeter Academy.

Architecture in the area was influenced by trends in commercial and industrial development, substantial fires, and supporting infrastructure needs.

The area's history and architectural description are clear and concise, and along with well-chosen streetscapes and detail photos provide a context in which to understand the project area and plan for further study.

The form provides a list of many of the previously NR listed and eligible, and local historic resources identified in the project area.

The form recommends future survey work for only one area in the project area, a residential/commercial area south of the Great Dam.

The DOE Committee recommends evaluation of additional areas/resources within the project area that are not addressed in the evaluation/recommendation section of the form. These include Gilman Park, PEA recreational areas and associated footbridges along Exeter and Little rivers, the granite walls in the vicinity of the Great Falls, and the resources/lack of resources east of the Exeter River, south of Gardner Street.

ENTERED INTO DATABASE

ACREAGE: 77 acres

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE: n/a

AREA OF SIGNIFICANCE: Industry, architecture, recreation, utilities

BOUNDARY: n/a

SURVEYOR: Rita Walsh, Nicole Benjamin-Ma; VHB, Inc.

FOLLOW-UP: Notify appropriate parties.

- Please confirm/clarify/correct various dates in the text that are inconsistent or incorrect. For example, Great Dam is dated to both 1914 and ca. 1911, the fish passage and weir are dated to both 1968 and 1969, and Great Bridge is dated to 1934, 1985, and ca. 2000s (per P. Michaud).
- Please clarify in the form when Great Falls was originally dammed.
- Please note (p.18) that the boundary of the Downtown Historic District is not the "same" as the NR boundary of the Exeter Waterfront Commercial district, but rather is "similar."
- Figure 1: It would be helpful here and in future area forms to identify on the map properties that are referenced in the form, particularly those referenced repeatedly, such as Pickpocket Dam and Founders Park to make it clear for lay readers unfamiliar with the area.
- Figure 1 and text: It is also important not just to identify an "inventoried" property, but to identify the results/status/date of the inventory. Any questions or "outdated" inventory information would inform recommendations for future survey work.

Final DOE approved by:

Kate Ryan

Determination of Eligibility (DOE)

Inventory #: EXE0043

Review Date: 5/23/2012 **DOE Date:** 5/14/2012

Final DOE Approved

DHR Staff: MKR



Property Name: Exeter Great Dam

Area: Exeter Waterfront Commercial Historic District

Address: 200 ft downstream of High Street
Bridge

Town: Exeter **County:** Rockingham

Reviewed For: R&C

DOE Program(s): NOAA RPR 3280

DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Contributes to a National Register/

Integrity: Yes

Level: Local

Criteria: A: Yes B: C: Yes
 D: E:

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

A dam has existed at this location since the 1640s. The current run-of-river concrete gravity dam "Great Dam" at Great Falls in Exeter was constructed in 1914. It was repaired (content of that repair unknown at this time) in 1938, and a fish ladder was added in 1968.

The dam provided power to the Exeter Manufacturing Company from construction in 1914 through 1949. The mills were in service until 1983, but the dam and water rights were donated to the town of Exeter in 1981. It is currently used as an impoundment dam for the town's water supply.

As part of the significant Exeter Manufacturing Company complex, the dam is a contributing resource to the National Register listed Exeter Waterfront Commercial Historic District, listed in 1980 and expanded in 1986 to include the Exeter Manufacturing Company complex. Though the form does not address this, it is likely that the granite retaining walls along the river are also significant structures relating to this context within the district.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE(S)

Industry

Period of Significance: 1914
to 1949

Period not applicable

Boundary: dam, retaining walls, not including fish passage+

Follow Up:

Notify appropriate parties.

Comments: