



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

MAY 31 1979

Docket Nos. STN 50-568
and STN 50-569

Executive Director
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Washington, D. C. 20037

Dear Sir:

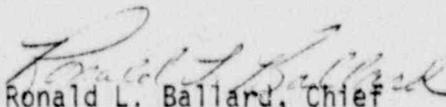
I am forwarding for your review and comment the draft environmental impact documentation identified in the enclosure to this letter.

The Draft Environmental Statement was prepared by my staff in accordance with the statement of general policy and procedure on implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as set forth in the Commission's regulations, 10 CFR Part 51. The statement has today been sent to the Environmental Protection Agency and notice of its availability is being forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication. Comments will be due within 60 days after publication in the Federal Register of the Environmental Protection Agency's listing notifying the public of issuance of the impact statement.

Since there are properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register which may be adversely affected by the proposed project, a preliminary case report is also enclosed.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact Dr. Phillip Cota (FTS 492-8432), who is the environmental project manager for our review of this application.

Sincerely,


Ronald L. Ballard, Chief
Environmental Projects Branch No. 1
Division of Site Safety
and Environmental Analysis

Enclosures:

1. DES (NUREG-0529)
2. Preliminary Case Report
3. An Historic, Architectural, and Archeological Investigation of the former Charlestown Naval Air Station and Vicinity.

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Executive Director, ACHP

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cc w/encl.: Director
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Preservation
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Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

cc w/encls 2 and 3 only:

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Roy Julian, Office of Real Property (DR)
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Enclosure 2

PRELIMINARY CASE REPORT
NEP 1 & 2

1. The proposed undertaking is described in the enclosed Draft Environmental Statement related to construction of NEP 1 & 2 (Docket Nos. STN 50-568 and STN 50-569), hereafter referred to as the DES.
2. There are four properties included in or recommended for inclusion in the National Register which may be affected by the undertaking: the site of Fort Ninigret, Foster Cove Area, General Stanton Inn, and Arnolde. These properties are described in the attached Sect. 2.6 of the New England Power Company's Environmental Report for NEP 1 & 2 (hereafter referred to as the ER).
3. Plant structures would be visible from these properties; the prominence of the plant would represent a perceptible change in the area's overall visual matrix. See DES Sects. 4.4.6 and 5.6.6, and the enclosed fourth draft of An Historic, Architectural, and Archeological Investigation of the Former Charlestown Naval Air Station and Vicinity, prepared by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, hereafter referred-to as the RIHPC report.
4. Measures taken in considering the undertaking's effect upon the properties included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register:
 - a. The views of the state historic preservation officer are presented in the enclosed RIHPC report.
 - b. The Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council has expressed its intention to evaluate proposed activities that may have an impact on these properties (DES Sect.4.4.6).
 - c. Alternatives that would avoid adverse effects are reviewed in DES Sect. 9.2.
 - d. To mitigate adverse visual effects of the plant, the applicant has proposed a greenbelt around the plant area (DES, Fig.4.1). To prevent impacts to the Foster Cove Area, the applicant proposes to fence and protect that area from all construction activity, and is continuing discussions with the RIHPC with the objective of recovering archeological artifacts onsite prior to the proposed construction (DES, Sect.4.1.1).

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2.6 REGIONAL HISTORIC, SCENIC, CULTURAL AND NATURAL LANDMARKS

2.6.1 Historic Significance

2.6.1.1 Aboriginal Population¹. The Charlestown, Rhode Island, area is thought to have been occupied by Native American populations for at least 2,000 years prior to the arrival of European colonists. The historic Native American population occupying the Charlestown area was the Niantic Indians. A sketch of their life style may be typical of the general prehistoric occupation of Charlestown. The Niantics were closely related to the Narragansetts and eventually became assimilated with them in the seventeenth century. It is usually asserted that the Niantics were displaced from Connecticut in the seventeenth century but their similarity to the Narragansett and the ease of assimilation makes this a somewhat dubious conclusion.

The Niantics, like many Eastern Woodland groups, were a semi-nomadic population whose economy consisted of hunting and gathering, with a substantial amount of food provided by slash and burn agriculture. Slash and burn agriculture involves a round of forest clearing, then burning the debris and planting the crops in the remaining layer of ash, often with the addition of a fish fertilizer. The plots, less than a half-acre in size, yielded well for a period of three to six years until soil fertility diminished, then a new plot would have to be opened in another area. Since the wood and brush homes were located near the cultivated plot, residences shifted continually. This was not a particular problem because land ownership was by the tribe as a whole and use was available to the individual member according to need. Despite a moderate population density, the entire outwash coastal plain yields evidence of Indian occupation as a result of the shifting settlements.

In general, Native American sites in this area can be classified as follows:

Villages. Sizable communities including up to several hundred people, these were loosely bounded, generally rambling areas. Their form had been noted by John Smith and others during early voyages. This type became uncommon after the plagues of 1614-1615 because of the loss of population and general disorganization. More nucleated settlements, often in the form of Forts, took their place and much of the population simply removed to the more secure interior sections.

Campsites. These were small compact sites usually occupied by several families during the nomadic segments of the year. The availability of specific resources, notably water, predetermined their location. These are scattered throughout the Charlestown area.

Forts. This refers to concentrated, walled communities, inhabited by Niantics and other groups during the proto-historic and early historic periods. Most of these were constructed by the Indians but some, such as the enigmatic Fort Ninigret, have uncertain origins.

Burial Grounds. In prehistoric times these were normally associated with the villages. In the early historic period they became very compact and situated in sacred areas. The reckless looting of these by whites is described by Howard M. Chapin (1927), "Indian Graves," Rhode Island Historical Society Collections 20:14-32.

2.6.1.2 Proto-Historic: 1500-1661¹. During this period there were sporadic, poorly documented contacts between the Niantics and early European explorers and traders. Fort Ninigret, approximately one mile east of the base, falls into this category.

Despite three weeks of excavation, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission archeological survey team was unable to specify the ethnic affinity of the fort. Native American and English artifacts have been recovered with, possibly, some evidence of Dutch habitation. Unfounded claims have been made in the past positioning Portuguese and French occupation.

The major events of this period for the Niantics was the shift from rambling villages to compact fortified sites. Captain Mason in 1637 described the Niantic occupation of what was probably Fort Ninigret, which Mason and his company surrounded to prevent any treachery. The question of the origin of the Fort was not answered by this encounter but it did point out the newly concentrated settlement pattern of the Niantics.

The period ends with increasing interest by European colonists in settling the area as land became scarce in the eastern part of the state.

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2.6.1.3 Historic Settlement: 1660-1880¹. In 1660, a group of European settlers obtained the Misquamakuck Purchase from the Narragansett Sachem Socooa. One of the colonists was Jeffery Champlin who in 1661 received the land on which the NALF was located.

At what point agricultural use was first made of the land by Europeans is unknown, but most of the Charlestown south strip was being cultivated or used for the raising of the famed Narragansett Pacer by the time of the 1738 division that separated Charlestown from Westerly.

2.6.1.4 Recent Period: 1880-1974¹. The recent period is characterized by mixed land use. Agricultural usage still occurs, but has been largely superseded by second growth woodland, summer homes and tourist-related development. There is little commercial or industrial activity and the atmosphere is predominantly rural. The one major exception to this was the Charlestown Naval Auxiliary Landing Field (NALF), constructed during World War II as an adjunct to the Quonset Point Naval Air Station. During the War, Navy pilots were trained for night flying at the Charlestown base. In the 1950's and 60's the NALF continued as a subsidiary to Quonset Point, handling overflow air traffic and serving as a touchdown point for training flights.

Currently, the study area's rural land use pattern is undergoing suburban style tract developments.

2.6.1.5 The Visual Context¹. The study area may be divided into three east-west bands, both topographically and visually. The southern bank along Block Island Sound is now predominantly a tourist and resort area marked by the presence of the earlier agricultural land use. The visual character of this band is that of groups of small cottages following the general pattern of the shoreline and access roads, field-surrounded farm complexes, areas of secondary reforestation, and a few residential tract developments which are subordinate visually. The NALF site lies within this southern band. The center band, lying north of U.S. Route 1, includes most of the present-day state management areas. Predominantly second-growth woodland, the area is characterized by a dispersal of structures in the irregular landscape. Clustered villages, sited to take advantage of the water power of the Pawcatuck River, typify the northern band. There is some evidence of an agricultural background here. But this is overshadowed by the mill villages of Carolina, Shannock and Kenyon.

Overall, the area surrounding the site of the Charlestown NALF may be described as a district of low wooded hills, ponds and marshes, in land bordered by a river valley, and fronted by a low, spreading coastal plain, the whole rural in aspect. Throughout, the scale and pattern of land uses dating back to the seventeenth century are present.

2.6.1.6 National Register Properties. The National Register of Historic Places, published by the Department of the Interior, February 10, 1976, lists three historic sites which are within five miles of the proposed NEP 1 & 2 site. These are:

Royal Indian Burial Ground, Narrow Lane, Charlestown, Rhode Island. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 2.7 miles southwest of, and not visible from, this area. Although Applicant has determined from field investigations that the proposed project would not be visible from this site, the RIHPC Report classifies it as "topographically visible." This means that the project would not be visible under existing conditions, but, should all trees, vegetation and structures between this site and the proposed project be removed, portions of the project structures could be visible based on line-of-sight across a barren topography.

Fort Ninigret, off Old Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. Indian habitation site and early trading post, became a state-owned historic site in 1883. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 1.5 miles southwest of, and visible from, this site.

Historic Village of the Narragansetts, South County Trail, Charlestown Rhode Island. A large area in north central Charlestown containing the Indian Cedar Swamp, the stone nineteenth century Indian Church, Indian Cemeteries and many archaeological sites. This area is said to be a center of Indian life in Rhode Island dating from the early eighteenth century. The Narragansett Long House, the tribal headquarters, is within the district. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 1.5 to 6.0 miles south of, and not visible from, this area.

In order to determine other areas of significant historical or archeological value at the NALF Charlestown and at nearby areas, Applicant, on March 5, 1974, consulted with the Rhode Island State Liaison Officer for Historic Preservation, Frederick C. Williamson. This consultation led to the performance of a detailed historical survey, partially funded by Applicant, of the NALF and of all the land area within a five-mile radius, and an archaeological study of

the NALF and nearby Fort Ninigret, by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, under the direction of Executive Director Richard Alan Dow. In addition, the Historical Preservation Commission performed a broader survey of those historical and archaeological sites in the study area of proposed transmission lines from the Charlestown site.

2.6.1.7 National Register Nominations. As a result of this study, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission identified and approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, five additional historic sites (see Figure 2.6-1).

The Wilcox Tavern, Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. Eighteenth century dwelling, the birthplace and former residence of General Stanton, later converted to use as a tavern. The interior is in a good state of preservation, with original staircase, paneled rooms, etc. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 2.5 miles east of, and not visible from, this site.

Wilcox Farm (now "Saltbox Antiques"), Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. Eighteenth century 2-1/2 story frame house with saltbox profile. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 2.7 miles east of, and not visible from, this site.

Babcock House (now "Whistling Chimnies"), Quonochontaug Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. Early eighteenth century 2-1/2 story frame dwelling. It was built about 1720 and is thought to have been a trading post. Additions to the building were made early in the twentieth century. The building represents a very important early South County type. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 2.5 miles northeast of, and not visible from, this site. Although Applicant has determined from field investigations that the proposed project would not be visible from this site, the RIHPC Report classifies it as "topographically visible." This means that the project would not be visible under existing conditions, but, should all trees, vegetation and structures between this site and the proposed project be removed, portions of the project structures could be visible based on line-of-sight, across a barren topography.

Sheffield House, Quonochontaug Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. Circa 1710, 1-1/2 story gambrel farm house, with one-story ell. Much of the original interior detail is intact. The building represents a very important early South County type and is well preserved. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 3.0 miles northeast of, and not visible from, this site. Although Applicant has determined from field investigations that the proposed project would not be visible from this site, the RIHPC Report classifies it as "topographically visible." This means that the project would not be visible under existing conditions, but, should all trees, vegetation and structures between this site and the proposed project be removed, portions of the project structures could be visible based on line-of-sight across a barren topography.

Foster Cove Area-Archaeological, Charlestown, Rhode Island. Late Woodland archaeological site with shell middens containing shell tempered pottery. This area is on the west boundary of the site.

Of the eight historic sites listed above which are either on or approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, the proposed power plant will be visible from only one off-site area, Fort Ninigret at a distance of 1.5 miles, and one on-site area, the Foster Cove Archaeological area.

Recommended for Nomination to the National Register. As a further result of these studies, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission (RIHPC) identified 12 sites which they categorized as "recommended for nomination to the National Register" and 50 buildings or areas which they categorized as "all other properties having historic/architectural significance" within a 5-mile radius of the site.

General Stanton Inn, Old Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. Federal style 2-1/2 story residence. The original structure was awarded to General Stanton by a lottery in 1796. There is a store on the first floor with a hall above added in 1810. The building was used as a tavern during the nineteenth century. According to legend, it was used as an Indian School in the tenth century. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 2.3 miles east of, and visible from, this site.

NEP 1 & 2 ER

Charlestown Village ("Cross Mills"), Old Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. This small settlement, commonly known also as Cross Mills, is the focal point for southern Charlestown. It grew around an early eighteenth century grist mill which continued in operation into the twentieth century. Town Dock Road and a portion of the Old Post Road are within the district. The area includes architecturally and historically significant structures: The George Cross House, Cross Hall, the Card House, District School No. 2 (recently moved to the village and carefully restored), the First Baptist Church of Cross Mills, Captain Taber's House, the Macomber House and the Ocean House. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 1.7 miles southwest of, and not visible from, Cross Mills Village, but is visible from the waterfront south of the village.

Coronation Rock, off Old Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. This is a granite boulder, about five feet high, behind King Tom Farmhouse, with the date "1770" inscribed on it. Several chiefs of Niantics and Narragansetts were crowned here. The site is used periodically for historical pageants. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 1.5 miles southwest of, and not visible from, this site. Although Applicant has determined from field investigations that the proposed project would not be visible from this site, the RIHPC Report classifies it as "topographically visible." This means that the project would not be visible under existing conditions, but, should all trees, vegetation and structures between this site and the proposed project be removed, portions of the project structures could be visible based on line-of-sight across a barren topography.

Arnolds, Old Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. This is a very attractive residential resort community of some 30 houses along the west side of Fort Neck Pond. In about 1905, Thomas Arnold of Brooklyn, New York, initiated a summer colony here. Today, houses here display a range of styles; many dwellings are of high architectural value. The NEP 1 & 2 site abuts this area on the west and is visible from some of the homes.

General Stanton Monument, Post Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. This is a granite shaft monument which was erected in memory of General Stanton, first U.S. Senator from Rhode Island and later a U.S. representative. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 2.5 miles east of and not visible from, this site. Although Applicant has determined from field investigations that the proposed project would not be visible from this site, the RIHPC Report classifies it as "topographically visible." This means that the project would not be visible under existing conditions, but, should all trees, vegetation and structures between this site and the proposed project be removed, portions of the project structures could be visible based on line-of-sight across a barren topography.

1-1/2 Story Gambrel House, Town House Road, Charlestown, Rhode Island. This is an early eighteenth century 1-1/2 story gambrel roofed shingled dwelling with large center chimney, pond and saw mill site on property. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 4.5 miles south of, and not visible from, this site.

Samuel Perry House, Matunuck Schoolhouse Road, South Kingstown, Rhode Island. This is a late seventeenth century, end chimney (stone) style 2-1/2 story frame farmhouse, presently wood shingled. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 5.3 miles west of, and not visible from, this site.

Farm Complex, off Matunuck Schoolhouse Road, South Kingstown, Rhode Island. This very fine farm complex in an excellent rural setting includes a nineteenth century farmhouse and out buildings. The boulder-strewn open landscape along Trustom Pond is outwash resulting from the last ice age. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 4.6 miles west of, and not visible from, this site. The top of the meteorological tower is visible, but the station is 100 feet lower and would not be visible.

Carpenters Mill, Moonstone Beach Road, South Kingstown, Rhode Island. This is an eighteenth century one-story frame wood shingled grist mill. The original mill was built in about 1716. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 5.2 miles west of, and not visible from, this site.

Bradford Village, Old Shore Road, Westerly, Rhode Island. The Village was originally called Shattuck's Weir, and was associated with Indian fishing camps. The first dam was built here in 1758 and a saw mill and grist mill were erected. The site was subsequently developed for use in textile manufacture. In 1911, the mill site was purchased by Bradford Dyeing Association and the present name was adopted. The existing village includes mill houses, stores, churches and the factories. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 5.0 miles southeast of, and not visible from, this site.

Ninigret Farm (Woodbine Villa), Post Road, Westerly, Rhode Island. This is an early Republican style 2-1/2 story frame farmhouse, on land purchased from Chief Ninigret in 1731. It has long been in the Bavitt and Dunn families. The first house on this site was built in 1776. Admiral Herbert O. Dunn, who served in World War I, summered here, and Franklin Roosevelt was a guest here when he was Secretary of the Navy. The NEP 1 & 2 site is 4.3 miles east of, and not visible from, this site. Although Applicant has determined from field investigations that the proposed project would not be visible from this site, the RIHPC Report classifies it as "topographically visible." This means that the project would not be visible under existing conditions, but, should all trees, vegetation and structures between this site and the proposed project be removed, portions of the project structures could be visible based on line-of-sight across a barren topography.

Weekapaug District, Quonochontaug Pond, Westerly, Rhode Island. Along the shore of Quonochontaug Pond, at the five-mile radius line, is the eastern edge of this architecturally and historically important district. The area contains many fine late nineteenth and early twentieth century summer houses. The NEP 1 and 2 site is 5.0 miles northeast and not visible from approximately 80% of this area.

2.6.2 Archaeological Significance

The presence of the "Historic Village of the Narragansetts," a National Register property, 1.5 to 6 miles north of the NALF, contributed to the decision to perform an archaeological survey and excavations on-site at an early stage of planning. This work was performed under the supervision of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and was one part of their study which is described in paragraph 2.6.1 of this report.

The archaeological survey of the NALF Charlestown involved a broad survey of the southern Charlestown area with particular reference to land use patterns from prehistoric to recent times. This was accompanied by an aerial photographic survey and, subsequently, by a foot survey of the base. The final phase consisted of an intensive test excavation program to define the potential of various areas. General results of the archaeological investigation indicate that, despite extensive modifications to the base site, significant archaeological features are located there which should be taken into account in planning future development.

Extensive construction and previous cultivation at the NALF Charlestown have obliterated archaeological remains, which might have existed, from a sizable portion of the base. But a major undisturbed site has been located on a peninsula projecting into Foster Cove on the western perimeter of the base. This late Woodland Indian campsite and midden is one of the few known ceramic yielding sites in southern Rhode Island. It has been recommended for nomination to the National Register. This site will be protected during construction and preserved and made available for further study.

In addition, three archaeological areas of less significance were noted on-site.

Preliminary plans call for construction activities to avoid most of the undisturbed portions of these areas; however, Applicant is continuing discussions with the RIHPC with the objective of recovering archaeological artifacts on the site prior to the proposed construction.

2.6.3 Natural Landmarks

The National Registry of Natural Landmarks, published by the United States Department of the Interior, September 5, 1973, updated to May 5, 1975, lists only one natural landmark in the state of Rhode Island, Ell Pond in Richmond, Rhode Island, 11-1/2 miles northwest of the site. The NEP 1 & 2 site is not visible from this natural landmark.

2.6.4 Historic Significance Along Transmission Right-of-Way

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission was consulted regarding the locations of areas of historical, architectural and archaeological significance within the Rhode Island portion of an 1,100-square mile transmission line study area. This consultation led to the conduct of a broad-brush survey of known historical, architectural and archaeological areas within the study area. This survey is being used in the routing of project transmission lines to avoid areas of historic significance. The locations of these sites are shown on Figure 3.9-8 of this report.

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On Thursday, July 3, 1975, Applicant consulted with Mrs. Elizabeth R. Amadon, State Survey Director, and Ms. Rita Morrison, Mapping Coordinator, Massachusetts Historical Commission, concerning the existence of historical and archaeological landmarks in the vicinity of the proposed West Farnum to Millbury 341 KV transmission line. The proposed line passes through portions of Millbury, Sutton, Northbridge, Uxbridge and Millville, Massachusetts, and Woonsocket, Rhode Island.

An inspection of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's records revealed that there are no historical or archaeological sites in the immediate vicinity of the project area; however, the following National Register properties are in the general area:

Crown and Eagle Mills, North Uxbridge, Massachusetts. 1.8 miles northeast of the proposed line — not visible.

Rogerson's Village, North Uxbridge, Massachusetts. 1.8 miles northeast of the proposed line — not visible.

Blackstone Canal, Uxbridge and Northbridge, Massachusetts. 1.7 to 3.0 miles north and east of the proposed line — not visible.

Friend's Meeting House, Uxbridge, Massachusetts. 0.5 miles southwest of the proposed line — not visible.

Woonsocket City Hall, Woonsocket, Rhode Island. 1.7 miles northeast of the proposed line — not visible.

Woonsocket Company Mill Complex, Woonsocket, Rhode Island. 2.3 miles northeast of the proposed line — not visible.

Woonsocket Opera House, Woonsocket, Rhode Island. 2.1 miles northeast of the proposed line — not visible. The proposed project will have no physical or visual impact on the above-named historic sites.

2.6.5 Visual Effects on Nearby Parks and Recreation Areas

Parks and recreation areas within a five-mile radius of the NEP 1 & 2 site and the visibility of the proposed project from those areas are as follows:

Burlingame State Park. This is a State-owned and operated picnic-camping-boating and natural resource management area surrounding Watchaug Pond in Charlestown, Rhode Island. Its distance from NEP 1 & 2 varies from approximately 1.5 to 4 miles to the northwest. The proposed project will not be visible from this area.

Kimball Bird Sanctuary. This is a wildlife preserve and passive recreation and nature study area on the southeast shore of Watchaug Pond in Charlestown, Rhode Island, owned and managed by the Rhode Island Audubon Society. Its distance from NEP 1 & 2 is approximately 1.5 miles to the northwest. The proposed project will not be visible from this area.

Deep Pond Public Fishing Area. This is a State-owned boat launching and parking area on the west shore of Deep Pond in Charlestown, Rhode Island, providing boat access for fishing. Its distance from NEP 1 & 2 is approximately 1-3/4 miles to the north. The proposed project will not be visible from this area.

Charlestown Beach and Public Boat Launching Area and Ninigret Conservation Area. This is a State-owned and operated area with facilities for swimming, boat launching and fishing provided at various locations along the Charlestown Barrier Beach from East Beach Road to the Charlestown Breachway in Charlestown, Rhode Island. This stretch also encompasses the Ninigret Conservation Area, a natural preserve of barrier beach consisting of sand dunes and beach grasses. Its distance varies from approximately 1/2 mile to 2 miles southerly of the site. The proposed project will be visible from most locations along the Ninigret Pond side of the barrier beach, while it will not be visible from many locations on the Block Island side due to the rise in elevation from the water surface to the ridge line of the barrier beach.

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2.6.6 References

1. *An Historic, Architectural & Archeological Investigation of the Former Charlestown Naval Air Station and Vicinity*, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, December, 1974.

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