

**Seacoast Reliability Project  
Preliminary Report: Historic Resources**

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## **I. Introduction**

Public Service of New Hampshire (PSNH), a subsidiary of Eversource (formerly Northeast Utilities), is planning a 115kV electrical-power transmission line between existing substations in Portsmouth and Madbury, New Hampshire. The 13-mile-long line will pass through the towns of Portsmouth, Newington, Durham, and Madbury. For most of its length, the project, known as the Seacoast Reliability Project, represents an upgrade of an existing power line, with new poles and transmission wires. The poles will be taller than the existing poles but spaced somewhat further apart. The character of the areas through which the transmission right-of-way passes is varied, and includes (east to west), a densely built commercial and industrial area in Portsmouth and Newington; the recently reconstructed Spaulding Turnpike, a limited-access highway; the former Pease Air Force Base, a business and aviation facility now known as Pease International; a largely rural part of Newington on the east side of Little Bay; corresponding rural areas in Durham on the west side of Little Bay; the former Boston and Maine railroad right-of-way, currently operated by Pan Am Railways; the campus of the University of New Hampshire; and, for a short distance, a rural area of Madbury. The transmission-line corridor is shown on a series of excerpts of USGS topographical maps covering the route in the four towns (Appendix A).

This report presents preliminary information regarding historic properties that may be affected by the project. Historic properties include buildings, structures, objects, districts, and sites that may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The report was prepared by Bruce Clouette, PhD, Senior Historian with Archaeological and Historical Services, Inc. of Storrs, Connecticut, under contract with the project's engineering consultant, Normandeau Associates, Inc. Site file research and field inspection of the project route were undertaken in November and December 2013. This report does not include consideration of archaeological resources, which are being investigated by another Normandeau Associates, Inc. subcontractor.

## **II. Methodology**

The information presented in this report was developed in the course of preparing materials for a Request for Project Review (RPR), which it is anticipated will be submitted to the State of New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (DHR). DHR serves as New Hampshire's state historic preservation office; its mission is to preserve and enhance New Hampshire's historical places. The methodology used to identify possibly affected historic resources follows DHR requirements for an RPR. The first step was to consult the files of already-identified historic properties maintained by DHR at its Concord offices. These include National Register of Historic Places listings, project and historic-district Area Forms, and Individual Forms from all four towns. In addition, multi-town files were examined and found to be relevant, particularly the file for the Spaulding Turnpike. Two listed or eligible historic districts and one farm complex were identified as a result of the file review.

Next, the route of the transmission line was inspected in the field in early December 2013. All points at which the transmission-line route crossed public roads were examined, as were the two points on private property where the line will go underwater so as to cross Little Bay. In addition, roads paralleling the proposed route were driven so as to identify historic resources from which the existing overhead power lines were visible. All properties that appeared to be more than 50 years old (1963 or earlier) were noted and photographed; in cases of indeterminate age or buildings that appeared to be

on the borderline of 50 years old, the date in the town assessor records was used. A total of fifteen individual buildings, three railroad-related bridges, and one additional potential historic district were identified as a result of the field survey. The buildings include houses and barns from various periods, an educational building and the 1929 heating plant at the University of New Hampshire, the Durham train station, and two small brick switch houses built as part of the Little Bay underwater electrical cable crossing.

Several recent highway bridges over the former Boston and Maine railroad right-of-way were observed to have retained portions of earlier stone or concrete abutments. Because these are essentially modern bridges built to provide greater overhead clearance for trains, they were not included as historic resources. Three buildings at the University of New Hampshire that are listed in, or determined eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places are not included because there is only minimal visibility of the transmission line and it did not seem reasonable to consider the transmission corridor as a part of the buildings' settings:

- Thompson Hall, Main Street, Durham – National Register-listed, 1999
- Durrell Hall, DUR0009, corner of College and Main Streets, Durham, Eligible
- Israel Demeritt House, DUR0001, vicinity of Mast Road, Durham, Eligible

Similarly, the Isaac Dow House (NWN0205) on Woodbury Avenue in Newington was not included because it lies on the opposite side of the Spaulding Turnpike from the transmission corridor. The Dow House appears as an isolated historic building surrounded by modern development; it did not seem reasonable to consider the transmission corridor as having any potential to further diminish the property's integrity of setting, feeling, or association, even though there may be some visibility of the tops of the new poles.

For the purposes of this initial step, the Area of Potential Effect was construed as the transmission-line right-of-way, properties the boundaries of which are adjacent to the right-of-way, and properties that appeared to have some potential for an effect of new construction on the property's integrity of setting, feeling, and association. The delineation of the new line's visibility was not completed at the time of file research and field inspection. However, the field inspection, using the visibility of the existing transmission line as a guide, provided a good initial method of approximating the limits of indirect visual effects on historic properties.

Background historical research conducted for this stage of the investigation consisted of consulting previously published works of local history, including a history of the University of New Hampshire, and historical maps that indicate building use and property ownership (see Bibliography).

The intent of this report is to identify potential historic properties that may be affected by the project. Actually determining the National Register eligibility of properties that have not already been listed or determined eligible will be undertaken during further consultation with DHR, as will the assessment of the project's effects on listed and eligible properties.

### III. Results of File Research and Field Review

Table 1 summarizes the historic and potentially historic properties that could be affected by project actions, listed in east-to-west (Portsmouth to Madbury) order. No Portsmouth properties are listed because the project will use existing transmission facilities in an area heavily developed with modern commercial buildings. The locations of these properties are plotted on the USGS maps in Appendix A. Photographs and additional information on each property are presented below.

#### 7-11 and 16-48 Fox Point Road Newington

Four adjacent houses in this neighborhood could conceivably constitute a National Register-eligible historic district on the local level of significance based upon their architectural character and association with Newington's historical identity as a predominantly agricultural community. The houses appear to be relatively well-preserved and to retain intact many of their character-defining features. The only property that is directly adjacent to the transmission-line right-of-way is 28 Fox Point Road, a modest, plainly detailed house built in 1930 (Newington assessor records). Except where the lines cross the road, the right-of-way is not readily visible from the other properties in the potential historic district.



*House at 7 Fox Point Road, Newington, ca. 1805, camera facing northwest. Although not directly adjacent to the transmission line, the house could be considered a contributing building within a potential historic district at this end of Fox Point Road. The garage structure to the rear may represent a remodeling of an old barn.*

**Table 1**  
**Historic and Potentially Historic Properties Identified Through File Review and Field Survey**  
**(East-to-West Order)**

Location	Town	Description	National Register Status
7-11, 16-48 Fox Point Road	Newington	Potential historic district of early 19 <sup>th</sup> -century houses	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
28 Fox Point Road	Newington	House, 1930 (included in above)	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
97 Nimble Hill Road	Newington	Benjamin S. Hoyt House	Determined eligible 12/14/2005.
249 Nimble Hill Road	Newington	House, 1934	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
249 Nimble Hill Road	Newington	"Bickford House," 1711 (sign)	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
Nimble Hill Road	Newington	Newington Center Historic District	Listed 11/30/1987.
339 Little Bay Road	Newington	House and barn, 1812	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
44 Gundalow Landing	Newington	Cable switch house, 1902	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
295 Durham Point Road	Durham	Cable switch house, 1902	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
310 Durham Point Road	Durham	Barn, ca. 1900	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
300 Durham Point Road	Durham	House and barn, 1830	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
280 Durham Point Road	Durham	House, 1955	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
Newmarket Road, Bennett Road	Durham	Newmarket and Bennett Roads Farms Historic District	Determined eligible 10/20/2010.
Oyster River	Durham	Railroad bridge, 1911	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
2 Library Way	Durham	UNH Central Heating Plant, 1929	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
Library Way	Durham	Railroad bridge, 1911	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
131 Main Street	Durham	UNH Nesmith Hall, 1893/1932/1939	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
Main Street	Durham	Main Street Railroad Bridge, 1936	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
3 Depot Road	Durham	Durham Railroad Station, 1893	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.
124 Perkins Road	Madbury	"Old Perkins Place," 1846	Identified in field survey; eligibility not yet determined.



*House at 11 Fox Point Road, Newington, ca. 1830, camera facing northwest. Although not directly adjacent to the proposed transmission line, the house could be considered a contributing building within a potential historic district at this end of Fox Point Road.*

*House at 16 Fox Point Road, Newington, ca. 1813, camera facing northwest. Although not directly adjacent to the proposed transmission line, the house could be considered a contributing building within a potential historic district at this end of Fox Point Road.*



*House at 28 Fox Point Road, Newington, 1930. The right-of-way for the transmission line lies adjacent to the property's north lot line. This house, though later than the others, could be considered contributing to a potential historic district at this end of Fox Point Road.*

**Benjamin S. Hoyt House**  
**97 Nimble Hill Road**  
**Newington**

This property, which has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, includes a 2-story hip-roofed clapboarded 19<sup>th</sup>-century house and barn within a setting of several acres of open fields. The transmission line traverses the rear of the property at its southeast corner.



*Benjamin S. Hoyt House (NWN0148), 97 Nimble Hill Road, Newington, camera facing southwest. The 20-acre lot associated with the house is crossed by the transmission-line right-of-way at its southeast corner.*



*Barn associated with the Benjamin S. Hoyt House (NWN0148), 97 Nimble Hill Road, Newington, camera facing southwest.*



*Fields associated with the Benjamin S. Hoyt House (NWN0148), 97 Nimble Hill Road, Newington. The existing transmission line can be seen in the far background.*

**249 Nimble Hill Road  
Newington**

This property includes a 2 ½-story 1934 house with simple Colonial Revival-style detailing, a small garage of indeterminate age, and an apparently relocated 1 ½-story 18<sup>th</sup>-century house now serving as an outbuilding. The transmission line crosses the southeast corner of the house's lot.



*House at 249 Nimble Hill Road, Newington, west elevation, camera facing southeast.*



*Outbuilding at 249 Nimble Hill Road, Newington, camera facing northeast. The sign identifies the building as “The Bickford House 1711.” The Newington Assessor gives a date of 1810.*

**Newington Center Historic District  
Nimble Hill Road  
Newington**

This National Register-listed historic district includes a library, church, and several houses. Particularly at its northern end, it retains a rural historic landscape character that recalls Newington’s agricultural heritage. The transmission right-of-way passes through open fields associated with the Frink Farm, a complex that includes a brick house and agricultural outbuildings that contribute to the significance of the historic district.

*Existing transmission line as it passes through the open land in the northern part of the Newington Center Historic District; camera facing southwest from Old Post Road. This land is associated with the ca. 1820 Frink House at 272 Nimble Hill Road.*





*Open land at the northwest corner of the Newington Center Historic District; camera facing south from Old Post Road. This land is associated with the ca. 1820 Frink House at 272 Nimble Hill Road, which is visible in the background along with its attached barns.*

**339 Little Bay Road  
Newington**

The transmission line passes through the extensive acreage associated with this farmstead, which includes a 2 ½-story clapboarded center-chimney house built in 1812 and several agricultural outbuildings. Although not entirely unaltered (the porch appears to be much later than the house), the complex as a whole recalls Newington's agricultural heritage in much the same way as the Frink Farm in the Newington Center Historic District. In this case, however, the transmission right-of-way is less readily visible from the road, as it runs along the northern part of the property.



*House, 339 Little Bay Road,  
Newington, 1812, south  
elevation, camera facing north.*



*Barn associated with house at 339 Little Bay Road, Newington, camera facing northwest.*

### **Cable Switch Houses**

**44 Gundalow Landing, Newington  
310 Durham Point Road, Durham**

These two small brick buildings once contained switch gear for energizing the underwater electrical cable that was installed under Little Bay between Newington and Durham in 1902. This was an early example of submarine power transmission and was written up in the technical literature of the day. The east switch house in Newington has been substantially modified for use as a private dock facility; as the right-of-way now bypasses the building, it will not be affected by the project. The west-side switch house in Durham has been less altered, but its condition is poor. Construction of the new underwater crossing for the transmission line will necessitate its removal.



*East-side cable switch house, located on the water at 44 Gundalow Landing, Newington, 1902, camera facing northeast.*



*West-side cable switch house, located on the water at 295 Durham Point Road, Durham, 1902, camera facing northwest.*



*U. S. Coast Survey chart, 1914, with the two switch houses labeled as “Cable Ho[use].”*

**310 Durham Point Road  
Durham**

This large frame barn, probably dating to ca.1900 and now located on a separate parcel, may formerly have been associated with the adjacent property at 300 Durham Point Road. Its condition appears to be deteriorated. The transmission line is only visible from that neighboring property.



*Barn at 310 Durham Point Road, camera facing west.*

**300 Durham Point Road  
Durham**

This 1 ½-story house with an attached barn has been altered over time with a dormer and added porches, but it could have local historical significance for its associations with Durham’s agricultural past. The transmission right-of-way is not readily visible from the property, but it does pass across the lot’s southeast corner.



*House and attached barn at 300 Durham Point Road, Durham, ca. 1830, camera facing southwest.*

**280 Durham Point Road  
Durham**

Built in 1955 (Durham Assessor records), this “Colonial” type house appears to have been altered from its historic appearance with addition, siding, and replacement windows. It has a large lot of 34 acres, through which the transmission line passes.



*House at 280 Durham Point Road, Durham, 1955, camera facing north.*

**Newmarket and Bennett Roads Farms Historic District  
Newmarket Road, Bennett Road  
Durham**

This area constitutes a rural historic landscape with several 19th and early 20th-century houses, a small roadside cemetery; and extensive open fields. It is also known as the Doe-Mooney-Dame-Stevens district (Durham Area M). The power line right-of-way is quite far back from the road and is not readily visible except where it crosses Newmarket Road. The district has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.



*House associated with the Mooney-Moriarty Farm, 4 Bennett Road, Durham, ca.1800, camera facing northeast. The house is a contributing building within the Newmarket & Bennett Roads Farms Historic District. The existing transmission line, while not visible in the photograph, runs through the rear portion of this 3.7-acre lot.*

*Hamel-Beliveau House, 127 Newmarket Road, Durham, ca.1912, camera facing southeast. The house is a contributing building within the Newmarket & Bennett Roads Farms Historic District. A portion of the existing transmission line visible at the right.*



**Oyster River Railroad Bridge**  
**Former B&M Railroad Right-of-Way at Oyster River**  
**Durham**

This small concrete arch was built in 1911 (the date appears above the arch) as part of a re-alignment of the railroad in Durham, which brought it closer to the University of New Hampshire and away from the commercial area further east on Main Street. It may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places for its engineering significance and for its historical associations. It is typical of the railroad engineering of the period, in which reinforced concrete replaced stone masonry as the material of choice for small river crossings. The transmission line runs along the west side of the railroad right-of-way and so is not visible from the most publicly accessible side of the bridge, the east or downstream elevation.



*Oyster River Railroad Bridge,  
Durham, east elevation,  
camera facing southwest.  
The date "1911" is incised  
above the apex of the arch.*

**University of New Hampshire Central Heating Plant**  
**2 Library Way,**  
**Durham**

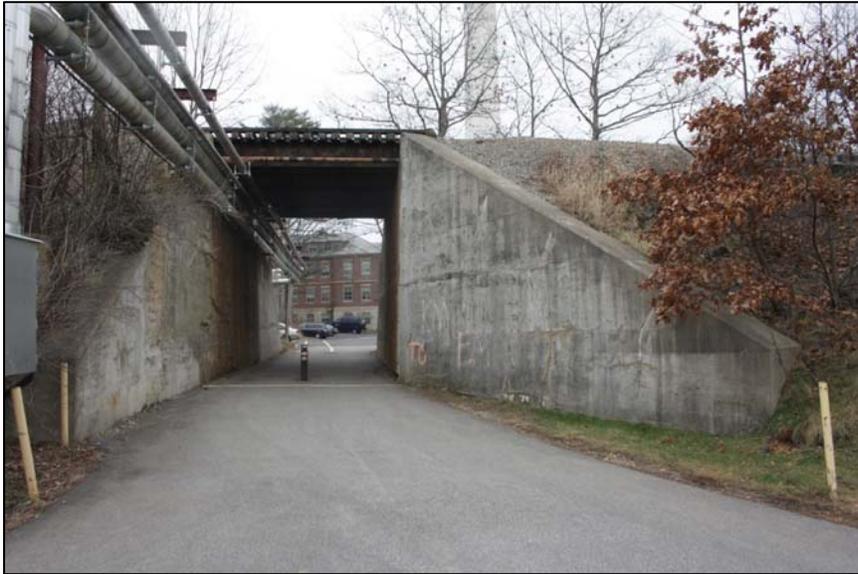
Built in the period 1927-1929, the heating plant has been repeatedly expanded, including some relatively recent additions. Nevertheless, the original portion is clearly identifiable with its arched windows, brick walls, and molded cornice, all of which reflect the Colonial Revival style of architecture then favored for campus buildings. To date, although individual buildings have been listed, the historic resources of the university have not been evaluated for their collective National Register eligibility. While the heating plant might not be eligible individually because of the extent of alterations, it could be considered a contributing component of an eligible university historic district that would include the older buildings in this part of the campus. The plant is adjacent to the railroad right-of-way, which carries the existing transmission line along its western edge.

*University of New Hampshire  
Central Heating Plant, 2  
Library Way, Durham, 1927-  
1929, camera facing  
southwest.*



**Library Way Railroad Bridge**  
**Library Way**  
**Durham**

The plate-girder superstructure and concrete wing walls of this bridge suggest that it was part of the railroad's realignment project of 1911-1912. It has been altered from its original appearance by an extensive series of utility conduits along the north side of Library Way.



*Library Way Railroad Bridge,  
Library Way, Durham, west  
end, camera facing east.*

*Library Way Railroad Bridge in 1926,  
showing east end (University of New  
Hampshire Archives).*



**Nesmith Hall**  
**131 Main Street**  
**Durham**

Nesmith Hall is one of the university's original 1893 buildings, but it was substantially altered in the Colonial Revival style in 1936 (center portion); the flanking wings were added in 1939. The building is adjacent to the railroad right-of-way, along the west side of which runs the existing power line. To date, although individual buildings have been listed, the historic resources of the university have not been evaluated for their collective National Register eligibility. While Nesmith Hall might not be eligible individually because of the extent of alterations, it could be considered a contributing component of an eligible university historic district that would include the older buildings in this part of the campus.



*Nesmith Hall, 131 Main Street, Durham*

**Main Street Railroad Bridge**  
**Main Street over former Boston and Maine railroad right-of-way**  
**Durham**

This reinforced-concrete arched rigid-frame structure was built in 1936 as a replacement for the timber truss installed at the time of the railroad's 1911-1912 re-alignment. The stone facing and sidewalk overlooks relate to the "City Beautiful" movement of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and suggest that the State Highway Department intended it as an aesthetic gateway to the University of New Hampshire's campus. The current transmission line is carried over the bridge along the west side of the railroad right-of-way.



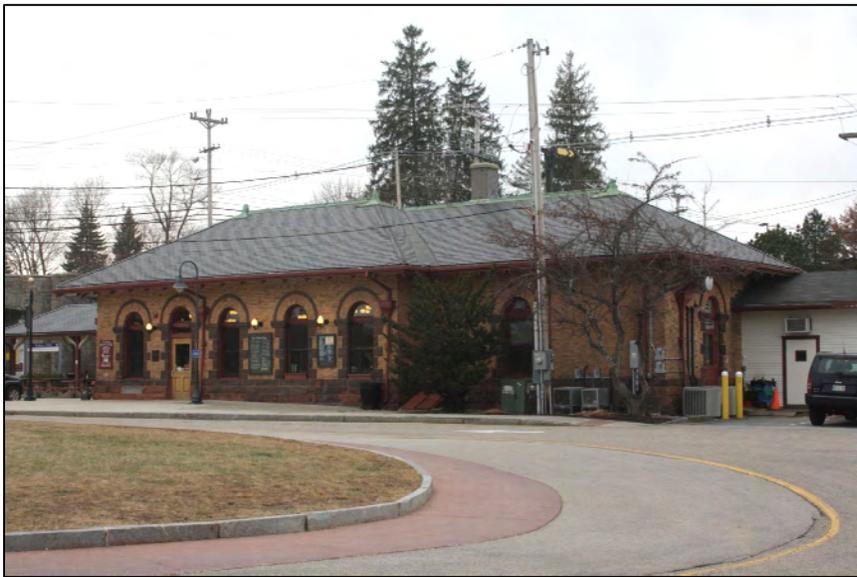
*Main Street Railroad Bridge,  
1936, Main Street, Durham,  
north elevation, camera  
facing northwest.*



*Detail of sidewalk niche, south  
side, camera facing southeast.*

**Durham Railroad Station,  
3 Depot Road  
Durham**

This appropriately restored small-town depot has both historical and architectural significance. It is the chief resource for recalling the importance of the railroad in the history of Durham and the University of New Hampshire, and it embodies many of the distinctive characteristics of the Victorian period's polychrome Renaissance Revival architecture. Both the interior and exterior appear much as they do in old photographs. The station, which now serves as the UNH Dairy Bar, was built in 1893 in East Lynn, Massachusetts, and was moved to Durham as part of the railroad's re-alignment in 1912. While moved buildings are not ordinarily eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the relocation of this building in 1912 is part of its significance.



*Durham Railroad Station, 3 Depot Road, Durham, east elevation, camera facing southeast.*



*Detail of interior brick wall and original woodwork.*

**“Old Jackson House”  
124 Perkins Road  
Madbury**

This 1 ½-story clapboarded 1846 house appears to retain intact much of its historic appearance, including the divided-light sash, sidelights flanking the paneled entrance door, pilaster-and-lintel entry, and the pediment-shaped window caps. It is listed in the local history (Adams 1968) as one of the town’s historic houses. The house is accompanied by several outbuildings that appear to have been constructed relatively recently. The property abuts the railroad right-of-way, which has the existing transmission line along its western edge. The Madbury substation and the transmission line are not readily visible from the road but can be seen from the property, especially when the leaves are down. The property is operated as a tree farm.

*“Old Jackson House,” 1846,  
124 Perkins Road, Madbury,  
camera facing northwest.*



*Modern outbuildings south of  
the house, camera facing  
north.*



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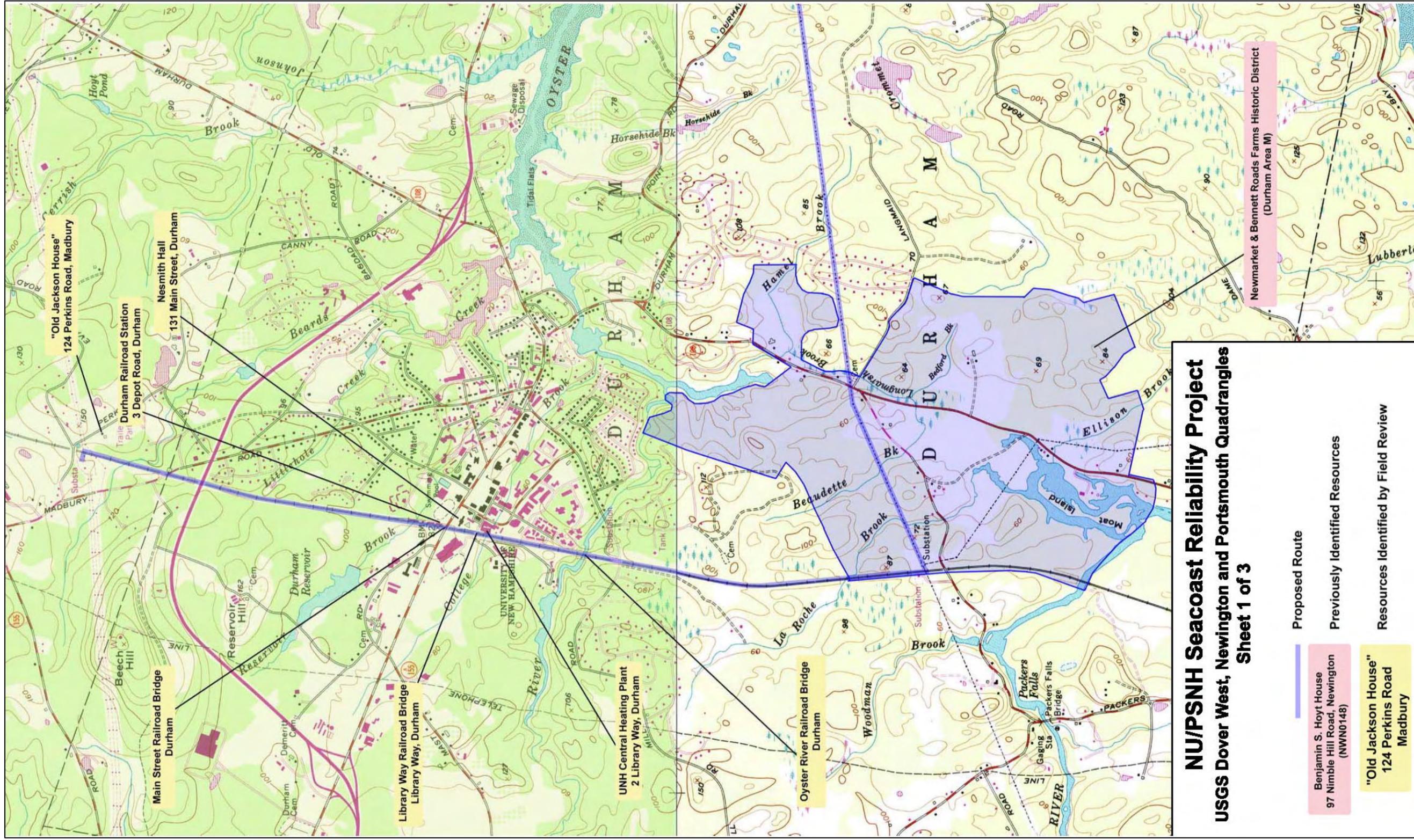
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**APPENDIX A:**

**Excerpts from USGS Topographical Quadrangles Covering the Project Route**





**NU/PSNH Seacoast Reliability Project**  
**USGS Dover West, Newington and Portsmouth Quadrangles**  
**Sheet 1 of 3**

Proposed Route

Benjamin S. Hoyt House  
 97 Nimble Hill Road, Newington  
 (NWN0148)

Resources Identified by Field Review

"Old Jackson House"  
 124 Perkins Road  
 Madbury

Newmarket & Bennett Roads Farms Historic District  
 (Durham Area M)

# NU/PSNH Seacoast Reliability Project

## USGS Dover West, Newington and Portsmouth Quadrangles

### Sheet 2 of 3

Proposed Route

Benjamin S. Hoyt House  
97 Nimble Hill Road, Newington  
(NWN0148)

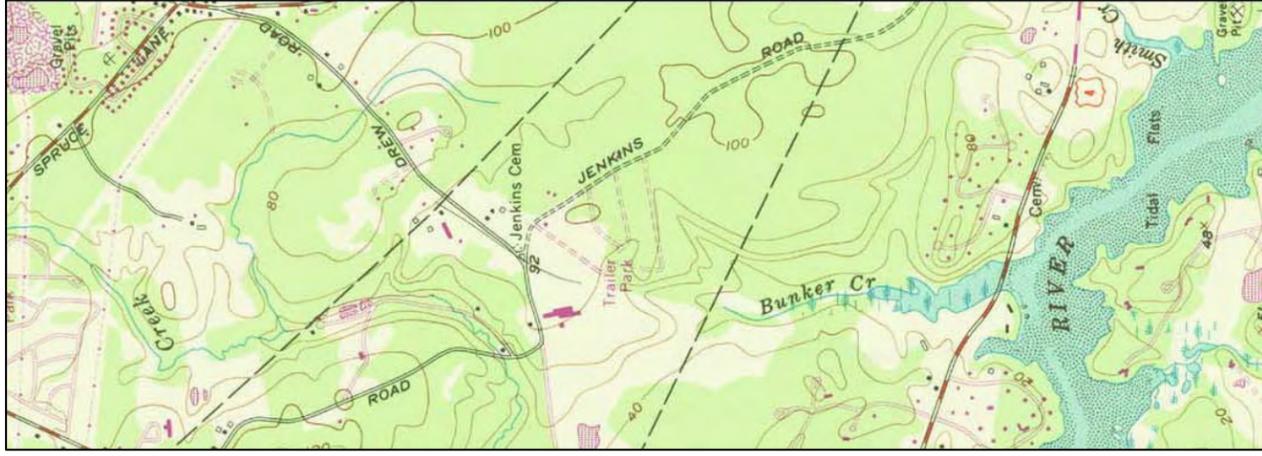
Previously Identified Resources

"Old Jackson House"  
124 Perkins Road  
Madbury

Resources Identified by Field Review

USGS Quadrangles:

Dover West (1993)	Portsmouth (1994)
Newmarket (1988)	



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Barn, 310 Durham Point Road  
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West-Side Cable Switch House  
295 Durham Point Road, Durham

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House and Barn, 300 Durham Point Road  
Durham

East-Side Cable Switch House  
44 Gundalow Landing, Newington

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House and Barn, 339 Little Bay Road  
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