

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received MAY 22 1985  
date entered 20

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic Ellsworth Powerhouse and Dam

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number Union River less than one mile north from downtown Ellsworth not for publication

city, town Ellsworth, N/A vicinity of

state Maine code 23 county Hancock code 009

**3. Classification**

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Bangor Hydro-Electric Company

street & number Box 932

city, town Bangor, vicinity of state Maine 04101

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Hancock County Registry of Deeds

street & number

city, town Ellsworth, state Maine

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title N/A has this property been determined eligible?  N/A yes  no

date  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records

city, town state

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## 7. Description

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**Condition** excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved

date \_\_\_\_\_

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**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The Ellsworth Powerhouse and Dam, completed in 1907, is one of the earliest in Maine. The dam is an Ambursen type, or hollow, and is supported by cement buttresses which are three feet thick, one hundred feet long, and from sixty to seventy-one feet high. They form the supports of two large slabs of cement, reinforced with steel bars, which extend entirely across the river and rest on granite ledges. The seventy-one foot high dam, with a sixty foot spillway, is located between two granite bluffs which rise nearly one hundred feet.

Located at the foot of the western bluff, the Power House is of concrete block construction and one-and-one-half stories high with a gable roof covered with red Spanish tiles. Designed in a Renaissance style, the building provides a well-lighted interior with large round arched windows linked by a stone belt course. The cornice has modillion blocks, returns and a Palladian window in the gable end. An addition on the rear of this structure repeats the original classical motifs with round arched windows.

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1907 **Builder/Architect** James T. Leonard, Chief Engineer

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ellsworth Powerhouse and Dam, located less than one mile from downtown Ellsworth, is one of the oldest "peaking" facilities in the state, and represents a unique design, for the dam itself is hollow (called an Ambursen type, after the designer). It consists of two thin steel reinforced slabs of concrete supported by concrete buttresses built at fifteen foot intervals. The dam is also the highest of its type ever constructed, and the granite ledge upon which it sits insures longevity.

The engineer of the project was James T. Leonard, distinguished in his field, who worked for the Bar Harbor and Union River Power Company (acquired by Bangor Hydro-Electric in 1925). In 1928 Leonard wrote a report which contains the following vivid and colorful description:

"Owing to the natural beauty of the surroundings, the great height of the dam, and the architectural features of the power house, the Ellsworth station is undoubtedly the handsomest power station in New England. The dam and power house are located between two rugged granite bluffs rising almost perpendicularly to a height of nearly one hundred feet above the bed of the river; between these primeval ledges stretches a massive dam of concrete and steel, rising seventy-one feet above the bed rock, the highest power dam in New England. The power house is located at the foot of the bluff on the westerly side of the river, and is a handsome building constructed of concrete block, with large circular topped windows nearly thirty feet high; above these windows is an ornate cornice formed of concrete, and the building is surmounted by a roof of red Spanish tiles."

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bangor Hydro-Electric News, Vol. 1, No. 2, January 16, 1928, Bangor, Maine.  
 Article by James T. Leonard, Engineer, Bar Harbor and Union River Power Company.

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 2  
 Quadrangle name Ellsworth Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A	<u>19</u>	<u>545240</u>	<u>49322610</u>	B			
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

Verbal boundary description and justification

Assessor's Map 34, Lot 88

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Frank A. Beard, Historian/Robert L. Bradley, Architectural Historian/<sup>Arthur</sup>~~Daniel~~ Feeley,  
 Intern  
 organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date April, 1985  
 street & number 55 Capitol Street, Station #65 telephone 207/289-2132  
 city or town Augusta, state Maine 04333

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *E. S. Feltwood*  
 title S.H.P.O. date 5/10/85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

*J. Allores Byers* Entered in the National Register date 6-20-85  
 Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief of Registration