

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED APR 1 1975

DATE ENTERED APR 17 1975

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Thames Shipyard

AND/OR COMMON

Thames Shipyard and Repair Co., Inc.; Thames River Shipyard

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Farnsworth St.

CITY, TOWN

New London

VICINITY OF

---NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
2nd- Christopher Dodd

STATE

CT

CODE
09COUNTY
New LondonCODE
09**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input checked="" 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

U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Coast Guard Academy

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

New London

VICINITY OF

STATE

CT

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

New London Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

181 State Street

CITY, TOWN

New London

STATE

CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

RECORDED BY HOWE, SUMMERS, 1975

CT Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources

DATE

1/75

---FEDERAL STATE ---COUNTY ---LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The buildings of the Thames River Shipyard are situated on approximately seven acres of land on the west bank of the Thames River in New London, Connecticut. The terrain consists of flat land devoid of trees or relieving natural features. All buildings presently on the site are, or were, formerly used in the shipyard operation. The nominated area is bounded on the west by the roadbed of the Central Vermont Railroad, on the east by the bank of the Thames River, on the north, the property of Connecticut College, and on the south by the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. The Thames Shipyard is approached from the west by a steep descent down Farnsworth Street.

The central feature of the Thames Shipyard is the two-story brick headhouse of the two steam-powered marine railways. The headhouse contains two large stationary steam engines (manufactured by Huston, Stamwood and Gamble of Cincinnati, Ohio) with a long driveshaft which powers heavy chain winches (manufactured by W.R. Poole & Son, Baltimore, Md.) for two marine railways (4000 and 1000 deadweight tons). The second story of the headhouse was destroyed in the hurricane of 1938, and it is not known if the building was returned to its original appearance. The second story is presently sheathed in metal, stamped and painted to resemble brick. The northern end of the headhouse contains a blacksmith shop. The building makes a right angle to the east and is carried on as a wood frame, two-story structure used as a pipe shop.

Each of the three marine railways extending eastward into the Thames River consist of four wrought iron rails mounted on continuous sleepers. The carriages are constructed of heavy timber. On each carriage is erected a lighter weight cradle which supports the vessel from each side. Each carriage is drawn by two lengths of stud link chain wound on drums (wild cats) with pockets to receive the links.

To the west and south of the main headhouse stands a three-story wood frame storehouse. This building is sheathed in "pressed galvanized brick" sheet metal siding.

South of the main headhouse is a small, one-story wood frame headhouse for the one electric marine railway (1,500 tons).

Beyond the electric marine railway headhouse is a four-story wood frame machine shop containing belt-driven machine tools. Originally powered by its own steam engines, the machine shop now utilizes electric motors.

Various other small frame buildings, including a fire hose shed (one story wood frame) and a wood shop (one story wood frame containing a band saw and equipped with wheeled carriages on rails for handling large timbers) are scattered about the site. Four wooden piers extend into the Thames River approximately 200 feet from the shoreline. The buildings and grounds contain materials used in shipbuilding, parts of vessels and pleasure boats in storage.

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Two of the three marine railways are still in use. The largest was damaged by the overloading of its lightweight cradle during World War II. The cradles, railways, chain and gearing for the two useable railways are in excellent condition.

The whole site exhibits almost total historical integrity, with alterations occurring only in some of the nonessential outbuildings and in the larger of the marine railways.

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 1900-1901

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Thames River Shipyard contains one of the few remaining steam-powered marine railways in the nation.¹ The Shipyard is a complete surviving example of a late 19th century marine construction and repair facility, although the Shipyard was actually constructed shortly after the turn of the century. The Thames Shipyard has been in continuous service since its construction in 1900-1901.

The Thames River Shipyard was built by Frank H. Chappell, part owner of the F.H. and A.H. Chappell Coal Company and Thames Tow Boat Company. The latter firm, with its fleet of 14 tugs and 34 barges carried much of the coal used in southern New England. The Thames Shipyard was built initially to overhaul and service the Chappell Company vessels. The Thames Shipyard, Inc., which evolved from Chappell's maintenance facility, was organized as a separate company in 1919.

The Thames Shipyard was used primarily for repair work on the Thames Tow Boat Company fleet and on various large steam yachts. However, some ship construction was carried on at the Shipyard, and the largest steam two boat built up to that time, the 185 foot Paul Jones was launched there in 1914. During World War I, the Shipyard did work on Navy, Coast Guard and Army vessels, as well as on commercial shipping. After the war, commercial work continued. The yard was also used for winter storage and for overhauling very large and luxurious steam and sail yachts. Twelve yachts over 200 feet long were berthed there each winter.

With the onset of World War II the Thames Shipyard again contracted for military work, including hauling-out and repairing fleet and school submarines. The Shipyard also converted yachts for government use with the Underwater Sound Lab.

The cradle of the large steam marine railway was heavily damaged in 1950. This railway has not been restored to working order. However, the remaining operational steam hauling facility is one of the few remaining such systems in the country. The present owner is the U.S. Coast Guard, which plans to raze the shipyard and build a multi-use facility on the nine acres and on an additional 1.9 acres to be created by landfill.

¹ The other known operating steam railways are in San Francisco, Cal., Panama City, Florida, and Chelsea, Mass.
 ↳ SHERMAN'S SHIPYARD, PANAMA CITY, DOES NOT HAVE A STEAM POWERED MARINE RAILWAY, BUT SOMETHING JUST AS

INTERESTING - AN OLD STEAM POWERED CRANE. 5/21/77

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The Thames Shipyard is still in use as an active maritime repair facility. The present tenant of the U.S. Coast Guard, the Thames Shipyard and Repair Company, Inc., operates the smaller steam and the electric marine railways for the hauling out and repairing of barges, tugboats, and yachts. The machine shop and metal forming shop turn out custom made parts required in the repair and refitting of vessels. The Thames Shipyard, therefore, survives as a living, functioning example of industrial and engineering technology from the age of steam.

4-1-75



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION
59 SOUTH PROSPECT ST. HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
AREA CODE 203 566-3005

April 8, 1975

To: Miss Kate Cole, National Register of Historic Places

From: Mr. Clark J. Strickland

Subject: Boundaries of the proposed Thames Shipyard,
New London, CT

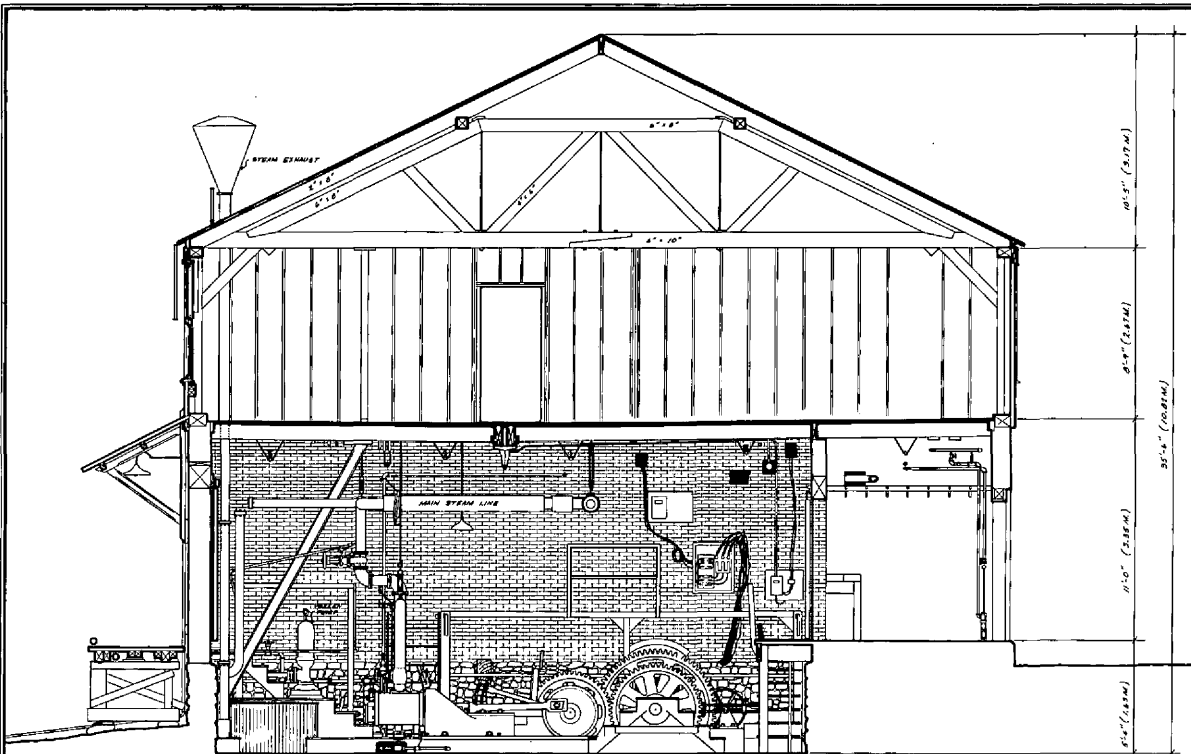
A verbal description of the boundaries of the proposed Thames Shipyard site, New London, CT is as follows:

From the point where the southern edge of the proposed right-of-way for Saltonstall Street intersects with the ordinary high water mark, the northern boundary of the Thames Shipyard extends generally westward along the southern side of the right-of-way of Saltonstall Street, approximately 165 feet to the intersection of the right-of-way for Saltonstall Street with the eastern boundary of the Central Vermont Railroad right-of-way; thence, the western boundary extends along the eastern edge of the Central Vermont Railroad right-of-way south for approximately 1234½ feet to the present northern boundary of the United States Coast Guard Academy where that boundary intersects with the eastern edge of the Central Vermont Railroad right-of-way; thence, the southern boundary extends generally eastward for approximately 146 feet to a point of land approximately 40 feet south of the City of New London's sewer outfall; thence, the eastern boundary extends northerly along the line of the ordinary high water level to the initial starting point. The enclosed area consists of 7.227 acres of land as detailed on the enclosed map.

Clark J. Strickland
Clark J. Strickland
Historic Sites Researcher

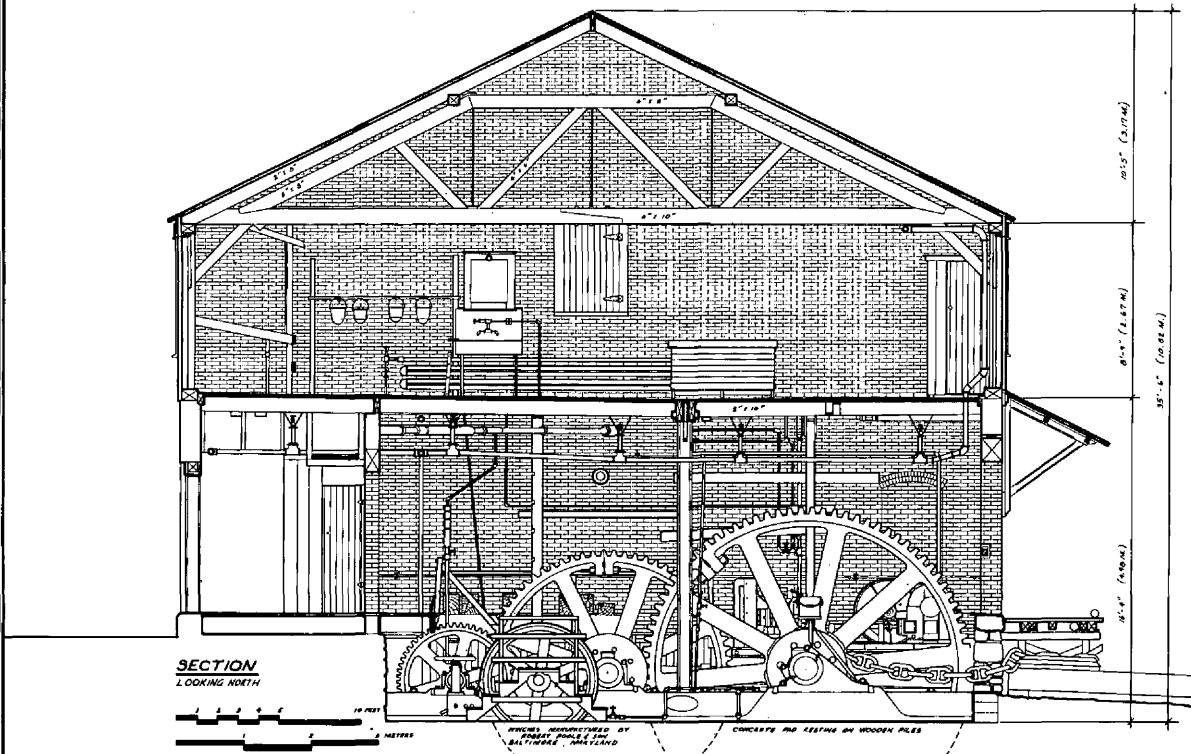
CJS/eb
Enclosures





HORIZONTAL STEAM ENGINE MANUFACTURED BY
HOUSTON STEAMBOILER & ENGINE CO.,
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

SECTION
LOOKING SOUTH



WHEELS MANUFACTURED BY
PIPER, HUNTER & CO.,
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

CONCRETE PAD RESTING ON WOODEN PILES

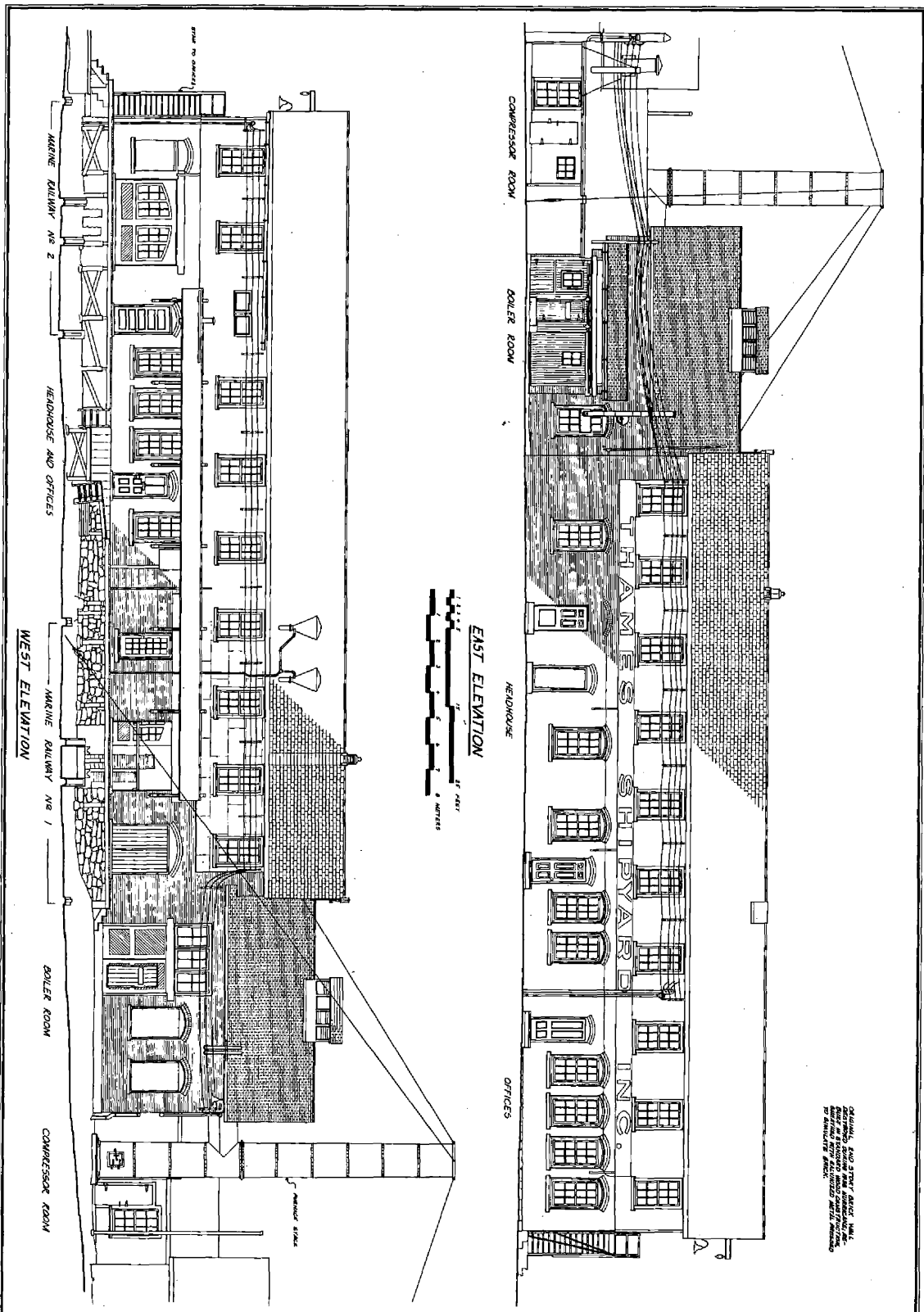
SECTION
LOOKING NORTH



DRAWN BY: PETER CURLEY, ARNOLD SMID, JAMES MITCHELL
OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
THAMES SHIPYARD EMERGENCY RECORDING PROJECT
UNDER SUPERVISION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

THAMES TOW BOAT COMPANY (THAMES SHIPYARD); HEADHOUSE, 1900-1903
WEST BANK OF THAMES RIVER AT EAST END OF FRANKMOUTH STREET
NEW LONDON, NEW LONDON COUNTY, CONNECTICUT

RECORD NO. HAER CT-4A
HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
SHEET 3 OF 5 SHEETS



DRAWN BY BELMONT WHEATON, 1932
 OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
 THAMES SHIPYARD ENGINEERING RECORD PROJECT
 UNDER SUPERVISION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 THAMES TOW BOAT COMPANY (THAMES SHIPYARD) HEADHOUSE, 1900-1903
 WEST BANK OF THAMES RIVER AT EAST END OF FARRISWORTH STREET
 NEW LONDON COUNTY
 CONNECTICUT CT. 4A
 HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
 SHEET 2 OF 3 SHEETS

IF REPRODUCED, PLEASE CREDIT: HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NAME OF DELINEATOR, DATE OF THE DRAWING