

NAVAL AMMUNITION DEPOT EARLE, PIER 3, BUILDING NO. 5A  
(Naval Weapons Station Earle, Pier 3, Building 5A)  
Sandy Hook Bay  
Colts Neck vicinity  
Monmouth County  
New Jersey

HAER NJ-142-B-2  
*HAER NJ-142-B-2*

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD  
NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
U.S. Custom House, 3rd Floor  
200 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

NAVAL AMMUNITION DEPOT EARLE, PIER 3, BUILDING 5A  
(Naval Weapons Station Earle, Pier 3, Building 5A)

HAER No. NJ-142-B-2

Location: Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) Earle  
(currently Naval Weapons Station [NWS]  
Earle)  
Colts Neck Vicinity  
Monmouth County  
New Jersey

USGS Sandy Hook, NJ Quadrangle, 1:24,000  
UTM Coordinates: 18.580527.4478492

Construction Dates: 1944

Architect/Engineer: Shaw, Naess and Murphy, Architects/  
Engineers; Frank Grad and Sons, Architects

Contractor: J. Rich Steers, Inc.

Present Owner: Department of the Navy

Present Use: Ordnance Storage, Pier 3

Significance: Funded in part by the Army, Naval Ammunition Depot Earle was commissioned in 1943 as the only major ordnance transshipment depot on the East Coast. Its mission was to facilitate the movement of ordnance from stateside production and storage facilities to the Navy and Army forces, then in the European theater of World War II. Building 5A on Pier 3 was constructed in 1944 as a signal tower for communicating with ships arriving at or leaving the pier. The building contributed directly to the depot's primary function during World War II.

Project  
Information:

The Department of the Navy plans to replace Pier 2, Pier 3, Trestle 2, and Trestle 3 at NWS Earle. These structures, and many of their associated buildings, were identified as meeting National Register Criterion A during a cultural resources investigation conducted at NWS Earle in 1999. The Department of the Navy and the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (NJ SHPO) have not reached an agreement concerning the specific definition or boundaries of the National Register-eligible architectural resources at NWS Earle to date; however, an assumption of eligibility for Pier 2, Pier 3, Trestle 2, and Trestle 3, as well as the historic buildings associated with these structures, was made for the purposes of this project. To mitigate the adverse effect of the proposed project to the piers, trestles, and associated buildings, the Department of the Navy, the NJ SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation entered into a Memorandum of Agreement stipulating written, graphic, and photographic documentation of the structures. This documentation was undertaken to fulfill these stipulations.

Historians:

Elizabeth Amisson, Sarah Farley, and Robert F. Panepinto, August 2003

Part I: Historical Information

Building 5A (Ordnance Storage, Pier 3) dates to the construction of the pier (1944). It is located at the northern corner of the pier, and was constructed for use as a signal tower for communicating with ships arriving or leaving the pier area. It is currently used for storage.<sup>1</sup>

Building 5A complied with the standards established for buildings constructed at NAD Earle during the mid-1940s. Ernest J. Benshimol, author of *History of U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot Earle, New Jersey* (1945), described the buildings constructed under contract NOy-8780, the contract under which most World War II-era buildings located in the Mainside and Waterfront Areas were constructed, in the following manner:

a. General

- (1) Administrative and Housing Buildings - concrete foundations, brick and tile walls, plastered, cast concrete sills, concrete floors, wood double hung windows, wood roof framing, plaster ceiling top floor, corrugated asbestos roof
- (2) Industrial Buildings - similar to above except 12" solid brick walls and some buildings have flat concrete framed roofs.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Shaw, Naess and Murphy and Frank Grad and Sons, *Ships Piers and Approaches, U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Earle, New Jersey* (N.p.: Shaw, Naess and Murphy and Frank Grad and Sons, 1944), Y & D Drawing No. 279447. Hereafter, Y & D Drawing No.; The Cultural Resource Group, Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., "Architectural Resources Survey: Naval Weapons Station Earle, Monmouth County, New Jersey" (Colts Neck, NJ: The Cultural Resource Group, Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., 1999), 74; David Smith, Base Civil Engineer, 2003, conversation with authors, Naval Weapons Station Earle, Colts Neck, NJ, 2 April.

<sup>2</sup> Ernest J. Benshimol, *History of U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot Earle, New Jersey* (August 1945) (Subject Files (ACC No. A-12-1(1)), Loc No. R-105-6-4-5, Box 422. RG 181, National Archives and Record Administration, Northeast Branch), 125.

Part II: Descriptive Information

Building 5A (Ordnance Storage, Pier 3) is a rectangular, one-story, brick building located at the northern corner of Pier 3. Constructed in 1944, Building 5A historically functioned as a signal tower, used by military personnel to communicate with ships arriving or leaving the pier area. The building is in fair condition, and currently functions as a storage area.<sup>3</sup>

This flat-roofed building is three bays wide and one bay deep, with brick walls constructed in a common bond. Pre-cast concrete coping is located along the roofline of the building. The building's one window opening, centrally located on the façade (southwest elevation), has a concrete sill and is covered with plywood. A one bay by one bay projection at the far northwestern end of the façade contains the building's entry. The doorway, set left of center, contains a metal door with a glass transom and has a concrete sill. A rectangular metal box, possibly for a fire extinguisher, is located in the lower right corner of the projection. The southeast wall of the projection is unadorned, except for a metal box at the southwestern end, which housed a phone or communications equipment. A metal conduit runs from the box along the face of the projection, entering the building through the southwest wall. To the right of the façade's only window stands a large, cylindrical, metal tank the same height as the building. Abutting the façade next to the tank is a small frame entry addition with a metal shed roof and wood panel door. Sitting on a concrete pad next to this addition is a large, metal electrical box. Both the entry addition and the metal box are posted high voltage. A fire alarm air horn at the end of a metal pipe extends from the roof above the tank.

The most prominent feature on the northeast elevation is a louvered opening with a wire mesh cover and a concrete sill at the southeastern end of the elevation. A metal and plastic box light is located above and to the right of the louvered opening. Below and to the left of the louvered opening is a u-shaped metal bracket of unknown function. Several PVC pipes lead into the base of the building to the left of the center. Near the top of the building, also to the left of the center, two metal

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

conduits exit the building. The conduit on the right wraps over the top of the building, and the other runs southeast along the top of the wall and connects to Building 531, which is located adjacent to Building 5A. A rectangular spotlight projects from the roof above the conduits.

The southeast elevation is bare except for two metal overflow valves, which exit near the top of wall at the southwestern end of the elevation. A small, open, metal box is attached to the wall below the overflow valves. The northwest elevation of the building is bare.

The current layout of Building 5A differs from the design shown on the original construction plans dating from 1944 (see historic plans in Photographic Documentation section of this report and current floor plans immediately following Part III of Written Documentation section). The 1944 plans show a vestibule projecting from the building leading to a small office on the northwest side of the building. Off the office are a rest room and a closet for flags. The door in the southern corner provided separate access to a transformer room. A flagpole was located in the center of the roof.<sup>4</sup> Today, the building has a large main room on the northwest side of the building. A closet and a storage room are located on the southeast wall of the room. The transformer room is most likely still located in the southeast end of the building, as evidenced by the "Danger High Voltage" signs on the door.<sup>5</sup>

Interior access to Building 5A was limited to a narrow hallway and small room that would not yield valuable information through photographs due to their small sizes. The room was empty and lacked architectural detail.

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<sup>4</sup> Y & D Drawing No. 279446.

<sup>5</sup> Dewberry & Davis, *Asbestos Operations and Maintenance Plan, U.S. Naval Weapons Station Earle* (Colts Neck, NJ: Naval Weapons Station Earle, 1999), Building 5A, no. 1 of 2.

Part III: Sources of Information

A. Engineering Drawings

Dewberry & Davis. *Asbestos Operations and Maintenance Plan, U.S. Naval Weapons Station Earle*. Colts Neck, NJ: Naval Weapons Station Earle, 1999. Printed from a CD provided by Naval Weapons Station Earle, Base Civil Engineering Office.

Naval Weapons Station Earle, Base Civil Engineering Office. *Building Use Location, Trestle & Piers, Waterfront Area Map*. Colts Neck, NJ: Naval Weapons Station Earle, Base Civil Engineering Office, 1994. Printed from a CD provided by Naval Weapons Station Earle, Base Civil Engineering Office.

Shaw, Naess and Murphy and Frank Grad and Sons. *Ships Piers and Approaches, U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot, Earle, New Jersey*. N.p.: Shaw, Naess and Murphy and Frank Grad and Sons, 1944. Printed from a CD provided by Naval Weapons Station Earle, Base Civil Engineering Office.

B. Historic Views

Danforth, Lew. "Loading Piers-N.A.D. Earle, N.J." 1951. Illustration filed at Naval Weapons Station Earle, Public Affairs Office.

Original photographs of pier complex at Naval Ammunition Depot Earle/Naval Weapons Station Earle. 1944-76. Filed at Naval Weapons Station Earle, Public Affairs Office.

C. Interviews

Smith, David, Base Civil Engineer. 2003. Conversation with authors, 2 April, Naval Weapons Station Earle, Colts Neck, NJ.

D. Bibliography

Benshimol, Ernest J. *History of U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot Earle, New Jersey*. August 1945. Subject Files (ACC No. A-12-1(1)), Loc No. R-105-6-4-5, Box 422. RG 181. National Archives and Record Administration, Northeast Branch. Also filed at NWS Earle, Public Affairs Office.

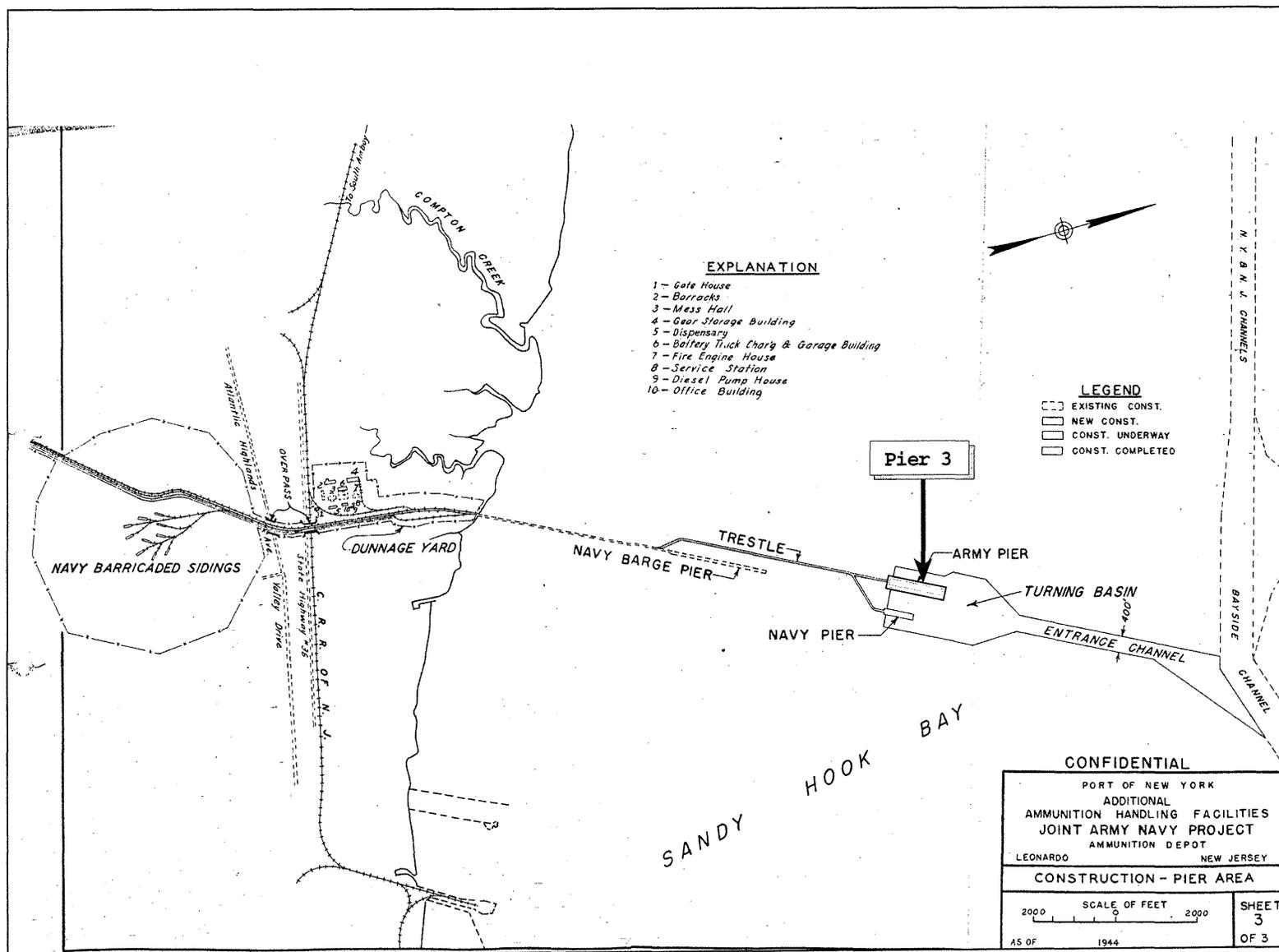
The Cultural Resource Group, Louis Berger & Associates, Inc. "Architectural Resources Survey: Naval Weapons Station Earle, Monmouth County, New Jersey." Colts Neck, NJ: The Cultural Resource Group, Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., 1999. Photocopied.

Lancaster, L. W. "Record Report, Contract NOy-7693, Ships Piers and Approaches." Colts Neck, NJ: Naval Ammunition Depot Earle, 1945. Photocopied.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

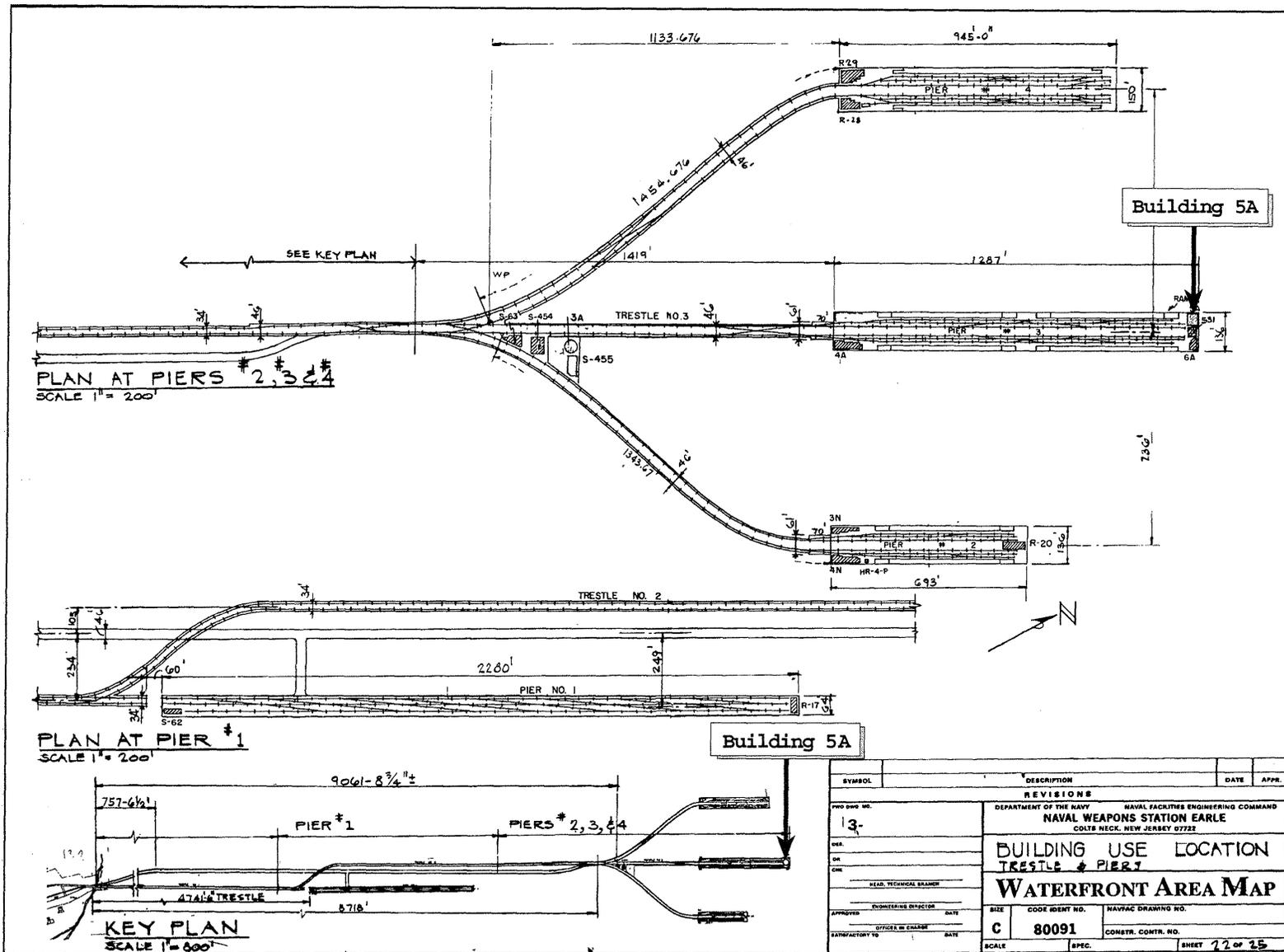
Records of the Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Center, 805 Kidder Breese Street SE, Washington Navy Yard, D.C. 20374-5060.

Records of the National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001.



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General Construction Map, Pier Area, 1944  
(source: Lancaster 1945)



Location Map and General Plan, Pier Area, 1994  
(source: Naval Weapons Station Earle, Base Civil Engineering Office 1994)

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