

American Canal Society Canal Structure Inventory

Structure Navigation Lock & Dam		Canal Charles River Navigation	HAER/CEHR Condition Good
State/Province <u>Mass.</u> County <u>Suffolk</u>		Designer(s) Holbrook, Cabot, Rollins Corp;	
City/Town <u>Boston</u>		Contractor/Builder Same as above	
Street <u>MSGR. O'BRIEN HIGHWAY</u>		Source of Material Local	
Associated Waterway <u>Charles River</u>		DATES OF CONSTRUCTION	
TOPOGRAPHIC MAP <u>Boston South</u>		Start <u>Jan. 14, 1905</u>	Rebuilding <u>Yes</u>
UTM Coordinates <u>19.329540.4692380</u>		Completion <u>1908-1910</u>	Abandoned <u>No</u>
History & Use in Service; Use Since Abandonment: This dam was 1170 ft. long, a boat lock and sluices were completed in 1908-1910. A highway was built on the dam in 1910, replacing the Craige Bridge built in 1809, connecting Cambridge with Leverett St. in Boston. The Charles River was a source of navigation in the 1800's and well into the 20th century for Schooners that could navigate the tidal waters from Boston inner harbor to the dam at Watertown. Here, a turning basin was provided and some of the pilings existed (in part) up until about the turn of the century or later at the rear of a factory. Navigation still exists for coal & oil barges on the river for about 1 mi. above the dam. This site was designed for flood control, also to relieve the mud flats (stench) by covering with water.			
Description (Visible Remains at the site): Construction of the above facilities was started on Jan. 14, 1905. At that time the Charles River Basin was nothing more than mud flats at low tide. Creating an environmental condemnation of the estuary in 1894. Tide levels created problems for boats passing under bridges, but the dam impounded the river thus raising its level and with a spillway took care of its overflow. The basin level was set at 8 ft. above low water. Thus navigation available for certain craft for a distance of 9 miles to Watertown Dam. One large lock was built 350 ft. long, 45 ft. wide, with an 18 ft. chamber at low water. This site is operated by the Metropolitan District Commission. Original cost was \$1,084,144. Took three years and four months to complete.			
Other works or events associated with site: The entire Charles River Basin and the upper reaches are extensively used by Pleasure Boats today. Recreation facilities are provided in many sections throughout its 9 miles of waterway. The lock provides access from Boston's inner harbor to the river and in reverse to points north and south along the Atlantic Seaboard.			
Present Property Owners: Commonwealth of Mass. Metropolitan District Commission		Location of Deed Description: Same	
Bibliography (Published, unpublished mss, maps, photographs): Mass. Institute of Technology Metropolitan District Commission U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Boston Public Library			
Agencies, Individuals Interested in Preservation/Restoration: Metropolitan District Commission U.S. Army Corps of Engineers U.S. Coast Guard (boating regulations)		National Register/CEHR, Other Recognition: ?	
Investigation made by: Alden W. Gould (ACS)			Date:
Address: 12 Shady Crest Drive, Nashua, N.H. 03060			9/27/76
RETURN TO: Peter Stott			

A sketch map or illustration of the site should be included on the reverse.