

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

DO-MTC-038
CS 2007
Mantorville Retaining Walls

Historic Name Other Name	Mantorville Retaining Walls	CS # SHPO Inv #	2007 DO-MTC-038
Location	E and W sides of TH 57 between 6th St and 7th St	Hwy District Reference	TH 57 6B 3.0
City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM	Mantorville, City of Dodge 107N 16W Sec 16 Dodge Center Z15 E519610 N4879260	Acres Rest Area Class	NA
Designer	Unknown	SP #	
Builder	Ole Stensted	SHPO Review #	
Historic Use Present Use	Hwy Retaining Wall/ Sea Wall Hwy Retaining Wall/ Sea Wall	MHS Photo #	013522.03-09
Yr of Landscape Design	1932	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance Also member of listed NR district: Mantorville Historic District		
Historic Context			
List of Standing Structures			
Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Retaining Wall	1932	05-11-97
02	Retaining Wall	1932	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			Prep by Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 42
			Prep for Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ BRIEF

The Mantorville Retaining Walls consist of two stone retaining walls that flank a one-block stretch of T.H. 57 (also known as Main Street) between Sixth and Seventh streets. The walls retain the eastern edge of Block 12 and the western edge of Block 22 of the Original Townsite of Mantorville.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Stone Retaining Walls. Built 1932 by Ole Stensted for Dodge County. The site consists of two retaining walls built of rockfaced, coursed ashlar, Mantorville limestone, with some limestone rubble. Most of the limestone is tan, but the walls are capped by a course of gray limestone. The walls are rather crudely built (rather than displaying carefully cut or chosen stones and fine mortar work).

The walls are roughly symmetrical except that there is an extra extension with a stone stairway at the southern end of the western wall. The eastern wall is approximately 340' long and the western wall is approximately 360' long. The walls are about 18" wide and about 4.5' to 5' tall (the height varies somewhat). The gray limestone cap varies from about 3" to 5" thick.

Each end of both walls is marked by a stone pier. The southern piers are topped by pyramidal finials. (The finial on the western wall is gray limestone and on the eastern wall is poured concrete, apparently a replacement.) Beneath each finial is a datestone, facing south, that reads "1932."

There are staircases at the northern ends of both walls and at the southern end of the western wall. The staircases at the northern ends of the walls carry the public sidewalks away from the walls to the west (along the northern edge of Block 12) and to the east (along the northern edge of Block 22). (The western steps are 4'6" wide and built of limestone; the eastern steps are 5'5" wide and are poured concrete.) At the southern end of the western wall, a 4'-wide staircase begins after a 19'8" wall extension and leads from the public sidewalk to the private property at the southeastern corner of Block 12. (The upper steps in this set are poured concrete.) At the southern end of the eastern wall there is no staircase, but rather a short wall section that extends eastward along the southern edge of Block 22.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The walls flank a one-block stretch of Main Street (T.H. 57) and are bounded by Sixth Street on the south and Seventh Street on the north. There is a public sidewalk between T.H. 57 and each retaining wall. The original sidewalks probably were concrete. In 1975 they were replaced with 3'2"-wide wooden planks (now warped) that are incised with the names of contributors.

The walls are located approximately 26' from the centerline of T.H. 57. The site is located on a moderately steep hill that rises from south to north. The property that the two walls retain is at an elevation several feet above the walls and T.H. 57.

The retained hillsides above the walls have exposed natural limestone outcroppings. There is a chain-link fence at the top of each of the retained hillsides above the walls. Planted above the walls are old, low spreading juniper bushes and rough, overgrown grass, weeds, some irises and shrubs, and one large elm. All plantings appear to be minimally maintained.

■ **SETTING**

The walls are located in the center of the town of Mantorville. The eastern wall retains the property of the Dodge County Courthouse. The Dodge County Courthouse was built in 1865 of buff-colored limestone similar to that of the walls. The western wall retains the yards of several late 19th century houses, a church, and a school (all woodframe) that are apparently owned by the Dodge County Historical Society.

The walls are located within the boundaries of the Mantorville Historic District, a commercial and residential district that is associated with the early settlement of the town. The district includes about 24 properties that date from 1854-1918. The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.

■ **INTEGRITY**

Alterations

The western wall is basically intact. Three sections of the eastern wall have been replaced with poured concrete: the short section that extends east at the northern end, the stone steps at the northern end, and the pyramidal finial at the southern end.

In 1975 the previous public sidewalk (probably concrete) was replaced with a boardwalk sidewalk.

In general, the site retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The walls are in poor condition and need repair. Some stones are missing and some stones have been replaced with poured concrete. The sidewalk planks are warped. The landscaping is minimally maintained.

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

These limestone retaining walls were constructed in 1932, apparently for the Dodge County public works department. Ole Stensted, a contractor from Kasson, Minnesota, was awarded the bid in the summer of 1932 to construct a "county gutter and wall" (*Mantorville Express*, Sept. 22, 1932). The walls were built just prior to the New Deal and apparently have no federal relief associations. (The Dodge County Historical Society has no further information on file.)

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

There apparently have been no previous SHPO cultural resource reviews of the property.

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Mantorville Retaining Walls were built in 1932 by a private contractor for the county highway department in what was apparently a county-sponsored roadway beautification effort that may have been inspired by, or associated with, the existence of the nearby, monumental limestone Dodge County Courthouse.

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that the property is NOT ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it does not meet the context registration requirements.

The Mantorville Retaining Walls are located within the Mantorville Historic District, a district that was listed on the National Register in 1974 for its associations with the early settlement and development of the town of Mantorville. The walls are probably a non-contributing element within the historic district.

■ **OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 57 is relatively quiet through this site.

■ **REFERENCES**

Mantorville Express, Sept. 22, 1932.

Nelson, Charles. "Mantorville Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form. March 28, 1974.

Thiel, George A. and Carl E. Dutton. *The Architectural, Structural, and Monumental Stones of Minnesota*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1935.

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Mantorville was first settled by Euro-Americans in 1854 and was named for three brothers, Peter, Riley, and Frank Mantor, who were the first settlers in the area. The town was incorporated in 1854 and again in 1857, platted in 1856, and named the Dodge County seat in 1857. The Southern Minnesota Railroad bypassed Mantorville in the late 1880s, and many residents moved to Kasson, a newly-established railroad town.

Mantorville Limestone

The economy of Mantorville centered around the mills on the Zumbro River and the rock quarries located north and south of Mantorville. Galena limestone had been quarried at Mantorville as early as 1856, supplying much of the stone for southern Minnesota before the building of the railroads allowed other stone and brick to be imported. Galena limestone is the youngest strata formation exposed in the bluffs of the Zumbro River and its tributaries. This limestone is famous for its pure color and smooth texture. Galena or Mantorville limestone is dolomitic limestone that is usually yellow to buff-colored. Where not exposed to weather, the limestone is bluish-gray. The finished stone was marketed as "travertine," with two color varieties sold by the Mantorville Stone Company -- Blue Mantorville Travertine and Cream Mantorville Travertine. Both were considered to be high-grade building stones (Thiel and Dutton 1935:135-136).

Many buildings in Rochester were constructed of Mantorville Galena limestone, including St. Mary's Hospital. The majority of structures in Mantorville were also constructed from local stone. They include the Dodge County Courthouse, constructed in 1865, which is a rare surviving example of the Greek Revival style. The courthouse stands east of the walls.