

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

FL-CHC-034
CS 2311
Chatfield Historical Marker

Historic Name Other Name	Chatfield Historical Marker	CS # SHPO Inv #	2311 FL-CHC-034
Location	N side of TH 52 .25 mi E of CSAH 5	Hwy District Reference	TH 52 6A 33.4
City/Township County Twp Rng Sec USGS Quad UTM	Chatfield, City of Fillmore 104N 11W Sec 5 Chatfield Z15 E566340 N4854020	Acres Rest Area Class	.6 4
Designer	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	SP #	2311-02
Builder	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	SHPO Review #	
Historic Use Present Use	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area	MHS Photo #	013522.10-17
Yr of Landscape Design	1955	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	Ols 1.89
Overall Site Integrity	Intact/Slightly Altered		
Review Required	Yes		
National Register Status	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance Now eligible: see http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/historic/files/wayrep-suppl.pdf for additional information.		
Historic Context			
List of Standing Structures			
Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built	Fieldwork Date
01	Marker	1955	05-12-97
02	Bench(es), Stone	1955	
NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table			Prep by Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 12
			Prep for Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)		

■ BRIEF

The Chatfield Historical Marker is a .6-acre site located on the northern side of T.H. 52 within the City of Chatfield near the eastern city limits. It is located .25 miles east of CSAH 5.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Stone Marker. Built 1955 by MHD. The principal feature on the site is a stone marker that is approximately 16' wide by 15' deep and about 9'6" tall. It was built of tan, random ashlar, rockfaced limestone on a concrete footing. The marker has a central shaft that is buttressed with stone. The shaft is flanked by stepped sidewalls. The marker rests on a low poured concrete terrace that is about 22' wide. Three curving poured concrete steps approach the front of the marker. The lowest step is about 10'6" wide. Mounted on the marker is an aluminum plaque in a rectangular niche that is topped with a keystone. The text of the marker addresses the founding of Chatfield. The seals of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Department of Highways are cast at the bottom of the plaque. (See marker text at the end of this document.)

Benches. Built 1955 by MHD. Two limestone benches with poured concrete seats (6' long and 1'4" wide) are set at an angle out from the marker along the edges of the concrete terrace.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The site has a basically triangular shape that is divided into two units by a 24'-wide asphalt-paved drive that runs north and south in front of the marker. East of the drive is a triangular island whose western edge is lined with a concrete curb. A natural hill forms the western boundary of the site and serves as a backdrop for the marker. In front of the marker's concrete terrace is a 4' wide concrete walkway and a concrete curb. The topography of the site itself is relatively flat, with the exception of the hillside along the site's western boundary.

The original planting plan specifies that the marker be flanked by 10 Savin Juniper with eight Mugho Pine planted immediately behind it to form a backdrop. The plan specifies that about 13 Colorado Spruce be planted on the hillside behind the marker and two American Elm and 17 Lombardy Poplars be planted near the top of this hill. The plan specifies that the triangle be planted with two American Elms near the center, a group of five Colorado Spruce near the northern edge, and groups of Savin Juniper at the northwestern and southwestern corners and at the eastern point of the triangle. The plan also calls for about 27 American Elm to be widely scattered throughout the intersection and along T.H. 52, and that a row of Villosa Lilac be planted along the southern side of T.H. 52 adjacent to the site. Many of these plantings currently exist with the exception of the juniper at the eastern end of the site, the spruce within the triangle, and the pines behind the marker. Some additional plantings have been added (for example, there are four new arborvitae near the southwestern corner of the site). The majority of the site is planted with grass.

■ **SETTING**

This .6-acre triangular site is located on the northern side of T.H. 52 within the City of Chatfield near the eastern city limits. Chatfield is situated in the wooded hills of the Root River Valley. The site is bounded on the south by T.H. 52 and on the north by a paved county road. It is surrounded on the north by a Mn/DOT maintenance facility, on the west by a low office-type building on a large grassy lot, and on the east and south by farmland.

■ **INTEGRITY**

Alterations

It appears that the marker and the site were built fairly close to plan.

Some of the plantings have apparently been removed and additional plants installed. The site is otherwise basically intact and retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Notes on Condition

The marker is in fair to poor condition. Stones are missing and it needs mortar repair. The site is fairly well maintained.

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

Prior to the erection of the stone marker, a 3' by 5' steel sign with white background and black lettering was at this site. The legend on the steel marker was identical to the current text on the stone marker. These steel markers were erected beginning in 1930 by the first cooperative historic marking program of the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota Department of Highways, which had been established in 1929.

The current wayside rest and marker were constructed in 1955 as part of a roadside development project that focussed solely on the rest area. The construction plans were approved by Harold E. Olson (Engineer of Roadside Development), E. J. Rowland (Engineer of Lands and Right of Way), Walter Schultz (Assistant Engineer of Plans and Surveys), C. A. Swanson (District Engineer), G. G. Gladman (Engineer of Plans and Surveys), J. C. Robbers (Assistant Chief Engineer), and R. J. Wolfangle (Engineer of Plans). The site may have been designed by Fred Vogt, who was the Roadside Development Division's landscape architect during this period. A 1955 photo in Olson vol. 1 (ca. 1942/ca. 1954) shows the site under construction.

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

■ **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Chatfield Historical Marker is a roadside parking area with a triangular site design. Its stone marker is one of 18 free-standing shrine-type markers recorded in this inventory. The site was developed in 1955 by the MHD. It may have been designed by Fred Vogt, the Roadside Development Division's landscape architect during this period.

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's registration requirements. The design of the wayside rest and its stone marker appears to have been strongly influenced by roadside development of the federal relief era. However, the property was not built within the decade immediately following the end of the federal relief programs (1944-1954), which is one of the registration requirements associated with this historic context. It is recommended that the National Register eligibility of this property be reevaluated again in the future when it can be compared to MHD roadside development work of the 1950s and 1960s.

■ **OTHER COMMENTS**

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 52 is fairly quiet past this site.

This site may be associated with local historic contexts established by the City of Chatfield's Heritage Preservation Commission.

The text of the historic marker is associated with the town of Chatfield and mentions "the present highway." It is not specifically associated with the site of the wayside rest.

■ **REFERENCES**

Guide to Historic Markers Erected by the State Highway Department, Cooperating with the Minnesota Historical Society. Prepared by the Minnesota Historic Records Survey, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Works Projects Administration. St. Paul: May 1940.

Olson, Harold E., comp. *Historical Markers in Minnesota.* 4 vols. Photo albums prepared by Department of Roadside Development, Minnesota Department of Highways, circa 1942, updated circa 1954. Mn/DOT Site Development Unit.

Site Plans. Minnesota Department of Transportation, St. Paul.

■ **ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MARKER TEXT**

Chatfield was settled by Euro-Americans in 1853 and named in honor of Judge Andrew Chatfield who presided over the first court in the county. The village was platted in 1854, incorporated in 1857, and was the first seat of Fillmore County from 1853-1855. The county seat was moved in 1855 to Carimona, and to Preston in 1856.

Text of Plaque on Stone Marker

"Chatfield. Settled in 1853 and platted in 1854, this town from June 1856 to November 1861 was the Government Land Office for the southern area. The St. Paul-Dubuque stage route, opened in 1854, following the Territorial Road from Hastings, roughly the present highway, here met the line from Winona. Chatfield Academy was established in 1858."
[Seals of Minnesota Historical Society and Minnesota Department of Highways]