

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT  
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

SL-DUL-2416  
CS 6910  
Fond du Lac Culvert (Bridge 5757)

|   |  |                                       |                      |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Historic Name<br/>Other Name</b>                                   | Fond du Lac Culvert (Bridge 5757)  | <b>CS #<br/>SHPO Inv #</b>            | 6910<br>SL-DUL-2416  |
| <b>Location</b>   | TH 23 at Mission Creek<br>(132nd Ave W)  | <b>Hwy<br/>District<br/>Reference</b> | TH 23<br>1A<br>336.2 |
| <b>City/Township<br/>County<br/>Twp Rng Sec<br/>USGS Quad<br/>UTM</b> | Duluth, City of<br>St. Louis<br>48N 15W Sec 8<br>Esko<br>Z15 E555430 N5167460  | <b>Acres<br/>Rest Area Class</b>      | NA                   |
| <b>Designer</b>   | Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)  | <b>SP #</b>                           | 23-185-23-2          |
| <b>Builder</b>  | Bodin, A.A., and Son   | <b>SHPO Review #</b>                  |                      |
| <b>Historic Use<br/>Present Use</b>                                   | Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam<br>Bridge/ Culvert/ Dam   | <b>MHS Photo #</b>                    | 013537.11-20         |
| <b>Yr of Landscape Design</b>   | 1937   | <b>MnDOT Historic<br/>Photo Album</b> |                      |
| <b>Overall Site Integrity</b>   | Intact/Slightly Altered  |                                       |                      |
| <b>Review Required</b>  | Yes  |                                       |                      |
| <b>National Register Status</b>                                       | Listed, see Statement of Significance<br>Recommend property be evaluated with entire six-block Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive; see <a href="http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/historic/files/wayrep-suppl.pdf">http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/historic/files/wayrep-suppl.pdf</a> for additional information. |                                       |                      |
| <b>Historic Context</b>   | Iron and Steel Highway Bridges, 1873-1945<br>Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960   |                                       |                      |

**List of Standing Structures**

| Feat#   | Feature Type   | Year Built | Fieldwork Date  |
|---|----------------|------------|---|
| 01  | Bridge/Culvert | 1937       | 10-09-97  |
|   |                |            | <b>Prep by</b><br>Gemini Research<br>Dec. 98 G1. 98   |
|   |                |            | <b>Prep for</b><br>Site Development Unit<br>Cultural Resources Unit<br>Environmental Studies Unit |
| NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table |                |            |   |

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>Final Report</b> | Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998) |
|---------------------|---|

■ BRIEF

The Fond du Lac Culvert (Bridge 5757) carries T.H. 23 ("Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive") over Mission Creek within Fond du Lac, a community on the northern bank of the St. Louis River that is now within the boundaries of the City of Duluth. The bridge is located immediately east of the intersection of 132nd Ave. W. and T.H. 23.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

**Bridge.** Built 1937 by A. Bodin and Co. Bridge 5757 is a double span, multi-plate arch culvert faced with granite headwalls. It has concrete abutments. The bridge carries T.H. 23 over Mission Creek. The structure's headwalls and railings are faced with random rubble, roughly-cut, granite in light and dark shades of gray, pink, and tan. The mortar joints are white.

The creek is carried through two 20'-span multi-plate metal culverts that are 115' wide. The arched openings are faced with large reddish, rockfaced granite voissiors and slightly larger keystones. The headwalls rise above the roadway to form stone railings. The railings are 18" thick, 3' tall above the walkway, and 86' long. They are decorated with 12 pair of narrow, lancet-like openings that continue the bridge's medieval-inspired Late Gothic Revival design. Piers flank each culvert opening and anchor the ends of the railings. The piers project above the railings about 6". A rectangular plate on the southern face of the northern railing reads "Minnesota Highway Department Bridge No. 5757 1937."

The inside face of the southern railing has a poured concrete sidewalk. A similar sidewalk has been removed from the northern railing, revealing the rubble footing of the railing itself. A thin layer of poured concrete has been added to the top of the railings. A metal guardrail now extends from the eastern side of the northern railing.

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The bridge is aligned east and west. The banks of Mission Creek north of the bridge have stone riprapping that has been crudely covered with poured concrete.

This portion of T.H. 23 is known as Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive. For about three-quarters of a mile through the community of Fond du Lac, T.H. 23 is a wide, shaded, parkway-like divided highway. The grassy median between the two highway lanes is planted with mature deciduous and evergreen trees. A poured concrete pedestrian sidewalk runs along the southern side of T.H. 23 and across the bridge.

The bridge is located within the overall landscaped setting of Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive. There do not appear to be any plantings specifically associated with the bridge. The topography of the site is basically flat.

■ SETTING

Mission Creek flows southward from the bluffs above Duluth, through the community of Fond du Lac, and southward into the St. Louis River. The bridge is located immediately east of the intersection of 132nd Ave. W. and T.H. 23.

The bridge stands in a primarily residential setting. It is surrounded by a city park to the east, a wooded area to the south, and residential areas to the west. The Fond du Lac Historical Marker (see inventory form) is located about 1.5 blocks east on T.H. 23. The St. Louis River is located about 1.5 blocks to the south.

#### ■ INTEGRITY

##### **Alterations**

The bridge appears to have been built fairly close to plan.

A thin layer of poured concrete has been added to the tops of the railings and the stonework has been crudely patched. A poured concrete sidewalk has been removed from the northern railing, revealing the rubble footing of the railing. A metal guardrail now extends from the eastern side of the northern railing. The banks of the creek north of the bridge have stone riprapping that has been crudely covered with poured concrete.

In general, the Fond du Lac Culvert (Bridge 5757) retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

##### **Notes on Condition**

The bridge appears to be in fair condition. The mortarwork needs repair and there is some graffiti on the stonework. The bridge and its concrete sidewalk are overgrown with weeds and brush.

#### ■ HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Bridge 5757 was built in 1937, during the height of federal relief New Deal construction, but was apparently not built with Depression relief labor. The building contractor was A. Bodin and Sons of Minneapolis. The bridge was designed by the Minnesota Department of Highways, probably in cooperation with Arthur R. Nichols who was serving as the MHD's Consulting Landscape Architect.

For more information on the fabrication of the bridge, see the Minnesota Historic Bridge Inventory form by Jeffrey A. Hess (copy within this inventory file).

Evergreen Memorial Drive was dedicated on October 5, 1947, to the men and women of Carlton, Pine, and St. Louis Counties who had served in the Armed Forces. Thirty-nine years later, on October 5, 1986, a 43-mile-long portion of T.H. 23 was rededicated as Veteran's Evergreen Memorial Drive. Dedication ceremonies were held at the city park in Bruno, Minnesota. Local, district, and state Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) dignitaries, and other officials attended, and featured speaker was the legislation's sponsor, State Senator Florian Chmielewski.

#### ■ PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS

There have apparently been no previous SHPO cultural resource reviews of this property, except for the bridge's inclusion in the Mn/DOT Historic Bridge Inventory. (See Statement of Significance below.)

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fond du Lac Culvert (Bridge 5757), built in 1938 for the MHD, is one of seven bridges recorded in this inventory that are faced with stone. It was apparently not built by federal relief labor, but follows the design precedents established by federal relief construction programs of the 1930s. The bridge is a significant element on the well-landscaped parkway in Fond du Lac known as "Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive."

This property has been evaluated within the historic context "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." It is recommended that Bridge 5757 is ELIGIBLE for the National Register under this historic context because it meets the following registration requirements:

Non-Federal Relief Property That Closely Resembles a Federal Relief Property. The Fond du Lac Culvert is an excellent example of a Non-Federal relief property, built during the Depression, which strongly represents the same design principles and philosophy as the federal relief-built roadside development sites. (National Register Criterion A.)

Significant to the History of Roadside Development. The Fond du Lac Culvert is one of 68 Depression-era properties in this inventory. These sites represent the MHD's first large-scale effort to construct roadside development facilities in the state. The culvert is an excellent example of the distinctive and well-constructed public facilities that were usually built by the MHD in partnership with federal relief agencies. (National Register Criterion A.)

Design Significance. Bridge 5757 represents the principles of the National Park Service Rustic Style combined with a Gothic Revival motif. It has stonework of excellent quality. The site displays the special labor-intensive construction techniques and distinctive use of indigenous materials that are usually seen in federal relief construction from the period. (National Register Criterion C.)

Bridge 5757 was also determined to be eligible for the National Register by the Mn/DOT Historic Bridge Inventory and was officially listed on the National Register in 1998. The National Register nominatin form states:

Noteworthy for its well-crafted masonry and Late Gothic Revival detailing, Bridge No. 5757 is eligible for the National Register for its design and workmanship under Criterion C, within the historic context of 'Iron and Steel Bridges in Minnesota, 1873-1945.' The Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) associated with this context presents the following registration criteria for the multi-plate arch type: 'Since the multi-plate arch bridge is most notable for its modular corrugated-metal construction and stone headwalls and spandrels, these features should be clearly visible and relatively unaltered. And since the multi-plate arch bridge enjoyed its vogue at least partly because of the New Deal's encouragement of roadside beautification, the bridge's workmanship and design should be on the original site, harmonious with the general setting, of high aesthetic quality, and of New Deal vintage.' Bridge No. 5757 satisfies all of these criteria' (Hess Sept. 1997).

The property may also be associated with the "Tourism and Recreation in the Lake Regions, 1870-1945" historic context.

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 23 past this site was fairly quiet during this October field visit but is probably busy during the summer months.

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

The Fond du Lac Culvert was inventoried in 1984 during a City of Duluth cultural resources survey and was given the Duluth Survey number SL-DUL-A-1.

■ REFERENCES

Aguar, Charles E. *Exploring St. Louis County's Historical Sites*. Duluth: St. Louis County Historical Society, 1971.

Hess, Jeffrey A. "Bridge No. 5757." National Register of Historic Places Registration Form. Sept. 1997.

Hess, Jeffrey A. Minnesota Historic Bridge Inventory form for Bridge 5757. Hess, Roise, and Company. 1997.

Waters, Thomas F. *The Superior North Shore*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987.

■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Fond du Lac area, located along an important canoe route, was the site of an Ojibwe settlement in the 16th through 19th centuries. "Fond du Lac" is a French word that means "Farther end of the lake" or "Head of the lake". Fond du Lac became a trading post of the American Fur Company in 1817. Fond du Lac was the headquarters for the company, served many smaller inland posts, and operated for 25 years. Mission Creek was named for an Ojibwe mission that was located at Fond du Lac during the 1830s. In 1842 the American Fur post was purchased by the Missouri Fur Company which operated until 1848. In 1854 the Treaty of La Pointe was signed at Fond du Lac, by which the Ojibwe relinquished mineral rights in the area. The village of Fond du Lac was platted in 1856 and incorporated in 1857. Fond du Lac was one of eight small communities that were absorbed by the growing city of Duluth. Fond du Lac was incorporated into Duluth in 1895.