

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

SL-DUL-2430
CS 6910
New Duluth Overlook

Historic Name	New Duluth Overlook	CS #	6910
Other Name	New Duluth Scenic Overlook	SHPO Inv #	SL-DUL-2430

Location	S side of TH 23 about 600' W of Sargent Creek	Hwy District Reference	TH 23 1A 338.5
-----------------	---	-------------------------------	----------------------

City/Township	Duluth, City of	Acres	.54
County	St. Louis	Rest Area Class	4
Twp Rng Sec	48N 15W Sec 10	SP #	
USGS Quad	West Duluth		
UTM	Z15 E558890 N5166790		

Designer	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)	SHPO Review #	
Builder	Minn Dept of Highways (MHD)		

Historic Use	Roadside Parking Area	MHS Photo #	013538.01-09
Present Use	Roadside Parking Area Roadside Parking Area		

Yr of Landscape Design	Ca. 1958	MnDOT Historic Photo Album	
Overall Site Integrity	Very Altered		
Review Required	Yes		

National Register Status	Not Eligible, see Statement of Significance
---------------------------------	---

Historic Context	
-------------------------	--

List of Standing Structures

Feat#	Feature Type	Year Built
01	Overlook Wall	Ca. 1958
02	Guardrail, Stone	Ca. 1980

NOTE: Landscape features are not listed in this table

Fieldwork Date	10-09-97
-----------------------	----------

Prep by	Gemini Research Dec. 98 G1. 50
----------------	-----------------------------------

Prep for	Site Development Unit Cultural Resources Unit Environmental Studies Unit
-----------------	--

Final Report	Historic Roadside Development Structures on Minnesota Trunk Highways (1998)
---------------------	---

■ BRIEF

New Duluth Overlook is located on the southern side of T.H. 23 ("Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive") about 600' west of Sargent Creek. It is located on the northern bank of the St. Louis River within Duluth near the southern edge of the city.

■ STANDING STRUCTURES

Remnants of Overlook Wall. Built circa 1958 by MHD. The only standing structures on the site are the poured concrete footings and one stone pier which remain from an overlook wall. The pier is standing at the western end of the former wall. It is built of coursed split rock (bread loaf-sized) in shades of pink, gray, and black. The pier is about 26" square and about 28" tall. The concrete footing is a long, continuous line of concrete about 18" wide running the length of the parking area, flush with the ground.

Stone Guardrail. Built circa 1980. Enormous boulders have been placed (not very evenly) on top of the concrete footings. These rocks are large chunks of granite that measure about 4' by 4' by 4'. They were obviously inspired by similar stone guardrails that were placed along portions of Duluth's Skyline Drive beginning in the early 20th century (Nunnally 1997:75).

■ OTHER LANDSCAPE FEATURES AND PLANTINGS

The wall footings and pier stand on the southern edge of a gravel parking area that measures approximately 60' by 200'. The parking area is lined with wood timber posts that are specified on the original plan. There are cables between the posts on the northern side of the site, creating a guardrail along T.H. 23. There is a picnic area with one portable picnic table immediately west of the parking area. A trail that is marked "Old Road" on the map leads from the western end of the parking area down the slope toward the river flood plain. An adjacent trail (labeled as a 5' asphalt walkway on the plans) is today a grassy trail.

The parking area is surrounded by grass. Sumac, brush, and trees are overgrown south of the wall, blocking the site's intended view of the St. Louis River. An original planting plan has not been located.

The parking area is located on a relatively narrow, flat area adjacent to the highway. The land drops off down to the old T.H. 23 alignment and a railroad trackbed (neither of which are visible from the parking area) and the St. Louis River, which is barely visible.

■ SETTING

The site is located in a rural setting surrounded by the St. Louis River floodplain on the south, T.H. 23 on the north, and woods in all directions. The overlook is located about 600' west of Sargent Creek. The former community (now neighborhood) of Fond du Lac is located about two miles to the west.

■ **INTEGRITY**

Alterations

The integrity of the site is poor. The walkway, curb, and entire wall (except one pier and the concrete footings) have been removed.

The site retains integrity of location and setting. However, it has lost integrity of materials, workmanship, feeling, and association due to the removal of the wall.

Notes on Condition

Sumac, brush, and trees are overgrown south of the wall, blocking the site's intended view of the St. Louis River.

■ **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The New Duluth Overlook was a roadside development project of the Minnesota Department of Highways. Plans for the site were drawn and signed in July of 1958. The plans were signed by V. H. Benson (District Maintenance Engineer), Harold E. Olson (Engineer of Roadside Development), G. A. Mishal (Maintenance Engineer), and L. H. Miller (District Engineer).

The wall was specified on the plans to be 200' long with a curving overlook bay at its midpoint. It was to be 18" thick and 2' tall and built on a concrete footing. The wall was anchored with 26"-square, 28"-tall stone piers at 20' intervals. There was to be a 6'-wide asphalt-paved walkway along the inside of the wall that was lined with a stone curb. Historic photos indicate that the site was actually built with pairs of beams (probably steel) between the piers, rather than the stone superstructure drawn on the plans.

The New Duluth Overlook was developed about three years after a roadside development project improved a 7.1 mile stretch of T.H. 23. That project, S.P. 6910-29, was approved in October of 1955 and included construction of the Fond du Lac Historical Marker parking area (about two miles west of the New Duluth Overlook), and plantings along Evergreen Memorial Drive through the community of Fond du Lac.

The use of natural rock to construct the overlook was perhaps an extension of the natural landscape design utilized in the 1930s to construct guardstones and retaining walls along various parkways in Duluth.

Roadside Development Division files indicate that in both circa 1964 and 1979 there were picnic tables at this site.

■ **PREVIOUS SHPO REVIEWS**

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

■ STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The New Duluth Overlook is a roadside parking area that was developed in the late 1950s by the MHD. 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 due to loss of integrity.

■ OTHER COMMENTS

This property may require further evaluation for potential archaeological resources.

T.H. 23 past this site was fairly quiet during this 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.

■ REFERENCES

Maus, Pat [Duluth Historical Society]. Telephone Interview. Jan. 26, 1998.

Olsenius, Richard. *Minnesota Travel Companion: A Guide to History Along Minnesota's Highways*. Wayzata: Bluestem Productions, 1982.

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

■ ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

New Duluth

New Duluth was established in 1890 and incorporated as a village on September 15, 1891. The original townsite consisted of 2,600 acres and there were 439 residents at the time of incorporation. It was planned that New Duluth would be the industrial center for the Duluth area, but the Panic of 1893 closed many of New Duluth's businesses. New Duluth was annexed by Duluth on December 31, 1894, one of eight small communities that were eventually absorbed by the city of Duluth. The city of Duluth was named for Daniel Greysolon Du Luth, a French explorer and fur trader who first visited Lake Superior in 1678. Duluth was first settled by Euro-Americans in 1850-51, and platted and named in 1856. Duluth was incorporated as a town in 1857 and as a city in 1870. Duluth extends for approximately 25 miles (southwest to northeast) along the shores of Lake Superior, the largest body of fresh water in the world. The lake is 383 miles long, 160 miles wide, and is 489 feet to 1,400 feet deep at its maximum depth. The Ojibwe called the Lake "Kitchigumi," meaning "Great Water." The early French traders called the lake "Lac Supérieur" because it was located at the head of the Great Lakes.

Veterans' Evergreen Memorial Drive

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,

**MNDOT HISTORIC ROADSIDE DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURES INVENTORY**

**SL-DUL-2430
CS 6910
New Duluth Overlook**

parkway-like divided highway. The grassy median between the two highway lanes is planted with mature deciduous and evergreen trees.

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.