

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PART I. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Common Name: 5083
Bridge Number: 5083
Identification Number: LY-MS-057

Location:
Feature Carried: TH 19
Feature Crossed: Redwood River
Descriptive Location: 0.2 Miles Northeast of Jct. TH 59
Town, Range, Section: 111N-41N-4
Town or City: Marshall
County: Lyon

UTM:
Zone: 15
Easting: 278390
Northing: 4925350

Quad:
Marshall
7.5 Minute Series
1927

Present Owner:
State

Present Use:
Mainline

Significance Statement:
Carrying Minnesota Trunk Highway 19 (formerly Trunk Highway 14) over the Redwood River in the center of Marshall, Bridge No. 5083 stands between a residential neighborhood on the south and the city's main park on the north. Displaying a skewed alignment, the bridge consists of two, 37-foot, deck, concrete-girder spans on a concrete substructure. Eight lines of girders support the concrete deck, which accommodates a 40-foot, bituminous-surfaced roadway and two concrete sidewalks bordered by ornamental, open-balustrade, metal railings with concrete posts. Each railing supports two metal light standards detailed in the Classical Revival Style with consoles, fluting, and acanthus leaves. Metal plates on the northwest and southeast endposts bear the following inscription: "Minnesota Highway Department Bridge No. 5083 1931." Plans for Bridge No. 5083, dated 1931, are on file with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. These drawings indicate that the bridge still embodies its original design. The main repair on the structure was a re-decking project in the early 1980s, which did not affect its historical integrity.

In 1930, the Minnesota Highway Department turned its attention to improving State Trunk

Highway 14 (later renumbered Trunk Highway 19) in southwest Minnesota. Although the route was designated in 1921 as part of the state's original trunk highway system, the section in Lyon County had not yet been paved, nor had a permanent location for the highway been selected in the city of Marshall, the county seat. In January 1931, the highway department offered the city two possible alignments: one skirting the city on the north, the other bisecting the city near the business district. Although both the city council and the chamber of commerce favored the downtown route, there were misgivings that the proposed alignment cut through the city's main park on the bank of the Redwood River. In a series of public meetings, the highway department assuaged these concerns by demonstrating that the highway would claim relatively few trees in the park and that the new river crossing, to be designated as Bridge No. 5083, would be a suitably ornamental structure. Civic leaders were so impressed with the park bridge's design that they persuaded the highway department to apply it to a second Redwood River crossing, designated as Bridge No. 5151, that was to be built on Trunk Highway 19 on the western outskirts of the city. Because of its more remote location, Bridge No. 5151 had originally been planned as a simple utilitarian structure.

In designing Bridge No. 5083 and Bridge No. 5151, the highway department adapted a basic plan it had developed in the late 1920s for urban trunk highway bridges, whether steel or concrete. In the case of the two Marshall bridges, the design was applied to a two-span, concrete, deck-girder superstructure. The bridges were built under separate contracts, both secured from the state on a low-bid basis by Guaranty Construction Company of Minneapolis. Bridge No. 5083 was completed at a cost of \$23,277 in October 1931; Bridge No. 5151, slightly more expensive at \$26,496, opened to traffic the following December. With the completion of the second project, the city's newspaper announced that "there are now two beautiful bridges on Highway 14 in Marshall, one at each end of the highway's route through the city."

Although the state highway department applied its ornamental urban bridge design to numerous trunk highway crossings before World War II, it is now rare to find good surviving examples of the type. In the post-war decades, road-widening projects eliminated sidewalks and railings, obsolescence (and vandalism) claimed lighting fixtures, and bridge-replacement projects did away with entire crossings. Bridge No. 5083 and Bridge No. 5151 in Marshall are among the few surviving, intact examples of the design.

Bridge No. 5083 is eligible for the National Register for its architectural design under Criterion C, within the historical context of "Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota, 1900-1945." The Multiple Property Documentation Form associated with this context states, in Registration Criterion 5, that a concrete highway bridge may be eligible under Criterion C if it displays notable aesthetics. Bridge No. 5083 satisfies this criterion.

PART II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Construction:

1931

Contractor and/or Designer (if known):

Contractor: Guaranty Construction Company, Minneapolis

Designer: Minnesota Highway Department

Historic Context:

Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota

National Register Criterion:

C

PART III. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Descriptive Information:

skewed 2-span concrete girder

concrete U-abutments, solid concrete pier

bituminous-surfaced concrete deck carried by 8 girders

Railings: ornamental, open-balustrade, metal railings with concrete posts decorated with a recessed panel on each side; ornamental metal light standards on railing posts; sidewalks along roadway; bridge plates on northwest and southeast railing endposts ("Minnesota Highway Department Bridge No. 5083 1931")

PART IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

References:

Minnesota Department of Transportation Bridge Database; Bridge No. 5083 and Bridge No. 5151 Files, in Minnesota Department of Transportation, Waters Edge Building, Roseville, Minnesota; Bridge No. 5083 and Bridge No. 5151 Storage Files (plans, contracts, correspondence), in Minnesota Department of Transportation Records Storage Center, St. Paul; Bridge No. 5083 and Bridge No. 5151 Files, in Minnesota Department of Transportation District 8 Office, Willmar, Minnesota; Minnesota Highway Department, Construction Plans for Trunk Highway 14, 1931, in Minnesota Department of Transportation, Waters Edge Building; following articles in News Messenger (Marshall) of 1931: "Business Men Hear Report on Highway Status" (9 January), "Highway Route Through Park Will Be Shown Next Monday" (16 January), "Business Men Vote 66 to 11 for Park Route" (23 January), "Park Route Favored by City Council" (6 March), "Paving Work in County Will Total 26 Miles" (8 May), "Work on Highway 14 Bridge Here Goes Well" (12 June), "New Bridge Will Be Twin to One at Park" (25 September), "This New Highway Bridge Will Be Dedicated Friday" (23 October), "Work on Bridge Began During First Week in June" (23 October), "New Bridge Opened to Traffic Saturday" (23 December); field inspection by Shawn P. Rounds, 22 October 1995.

PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION

Historians:

Jeffrey A. Hess

Form Preparer:

Mead & Hunt, 2006

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