

MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

PART I. PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Common Name: 8096
Bridge Number: 8096
Identification Number: RC-NFC-326

Location:

Feature Carried: TH 19
Feature Crossed: Spring Creek
Descriptive Location: 0.6 Miles Northeast of N. Jct. TH 3
Town, Range, Section: 112N-19W-31
Town or City: Northfield
County: Rice

UTM:

Zone: 15
Easting: 487770
Northing: 4923220

Quad:

Northfield
7.5 Minute Series
1927

Present Owner:

State

Present Use:

Mainline

Significance Statement:

Standing within the campus boundaries of Carleton College in Northfield, Bridge No. 8096 carries Minnesota Trunk Highway 19 over Spring Creek. The crossing was built in two stages. The original construction in 1918 produced an 18-foot, spandrel-filled, reinforced-concrete arch with a 22-foot roadway between solid-parapet concrete railings. In 1947, the bridge was doubled in width by extending both sides to accommodate a 36-foot roadway and two sidewalks. This reconstruction covered the bridge's sidewalls with roughly coursed, rock-faced limestone detailed in the Late Gothic Revival Style. Buttressed pilasters frame the arch opening and abutment retaining walls, while pointed arches punctuate the parapet railings. A metal plaque on the bridge's northeast corner bears the inscription: "Federal Aid Project FAS 80-4 Minnesota 1947." Plans for the bridge, dated September 1946, are on file with the Minnesota Department of Transportation. These drawings indicate that Bridge No. 8096 was built according to plan and retains its historical integrity.

As part of a general improvement of Minnesota Trunk Highway 19 in Rice County, the Minnesota

Highway Department in 1947 widened the existing reinforced-concrete arch bridge over Spring Creek on the campus of Carlton College. Although the rebuilding of older concrete structures to accommodate wider roadways was not usual, the architectural treatment of the crossing, known as Bridge No. 8096, was unorthodox for the post-war period. Instead of utilizing a clean-lined Modernist aesthetic, which characterized the standardized bridge plans that the highway department was preparing at the time, the state engineering staff gave Bridge No. 8096 a masonry veneer detailed in the Late Gothic Revival Style, replete with buttressed pilasters and pointed-arch railing openings. The state highway department had used essentially the same design for at least two bridges built in the late 1930s, when civil works projects were in the grip of a federal work-relief aesthetic that favored the use of natural materials and labor-intensive craftsmanship. Although the surviving plans for Bridge No. 8096 are dated 1946, it is possible that the bridge's reconstruction was originally designed as a work-relief project during the New Deal. Or it is conceivable that the highway department decided that the older aesthetic was more appropriate for a crossing on a college campus, adjacent to the arboretum and other landscape features. Despite its "outmoded" design, Bridge No. 8096 is an excellent example of an ornamental, stone-faced, concrete-arch bridge. Noteworthy for its well-crafted masonry and Late Gothic Revival detailing, Bridge No. 8096 is eligible for the National Register for its architectural design and workmanship under Criterion C, within the historic 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. 8096 satisfies this criterion.

PART II. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Construction:

1918, 1947

Contractor and/or Designer (if known):

Contractor: N/A

Designer: Minnesota Highway Department

Historic Context:

Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota

National Register Criterion:

C

PART III. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION

Descriptive Information:

single-span, stone-faced, reinforced-concrete arch
stone-faced concrete abutments
earth fill on arch supports roadway and two sidewalks
parapets rise above roadway to form stone railings

PART IV. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

References:

Minnesota Department of Transportation Bridge Database; Bridge No. 8096 File, in Minnesota Department of Transportation, Waters Edge Building, St. Paul; "Contracts Let for 3 Projects on Highways in Rice and Dakota," Northfield Independent, 6 March 1947; Robert M. Frame, "Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, Sec. F, 8, in State Historic Preservation Office, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul; field inspection by Shawn P. Rounds, 5 December 1995.

PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION

Historians:

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Form Preparer:

Mead & Hunt, 2006

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