

MINNESOTA ARCHITECTURE - HISTORY INVENTORY FORM

Project: Local Historic Bridge Study - Phase II Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota

Identification
Historic Name East Calhoun Parkway Bridge
Current Name Bridge L5728
Field #
Address Midtown Greenway over East Calhoun Parkway
City/Twp Minneapolis
County Hennepin
Legal Desc. Twp 29N Range 24W Sec 32 QQ SWSW
USGS Quad Minneapolis South
UTM Zone 15 Datum 27
Easting 156146 Northing 16330319
Property ID (PIN)

SHPO Inventory Number HE-MPC-05335

Review and Compliance Number

Form (New or Updated) Updated

Description
Linear Feature? No
HPC Status Unknown
Resource Type Structure
Architect/Engineer Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad
Style Classical Revival
Construction Date 1912
Original Use Transportation
Current Use Transportation

Description

Constructed in 1912, Bridge L5728 (also known as the East Calhoun Parkway Bridge) is located in Minneapolis's Lake District and carries Midtown Avenue over East Calhoun Parkway. Midtown Avenue is also known as the Midtown Greenway, a bicycle and pedestrian path that runs along the former Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul (CM&StP) Railroad right-of-way. Parkland and residential areas are located near the bridge.

The East Calhoun Parkway Bridge is a four-span, reinforced-concrete, cast-in-place slab with a main span length of 22 feet and a total structure length of 74 feet. The bridge has a concrete parapet that consists of long horizontal panels separated by pilasters at the abutments and over the piers. The parapet features Classical Revival details, including pilasters, recessed panels, and circle medallions centered on each span. Each parapet is topped with cap stones that join wider caps at each pilaster. A non-historic metal railing with a semi-circular pattern lines the bridge on either side of the deck. The bituminous deck is 29 feet wide and carries pedestrian and bike traffic. Each concrete pier consists of three columns and two wide arches. The outside columns of each pier are aligned with pilasters in the parapet above. The concrete abutments are flanked by curved wingwalls. Each wingwall commences at the back of the abutment, where it rises to the height of the end pilaster in the parapet. The wingwall then curves away from the bridge alignment in a 90-degree quarter circle. As the wingwall curves, the coping slopes downward and terminates in a 3-foot-square column. The piers and abutments feature simple classical details and have a projecting cornice and base.

Changes to the bridge include the addition of warning light fixtures to the center pier by 1935. A c.1935 photograph shows the parapet was painted with an advertisement and piers were painted with a diagonal safety stripe. A traffic island was constructed around the center pier at an unknown date.

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In the 1990s Hennepin County Regional Railroad Authority (HCRAA) acquired a portion of the CM&StP right-of-way, including Bridge 90661, for the purposes of constructing a proposed light rail transit line. Ultimately a pedestrian and bicycle trail was constructed to fulfill a community-identified need. The County established the 2.8-mile-long trail, now known as the Midtown Greenway, between 2000 and 2004. To accommodate the conversion, railroad tracks were removed and a paved pedestrian and bike trail was installed. A new City of Minneapolis-designed standard railing was installed along the north parapet, and the south edge of the trail was lined by a chain-link fence.

Hennepin County Housing, Community Works, and Transit, with assistance from the Federal Highway Administration, rehabilitated Bridge L5728 in 2011. On behalf of the Federal Highway Administration, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) conducted Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act consultation for the proposed project with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (Minnesota SHPO) in 2009. Work included spot repair of deteriorated concrete on the bridge piers, abutments, parapet walls, and underside of the bridge slab. Concrete repairs were made using a pre-colored concrete mixture prepared to match the texture, color, and composition of the original. All graffiti was removed from the bridge and a mitigation plan for future graffiti removal established. The spot repairs were stained to better match the original concrete color. During rehabilitation, the warning lights were removed and underpass lightning was added. City of Minneapolis-designed standard railing was added to the south side of the bridge, matching the north (Section 106 Consultation Letter to Dennis Gimmestad, Minnesota SHPO, from Garneth Peterson, MnDOT, dated April 21, 2009; Minnesota SHPO Response Letter from Britta Bloomberg to Garneth Peterson, dated June 1, 2009; SHPO Response Letter from Dennis Gimmestad to Garneth Peterson, dated June 17, 2009).

EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

Historical Context

Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota, 1900-1945

Historical Narrative

The Minneapolis Park Board (Board) constructed East Calhoun Parkway as part of the Grand Rounds park system encircling Minneapolis. The Board was established in 1883 and hired landscape architect Horace Cleveland to plan and design the city's park system, a portion of which became known as the Grand Rounds. The Grand Rounds is a series of seven segments of interconnected parks and parkways that encircle the city and connect lakes, river, creeks, and other natural features. The Grand Rounds continued to be developed and expanded throughout the twentieth century, and included the construction of bridges connecting roads and paths between waterways.

East Calhoun Parkway was constructed as a part of the Grand Rounds park system located in the Lake District. When the Board decided to construct East Calhoun Parkway, it had to finance the construction of a railroad bridge to carry the CM&StP over the road. At the time the bridge was constructed, the CM&StP had been running through Minneapolis for nearly 40 years as part of the Benton Cutoff, which connected Minneapolis flour mills with the wheat fields of western Minnesota and southern Dakota Territory.

In the 1910s the CM&StP presented its initial design for the bridge to the Board: a concrete structure with a simple parapet with six rectangular panels and flat wingwalls. The Board did not approve these plans, and requested a design more in character with other ornamental bridges in the Grand Rounds and Lake District. The final agreed-upon design was a

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Classical Revival bridge. Although it is unknown who designed the bridge, the CM&StP commissioned the bridge's design at the same time as the Dean Parkway Bridge (Bridge 90661) to correspond with the Lake Calhoun-Lake of the Isles Channel Bridge (Bridge 93809) designed in 1911 by William Pierce Cowles and Cecil Bayless Chapman. The three bridges share very similar Classical Revival features, including pilasters, recessed panels, and circle medallions centered on each span. Charles F. Loweth, Chief Engineer of the CM&StP, approved the final bridge plans. Loweth was also responsible for the design and construction of 37 concrete bridges that spanned the depressed CM&StP right-of-way further east (known as the CM&StP Grade Separation project). In 1912 the CM&StP constructed the new Classical Revival bridge over East Calhoun Parkway.

In the 1990s HCRRA acquired a portion of the CM&StP right-of-way, including Bridge L5728, in an effort to create the 2.8-mile-long pedestrian and bike path known as the Midtown Greenway. In 2011 a rehabilitation project was undertaken to repair deteriorated concrete on the bridge parapet railing, piers, and abutments; update lighting; and add pedestrian railing to the south side of the bridge.

Significance

Bridge L5728 was previously evaluated as a contributing resource to the Grand Rounds Historic District, which has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). However, the bridge was not previously evaluated individually for its design and engineering significance. Under *Criterion C*, the bridge as an individual resource possesses aesthetic value as demonstrated in its architectural details. The bridge displays architectural details like pilasters, recessed panels, and circle medallions that convey the aesthetic of formality and refinement associated with the Classical Revival style. The period of significance for the East Calhoun Parkway Bridge is 1912 to correspond with its date of construction.

It should be noted that the National Register-listed Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Grade Separation Historic District is located to the east of Bridge L5728, and does not include Bridge L5728 in its boundaries.

Integrity

Despite alterations in the early 2000s to meet safety standards as a pedestrian and bicycle trail, and the rehabilitation efforts in 2011, the bridge largely retains its historical integrity. Integrity of design and materials is somewhat compromised by the addition of the non-historic railing. The rehabilitation work was keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* and the National Register Bulletins on concrete-repair. As such, the bridge retains integrity of workmanship and materials. The bridge continues to carry old CM&StP right-of-way over East Calhoun Parkway in the Lakes District and retains integrity of location and setting. Integrity of association and feeling has been slightly diminished with the conversion of the CM&StP corridor to pedestrian and bike trail. The alterations to the bridge, including conversion to pedestrian use and the 2011 rehabilitation, are only minor impacts to its integrity. Bridge 90661 retains a sufficient degree of integrity to convey its historic significance under *Criterion C* for notable aesthetics.

Recommendation

Bridge L5728 was previously identified as a contributing resource to the National Register-eligible Grand Rounds Historic District. Within the historic context of "Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota, 1900-1945" and the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) associated with this context, the bridge satisfies Registration Criterion 5, which states

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that a concrete bridge may be eligible under *Criterion C* if it displays notable aesthetics. Bridge L5728 satisfied this criterion based on its Classical Revival design features and ornamentation. The bridge retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic significance as a contributing resource to the Grand Rounds Historic District and its engineering and design significance as example of a cast-in-place slab bridge with Classical Revival details. Therefore, the bridge is significant under *Criterion C: Engineering* for high artistic value. The period of significance for the East Calhoun Parkway Bridge is 1912 to correspond with its date of construction.

Sources

“Bridge L5728.” Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory Form. Available at the State Historic Preservation Office, St. Paul, Minn.

C.M. & St. P. Ry. Engineering Department. “Dean Boulevard Bridge, Minneapolis, Lake of the Isle Boulevard, General Pan,” 1912.

Mead & Hunt, Inc. “Historic Evaluation of Railroad Bridges at lake of the Isle and Midtown Greenway Infrastructure Elements.” Prepared for the Hennepin County Housing, Community Works and Transit and the Minnesota Department of Transportation, April 2009.

National Register of Historic Places. Reinforced-Concrete Highway Bridges in Minnesota. National Register #64500291.

National Register of Historic Places. Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Grade Separation, Minneapolis, Minnesota. National Register #05000508.

Roise, Charlene and Denis P. Gardner. *Making the City Itself a Work of Art: An Historical Context for the Grand Rounds, Minneapolis*. Minneapolis: Hess, Rosie, and Company, 2000.

URS. “29th Street Midtown Greenway Bridge and Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Restoration Project Phase 1,” 2009.

URS. “29th Street Midtown Greenway Bridge and Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Restoration Project Phase 2,” 2010.

Wirth, Theodore. “Minneapolis Park System, 1883-1944.” [Minneapolis: Board of Park Commissioners, 1945].

Consultant’s Recommendation of Eligibility

Eligible – Individual; Contributing to Eligible Historic District

Prepared By

Mead & Hunt, Inc.

Date Surveyed

N/A

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Property Photographs



View facing northeast



Parapet detail

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View facing northwest

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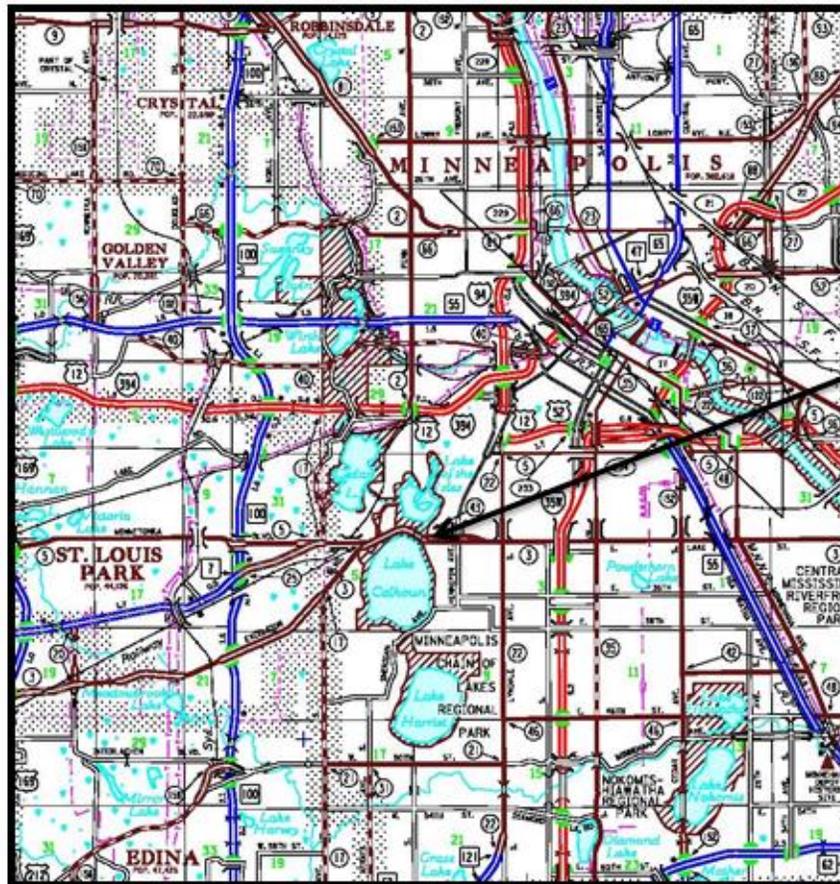
Wingwall detail

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Location Map



BR. NO. L5728

Bridge L5728 – MIDTOWN GREENWAY over LAKE ISLES CHANNEL



PROJECT LOCATION
HENNEPIN COUNTY
SW 1/4, SW 1/4, SEC. 33, TO 029NN, R 24W
UTM ZONE: 15 NAD: 27
USGS QUAD NAME: MINNEAPOLIS SOUTH
EASTING: 1561486 ft.
NORTHING: 16330319 ft.