

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

■ PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The primary goal of the project was to inventory all roadside development properties on current Mn/DOT right-of-way that contain pre-1961 standing structures and to evaluate the National Register eligibility of the sites.

Studying the properties as a group and evaluating their National Register eligibility is designed to streamline the review process that Mn/DOT and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) undertake when changes are proposed to the sites. Assessing the cultural significance of the properties will assist Mn/DOT in making decisions regarding their future rehabilitation, improvement, or replacement. Similarly, collecting information about the number, type, location, and physical characteristics of the properties will assist Mn/DOT in planning both routine and long-term maintenance and management.

■ PREVIOUS RESEARCH

There has been no previous, comprehensive, cultural resource study of historic roadside development structures in Minnesota and no previous historic context development that focuses on this type of property. Several of the properties in the inventory had been the subject of previous cultural resource surveys or reviews by Mn/DOT and the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Where possible, the consultants used this information to avoid duplication of previous work.

Historian Rolf Anderson has conducted surveys, research, and historic context development focussing on state park structures in Minnesota that were built by New Deal federal relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). Some of Anderson's documentation briefly mentions roadside development properties, but its greater value is in providing excellent background and technical information about state park structures that were designed and built by the same historical forces that created many roadside development properties. Copies of most of Anderson's work is available at the SHPO.

Linda Flint McClelland, an historian for the National Register within the National Park Service, wrote the documentation for an historic context that is used by the Park Service to evaluate landscape architecture and park structures within national parks. McClelland's work also provides detailed background and technical information that is applicable to roadside development properties built in the 1930s and 1940s. Publications by McClelland are listed in the "References" section of this report.

■ PROJECT METHODS

The survey area for this project encompassed the entire state. Susan Granger of Gemini Research served as Principal Investigator.

HISTORIC CONTEXT DEVELOPMENT

For the purposes of this project, roadside development properties are defined as structures and landscapes that were designed, built, or used for what are broadly termed "roadside development" purposes. Roadside development is a field of landscape architecture and highway design that is concerned with improving highway safety and aesthetics. Working within the highway design process, roadside development engineers blend roadways into the natural environment, control erosion, increase driver visibility, erase road construction scars, screen ugly views, and enhance scenic vistas. They design wayside rests and scenic overlooks that enhance public access to natural areas, provide safe places for travelers to enjoy outstanding views, and create facilities in which drivers can rest. Roadside development staff also design structures such as bridges and retaining walls that beautify roadways while at the same time serving engineering functions. Roadside development is often linked to urban design improvements, the promotion of recreational travel and tourism, and other economic development activities.

In accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* (1983), this project included the development of an "historic context" to help identify, understand, and evaluate the inventoried properties. The context is entitled "Roadside Development on Minnesota Trunk Highways, 1920-1960." The time frame of the context begins with the establishment of the state trunk highway system in 1920. The time frame ends in 1960, after which the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) built and acquired fewer trunk highway rest areas and, instead, shifted its attention for the next several years to the development of the interstate highway system.

Two documents were written for the new roadside development historic context. The first is an "Historic Context Narrative" that provides background information on the historical forces, patterns, and individuals that helped create roadside development properties. (The narrative begins on page 3.1 of this report.) The second document is a list of "Registration Requirements" that are used to evaluate the National Register eligibility of the properties within the historic context. While the historic context narrative helps us understand the properties, the registration requirements help determine their significance. (The registration requirements begin on page 6.1 of this report.)

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INVENTORY

Preliminary planning by Mn/DOT personnel and historical research conducted during the project refined the scope of the types of properties that would be included in the inventory. It was decided that the project would inventory all properties on current Mn/DOT right-of-way that appeared to have been developed or acquired by the Minnesota Department of Highways for roadside development purposes and that contain pre-1961 standing structures. Roadside development properties that do not contain any pre-1961 standing structures were excluded from the inventory.

Highway bridges and culverts that were either clearly designed for roadside development purposes (e.g., designed by the MHD Roadside Development Division) or are located within a larger roadside development property were included in the inventory. Another

distinct group of roadside development properties known as state line markers was excluded from the inventory because they had already been the subject of a recent Mn/DOT study that evaluated their National Register eligibility. (See Appendix K of this report.)

Roadside development properties that are not on current Mn/DOT right-of-way were not inventoried. These include roadside development properties that were developed by cities and counties and are located on local or county roads, as well as state-built roadside development properties that have left the trunk highway system for one reason or another. Some of the latter group of properties are located on segments of trunk highway that have been redesignated as county or local roads. Others are located on parcels of land that Mn/DOT has relinquished or sold. (In many cases, the National Register eligibility of sites that are not on current Mn/DOT right-of-way can be evaluated using the registration requirements that begin on page 6.1 of this report, or a modification thereof.)

Identifying properties to include in the inventory was a time-consuming process, in part because current Mn/DOT records do not contain a comprehensive list of historic roadside development sites. The consultants used current and historic Mn/DOT files, information supplied by Mn/DOT District office staff, historical photographs, the SHPO statewide historic properties inventory, Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) historic marker information, and final reports issued by New Deal agencies such as the National Youth Administration (NYA) to identify possible candidates for the inventory. Dozens of properties were added, and later deleted, from the master list as research revealed that they had been razed, were no longer on current right-of-way, or had no pre-1961 standing structures. Another 21 properties were excluded from the inventory after a field visit revealed no pre-1961 structures. The final inventory list comprised 102 properties.

FIELDWORK AND SITE RESEARCH

Fieldwork was conducted to photograph and record the 102 properties according to the specifications of Mn/DOT's Cultural Resources Unit and the SHPO. All permanent standing structures on each inventoried property were recorded with the exception of some ubiquitous (and relatively minor) modern site furnishings such as lampposts, bollards, and fencing.

Background research on individual sites was conducted using various primary and secondary sources including highway department records in the State Archives, historical photographs, the records of state and federal relief agencies, and the holdings of county historical societies. Two important sources were not tapped by this project due to budget constraints. The first is the National Archives in Washington D.C., which hold a large collection of materials from federal relief programs such as the CCC. The second source is the back issues of local newspapers, many of which undoubtedly covered the construction of roadside development properties in news or feature articles. (Because these newspapers are usually not indexed, research using this source is time-consuming.)

EVALUATION OF NATIONAL REGISTER ELIGIBILITY

The National Register eligibility of the inventoried properties was evaluated by the consultants using the "Registration Requirements" that were prepared as part of this study, and the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (listed in Appendix L of this report). The registration requirements, and the results of the evaluation, appear in the section of this report entitled "Evaluation of National Register Eligibility."

FINAL PRODUCTS

The final products of this study consist of three major items, listed below. It is recommended that users of the inventory consult all three items for information on particular sites, since each of the three contains unique information.

1. An inventory file was prepared for each property. (An abbreviated, duplicate set of materials was also prepared for the SHPO.) Each inventory file contains:
 - a several-page inventory form
 - original construction plans (if available)
 - a sketch map (if the current site differs from available plans)
 - a USGS topographical map
 - a right-of-way map (for National Register-eligible sites only)
 - black and white prints
 - color slides
 - photocopies of historical photographs
 - photocopied documentation from previous cultural resource reviews
 - photocopies of historical background information

Appendix I of this report contains a "Guide to the Inventory Form" that describes and defines each item on the inventory form.

2. Two sets of historic Mn/DOT photo albums (totaling eight volumes) were organized and indexed as part of this project. The albums are described in Appendix J of this report.
3. The consultants prepared this final report, which describes the study's objectives, methods, and results. The report includes important comparative information on the inventoried properties.

With one exception, all final products are on file at the Site Development Unit within the Mn/DOT Office of Technical Support. The negatives for the black and white photographs taken during this project, however, have been archived in the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) photo collection. (Photo reprints can be ordered from MHS by referencing the "MHS Photo #" on each inventory form.)

All methods and final products were designed to meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation* (1983) and the specifications of "Guidelines for SHPO Architecture/History Projects" (1993).

■ **LIMITS OF THE PROJECT**

The 102 properties in this inventory were identified using the method described under "Development of the Inventory" above. It is probable that a small number of Mn/DOT-owned, roadside development properties with pre-1961 standing structures were missed in this process. It is recommended that the National Register eligibility of these properties be evaluated using the registration requirements contained in this report.

The current project did not study properties that are not located on current Mn/DOT right-of-way.

The current project focused only on properties with standing structures (i.e., permanent, above-ground buildings, structures, and objects). Roadside development properties that do not have pre-1961 standing structures were not inventoried.

The current project did not document archaeological features (e.g., burial mounds, oxcart trails) on the inventoried properties.

Exhaustive research was not conducted on each inventoried property. Instead, the properties were researched only to a level sufficient to evaluate their significance within the historic context and to determine their potential National Register eligibility.

