Phase I and II Architecture-History Investigation, Rehabilitation or Replacement of Bridge 5882 Over the South Fork of the Crow River, CSAH 10, Watertown, Carver County, Minnesota

Submitted to Bolton and Menk and Carver County
July 2012

Prepared by
Susan Granger and Scott Kelly
Gemini Research, Morris, Minnesota
PHASE I AND II ARCHITECTURE-HISTORY INVESTIGATION,
REHABILITATION OR REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE 5882
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Carver County, in cooperation with the City of Watertown, is proposing to rehabilitate or replace Bridge 5882 and reconstruct the intersection of Territorial Street and Lewis Avenue in downtown Watertown, Carver County, Minnesota. Bridge 5882 carries Territorial Street (CSAH 10) over the South Fork of the Crow River. The bridge is a three-span steel girder structure built in 1939. It is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2012 Gemini Research was hired to conduct a Phase I and II architecture-history survey in association with the project. The investigation was conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (36 CFR 800). Section 106 requires that responsible government agencies take historic properties into consideration during the planning of undertakings that are funded, permitted, or licensed by the federal government. “Historic properties” are defined by the Act as properties that are listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). (Archaeological resources were investigated in a separate process.)

Gemini identified a 16.8-acre Area of Potential Effect (APE) for architecture-history resources. The APE doubled as the survey area. Gemini encountered only one property in the survey area that was 50 years old and met National Register integrity requirements. It is Bridge 5882 itself. The bridge was determined eligible for the National Register in the late 1990s as part of the statewide Minnesota Historic Bridge Inventory. It meets National Register eligibility Criterion C for its notable and intact design.

Gemini Research recommends that there is one property in the APE that is listed on, or eligible for, the National Register. It is Bridge 5882 (CR-WTC-010) on Territorial Street (CSAH 10). This report and one Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory form were the final products of the architecture-history investigation.
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INTRODUCTION

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In 2012 Gemini Research was hired under contract to conduct a Phase I and II architecture-history investigation in association with the project. The architecture-history survey was conducted in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (36 CFR 800). Section 106 requires that responsible government agencies take historic properties into consideration when planning and implementing projects that are funded, permitted, or licensed by the federal government. “Historic properties” are defined by the Act as properties that are listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places.

This report summarizes the findings of Gemini Research’s investigation. Archaeological resources were not included in this study.
PROJECT OBJECTIVE AND METHODS

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this cultural resources investigation was to identify properties in the undertaking’s Architecture of Potential Effect (APE) that are listed on, or eligible for, the National Register of Historic Places. Properties listed on, or eligible for, the National Register meet the definition of “historic” properties per Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended (36 CFR 800). Identifying historic properties will allow Carver County and others to take significant cultural resources into consideration during project planning and implementation as required by Section 106.

PROJECT METHODS

Project methods are briefly described below. The findings of the investigation appear in Chapter 3.

Susan Granger served as Principal Investigator. Gemini conducted the study in the spring and early summer of 2012.

Brief Description of the Undertaking

Carver County proposes to rehabilitate or replace Bridge 5882 on Territorial Street (CSAH 10) in downtown Watertown and reconstruct the intersection of Territorial Street and Lewis Avenue. (Map 1.) Bridge 5882, built in 1939, carries Territorial Street over the South Fork of the Crow River. Territorial Street intersects with Lewis Avenue, Watertown’s main commercial street, just west of the bridge.

If Bridge 5882 is rehabilitated or reconstructed, Territorial Street would remain on its current alignment.

If Bridge 5882 is replaced, one option proposes that a new bridge be built roughly 50’ north of the existing bridge (centerline to centerline). Bridge 5882 would remain open during construction. After the new bridge is complete, Territorial Street would permanently curve north of its current alignment to cross the new bridge and then return to its current alignment. Planners are exploring the possibility of keeping Bridge 5882 in place for pedestrian and bike use.

Territorial Street and Lewis Avenue currently intersect in a traditional orthogonal intersection near the western edge of the bridge. If Bridge 5882 is rehabilitated or reconstructed and the crossing remains on its current alignment, the intersection would retain its current shape but Territorial Street on the eastern side of the intersection would be widened (between the end of the bridge and Lewis Avenue). The streets on the other three sides of the intersection (north, west, and south) would retain their current widths.
If a new bridge is built north of the current bridge, the Territorial Street-Lewis Avenue intersection would likely be reconstructed as a mini-roundabout, which is a roundabout with a low, surmountable center. It would not have raised structures or plantings in the center. The roundabout would be shifted north of the current intersection to line up with the new bridge and new Territorial Street centerline.

If Bridge 5882 were to be widened or a replacement bridge built, the widened or replacement Bridge would likely be about 58’ wide. Bridge 5882 is currently 38’ wide. The deck of a replacement bridge would likely be about 4’ to 5’ higher than the deck of the current bridge to provide additional clearance over the river.

In most or all scenarios, Territorial Street east of the bridge would be widened slightly, perhaps by 10’ total, to accommodate traffic. The widening would begin at the eastern end of the bridge and likely extend about 1 1/2 blocks to the intersection of Territorial Street and Hope Avenue.

In all scenarios, the altered one-story commercial building at the northeast corner of Territorial Street and Lewis Avenue near the western end of the bridge would be demolished.

If a new bridge is built immediately north of Bridge 5882 and Territorial Street is curved northward to cross the new bridge, some property would likely be acquired from the yard of the altered turn of the century house at the northeastern corner of Mill Avenue and Territorial Street.

It is proposed that an overhead utility line (supported by timber poles) that crosses the bridge on the northern side of Territorial Street be moved underground as part of the project.
Architecture-History Investigation, Rehabilitation or Replacement of Bridge 5882, Watertown, MN

Map 1. Map of APE and Inventoried Properties
Architecture-History Area of Potential Effect

An Area of Potential Effect or APE is generally defined as the geographic area in which potential effects to historic properties caused by the undertaking are most likely to occur. Potential effects generally include the possibility of right-of-way acquisition, construction activity (e.g., earth-moving, vibration from construction, construction staging), significant visual or auditory effects, significant changes to traffic patterns, property access changes, and other potential effects during and after construction.

Gemini Research identified an architecture-history APE for the proposed undertaking, taking into consideration potential effects from undertaking options as described above.

The APE encompasses 16.8 acres on both sides of the river. (Map 1.) The boundaries of the APE were determined in the field by walking the area and identifying the locations from which there was a possibility of substantial visual effects from the alteration of Bridge 5882, construction of a new bridge north of the existing bridge (with accompanying realignment of Territorial Street), and/or reconstruction of the Territorial Street-Lewis Avenue intersection, principally as a mini-roundabout shifted north of the current intersection.

The APE served as the boundary for the architecture-history survey.

Literature Search

At the beginning of the survey, Gemini conducted a literature search to examine previous cultural resources studies, to understand the historical development of the survey area including key contexts and themes, to become familiar with the types of properties expected to be encountered, and to identify sources to be used for site-specific research. The References in this report (Chapter 4) list relevant sources identified in the literature search.

Previously-Inventoried Properties

Fourteen properties in Watertown had been previously inventoried and assigned Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (MnSHPO) inventory numbers. One of the properties, Bridge 5882 (CR-WTC-010), is located in the APE.

No properties in the APE have been listed on the National Register. One, Bridge 5882 (CR-WTC-010), had already been determined eligible for the National Register.

Watertown does not have a local Heritage Preservation Commission.

Historic Contexts

Historic contexts are a tool used in cultural resources investigations to help identify, understand, and evaluate the potential significance of historic properties. The MnSHPO has developed a series of statewide historic contexts, and periodically adds new contexts to the series. The statewide historic contexts most applicable to the survey were:
Fieldwork, Research, and Evaluation

Phase I. Gemini Research conducted fieldwork in the spring of 2012. Gemini examined all properties within the APE or survey area and inventoried those with the potential to meet National Register eligibility criteria. Properties selected for inventory needed to be 50 years old and retain historic physical integrity (i.e., have minimal exterior alteration). Historic physical integrity is defined by the National Register program as a property’s ability to continue to convey its historic appearance, historic associations, and potential historic significance.

Gemini prepared a Minnesota Architecture-History Inventory form for each property that met the selection criteria just described. Properties were assigned MnSHPO inventory numbers.

Phase II. For each inventoried property, Gemini conducted research and additional fieldwork as needed to evaluate (or confirm) potential National Register eligibility. Gemini evaluated (or confirmed) the National Register eligibility of properties using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation (36 CFR 800).

Final Products

The final products of the architecture-history survey were this report and an individual inventory form prepared for each inventoried property. The documents will be archived at the MnSHPO located at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul.
Historical Background Summary

Watertown is a community of about 4,200 people located in northeastern Carver County on the county's border with Wright County to the north. Watertown is about 4 miles west of Carver County's border with Hennepin County to the east, and about 10 miles northwest of Lake Minnetonka.

Permanent Euro-American settlement of Watertown began in 1856 (two years before statehood) when townsite speculators platted the town, first called Rapid Waters, at a set of rapids on the South Fork of the Crow River that had water-power potential. The town site was also on or near the proposed route of a government road that the Territorial legislature had authorized in the 1850s to be built from Minneapolis west into the undeveloped Minnesota interior.

Founders of the town built a crude road (likely an improvement of an earlier trail) from about Wayzata westward to the site in 1856. (Present-day CSAH 20 that approaches Watertown from the east roughly follows this route.) The first bridge, also built circa 1856, was on Territorial Street, site of the current bridge. A cluster of woodframe buildings were built around a saw mill and gristmill next to the river, and the first hotel and store were built. The road leading from Minneapolis to Watertown and extending westward became an important stagecoach road and mail route. In 1858 the settlement was renamed Watertown. Some of the last buildings remaining from the early settlement period were three houses on the banks of the river in the northern part of the survey area. They were demolished circa 1990 and the area (on the eastern side of Lewis Avenue north of 104 Lewis Avenue) is now park land.

As farms were established in northern Carver County, Watertown became a small agricultural service center supplying farmers with lumber, hardware, equipment, clothing, and services. Businesses such as a brewery and creamery processed and marketed the output of area farms. Town growth was slow, however, because until 1915 Watertown had no rail service. The nearest train stopped at Delano located several miles northeast in Wright County.

In 1877 Watertown incorporated. Watertown Roller Mills was built in 1884 at the southern end of Lewis Avenue, just south of downtown. The mill burned in 1920 and was rebuilt in 1921 as Watertown Cooperative Grain and Fuel. By this time, the Electric Short Line Railroad (also called the Luce Line) had been built through Watertown in 1915. The tracks passed through the industrial area south of downtown. Gopher State Canneries built a canning factory near the tracks in the same area in 1918. The factory was soon operated by Minnesota Valley Canning (Green Giant) and remained a major employer through the 1950s. The Electric Short Line Railroad became the Minnesota Western Railroad in 1924.

Watertown's population was about 600 when the Great Depression began around 1930. The economic collapse devastated a regional economy already struggling because of a 1920s decline in farm commodity prices. Federal and state New Deal programs funded relief payments to the poor, established farm assistance programs, and financed public works projects. The infrastructure projects were built by both private contractors and work-relief programs that hired local unemployed workers. Streets, sewers, sidewalks, parks, a public library, and bridges were constructed in Watertown, including Bridge 5882 on Territorial Street.
After World War II, Minnesota’s farm economy began to flourish along with the rest of the U.S. economy. A modern hospital was built in Watertown in the 1950s, and in 1960 the population exceeded 1,000 people for the first time. Watertown has seen significant population growth since the 1970s and has increasingly become home to commuters who work closer to the center of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

- **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY AREA**

The architecture-history APE or survey area is located in the center of Watertown, a town of 4,200 people located near the northeastern edge of Carver County. The survey area is focused on Bridge 5882 (CR-WTC-010) which crosses the South Fork of the Crow River. The river and street grid are aligned at an almost 45-degree angle. (Map 1.) To simplify descriptions, “northeast” will be called “north” for the purposes of this report.

Bridge 5882 carries Territorial Street, which roughly bisects the gridded central portion of Watertown. The street has two traffic lanes in and near the survey area. This portion of Territorial Street is part of two county routes, CSAH 10 and CSAH 20. CSAH 10 approaches the city from Waconia, southeast of Watertown. CSAH 10 crosses Bridge 5882 to the western bank of the river and then extends northeast to Delano in southeastern Wright County (as Wright Co. 13). Early in Watertown history the road to Delano was particularly important because Delano had the nearest railroad service. CSAH 20 approaches Watertown from Wayzata in Hennepin County to the east. This route originated as the first road to Watertown, which was improved when the town was founded in 1856. CSAH 20 crosses the bridge to the western bank of the river and extends westward, linking Watertown with Winsted in northeastern McLeod County.

Most of the riverbank in and near the survey area is publicly-accessible as part of four parks. Three of the parks are forested, with the trees particularly dense in the park land north of the eastern end of the bridge. On the eastern bank of the river, south of the bridge, the 1-acre Old Mill Park on Territorial Street is entirely within the survey area. It has a paved recreational trail. North of the bridge on the eastern bank, the eastern half of a relatively new park – Rapid Waters Park – is located within and north of the survey area. On the western bank of the river, south of the bridge, City Center Park at the southeastern corner of Territorial and Lewis is entirely within the survey area. It is a 0.7-acre, recently-hardscaped and planted pocket park with a polygonal wooden observation platform facing the river and a paved recreational trail. North of the bridge on the western bank are two commercial buildings and then the western half of Rapid Waters Park (within and north of the survey area) and, north of it, the 4-acre Rick Johnson Park on Lewis Avenue (north of State Street; north of the survey area).

In addition to park land and Bridge 5882, the survey area contains about 15 commercial buildings and 15 residential properties.

The commercial properties are located in downtown Watertown, which is immediately west of the bridge along Lewis Avenue. The northern end of the downtown is within the survey area, and the commercial buildings also extend another 2 1/2 blocks along Lewis Avenue south of the survey area.

Most of the downtown commercial buildings are one- and two-story structures built around the 1890s-1920s. A handful were built fairly recently (or represent construction that has encapsulated an earlier building). Most of the pre-1960s buildings are woodframe, brick, and/or
concrete block and are faced with brick, stucco, wood, vinyl, and/or thin stone or mock-stone veneers. Within the survey area most are retail stores, but there are also two former gas station and auto repair shops that are now retail businesses.

None of the commercial buildings in the survey area retains sufficient historic integrity to meet National Register eligibility requirements. The least altered of the pre-1960 commercial buildings in the survey area is probably Neisen Liquors at 101 S. Lewis Ave. It is a two-story brick building whose alterations include modernization of all three storefronts with brick infill and 1960s or 1970s glass and metal display areas and doors, as well as complete coverage of the northern elevation with stucco and plywood. South of the survey area there are a few commercial buildings that retain historic integrity.

The residential properties in the survey area are distributed on both banks of the river. On the western bank, there is a modern townhouse development (115-123 N. Lewis Ave.) near the northwestern corner of the survey area, and two altered houses on the western edge of downtown, one north and one south of Territorial Street. On the eastern bank of the river is a modern apartment building at 210 E. Territorial, as well as eight houses, most of which predate the 1920s. The least altered of the houses is a woodframe Queen Anne style house at 216 E. Territorial (at the southwestern corner of Territorial Street and Hope Avenue). While the house retains clapboard siding and original massing, the main entrance and entrance porch have been removed from the eastern facade, the rear door and rear porch are now used as the main entrance, and the southern side wall has been altered with a large timber second-story deck accessed by a wooden stairway.

**INVENTORIED PROPERTIES**

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**CR-WTC-010**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hist Name:</th>
<th>Bridge 5882</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Territorial St. at S Fork Crow River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built:</td>
<td>1939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRHP Eligibility:</td>
<td>Eligible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bridge 5882, built in 1939, is located in the center of Watertown on the site of the town’s first bridge, erected circa 1856. Bridge 5882 carries Territorial Street over the South Fork of the Crow River. The central business district is located at the western end of the bridge along Lewis Avenue which runs parallel to the river.
The bridge is an intact three-span steel stringer structure on a concrete substructure. It is 114' long and 38' wide. Each span is 48'.

The substructure is comprised of reinforced concrete abutments with wing walls and two concrete piers. The piers are faceted on the upstream and downstream ends. The banks are riprapped with dumped rock.

The bridge superstructure is comprised of three sets of eight 48'-long steel stringers, one set per span, that support a concrete deck. There is channel bridging between the stringers. The deck is now paved with bituminous. There is a poured concrete sidewalk along the southern side, adjacent to the travel lanes. Utility lines now cross the river in conduits mounted on the outsides of the deck (one conduit on the southern side of the deck and about five on the northern side).

On the outer edges of the deck are ornamental metal railings painted black. The balusters are rectangular. The railings are supported by four concrete endposts (rising over the abutments) and four intermediate posts (rising over the piers). The strong vertical lines created by the posts and piers give an Art Deco style emphasis to the design. The posts are polygonal, have shallow polygonal tops, and have vertical lines incised on the inner surface above the roadway. The endposts support four ornate Classical Revival style lamp standards that bear the mark “Union Metal, Akron, Ohio.” The base of each standard is comprised of a paneled plinth flanked by a pair of consoles (like bookends). Each plinth supports a shaft rising from a receptacle of acanthus leaves. At the top of each shaft is an white textured glass fixture.

There is a bridge plate on the southwest endpost. It reads: “Carver County Minnesota Bridge No. 5882 1939.”

**Historical Background**

The bridge was built during the 1939 construction season by a private contractor, the Theodore Jenzen Company of St. Cloud. (The Jenzen Company built another bridge in Watertown at the same time, a grade-separation bridge over the Minnesota Western Railway.) Construction of Bridge 5882 was supervised by the Carver County engineer. The bridge was financed by federal New Deal funds through the Public Works Administration or PWA.

The PWA was established in June of 1933. The program was designed to help stimulate the economy in part by steering money to the construction industry and to suppliers of building materials. The PWA generally focused on large-scale public infrastructure projects like dams and schools. Unlike other New Deal programs that directly hired needy workers, PWA funds were often used to hire private contractors who, in turn, hired workers. Workers hired with PWA funds did not need to qualify as needy, and they were more likely to be skilled in their trade. (Many other New Deal programs hired mostly unskilled workers.)

Bridge 5882 was designed by the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD). According to bridge historian Jeff Hess:

During the late 1920s the Minnesota Highway Department developed a basic design concept for urban trunk highway bridges, whether steel or concrete. The plan called for relatively wide roadways, pedestrian sidewalks, ornamental railings, and (if the host city agreed to pay future electricity costs) ornamental light standards. Although the state highway department originally targeted the urban-bridge plan for trunk highway
projects, the agency also applied it to other prominent urban crossings that came under its design jurisdiction, such as projects funded by the Public Works Administration during the New Deal. Altogether, several dozen examples of the urban bridge design were built in Minnesota before World War II (Hess 1996).

**National Register Eligibility**

Bridge 5882 was determined eligible for the National Register in the 1990s as part of the statewide Minnesota Historic Bridge Inventory conducted by the Minnesota Department of Transportation in association with the State Historic Preservation Office.

According to Hess, several dozen examples of the MHD’s standardized urban bridge plan (with ornamental railings and optional lamp standards) were built statewide, but “it is now rare to find good surviving examples of the design. In the postwar 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. 5882 in downtown Watertown is one of the few surviving intact examples of the design” (Hess 1996).

Hess further explains:

. . . with its ornamental metal railings and light standards, the bridge was an excellent example of the state highway department’s design concept for prominent urban crossings. Displaying elements of both the Classical Revival and Art Deco styles, Bridge No. 5882 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 [National Register] 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. 5882 satisfies this criterion (Hess 1996).

Hess identified the period of significance as 1939-1947.

Bridge 5882 continues to retain historic integrity today.
Fig. 1. Bridge 5882 from the south (facing NE)

Fig. 2. The bridge from the north (facing SW)
Fig. 3. North side from the west bank (facing S)

Fig. 4. Pier and railing on the north side (facing SW)
Fig. 5. South side from the west bank; note the shaped concrete on the edge of the deck beneath the railing (facing E)

Fig. 6. Consoles and plinth on lamp standard base at the west end of the bridge (facing SE)
Fig. 7. Sidewalk and south railing (facing SE)
Fig. 8. South side from the east bank; the posts rising from the piers and abutments create strong vertical lines, a hallmark of Art Deco design (facing N)
REFERENCES


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*150 Interesting Things about Carver County History.* Carver County Historical Society, 2004.


“Two New Bridges for Watertown This Summer.” *Carver County News*, March 30, 1939.


*Watertown.* Original Town plat map. Carver County Registrar of Deeds.