

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only
received FEB 22 1985
date entered MAR 21 1985

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Water Street/Darden Road Bridge

and/or common Darden Road Bridge

2. Location

street & number Over St. Joseph River at Darden Road N/A not for publication

city, town South Bend X vicinity of

state Indiana code 018 county St. Joseph code 141

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Closed to

vehicular traffic

4. Owner of Property

name St. Joseph County Commissioners

street & number County-City Building

city, town South Bend N/A vicinity of state Indiana 46601

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. St. Joseph County Engineer's Office

street & number County-City Building

city, town South Bend state Indiana

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Indiana Historic Sites
title and Structures Inventory has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975-1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records Indiana Department of Natural Resources

city, town Indianapolis state Indiana

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved

date July 24, 1906

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Darden Road Bridge is located in Clay Township in the northeast sector of St. Joseph County. The bridge crosses the St. Joseph River near Healthwin Hospital, a county health care facility. The Darden Road Bridge was originally built in 1885 at Water Street (now LaSalle Street) in downtown South Bend, Indiana. In 1906 the bridge was removed from the Water Street location and floated downriver to its present location four miles north of town. In its first location the bridge consisted only of two spans, each 129 feet long. Two 35 foot approach spans had to be added to the bridge when the truss was moved to its present location.

The Darden Road Bridge is a double span, Pratt through truss (Photos 1, 2 and 3). The total length of the bridge is 328 feet (including two 129 foot spans and two 35 foot approach spans), and it has a 20 foot wide roadway deck. The truss measures 24 feet from the lower to the upper chord. The pin-connected, malleable iron bridge is supported by three concrete piers and two abutments. The through truss structure is basically level across the river, but because the river bank is higher on the east side of the river, the roadbed of the bridge slopes down from east to west. The truss has few embellishments; the most decorative feature is the structural lattice pattern of the portal bracing on three of the four pairs of endposts (Photo 5). The portal bracing is missing for the easternmost pair of endposts (Photo 2). The bracing of the vertical posts of the truss forms a zig-zag pattern (Photo 7). Evidence of the nameplates that once extended up from the portal struts can be seen on the inside end of each span (Historic Photos 13 and 14). The girders of the substructure extend south beyond the roadway deck to provide support for an eight foot wide sidewalk (Photo 8). The wooden sidewalk deck is almost all gone. However, the simple iron bar, balustraded handrail (Photo 2) is extant except for a portion on the western approach span. The sidewalk has been barricaded from pedestrian traffic for several years. Modern aluminum highway barriers have been added to each side of the bridge (Photo 4); however, one section is missing on the northern side of the bridge.

It appears that the re-erected through truss bridge served the county for several years with no problems. However, in 1939 the bridge was closed due to a perceptible sag when it was loaded. The bridge reopened in 1940 with only a few minor problems. In 1952 the bridge was once again closed to traffic due to its poor condition, and repairs were reported to be unfeasible. However, light vehicles were allowed to cross the bridge at their own risk. In 1957 a new wood deck was laid on the bridge and a year later it was covered with asphalt. This deck was eventually replaced by a corrugated metal and asphalt deck. In 1968 the load limit of the bridge was reduced to three tons and by 1970 the bridge was closed to all vehicular traffic.

Since the closing of the bridge to traffic in 1970 it has received no maintenance. This lack of maintenance over the last 14 years, combined with the minimal maintenance program of previous years, has taken its toll on the bridge. The bridge has remained standing because it was the superstructure for gas and sewer lines crossing the river. The gas line was placed under the river in 1983, but the bridge still carries the sewer line.

In general, the overall condition of the original bridge spans is fair, while the two new approach spans are deteriorating. The original bridge superstructure appears to be in good condition with minor rusting. There are no apparent problems with any of the major truss members, and the majority of top lateral bracing tie rods are still in place, but are sagging (Photo 5).

9. Major Bibliographical References

Please see continuation sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property Less than one acre

Quadrangle name South Bend West

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References

A

1	6	5	6	0	8	3	0	4	6	1	9	8	6	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

Zone		Easting				Northing								

D

Zone		Easting				Northing								

E

Zone		Easting				Northing								

F

Zone		Easting				Northing								

G

Zone		Easting				Northing								

H

Zone		Easting				Northing								

Verbal boundary description and justification

Includes the bridge and its abutments along with ten feet of the roadway at each end of the bridge on Darden Road over the St. Joseph River in St. Joseph County, Indiana.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth A. Straw

organization Historic Preservation Commission of South Bend and St. Joseph County date October 29, 1984

street & number County-City Building telephone 219/284-9798

city or town South Bend state Indiana 46601

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *John T. Colett*

title Indiana State Historic Preservation Officer date 2-6-85

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Byers
Keeper of the National Register

Entered in
National Register

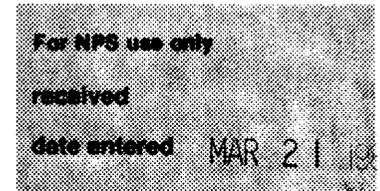
date 2-21-85

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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Continuation sheet Water Street/
Darden Road Bridge

Item number 7

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The substructure of the original bridge is in fair condition; the girders and the stringers show few, if any, signs of deterioration. However, several of the tie rods that form the lateral bracing and the sway bracing are missing or in poor condition. All the substructure tie rods appear to be sagging (Photo 9).

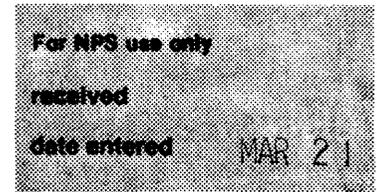
The substructures of the two, 35-foot approach spans are deteriorating. The steel girders and I-beams of the newer approach spans both show signs of corrosion, the I-beams to such a degree that there are gaping holes and collapsed beams (Photo 10). The deterioration of the western approach span is further advanced than that of the eastern approach span, probably as a result of being at a lower level and subjected to more water and salt run-off.

The three concrete piers that support the bridge all show signs of scouring by the river and have some minor cracks, but appear to be in good condition (Photo 3). The two abutments are in various stages of disrepair. The abutment on the western bank is in worse condition than the eastern abutment. Much of the problem of the western bank abutment appears to stem from a storm sewer having washed out the retaining wall, causing a severe erosion problem. The eastern abutment has some erosion at the south retaining wall, but it is in relatively good condition.

Overall, the Darden Road Bridge has remained in fair condition in spite of the poor maintenance the bridge has received in the last 40 years. Currently, the bridge roadway, the sidewalk deck, the sidewalk handrail, and several tie rods need to be repaired or replaced. Major structural work, possibly total replacement, is needed on both approachment spans to secure the bridge for the pedestrian traffic that has continued since closing of the bridge to vehicular traffic.

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Continuation sheet Water Street/
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for the Marsh Bridge Company. In April, 1907, the Commissioners awarded a contract to C. L. Copp, a local contractor, to re-erect the bridge at a cost of \$10,784. The bridge's re-erection was completed on October 1, 1907.

The Darden Road Bridge has always served as an important transportation link for the residents of South Bend and St. Joseph County. The bridge was the third bridge to be built across the St. Joseph River at Water Street, the site of the city's first ferry crossing. Water (now LaSalle) Street was and still is a major thoroughfare in South Bend. Early petitions emphasized the importance of the river crossing at Water Street. First, in January, 1885, a petition with 105 signatures (the population of South Bend was approximately 15,000 in 1885) was presented to the Common Council, requesting immediate rebuilding of the Water Street Bridge; in 1906 residents again petitioned the County Commissioners, this time to replace the outdated bridge on LaSalle (Water) Street with a wider and more modern bridge.

In 1908 the bridge, then known as Four Mile Bridge, provided an important transriver link in northern St. Joseph County. The Four Mile Bridge was the only bridge to cross the St. Joseph River between Angela Boulevard in South Bend and the Bertrand Bridge in Bertrand, Michigan, a distance of approximately eight miles. This river crossing in northern St. Joseph County greatly aided in the development and growth of Clay and German Townships in the early 20th century by providing residents of the area with a convenient crossing. The Darden Road Bridge remained the only river crossing in northern St. Joseph County until 1960, when the Auten Road Bridge was built one mile north. In 1970 the bridge was closed to vehicular traffic after the opening of the Cleveland Road Bridge, one-half mile south, but the bridge has remained a vital pedestrian crossing since its closing.

In 1978 the Darden Road Bridge was declared a County Landmark by the Historic Preservation Commission and the County Commissioners, because of its importance to St. Joseph County as an example of a late 19th century iron truss bridge, and for the major role it had in South Bend and St. Joseph County's early transportation history.

Item Number 9

Howard, Timothy Eugene. History of St. Joseph County, Indiana. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1907.

Hugus, Warren, Richard Manso and Walter Stumpf. "Integrated Design Project/Darden Road Bridge Study." Unpublished Student Paper, Notre Dame University, 1979.

St. Joseph County Commissioner's Minutes. Books 19 and 20, 1906-1907.

South Bend Common Council Records. Books 7 and 8, 1884-1885.

South Bend Public Library Clipping File. "Rivers—St. Joseph—Bridges." Various years, 1924-1974.

South Bend Tribune. Various issues, 1884-1978.