

PH0011550

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
COUNTY:
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE
JUL 16 1973

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Buffalo Bridge

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Dumbarton Bridge, O Street Bridge

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Q Street over Rock Creek Park, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: Congressman  
Walter E. Fauntroy, D.C.

STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 11      COUNTY: District of Columbia      CODE: 001

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

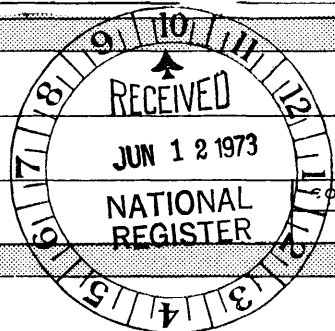
**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
District of Columbia

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:



**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Recorder of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:  
6th & D Streets, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 11

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY: Proposed District of Columbia Additions to the National Register of Historic Places recommended by the Joint Committee on Landmarks

DATE OF SURVEY: March 7, 1968       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
National Capital Planning Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1325 G Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Washington

STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Buffalo Bridge is a sandstone and reinforced concrete structure which crosses Rock Creek Valley at Q Street. The bridge constructed in 1912-15 is 261 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 65 feet high. Q Streets in Washington and in Georgetown are parallel but do not align by 185 feet. The roadway of the bridge curves to connect them.

This curving roadway is carried by five round arches. These arches are small enough to allow the curve, but large enough to give a massive, impressive appearance. Their proportions were influenced by the proportions of arches of Roman aqueducts. The central arch has the largest span and the others decrease one foot per arch as they approach the abutments. The piers decrease in the same proportions as do the boldly projecting corbel arches which carry the solid parapet. Piers and corbel arches have a slight batter. The employment of corbel arches above the main arches was inspired by the Ponte Maggiore Bridge over the Tronto River in Italy. The shadows cast by these corbel arches are a major design feature of the bridge.

The bridge is constructed of sandstone from Kingswood, West Virginia, and reinforced concrete made from sands and gravels which yield a color similar to the sandstone. In 1915 the color was said to be "a rich, reddish, warm buff." The bridge now has an orange cast. Arches, corners, abutment walls, parapet walls, belt courses, and carvings are stone. Between the stonework are unbroken masses of concrete. The stone has a picked face for arches, quoins, and abutments. The mouldings which are hammered face have finer finishes where closer to the viewer. The abutments have ashlar bonds. Concrete surfaces are picked so that they are coarser than the stone.

Some of the bridge's decorative features have American sources. The most obvious of these are the approximately eight foot high bronze buffaloes which stand on pedestals flanking the east and west entrances of the bridge. The pairs of standing bisons face each other. They were sculpted by A. Phimister Proctor. Another interesting decorative feature are the corbels, 28 on each side of the bridge. These corbels are stylized heads modeled on a life mask of Kicking Bear, an American Indian chief.

A 12 inch water main is incorporated into the structure of the bridge. This main was completed on February 2, 1916, but was not connected to the city's water system until 1917.

The bridge has undergone few alterations. The median was removed and lighting placed along the parapet. The plaza at the eastern entrance has been changed.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1912-15

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                   | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian       | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                   | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Buffalo Bridge (Dumbarton Bridge) at Q Street and Rock Creek Park a Category II Landmark of importance which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia. This picturesque Romanesque Revival structure erected in 1912-15 is an important extension of the L'Enfant Plan of the city as a physical and visual link between Q Street in the Federal City and Q Street in Georgetown. These streets are not aligned but the bridge's curving roadway joins them.

The bridge's architects, Glenn and Bedford Brown, consciously designed a structure that would enhance the park in Rock Creek Valley and complement other spans crossing the valley. They found inspiration in Roman, medieval and American sources, but in total effect the bridge has a Romanesque quality due to its rugged massiveness, earth color, and the employment of large round arches and corbeling. The bronze buffaloes flanking the entrances are an outstanding feature and give the bridge its popular name.

In the early 20th century the area northwest of Dupont Circle was developing rapidly. By 1905 Georgetown citizens were actively seeking to span Rock Creek Valley at Q Street and link Georgetown to this section of the Federal City. Discussions concerning moving either Woodley Lane bridge or the Thompson steel bridge to Q Street were abortive, and by 1911 sketches were completed for a new masonry bridge.

The Q Street Bridge, officially named Dumbarton Bridge, was designed by Glenn Brown and his son, Bedford Brown. Glenn Brown (1854-1932) practiced architecture by himself in Washington for a number of years. He was secretary of the American Institute of Architects and was instrumental in promoting comprehensive planning for Washington at the turn of the century. He was the author of several books and articles including The History of the U.S. Capitol.

The engineer for the bridge was D.E. McComb. The contractor was A.E. Guidane of New York. The bridge was constructed by the District of Columbia under the auspices of the Engineer Commissioner.

On April 4, 1912, a \$20,000 contract for the four bronze buffaloes was let to A. Phimister Proctor. Proctor (d. 1950) was a well-known sculptor who did work at the World Fair in 1893 and who designed the tigers on the 16th Street Bridge over Piney Branch Parkway in Washington. A member of the

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

D.C. Department of Highways. Pictorial Report on Highways and Bridges. Washington, D.C. 1956, p. 49.

National Capital Planning Commission. Landmarks File.

Newspaper clippings. Washingtoniana Collection. D.C. Public Library.

"The Q Street Bridge, Washington, D.C." The American Architect. CVIII (Oct. 27, 1915), pp. 273-279, plates 2079.

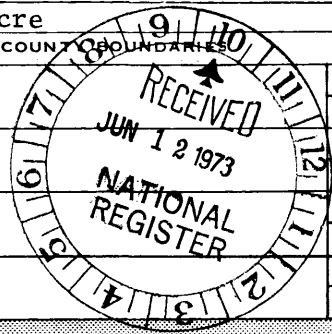
**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	38°	54'	39"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	77°	03'	35"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**T. Robins Brown, Architectural Historian**

ORGANIZATION: **National Capital Planning Commission**      DATE: **April 2, 1973**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1325 G Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington**      STATE: **District of Columbia**      CODE: **11**

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION      NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name: *[Signature]*

Title: Assistant to the Mayor for Housing Programs

Date: JUN 4 1973

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

*[Signature]*  
Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 7/16/73

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*  
Keeper of the National Register

Date: 7 10 73

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance - Buffalo Bridge

committee which determined the appropriation for the bridge was responsible for the choice of buffaloes.

On December 24, 1915, the bridge opened. It cost \$223,553. Its design was widely praised and on October 27, 1915, The American Architect had published photographs and plans and an interview about it with Glenn Brown.

The bridge has undergone little modification over the years. The plaza at the east end has been removed. In 1938 the center lights and median were removed and side lights along the parapet installed. In 1915 a narrow road ambled through Rock Creek Park and under Buffalo Bridge. The adaptability of the bridge was shown when the parkway was constructed under it without causing it to be seriously altered. The bridge continues to serve its important transportation function, as well as carrying a 12 inch water main.

9. Bibliographical References

Spratt, Zack. "Rock Creek's Bridges." Records of the Columbia Historical Society. Vol. 53-56, 1953-56, pp. 125-126.

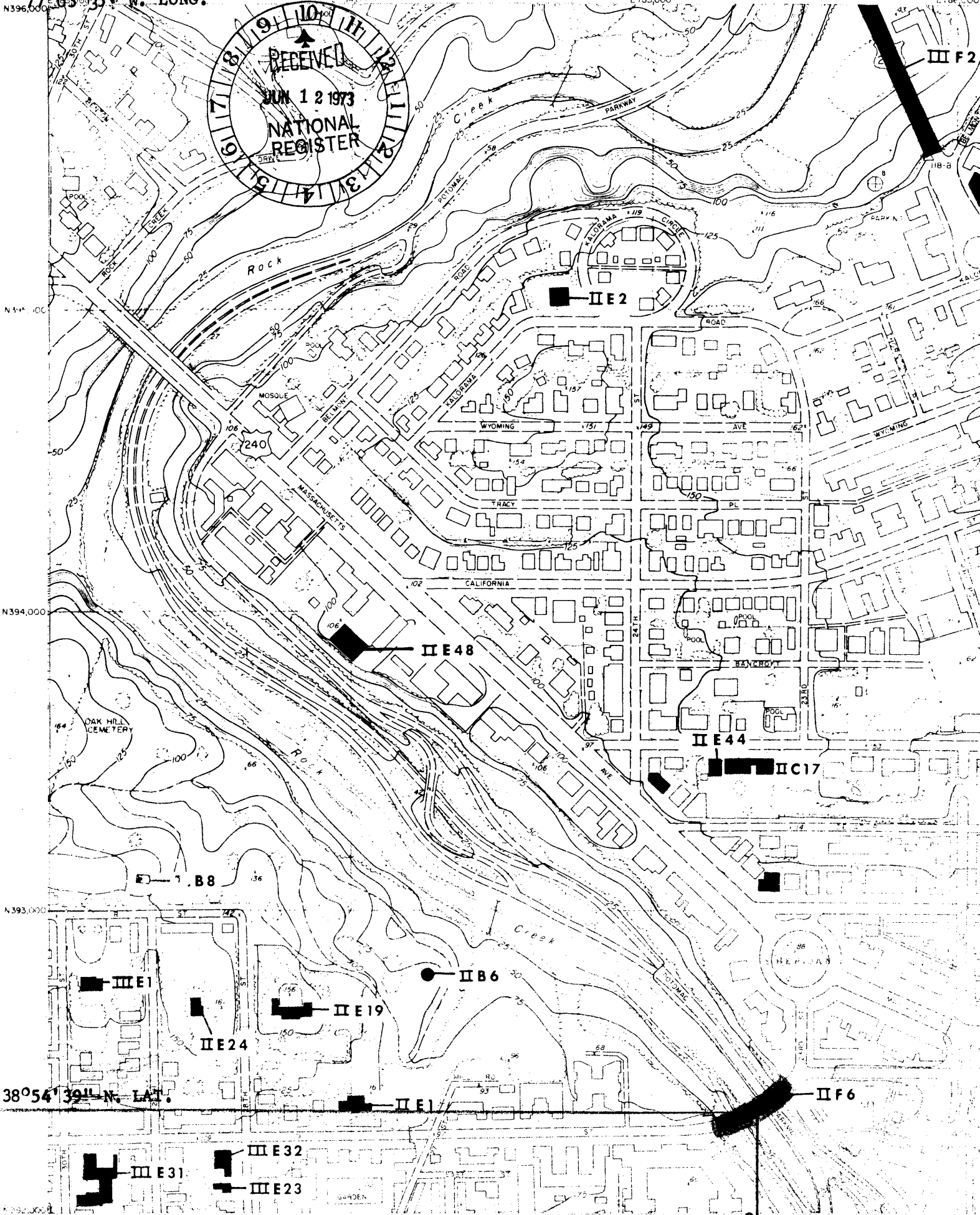
Withey, H.F., and E.R. Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased). Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970, pp. 81-82.



77° 03' 05" W. LONG.

E 785,000

E 786,000



38° 54' 39" N. LAT.

77° 03' 05" W. LONG.