

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

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

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Continuation sheet 80

Item number 7

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NAME: Division Street Bridge
LOCATION: Division Street at Seekonk River 1/3 mile below Pawtucket Falls
OWNER: City of Pawtucket
137 Roosevelt Avenue
Pawtucket, RI

CONDITION: Good; altered; original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Division Street Bridge is a nine-arch, stone and brick highway bridge approximately 425 feet long between abutments carrying a 27-foot roadway and two 7-foot wide projected walkways over Taft Street and the Seekonk River one-third of a mile below Pawtucket Falls. The bridge's nine segmental arches each have an approximate 50-foot span, and each rises roughly 12 feet above its springing points; the six shore arches (four on the western bank, two on the eastern) have spans of approximately 40 feet and rises of only about 10 feet. The height of the roadbed above the mean water level of the Seekonk River is roughly 45 feet. The bridge's piers and abutments are constructed of rock-faced, coursed granite ashlar; the voussoirs are dressed granite with enlarged single keystones; spandrels are filled with heavily mortared random granite rubble; the arch barrels are of brick. Railed iron walkways are projected on iron brackets from both sides of the bridge. The only obvious alterations of the original structure are the present asphalt paving of the roadway, and the reinforced concrete sheathing over the footings of the river piers.

PERIOD: 1800-1899

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Engineering; Transportation

DATE: 1876-77

ARCHITECT: Unknown

SIGNIFICANCE:

The Division Street Bridge is the finest and the longest stone-arch highway bridge remaining in Rhode Island. It was erected in 1875-77 by the Town of Pawtucket at a cost of \$95,000 to link the two rapidly growing neighborhoods which were then developing along both banks of the Seekonk south of the historic town centers closer to Pawtucket Falls. It also represented something of a grand symbolic gesture--the two villages on the opposite banks of Pawtucket Falls had belonged to separate towns (and, even, to separate states) from the dates of their foundings until 1874. In that year, the two communities were finally united as a single political entity. It is undoubtedly significant that one of the first major projects under-

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taken by the consolidated Town of Pawtucket was the erection of this costly and striking masonry bridge.

The town committee responsible for the direction of the bridge project included the accomplished Rhode Island architect and Pawtucket resident, William R. Walker, but it is not known what influence (if any) the architect might have had upon the actual appearance of the bridge. Cushing & Company, and later, Cushing & Shedd were the consulting engineers on the project; the Pawtucket master mason, Horace Foster, was the general contractor; and the iron walkways were manufactured by Crowell & Sisson of Providence.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The nominated property is the Division Street Bridge from (and including) its eastern abutment to its western abutment.

ACREAGE: less than one
LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State
UTM: 19 302080 4638140

Determined eligible for the National Register: 8 November 1982

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