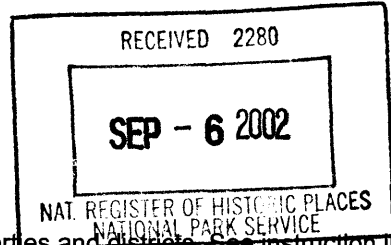


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1128



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determination for individual properties and districts. See instruction in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name South Platte River Bridges

other names/site number CDOT No. F-16-DP; 5DV7072

2. Location

street & number Interstate Highway 25 at milepost 210.53 [N/A] not for publication

city or town Denver 31 [N/A] vicinity

state Colorado code CO county Denver code 059 zip code     

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide [X] locally. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Stacyanna Contiguglia State Historic Preservation Officer August 19, 2002 Date  
Signature of certifying official/Title  
State Historic Preservation Office, Colorado Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria.  
([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:  
[X] entered in the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.  
[ ] determined eligible for the National Register [ ] See continuation sheet.  
[ ] determined not eligible for the National Register.  
[ ] removed from the National Register  
[ ] other, explain [ ] See continuation sheet.  
Edson A. Beall Signature of the Keeper 10.15.02 Date of Action

South Platte River Bridges  
Name of Property

Denver City and County, Colorado  
County/State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not count previously listed resources.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
0	0	sites
2	0	structures
0	0	objects
2	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing.**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Highway Bridges in Colorado

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register.**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Function**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Road-related  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Road-related  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Steel girder-ribbed deck arch  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation  
walls  
\_\_\_\_\_  
roof  
other Concrete  
Steel

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

**National Register of Historic Places**  
**Continuation Sheet**

South Platte River Bridges  
Denver City and County, Colorado  
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

Section number 7 Page 1

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**DESCRIPTION**

Location: Interstate Highway 25 at milepost 210.53, west of downtown Denver.

Setting: The bridge crosses the South Platte River, two roadways, a bike trail, and a rail line. Directly to the west stands Invesco Field at Mile High, the football stadium for the Denver Broncos.

Structure length: 384 feet  
Structure width: 158.5 feet  
Roadway width: 154 feet

Approach span number: 5  
Main span number: 1  
Main span length: 173 feet

Superstructure: Steel girder-ribbed deck arch  
Substructure: Concrete abutments and pier pedestals  
Floor/decking: Concrete deck with asphalt overlay  
Other features: Concrete Jersey barrier guardrails

Erected: 1951  
Designer: Crocker & Ryan  
Fabricator: Midwest Steel & Iron Works  
Contractor: Pete Seerie, Inc.

Alterations: The South Platte River Bridges functioned without alteration until 1970, at which time the two separate structures were joined and widened to accommodate an extra lane in each direction. The outside guardrails were replaced at this time with Jersey barrier guardrails.

South Platte River Bridges  
Name of Property

Denver City and County, Colorado  
County/State

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation

Engineering

### Periods of Significance

1951

### Significant Dates

N/A

### Significant Person(s)

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Crocker & Ryan

Midwest Steel & Iron Works

Pete Seerie, Inc.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey  
# \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record  
# \_\_\_\_\_

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Colorado Historical Society

Colorado Dept. of Transportation

**United States Department of the Interior**  
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South Platte River Bridges  
Denver City and County, Colorado  
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

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**SIGNIFICANCE**

The 1951 South Platte River Bridges on Interstate Highway 25 in Denver meet the registration requirements under Criteria A and C as set forth in *Highway Bridges in Colorado*, Multiple Property Documentation Form. The bridges are eligible in the area of transportation for their association with the Valley Highway. As the principal north-south thoroughfare through the center of Denver, the Valley Highway played a pivotal role in the post-war development of the city. The first limited-access freeway undertaken in Colorado—a precursor to the Interstate highways that followed—the highway represents a landmark in transportation planning, as engineers struggled to snake the major artery through commercial, industrial and residential districts in the city. The highway's planning, funding, design and execution form an epic story in the state's transportation history, involving Colorado's greatest peacetime mobilization of manpower and equipment for a single civil engineering project. At a cost of over \$30 million, the highway's construction is distinguished as Colorado's costliest non-defense public works project at that time. The Valley Highway was subsequently modified by widening and bridge replacements throughout its length. The South Platte River Bridges are rare surviving bridges from the original highway construction.

The South Platte River Bridges are also eligible in the area of engineering. The bridges form one of only two major steel spans in Colorado, the other being the National Register listed Red Cliff Bridge in Eagle County. Their rarity in the state, as well as their immense size, make them significant among Colorado's bridges. Subsequent alteration have diminished the structures' physical integrity, but the overpass still retains its original profile and structural configuration. The structure's overriding importance to the functionality of the Valley Highway distinguishes it as an important element in this exceptionally significant civil engineering landmark.

**CONSTRUCTION HISTORY**

After years of planning and negotiating, the construction of Denver's Valley Highway finally commenced in September 1948. The work was undertaken in sections, beginning at the highway's north terminus at West 52nd Avenue. Acquisition of right-of-way and construction of the highway continued southward from the original section, and the first 2¼-mile section was opened to traffic late in 1950. Problems with funding and right-of-way procurement in 1951 caused the highway department to shift its focus to the Colorado Boulevard interchange near the highway's south end. Highway construction resumed here in 1952 and proceed in a man-made recess through the residential district along Buchtel Avenue to the northwest.

The original master plan for the highway, produced by Denver consulting engineers Crocker and Ryan in 1944, called for a steel plate-girder bridge over the South Platte River. "All interchange structures are planned to be of rigid-frame construction of concrete, while the [South Platte] river bridge and the bridges carrying the main-line railroad tracks over the Highway have been designed as steel plate-girder structures on concrete substructures," the

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National Park Service

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South Platte River Bridges  
Denver City and County, Colorado  
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

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plan stated. "All have been designed for a load corresponding to the most advanced modern traffic conditions."

For the twin underpass bridges, Crocker and Ryan delineated steel plate-girder, open-spandrel arch structures for the 173-foot main spans, and steel plate-girder construction for each bridge's five approaching spans. The approaching spans were carried on a moderate skew by concrete abutments and piers.

The Colorado Highway Department hired Peter Seerie, Inc. of Denver to build the South Platte River Bridges. Using reinforcing and structural steel fabricated by the Midwest Steel & Iron Works, Seerie completed the Platte River structures, along with the sewers from 36th Avenue to 16th Street, in 1951 for an aggregate cost of \$434,827.

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National Park Service

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**Continuation Sheet**

South Platte River Bridges  
Denver City and County, Colorado  
Highway Bridges in Colorado, MPS

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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- Commemorating the Opening of the Denver Valley Highway; November 23, 1958.* Denver: Colorado Department of Highways, 1958.
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- "Denver's Valley Highway." *Modern Highways*, (December 1958): 12-18.
- "Dream Come True: Denver's Valley Highway Is Completed." *The Engineers' Bulletin*, 42:12 (December 1958): 8-10.
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- Joy, James. Field inspection, 22 February 2000.
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South Platte River Bridges  
Name of Property

Denver City and County, Colorado  
County/State

## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.6 acres

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1. 13 498663 4399062  
Zone Easting Northing

2. Zone Easting Northing

3. Zone Easting Northing

4. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Staff of the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation and Jim Joy

organization Colo. Hist. Society and Colo. Dept. of Transportation date May 21, 2002

street & number 1300 Broadway telephone 303-866-4681

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80203

## Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

### Continuation Sheets

### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

### Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

### Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

## Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Colorado Department of Transportation

street & number 4201 E. Arkansas Avenue telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town Denver state CO zip code 80222

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*)



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Denver City and County, Colorado  
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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

The bridge is located on Interstate Highway 25 at milepost 210.53. The boundaries of this nomination consist of a rectangle of land 10 feet out in each direction from the footprint of the bridge.

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION**

The nomination includes all the land directly and historically associated with the bridge.

**PHOTOGRAPH LOG**

The following information pertains to photograph numbers 1- 7:

Name of Property: South Platte River Bridge  
Location: Denver County, Colorado  
Photographer: Dale Heckendorn  
Date of Photographs: 8/2002  
Negatives: Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation  
Colorado Historical Society

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photographic Information</u>
1	West elevation; view to the northeast.
2	West elevation; view to the northeast.
3	West elevation, showing road, rail line and bike trail beneath bridge view to the northeast.
4	Concrete piers supporting southern approach; view to the west.
5	Steel arches, western spans; view to the north.
6	Steel arches, center spans; view to the north.
7	Steel arches, eastern spans; view to the north.

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USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP  
Fort Logan Quadrangle, Colorado  
7.5 Minute Series, 1990

