

Cliff Drive Overpass

JACK18

GENERAL DATA

structure no.:	S026B32	city/town:	Kansas City
county:	Jackson	feature inters.:	Chestnut Trafficway
		cadastral grid:	S34, T50N, R33W
		highway route:	Cliff Drive
		highway distr.:	4
		current owner:	City of Kansas City

STRUCTURAL DATA

superstructure:	concrete filled spandrel arch		
substructure:	concrete abutments with stone masonry wingwalls		
span number:	1	condition:	good
span length:	82.0'	alterations:	none
total length:	82.0'	floor/decking :	asphalt over earth fill
roadway width:	42.0'	other features:	six arch ribs corbeled beneath arch barrel; recessed panels on arch spandrels; classical guardrails with cast concrete balusters; bronze plate: ERECTED 1920 / BY BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS / KANSAS CITY MO / H.B. THOMPSON CONTRACTOR

HISTORICAL DATA

erection date:	1920
erection cost:	\$20,000.00+
designer:	Kansas City Board of Park Commissioners
fabricator :	none
contractor:	H.B. Thompson / Concrete Construction Company
references:	Missouri Highway and Transportation Department Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure Number S026B32; Roy Ellis, "A Civic History of Kansas City, Missouri," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1930, pages 90-92; Carrie Westlake Whitney, Kansas City, Missouri: Its History and Its People 1808-1908 (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1908), page 579; A Story of the Development of the Parks and Recreation Department Published on occasion of its Diamond Jubilee, 1892-1967 , page 8; Kansas City Park Department, Cowtown 1890 Becomes City Beautiful 1962: The Story of Kansas City's Parks , page 55; Office of City Council of Kansas City, Index to Appropriations , Ordinance 34530, Book 86, page 163 (5 May 1920); William H. Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pages 99-125; field inspection by Lon Johnson, 4 February 1991.
sign. rating:	53
evaluation:	NRHP possibly eligible (well-preserved concrete structure associated with Kansas City's park and boulevard system)

Inventoried by: Clayton B. Fraser 21 September 1994

HAER INVENTORY

Missouri Historic Bridge Inventory

NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

Cliff Drive Overpass
MHTD: S026B32

JACK18

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION

1920

LOCATION

Cliff Drive over Chestnut Trafficway; S34, T50N, R33W
Kansas City; Jackson County, Missouri

USE (ORIGINAL / CURRENT)

city street overpass / city street overpass

RATING NRHP possibly eligible (score: 53)

CONDITION

good

OWNER

City of Kansas City

span number: 1

span length: 82.0'

total length: 82.0'

roadway wdt.: 42.0'

superstructure: concrete filled spandrel arch

substructure: concrete abutments with stone masonry wingwalls

floor/decking: asphalt over earth fill

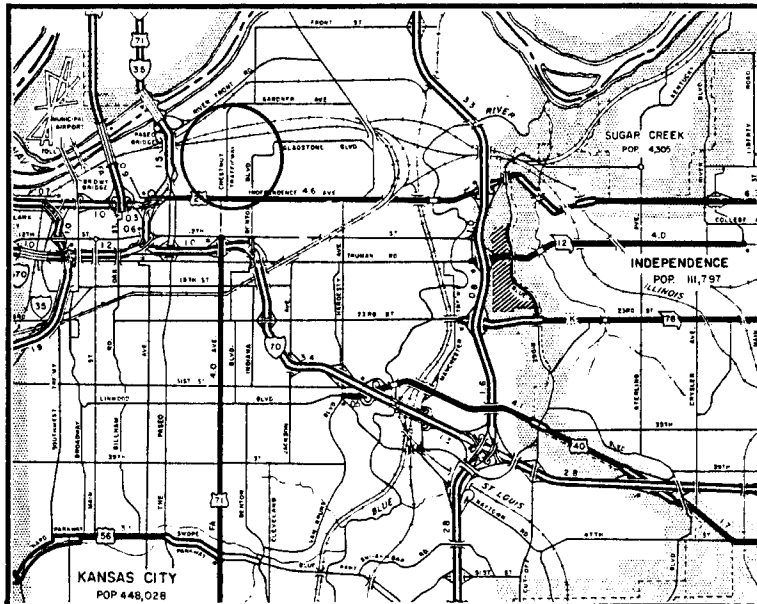
other features: six arch ribs corbeled beneath arch barrel; recessed panels on arch spandrels; classical guardrails with cast concrete balusters; bronze plate: **ERECTED 1920 / BY BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS / KANSAS CITY MO / H.B. THOMPSON CONTRACTOR**

An important aspect in the development of late 19th century Kansas City was the incorporation of a series of parks and boulevards. As the city grew, city officials recognized the need to provide recreational areas for the public. A Board of Park Commissioners was appointed between 1893 and 1895, and in the decades to follow countless city parks were created. Parts of North Terrace Park, a 305-acre tract, were set aside between 1899 and 1920. Located along the bluffs of the Missouri River between Highland and Belmont, this park is cut across by the serpentine Cliff Drive, which was constructed between 1899 and 1904 and was once considered the most scenic drive in the country. In May 1920 the Board of Parks Commission appropriated \$20,000.00 for the construction of an overpass that would carry Cliff Drive over the Chestnut Trafficway, which runs north and south through the park. The rest of the cost was to be paid by the North Park District Fund. As designed, the Cliff Drive Overpass consisted of an elliptically shaped, filled spandrel arch with six arch ribs corbeled slightly beneath the arch barrel. The bridge featured stone masonry wingwalls, recessed panels on its concrete spandrels and a classical balustrade. The park board hired H.B. Thompson to build the bridge, which he completed with the Concrete Construction Company in 1920. Since that completion, the Cliff Drive Bridge has carried vehicular and pedestrian traffic in essentially unaltered condition.

Sponsored by August R. Meyer and designed by George E. Kessler, the Kansas City network of parks and boulevards represents one of the most stellar successes of the City Beautiful Movement in America. The North Terrace Park, overlooking the Missouri River, was one of the city's earliest and most popular attractions, and Cliff Drive formed a central feature in the park. The Cliff Drive Overpass was built in 1920 as the park was developing to maturity. As such it is a well-preserved, integral component of the city's park system. A handsomely proportioned and detailed structure, it is among the state's more noteworthy concrete arch bridges.

NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

Cliff Drive Overpass

PHOTOS AND SKETCH MAP OF LOCATION**LOCATION MAP**

TAKEN FROM MISSOURI HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
GENERAL HIGHWAY MAP

SOURCES

Missouri Highway and Transportation Department Structure Inventory and Appraisal: Structure Number S026B32; Roy Ellis, "A Civic History of Kansas City, Missouri," Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University, 1930, pages 90-92; Carrie Westlake Whitney, **Kansas City, Missouri: Its History and Its People 1808-1908** (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1908), page 579; **A Story of the Development of the Parks and Recreation Department Published on occasion of its Diamond Jubilee, 1892-1967**, page 8; Kansas City Park Department, **Cowtown 1890 Becomes City Beautiful 1962: The Story of Kansas City's Parks**, page 55; Office of City Council of Kansas City, **Index to Appropriations**, Ordinance 34530, Book 86, page 163 (5 May 1920); William H. Wilson, **The City Beautiful Movement** (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), pages 99-125; field inspection by Lon Johnson, 4 February 1991.

INVENTORIED BY

Clayton B. Fraser

AFFILIATION

Fraserdesign, Loveland CO

DATE

24 September 1994
