
Bridge NRHP Eligibility Report

Structure ID: 150150025306029

Disposition: In Service

Year Built: 1935

Year Rcnst: 0000

District:	San Antonio	Span Type:	Arch
County:	Bexar	Roadway Type:	Deck
Location:	1.10 MI S OF IH 10	Member Type:	Other Concrete
Facility Carried:	SPUR 536	Main Span Length:	0110
Feature Crossed:	SAN ANTONIO RIVER	Structure Length:	000290
NRHP Det. Date:	08/31/1999	Evaluator:	John W. Murphey
Historical Significance:	2 NR Eligible		

NRHP Eligibility Determination Statement:

The San Antonio River Bridge is a three-span, closed spandrel concrete arch structure resting on concrete supports. The bridge has an overall length of 370', which includes the 110' main span and two 85' end spans. The bridge carries four lanes of traffic on a 40' wide concrete roadway. Four-foot wide concrete sidewalks are provided on both sides of the bridge. The walkways are bordered by special design concrete handrailing composed of open balustrade divided into sections by concrete posts and pedestals. These features are formed in the silhouette of a mission, complete with a quatrefoil pattern impressed on each post. Other decorative embellishments include pointed pier caps, raised arch rings, and pedestals above each pier and abutment.

The McKenzie Construction Company constructed this bridge in 1935 as part of a state highway project that developed 3.3 miles of SH 66 in San Antonio as a scenic highway following the course of the Mission Road. As part of the project both sides of the road were planted with native and ornamental vegetation after a plan by landscape architect, Jac Gubbels.

The Bridge Division designed a graceful concrete arch embellished with Mission style lines and ornamentation for this crossing. The 110' long main arch was considered by the consulting engineer to be too long because of the excessive dead load it would create. In the end, the Bridge Division retained the original plan in order to maintain the symmetrical design and to avoid placing a pier in the middle of the river.

Special attention was given the bridge's architectural treatment because of its location along the scenic highway. The San Antonio Conservation Society became active in the design process, inviting area architects to submit sketches for its treatment. Its distinctive appearance was influenced by the surrounding mission landscape. Windows from nearby San Jose Mission were the influence for the quatrefoil pattern concrete posts. The Mission style was also applied along the pedestals, which have four glazed tiles depressed in the concrete below each rail pedestal.

During a 1958 channel improvement project, the US Corps of Engineers added concrete around the footings of the piers and protected the channel embankments under the bridge with concrete slopes. These changes have not adversely affected the integrity of the bridge as a whole.

The San Antonio River Bridge is significant for its type and special design. The bridge is one of a small number of concrete closed-spandrel arches in Texas and is the longest example, both in overall length and length of its main span. The bridge is also significant for its architectural treatment and Mission motif that complements the surrounding landscape. The bridge has retained its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association. The San Antonio River Bridge meets National Register eligibility under Criterion C, Engineering, at the state level of significance.