

Bridge NRHP Eligibility Report

Structure ID:	150460B01550001	Disposition:	In Service	Year Built:	1923	Year Rcnst:	0000
District:	San Antonio	Span Type:	Arch				
County:	Comal	Roadway Type:	Deck				
Location:	0.25 MI NE OF SH 46 BUS	Member Type:	Concrete Arch, Open Spandrel				
Facility Carried:	SAN ANTONIO STREET	Main Span Length:	0070				
Feature Crossed:	COMAL RIVER	Structure Length:	000410				
NRHP Det. Date:	08/31/1999	Evaluator:	John W. Murphey				

Historical Significance: 2 NR Eligible

NRHP Eligibility Determination Statement:

The Comal River Bridge in New Braunfels, is 410' in length and consists of seven open-spandrel concrete arch spans resting on concrete piers and abutments. The arches support a concrete deck, which in turn carries two lanes of traffic on a 20' wide roadway. The total width of the bridge includes cantilevered concrete sidewalks on both sides of the bridge. Bordering each sidewalk is a line of open balustrade handrailing. The balustrade is divided into section by pyramid capped concrete posts. The end section of rail is arranged at a skew above the bridge's wingwalls. Other architectural features include sidewalk bracketing and classical influenced spandrel columns.

The city of New Braunfels built this concrete arch bridge in 1923 after a plan designed by the San Antonio based engineering firm of Terrell Bartlett Engineers, Inc. The bridge created for this scenic crossing utilized an open-spandrel design, which emphasized the light structural form of this technology. The selected plan consisted of seven rib-type arches supported on low concrete two-column piers. Using thin arch ribs and battered spandrel columns, permitted the bridge to be constructed with less concrete and accentuated the architectural lines of the arches. The bridge was built by Miller-Fifeld of Waterloo, Iowa.

The bridge's design followed the progression of arch bridges issued from Terrell Bartlett's engineering firm during the 1920's. Born in San Antonio on July 26, 1885, Bartlett earned a degree in civil engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1906, and is credited for creating the first concrete open-spandrel arch bridge in Texas. With the 1910 Medina River Bridge in San Antonio, Bartlett introduced the lighter open-spandrel, rib arch technology to Texas, which later influenced the State Highway Department's design of arches on state highways. Bartlett continued to perfect the open-spandrel form, using the design of the Comal River Bridge to create the 1926 concrete arch bridge over Barton Springs Creek, in Austin.

The Comal River Bridge is significant for its type, design, and association with noted Texas bridge engineer, Terrel Bartlett. The bridge is a good representative example of a small number of open-spandrel concrete arch bridges in Texas. Although some of the concrete structural members show deterioration, the bridge has retained the majority of its integrity of design, materials, workmanship, location, setting, feeling, and association. The Comal River Bridge meets National Register eligibility under Criterion C, Engineering, at the state level of significance.