

**Minnesota Historic Property Record  
Background Data Form****1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Bridge 9177

SHPO inventory no.: MW-AUS-101

Current name: Bridge 9177

**2. Location**

Street & number, intersection of feature carried and feature crossed, or general property location description:  
Bridge 9177 carries Minnesota State Aid Street (MSAS) 144 (11<sup>th</sup> Drive Northeast) over Interstate 90 (I-90), 0.9 miles west of junction with Trunk Highway (TH) 218.

City or township: Austin

County: Mower

State: MN

Zip code: 55912

Legal description: Township 103N, Range 18W, Section 35

UTM Reference: Zone 15

Easting: 503523.56

Northing: 4835884.4975

NAD 83

**3. Description**

Four-span prestressed-concrete beam bridge

**4. National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) status**NRHP, individually listed ☐ or eligible ☒: Date of designation: July 2013NRHP, in listed ☐ or eligible ☐ historic district: Date of designation:

National Historic Landmark: Date of designation:

**5. Previous Designation or Recordation**

Local designation program: Date of designation:

Name of program:

Name and location of repository:

Other (e.g. HABS/HAER/HALS): Date of designation:

Name of program:

Name and location of repository:

**6. Preparer's Information**

Federal or State agency: MnDOT

Date MHPR prepared: February 2016

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**Bridge 9177**  
**MHPR No. MW-AUS-101**  
**Narrative**

**(1) Description**

Bridge 9177 carries Municipal State Aid Street (MSAS) 144, also known as 11<sup>th</sup> Drive Northeast, over Interstate 90 (I-90) in the city of Austin, Mower County, Minnesota. This section of I-90 around the north area of Austin was originally designed as a beltway, then redesigned and incorporated into the new Interstate Highway System in the late 1950s when the Interstate Highway System was first built in Minnesota. The highway design, both as a beltway and as an Interstate highway, followed new expressway standards of limited access and therefore required grade-separated intersections. Bridge 9177 was designed as one of the grade-separation structures. In the original 1957 pre-Interstate plans, I-90 was identified as Trunk Highway (TH) 391 and MSAS 144 was identified as "Connection Road C," usually written as "Conn. C."

The bridge was built by the Minnesota Department of Highways (MHD) and continues to be owned by MnDOT. It was designed by the Twin Cities consulting partnership of Goldberg and Davidson and built by Lysne Construction Company Inc., of Blooming Prairie, Minnesota. The prestressed beams were engineered by Charles C. Zollman and Associates of Newtown Square (Philadelphia), Pennsylvania, and fabricated by Elk River Concrete Products Company, an affiliate of the Cretex Companies, located in Elk River, Minnesota.

The bridge is aligned on a northeast-southwest axis and perpendicular to the I-90 roadway beneath. MSAS 144 is a two-lane local access road. The area immediately northeast of the bridge is a mixture of open land and light industrial and commercial property. The area to the south and west is residential with two exceptions: a strip of light industrial property along a north-south rail corridor and the Hormel plant. The rail line bridges I-90 about 1,000 feet northwest of Bridge 9177, at the termination of the off/on ramps for Bridge 9177. The large Hormel Foods plant is located less than a mile directly west of Bridge 9177. This plant was one of the expressed reasons for the alignment of the original beltway around the north side of Austin, so trucks would have access to the facility. Nevertheless, Bridge 9177 is not the closest I-90 intersection to the Hormel plant.

Bridge 9177 is a four-span prestressed concrete girder bridge with a total structure length of 157.3 feet, including two center spans of 43.667 feet and two side spans of 35 feet. Within the out-to-out deck width of 37.5 feet, the bridge carries a 30-foot, undivided, two-lane, two-way roadway and a 2.4-foot sidewalk on each side. The superstructure is perpendicular to the underlying roadway. The roadway lanes beneath the bridge are superelevated.

The center spans (spans 2 and 3) are each comprised of six precast, prestressed (pretensioned) I-section concrete girders, 42.833 feet long, spaced equally across the deck width. The side spans (spans 1 and 4) are comprised of six precast, prestressed (pretensioned), I-section concrete beams, 34.2 feet long, spaced equally across the deck. According to Zollman's calculations, all prestressed beams are 36 inches deep. The beams for spans 2 and 3 are Type 1; the beams for spans 1 and 4 are Type 2. Each

beam has concrete end-blocks on both ends. According to the plans, the outside spans (1 and 4) have fixed bearings on both ends. The center spans (2 and 3) each have expansion bearings on the north ends and fixed bearings on the south ends. Concrete diaphragms are located between the beams on all four spans. The deck is constructed of cast-in-place concrete, as are the sidewalks.

The substructure is comprised of two reinforced-concrete abutments and three reinforced-concrete piers, all on pilings. The piers are aligned perpendicular to the underlying roadway. Each pier has three square columns separated by angular arched openings. The columns are fluted on the outside (highway) faces, with the recess of the fluting deepening at the top of the column to create a shadow. Concrete crash struts have been added between the pier columns of the outside piers. Tall concrete barriers have been erected along the inside traffic lanes and across both sides of the center pier. The U-form abutments are largely below grade, with only the upper few feet visible. Located in each abutment face wall, between beam seats, are three rectangular openings that were designed for future utilities. Two of the openings appear exactly as drawn in the 1957 plans, in-filled with concrete bricks and unused. The third contains a utility pipe and an electrical conduit. Slope protection made of precast concrete panels extends from the upper roadway face of each abutment to the inside base of the closest pier.

The top of each wingwall extends above the deck to become a stepped concrete endpost for the bridge railing, creating a modernist stylistic feature that blends readily with the two-tube modern aluminum railing on curved aluminum posts located along both sides of the deck. The railings are mounted on raised concrete curbs that have horizontal openings above the deck that extend between each rail post location above. A large Interstate exit sign is mounted on the east face of the bridge deck above the westbound lane. A bridge plate is mounted on the west column of the south pier, and on the east column of the north pier, both on the sides facing the roadways.

## **(2) History and Context**

### *Introduction*

Beginning in the late 1940s and early 1950s the MHD undertook the design of a beltline highway around the city of Austin. The highway was intended to divert through-traffic from downtown Austin and re-route it north where it would also facilitate delivery of livestock and shipping to the George A. Hormel Company (Hormel Foods) plant, the city's largest employer, located one-half-mile northeast of downtown. Disputes over the routing and lawsuits delayed construction of the beltline until the mid-1950s. By then, the long-discussed federal Interstate Highway System had received authorization and funding from U.S. Congress as part of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, popularly known as the National Interstate and Defense Highways Act. As a consequence, the existing state-funded beltline project was redesigned to conform to federal standards and integrated into the new I-90 program. The Austin section of I-90 commenced in 1958 and was completed in 1961.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "City Beltline Redesigned as Freeway," *Austin Daily Herald*, 8 November 1955; "Freeway Provides Link to Boston and Seattle Through Chicago," *Austin Daily Herald*, 15 March 1963.

Bridge 9177 was an integral element of one of the earliest segments of the Interstate Highway System constructed in Minnesota. The bridge and route on which it was situated incorporated distinctive elements of highway and bridge design that characterized post-World War II American highway design and construction, including grade separations, which allowed a continuous flow of traffic, uninterrupted by traditional at-grade intersections.

#### *Austin Beltway Improvement Project*

The MHD initiated planning in the late 1940s for the beltline project that would connect U.S. Highway (US) 16-E and 16-W in the city of Austin. The project would begin on US 16-W near Turtle Creek and terminate at 19<sup>th</sup> Street NE in the center of the city, and was designated as TH 252.<sup>2</sup> The beltline was designed as an "expressway," with two divided lanes that could later be expanded to four lanes. An expressway is a highway designed with divided traffic lanes, without grade-level crossings, and with limited access via ramps or bridges. These design innovations allowed for a continuous flow of traffic unimpeded by stops and turns.<sup>3</sup>

The Minnesota legislature passed a bill adding the planned beltline to the State Highway System in 1949.<sup>4</sup> Variations between the language in the bill and the preliminary layout of the highway route resulted in challenges to the beltline's proposed location. In addition, a number of condemnation suits stalled progress on the project. In response, the 1956 state legislature passed a bill that rerouted the proposed beltline, thus resolving the location issues. The legal challenges to the beltline held up construction until 1956, by which time federal highway policy and planning significantly altered the original proposal.<sup>5</sup>

#### *I-90 and a Beltline Expressway*

The first proposals for an integrated transcontinental highway system were initiated in the 1930s with the passage of the 1938 Federal-Aid Highway Act, which directed the Bureau of Public Roads (BPR) to study the feasibility of a network of intra-continental toll roads. The report advocated the construction of limited-access beltlines in urban areas to separate traffic flow, provide bypass options for traffic to avoid the city, and develop radial expressways surrounding the central business district.<sup>6</sup> The design of the Austin beltline followed this federally advocated model.

Following World War II, which had largely deferred highway planning and construction for six years, there was a renewed effort to undertake the development of an Interstate system. The Federal-Aid Highway

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<sup>2</sup> "Austin Beltline is Part of Federal Network," *Austin Daily Herald*, 9 November 1955.

<sup>3</sup> Mead & Hunt, Inc., *Minnesota Bridges, 1956-1970: Politics, Policies, Technology, and Design* (Minnesota Department of Transportation, May 2008), 17.

<sup>4</sup> "Austin Beltline is Part of Federal Network."

<sup>5</sup> "City Beltline Redesigned as Freeway"; Lindy Davis, "Highway Interstate 90," *Austin Daily Herald*, 9 November 1961.

<sup>6</sup> Richard F. Weingroff, "Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956: Creating the Interstate System," *Public Roads* 60, no. 1 (Summer 1996): 1.

Act of 1944 authorized a system of Interstate routes to serve national defense efforts. Routes were to be selected in conjunction with state highway departments, but little funding was provided to implement a program. As early as 1947, discussions of the potential Interstate Highway System identified three routes passing through Minnesota. These routes closely corresponded with the eventual alignments of I-35, I-90, and I-94.<sup>7</sup>

When Dwight D. Eisenhower became president in 1953 he placed a high priority on establishing an Interstate Highway System. In 1954 and 1956 he succeeded in getting a Federal-Aid Highway Act passed that provided funding for Interstate Highway construction; fiscal responsibility for the system was shared between the states and federal government.<sup>8</sup> This act spurred development of the Interstate Highway System nationally and in Minnesota, where the MHD focused its attention and resources on the construction of the Interstate network and the associated number of grade-separation structures. In the first decade of Interstate construction, the MHD constructed over 400 bridges and estimated that another 600 would be required by the time Interstate construction was complete on over 900 miles of the system in Minnesota.<sup>9</sup>

The beltline proposal for improvements to US 16 lay within the path of the proposed I-90 route through the southern part of the state. State officials, aware of the policy debates supporting the construction of the Interstate Highway System and of the proposed Interstate routes, did little to move forward on the Austin beltline proposal, despite the settlement of the legal challenges regarding the location of the beltline that had initially delayed construction for several years.<sup>10</sup>

In November 1955 the *Austin Daily Herald* proudly announced that the long anticipated beltline project was being "ambitiously redesigned to give the city the first true freeway in Minnesota." When the Austin City Council approved the preliminary plans for the freeway in November 1955, the road was designated TH 252—the same number that had been assigned to the original beltline project.<sup>11</sup> The project was placed in the MHD programming for 1956, and the beltline plans were modified to conform to the design standards for Interstate Highways established by the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO), which included four divided lanes (two in each direction) with fully controlled access.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> "U.S. Highways in Minnesota," <http://www.steve-riner.com/mnhighways/ushwys/htm>.

<sup>8</sup> Weingroff, 5, 8; Mead & Hunt, Inc., 12. The Interstate Highway through Austin was funded in accordance with the Federal-Aid to Highways Act of 1956 at a 90-10 federal to state dollars ratio.

<sup>9</sup> Mead & Hunt, Inc. 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> "Austin Beltline is Part of Federal Highway Network."

<sup>11</sup> "Austin Beltline is Part of Federal Highway Network." The Interstate Highway was officially designated as I-90 in 1959. I-90 was also referred to as Legislative Route 391 and TH 252.

<sup>12</sup> Weingroff, 4, 10; Minnesota Department of Highways, "Bridge No. 9176, Plan & Drawing Sheets 1-22," Sheet 1. A box on the plan entitled "Design Data" cites the AASHO design specification, 1953. Requirements for four lanes and full access control, with some exceptions, had been in place since 1945.

As part of the Austin beltline's transformation into a segment of I-90, it became one of an early number of highway segments in post-World War II Minnesota to utilize expressway design standards and elements that had been adopted by AASHO in 1953.<sup>13</sup> The Interstate Highway System was significantly different from the Trunk Highways that had preceded it. The underlying concept of the Interstate and of all freeways was to maintain the uninterrupted flow of traffic. To accomplish this goal, the system relied on controlled access and the elimination of conventional intersections through the use of interchanges and grade separations.<sup>14</sup> The redesigned beltline included ramps, cloverleaf and diamond interchanges, and outer drives (likely frontage roads), although the construction of the cloverleaf interchange was deferred to a future time. The Austin portion of I-90 included nine grade separations over a 4.5-mile area, including Bridge 9177.<sup>15</sup>

The first Interstate groundbreaking activities in Minnesota were along I-90 in Austin. On May 9, 1956, work began on a storm sewer near Sutton Park that would provide drainage for railroad underpasses along the Interstate. This work was let earlier than other projects, such as road construction and overpasses, because these structures were expected to take longer to finish. Work on the Interstate in Austin continued through the 1950s and early 1960s, with sections opened to traffic as they were completed.<sup>16</sup> Work was delayed in 1958 due to unanticipated soil conditions, and again in 1959 due to a steel strike.<sup>17</sup>

Although the Interstate project through Austin was widely supported by public officials and extolled as a boon to the community that would promote growth and prosperity, the project was not without its detractors. Prominent among these were the Rose Creek school district and business community whose representatives voiced their objections to the Interstate design that dead-ended County Road (CR) 19 at the freeway and isolated parts of their community.<sup>18</sup> Their request for an overpass was initially denied by the Bureau of Roads in 1959, but reversed following the involvement of U.S. Representative Al Quie and U.S. Senators Eugene McCarthy and Hubert Humphrey.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The first official segment of the Interstate Highway System in Minnesota was located near Owatonna, which began on August 5, 1957. Mead & Hunt, Inc., 13. The *Austin Daily Herald* placed the beginning of the Austin beltline project in May 1956, when work commenced on a storm sewer to provide drainage for the freeway underpasses. The paper stated that the ground breaking for the sewer was the first soil "moved in Minnesota for construction of a project under the federal Interstate Highway system." Davis.

<sup>14</sup> Weingroff, 13.

<sup>15</sup> "City Beltline Redesigned as Freeway," n.p.; "Austin Beltline Opening," *Minnesota Highways* (December 1961): 3.

<sup>16</sup> "Austin Beltline is Part of Federal Highway Network: First Dirt Turned Here to Launch Freeway Work," *Austin Daily Herald*, 9 May 1956; "Interstate 90 Dedication Held Today," *Austin Daily Herald*, 21 July 1964. The first official Interstate paving project in Minnesota occurred on August 5, 1957, on I-35 near Owatonna.

<sup>17</sup> Davis.

<sup>18</sup> "Transcript of Public Hearing held in Mower County Courthouse, Austin Minnesota, February 25, 1958," n.p.; Davis, "Highway Interstate 90," n.p.

<sup>19</sup> Davis.

The Austin beltline portion of I-90 opened to traffic August 11, 1961, as final landscape beautification work was being completed.<sup>20</sup> The local paper asserted that the project was "the biggest single public improvement program in the city's history."<sup>21</sup> In the following years, work continued on I-90 east and west of the Austin beltline, and on July 21, 1964, the 42.7-mile section of I-90 between Petran's Corner, west of Austin, to Stewartville, east of Austin and south of Rochester, was officially dedicated.

#### *Planning, Designing, and Constructing Bridge 9177*

Bridge 9177 was designed as one of the grade-separation structures in the Austin beltline and eventual I-90 corridor. On February 7, 1957, the firm of Goldberg and Davidson, consulting civil and structural engineers, submitted a proposal to MHD bridge engineer A.E. LaBonte to prepare plans for Bridge 9177 for a fee of \$3,600. The partners were Sidney L. Goldberg and Henry A. Davidson, with offices in St. Paul (Goldberg's location) and Hopkins (Davidson's location). According to their proposal letter, signed by Davidson, Bridge 9177 was intended to carry Road "C" over TH 252 (the original designation of the beltway that would become I-90). Road C was identified as a "Shopping Center connection." Preliminary plans were submitted on March 8 and detail plans were completed on May 6, 1957.<sup>22</sup>

The MHD sent a number of plans to the Goldberg and Davidson office to serve as models for the design of the new structure, including Thomas Ellerbe's complete set of drawings for Bridge 9053, the MHD's first prestressed concrete beam bridge, and the unchecked plans for another prestressed beam, Bridge 9232 near Hibbing, which had been developed by the engineering firm V.S. Morehouse and Associates.<sup>23</sup>

In March 1957 Goldberg and Davidson submitted "Criteria for the Design of the Substructure and Superstructure" for Bridge 9177, indicating that the design of prestressed concrete would follow "Criteria for Prestressed Concrete Bridges," published by the BPR in 1954. The Goldberg and Davidson document stated that the "prestressed girders shall be designed for pretensioning or posttensioning [sic]." Like their proposal letter, the criteria report stated that Bridge 9177 would carry "Shopping Center Connecting Road 'C.'" The shopping center reference is found in one other document, a list of bridge projects proposed for the new Interstate Highway System, for which plans could be ready in 1957. The entry for Bridge 9177 identifies its location as "Shopping Road" over TH 252, the future I-90.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> "Austin Belt Line Officially Opens Traffic Today after 4," *Austin Daily Herald*, 11 August 1961, n.p.

<sup>21</sup> "Austin Beltline is Part of Federal Highway Network: First Dirt Turned Here to Launch Freeway Work."

<sup>22</sup> Henry A. Davidson, letter to A.E. LaBonte, Bridge Engineer, Minnesota Highway Department, "Proposal for Bridge 9177 Plans," 7 February 1957), Bridge 9177 Records, MnDOT Bridge Project Records, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>23</sup> Charlene Roise, Hess, Roise and Company, *Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Program Comment Review of Minnesota Bridges, 1955-1970* (Minnesota Department of Transportation, June 2014), 49.

<sup>24</sup> A.E. LaBonte, Bridge Engineer, MHD, memorandum to J.C. Robbers, Asst. Chief Engineer, MHD, 20 May 1957), Bridge 9177 Records, MnDOT Bridge Project Records, St. Paul, Minnesota; "Bridge Projects in Proposed Construction Program for Which Construction with Bond Issue Funds Could Be Considered" (Minnesota Department of Highways, May 20, 1957), Bridge 9177 Records, MnDOT Bridge Project Records, St. Paul, Minnesota.



Beyond the references in these three documents, the shopping center connection is not found in any subsequent documents, including the final plans, which include the bridge survey sheet and map. Research, including the most recent field survey, has identified no shopping center planned or existing in the vicinity of the bridge or related to Road C. No explanation has been found for the shopping center connection reference in the Goldberg and Davidson documents.<sup>25</sup>

Goldberg and Davidson submitted preliminary plans for Bridge 9177 to the MHD on April 9, 1957. Although submitted by the partnership, the final plans (see sheet 1) were signed on November 6, 1957, by Davidson as the engineer of record. The work of Goldberg and Davidson was considered complete by December 20, 1957, and the plans were approved by the MHD on December 26, 1957.<sup>26</sup> Although their earlier criteria document indicated that the beams would be designed for pretensioning or post-tensioning, only pretensioned beams are included in the final plan set (see table of quantities for superstructure on sheet 5 and beam plans on sheet 6). No explanation has been found for the selection of pretensioning over post-tensioning. The preliminary plans or an earlier plan set may have shown additional or other details, since sheet 6 in the only available plan set is referenced for Elk River Concrete, dated May 1, 1958, and notated "All dimensions and details not given on this sheet are same as original sheet."<sup>27</sup>

The MHD did not distribute a request for construction bids until January 1958, with proposals due at the end of that month. The request for proposals required that the prestressed-concrete beams "be fabricated and installed in accordance with the provisions of Specification No. 405 dated January 2, 1958." Lysne Construction (Lysne) from Blooming Prairie, Minnesota, won the contract with a bid of \$87,222.80.<sup>28</sup>

Lysne arranged to have the prestressed beams fabricated by Elk River Concrete Products Company in Elk River, Minnesota, which was affiliated with the Cretex firm that owned several concrete companies. Elk River, in turn, contracted with Charles C. Zollman and Associates for the prestressed-beam calculations required for the fabrication. Zollman provided Cretex with a 17-page set of calculations in March 1958.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Goldberg and Davidson, *Bridge No. 9177: Criteria for the Design of the Substructure and Superstructure* (Minnesota Highway Department, March 1957), Bridge 9177 Records, MnDOT Bridge Project Records, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>26</sup> A.E. LaBonte, Bridge Engineer, MHD, Memorandum, "Completion of Work on 9177 by Goldberg & Davidson," 20 December 1957), Bridge 9177 Records, MnDOT Bridge Project Records, St. Paul, Minnesota.

<sup>27</sup> Henry A. Davidson, "Bridge 9177 [Plan Set 1957-58]-T.H. 391 Under Conn. Road C in Austin" (Minnesota Highway Department, December 26, 1957).

<sup>28</sup> Charlene Roise, Hess, Roise and Company, *Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's Program Comment Review of Minnesota Bridges, 1955-1970*, 49.

<sup>29</sup> A.H. Bailey, Elk River Concrete Products Company, letter to Mr. Radin, Minnesota Highway Department, "Computations for Beams for Bridge 9177," 8 April 1958), Bridge 9177 Records, MnDOT Bridge Project Records, St. Paul, Minnesota; Charles C. Zollman, *Revised Prestressing-Bridge 9177-Minnesota* (Charles C. Zollman and Associates, Consulting Engineers, March 24, 1958), Bridge 9177 Records, MnDOT Bridge Project Records, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Zollman was a student of the important prestressed-concrete engineer Gustave Magnel at Belgium's University of Ghent, who was active in the 1930s and 1940s. Zollman translated Magnel's influential volume *Le Beton Precontraint (Prestressed Concrete)* into English and promoted Magnel's work in the U.S. He then facilitated Magnel's selection as the designing engineer for the 1950 Walnut Lane Bridge in Philadelphia, the first prestressed-concrete beam bridge built in the U.S. A few years later, Zollman advised Elk River Concrete on the design of its large tensioning beds that were necessary for the fabrication of prestressed concrete bridge beams. The Elk River yard became one of Minnesota's pioneering plants in producing prestressed-concrete bridge beams. Zollman's subsequent involvement with the design of the prestressed beams for Bridge 9177 establishes a direct link between the Minnesota bridge and the beginnings of prestressed-concrete bridge design in the U.S. as well as in Minnesota.<sup>30</sup>

Available documents indicate that Bridge 9177 was completed in 1958. Soon a major issue emerged for the entire Austin segment of I-90 that affected a number of the bridges that had just been built. When AASHTO issued design standards for the Interstate Highway System, it established a minimum of 14 feet for vertical clearance (the distance from the Interstate roadway pavement to the bottom of the overpass). It was not until after the Interstate Highway System was under construction that the Department of Defense (DOD) informed the BPR that the 14-foot clearance was not adequate for defense purposes. In 1960 the Secretary of Commerce revised the minimum vertical clearance to 16 feet. The revised standard applied to all Interstates in rural areas and to at least one Interstate route within urban areas.<sup>31</sup> The MHD, like many other state transportation departments, had adopted the earlier AASHTO standard. However, by 1959, prior to the Secretary of Commerce's action to raise the federal standard, the MHD was already considering the issue of adequate vertical clearance. A November 4, 1959, memorandum from Commissioner of Highways L.P. Zimmerman refers to the MHD's internal discussion of the DOD's revised clearance requirement, recent state legislative action to establish a 16-foot clearance requirement for all railroad bridges in Minnesota, and policy action to expand that requirement to apply to all highway grade separations. Zimmerman noted that a state study indicated that at least three other states had taken action to adopt a 16-foot clearance requirement.<sup>32</sup>

When the *Austin Daily Herald* reported that five bridges along the Austin beltline did not meet the revised federal vertical clearance standard of 16 feet, it said that the MHD was considering the means to modify the existing bridges. Clayton Swanson, the Rochester District MHD Engineer, stated that steel bridges could be raised using a jack and concrete blocks, but that the prestressed- and reinforced-concrete bridges represented a more difficult problem. At the time, the MHD was considering the most economical

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<sup>30</sup> Robert M. Frame III and Richard E. Mitchell, "Constructing Suburbia: The Hidden Role of Prestressed Concrete," *Minnesota History* 64, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 160–161, 164, 166.

<sup>31</sup> Federal Highway Administration, "Right of Passage: The Controversy over Vertical Clearance on the Interstate System," <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/infrastructure/50vertical.cfm>.

<sup>32</sup> L.P. Zimmerman, "State of Minnesota, Office Memorandum: Vertical Clearance for Trunk Highway Bridges," 4 November 1959, n.p.

methods to achieve the minimum vertical clearance requirement, either by raising the superstructure using power jacks or lowering the roadway grade.<sup>33</sup>

The *Austin Daily Herald* article did not identify the individual bridges with inadequate clearance and no other available document has named the bridges. Further research on neighboring I-90 Bridge 9176 identified it as one of the five and further indicated that the solution was to lower the Interstate roadway beneath the spans.<sup>34</sup> While the records for Bridge 9177 do not mention the clearance issue, evidence in the plan set for Bridge 9177 provides a definite indication that it was also one of the bridges that did not meet the revised federal vertical clearance standard. The elevation plan on sheet 1 shows the cross section of the roadway, apparently as built or at least as designed, but added in a dotted line is a new section for both east- and west-bound lanes that is one or 1 and 1.5 feet lower (the image is unclear). With the line is this notation: "Planned grading section. Quantity of class U excavation is estimated with this section as the upper limit." In other words, lines indicating new and lower elevations for the 9177 roadway below the spans were added to the plan sheet with a notation that the excavation was planned and the new lines marked the "upper limit" of the new, lower roadway—it might be even lower. A few new dimensions were added with the new lines. These undated lines and notes, added to the existing 1957 sheet, are evidence that a lowered roadway allowed Bridge 9177 to comply with the revised clearance standard.<sup>35</sup>

At the national level, previously constructed bridges represented a significant problem with the new vertical clearance standards since the cost of correcting vertical clearance could be prohibitively expensive. Following a 1967 survey that revealed that 2,650 bridges within the Interstate Highway System did not meet the revised DOD standard, the Federal Highway Administration, AASHTO, and the Military Traffic Management Command decided that a priority network would be established to serve major military installations and only 350 bridges nationwide would be corrected to provide clearance.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> "5 Belt Line Bridges Reported Too Low," *Austin Daily Herald*, 24 November 1959. In an oral history interview conducted by Bob Frame with Louis Anderson, a surveyor who worked on the Austin segment of I-90 in the mid-1950s, Anderson confirmed that there were a number of changes in engineering standards during that period. This was particularly true in regard to bridge elevations. However, Anderson did not recall elevation issues specific to Bridge 9177. Louis Anderson, interview by Bob Frame and Darrell Berry of Mead & Hunt, Inc., transcript, Minnesota Department of Transportation, District 6, June 29, 2009.

<sup>34</sup> Carol Roland et al., *Bridge 9176 (MW-AUS-092)*, Minnesota Historic Property Record, (2009), 5–7.

<sup>35</sup> Henry A. Davidson, "Bridge 9177 [Plan Set 1957-58]-T.H. 391 Under Conn. Road C in Austin," Sheet 1.

<sup>36</sup> Federal Highway Administration, "Right of Passage: The Controversy over Vertical Clearance on the Interstate System."

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# MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

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MnDOT BRIDGE 9177

MW-AUS-101

Carrying MSAS 144 (11<sup>th</sup> Drive Northeast) over I-90

Austin

Mower County

Minnesota

35mm photographs by Richard E. Mitchell, Mead & Hunt., Inc., November 18, 2015

MW-AUS-101-01	OBLIQUE VIEW OF NORTH SPANS AND ABUTMENT OF BRIDGE, LOOKING NORTHWEST.
MW-AUS-101-02	OBLIQUE VIEW OF NORTH SPANS OF BRIDGE, LOOKING NORTHWEST.
MW-AUS-101-03	SOUTH BRIDGE PLATE, LOOKING SOUTHEAST.
MW-AUS-101-04	FACE OF SOUTH ABUTMENT WITH UNUSED UTILITY OPENING WITH BLOCK IN-FILL, LOOKING SOUTH.
MW-AUS-101-05	UNDERSIDE OF SUPERSTRUCTURE, LOOKING NORTHEAST.
MW-AUS-101-06	OBLIQUE VIEW OF BRIDGE, LOOKING NORTHEAST.
MW-AUS-101-07	DECK VIEW OF NORTHEAST END WALL, LOOKING EAST.
MW-AUS-101-08	TRAFFIC SIDE OF EAST RAILING, LOOKING SOUTHEAST.
MW-AUS-101-09	WEST SIDE OF BRIDGE, LOOKING SOUTHEAST.
MW-AUS-101-10	OBLIQUE VIEW OF BRIDGE, LOOKING SOUTHEAST.
MW-AUS-101-11	CENTER PIER, LOOKING WEST-SOUTHWEST.
MW-AUS-101-12	OVERVIEW OF BRIDGE, LOOKING WEST.
MW-AUS-101-13	NORTH BRIDGE PLATE, LOOKING NORTH-NORTHWEST.
MW-AUS-101-14	EAST SIDE OF BRIDGE, LOOKING SOUTHWEST.
MW-AUS-101-15	DECK VIEW, LOOKING SOUTH.

MW-AUS-101-16	1957 PLAN, COVER SHEET, "CONSTRUCTION PLAN FOR BRIDGE NO. 9177."
MW-AUS-101-17	1957 PLAN SHEET 1 OF 9, "GENERAL PLAN AND ELEVATION."
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MW-AUS-101-22	1957 (REV. 1958) PLAN SHEET 6 OF 9, "35-43-43-35 PRESTRESSED GIRDER SPANS."
MW-AUS-101-23	1957 PLAN SHEET 7 OF 9, "RAILING DETAILS."
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MW-AUS-101-25	1957 (SURVEY MADE 1951) PLAN SHEET 9 OF 9, "BRIDGE SURVEY."

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MW-AUS-101-01





MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

MnDOT BRIDGE 9177

MW-AUS-101-02



MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

MnDOT BRIDGE 9177

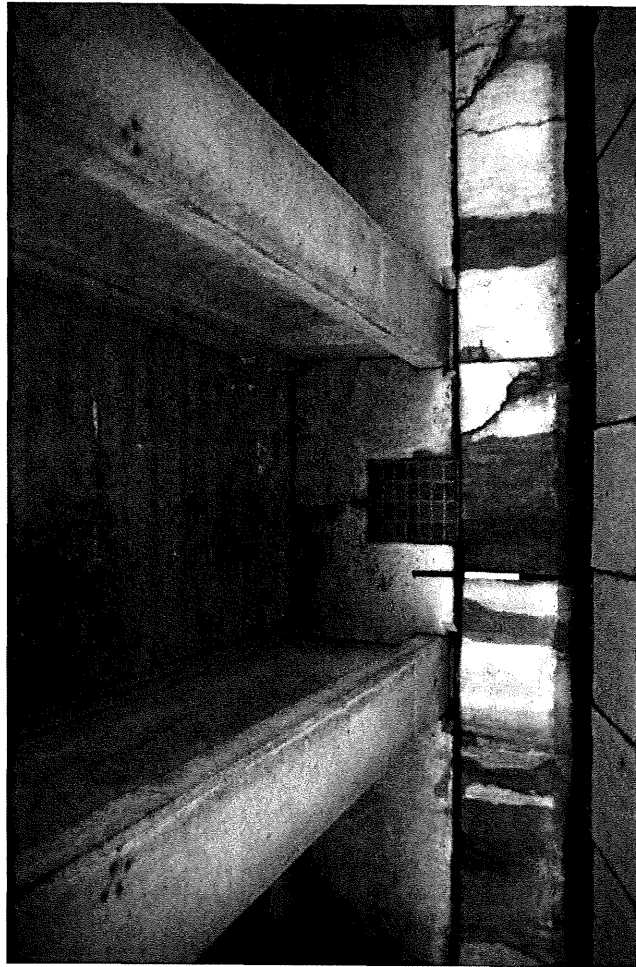
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MnDOT BRIDGE 9177

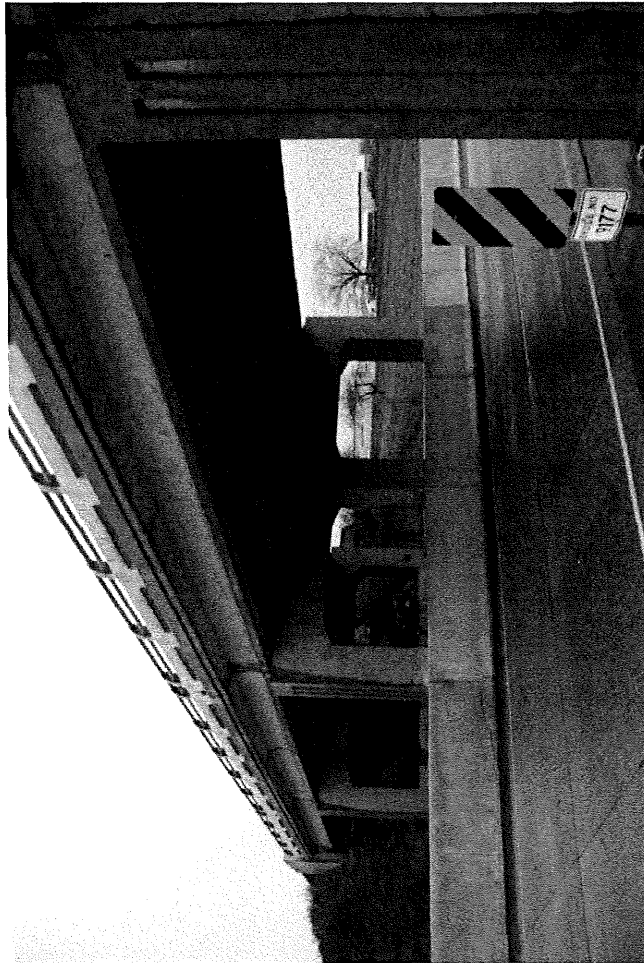
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MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

MnDOT BRIDGE 9177

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MINNESOTA HISTORIC PROPERTY RECORD

MnDOT BRIDGE 9177

MW-AUS-101-15



AT A POINT 17795' WEST AND 6014' NORTH OF THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SECTION 35, T103N R18W

**STATE PROJECT NO. 5080-05**

GROSS LENGTH	FEET	MILES
BRIDGES-LENGTH	FEET	MILES
EXCEPTIONS-LENGTH	FEET	MILES
NET LENGTH	FEET	MILES

## SPECIFICATIONS

BRIDGE NO. 9177  
CONN. "C" OVER T.H. 391  
LENGTH 157.3 FT.



Recommended for Approval: R. E. La Bonte 12-26-57  
Special Agent in Charge

Recommended for Approval \_\_\_\_\_ 10

Recommended for Approval: D. J. Quinn 7/26/57

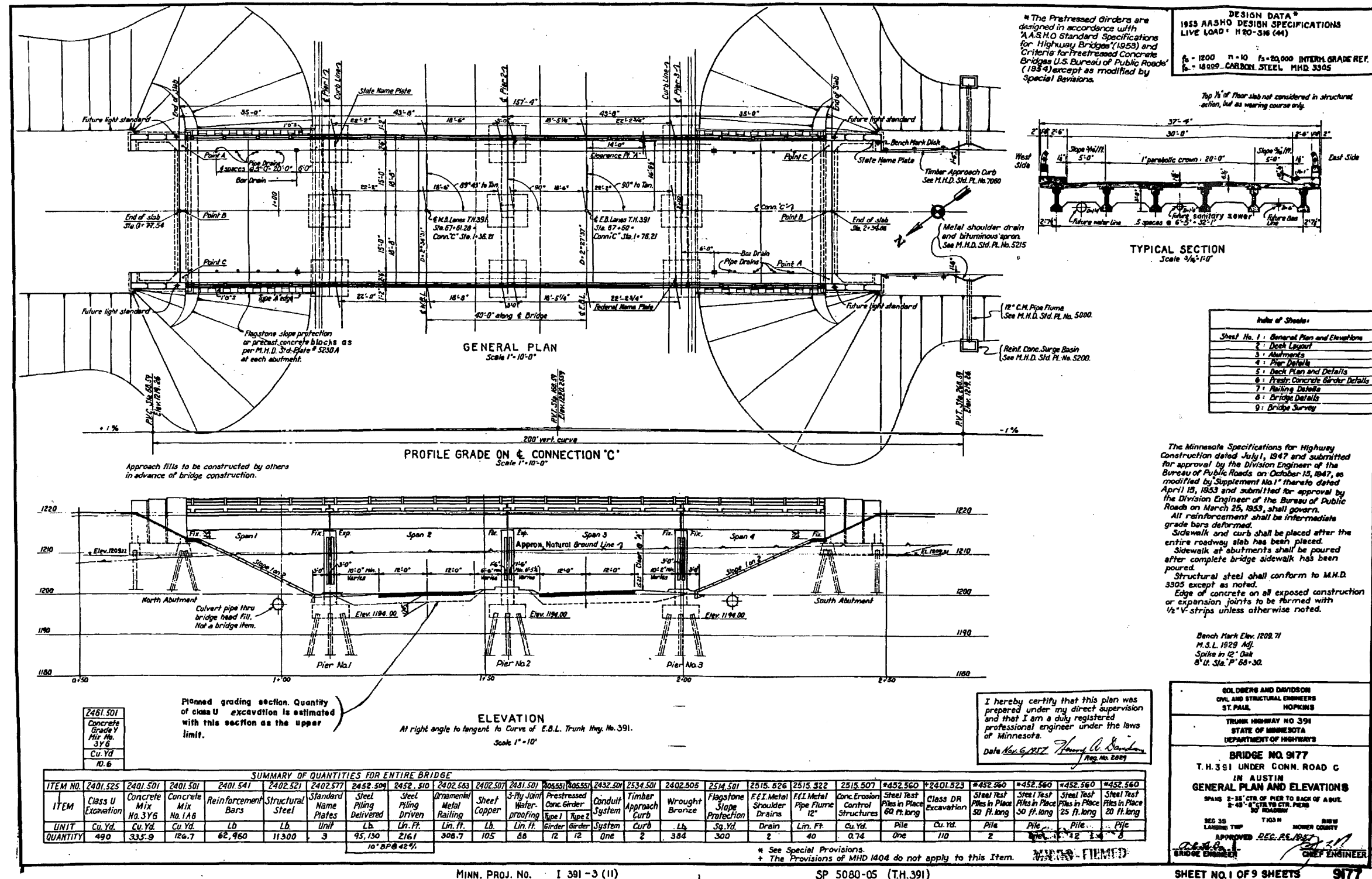
Applied, 12/24/57 G. F. Krumpholtz

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

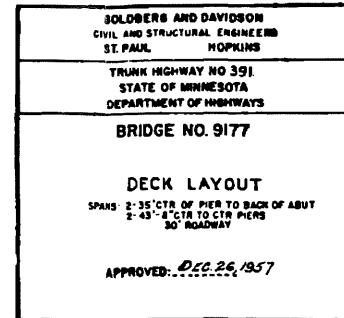
**APPROVED:**

DISTRICT ENGINEER DATE

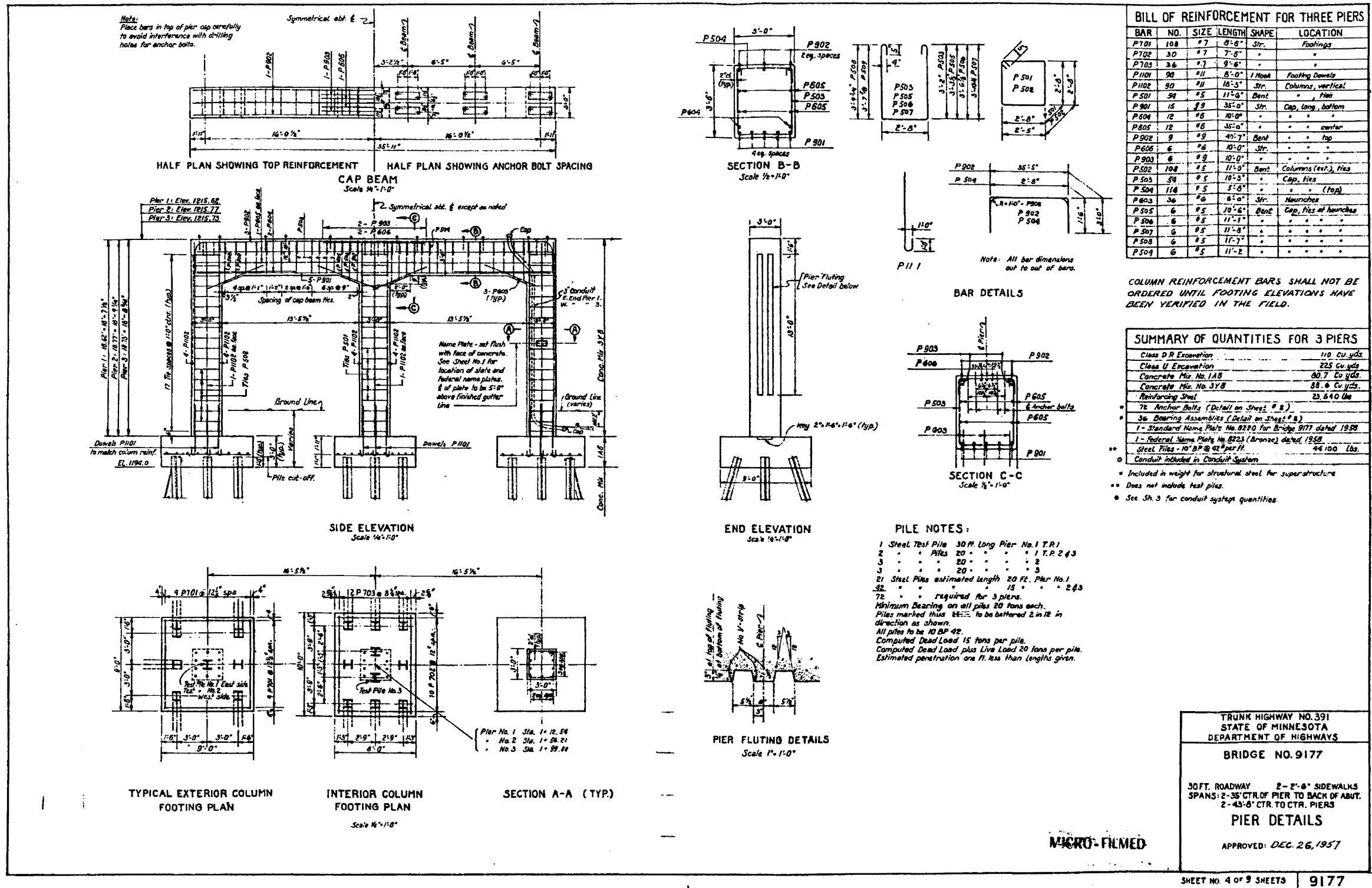
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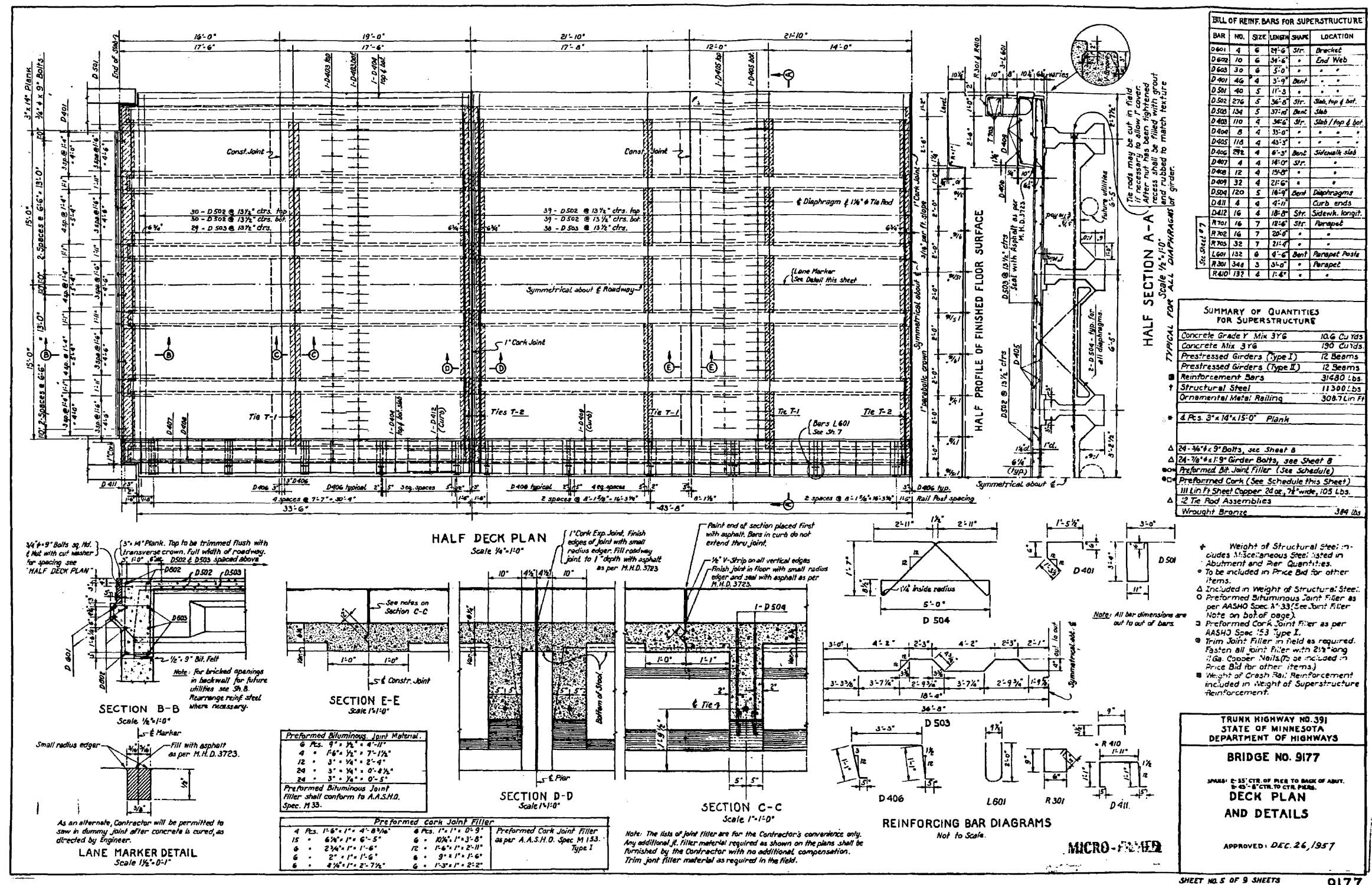


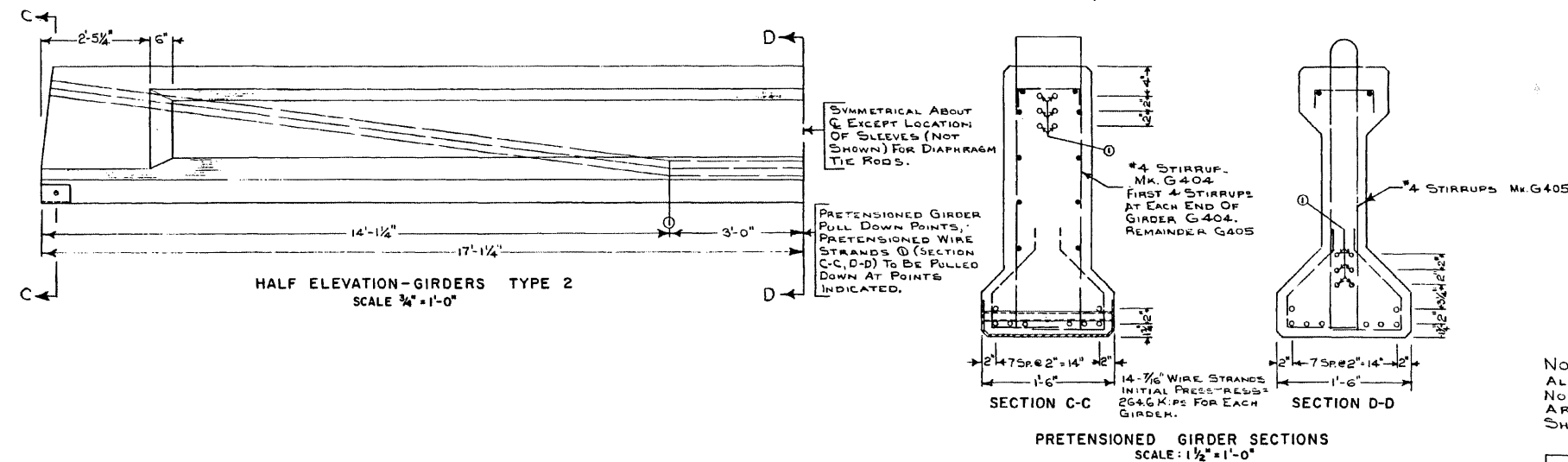
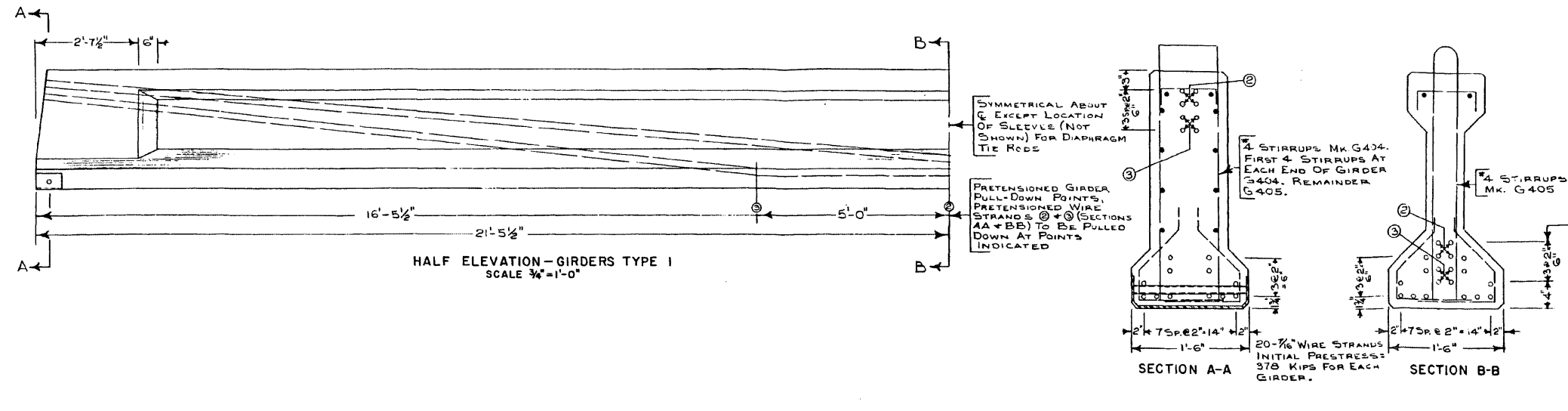






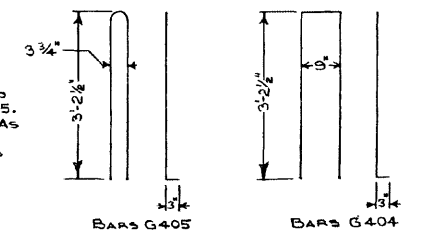






NOTE:  
ALL DIMENSIONS AND DETAILS NOT GIVEN ON THIS SHEET ARE SAME AS ORIGINAL SHEET.

NOTE:  
BAR G401 REVISED TO BAR G404 AND G405. OTHER BARS SAME AS ORIGINAL DESIGN. ALL BAR DIMENSIONS ARE OUT TO OUT.



ELK RIVER CONCRETE PRODUCTS CO. ELK RIVER, MINNESOTA
TRUNK HIGHWAY NO. 391 STATE OF MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS
BRIDGE NO. 9177
30 FT. ROADWAY 35-43-43-35 PRESTRESSED GIRDER SPANS
APPROVED: MAY 1, 1958

