United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property
   historic name: STARR MILL ROAD BRIDGE
   other name/site number: Beverly Heights Bridge, Bridge No. 4541

2. Location
   street & number: Beverly Heights
   city/town: Middletown
   state: CT
   county: Middlesex
   code: 007
   zip code: 06457

3. Classification
   Ownership of Property: public-local
   Category of Property: structure
   Number of Resources within Property:

   Contributing Noncontributing
   buildings
   sites
   structures
   objects
   Total

   Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

   Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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. ___ See cont. sheet.

[Signature]
Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

[Date]

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. ___ See continuation sheet.

[Signature]
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

[ ] 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): _______________________

[Signature]
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: TRANSPORTATION Sub: road-related

Current: NOT IN USE Sub:
7. Description

Architectural Classification:

other: Warren pony truss

Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation N/A roof N/A walls N/A other METAL: steel CONCRETE

Describe present and historic physical appearance. X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: state

Applicable National Register Criteria: A.C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ENGINEERING INDUSTRY

Period(s) of Significance: 1927

Significant Dates: 1927

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Berlin Construction Company (fabricator)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above. X See continuation sheet.
9. Major Bibliographical References
X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
_ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_ previously listed in the National Register
X 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
X Other state agency Connecticut Dept. of Transportation
_ Federal agency 24 Wolcott Hill Road
_ Local government Wethersfield, CT 06109
_ University
_ Other -- Specify Repository: _____________________________

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: _less than one

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A 18 693720 4602100 B ___ ______ ______
C ___ ______ ______ D ___ ______ ______

X See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: ___ See continuation sheet.
The nominated property includes the bridge, abutments, and roadway.

Boundary Justification: ___ See continuation sheet.
The boundary includes only the components of the bridge itself.

11. Form Prepared By - Reviewed by John Herzan, National Register Coordinator

Name/Title: ___ Bruce Clouette and Maura Cronin

Organization: ___ Historic Resource Consultants Date: ___March 1, 1993____

Street & Number: 55 Van Dyke Avenue Telephone: 203-547-0268

City or Town: ___ Hartford State: ___CT___ Zip: ___06106___
Beverly Heights Bridge, originally known as Starr Mill Road Bridge and numbered as No. 4541 in the state bridge system, is a single-span steel Warren pony truss erected in 1927 (Photographs 1 and 2). It spans the Cochinaug River just downstream of the Starr Mill dam, at a height of about 12 feet above the water level. The overall length of the bridge is 46 feet, with a roadway width of 14 feet. The road (Photograph 3), which formerly led into the yard of the adjacent Starr Mill, an 1865 suspender mill built on the site of an 1813 pistol factory, is now closed.

The bridge’s four-panel trusses are about eight feet in depth. The inclined end posts and top chord are built-up box girders with back-to-back channels joined by a continuous plate on top and lacing bars on the bottom. The bottom chord consists of a pair of back-to-back angles connected by tie plates at three-foot intervals, as do the first diagonals and the verticals in the web. The other diagonal members are back-to-back angles with lacing. The floor system (Photograph 4) consists of rolled I-section floor beams and stringers and a concrete-slab deck. Original riveted lattice railings, about two feet high, are still in place. The bridge’s concrete abutments were poured around the rubble-masonry abutments of an earlier bridge.

The bridge’s components are riveted and bolted together using gusset plates (Photograph 5). Most of the joints are bolted on at least one side (and riveted on the other), a technique that afforded easier field assembly.

On the southwest end post is a plaque (partly broken), giving the bridge’s date of construction, fabricator (Berlin Construction Company), and the name of the Middletown official responsible for the project, Second Taxing District selectman and highway supervisor Howard S. Peck (Photograph 6).

The bridge is in somewhat deteriorated condition, with corrosion of some structural members and severe spalling along the underside of the floor slabs. The only alterations to the bridge’s original appearance are the additional layers of concrete and asphalt poured on top of the original deck.
Starr Mill Road Bridge is a representative example of the small highway trusses of the 1920s (Criterion C). Its steel material, Warren-truss design, riveted connections, and concrete-slab deck are characteristic features of the period and reflect the standardization of bridge design that had occurred in the 1890s and early 1900s. The bridge is also notable for its associations with the Berlin Construction Company, Connecticut’s leading bridge fabricator of the 20th-century (Criterion A).

The technological significance of the bridge is as an example of the period’s standard highway bridge engineering. By the time it was built, steel had entirely replaced the earlier wrought-iron as a bridge-building material, and the older method of connecting the major members with large pins had been superseded by rivets and gusset plates, which greatly simplified shop fabrication while also providing greater rigidity. As this bridge indicates, field riveting was still somewhat difficult, so bolts were sometimes substituted for rivets on half of the joint. The design of the bridge, the triangular or Warren-truss pattern, was one of only two major types still in use in the 20th-century; nearly all of the various unusual truss designs of the 19th-century had been discarded by this time. Finally, the overall proportions of the bridge, as well as its concrete slab deck, reflect its origins in a period when bridges were being designed for the heavy loads placed on them by ever-growing automobile and truck traffic.

Historical Background

When the city and town governments of Middletown were consolidated in 1924, separate taxing districts were provided for the former parts, and they continued to maintain their own budgets. This bridge was built as part of an ongoing program of bridge construction by the Second Taxing District (formerly the town outside the city), under the leadership of highway supervisor-selectman Howard S. Peck. Like many town governments in the period, Middletown turned to Connecticut’s own Berlin Construction Company as a source for small highway trusses.
Berlin Construction Company (today known as Berlin Steel) was founded in 1900 by three former employees of Berlin Iron Bridge Company, an East Berlin firm that been a major fabricator of bridges in the late 19th century. In 1900, Berlin Iron Bridge Company was absorbed by American Bridge Company as part of the latter’s attempt to monopolize the industry. The former management left and started a new company, and within two years, they had erected a large fabricating facility in the Kensington section of Berlin. They continued the business of their former company, marketing highway bridges, steel-framed commercial and manufacturing buildings, and other steel industrial structures such as bridge-crane installations, dock facilities, and coal-handling systems. Berlin Construction Company held a large share of the regional market for highway trusses into the 1930s, when concrete construction and the advent of large steel and concrete beams brought an end to the use of metal trusses for ordinary highway bridges.
Bibliography
Starr Mill Road Bridge
(Bridge No. 4541, Beverly Heights Bridge)
Middletown, Middlesex County, CT

Connecticut Department of Transportation. Historic Bridge Inventory. 1991.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Photographs

Starr Mill Road Bridge
(Beverly Heights Bridge, Bridge No. 4541)
Middletown, Middlesex County, CT

Photos-1

All photographs:
1. Starr Mill Road Bridge (Beverly Heights Bridge, Bridge No. 4541)
2. Middletown, Middlesex County, CT
3. Photo Credit: HRC, Hartford, CT
4. April, 1993
5. Negative filed with Connecticut Historical Commission
   Hartford, CT

Captions:

Downstream side of bridge, camera facing west
Photograph 1 of 6

Upstream side of bridge, camera facing east
Photograph 2 of 6

Roadway, camera facing northwest
Photograph 3 of 6

Underside of bridge, camera facing northwest
Photograph 4 of 6

Detail of portal joint, camera facing east
Photograph 5 of 6

Plaque, camera facing northwest
Photograph 6 of 6