

10. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

State Bridge Number 3C

11. PHOTOS (W/ FILM ROLL & FRAME NO.) AND SKETCH MAP OF LOCATION

28A:5-14



28A:6

Mack, Warren W. "A History of Motor Highways in Delaware", in Reed, Henry Clay, Delaware: A History of the First State, vol.2, pp.535-550 (NY: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1947).

Delaware State Program. Delaware State Highways; The Story of Roads in Delaware.... [Newark, Delaware: Press of Kells, 1919].

Federal Writers' Project. Delaware: A Guide to the First State. (New York: Viking Press, 1938).

Hancock, Harold Bell. A History of Kent County, Delaware. (Dover, Del.: Dover Litho Printing Co., 1976).

Spero, Paula A. C. A Survey and Photographic Inventory of Concrete and Masonry Arch Bridges in Virginia. (Charlottesville, Virginia: Virginia Highway & Transportation Research Council, 1984).

Delaware State Archives. Kent County Road Records 1875-1940. ms. State Archives, Dover, Delaware.

Delaware DOT records: Annual Reports; Kent County Levy Court Records; photo archives and contract files.

Plans on file at Delaware DOT: Contract #155,86-098-06

12. SOURCES
13. INVENTORIED BY:

AFFILIATION

DATE

P.A.C. Spero & Company with Kidde Consultants for Delaware DOT

April-November 1988

HABS/HAER INVENTORY

See "HABS/HAER Inventory Guidelines" before filling out this card.

1. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

Silver Lake Bridge
State Bridge Number 3C

2. LOCATION

North State Street over Silver Lake
Dover, Kent County, Delaware

3. DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION

1937

4. USE (ORIGINAL/CURRENT)

Vehicular

5. RATING

CA

6. CONDITION

Excellent

State Highway Bridge 3C is a monumental three span reinforced concrete arch bridge embellished with brick veneer, a brick and white marble balustrade, and ornamental wrought iron light posts. The bridge is 155'-0" long, with each arch spanning 28'-4 1/2". The arches are segmentally shaped and symmetrical. The substructure consists of reinforced concrete piers, abutments and wing walls which are supported on timber piling. The pier noses are semicircular. All visible portions of the bridge are faced with brick veneer except for a corbelled marble arch ring. The parapet wall is divided into three sections, mirroring the spans: above the triple arches it consists of a marble balustrade with brick panels, above the wing walls the parapet consists of solid brick panels with corbeled marble rails. A bronze plaque commemorates the veterans of World War I, 1917-1918, by the American Legion Walter L. Fox Post No.2.

Delaware Department of Transportation records state that Bridge 3C was built in 1937 under State Highway Department contract 155, and Federal Aid Project, No. 890. Original drawings, dated November 1936, comprehensively illustrate the configuration of the bridge and its details. Added notations on these drawings document the construction process and quantities of materials used. The cost of the bridge amounted to \$48,350 with the Spear-Jones Company of Dover undertaking the construction. Work began on December 14, 1936 but encountered a two week delay when the contractor could not obtain some necessary lumber. Bridge 3C replaced a three-span stone arch bridge constructed in 1907. Removal of the old stone bridge could not be accomplished until two sections of the new bridge had been built on both sides. This arrangement allowed the previous stone bridge to continue serving traffic until the new spans could accommodate it. Specifications also called for the lowering of the lake from 13 feet to 9.0 feet, to be accomplished by the neighboring mill owner. The current bridge was designed for a 20 ton truck load, with impact. Portions of the railing were repaired in 1986 under contract 86-098-06. The State Highway Department engaged E. William Martin as consulting architect for the Silver Lake Bridge. Martin, who had designed the State Legislative Building and the ornamentation on the East Loockerman Street Bridge (#23A), was among Delaware's most prominent architects of the period. A graduate of the University of Delaware and of the School of Architecture of the University of Liverpool, England, he had toured France and Italy and studied the architecture of those countries. He began practicing in Philadelphia, and was admitted to the American Institute of Architects in 1923. In September 1926, he came to Wilmington and opened offices in the DuPont Building. He quickly rose to statewide prominence in his profession, becoming a charter member (and later President) of the Delaware Chapter of the AIA, which was organized in November 1931. One of the first activities of the Chapter was to support legislation requiring the registration of architects in Delaware; this legislation was passed in 1933, and Martin served as the first President of the state Registration Board. He served as regional director for the Historic American Buildings Survey in Delaware in 1934. Martin received an honorary degree from the University of Delaware in 1936, in recognition of his distinction in architecture, and was honored with a Chamber of Commerce award for the "finest residence and finest public building designed by a Delaware architect" in 1940. He was elevated to Fellowship in the AIA December 14, 1945 for "... his achievements in the practice of his profession. By the conscientious and painstaking devotion to the design of his buildings, his sense of scale, and understanding of the use of his material, he has contributed notably to the practice of architecture in Delaware and vicinity." Martin's commissions included several large residences for prominent Delawareans, as well as several smaller suburban dwellings. Pierre S. duPont was among Martin's most active clients, commissioning numerous houses, an organ room and concert hall addition for his residence at Longwood, an Azalea House addition to the Horticultural Group at Longwood Gardens, and several other buildings on his estate. Among Martin's public commissions were the Federal Court Building and Post Office in Wilmington, the State Legislative Building in Dover, several school buildings in Delaware and Pennsylvania, and the Contagion Wing of the Chester County Hospital (which was donated to the Hospital by P. S. duPont). For the Silver Lake Bridge, Martin detailed the structure's red brick fascia and white marble trim similarly to his treatment of the East Loockerman Street Bridge, a prominent crossing in a location adjacent to the Georgian Colonial State Legislative Building. Some consideration had been given to the substitution of limestone for marble to reduce the cost of the structure, but Martin and the chief engineer agreed that the use of marble, exemplified by the East Loockerman Street Bridge, presented the most satisfactory effect. The specifications noted that the quality of the brick used must be equal to the quality found in the State Legislative Building. The wrought iron lamps were fabricated by Frederick Grundy Iron Works of Philadelphia, and the marble was worked by the Vermont Marble Company of Proctor, Vermont.

Occupying a prominent location in the state capital city, the Silver Lake Bridge features extensive architectural elaboration in the Colonial Revival style. It is one of two Dover bridges for which distinguished Wilmington architect, E. William Martin designed the details of the ornamentation.