1. **NAME**
   - **COMMON:** Waco Suspension Bridge
   - **AND/OR HISTORIC:**

2. **LOCATION**
   - **STREET AND NUMBER:** Bridge Street and Brazos River
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** Waco

3. **CLASSIFICATION**
   - **CATEGORY** (Check One)
     - District
     - Site
     - Object
     - Building
     - Structure
   - **OWNER'S NAME:** City of Waco
   - **STREET AND NUMBER:**
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** Waco

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**
   - **OWNER'S NAME:** City of Waco
   - **STREET AND NUMBER:**
   - **CITY OR TOWN:** Waco

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**
   - **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**
     - City of Waco
     - **STREET AND NUMBER:** Street and Bridge Department
     - **CITY OR TOWN:** Waco

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**
   - **TITLE OF SURVEY:** None
   - **DATE OF SURVEY:**
     - **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**
     - **STREET AND NUMBER:**
     - **CITY OR TOWN:**
An early suspension bridge with two double cable towers of pink brick (now stuccoed) with superimposed arches connecting the two piers of each tower and crossing the road bed. Toll houses and walls terminate both ends of the bridge. The original crenellation, pierced openings, and fine detail has been removed or stuccoed over, but the general lines of the structures are still architecturally interesting. The toll houses have stepped gable roofs, parapets, and round arched openings now closed up.
### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Waco suspension bridge was the first bridge across the Brazos river and the longest single span suspension bridge in the world when it was built.\(^1\) It was chartered by Waco stockholders November 1, 1866. Col. John T. Flint, President of the Waco Bridge Company, went to New York and contacted the John A. Roebling Company (the Brooklyn Bridge was completed in 1883). The engineer Thomas M. Griffith was sent to Waco to design the bridge. It has a 475 foot span and the cable and pieces were tooled at eastern foundaries and shipped to Galveston. They were then sent on part of the way by rail and the rest of the way by ox teams. Thousands and thousands of local brick were used.

The bridge was opened January 7, 1870 and functioned for twenty years as a toll bridge with a 24 hour toll keeper. On September 1, 1889, it was purchased by McLennan county for $75,000 and conveyed to the city for one dollar.

A severe flood in 1885 damaged the east approach and a steel span was built for this section. Later the windows and doors of the anchor houses and towers were closed and the brick construction was covered with plaster.

The bridge is still in daily use.

---

\(^1\) O'Dowd, M. A., *The Magic Bridge*
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


Liecke, Jay; Mogas, Richard; Fields, Earl. Waco Suspension Bridge. unpublished student paper. Architecture archives, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, n.d.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LESS THAN TEN ACRES

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Wayne Bell, Project Director
Roxanne Williamson, Architectural Historian (SB)

ORGANIZATION
Texas Historical Survey Committee

DATE: 3/25/70

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

Name
State Liaison Officer

DATE: MAY 27 1970

ATTEST: William C. Snodgrass

3493100

SEE INSTRUCTIONS
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If checked, et. to Clerk

/ / Chief Architect / / Chief Archeologist / / Chief Historian

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**EDITORIAL PROCESSING**

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Federal Register Entry

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1. NAME
   COMMON: Waco Suspension Bridge
   AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: Bridge Street and Brazos River
   CITY OR TOWN: Waco

3. MAP REFERENCE
   SOURCE: United States Department of Interior Geological Survey
   SCALE: 1:24000
   DATE: 1956
   CODE: 042
   COUNTY: McLennan
   CODE: 309

4. REQUIREMENTS
   TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
   1. Property boundaries where required.
   2. North arrow.
   3. Latitude and longitude reference.
Acreage of nominated property: approx. 8 acres

Quadrangle name: Waco West, Texas      Scale: 1:24,000

UTM References:  A)14/677800/3493265  
                  B)14/677860/3493245  
                  C)14/677700/3493000  
                  D)14/677600/3493085

Verbal boundary description:
   The nominated property is bounded by University Parks Drive, Washington Ave., Lake Brazos Drive, and Franklin Ave.
Original nomination submitted with simply - under 10 acres.
So--this documentation is not out-of-line with that material.
While this is fairly arbitrary, given the scale of the bridge, the
state case for needing additional acreage is logical, i.e. any
area from 1 - 20 would be somewhat justified.

This control sheet is for comments re. a
VBD being submitted for a bridge which is already listed on the Nat'l Register. I
questioned the inclusion of a small bldg. which appears on the USGS map. The bldg.
o longer stands. I also had doubts regarding the size of the proposed VBD. I did
receive an answer on this matter which satisfied me. Refer to historian.

new acreage (8) reflects whole Bridge
sits on rather than solely bridge, but this boundary
has the advantage of being easily duplicated.

United States Department of the Interior - Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
December 11, 1978

Dear Dr. Murtagh:

The Texas Historical Commission would like to amend the National Register form for the Waco Suspension Bridge. Since the form was submitted in 1970, no verbal boundary description was required. To correct that lack, we have enclosed a new quad map, site plan, and continuation sheet.

Significance of the Bridge depends partially on its visual impact. Its towers, rising 56' above the roadbed, comprise an impressive site for not only the surrounding neighborhoods, but also for the travelers on Interstate Highway 35, a few blocks to the east. Therefore, inclusion of the entire city block is logical, as it will facilitate the continuing isolation this unique structure deserves. The city of Waco owns the entire 8 acres.

Your rapid approval of this material would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lissa Anderson
Coordinator
National Register Nominations

LA/cm
Enclosures

Dr. William J. Murtagh
Keeper of the National Register
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Heritage Conservation & Recreation Service
Pension Building
440 G Street, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20243

The State Agency for Historic Preservation
WACO SUSPENSION BRIDGE
WACO, McLennan County
Texas; Not to Scale
NPS Number   70-6-42-0006
Title:        Waco Suspension Bridge
Loc.          McLennan Co., Texas

Cable anchor at toll house
NPS Number 70-6-42-0006

Title: Nueces Suspension Bridge

Loc. Matagorda Co., Texas
View of Bridge Approach
NPS Number 70-6-4/2-0006

Title: Waco Suspension Bridge
Loc. McKenney Co., Texas Toll House
NPS Number: 70-6-42-0006

Title: Waco Suspension Bridge

Loc: Mc Henry Co, Texas

Roadway
NPS Number: 70-6-42-0006
Title: Waco Suspension Bridge
Loc: McLennan Co., Texas
View of approach and bridge
Properties added to the National Register of Historical Places

**TEXAS**

- Texas State Capitol Building  Austin, Texas
- Waco Suspension Bridge  Waco, Texas
- Winedale Inn  Winedale, Texas
Mr. Truett Latimer
Executive Director
Texas State Historical Survey Committee
108 West 15th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Latimer:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Senators Ralph W. Yarborough and John G. Tower and the appropriate Representatives have also been notified. Please withhold any publicity on this until you have received a carbon copy of the Congressional correspondence.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Ernest Allen Connally
Chief, Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation

Enclosure

Entered in the National Register

cc:
HR
RGamble:mm
6/22/70
BASIC FILE RETAINED IN HR
Hon. Ralph W. Yarborough
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Yarborough:

We are pleased to inform you that the historic properties listed on the enclosure have been nominated by the State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor for the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Program in Texas and have been entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Senator John G. Tower and the appropriate Representatives have also been provided with this information. By copy of this letter, the State Liaison Officer, Mr. Truett Latimer, Executive Director, Texas State Historical Survey Committee, 106 West 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, has likewise been notified. A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

(Hand) Thomas F. Flynn
DEPUTY Director

Enclosures

Entered in the National Register

JUN 22, 1970

cc:
Mr. Truett Latimer, Executive Director, Texas State Historical Survey Committee, 106 West 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Duplicate letter sent to: Hon. John G. Tower
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.
Properties added to the National Register of Historical Places

**TEXAS**

Texas State Capitol Building  
Austin, Texas

Waco Suspension Bridge  
Waco, Texas

Winedale Inn  
Winedale, Texas
Hon. W. R. Poage  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Poage:

We are pleased to inform you that the Waco Suspension Bridge in Waco, Texas, has been nominated by the State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor for the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Program in Texas and has been entered into the National Register of Historic Places. Senators Ralph W. Yarborough and John G. Tower have also been provided with this information.

By copy of this letter, the State Liaison Officer, Mr. Truett Latimer, Executive Director, Texas State Historical Survey Committee, 108 West 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78701, has likewise been notified.

A leaflet explaining the National Register is enclosed.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) Thomas F. Flynn

DEPUTY Director

Enclosure

Entered in the National Register  
JUN 22 1970

cc:
Mr. Truett Latimer, Executive Director, Texas State Historical Survey Committee, 108 West 15th Street, Austin, Texas 78701

Director, Southwest Region
October 10, 1974

Norma Rowland  
Branch of Publications  
National Register Of Historic Places  
Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
18th and C Streets, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Ms. Rowland:

Concerning your questions about the Lampasas County Courthouse, the nomination form should be changed to denote unrestricted accessibility to the public. The measurements you requested for the Waco Suspension Bridge include a sixteen foot wide road across the bridge and cable towers measuring fifty-six feet from the surface of the road.

Since the Waco Suspension Bridge was nominated, the bridge has been closed for motorized traffic and is used presently only as a foot bridge.

There has been another change in a recently accepted nomination. Only a few days after the "Little Campus" submission was accepted in September, 1974, some of the structures were demolished. The buildings referred to as the carriage house and the two-story brick structure built in 1912 have been razed in order to create an access road adjoining a section of Interstate Highway 35 under construction. However, the three most important structures in the complex remain unthreatened at this time.

If you have further questions concerning past submissions, we will be glad to help you.

Sincerely,

Marie D. Landon  
Historian

MDL/dra
Ms. Marie Landon  
Texas Historical Committee  
Box 12276  
Capitol Station  
Austin, Texas  

Subject: Suspension Bridge Over the Brazos - Waco, Texas  

Dear Ms. Landon:  

Under separate cover are three blueline copies of original drawings concerning the Suspension Bridge about which Roger N. Conger asked me to send you information. The key points which you might be interested in as follows:  

ORIGINAL BRIDGE - 1870  

1. Span - 475 ft.  
2. Brick Towers -  
   a. Height of cables from roadbed - 43'-3"  
   b. Overall height from roadbed - 49'-0"  
3. Wood Trusses  
   a. Bolted wood sections  
   b. Total height trusses - 6'-8"  
4. Wood Roadbed  
   a. Width - 18'-0"  
   b. Total width wood structure - 22'-0"  

BRIDGE - REMODELED - 1914  

1. Span - 475 ft.  
2. Towers - Original brick was stuccoed. Cable height raised with concrete addition. Concrete arch added. Castellated brick removed.  
   a. Height of cables from roadbed - 51'-1"  
   b. Overall height from roadbed - 56'-10"  
3. Trusses - All original wood removed and replaced with steel trusses  
   a. Riveted steel angles, channels, and I-beams  
   b. Total height trusses - 14'-8"  

October 28, 1974
4. Roadbed - A wood roadbed was installed and two pedestrian walkways. Later, asphalt was installed over the wood roadbed (no date).
   a. Width - 18'-0"
   b. Walkway - 6'-0" - both sides
   c. Total width all steel - 34'-0"

BRIDGE ROADBED AND WALKWAYS - 1949

All of the roadbed and walkways were replaced to new specifications. Asphalt on roadbed was also installed. Since this date, roadbed has been repaired as needed.

BRIDGE - 1953 TORNADO

During the 1953 Waco tornado, the roadbed and structure were lifted in the center of the span and received minor damage. All steel was repaired as necessary to restore its vehicular useage.

BRIDGE - 1974

At present, detailed renovation plans are being planned as part of Waco's bicentennial celebration. The bridge is now used only for pedestrian traffic being closed to vehicular traffic in 1971. The bridge is planned for utilization for art shows, exhibits, outdoor dinners, and general public events.

Ms. Landon, I hope that this summary has the specific information that you are seeking. I have now secured all drawings of the bridge in the city secretary's fireproof vault. The McLennan County engineer also maintains a copy of most of the drawings that the City of Waco has at this time; however, our drawings are more complete. Unfortunately, we do not have the original drawings of the bridge; however, before the 1914 changes, a record of the original bridge was made. Also, enclosed you will find cover sheet copies and a bibliography copy from a report we are utilizing which may be of help to you.

If you need any additional information, please, feel free to call.

Sincerely,

DENNIS BROOKS LINAM, Associate A.I.A.
Bicentennial Coordinator

DBL/cb
encls
November 1, 1974

Ms. Norma Rowland
Branch of Publications
National Register of Historic Places
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
18th and C Streets, N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Ms. Rowland:

Recently you wrote to the Texas Historical Commission requesting additional information on the measurements of the Waco Suspension Bridge. The information I sent to you on October 10, 1974, was based on a scale drawing of the bridge included in an architectural report at the University of Texas. Yesterday, I received this very detailed report from the Waco City Planning Office and thought you might be interested in the material.

Sincerely,

Marie D. Landon
Historian

MDL/dra
Enclosure
REPORT: No notable structures (gazetteer).

No imminent construction is planned.

Consid const in area, however she says not a buffer because no clear + present danger.

Ask if land included is that which was purchased with bridge.

Is it unchanged since construction of bridge?

Sharply call "small bldg no longer exists."

Other questions not addressed.