



Photo 5-62. Miami River Canal Swing Bridge, Miami-Dade County (No. 874130)

Miami River Canal Swing Bridge

Miami-Dade County

FDOT #874130, 8DA100

This 1924 bridge, also known as the NW 54th Street Bridge, carries northbound Curtiss Parkway across the Miami Canal and connects the cities of Hialeah and Miami Springs. Designed by the Pompano and Dania Bridge Company of Broward County, the bridge was fabricated and installed by the Champion Bridge Company of Ohio. This bridge underwent major alterations in 1941 due to the damming of the Miami River. The “swing mechanism was removed and the swing span foundation reconstructed. The pivot cap was enlarged and twelve treated timber piles were added as support.”¹²⁶

The 112-foot, single-span swing bridge features a Warren pony truss with verticals that include steel beam top and bottom chords and end posts, angles in the vertical posts and diagonals, rigid connections, and gusset plates. Rather than placing the pivot pier in the usual location at mid-channel, the bridge was built as a bob-tail swing span with the pivot pier located near the bank to provide extra clearance for vessels using the canal. The rack and pinion of the swing mechanism was removed, and the bridge was widened in 1941. The wooden sidewalks originally appended to the outside of the truss also were removed in 1941. In 1981, asphalt replaced the original wooden deck.

Few bob-tailed spans remain in Florida. They represent a noteworthy adaptation of a major and important bridge technology. The Miami River Canal Swing Bridge also derives significance from its builder, age, technological type, and association with the rapid growth of Hialeah and Miami Springs during the 1920s. This bridge represents a central symbol of the downtown centers of the communities it connects. In 1995, the bridge was determined eligible for listing in the NRHP by the SHPO. It is significant under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and under Criterion C in the area of Engineering as a rare example of a bob-tailed swing bridge constructed by the Champion Bridge Company. FDOT rehabilitated the bridge in 2003 while maintaining its historic character.

¹²⁶ Anderson, Sherry, The Miami River Canal Swing Bridge, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, September 1997.