

FORM F - STRUCTURE

Assessor's Number **USGS Quad** **Area(s)** **Form number**
907

Town Groton

Massachusetts Historical Commission
220 Morrissey Boulevard
Massachusetts Archives Building
Boston, MA 02125

Place (*neighborhood or village*)

Address or Location Fitchs Bridge Road

Photographs
See Continuation Sheet

Name Fitch's Bridge

Ownership *Public X* *Private*

Type of Structure (*check one*):

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | bridge | powderhouse |
| | canal | carousel |
| | dam | boat or ship |
| | fort | street |
| | gate | tower |
| | kiln | wall |
| | lighthouse | windmill |
| | pound | tunnel |
| | other (<i>specify</i>) | |

Date of Construction 1898

Source Green, Vol. 4, p. 422

Sketch Map
See Continuation Sheet

Architect, Engineer or Designer: Berlin Iron Bridge Co.

Materials Steel, stone

Alterations (*with dates*)

Condition Poor

Moved no X yes **Date**

Acreage

Setting Rural

Recorded by Sanford Johnson
Organization Groton Historical Commission
Date (*Month/Year*) 10/06

DESIGN ASSESSMENT *Describe important features and evaluate in terms of other structures within the community.*

Fitch's Bridge is a double-intersection Warren Truss bridge, built in 1898 by the Berlin Iron Bridge Company of Berlin, Connecticut. The bridge is a riveted steel through truss, 126 feet long with a span of 119 feet and width of 14 feet. As of 1986, Fitch's Bridge was the third oldest of seven double intersection Warren through trusses in the Massachusetts Department of Public Works (MDPW) database. The bridge has wood decking and split stone abutments. It was repaired in 1921, and there are no records of repairs since then. The bridge was closed to traffic in 1965 or 1966. The bridge was removed from the National Bridge Inspection Standards inventory in 1994 and was last inspected in November, 1994. The setting is wooded and relatively isolated from vehicle traffic.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE *Explain the history of the structure, and how it relates to the development of the community.*

During the Colonial Period, travel over waterways in Groton took place on fordways at Stony Fordway off Nod Road, Woods Fordway at the West Groton bridge; Tarbells' Ford between Fitch's Bridge and Woods Ford. The first bridge over the Nashua River (then called the Lancaster River) was voted to be built on August 22, 1699, probably of wood piles and beams with spans of 15-20 feet and diagonal bracing in the corners as in a timber frame house. Two bridges had been built by 1726: one was between the Squannacook River and Mulpus Brook and another at the unidentified Walnut Run. Five bridges existed by 1750 in the current locations of river crossings in the town.

In 1793 or 1794 (sources conflict), Fitch's Bridge and the one at Stony Wading Place (Nod Road and State Route 119) were carried away in a flood as noted in Zachariah Fitch's notes of life near the Nashua River and in May's "Plantation". Caleb Butler notes in his history of the town that Captain Zachariah Fitch assumed responsibility for Fitch's Bridge in 1803 in exchange for an annual fee of \$30. Captain Zechariah Fitch's (b. 1734 d. 1820) Revolutionary War Diary describes his march in Bedford, on His notes Bennington, Vermont during the Revolutionary War.

Portion of 1893 USGS – From MassGIS
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 also mention that on March 1st, 2nd, and third in 1818 " A warm rain and a south wind melts a deep snow and causes a severe flood which does immense damage to mills, damns (sic) and bridges. Fitch's and Jewett's bridges carried away." Captain Fitch's son Zechariah was the builder of the bridge carried off in the flood in the spring of 1818;

The steel bridge was finished over the Nashua River on Saturday, February 12, 1898. It replaced a wooden one built in 1871 by Luther Blood, Groton builder and resident of 1 Powderhouse Road (MHC #143). The steel bridge was voted by the town to be built by the Berlin Iron Bridge Co. of Connecticut according to the Boston Evening Journal, November 27, 1898 and reported by Dr. Green in his history of the town. Fitch's Bridge was closed in 1965 or 1966 due to its unsafe condition but retains many original features including ornamental rosettes along the safety rail.

Bibliography:

Rehabilitation of Fitch's Bridge Groton Application to the Transportation Enhancements Program for Construction Funding. Prepared by Town of Groton Board of Selectmen, Groton Greenway Committee, Friends

of Fitch's Bridge, February 15, 2006. Sawyer, "People and Places", p. 142; May, "Plantation", pp. 10, 13; Butler, pp. 52, 56; Green, Vol. 4, pp. 387-389, 422;

X Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a National Register Criteria Statement Form.*

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

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Sketch Map

North Toward Top



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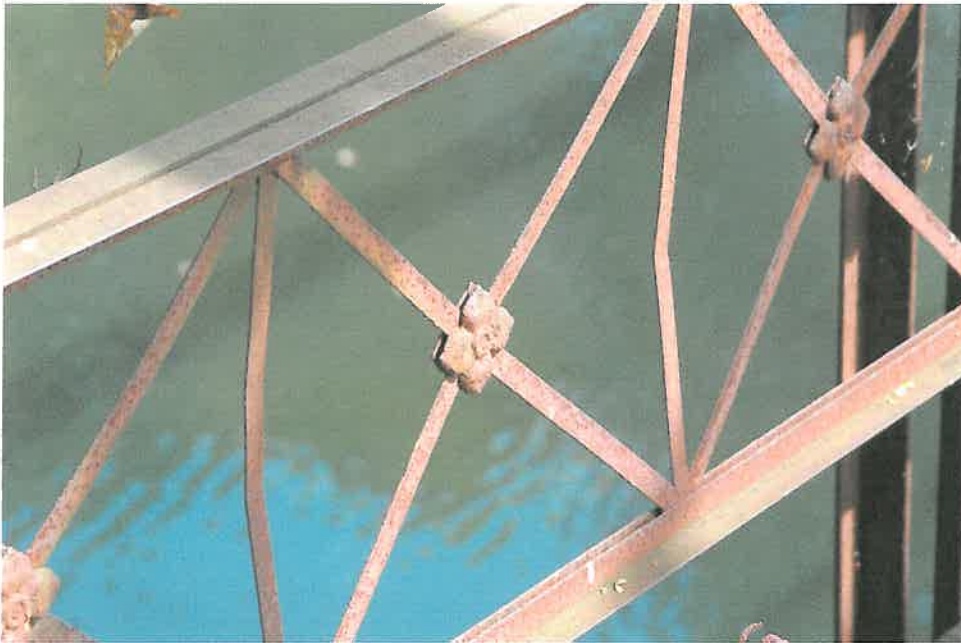
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