Santa Barbara County Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission

NOMINATION FORM FOR DESIGNATION OF:

[X] **HISTORIC LANDMARK** **OR** [ ] **PLACE OF HISTORIC MERIT**

(Please read the instructions before preparing form, and use continuation pages as necessary.)

1. Address and Assessor's Parcel Number(s) of site:
U.S. Route 101, Postmile 40.98
29.4 miles west of the City of Santa Barbara

2. Current owner's name, address, and telephone number:
California Department of Transportation, District 5
50 Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

3. Name of property:
Arroyo Hondo Bridge

4. Property's historical name and name of original owner:
Arroyo Hondo Bridge
California Highway Commission

5. Type of resource (check one): [ ] building; [X] other structure; [ ] site or feature; [ ] cultural landscape; [ ] object; [ ] other
Bridge

6. Date of construction or age: 105 years old in 2024. Construction started in 1918 and concluded in late 1919.

7. Architect and architectural style:
Open spandrel reinforced concrete arch bridge

8. Physical description of the nominated property: The Arroyo Hondo Bridge is 530 feet long with a bridge deck 21.2 feet wide. It is an open spandrel reinforced concrete arch bridge with approach spans on two-column bents. The columns rest on plinths with simplified Doric capitals. There are 11 spans including 5 main arch spans and 6 approach spans. Each arch has two ribs connected with reinforced concrete beams. The railings are a concrete baluster style.

9. Physical alterations to the nominated property and its current historical and architectural integrity:
Caltrans did not provide any information regarding alterations. It is likely that no alterations were made because it was difficutl to alter a concrete bridge. It was bypassed in 1950 and has no recognizable alterations.

10. Description of current setting, including but not limited to associated historic cultural features such as vegetation, walls, roads, as applicable: The bridge is on the Gaviota coast, west of the US 101, over Arroyo Hondo Canyon. Directly west of the Arroyo Hondo Bridge is a railroad trestle bridge. The north and south approaches only expand a few feet beyond the bridge. The north side is not accessible to vehicles. On the south side is a vista point where people can park and view the bridge before returning to the freeway.

11. Provide a brief history of the nominated property and discuss its historical importance (include references and use continuation pages if needed):
Please see continuation sheets.

12. Discuss why the nominated property meets one or more of the eligibility criteria established by the County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 18A, Section 18A-3. (Consult the County Landmark Information Sheet and use continuation pages if needed):
Please see continuation sheets.

13. Summarize the case for the designation of this property as a [X] Landmark or [ ] Place of Historic Merit:
Please see continuation sheets.

14. [X] Published map with the property location marked.

15. [X] Map or survey of the property boundaries (Assessor's Parcel Map is acceptable). Include the boundaries of those portions or elements that are proposed to be designated.

16. Number and description of photographs enclosed. Where feasible, provide views of those features that make the property worthy, as well as views of the current neighborhood setting.
10 photos are attached. Photo 1 is a modern image and the other 9 photos are from the 1919 report by Highway Engineer A. B. Fletcher to the California Highway Commission.

17. Name, address, telephone number, and email address of person or entity submitting this nomination:

Amber Long, Principal Architectural Historian, Long Historic Preservation Services
P.O. Box 882 Santa Maria, CA 93456-0882
805-748-7992 info@longhps.com

18. [x] I believe that the statements made herein are true and complete.

Amber Long

(Authorized signature of individual or entity representative submitting this nomination)

19. Date of nomination:
October 7, 2024

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[ ] Signature [ ] References [ ] Photographs [ ] Maps [ ] Owner's Name [ ] Complete [ ] Peer Review

Name(s) of Reviewer(s):

Continuation Sheets: Arroyo Hondo Bridge

The following information is adapted from the Arroyo Hondo Bridge Memo prepared in 1979 by staff architectural historian John Snyder of the California Department of Transportation. The memo recommended that the bridge was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Section 11: Brief history of nominated property and historical importance.
In 1917 and 1918, the California Highway Commission, the precursor to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), set about upgrading the coast road between Santa Barbara and the Gaviota Pass. A series of canyons required the alignment to curve inland to a point where an easy crossing was possible. Ledbetter and Company of Los Angeles began construction on the bridge over Arroyo Hondo Canyon in August 1918. The plans and specifications were prepared by the California Highway Commission, which called for a cast-in-place, open spandrel, reinforced concrete arched bridge with parabolic arches surmounted by columns and round arches that supported the deck. The location was isolated, and all materials were shipped via the Southern Pacific Railroad's Coast Line to the Tajiguas railroad siding nearby. Materials were hauled two miles on a concrete road to the job site. The California Portland Cement Company provided the concrete; Russell, Greene & Foell of Los Angeles provided the aggregate; reinforcing steel was provided by the American System of Reinforcing of Los Angeles; and expansion joints were provided by Llewellyn Iron works of San Francisco. The design of the bridge was similar to the Arroyo Seco Bridge in Pasadena and appears to be directly influenced by that bridge, built in 1913.

Section 12: Discuss why the nominated property meets one or more of the criteria established in County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 18A, Section 18A-3.
The Arroyo Hondo Bridge is eligible as a County Landmark under eligibility criteria a, c, f, g, and h.

(a) It exemplifies or reflects special elements of the county's cultural, social, economic, political, archaeological, aesthetic, engineering, architectural or natural history.
The Arroyo Hondo Bridge represents the county's architectural and engineering history through its reinforced concrete design and function as a transportation link. The bridge also influenced the economic and political history by providing better access for transportation and commerce along the Gaviota coast.

(c) It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship.
The Arroyo Hondo Bridge is an excellent example of the rise and widespread development of reinforced concrete bridges between 1900 and 1940. It is considered a prototype of the open spandrel parabolic arch bridge that makes it unique. Stylistically, Classical Revival designs were popular for monumental structures. The use of superimposed arches relates to Roman aqueduct design and the simplified Doric capitals reflect Greek architecture.

(f) It has a location with unique physical characteristics or is a view or vista representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the County of Santa Barbara.
The Arroyo Hondo Bridge is visible on the southbound side of the US 101, where a vista point was constructed for tourists to stop and learn more about the bridge and the Gaviota coast. It also provides a great vantage point of the bridge. At times the bridge is open to pedestrians and constitutes an important view or vista of the Gaviota coastline.

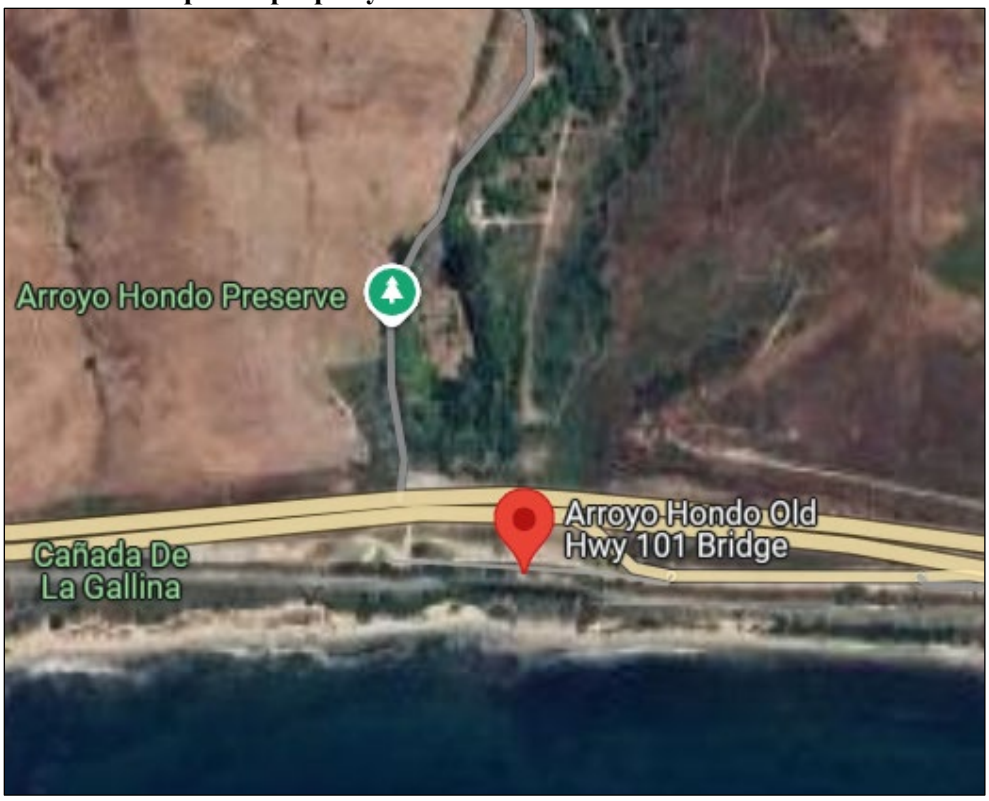
(g) It embodies elements of architectural design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship that represent a significant structural or architectural achievement or innovation.

The Arroyo Hondo Bridge is recognized by Caltrans as a prototype in the development of the cast-in-place, multi-span, reinforced concrete, open spandrel parabolic arch bridge. It utilizes aesthetic design principles that create unity and avoid duality or perfect symmetry and was among the first bridges to use these design principles. These design principles became desirable in multi-span arche bridges through the 1940s representing a significant structural and architectural achievement.

(h) It reflects significant geographical patterns, including those associated with different eras of settlement and growth, particularly transportation modes or distinctive examples of park or community planning.
The Arroyo Hondo Bridge was part of the early alignment of the Coast Highway, which became the US 101. It was designed and constructed to bridge the Arroyo Hondo Canyon and provide improved and reliable transportation along the Gaviota coast for commerce and later, automobiles and tourism. Like other bridges in the county, the Arroyo Hondo Bridge provided important links that aided the growth of the county.

Section 13: Summarize the case for designation as a landmark.
The Arroyo Hondo Bridge is eligible as a county landmark because it reflects the economic, political, engineering, and architectural history of the county. It embodies the characteristics of Classical Revival bridge design using cast-in-place reinforced concrete with open spandrel arch spans, approach spans on two-column bents, and concrete baluster railings. It is a notable vista along the southbound US 101 with a vista point and information signage. It is a prototype in the development of the cast-in-place, multi-span, reinforced concrete, open spandrel parabolic arch bridge representing a significant structural and architectural achievement. The Arroyo Hondo Bridge also reflects the evolution of transportation links along the Gaviota Coast.

Section 14. Published map with property location marked.



Source: Google Maps

Section 15: Map or Survey

Source: Gaviota Quadrangle U.S. Geological Service Topographic Map, 2021. Arroyo Hondo Bridge circled in blue.

Section 16: Photographs

1. View of Arroyo Hondo Bridge from the south, facing north. The historic photos are from the 1919 report prepared for the California Highway Commission.

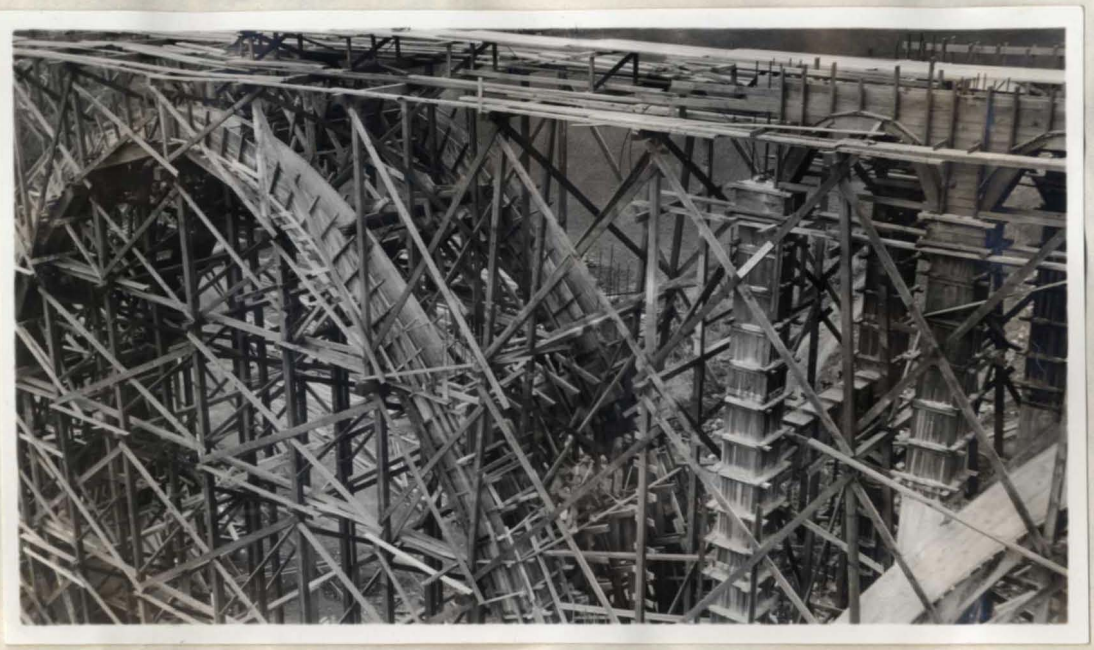
Source: Wikimapia.org.

Arroyo Honda Bridge –

Completed Structure

Railing Constructed on Vertical Curve.
S.B.2F. Cont. #229 -

Arroyo Hondo Bridge Under Construction



False work and forms
Arch ring No. 2

Span No. 1 stripped.

Rail forms - End post.

Rail forms