Historic 5th Avenue Bridge

Bridges across Mill Creek are shown in maps as early as 1876. Wooden bridges constructed at this site were repeatedly damaged by Mill Creek floods and replaced. A concrete bridge built in 1916 was the fourth bridge at this site. The bridge connected residences on the north side of Mill Creek with the commercial district along Rose and West Main streets.

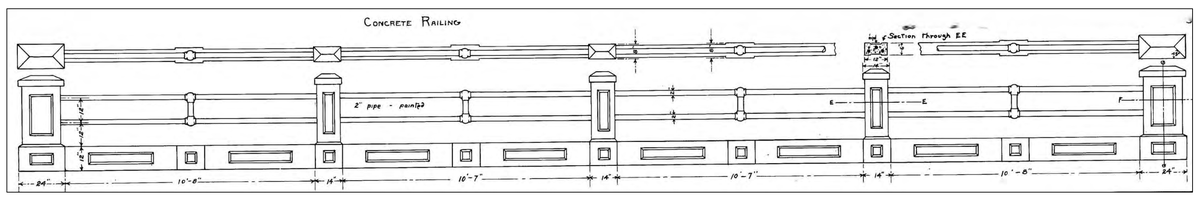
Engineer Walter Rehorn designed the 5th Avenue bridge, and seven other bridges in Walla Walla. The bridge followed standard designs for concrete bridges of the era, but was unique in the decorative design elements, including concrete posts and caps and the rectangular relief of its guard rails.



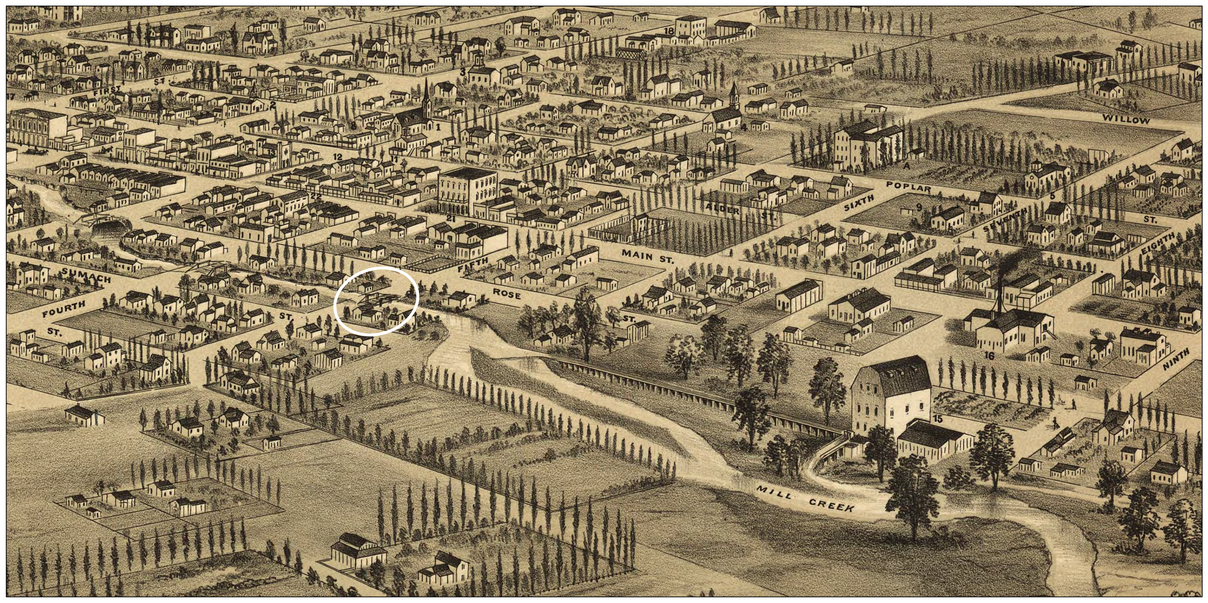
Decorative railing of the 5th Avenue bridge



W.R. Rehorn
CITY ENGINEER



Detail of the concrete posts and rails from the original plan drawings



A bridge at 5th Avenue is shown (circled) in the *Bird's Eye View of Walla Walla* map in 1876

Map source: Glover, E. S, A.L. Bancroft & Company, and Everts & Able. Bird's eye view of Walla Walla, Washington Territory. www.loc.gov/item/75696671/

Original drawings of the 5th Avenue bridge depict a span with one center support pier. Retrofitting shown in later drawings (1928) added an angled pier nose. Similar retrofitting occurred on the Palouse and Colville Street bridges. The retrofitting was primarily for flood control purposes and included reinforcing the peak of the angled nose with steel bars and widening the pier's base.

The 5th Avenue bridge was an example of early city planning and the integration of architectural features with the cityscape. It was also an example of design styles of such spans erected in the early 20th century.



View of the 5th Avenue bridge looking downstream in 2024



View of the 5th Avenue bridge looking upstream in 2019

The 5th Avenue bridge replacement and fish passage project was sponsored by Tri-State Steelheaders, and completed in partnership with the City of Walla Walla and Walla Walla County.

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City of Walla Walla, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Bonneville Power Administration, and Tri-State Steelheaders.

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