

CATARAQUI RIVER CROSSING

Landscape Design Narrative

November 8, 2011

1. Principles and Concept

The main intent of the landscape concept is to ground the bridge structure dramatically and distinctively at each side of the crossing. While the east side of the river embankment is steeper and higher, the landscape and retaining walls at both sides are intended to reflect and enhance the edge condition where the land falls away under the bridge. In terms of the crossing experience, the landscape concept utilizes the principle of spatial compression to amplify the difference between the limited views passing along a roadway corridor and the open vistas over the Cataraqui River.

Gateway elements will punctuate the edge location and along with the landscape corridor provide a traffic calming suggestion to drivers. The river edge condition and abutment landscapes offer excellent opportunities for belvederes or lookouts, as well as, locations for interpretation of the cultural landscape.

2. Description of Elements

While the east and west banks offer differing conditions the palette of materials, light fixtures and the gateway elements in particular, should display continuity. Materials selection should reflect the cultural landscape of Kingston and the Cataraqui River and might reference, but not overtly imitate, the built elements associated with the Rideau Waterway.

2.1 Planting

Where possible, reinstate woodlands or create natural copses of trees to maximize the corridor effect and limit views on the land sides of the actual bridge. The height of plant material should drop to under 1.5 m on the upper terraces of the abutment retaining walls to ensure views to the river landscape from the roadway and sidewalk.

Select native plant material reflective of the Deciduous Forest Region species association, and vary the list as much as is practical to provide diversity and hardiness. Shrubs in particular, should be selected to minimize maintenance such as pruning.

2.2 Retaining Walls

Retaining walls are to be large, regular limestone 'cap rock' blocks. This material makes reference to both the Rideau Canal lock walls and the heritage buildings of Kingston and other Rideau Canal corridor settlements. In addition locally sourced natural stone is a cost effective and low embodied energy material.

2.3 Belvederes

The belvederes should be large enough to be in scale with the bridge and gateway elements, as well as to call attention to the presence of longer, waterfront trail systems. Provide shade, benches and garbage receptacles, so as to be punctuation on the trail system and a natural destination, a resting place or rendezvous. Overhead pergolas should be constructed of large timber and black coloured steel or cast iron (or aluminum) as a material reference to lock station elements, however should reflect contemporary design aesthetic. Overhead trellises also offer the opportunity to mount light sources, which are 'invisible' rather than stand-alone design elements. Interpretive signs or sculptural objects should be integrated into upstand walls or railings rather than on stand-alone posts.

2.4 Gateway Elements

The gateway elements are intended to clearly demark the junction of bridge structure to land and impart iconic or landmark character to this important structure. There is a long tradition and many examples of distinctive columns and other sculptural objects around the world which become associated with both the place and era in which they were built. Careful consideration to the scale and volume of the elements is necessary, as it is likely that they could too small and seem meagre in size given the width of the roadway and wide open vista of the Cataraqui River. As with the other aspects of the approach landscape the gateway elements should be contemporary in form and use materials and proportions to reference the cultural landscape without overt imitation of heritage architecture.

2.5 Lighting and Site Furniture

The appropriate location to change from standard roadway post-type lights to bridge lighting is at the abutment. The bridge lighting should be a low and unobtrusive as possible, rather than a distinctive design element to enhance the sleek profile of the structure, as viewed from a distance and to minimize visual interpretation of views of the river corridor from the bridge.

Site furniture, such as benches, waste receptacles and bike racks should have a combination of black metal and wood.

2.6 Dry-stone Wall at Library

The dry-laid stone wall on south-west of the library extends past the planned toe of slope for the Gore Road widening fill. We recommend disassembling the affected

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portion at the south end and reconstructing it as a return to the east to form a partial courtyard. This wall has bullet shaped vertical coping at the top and exhibits a high level of workmanship, that hints at old world skills. The reconstruction will need to be done by an experienced 'stone waller'. The Dry Stone Waller Across Canada (formerly the Dry Stone Wall Association of Canada) would be the first point of contact in sourcing a craftsman with skills to relocate the south end of the wall and give the remaining length some remedial attention.

Careful attention to the cornering treatment is necessary as well as avoidance of stacked joints, one of the few flaws in the existing wall. The junction between original and reconstructed wall should be subtly marked. One suggestion would be to trace that joint with copper flashing so as not to weaken the kni , but still record where the intervention occurred, as well as pave the former footprint of the wall along the slope as a vestige of its original location.

2.7 Pathways

The pathways connecting roadway sidewalks should be 3 m wide and paved with asphalt where on slopes exceeding 2%. The maximum slope should be 5%.