

Advisory Committee of Council Information Report



Committee	Heritage Guelph
Date	Monday, June 3, 2024
Subject	116 Gordon Street (Boathouse) – Rehabilitation of retaining wall

Purpose of Report

This report provides information regarding the proposed rehabilitation of the existing concrete retaining wall in front of the Boathouse building east of the Gordon Street bridge at 116 Gordon Street.

Key Findings

The property known municipally as 116 Gordon Street (Attachment-1, Figures 1 and 2) contains the Boathouse building, a significant built heritage resource protected under individual heritage designation By-law (1997)-15531. The heritage attributes of the property protected by the individual heritage designation are limited to the Boathouse building exterior and do not include the concrete retaining wall between the building and the river (Attachment-1, Figures 3 and 4).

116 Gordon Street is located within the Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District under heritage designation By-law (2014)-19812 (Attachment-1, Figure 5). The property is also within the Speed and Eramosa Riverscape identified by the Cultural Heritage Action Plan as a candidate cultural heritage landscape (CHL). The HCD Plan has identified the stone walls lining the river corridor as having cultural heritage value in their have historic associations with social history in the early 20th century of Guelph. Most of the river walls in this section of the Speed River from its confluence with the Eramosa River downstream to Gow's Bridge were constructed in stone during the 1930s as civic beautification.

The previous, 2-storey boathouse building is seen in the 1929 Fire Insurance Plan (Attachment-1, Figure 6). The individual heritage designation by-law states that the current building was built about 1930 and a 1940's air photo shows the retaining wall in front of it only partially constructed by that time (Attachment-1, Figure 7). The 1946 Fire Insurance Plan shows the building as it is today (Attachment-1, Figure 8). It is important to understand that the retaining wall in question was not fully in place during the 1940s and it was added to with additional concrete parging and a concrete coping in later years.

Although the proposed rehabilitation project is largely about repairs and re-facing of the concrete retaining wall and the re-location of the steps down to water level - compliance with the Building Code requires a guard rail be installed along the top of the wall in front of the Boathouse building east of the Gordon Street bridge. This

change to a prominent feature of the Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District requires review and comment by Heritage Guelph.

Figures 9-12 in Attachment-1 show current photos of the retaining wall area today. Figure 13 shows an example of metal railing installed along the Riverwalk beside the protected heritage building complex at the Metalworks on Arthur Street South.

Section 4.7.8 of the Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District Plan and Guidelines states that views of the river shall remain unobstructed by buildings and structures. The type of railing design being contemplated in staff's opinion creates an acceptable amount of transparency while achieving compliance with the Building Code.

The HCD Plan also states that the stone walls lining the river corridor shall be conserved. The proposed rehabilitation of the Boathouse retaining wall would be repaired and re-faced in such a way that retains the appearance of this important part of Guelph's Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Property location, historic images and current photos

Departmental Approval

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