

DATE: June 15, 2017

TO: Mayor Al Strathdee and members of St. Marys Town Council

RE: Flowers on Church Street Bridge

At the recent meeting of the Heritage St. Marys Committee, the matter of the sudden appearance of flower boxes on the parapet walls of the Church Street Bridge was brought forward.

The committee has concerns about these flower boxes for several reasons. The Church Street Bridge is a designated structure (By-law 16-1979) and therefore any plan for modification of it – including placing unrelated elements on it – should be brought to the Heritage Committee for review. The committee's mandate is to advise council on whether or not this sort of modification is in the best interests of this important 1884 stone-arched bridge, one of the town's most recognizable heritage assets.

In 2014, a newly formed beautification committee did bring to the St. Marys Heritage Committee for review a plan to place a total of 26 planters on the parapets of the Queen Street Bridge – 13 on each side. The Queen Street Bridge is also a designated structure. (By-law 31-1978) The following excerpt from the minutes of the St. Marys Heritage Committee, April 12, 2014, gives the outcome of this request for approval:

.... Following some discussion it was agreed that since these planters will not be permanent and will not damage the stonework in any way:

Moved by Jan Mustard, seconded by Ian Ball that the St. Marys Heritage Committee approves the installation of flower boxes on the Queen Street Bridge. Carried

The flower boxes were placed on the bridge again in 2015 and, in the Report from Council, part of the minutes of the St. Marys Heritage Committee, April 20, 2015, it was stated that “the plantings should be low enough for a reasonably unobstructed view of the river.”

In 2016, of course, the main street reconstruction project meant that there were no flower boxes on the bridge. This year they are back but with only seven on each side, allowing for clear views up and down the Thames River and an excellent showing of the rehabilitated bridge superstructure.

Eight of the leftover boxes are now on the parapets of the Church Street Bridge, adding extra weight to this stonework, due for a repairs and reinforcement at some time after the work on the new Wellington Street Bridge is completed.

The members of the St. Marys Heritage Committee realize that 2017 is a special year, celebrating Canada's Sesquicentennial. The committee has no wish to dampen efforts to make our town look especially attractive for this occasion.

However, the committee does suggest that any future plans to modify the appearance of the Church Street Bridge should follow due process and be presented to the St. Marys Heritage Committee for prior review and recommendations.

Best wishes

Mary Smith, Secretary

St. Marys Heritage Committee

Letter reviewed and approved by Larry Pfaff, Chair



Flower boxes on Queen Street Bridge, June 14, 2017.

There are seven boxes on each parapet, spaced to allow appreciation of the heritage features of the rehabilitated bridge superstructure and also a clear view of the river on each side. Note also the hanging flower baskets on the light standards at the ends of the bridge.



Flower boxes on the Church Street Bridge, June 14, 2017

There are four wooden boxes on each parapet of the Church Street Bridge, sitting directly on the limestone caps