

NORTH HALTON CELTIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY

UPDATE 49- THE FALLBROOK BRIDGE AND THE HALTON MASTER CYCLE PLAN



There is one final aspect of the campaign to preserve the Fallbrook site as a memorial to the Ballinafad pioneer community on which we wish to elaborate. It is the historic stone bridge built in the late 1800's from stones recycled from the destroyed mill that the McClure's had built. Although the structure remains sound, major repairs are necessary to preserve it for the future. How long can it survive the wear and tear and pollution of modern vehicles, including trucks? As you see in the picture (the millrace is behind the picture) taken by our communications consultant Alastair McIntyre, the proposition before Halton Hills Municipal Council (H.H.M.C.) is to close the road accept for pedestrians, cycles and horses. It would be integrated into the Halton Hills Master Cycle Plan.

In order to evaluate the importance of the bridge and make propositions for its future use, H.H.M.C., at the request of the Ontario Heritage Trust, contracted to R.J. Burnside and Associates than Unterman McPhail Associates to do the study. The Friends of Fallbrook and our consultant Tom Murrison collaborated in this research. To see the complete study, link directly to electric Scotland at http://www.electricscotland.com/history/canada/16336_Draft.pdf . We show you a few pertinent excerpts.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

*R.J. Burnside & Associates Limited retained Unterman McPhail Associates, Heritage Resource Management Consultants, on behalf of the Town of Halton Hills to undertake a cultural heritage evaluation report (CHER) for the Halton Culvert #54C —also referred to as the Silver Creek Bridge and Fallbrook Bridge—on behalf of the Town of Halton Hills. The Town of Halton Hills is preparing an environmental assessment to develop alternatives and undertake public consultation to address the structural deficiencies of the culvert on 27th Side Road. A 2008 condition survey indicated the structure has stone loss and mortar deterioration and the railing system does not meet current safety standards. The bridge has been identified as being deficient in respect to deck width, barrier and guide rail protection. The project is being planned as a Schedule B project in accordance with the requirements of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) document (June 2000, amended September 2007 **p.1***

*The Ontario Heritage Trust visited the site in 2008. In a letter it has indicated that it considers the “historic stone bridge” over Silver Creek to be an integral and important part of a cultural heritage landscape encompassing the historic Fallbrook Farm and its associated heritage buildings and structures.²⁸ The Heritage Trust requested that a cultural heritage evaluation report of the bridge as part of the Environmental Assessment process.**p.14***

Evaluation

General Category Criterion Maximum Score

Possible

Scoring

Documentation Builder 6 0

Age 14 10*

Materials 4 4

Design/Style 16 16

Prototype 10 0

Technology

Structural Integrity 10 5

Visual Appeal 12 12

Integrity 4 4

Landmark 6 6

Gateway 4 4

Bridge Aesthetics and

Environment

Character

Contribution

4 4

Historical Historical Association 10 10

Total Score 100 75


** The bridge was scored using the c1900 date of construction. It is possibly a latter 19th century structure, but documentation at this time is not conclusive. If the pre 1900 date of construction was applied it would increase the score to 79 points.*

5.3 Summary of Cultural Heritage Value

The Council of Esquesing Township opened 27th Side Road in 1872 as part of the development of the local road system in the 19th century. The current stone arch bridge may be the first structure on the site; it is documented as having been built c1900 by a photograph. 27th Side Road provided access to the given road already established in Lot 28 Concession 9, now Fallbrook Trail. The one span, stone masonry arch structure was occasionally built in the 19th century, but was not a typical bridge type of its time. The Halton Culvert #54C has not undergone any significant modifications, and clearly exhibits its original form. Although a modest structure, the Halton Culvert #54C is considered to be well designed, and it contributes to the ambience and the natural and Rural character of the area.p.16

As we see, the Fallbrook Bridge receives a high score and its preservation becomes a necessity. HHMC is holding consultations on the eventual closure to vehicles and its recycling to environmentally friendly purposes. Cynthia Gamble, a local journalist, has been following the Fallbrook saga since its beginning in 2007. In the community newspaper, Inside Halton.com, she produced the following article concerning council's deliberations.


By Cynthia Gamble, staff writer

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- Jan 05, 2010 - 3:41 PM
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Input wanted on possible road closure

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 Halton Hills councillors were reluctant to close 27 Sideroad permanently due to a deteriorating historical bridge before all avenues of public notification were explored, at December's council meeting.

The 27 Sideroad bridge is a single lane stone arch structure, built approximately 130 years ago over Silver Creek on a narrow and windy stretch of road between Eighth Line and Fallbrook Trail, north of Georgetown. Many hikers park their vehicles near the bridge to access the nearby Bruce Trail and Silver Creek Conservation Area. According to a staff survey about 400 vehicles a day travel the road.

The staff recommendation comes after an Environmental Assessment Study was done on the bridge. To preserve its heritage value, structural repairs, costing about \$400,000, are recommended, rehabilitating the bridge to a pedestrian-only status. The road would be closed at bridge to thru traffic in the spring summer and fall months and in the winter the road would be ploughed only to provide access to the two 27 Sideroad residences, both located near Eighth Line.

Alternatives were to restore the bridge to full use, replace, replace on new alignment or do nothing and ranged in cost from \$650,000 to \$2 million.

Town Engineer Chris Mills warned councillors that the bridge is being closely monitored due to its rapidly deteriorating condition, and it may have to be closed temporarily for safety reasons anyway.

But ward trustees were reluctant to close a road without more public feedback. Only five residents commented during the notice of the study, with all requesting preservation and only one asking the road be rebuilt to remain open to vehicular traffic.

"It seems to me to close a road is a pretty big step," said Ward 2 Councillor Joan Robson. "I'd like us to hold off making a decision on this until we can put some signage up and get a little further public input."

Ward 2 Councillor Bryan Lewis pointed out that 400 vehicles/a day potentially means about 200 drivers/day having to find other routes to drive morning and night.

"I think we have to recognize that for people living on other roads around the area we may have a significant impact of 200 or 400 vehicles start going off in other directions.... And that is a genuine concern," Lewis said.

Staff will report back after getting additional public comment by placing signage on the local roads.

Although only pedestrian traffic is mentioned here, cycling, skiing, snowshoeing are all activities that would add to the attraction of the route, especially for the nature lovers who swarm to this magical site and use the Bruce Trail. Side road 27 is also a secondary link between the Fallbrook site, the Silver Creek Education Center and Scottsdale, the historical property belonging to the Ontario Heritage Site. Vehicle traffic can enter Scottsdale off Trafalgar Road which is a main highway. The Fallbrook bridge route would make a wonderful cycle tour between Halton, Erin and Caledon. Beautiful rural scenery on good, but unpaved roads. This leads us to our final document. The Halton Hills master Cycle plan and another fine article by Cynthia Gamble.

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- Jun 23, 2010 - 5:15 PM
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Bike lane meeting planned



Bike lane meeting planned. A public meeting will be held next Tuesday at the Civic Centre to discuss designated cycling lanes (like this one on Danby Road) and the Town's Cycling Master Plan. *Ted Brown*

Georgetown residents curious about the newest white lines on Delrex Blvd. and Danby Rd. E. can find more information in an upcoming Town-hosted public meeting.

For the full length of Delrex Blvd., the lines designate 1.5 metre bicycle lanes on both sides of the roads. Director of Infrastructure Services Chris Mills said at a recent council meeting, "parking is not banned (in the lanes) at this time." However, he said, residents on Delrex are being encouraged to park in their driveways.

On Danby Rd., the lane configuration is different; there is a bicycle route on the north side of the road (and parking will be banned on this side) and on the south side is a delineated parking space, with the bicycle lane beside that.

Mills said this new style is being tried out in the newly-developed part of town where parking habits have not yet been established.

Wards 3&4 Regional Councillor Jane Fogal, part of the Town's cycling committee, says the new lanes are part of the strategy outlines in the new draft Cycling Master Plan, and people have responded favourably so far.

"We're very excited about bringing forward the Cycling Master Plan; it's been a long time coming, and I'm anxious to get to the implementation stage," said Fogal.

She urges all residents attend the upcoming Public Information Centre (PIC) to be held at the Town's Civic Centre in the council chambers on Tuesday, June 29, 6-8:30 p.m.

"It's important that people understand that this is about types of cycling, especially kids riding to school, cycling for fitness in the rural area, or riding to the downtown for an ice cream cone," said Fogal. "It covers all ages and all abilities. So if people wonder if the PIC is meant for them, the answer is yes."

The draft Final Cycling Master Plan includes recommended cycling routes, on and off road, an implementation strategy with estimated costs over the next 20 years. The full report is available at www.haltonhills.ca/cycling or at the Civic Centre's Infrastructure Services counter.

Included are maps of the proposed roads to be designated bicycle routes in Georgetown, Acton, and the rural area.

In the rural area, proposed on-road routes include Steeles Ave., Winston Churchill Blvd., Five Sideroad, 15 Sideroad, 17 Sideroad, 20 Sideroad, 22 Sideroad, 32 Sideroad, portions of Third Line, Fifth Line, Dublin Line, Ninth Line including Fallbrook Trail, and portions of Tenth Line.

"We're asking people to have a look at those routes and give us feedback on the plan," said Fogal, who added comments are also welcome via e-mail or phone. "The more feedback we get the better."

Town staff will report back at a future council meeting with the final cycling master plan for approval, including an implementation plan with costs.

To see the H.H.M.C. master cycling plan, link to www.haltonhills.ca/cycling. Then link to <http://www.haltonhills.ca/cycling/pdf/Reports/4-5%20-%20Candidate%20Routes%20GEORGETOWN.pdf> to see the proposed routes. For the Fallbrook trail which would incorporate the Fallbrook Bridge, go to <http://www.haltonhills.ca/cycling/pdf/Chapter%204%20-%20The%20Cycling%20Network.pdf>.

This completes the documentation of the Fallbrook Bridge and the H.H. Cycle Master Plan. It clearly demonstrates both the heritage value of the bridge but also its vital role in the avant-garde transportation plan being considered by the H.H.M.C.. The idea of a H.H. Heritage Cycling Tour between all the marvellous sites of the region becomes more than a dream.