

4.1 Segment 1, West Anchor: Sandwich Community; McKee, Ambassador and Assumption Parks (Chewitt Street to Askin Avenue)

Context

The West riverfront anchor includes the Sandwich Community; McKee Ambassador and Assumption Parks. **(Figure 48)**

Segment 1 represents the Central Riverfront’s western anchor and gateway, emphasized by the presence of the Ambassador Bridge built in 1929 between Windsor and Detroit. **(Photos 36 and 37)** Assumption Park south of Riverside Drive is well treed and has a neighbourhood park setting separate from the riverfront. This park has been historically designated for the landforms (e.g. original creek bed formations) that are still evident today near the corner of Huron Church Road and University Avenue.

General Recommendations

- Symbolic international gateway from Detroit and the United States.
- Ambassador Bridge provides a visual anchor to the west end of the Central Riverfront.
- The Celestial Beacon and Sculpture Garden, plaza and other elements provide a setting for the enjoyment and contemplation of:
 - Sunsets.
 - Sculptural works of art.
 - The Ambassador Bridge.
 - Astronomical patterns.
- Existing and proposed trails and walkways provide access to the Celestial Beacon, Sculpture Garden, washrooms, parking and a terraced assembly plaza east of the Ambassador Bridge.
- Access to parking underneath and west of the Ambassador Bridge .
- The non-motorized boat launch and the existing beach are to be enhanced.
- Recreationway and walkway connections are proposed west to McKee Park where parking, facilities for both non-motorized and motorized boats exist, washrooms and connection to a shuttle service station is recommended.

Specific Recommendations (west to east)

Sandwich Entrance and McKee Park:

- Trail head location.
- Shuttle Service western terminus.
- Existing park, parking lot and boat launch facilities to be maintained and enhanced.
- Trail connection via easements along the river to Ambassador Bridge.

Ambassador Bridge Parking Court/Recreational Equipment Rental/Non-motorized Boat Launch:

- A 28+/- car parking court underneath the Ambassador Bridge providing parking at the western anchor, the existing beach and non-motorized boat launch.
- Parking lot access from Riverside Drive at the foot of Huron Church Road.
- An Equipment Rental Pavilion at the north east edge of the parking lot for recreational equipment rental including bicycles, rollerblades, non-motorized boats (e.g. kayaks, canoes).

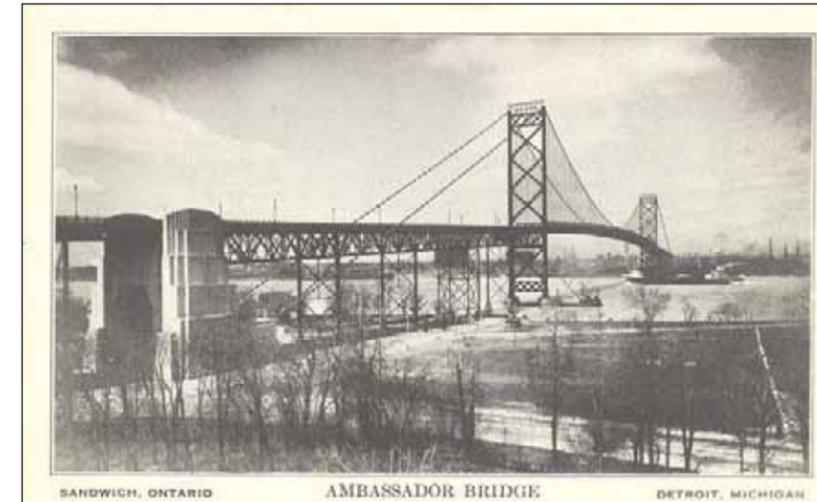


Photo 36



Photo 37



Photo 38

Photo 39

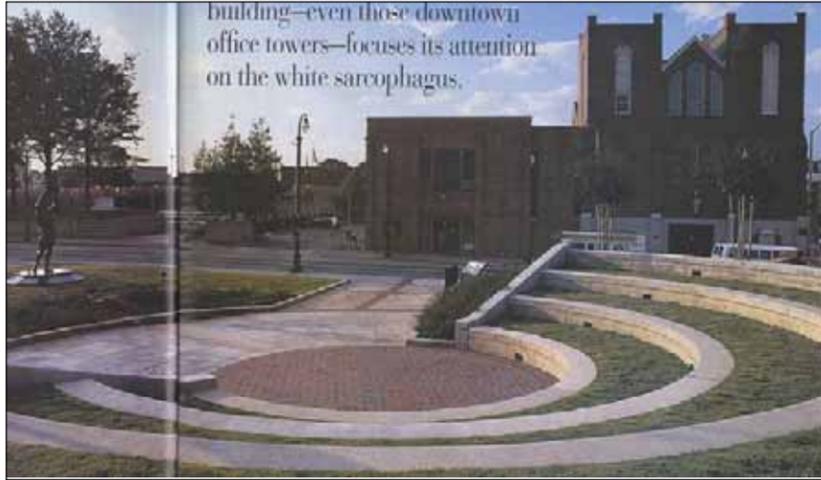


Figure 49

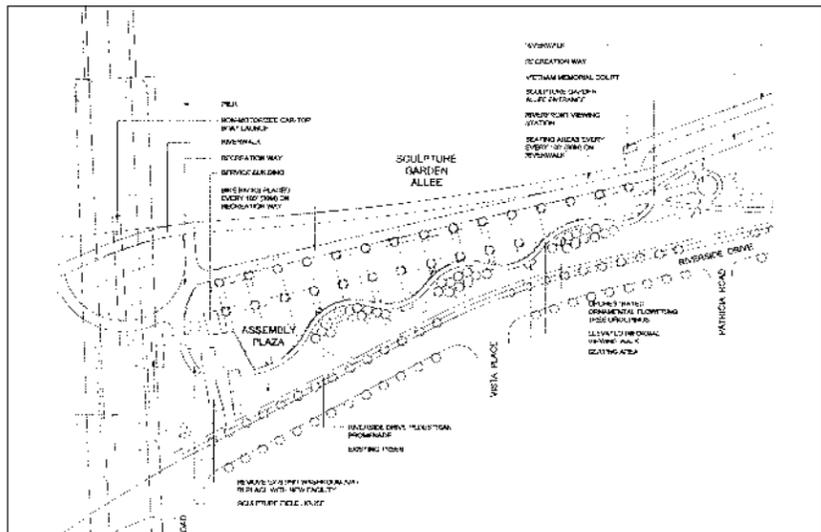


Figure 50



- This area of the riverfront has archaeological significance and is recommended for further investigation.

Assembly Plaza

- Location for children's and adults' outdoor arts. **(Photo 38)**
- Terraced assembly area created by a combination of grass and concrete retaining walls. **(Photo 39)**
- A hard surfaced lower assembly area including a combination of concrete and feature paving.
- Feature paving and patterned elements within the concrete should be used to delineate an assembly area and replicate themes related to the International Gateway and the creative arts

Service Building

- A service building to provide power source, parks equipment and storage facility.

Washroom

- Replace the existing washroom at the foot of Huron Church Road.

Sculpture Garden Allee

The sculpture garden extends east from Ambassador Bridge to the International Gardens. **(Figure 49)** The sculpture allee extends between the assembly plaza to the University Pump House. The sculpture allee provides a more formal, landscaped setting for viewing permanent and temporary sculptural installations. The Riverwalk and Recreationway link the tree-lined sculpture allee to the Sculpture Plaza directly south of the Celestial Beacon. Specific treatments within the sculpture allee include:

- A formal linear landscaped sculpture garden approximately 15m wide and 200 metres in length. **(Figure 50)**
- A paved allee lined by a double row of flowering trees (pear or redbud) set approximately 12 metres apart. The ground cover and columnar enclosure of flowering trees are to signal formality of the sculptural setting and to encourage slower and more contemplative movement through the garden. **(Photo 40)**
- Paving should be textured to discourage recreational use of the allee by cyclists and rollerbladers. **(Photo 41)** Recommended surface treatments include:
 - gravel set in concrete (e.g. exposed aggregate)
 - granite sets patterned to reflect the rhythm of tree and lighting placement
 - spaced granite sets or other paving placed in sod
- Free-standing park benches placed between every other pair of trees.
- A meandering seat wall at the edge of the allee. **(Figure 51)**

Vietnam War Memorial

The existing Vietnam War memorial is to be retained as a tribute to our Canadian and American friends and family who lost their lives in this conflict.

Viewing and Resting Station

A steel frame sitting and shade construction placed at the east end of the Sculpture Garden allee where the river edge projects outwards. **(Figure 52)**

University Pump House

This existing structure forms part of the embankment and operates as a pump house for the University of Windsor. The pump house bridges the embankment, providing potential use as a rooftop viewing platform.

- An enhanced viewing platform on the existing rooftop of the pump house.
- Rooftop decking landscaped with hard and soft landscaping including a spiral grassed mound, allowing park users to spiral up to a higher viewing point.
- Interpretative information about the Ambassador Bridge and International Gateway, the park and the river incorporated into visual signs/displays within the handrail and panels on the rooftop.

Celestial Beacon

One of the five key Beacons, the Celestial Beacon bridges the embankment and provides an outdoor rooftop viewing platform accessible from Riverside Drive and below. In support of the passive role of the surrounding open space and sculpture gardens, the Beacon provides the opportunity to view the river from above. The Beacon enriches the contemplative experience of the park. (see Section 3.1.1). (Figures 53 and 54)

Celestial Beacon Parking Court (between Sunset and California)

- A 50+/- car landscaped surface parking court between the University Pump House and the Celestial Beacon. Service vehicle access is provided at the west end of the parking court.
- Provides close access to major elements and activities in Segment 1. This is an adaptation of the existing two parking lots into one consolidated parking court. Specific design treatments are described in Section 3.3, Parking Strategy.

Environmental Assessment Implications

It is proposed that a non-motorized boat launch and temporary dock facility be located under the Ambassador Bridge in Segment 1. This is an activity requiring a "Schedule B screening" under the *Municipal Class EA for Water and Wastewater Projects*. In-water construction works or the placement of fill for these facilities may require approval under the federal *Fisheries Act and Navigable Waters Protection Act* and, as such, "trigger" the application of CEAA. In the screening consultations the City will need to conduct for this facility, the City should contact the Environmental Policy, Planning and Assessment Division of the Great Lakes and Corporate Affairs Branch, Environment Canada and the Essex Region Conservation Authority. Generally, if temporary/floating docks are used, there are minimal environmental effects to fish habitat and water flows.

In Segment 1 of the Central Riverfront, there are no other outstanding EA requirements to comply with, provided that the proposed parking facilities, new road access and landscaping for these road facilities is less than \$6 million. Beginning in 1986, the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) and the City undertook extensive improvements to the seawall in Segment 1 and Segment 2 extending from Huron Church Road in the west to Cameron Avenue in the east. This work was done in three phases for which ESR's were prepared, in accordance with the Conservation Authorities of Ontario's *Class Environmental Assessment for Water Management Structures*, and is now complete.



Photo 40



Figure 52

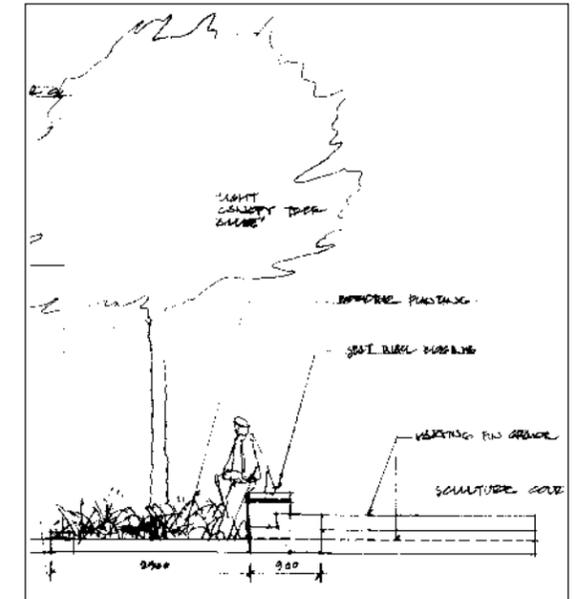


Figure 51



Figure 53