

# Proposal for a pilot project for the restoration of the Ordnance Boundary Stones of Niagara-on-the-Lake

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## Background

Between 1823 and 1853, thirty-seven Ordnance Boundary Stones (OBS) were installed by the British Army around the perimeter of the four military reserves in Niagara-on-the-Lake. These stones protected the military reserves from development.

The OBS tell the story of how our town came to be the way it is today, with beautiful green spaces like Simcoe Park, the golf course, Queens Royal Park, the Commons, all of these being once military reserves.

Each stone is typically 9" square with one-foot exposed above grade and engraved with the initials BO (Board of Ordnance) on the front with the Broad Arrow symbol.

Of the original 37 stones, 19 can still be found in place. Many have sunken into the ground. Some have been damaged or removed.

It has been suggested that these stones be restored (reset at their original height), cleaned, and protected with a barrier to prevent further damage.

Once they've been restored, their story can be told to residents and visitors alike.

## Pilot Project

This pilot project would restore, protect and celebrate OBS 32 this year.

- OBS 32 at the corner of King and Byron in Simcoe Park.

This will demonstrate just what is involved in restoration of a stone and what it costs; it will also inform planning for restoration of the remaining stones.

## Restoration of an Ordnance Boundary Stone

The following steps must be undertaken ...

1. The original **location** of the stone has already been marked by an Ontario Land Surveyor (OLS).
  - a. These are legal survey markers and can only be disturbed under supervision of an OLS.
  - b. **Richard Larocque** (The Larocque Group <http://www.larocquegroup.ca/>) has volunteered to provide his services to the restoration project.
2. A Landscape Architect will **design** the installation of the stone.

- a. **Alexander Topps** is a retired Landscape Architect who lives in town. He has volunteered to provide the foundation design and manage the installation of the stones.
3. **Restoration** will take place as follows:
  - a. The stone will be excavated by hand.
  - b. The stone will be lifted out of the ground.
  - c. The base of the hole will be compacted.
  - d. A fine aggregate layer will be placed in the base of the hole.
  - e. A concrete slab will be placed and levelled on top of the compacted aggregate.
  - f. The bottom of the stone must be flat – if necessary, it can be machined.
  - g. The stone will be placed on the slab and checked for accuracy by the OLS.
  - h. The hole will be backfilled in stages, compacting in shallow layers.
  - i. **Wayne Scott** is a cemetery worker with years of experience restoring tombstones; he has worked in most of the cemeteries in Niagara.
    - i. He has quoted a cost of \$350 to restore each stone.
    - ii. He can restore one stone in one day.
    - iii. He can also make the concrete slab to fit.
    - iv. He will work under the direction of the Landscape Architect and the Land Surveyor.
4. The stone will be **cleaned** . . .
  - a. After 200 years, the stones are worn and dirty.
  - b. **Doug King** has volunteered to clean the stones after they have been restored.
  - c. Mr. King has worked in monument restoration in many cemeteries in Niagara, including St. Marks and St. Andrews.
  - d. He was the Executive Director of the Ontario Monument Builders Association (<https://www.omba.com/>) for many years.
  - e. He also sat on the Board of The Willowbank School of Restoration Arts.
5. A barrier will be erected around the stone, similar to the picture below.



- a. This will serve to
  - i. Protect the stone from impact from motorized equipment.
  - ii. Frame the stone to draw attention to it.
  - iii. Prevent people standing on it.
  - iv. Prevent animals from urinating on it.

## Costs

The cost of restoring and cleaning the stone is \$350 + HST.

One quote for installation of a protective decorative barrier has been received from Fortress Ornamental Fencing. The cost is \$1150 for solid steel or \$1275 for solid aluminum.

So the total cost for restoring, cleaning, and protecting OBS 32 should be less than \$2000.

## Conclusion

Once OBS 32 has been restored, the Town will have a clearer idea of what work will be required to restore the remaining 18 stones.

## Telling the Story of the Stones

Several suggestions have been made, including ...

- A **QR code** at each stone connecting to the Museum's web page telling the story of the Stones. (<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/UQVhU9l7mDmBLw>)
- A self-guided walking or biking **tour** can be designed.
- The NOTL Museum has the broken fragment of OBS 23 which could be exhibited as part of a display telling the story of the stones in more detail.
- A **commemorative plaque** could be placed by OBS 31 at the entrance to Simcoe Park giving a brief explanation of the importance of the OBS in the development of our town.
  - An example from London Ontario is shown below. London has one OBS still in place.
  - Alternatively, a plaque could be inset into a boulder.



