

Appendix A LACH Statement of Significance, December 2009

Statement of Significance for the Samia Road Bridge over the C.P.R.

(Revised December 2009)

Description of Property

Samia Road is the road between Concession 2 and Concession 3 in the former Township of London. The bridge carries Samia Road over the Canadian Pacific Railway, located in the south half of Lot 22 of Concession 3 in London Township, now in the City of London.

Statement of Cultural Heritage Interest

Samia Road was opened in the early 19th century to service the lands in the second and third concessions of the Township. The Ontario Quebec Railway Company, part of the Canadian Pacific Railway, constructed a rail line through the area in 1889. Because of the deep cut of the railway in this location, a bridge was necessary to allow the road to cross the railway line. The current bridge on this site was not the first structure to be used but there is no information on the original structure except that it was 296 feet long and crossed the railway in the straight line of the roadway, rather than squaring across the cut with a span length of 90 feet as it does today. Documents indicate that land from the southwest quarter of Lot 22 in Concession 3 was sold to the Township of London in 1904 to allow for re-alignment of the roadway to cross the railway at right angles with a shorter structure than the original.

Structural drawings from the C.P.R. indicate that a bridge from St. James (Manitoba), in Central Division was altered to fit at Mile 2.9 in the Windsor Section, the railway location for this crossing, being 2.9 miles west of the Richmond Street crossing. The bridge was originally constructed probably about 1890 in the Manitoba location. The drawings for its re-configuration to the new location are dated November 1904 but documents indicate that it was March 1909 when the Board of Railway Commissioner authorized the C.P.R. to use the bridge at Mile 2.9. The relocated structure was re-constructed on the Samia Road site by the Canadian Bridge Company of Walkerville, Ontario.

The bridge maintains a historical connection with the CPR at this site and an association with the Canadian Bridge Company, one of Canada's leading constructors. It also serves as a connection with a time period when roads and bridges were first incorporated into the physical landscape of the area.

Although the Pratt truss was quite common in bridges of the time, there is only one other similar design in the City of London, that being the former King Street Bridge over the Thames River. In the move from Manitoba, the bridge deck was widened to carry a two-lane roadway rather than the original rail tracks and timber decking was added. The added components to modify the configuration are still in use on the bridge, although the deck planking has been replaced a number of times. More recently, modern traffic demands require that the bridge is now used as a single lane. The concrete abutments date to the 1909 construction at Samia Road but they appear to have been repaired and altered several times.

Description of Heritage Attributes

- The Samia Road Bridge is a single span, steel, pin-connected, through Pratt truss
- The pin-connected feature is quite uncommon in local bridge construction
- The bridge's bottom chord, eye-bar and pin configuration is typical of late 19th century construction
- Members were added to the basic Pratt design, diagonally crossing in the central panel of each truss
- **An unusual** feature is a **rod** connecting the three centre panels **on** each truss, running from the top of the end post to the mid-point of the two central verticals and ending at the top of the other end post
- Indications are that many of the steel components of the bridge are original to its **first** use in Manitoba
- Several of the modified portions of the bridge are still evident today in the portal framing and v-lacing of the upper chords
- The height of the trusses was designed to allow railway clearances which are much higher than roadway clearances