

Hartman Bridge

Wooden bridge mid-1800s
Iron bridge 1882
Single-lane steel bridge 1903
Two-lane steel bridge 1936
Restoration 2006

Spanning the Generations

From the early days of settlement on the banks of the Grand River and its tributaries, bridges were important focal points for communities. Our significant heritage bridges have become distinctive landmarks that contribute to a strong sense of place. These links to the past span the generations as well as our waterways.

Their future cannot be taken for granted, however, as the ravages of time take their toll. The challenge for our generation is to maintain their symbolic as well as their functional integrity.

Bridge Design/Style

Wilmot Township is home to an excellent collection of truss bridges located along the Nith River. Together these bridges show the evolution of truss bridge design and technology over 50 years.

The Hartman Bridge, which crosses the Nith River, forms an attractive centerpiece for the town of New Hamburg. It is a single span, eight panel Pratt Through-Truss bridge with riveted connections. The unusual deck was slightly arched. The portal brace has a V-laced design. V-lacing is also present within the steel of the portal bracing, as well as on the sway bracing and the verticals. There is lattice under the top chord and end posts. The western portal bracing was damaged in the past, and portions of it were replaced prior to the restoration work of 2006.

Materials

Although concrete bridges were popular in the 1930s, a steel bridge was chosen for its economy and practicality. The Hartman Bridge had a structural steel through-truss with a concrete deck and asphalt wearing surface. The concrete sidewalk had a steel-latticed handrail. After rehabilitation the Hartman Bridge has an "Exodermic" deck and sidewalk, which is a composite of steel grating and concrete with concrete wearing finish.

Restoration (2006)

The Hartman Bridge has been well preserved and only slightly modified. During the restoration the bridge was strengthened to eliminate weight restrictions, the concrete abutments were fixed, the cantilevered sidewalks were widened, the main deck was replaced and the bridge was sandblasted and repainted. As a result, New Hamburg can continue to enjoy the beauty this bridge adds to the town, and future generations will be able to admire the complex design that is behind any historic metal truss bridge.

Structural Steel Through-Truss Bridge 1936
Bridge Designer/Engineer: D.J. Emery
Bridge Supervisor: Unknown
Construction: Hamilton Bridge and Tool Company
Total cost of the bridge: \$21,500

Although the earliest bridges have disappeared, their replacements have become landmarks which are important to the community.

During the First World War, a surge of patriotism was created by the arrival of the 111th Battalion on a route march from Galt to New Hamburg. The men marched into town and after their arrival were billeted in private homes over night before proceeding on to Baden and Berlin the next day. A fine civic welcome was accorded the battalion on their arrival.



Picturesque New Hamburg before 1914. The hotel and 1903 Hartman Bridge are on the right.



March 10, 1916 - The 111th Battalion from Galt marching across the Hartman Bridge



The Hartman Bridge is gone in this view of the 1883 flood taken from the top of the William Tell block.



The five steel truss bridges in Wilmot Township contribute to the rustic and rural image of Wilmot.



The 1903 Bridge



Construction of the river trail



The Hartman Bridge (1936) is a gateway into the town of New Hamburg, often carrying banners to announce and celebrate New Hamburg events.



The Hartman Bridge is located in the Township of Wilmot. It was designated under the Ontario Heritage Act in 2001 by the Township of Wilmot.

It was ranked Number 4 out of the Top 10 Heritage Bridges in Waterloo Region.

The Hartman Bridge

The Hartman Bridge was named after the Hartman family who initially owned the land across the river and donated it toward the bridge's construction.

The current bridge was designed by a Waterloo County Engineer, Mr. D. J. Emery, and was built in 1936 during the Great Depression by the Hamilton Bridge and Tool Company. It is the last remaining steel truss bridge on the Regional road system. In 2005 the bridge was nominated to the Ontario Heritage Bridge List.

The History of the Hartman Bridge Crossing

Prior to 1882, wooden timber bridges spanned the Nith River at the Hartman Bridge crossing. In 1882, the first iron Hartman Bridge was constructed at this site, but in August of 1883 a serious flood swept the bridge from its abutments and carried it down the Nith River. Following the flood, the bridge was repaired and placed back on its original concrete abutments. Later, in 1903, the bridge was moved to Shade Street in New Hamburg and was replaced with a new single lane bridge. This new bridge only remained until 1936 when the present steel truss bridge was constructed. The current bridge structure was to be called the Beger Bridge; however, the Hartman name was maintained.

Link to New Hamburg

The Hartman Bridge provides the connection to the heritage core of New Hamburg comprising the library, cenotaph, parkland, church, retail buildings and homes. The bridge also complements the riverfronts of Kirkpatrick and Scott Parks. This prominent landmark is an integral part of the landscape and has therefore been designated as part of the New Hamburg Heritage Conservation District by the Township of Wilmot under Part V of the Ontario Heritage Act. Designation as part of the Heritage Conservation District ensures that the bridge cannot be demolished, removed or altered without a permit being issued by Township Council.



Heritage Bridges of Waterloo Region

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