

St. Augustine Record

New bridge to get touch-up

Renovations likely won't cause lane closures or delays

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By [JENNIFER EDWARDS](#)

The new Bridge of Lions will be getting a touch-up after it reopens for traffic after an opening ceremony Wednesday.

The bascule tower roofs are to be adjusted to make them more historically accurate.

Theresa Segal, president of Save Our Bridge, said she discussed the issue with state preservation officials a few months ago but, "We've not made a big deal out of it because it's a small change ... we were trying to take care of it rather than make a big deal about it."

Segal said there were concerns about the height of the eight ridges on each tower -- called "hips" -- and mortar accumulation on the roofs.

"The original tiles had a much lower profile," she said.

Segal said the current roofs were based on the ones on the bridge at the time of rehabilitation. However, those roofs had been repaired and were missing the original 1927 finials -- decorations likely built of mortar and located at the peak where the eight ridges converge.

She said that renovations also mimicked a large amount of mortar that had built up on the original roofs after years of repair.

"Now, it looks like a solid mass instead of the individual tiles," Segal said.

She emphasized that the changes are minor, but significant in the long term.

"When people shoot the bridge, they take shots of the towers and they zoom in," she said. "They get a lot of visual play."

Gina Busscher, FDOT District 2 Public Information Director, said the Florida Department of Transportation would pay for repairs. No cost estimate is available yet, and it's not known how long renovations would take.

Laurie Sanderson, public information officer with the Bridge of Lions Rehabilitation Project, said the repairs are not expected to cause lane closures or traffic delays.

"They're discussing constructing a scaffolding around it to avoid" redirecting traffic, she said.

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Fun fact

Many of the tiles on the tower roofs are either the original tiles or replacement tiles manufactured around the same time as the original tiles and by the original manufacturer, Luduwici, a clay tile roof company in New Lexington, Ohio, that's been in business since 1888.

If there aren't enough of either to finish the touch-up, "They could request Luduwici make tile to match or find another stockpile somewhere to match."

Source: Theresa Segal, president of Save Our Bridge

<http://staugustine.com/news/local-news/2010-03-12/new-bridge-get-touch>