

Put a piece of the bridge to use at home



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

The Longfellow Bridge restoration project has created a surplus of lavender-hued Deer Isle granite.

By Martine Powers | GLOBE STAFF JUNE 15, 2014

It doesn't get much cooler than owning a little piece of the Longfellow Bridge — right in your backyard.

Readers might have seen a [Globe article published a few weeks ago](#) about the unusual restoration efforts underway to reconstruct the historic bridge that stretches over the Charles River. To maintain the century-old look and feel of the structure, engineers have consulted 1930s-era construction manuals, workers have been trained in the ways of World War II-esque riveting, and officials scrambled to find the same kind of stone — Rockport granite, to be exact — that was used in the original construction of the edifice.

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Steve Roper, MassDOT's historic resources supervisor, explained the conundrum facing the agency: Because it planned to strip stone curbing between the vehicle lanes and the T tracks, it had a surplus of lavender-hued Deer Isle granite. The agency originally hoped to repurpose that granite for new stairs and barriers on the side of the bridge, but the purplish tint of the stone would have clashed with the surrounding black-and-white-speckled Rockport granite.

So contractors ultimately purchased many tons of Rockport granite from a Wakefield company, Olde New England Granite. But the question remained: What would happen to the lavender Deer Isle granite stripped away from the bridge?

The answer: Flower planters. And garden pavers. And sturdy posts to serve as foundations for mailboxes and streetlights.

Olde New England Granite is purchasing the Deer Isle granite from MassDOT and will be selling the reclaimed stone to the public in the form of landscaping handiwork. To inquire about purchases, contact the company at www.oldnewenglandgranite.com , or on the phone at 781-334-4805.

Biz Reed, co-owner and executive vice president of the company, said reclaiming the stone for outside purchases is a win-win: It keeps the stone from going to waste, and it will thrill history buffs who might jump at the chance to buy a little piece of the bridge.

“We are using our creativity to make products of all kinds that have purpose,” Reed said. “To appreciate, preserve, and extend the use by repurposing such historic material, rather than filling up landfills or crushing material, is our primary goal.”