



The Hammersmith Society

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17 November 2020

Dear Dana Skelley

Hammersmith Bridge Options

As the amenity society for the northern part of the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, we welcomed the detail provided at the public Zoom meeting on 28 October. We are desperately keen to see progress on achieving a fully functioning Hammersmith Bridge, and getting a temporary cycle and pedestrian crossing as soon as possible. Given the disruption already experienced, and its likely continuation, there is now a groundswell of opinion, even in some of our more conservative members - some of us highly experienced architects and engineers - that the time has come to think the unthinkable. Comparisons have been drawn with the much larger Genoa bridge that was replaced in little over a year.

With this in mind, we would like to suggest consideration of two alternatives:

1 Replacement Bridge

Although the bridge has been the logo of our Society since we were formed nearly 60 years ago, it is evident that with the costs and duration presented, and the maintenance demands that are likely to continue in the future, any strategic review of the river crossing should include consideration of a new bridge. Wholesale replacement need not mean total loss of the iconic appearance; it would be up to innovative designers – possibly selected by design competition – to work around what is there and to propose a better bridge for the 21st century, as was done in 1883 for the 20th, based on the 1827 original.

2 Repair and improvement

Over the years we've written many times about the bridge repairs and possible bridge improvements. If repairs to the existing bridge are to be as extensive as proposed, we suggest opportunities should be taken to reinstate the bridge whilst incorporating, within the decorative iron casings, new functional structures, designed to current-day performance standards, without necessarily the constraints of the existing structural elements, including:

An Amenity Group concerned with Planning and Conservation in Hammersmith since 1962

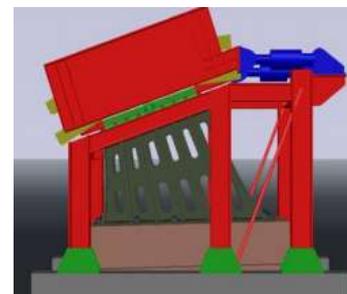
Patron: The Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham

Member of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies
President: Professor Hans Haenlein MBE

Founder Member of The West London River Group
Chairman: Richard Winterton RIBA

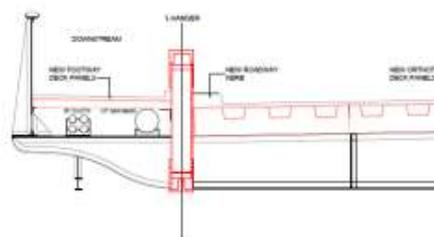
Secretary: Annabel Clarke, 42 Greenside Road, W12 9JG Tel: 07940 575590

- (a) The proposed Stabilisation Works detail a long programme to repair the cast iron pedestals. We are not aware that replacement of these has been considered: it may be significantly cheaper, quicker and less risky to replace these long-problematic parts with offsite pre-fabricated modern and maintainable equivalents. This could also possibly remove the need for temporary stabilisation.



The cast iron pedestals are attractive as examples of Victorian engineering, but they are no longer fit for purpose, are objectively unmaintainable, and are in any case hidden 'nuts and bolts' that could better form museum pieces when removed. By analogy, one of our long-serving members worked on one of Bazalgette's side-projects - Tower Bridge - when it had its steam engines replaced with electric motors in 1974, with fundamental changes to the bascule operation. The steam engines were entirely removed and are now museum exhibits.

- (b) This summer, prompted by the difficulties of distancing on the busy bridge pathways, we looked at the possibility of widening the pathways to better accommodate pedestrians and cyclists, as reported in an [article on our website](#). The proposed Works already



contain planned interventions where the hangers meet the deck and the cantilevered walkways are attached. Our proposal is to reproduce Bazalgette's longer cantilevers, currently seen only at the ends of the bridge, and replace the existing cantilevers with these longer ones everywhere, to produce a 21st century width walkway, allowing safe bi-directional cycling on one side and walking with room for passing wheelchairs / buggies on the other. The cost for this would be modest, especially in the context of the budgets and interventions already proposed, and it would yield major safety benefits without compromising bridge aesthetics.

There are doubtless further interventions that could be considered. But if the decision is to retain Bazalgette's bridge largely 'as is', we think these modest improvements would yield substantial benefits, both now, and in the longer term.

Yours sincerely
Richard Winterton
Chairman

cc
Baroness Vere