

Lucy's Mill Bridge

Technical status report, May 2018.

This report is written to record progress to date in the matter of the provision of DDA compliant access ramps to the existing Lucy's Mill Bridge.

History

Studies have been undertaken by Warwickshire County Council in 2006 and 2008 which investigated the provision of access ramps to the existing Lucy's Mill Footbridge, and also for an alternative proposal for the provision of a new footbridge adjacent to the Seven Meadows road-bridge. At the time of each study, both solutions were discounted on land ownership, proximity issues to the road-bridge and EA concerns.

Existing Structure

The existing footbridge is 1.5 metres between parapets with only steep stepped access on each side. The total length of the bridge is approximately 40 metres. The bridge has three spans supported on old stone abutments and two old stone piers. The deck construction is concrete cased steel beams and steel parapets.

Background

Following on from the WCC work, and during the course of 2017, Roger Clay of Avon Navigation, Trevor Edwards and team of Hawkes Edwards, Stratford based Conservation Architects, Mike Sheard, a Project Manager have been formulating ideas to address the issue of exclusion of certain groups of people from using this historic footbridge.

Design

The initial works involved commissioning a topographical and measured survey of the existing bridge, its steps, landings and surrounding areas. With this information Hawkes Edwards were able to ascertain the areas for placing access ramps, which have to be set at compliant gradients [Equality Act 2010]. This indicates that ramps should have a gradient of 1:20 with individual ramped flights not exceeding 10m. 1.5 metre long landings are required at the end of each 10m stretch of ramp. The design has minimised the impact on existing trees, landscaping, views and neighbours. The mature willow trees adjacent to the moorings on the west bank have tree preservation orders (TPO) on them as well as being within the Stratford-upon-Avon Conservation Area.

Another challenge in the feasibility design was to avoid taking support from the existing bridge, which has ancient foundations, and also to avoid placing additional supports in the river, which would be unacceptable to the Environment Agency.

This has been achieved by the group's Structural Engineer by the use of piled foundations supporting slender supports and a 'lightweight' superstructure, all of which are founded on dry land, and by utilising a cantilever principle at each end to achieve the span for the landings where they abut the existing bridge. The meeting points of ramps and bridge are located between the Seven Meadows Bridge and Lucy's Mill Bridge in order that the appearance of the footbridge is unaffected from 'upstream'. The bridge is located within the Avon flood plain. The environment Agency indicated that it would not accept additional piers in the river.

In accordance with the guidance provided by the Equality Act 2010, the ramp on the east bank would need to be approximately 65 metres in length. However on the west bank the ramp would require to be approximately 20 metres in length. In conclusion, it is considered that a suitable Equality Act access ramp arrangement to Lucy's Mill footbridge can be provided on both sides of the river.

Land Ownership

All land employed is in the public domain, either in the ownership of the District Council, County Council or Highways Authority.

The public footpath routes leading from the bridge to the surrounding areas need to be maintained. The moorings on the west bank are privately owned by the Directors of Lucy's Mill Ltd. and are unaffected by these works.

Consultations

Preplanning advice has been received from Stratford District Council planning department

Technical discussions have been held with Warwickshire County Council, Communities Group, Design Services

A public exhibition has been held at Stratford Town Hall in 2017

DDA access has been checked with the Stratford upon Avon disabled Access Group

The Town Council have received a presentation of the proposal

The feasibility scheme has been explained to the local MP and representatives from the local business community, and the Stratford upon Avon Town Transport Group.

A complete pack of all evidence and consultations will be available in early course

Funding

Any modification and refurbishment of the bridge would be funded by the County Council, fund raising and grants.

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