

# Hounslow Station

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The LCN+ Barrier programme focuses on the most complicated problems on the Network. Many of the schemes involve numerous agencies and stakeholders, and this sometimes triggers the need for a more comprehensive scheme benefiting a wider range of transport users, in addition to cyclists. This article describes a Barriers scheme currently being developed in the Hounslow Station area, as a good example of this process.

## Barrier Location: Whitton Road Bridge, Hounslow Station

Access to Hounslow Station is difficult for both cyclists and pedestrians, due to a bottleneck at the B361 Whitton Road railway bridge. When two buses pass each other, the narrow 5m carriageway often causes cyclists and buses to mount the footway. However, the footway is less than 1m wide on the east side, making it virtually unusable (see photo 1 below).

The bridge is used by many primary school children (usually accompanied), walking between Station Road and Maswell Park Road on the west side of the bridge, and using the 1m wide stairs located to the south of the railway line. Pedestrians crossing B361 Whitton Road to access the station are also hampered by large numbers of vehicles turning right (presumably rat running) towards Station Road.

## Options for Tackling the Barrier

A CRISP feasibility study carried out in 2005 for LCN+ Link 102 identified three options for dealing with this bottleneck: (i) a new shared-use foot and cycle bridge; (ii) signal-controlled single file traffic operation; (iii) traffic calming measures. The first option was favoured, with an initial cost allocation of £0.5M, and design work began in 2006.

However, the design of the scheme - now well advanced - has highlighted issues which were not, and could not have been, identified during the CRISP process, due to the multi-agency nature of the scheme.

## Scheme Objectives

Network Rail has been the most important project stakeholder in the scheme design process, along with their tenant South West Trains who are responsible for the operation of the station building and train services. The project team agreed that the scheme offered an opportunity to achieve several different objectives, including:

- Creating an attractive environment and gateway to Hounslow, (including conservation and enhancement of the original station building);
- Improving the bus/rail interchange;
- Improving pedestrian access, including safer routes to school;
- Providing a fully accessible station, which met the requirements of the DDA;
- Improving the station car park; and, of course;
- Improving cycle access - both along the B361 and into the station.

## Initial Design Options

Three bridge design options were initially developed for this location:

1. Cantilever foot and cycle bridges, on either side of the existing bridge;
2. A single new foot and cycle bridge on the east side of the existing bridge;
3. Complete widening of the existing bridge.

LB Hounslow did not favour Option 1 due to limited benefits for cyclists and pedestrians; similarly Option 2 was not favoured due to the need for formal crossing points on both north and southbound approaches to the structure which



**Far Left:** Substandard pavement width with damaged guard rail.

**Left:** Pedestrians crossing with no provision.

The barriers report can be found in the cycling publications section of TfL's website: [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

would delay traffic and limit the potential for using the free-standing structure. Complicated land ownership issues were a further reason for preferring Option 3, provided all of the project team supported this approach.

The outline design of Option 3 was sent to Network Rail and LB Hounslow's in-house structural engineers for comment. Initial estimates suggested that the cost for the bridge would be in the order of £2m-£3m - well in excess of the original CRISP estimate of £0.5m. It was recognised that the bridge would serve more than cyclists' interests, and LB Hounslow officers suggested that further funding sources should be identified, namely the London Bus Priority Network (LBPN), Local Safety Schemes (LSS), School Travel Plans, Walking and TfL Area Based Schemes.

### Project Stakeholder Engagement

The negotiation process started as soon as all parties supported bridge reconstruction. Reconstruction would involve demolition of the western extension to the main station building, and for this a number of agreements were needed Network Rail, the LB Hounslow and South West Trains regarding land ownership and use. LB Hounslow's Head of Transport has personally been involved in the negotiations and design process throughout.

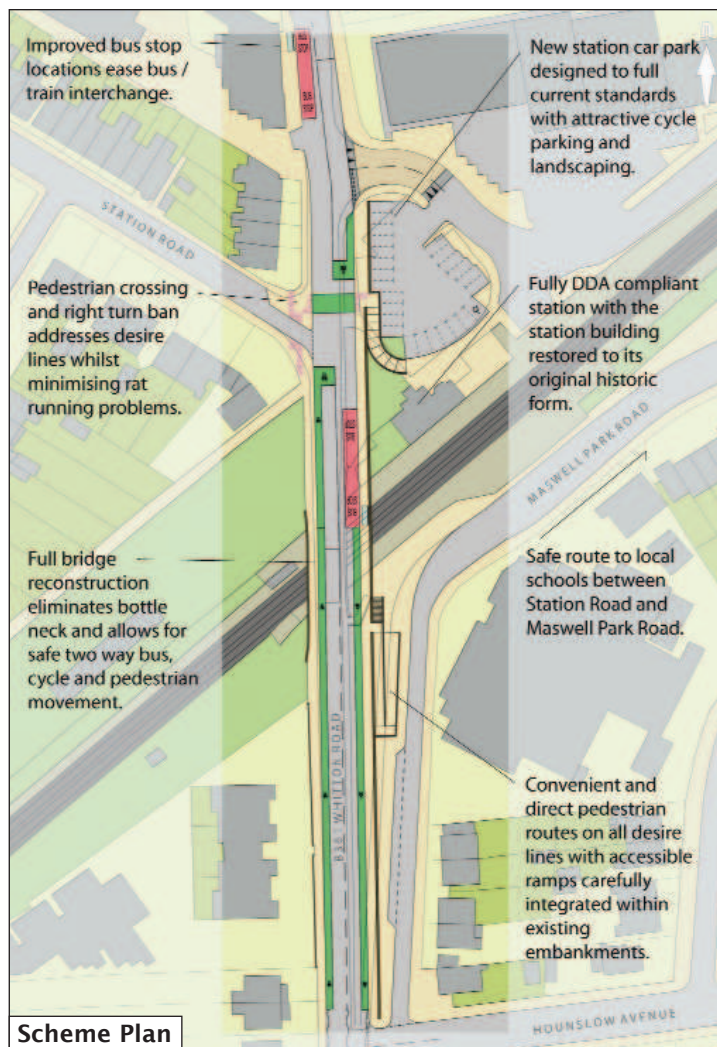
In the outline design, various solutions had to be considered to minimise the Station Road rat running problem in order to provide the best locations for a pedestrian crossing and the bus stops. Preliminary traffic flow analysis revealed that a solution allowing northbound drivers to turn left into Station Road would fully address both the pedestrian desire line and the rat running problem. The final strength of the proposal was that the station would become fully DDA-compliant with non-obtrusive ramps on the desire lines, on both sides of the station.

One of the key issues proved to be the ownership of land and the bridge. South West Trains accepted the loss of the western extension to the station but wanted to upgrade the original building and demolish an eastern extension, as well returning the building to its original form. A Station Options Report was produced which resulted in the Hounslow Gateway Proposal (shown right), an overall bid of £3.35m.

### Current Project Status

As soon as negotiations have been finalised, the clearance process will begin, starting with the formal submission of outline design proposals to Network Rail for authorisation and subsequent progression into detailed design. Meanwhile, LB Hounslow will continue to pursue its bidding opportunities, building on the constructive problem-solving attitude that has developed amongst all parties, to achieve a scheme that will convert a pinch-point into an impressive Hounslow Gateway.

The LCN+ can help to bring multiple benefits, in addition to an improved cycle network. The multi-agency approach is successful because all parties appreciate the project worth, and lend their efforts to make the project a success. It is anticipated that construction will begin in 2008/09 and ultimately deliver the following benefits:



1. The project will uplift the station area into the Hounslow Gateway;
2. A full DDA-compliant station will be achieved, with the building restored to its original historic design;
3. Convenient and direct pedestrian routes on all desire lines, with ramps carefully integrated within existing embankments;
4. A safer school route between Station Road and Maswell Park Road;
5. Safer two-way bus operation along the 281 priority service, and an improved bus-rail interchange;
6. The railway bridge converted from a bottleneck on LCN+ Link 102 into a full standard cycle route design;
7. A new station car park laid out to full current standard.

The Hounslow Gateway project illustrates that 4 years is typically needed on barrier schemes from feasibility design to construction of which 2 years for design and official multi-agency clearance and 2 years for construction.