

Bridges as Built Heritage: Preservation, Reimagination, Transformation

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Abstract

From ancient civilizations to thriving industrial cities, mobility infrastructure provides safe crossings and promotes economic vitality within both urban and rural communities. Bridges provide rituals of movement connecting users to key parts of our collective cultural identity. Built heritage is a form of placemaking – and the preservation of built heritage creates both environmental and social value.

Dissing+Weitling presents three unique projects to illustrate how cities can balance infrastructure and public safety demands with cultural heritage. Scotland's Queensferry Crossing, Canada's Samuel De Champlain Replacement Bridge, and Switzerland's Zweite Hinterrheinbrücke provide examples of how bridge architecture can reinforce cultural heritage while adapting to modern safety and user needs for safe crossing – whether through ensemble, replacement, or expansion of heritage infrastructure.

Keywords: built heritage; cultural heritage; replacement bridge; ensemble bridges; stakeholder engagement; transformation; train infrastructure; pedestrian bridge; cultural identity

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Mobility infrastructure is built to last: with intended lifespans of centuries rather than decades, it is an inevitability of bridge design to consider how local communities will not only functionally benefit but also find cultural relevance and pride within their routine crossings.

Where local planning authorities must balance competing demands to accommodate increased traffic volume, public safety, and environmental impact – mobility architecture can provide a complementary pathway to socially sustainable value creation. By incorporating cultural heritage considerations into the evaluation of a project's stakeholders, function, and form, infrastructure development can be seen as a placemaking effort.

A variety of approaches can be taken to integrate infrastructure into the built cultural heritage stock: new infrastructure may be developed with the

stated intent of having a design that can be embraced as a landmark – but ensemble and replacement bridges can also provide opportunities for infrastructure to adapt to changing user needs while still respecting the legacy of existing crossings.

Dissing+Weitling presents three unique cases to demonstrate how infrastructure development can create social value through the lens of cultural heritage. Each project exemplifies how considerations of built heritage can widen the scope of a project's community relevance beyond economic vitality and assurance of public safety. Scotland's Queensferry Crossing provides