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International Awards

Lille Langebro

Copenhagen, Denmark

Client
Realdania

Architects
WilkinsonEyre
Urban Agency

Structural Engineers
BuroHappold
NIRAS A/S

M&E Engineers
Eadon Consulting

Lighting Design
Speirs + Major

Main Contractor
Mobilis Danmark – Hollandia
Infra I/S

Sub-Contractor
SH Group

Judges' Comments:

"Exquisitely well executed civic infrastructure in precisely the right location."

The design vision for Lille Langebro was for a low lying, graceful structure that sits in harmony with its surroundings and does not compete for attention with the adjacent Langebro crossing.

At 160m long, the bridge follows a curve which aligns with the great arc of ramparts and moat of Christianshavn. As cycle traffic on the adjacent listed Langebro road bridge has increased dramatically since 2008, a central part of the brief was to improve safety and experience for this high volume of traffic. Lille Langebro brings cyclists away from its neighbouring bridge through providing an alternative route for over 10,500 cyclists and pedestrians combined daily.

Three key ideas characterise the concept and identity; firstly, the bridge's horizontal alignment extends the sweeping arc of the city's historic ramparts to the southeast, which are otherwise not apparent when viewed from this part of the city. To the northwest, clear axial views of the town hall clock tower help users orientate themselves relative to the city. Secondly, the structure is arranged as a triangular wing at each deck edge, defining an acute edge that divides light from shade. This edge dips below the deck at the

abutments and soars up above the deck at midspan to create a twisting profile. Thirdly, and unexpectedly, the curved profile of the bridge only becomes broken when the two swinging sections open for marine traffic. The bridge incorporates cutting-edge design with unique technical solutions.

While delivering an elegant design, the function of Lille Langebro as a swing bridge remains entirely concealed; motors and slewing rings are housed within hollow bridge piers while hydraulically operated mechanisms are housed in cavities inside outer deck members. To maintain a slender profile in elevation, a moment connection joins the moving parts together at midspan. Enlarged chambers adjacent to the moment connection accommodate hydraulic rams and associated mechanical parts. The innovative central moment connection was fundamental in achieving the structural depth demanded by the architectural concept of a sweeping, low level structure.

An example of thoughtful placemaking, Lille Langebro has provided Copenhagen with a new architectural icon which enhances the waterfront and confirms the city's reputation as the world's best for cycling, which provides a step towards a more sustainable future.



Images: Rasmus Hjortshøj - COAST