



The new Kienlesberg Bridge in Ulm, Germany an urban landmark in a historic setting

Bartłomiej Halaczek,

Knight Architects, High Wycombe, Bucks, UK

Heinz-Josef Vieth, Uwe Lange

Krebs und Kiefer Ingenieure GmbH, Karlsruhe, GER

Contact: B.Halaczek@Knightarchitects.co.uk

Abstract

Bridges in dense urban environments have always been a major design challenge. The focus is not only directed to limited space, access constraints and complex schedules respecting the local traffic situation, they also need to respond to various social, cultural and architectural questions that arise at the particular location.

One of such challenges is to design a new bridge which will be standing in the vicinity of a historic bridge with high importance to the local area. Following a competition win in 2012, the Kienlesberg Bridge in Ulm is a combined tram, cyclist and pedestrian bridge crossing a busy railway site right at the end of the Ulm main station. The 270m long crossing will be the keystone in the city's tram new Line 2 network providing an north-south connection linking the city centre with the university and a business park.

The design brief asked explicitly for a structure that respects and responds to the nearby Neutor Bridge, a 100 year old listed historic monument so that both bridges can be seen as a visual ensemble. On top of the architectural implications there is also the challenge of the local site situation, crossing not only 14 railway tracks at different levels, but also the tunnel portal of the new high-speed ICE train connection NBS Stuttgart – Wendlingen – Ulm, which is being built at the same time right underneath the Kienlesberg Bridge.

The bridge is currently under construction and is planned to be finished in 2018.

The paper will present the architectural, structural and programmatic issues related to the project and will discuss some of the pitfalls and solutions found in a project of such high complexity.

Keywords: Steel, Aesthetics, Architecture, Tram, Pedestrian, Launch, Historic, Semi-integral

1 Introduction

The city of Ulm is a thriving city in the south of Germany, located exactly on the border between Baden Wuerttemberg and Bavaria at the north bank of the river Danube.

The city is famous for its historic centre, with its iconic gothic cathedral, the Ulmer Münster, but is also well known for its heritage in modern design, introduced by the Hochschule für Gestaltung which was founded by late Bauhaus member Max Bill.