

**Supplementary
Submission
No 17a**

**INQUIRY INTO WINDSOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT
PROJECT**

Name: Ms Venecia Wilson

Date received: 28 January 2018

I make this submission under *“i. options presented to the community”* of the Terms of Reference of the Inquiry into the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project under Portfolio Committee No. 5.

I am a long term resident of the Hawkesbury. I have lived on both sides of the Hawkesbury River and travel across the Windsor Bridge several times a week.

When the Windsor Bridge Replacement Project was announced, there were a number of options presented to the community. Not one of the options presented was acceptable, however a number of them were complete and utter nonsense.

It was a transparent strategy to ensure the option already favoured by the RMS (then RTA) was the **only** possible option, as any possibility of a bypass had already been erased.

In particular, Options 4 and 5 would be laughed out of any sort of planning meeting I’ve ever attended, but nonetheless, they were proffered up to this community. A child would not have considered them, let alone present them to 20,000 odd road users already experiencing significant traffic congestion.

Option 4 – Baker Street

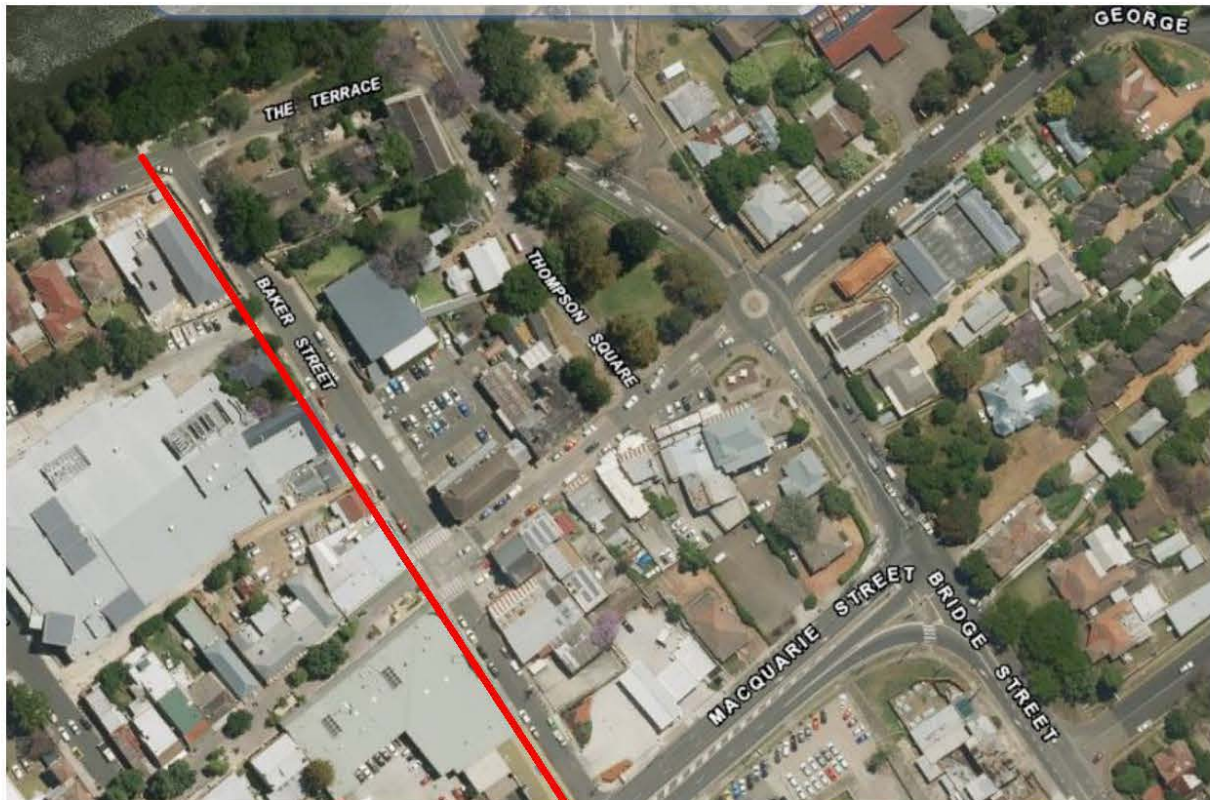
OPTION 4 BAKER STREET – UPSTREAM OF EXISTING BRIDGE

Along Macquarie Street via Baker Street, crossing the Hawkesbury River at Macquarie Park on the northern river bank.

Key considerations:

- As Baker Street is narrow, existing parking would need to be restricted/denied between Macquarie Street and George Street.
- Potential for the Bridge Street road cutting to be backfilled and landscaped to reinstate the shape of Thompson Square.
- Reconstruction of the intersection at Macquarie Street and Baker Street, providing a signalised right turn bay to accommodate right turning traffic.
- Increased traffic along shopping precinct in Baker Street reducing pedestrian and parked vehicle safety.
- Traffic lights would be required at The Terrace to manage the increased traffic volumes. Alternatively this access may be closed.
- Potential for traffic to queue back onto Windsor Road if the right turn bay cannot meet the needs of traffic during peak or busy periods.
- Removal of raised pedestrian threshold at George Street and replaced with traffic lights to allow pedestrians to cross safely due to increased traffic.
- Tree loss would be required along both river banks.
- Aboriginal heritage is likely to be found in areas near the presence of permanent water.
- Property would be acquired on Baker Street, along the southern and northern river banks and from Macquarie Park.

This is Baker Street Windsor.



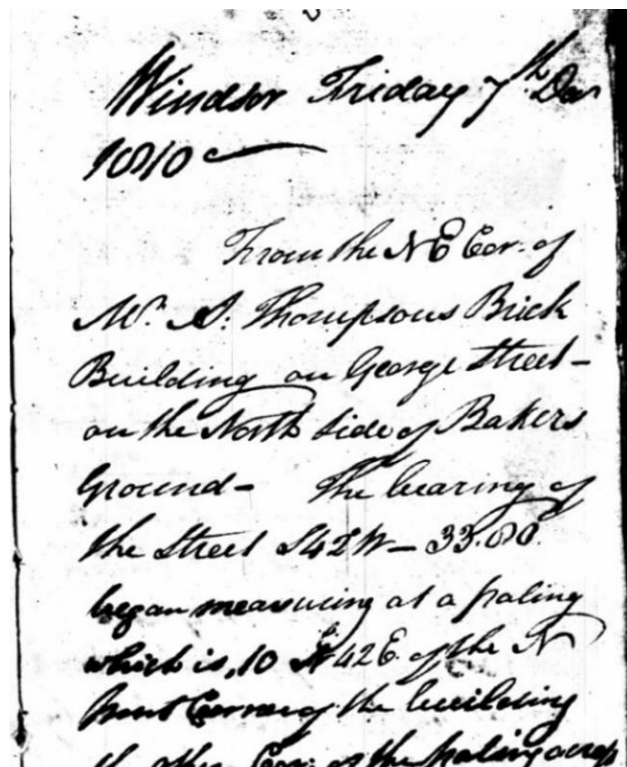
At it's widest point it is approximately 11m wide, at it's narrowest, around 7m.

In order to access a bridge via Baker Street Northbound, the 24,000 vehicles a day (including around 3,000 heavy vehicles) would be required to travel along Windsor Road, left into Macquarie Street and turn right into Baker Street.

Baker Street is home to the Hawkesbury Museum, commercial, retail and residential premises and is also the starting point for Windsor Mall. Even if the road was widened all the way to property boundaries, it would still barely be more than a laneway.

It is also a road which is older than Bridge Street, the current state route through Windsor.

Baker Street is based on "Baker's Line" which was the boundary of one of the first allotments granted in the Green Hills (later Windsor). Meehan used Andrew Thompson's brick building on the corner of what is now Baker and George Streets to do the entire survey of Windsor for Lachlan Macquarie's 1812 "Plan of Windsor". It is currently one of the outer boundaries of the Permanent Conservation Area of Thompson Square.



Windsor Friday 7th Dec
1810

From the NE cor. of
Mr A. Thompsons Brick
Building on George Street -
on the North side of Bakers
Ground - The bearing of
the street S42W - 33.80

began measuring at a paling
which is, 10 N42E of the N
front corner of the building
the other cor. of the paling across

Windsor Friday 7th Dec 1810 -

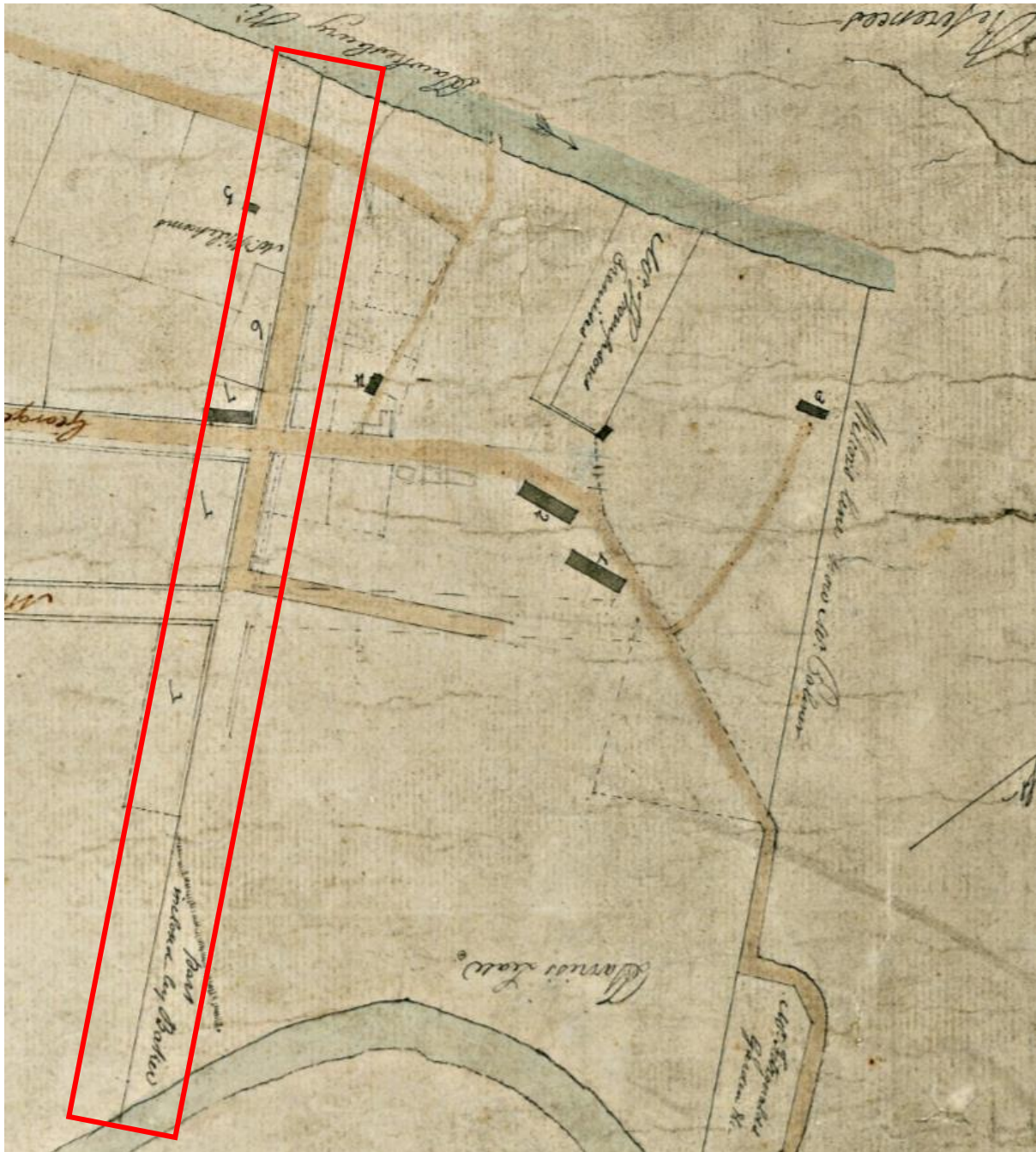
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Lachlan Macquarie's "Plan of Windsor" 1812.

That Baker Street was ever presented to the community as a route option for 24,000 vehicles is, at best, both insulting and derisory, at worst, the most embarrassing example of incompetence I've ever encountered.

Option 5 – Kable Street

OPTION 5 KABLE STREET – FROM WINDSOR ROAD, ALONG MACQUARIE STREET

Along Macquarie Street through to Kable Street, crossing the Hawkesbury River at Macquarie Park on the northern river bank.

Key considerations:

- As Kable Street is narrow, existing vehicle parking would need to be restricted/denied between Macquarie Street and George Street.
- Potential for the Bridge Street road cutting to be backfilled and landscaped to reinstate the shape of Thompson Square.
- Reconstruction of the intersection at Macquarie Street and Kable Street, providing an extended right turn bay to accommodate additional turning traffic.
- Traffic lights required at The Terrace to manage the increased traffic volumes. Alternatively this access may be closed.
- Removal of raised pedestrian threshold at George Street and replacement with traffic lights would allow pedestrians to cross safely.
- Increased traffic along shopping precinct in Kable Street reducing pedestrian and parked vehicle safety.
- Potential impact to the heritage listed Masonic Centre on Kable Street.
- Tree loss would be required along both river banks.
- Aboriginal heritage is likely to be found in areas near the presence of permanent water.
- Property would be acquired on Kable Street, along the southern and northern river banks and from Macquarie Park.

This is Kable Street.



Kable Street varies between 8 and 9 metres wide throughout it's length. In the photo above, it is around 8.5m wide. It transverses Windsor Pedestrian Mall.

Kable Street is home to heritage buildings, commercial, residential and retail premises.

In order to access a bridge at the end of this street, 24,000 vehicles would have been expected to follow the same route as for Option 4 (Baker Street), with an additional intersection along the route.

Kable Street was also included in Meehan's 1810 survey of Windsor and similarly, shown on Lachlan Macquarie's 1812 "Plan of Windsor"

Again, an insult to this community.

OTHER OPTIONS

Option 9 – rehabilitation of the current bridge, was actually the only feasible option, in conjunction with a properly planned bypass to relieve traffic. However that option was given very little description, and was accompanied on the Options brochure with its very own "why we can't" description.

OPTION 9 REHABILITATE THE EXISTING BRIDGE

The rehabilitation of the existing bridge with a 25 year life span would cost between \$14 million and \$17 million. The bridge would have to be closed for up to 12 months during the work and a significant detour (approximately 20 km) would be required to cross the river during the work.

Key considerations:

- Replacing the deck requires substantial modifications to the piers.
- There would be no additional impact on Thompson Square.
- Provide for a 1 in 2 year flood event.
- Minimal vegetation would be disturbed.
- No property acquisitions would be required.
- Potential safety hazard for traffic could be created with current sight distances along approaches to the bridge.

CHALLENGES OF RETAINING THE EXISTING BRIDGE

If the preferred option is to construct a new bridge the following needs to be considered:

- Potential risk to the new bridge if constructed downstream of the existing bridge.
- The ongoing cost of maintaining the existing bridge.
- The heritage of the existing bridge.
- Pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to local areas.

All other options were destructive and deficient. Including Options 1, 2 and 3 within Thompson Square.

Every single option (apart from Option 9 – rehabilitation) was dependent on demolition of the current heritage listed bridge, including the ‘bypass’ which was removed from the conversation before the Options brochure was even distributed to the public.

Option 8 (which a number of RMS staff have referred to as the ‘bypass’ option during my conversations with them), also required the demolition of the current Windsor Bridge, as well as proposing to force more than 20,000 vehicles through two more of the Five Macquarie Towns, Pitt Town and Wilberforce.

OPTION 8 PITT TOWN ROAD

Access from Pitt Town Road onto Punt Road, then by viaduct or low embankment and bridge across Bardenarang Creek, across the floodplain crossing the Hawkesbury River to King Road, Wilberforce.

Key considerations:

- Safe navigation for river traffic around bridge piers.
- Punt Road is a gravel road and would require reconstruction to accommodate anticipated traffic volumes.
- Bathurst Street is narrow and would require widening and upgrading to accommodate anticipated traffic volumes.
- Increase in traffic through Pitt Town.
- Potential access difficulties to properties along the route.
- Increase in traffic noise to properties along the route.
- Potential for the Bridge Street road cutting to be backfilled and landscaped to reinstate the shape of Thompson Square.
- Potential impact to heritage items along the route.
- Tree loss would be required along both river banks.
- Aboriginal heritage is likely to be found in areas near the presence of permanent water.
- Property would be acquired across the flood plains on both river banks.

There has been a significant amount of development in Pitt Town and this 'bypass' option would have caused massive and detrimental effects to thousands of residents.

SUMMARY

In summary, every single 'new bridge' option presented to the public by the RMS in 2009 was designed to push the community toward Option 1, which had already been drawn on a map by the Government Architect in 2004.

The entire public consultation process for this project has been pointless, has divided our community and wasted countless hours of people's time and resources.

That is unforgivable.

The insinuation and direct comment by both RMS staff and political proponents of the project, that the current bridge is in a perilous state of repair has created fear in our community.

That is unforgivable.

This project is so bad and unsuitable that taxpayer moneys spent on this project so far are in the region of \$30,000,000 and construction has not even started yet.

That is unforgivable.

Successive Premiers have refused to engage with locals and other opposed to this project.

That is unforgivable.

The previous Member for Hawkesbury has lied repeatedly in telling the community that Option 1 will offer flood free access in all bar the very worst of floods such as in 1867.

That is unforgivable.

The current Member for Hawkesbury refuses to address this significant issue in his electorate.

That is unforgivable.

The preferred option **will** destroy our national heritage.

That is unforgivable.

The preferred option **will** damage this community's economic viability into the future.

That is unforgivable.

The Windsor Bridge Replacement Project as a whole, is unforgivable.

RECOMMENDATION

My recommendation is that the current Inquiry refer the project to the Independent Commission Against Corruption for the full and comprehensive investigation.

And ensure that a realistic and feasible bypass is planned and executed for this community.

Regards

Venecia Wilson

Richmond