

= East Washington Avenue Bridge =

The East Washington Avenue Bridge refers to the bridges that have connected East Washington Avenue over the Pequonnock River in Bridgeport , Connecticut . Records state that a bridge was first constructed on the site in 1836 , but no description of the bridge has been found . The second bridge was a truss swing design and underwent heavy repair and modernization in 1893 . The third design was a movable Strauss underneath @-@ counter weight deck @-@ girder bascule bridge . The plans were drafted by James A. McElroy , using Joseph B. Strauss 's design in 1916 . However , construction was delayed for years because of a dispute with the contractor and a lack of funds . The bridge was completed by Bridgeport Dry Dock and Dredging when the State of Connecticut appropriated \$ 350 @,@ 000 to erect the bridge . Completed in 1925 , the bridge underwent several modifications throughout its service life . On July 26 , 1983 , the bridge was closed after it was found to be in danger of collapse . It reopened after repair , but was closed in the 1990s before being replaced with a modern bascule bridge in 1998 . In 2010 , the report listed the deck and superstructure conditions as " Good " and the substructure condition as " Satisfactory " .

= = Original bridge = =

The East Washington Avenue Bridge serves an area that was previously known as Pembroke , the name stemming from the 1650s , that grew to become a prosperous agricultural community . East of Pembroke was the village of Newfield , which was chartered as the borough of Bridgeport in 1800 . In 1821 , it became the township of Bridgeport before being chartered as a city in 1836 . The need for the bridge arose when Reverend Birdsey Noble purchased 50 acres from Senator Wright ; with the intention of selling housing lots . The location of the bridge was originally planned to be one quarter of a mile to the south , but it was changed through public opposition , and a toll bridge was constructed in 1836 . The description of this bridge and details of its service life and replacement have not been found in records .

= = Second bridge = =

The design of the second East Washington Avenue Bridge is unknown , but the survey in 1916 for its replacement documented a cantilever through truss swing that was 184 ft (56 m) long . The bridge was heavily repaired and remodeled in 1893 , around this same period a trolley line was added . Two decades later , the bridge needed to be replaced and restrictions were made to extend the service life of the bridge , with trolleys , then heavy trucks being banned . The bridge 's service life ended in 1917 with its closure .

= = Third bridge = =

The City of Bridgeport appointed a bridge commission to replace the aging East Washington Avenue Bridge on December 7 , 1915 . The commission chose a Joseph B. Strauss 's patented design from the Strauss Bascule Bridge Company of Chicago , Illinois . The city engineer James A. McElroy drew up the plans for the bridge 's specifications and the plans were completed on February 17 , 1916 . The steel for the construction was ordered from the Penn Bridge Company . The project was suspended because of a dispute with the contractor and a lack of funds to erect the bridge , but in 1923 the State of Connecticut appropriated \$ 350 @,@ 000 to complete the project . Only two bids for the bridge 's erection were placed , the first by Bridgeport Dry Dock and Dredging for \$ 326 @,@ 575 and the second by C. W. Blakeslee and Sons for \$ 389 @,@ 492 with estimations varying based on extra work needed . Bridgeport Dry Dock and Dredging won the contract and the materials were shipped to Bridgeport , with work beginning mid @-@ 1924 . The completed bridge included an operator 's house and a public toilet building . The bridge , costing over \$ 550 @,@ 000 in total , was turned over to the city on October 14 , 1925 .

== Service life ==

The original bascule deck of creosote @-@ impregnated yellow pine and the spruce plank sidewalks were replaced with concrete in the early 1940s . In 1960 , the original fender system was replaced . In June 1968 , the ornamental lamps were replaced with modern street lights . A 1979 inspection of the bridge found it listed in " poor condition " and recommended repairs totaling \$ 820 @, @ 000 to be completed by 1985 . A 1980 report by the Connecticut Department of Transportation listed the East Washington Avenue bridge as 1 of the 127 bridges in " poor condition " ; requiring " immediate " repair . The report defines " poor condition " as serviceable and not in danger of collapse . The Hartford Courant states that the 1979 report went unnoticed for four years and another inspection was carried out in 1982 ; also listing the bridge in " poor condition " .

After the Mianus River Bridge collapsed on June 29 , 1983 , a state @-@ wide assessment of bridges began . An engineering firm , Flaherty and Giavara , reported that a critical beam had nearly rusted through , prompting the bridge 's closure . Bridgeport 's mayor Leonard S. Paoletta said " the bridge could [collapse] at any moment . " The bridge was closed on July 26 , 1983 , around 3 p.m. Eastern Standard Time as a response to Flaherty and Giavara 's report . Repairs were completed and the bridge was reopened on August 10 , 1983 . The repairs billed at \$ 5 @, @ 000 were a temporary solution and the bridge was slated to close in February 1984 when \$ 1 @. @ 5 million in funds were unavailable .

== Current bridge ==

The bridge was closed in the 1990s and a replacement bridge was required . In 1998 , the demolition and construction of a modern bascule bridge replaced the previous East Washington Avenue Bridge . The railings were upgraded and the original operator 's house and connected toilet @-@ building were restored . In 2010 , the current state of the bridge listed the deck and superstructure conditions as " Good " and the substructure condition as " Satisfactory " . In 2013 , the East Washington Avenue Bridge was described by officials as rarely opening to accommodate marine traffic .