

One needs to know that motorized traffic was booming at the time and that speed and uncontrolled driving led to a number of accident victims in London. Because of that, in 1934 the Minister of Transport, Sir (again ...) Leslie Hore-Belisha had introduced the driving test, and a beacon – black and white striped pole, orange lighted ball on top – marking pedestrian crossings. This 'Belisha beacon' still is a typical, unique feature of the London traffic system today.

While he studied European cities and called on experts for the next few years, Bressey was assisted in his research work for the report by Edwin Lutyens. This is most likely why he was familiar with Rotterdam as he mentioned in his letter. The final report of the research, The Highway Development Survey, 1937 for Greater London, was published on 16 May 1938. In it, Bressey proposed a series of high capacity motorways radiating outwards from the city, triple-storey parking garages, large roundabouts and he made recommendations for a series of orbital roads around the city.



It all sounds very modern. Although many of the pictures published with the plans do have a distinct sci-fi twist to it, typical of the time. The images you see in films and avant-garde architectural drawings are of that era. On the other hand, sci-fi can become reality. Multi-storey parking decks are common now, although not smack in the middle of Trafalgar Square (upper left). To any foreigner the multi-storey bicycle decks in front of our Amsterdam train station look just as futuristic. But they are a reality for sure.