

**Lancashire
County
Council**



Central Railway Route Link Road, Blackpool

Opened by

County Councillor G. W. Slynn

Chairman of the Highways and Transportation Committee

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County Surveyor & Bridgemaster**

Introduction

The Central Railway Route Link Road, together with the major car and coach parks which are being developed in the Central and South Shore areas of Blackpool, provides a unique transportation facility designed to assist the tourist industry and, at the same time, relieve the existing road network of the effects of heavy traffic, particularly during the holiday season.

Background to the Scheme

Traffic conditions on Preston New Road A583 and on the roads distributing traffic from it, to and around the periphery of the Blackpool Town Centre, have been unsatisfactory for many years, particularly during the summer months. The opening of the M55 Motorway, in 1975, exacerbated the local problems. Congestion is particularly acute in the summer when, at certain times, queues of standing traffic extend from the Oxford junction in Blackpool almost back to the end of the Motorway, a distance of over 3 km. The heavy flows of traffic, often slow moving, with intermittent stopping and starting, have a serious affect on the environment, for the many people living in the vicinity.

Following Local Government reorganisation in 1974, a joint County Council / Borough Council investigation was carried out into the possible use of disused railway land, between the end of the M55 Motorway and the old Central Station site at the centre of Blackpool, for the construction of a road to serve the Central and South Shore areas of the town. It was concluded that the road should link directly into a car and coach parking area to be

constructed on the large track of land beyond Waterloo Road and into the site of the former Central Station.

Subsequently a scheme for the Link Road was prepared by the County Council and this, together with the parking areas, was included in its Transportation Policy and Programme.

Whilst the Link Road is the responsibility of the County Council, the construction of the car and coach parks, which when complete will have a capacity in excess of 6000 cars is the responsibility of the Blackpool Borough Council.

It is considered that the scheme will be particularly helpful and attractive to holiday makers and visitors on whom Blackpool largely relies for its economic prosperity, and will play an important role in the strategic planning of the South Shore Area of Blackpool.

The overall environment will benefit considerably from the transfer of traffic to the Link Road, which would otherwise continue to use routes through densely developed residential areas leading to the centre of the town. Pedestrians on these urban routes will benefit from the reduction in traffic both on safety and on environmental grounds, and vehicular access to the frontage properties will be made much easier.

Since large numbers of vehicles will enter the parking area directly from the Link Road, there will be relief to the endemic problem in the town, of traffic circulating the town centre roads looking for available parking spaces.

The Central Railway Route Link Road — Blackpool

Description of the Link Road

From the end of the main carriageways of the M55, new dual two-lane Motorway with hard shoulders, has been constructed passing under the bridges carrying the terminal roundabout of the Motorway which were originally provided when the Motorway was built in the early 1970's.

To the west of the new length of Motorway, a single carriageway road had been constructed in 1982, with slip roads to the M55 terminal roundabout, to provide access into the Peel Industrial Estate. A second carriageway has been added to this road to provide a dual two lane all purpose road, through to the Chapel Road roundabout.

Westwards from the Chapel Road roundabout through to Waterloo Road, near South Shore Station, the route, approximately 3½ km in length continues as a single two-way carriageway, constructed on top of the former railway embankment. On the major part of this length the road is bounded by a pre-cast concrete safety / noise barrier and where the route passes close to residential property this barrier is surmounted by a timber visual screen.

Although the Link Road leads directly into the car and coach parking areas a connection is provided to Waterloo Road but this will be closed during the peak traffic periods when traffic levels in the vicinity of Waterloo Road are very high.

Concrete Safety Barrier

The precast concrete safety barriers, which also act as noise barriers have a shaped traffic face which has been de-

veloped as the result of extensive full-scale tests in the USA and in this country and is designed to redirect an errant vehicle back on to the carriageway, with minimum damage to both the vehicle and the barrier. The outer face of the barrier is provided with a ribbed exposed aggregate finish.

Bridges

Four of the existing railway bridges were partially reconstructed in an advance bridgeworks contract. At Chapel Road Bridge and Vicarage Lane Bridge, the original steel girder decks were replaced by precast reinforced concrete beam and in-situ concrete slab decks. The brick abutments were retained and have been strengthened by reinforced concrete backing. At Whalley Lane Bridge and Hawes Side Lane Bridge, the brick arches have been strengthened by the addition of reinforced concrete saddles.

At St Annes Road / Watson Road, the five-legged road junction was formerly crossed by a steel through-girder bridge, which was generally in poor condition and has been replaced by a new single span bridge. The deck comprises four precast post-tensioned box beams of 30.6m maximum span with an in-situ reinforced concrete deck slab. The reinforced concrete abutments are supported on cast-in-situ bored piles. The vertical timber piles which supported the original bridge had to be extracted to enable the longer concrete piles to be installed. The original bridge wing walls have been partially utilised but have been reduced in height,

strengthened and refaced, to match the brick facework provided on the new abutments and on the retaining walls on the approaches to the bridge.

In order to produce harmony and continuity of appearance the concrete safety barrier units are continued throughout the retaining wall sections.

Three new reinforced concrete sign gantries have been constructed over the M55 Motorway on the west-bound approach to the A583 junction.

Operation of the Link Road

It is intended that, during the peak summer months and in the Illuminations period, the Link Road will connect only into the parking area. During these periods, the connection to the town road system, at Waterloo Road, will remain closed, except for emergency access and for certain hours in the evenings and early mornings. This is because the already congested Waterloo Road / Lytham Road / St-Annes Road area of Blackpool would be unable to cope with the additional traffic if this connection was to be open during the peak holiday season. The management and operation of the car and coach parking area itself will be carried out by the Blackpool Borough Council.

During the remaining part of the year, the traffic in Waterloo / Lytham Road / St-Annes Road area is lighter and the town road system is capable of accepting additional traffic. The demand for the parking area is also likely to be lower and the

connection to the town roads will be open. Traffic will then have the option of entering directly into the parking area or of joining the town roads.

Because of the unique situation whereby a major road will at certain times connect directly and only into a parking area, special traffic signing had to be designed. At the end of the M55 Motorway the three gantry signs will be capable of indicating, as appropriate, whether or not the parking area is full. Variable message signs will also be provided on the Preston New Road, A583 approach to the Link Road and at the Chapel Road junction.

Contracts

The construction of the Link Road has been carried out in two separate contracts by Fairclough Civil Engineering Ltd. An Advance Contract to the value of £148,000 was commenced in July 1984, for the reconstruction and strengthening of four of the bridges which carried the railway over various side roads. The Main Works contract to the value of £3.5M was commenced in October 1984.

The cost of constructing the Link Road has been aided by a grant from the European Regional Development Fund of the EEC.

The Link Road has been designed and the contracts prepared and supervised by the County Surveyor and Bridgmaster.

CENTRAL RAILWAY ROUTE LINK ROAD

BLACKPOOL (DISTRICT)
Stanley Park

STAINING CP
Staining
Staining Hall Farm



Car and Coach
Parking Area

Waterloo Road

South
Shore

Hawes Side Lane

Whalley Lane

St. Annes Road

Vicarage Lane

Chapel Road

Peel Industrial Estate

M55

A583



WESTBY-WI

