

HAER INVENTORY

Missouri Historic Bridge Inventory

NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE

New Franklin Viaduct
MHTD: K 744

HOWA02

DATE(S) OF CONSTRUCTION

1939-40

LOCATION

State Highway 5 over abandoned grade of MKT Railroad; S29/28, T49N, R16W
New Franklin; Howard County, Missouri

USE (ORIGINAL / CURRENT)

urban viaduct / urban viaduct

RATING NRHP possibly eligible (score: 51)

CONDITION

good

OWNER

Missouri Highway Transportation Department

span number: 6; 13
span length: 54.0'; 48.0'
total length: 1462.0'
roadway wdt.: 24.0'

superstructure: multiple span, concrete deck girder viaduct
substructure: concrete abutments, wingwalls and piers
floor/decking: asphalt-covered concrete deck
other features: arched concrete girders; open balustrade guardrails with flanking pedestrian stairways;
modest Moderne treatment on concrete piers

As part of the effort to create jobs during the Depression, Congress in 1934 passed an act allowing federal monies to be used for road and bridge construction within municipalities. Taking advantage of the new legislation, the Missouri State Highway Commission undertook a number of urban road and bridge projects during the late 1930s. Located on the southern side of New Franklin on State Highway 5, the New Franklin Viaduct was one such construction project. To span the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad, the Missouri State Highway Department engineered a multiple-span concrete girder structure, with slightly arched girders, open balustrade guardrails and pedestrian stairways at both ends. On September 22, 1939, a \$167,894.18 contract for the structure's construction was awarded to Carrothers and Crouch. Completed the following year, the New Franklin Viaduct has since carried increasingly heavy traffic loads on the principal highway leading into the city from the south.

As an important crossing of the MKT Railroad, the New Franklin Viaduct has formed an integral part of the city's street system. The viaduct is also important as one of the railroad separation projects funded through the New Deal's Hayden-Cartwright Act. Federal relief programs of the 1930s broke with past practice by allowing federal funds to be used for urban, as well as rural highways. Grade separation was a major focus of the highway department during this period, requiring commitment of much staff time. The New Franklin Viaduct is technologically distinguished as a multiple-span and long-span example of a MSHD mainstay structural type—the concrete deck girder. A well-preserved, regionally important example of this common bridge type, the structure is both technologically and historically significant.