Reuse of Parts From
The Historic New Franklin Viaduct
Route 5, Howard County:

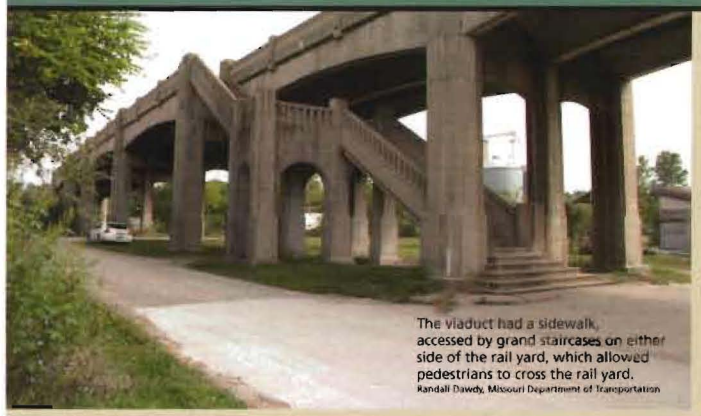
A stipulation in the project MOA stated "The MHTC, acting by and through MODOT, shall consult with the City of New Franklin to reuse and preserve a portion of the existing concrete bridge balustrade for a Katy Trail pedestrian fence to commemorate the historic bridge."

Additionally, MODOT had been in communication with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR), because they would be removing a bridge over the Katy Trail, which the MDNR controls. (The MDNR uses trailheads to showcase local history and points of interest and had offered to place wayside signing near the Katy Trail/Route 5 intersection). MODOT Historic Preservation staff agreed to provide text and photos outlining the history of the viaduct. MDNR then adapted the material to new wayside signage.

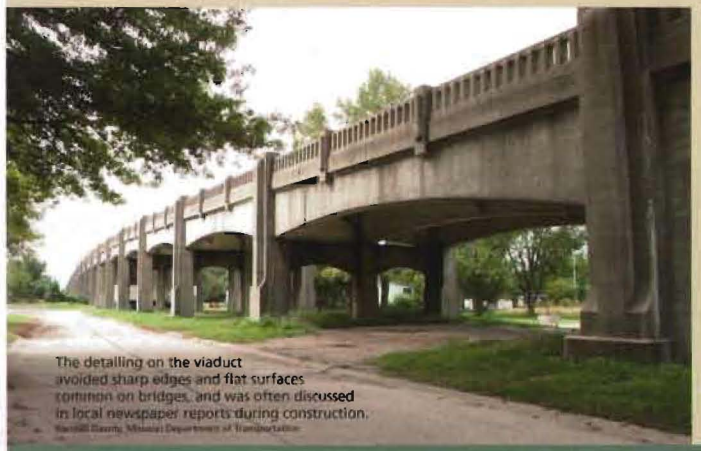

STOP

The New Franklin Viaduct

MP 188.3 KATY TRAIL STATE PARK



The viaduct had a sidewalk, accessed by grand staircases on either side of the rail yard, which allowed pedestrians to cross the rail yard.
Randall Dawdy, Missouri Department of Transportation



The detailing on the viaduct avoided sharp edges and flat surfaces common on bridges, and was often discussed in local newspaper reports during construction.
Randall Dawdy, Missouri Department of Transportation

The Need

When the Missouri, Kansas and Texas (MKT) Railroad established a division in Franklin, Mo., a switching yard was located south of New Franklin. This switching yard contained seven sets of tracks plus the through line. Missouri Highway 5 entered New Franklin by crossing this switching yard. There were several fatal accidents in the area before the viaduct was constructed.

Construction

The 1936 federal highway aid bill funded the viaduct and made reducing railroad grade crossings a high priority. A concrete deck girder design was the cheapest way to build the viaduct. The structure includes an unusual amount of architectural detailing because of the importance of the crossing and its location between Boonville and Fayette.

Carrothers and Crouch of Kansas City built the viaduct in 1939 and 1940. They used local labor, keeping unemployment in the community down during construction. The official dedication was part of an all-day celebration.

After the MKT

The MKT Railroad removed the switching yard after they stopped running in 1986. Katy Trail State Park replaced the through line. Missouri Department of Transportation discussed removing the viaduct as early as 1993 because it was not needed.

The Parkway

The Missouri Department of Transportation decided to remove the viaduct in 2009 and replace it with a parkway. A part of the railing became a decorative feature for Katy Trail State Park. More than half of the remaining structure provided recycled material for the at-grade parkway, which replaced the viaduct, rather than going to a landfill.

MoDOT KATY Missouri Department of Natural Resources

Close coordination with the MKT was necessary during design and construction.
Courtesy: South Howard County Historical Society

New Franklin had almost zero unemployment during construction of the viaduct due to federal rules requiring use of local labor.
Courtesy: South Howard County Historical Society

The viaduct was the south entrance to New Franklin for 70 years before it was removed.
Randall Dawdy, Missouri Department of Transportation

Railings from the viaduct added a decorative element to the Katy Trail State Park. Concrete from the viaduct made 5000 tons of rock for state and local road projects.
Randall Dawdy, Missouri Department of Transportation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