

Not with GN

DRAFT

SILVERTOWN WAY and SILVERTOWN BYPASS

1. INTRODUCTION

Following the successful exercise to record the Stratford and the closure of the Silvertown Bypass, discussions took place on 7th February between Howard Bloch, Local History Librarian, London Borough of Newham, and Tim Smith of GLIAS for the recording of Silvertown Way and Silvertown Way. On 27th February a preliminary visit was made. Thanks to Mr x of Newham Borough xx the visit included viewing of the works connected with the Lower Lee Crossing which materially affect Silvertown Way.

2. HISTORY

Billed as "A Road to the Empire", Silvertown Way was opened by the then Minister of Transport Mr Leslie Hore-Belisha on Thursday 13th September 1934. Factory owners and traders in Silvertown had been pressing for improvements to the approach roads to the Royal Docks and Silvertown since 1902. The First World War delayed the first scheme and it was not until 1929 that the Dock Approaches (Improvement) Act was passed. The consulting engineers were Messrs Rendel, Palmer and Tritton. The main bottle necks of the area were the White Gates level crossing in Canning Town, the narrow swing bridge over the entrance to the Royal Victoria Dock and the Silvertown level crossing. There were four parts to the new road scheme, a new bridge to carry Barking Road over the River Lea (completed September 1933), the Silvertown Way viaduct across the dock entrance, the Silvertown By-pass (opened July 1935) and the building of 599 new dwellings near Prince Regent Lane to re-house those displaced by the works.

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1 SILVERTOWN WAY

Silverown Way is an elevated road running from Canning Town to the south side of the Tidal Basin of the Royal Victoria Docks, near the Plaistow Wharf of Messrs Tate & Lyle. Most of the viaduct is built of reinforced concrete sections. These "standard units" are each 55ft long of three bays. The deck slab is supported by beams and columns. At each end "slab and wall" construction is used whereby the deck slab, thicker than in the standard unit, is supported on cross-walls of concrete. According to an article in "Engineering" [1] there are eight reinforced concrete bridges along its length. Five cross or crossed roads, and each have a span of 32ft 6ins. A 15ft span crosses a footpath. A two span bridge of 47ft 6ins crossed the PLA railway on the skew. The former Tidal Basin entrance is crossed by a 100ft span bridge. The article does not mention the bridge over the railway north of the Tidal Basin, unless the reference to the bridge over the PLA railway is means that bridge.

There are two spurs from the viaduct, both from the east side, giving access to the north side of the Royal Victoria Dock (the Tidal Basin Spur) and to the south side of the dock. The viaduct is known to have sustained damage during World War II.

3.2 SILVERTOWN BYPASS

This road is also of reinforced concrete construction and includes a bow-string bridge over the railway. There was a spur giving access to the King George V Dock.

4. CURRENT STATUS

4.1 Silvertown Way is still in use but is undergoing alteration as part of the works connected with the Lower Lea Crossing. A roundabout is being constructed underneath the flyover just south of the railway bridge. Two double sections of Silvertown Way are being replaced by steel beam bridges. The first, northern, beam bridge is being fabricated from steel imported to a Thames-side wharf from Belgium on a site parallel to the flyover just south of what will be its final position. The site alongside could not be used because of the position of power-lines. A crane will be used to place the bridge in position over a weekend in April when Silvertown Way will be closed. The second beam bridge will then be constructed on the same site before being swung into position in July.

Two slip roads will connect the flyover with the roundabout. That on the east side will pass under the Tidal Basin spur. A short section of the spur viaduct, at its junction with the flyover, has been replaced in order to accommodate the slip road. The west slip road will join the Way at a point just south of the Tidal Basin bridge. A length of the footpath has been removed at this point and the road temporarily narrowed.

4.2 The Silvertown Bypass is closed to vehicular traffic and is awaiting demolition.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDING

5.1 SILVERTOWN WAY

There are a number of features of interest along the Silvertown Way which should be recorded.

1. The plate girder bridge over the railway.
2. The Tidal Basin bridge.
3. An intermediate bridge over a former street.
4. Two spurs.
5. Two types of stairway giving access to the flyover from beneath for pedestrians. One type, full enclosed, can be found immediately south of the bridge over the railway. An open stairway can be found south of the Tidal Basin. The position and type of all stairways along the road should be recorded.
6. Lamp posts.
7. At the site of the new roundabout, the remains of loading banks and other features of occupation of the space beneath the flyover should be recorded.
8. South of Tidal Basin, opposite Charrington's and Tate & Lyle's, spaces underneath the flyover are occupied by a maintenance engineer's, a rag merchants and for vehicle maintenance, including black cabs. Borough of Newham repossession notices suggest these activities will not

continue for long. One bay here is occupied by an electricity sub-station and another is used for car parking.

9. At various points constructional details can be seen. Columns and the soffit display evidence of timber form-work. The parapets can be seen to have been constructed of pre-cast concrete sections.

5.2 SILVERTOWN BYPASS

The main features which ought to be recorded are:

1. The bowstring arch bridge section.
2. The railway crossing.
3. The kerbs, which are of different types of granite, and the inscribed kerbs which note the types of granite used.
4. The lamp standards, which appear to be original.

In addition, general views and a typical section should be photographed. The nearby railway level crossing on the Silvertown Tramway should also be recorded.

Tim Smith