

Gatwick Footbridge Refurbishment

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Long span footbridge rejuvenation completed two months early

As part of an ongoing improvement scheme at Gatwick Airport Railway Station, we were awarded further works by our Gatwick Airport Customer to refurbish two footbridges at the South Terminal.

The bridges are some hundred metres in length, each spanning six railway lines on the London to Brighton Main Line, along with the six extremely busy platforms at Gatwick Airport Station. The works included replacement of the external cladding, additional steelwork to provide support for the new roofing system, and painting of the exposed steelwork.

Both bridges carry passengers from the main terminal building to the drop off zone and car parking facilities, and had to remain open for the duration of the works. In addition, close liaison with both Network Rail and Southern Trains was paramount to ensure works over the track and within the station did not cause any disruption to the 24/7 flow of passengers.

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Our site team and our supply partners worked under extremely challenging conditions to deliver the North Bridge Refurbishment two months early.

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The project challenges facing our team demanded meticulous planning and a thorough understanding of our Customer's risks and opportunities to succeed. Although the Gatwick Airport Station was under the Olympic construction embargo during the Summer of 2012; due to careful management of operations and consultation with stakeholders, our project was allowed to continue to complete the North bridge façade cladding works to an accelerated programme which enabled Network Rail to mobilise and commence their station expansion works.

IMAGE: The new footbridge over Gatwick Airport station

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Coordinated access and design solutions

In order to facilitate the refurbishment works, access and complete encapsulation of both bridges was required. This was accomplished using a comprehensive scaffold system installed during a possession of the tracks below.

Successful erection and removal of scaffolding was undertaken during Network Rail possessions. The possessions were scheduled to coincide with Network Rail maintenance possessions on the London to Brighton rail line, to provide efficiencies and avoid further potential delays to passengers.

Concurrent works were taking place at Gatwick Airport Railway Station, involving the refurbishment of the station and construction of an additional platform. As a result there was very limited space for a site compound and meticulously planned and coordinated logistics were required for all deliveries and access routes to the bridges.

To ensure all elements of the works were coordinated and managed we developed a comprehensive Interface Management Plan which included a clear logistics strategy. The site team quickly identified key individuals in the adjacent project teams and assigned a buddy system to gain their confidence and to work closely together to achieve a positive outcome for all projects.



TOP: Gatwick Link

BOTTOM: Fully operational footbridge

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We demonstrate our commitment to providing a safe and efficient delivery designed around the needs of our Customer.

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IMAGE: The North Bridge providing a vital link for passengers to the station, as well as parking facilities.

Effective relationship management drives success

The team's challenge was to accelerate Gatwick Airport's refurbishment and cladding works to the North Bridge to enable Network Rail to commence their train lengthening programme at the station. This required a large section of the North Footbridge refurbishment to be completed, and the scaffolding removed, in time for Network Rail's contractor to commence the major works located under the footbridge.

Key to success of the refurbishment was the prompt resolution of design issues as site works progressed. The professional approach by all involved ensured that design details were discussed and agreed efficiently and effectively to ensure the project could progress unhindered.

The active role played by Gatwick Airport Limited in this process was essential. The collaborative teamwork successfully culminated in completion of the North Bridge in preparation for a 27 hour possession for removal of the comprehensive encapsulation and scaffolding system. Hence, allowing sectional completion and handback of the required working areas to Network Rail.

Effective relationship management drives success

Through innovative methodology phasing and access solutions, our refurbishment of the Gatwick Airport Entrance Bridges was shortlisted at the ICE South East England Engineering Excellence Awards. Our team also secured two successive Safety Awards, a highly significant achievement given the level of activity that is procured by the Airport, demonstrating our commitment to providing a safe and efficient delivery designed around the needs of our Customer.