

# News Release

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## **THE PRIME MINISTER DRIVES FIRST PILE OF £220M LIMEHOUSE LINK**

Construction of the 1.8 km Limehouse Link tunnel was officially started today by The Prime Minister, The Rt Hon. Margaret Thatcher.

From the cab of a 36 metre high piling rig, on the quayside of Limehouse Basin, The Prime Minister drove one of the first 10 tonne piles for the £220 million, four lane tunnel, designed to improve access to the west side of the Isle of Dogs. More than 350 of the 24 metre long piles will be required to build a coffer dam as part of the tunnel construction in Limehouse Basin.

Outside the basin the tunnel will be constructed by 'cut and cover' technique which allows most of the work to take place underground once the tunnel walls and roof are in place.

A £171 million contract for construction of the Limehouse Link was awarded to the Balfour Beatty - Fairclough (Limehouse Link) Joint Venture at the end of September 1989. The Limehouse Link will connect The Highway, at the junction of Butcher Row and Narrow Street in the west, to Westferry Road and the proposed Poplar Link, at North Quay, on the Isle of Dogs. The section to Westferry Road is scheduled for completion in mid 1993. The full scheme, to

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Poplar Link, is expected to open in Autumn 1993, six months ahead of original projections. The estimated final cost of the scheme in 1993 is £220 million. The Limehouse Link is one scheme in the London Docklands Development Corporations £650 million roads programme.

Speaking at the start of work LDDC Chairman, David Hardy, said: "This is more good news for London Docklands which comes hard on the heels of the confirmation of the Jubilee Line Extension to Docklands and the opening, last week, of a new route connecting the east side of the Isle of Dogs to the A13 (East India Dock Road). In addition the Government has recently reaffirmed its commitment to London Docklands by increasing our grant by £359 million over the three years to the end of March 1992.

"Over the next few years the Corporation will spend more than £1 billion, three quarters of which will be invested in new roads and railways to provide improved access for residents and the fast expanding Docklands workforce. The Jubilee Line, combined with the upgrading and extensions of the Docklands Light Railway and improved bus services will mean that about 80 per cent of the journeys to, from and within London Docklands will be by public transport by the mid 1990s.

"But what particularly pleases us is that through the construction of our major roads programme and the Accord with Tower Hamlets Council we have been able to improve the quality of life for up to 500 Council tenants and commit a £35 million package of social, education and community projects to the benefit of local people. Last week I was

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delighted to see that the first tenants have moved into their new housing association homes at Timber Wharves on the Isle of Dogs."

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **THE SCHEME**

1. The Board of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC) approved the Limehouse Link, as part of its highways strategy in June 1986. At the same time it resolved to make Compulsory Purchase Orders on land required for the highways schemes.
2. The Corporation commissioned Sir Alexander Gibb & Partners to complete feasibility studies and carry out the detailed design for the Limehouse Link at the end of 1986.
3. The Limehouse Link Compulsory Purchase Order was made by the Corporation on 29 April 1988.

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4. Planning permission for the Limehouse Link scheme was granted on 4 July 1988.
5. A public inquiry into the LDDC's Limehouse Link Compulsory Purchase Order, the associated road closure order and four conservation area consents was held between 18 October and 16 November 1988.
6. Six contractors/groups of contractors from the United Kingdom and Europe were invited to tender for the contract to build the Limehouse Link on 6 December 1988. Tenders were received in May 1989.
7. Nicholas Ridley, then Secretary of State for the Environment, and Paul Channon, then Secretary of State for Transport, jointly confirmed the Limehouse Link Compulsory Purchase Order on 27 June 1989. In addition Mr Ridley granted the conservation area consents and Mr Channon confirmed the road closure order.

The Limehouse Link is one of a number of highways schemes being progressed by the LDDC to improve access to Docklands. These include the widening of Westferry Road, from the Millwall Lock entrance northwards to Westferry Circus; improvements to West India Dock Road, including the realignment of the junction with East India Dock Road, the Poplar Link and improvements to Prestons Road, including a new flyover at the junction with the Poplar Link and the East India Dock Link.

Schemes in the Royal Docks include the widening of North Woolwich Road, the Royal Albert Dock Spine Road, the Connaught Crossing and the Eastern Gateway Access Road which opened last month.