

THE TRAMWAY MUSEUM SOCIETY

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Notes of 21st meeting on Sunday 24th January, 1988

Present : W.G.S.Hyde, M.C.Wright, and for part of the time, J.D.Markham.

Apologies for absence : A.W.Bond, D.Lardge, J.B.Brooke.

The review of progress deferred from the 19th meeting was again deferred. The meeting concentrated on proposals for remodelling Town End.

One proposal had been drawn up by the Committee and put on Poplar House office wall. This had generated considerable discussion amongst members, resulting in written contributions from David Tudor, Mike Davis, Geoffrey Baddeley (13 pages) and Operations Dept based on proposals from David Wilson. John Markham joined the meeting to present his ideas personally.

1. The Development Committee's ideas. The terminus tracks should end parallel to the existing shelter, be 6ft apart and have a 10'6" gap between outer rail and kerbs both sides. Visitors would then actually be stepping into the street to board a tram - absolutely correct practice, and better than stepping off the kerb directly onto the tram. This would introduce a slight curve into the otherwise straight street. The distance from crossover points to track end should be about 90ft., to allow for two long cars to load. The distance on the siding should be 60ft. minimum before the engine shed points. No shelter between the terminus tracks, since this made it impossible to turn trolleys, or for vehicles to turn from the proposed access road (from the carpark) into the street. It was suggested the pedestrian underpass be turned through 90 deg and emerge on the east of the track. The area would appear to be a 'normal' tram stop, creating the illusion (commonly used on model railways) that the road continued south and was not really a terminus at all.

2. Operations Dept. Whilst endorsing the general concept, interest centred on operating aspects, loading as many cars at once as possible, up to four, at this terminus by installing either a scissors, or facing plus trailing crossovers. Another possibility was two points back to back, i.e. ==>--<==. The present trailing crossover was considered the least convenient operationally (but the most typical). The engine shed track to be removed.

3. David Tudor favoured kerbside loading using a facing crossover, adding a trailing one outside the bookshop (for steam tram runround or works journeys avoiding Town End). The east siding would hold disabled cars, or cars parked awaiting service. The engine shed track to be removed.

4. Mike Davis considered any facing points to be unnecessary and potentially dangerous, but endorsed the concept of 'the road going on south', in which case the normal trailing crossover could be considered the reversing point for services not going 'through'. As a stop, not a terminus, straight track with a crossover was typical whereas single track into two sidings was not. Cars parked in the siding would give the impression of having 'worked through' from the south. However, having reversed, trams usually then crossed over and drew up to the stop to load, rather than load first. Difficult to accomplish at Town End, except by moving the crossover one car length south and extending the

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pavement northwards by the shelter, which would require the removal of the engine shed track, and restrict road vehicles turning in front of the Assembly Rooms.

5. John Markham recommended that all the Committee read 'Street Traffic Flow' by Henry Watson (1933), before finally deliberating. He reviewed road vehicle movement first and identified that the proposed ramp up to the carpark road was too steep, too sharp, and wrongly transitioned for anything bigger than a small car which would then have to plough its way through the tram queue. Since the Marylebone Gates could not be routinely used, small vehicles could do a U-turn in front of the Assembly Rooms (provided the pole by the phone box was moved back to the railings) and buses could turn by driving nose-in to the First Aid hut and reversing (with a conductor, correctly, on the back platform) alongside the pavement by the meter hut, where a bus stop should be placed. To reduce pedestrian wanderings, a pavement and kerb should be run in front of the Assembly Rooms and round to the phone box.

To load trams effectively, four at once, kerbside loading with a scissors was proposed, with the facing point electrically controlled from the overhead. The accompanying switch box would have a glass side so visitors could see it working. This was the *only* place where such a common piece of tramway action could be demonstrated. Since everywhere else the kerb will be 10'6", it was unnecessary by the shelter. The Stephenson Place stop was a bottleneck which was untypical, and the police would have got it moved years ago in reality. It shows all the 'bad' in tramway operation, we should be showing all the 'good'. However it was accepted that, for commercial reasons, trams and buses should unload in Stephenson Place, which, when the kerblines is moved back to 10'6", would be very effective. Since the steam tram was short wheelbase, and its trailer a bogie, a reversing triangle could fit in front of the Assembly Rooms, as the sharp curves would be unused by (and unwired for) electric trams. By extending the line out over Poplar House yard a bit, a ready made ash disposal and water point was possible, with gravity doing it all. As most visitors would not see this essential part of *steam tram* operation in use, (and it is something we as the Tramway Museum *should* show), a display of photographs and description beside the triangle would explain it.

6. Mr. Baddeley was concerned more with the general appearance of the whole Museum, taking particular exception to the blue and red of the railings (there were too many), which he claimed were totally untypical for the first part of this century. (Mr. Hyde agreed to find alternative shades of paint). The Museum was too gaudy and too untidy. The Ashton street lamps must be moved away from the Assembly Rooms, the hoarding was a 'step in the right direction' but cost too much, and he suggested a trailing crossover outside the bookshop to keep operating whilst Town End was remodelled with a facing one for kerbside loading. Street furniture had disappeared - bracket gas lamps, barbershop sign; put a pavement in front of the Assembly rooms, road member's barrow, remove depot 'A' points. The unfinished nature of the main entrance where visitors gain their first impression certainly made an impact.

It was agreed this summary of ideas was to be circulated for review by the Board.

Next meeting : not fixed.

Circulation : Committee members, Board, Mins Sec.

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