

THE TRAMWAY MUSEUM SOCIETY

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 44th meeting held on Sunday 1st September 1996.

Present: A.W.Bond (Chairman); M.C.Wright; J.Soper; M.S.Miller (Manager).

1. **Apologies for absence:** none. All present.
2. **Minutes of the last meeting (3.3.96):** Not reviewed. The meeting was convened specifically to consider the Red Lion.

3. **Red Lion:** It had begun in 1990, at an estimated cost of £200,000. The excavation and foundations had been started in 1992 in order not to lose the planning permission. There had also been pressure from members that existing facilities were inadequate at peak times, and the assumption was that with numbers at 130-140,000, additional capacity was essential. Takings in the Tea Rooms levelled off at about 800 visitors a day if no other outlets (Wakebridge, ice cream kiosk) were operating.

Data from other attractions (Beamish, Black Country) indicated a take per head in a 'period pub' were about 25p/visitor gross of VAT. With visitor numbers falling to 100,000, the commercial pressure for more catering had disappeared, and the viability of the Red Lion as a pub was in question. The net contribution from beer sales would probably be about £15,000 per annum. However, no decision had yet been taken by the Board regarding the sale of alcohol on these premises.

£85,000 had been spent so far, and it was estimated that a further £160,000 would be needed to complete the building, the immediate environment (road, setts, sewer connection, railings) and the interior as a pub with restaurant above. A watertight habitable shell was estimated to cost £100,000 without pub or restaurant fittings or catering hoist.

Other potential uses were considered.

The present Tea Rooms were expected to last between five and ten years, and the Lecture Room about five, so there was no immediate need to provide replacement facilities for either.

If the lottery went ahead, the lower floor could be a retail outlet whilst the Forge Bookshop was unavailable through building work.

School room/education/covered eating for school parties.

Corporate hospitality or small conferences (up to 75).

Exhibition area.

An additional sales outlet.

Additional eating area (NTM catering or visitors' own food).

Meeting rooms.

Offices.

Two flats.

Members' accommodation.

Evaluation:

The Manager reported that he had received quite a number of approaches for corporate hospitality and conferences in the 50-100 delegate range.

Action: MSM to provide details & estimate commercial potential.

Conversion to two flats would be commercially attractive, cost an additional £20,000, but it would sterilise a key location for a long time. The payback would be about ten years. The change of use needed to be approved by the planning authorities.

It was agreed that the most versatile (and least cost) alternative was to complete the building as a trading outlet with a general purpose function room

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above, but without the specialised catering equipment or bar interior. The south elevation would need alteration if the catering hoist was not to be built.

Action: JS

Construction Details.

The rate determining step was the Terra Coita work, which J.Soper estimated he could complete in another TWELVE MONTHS at the present rate, on his own. With one assistant this could be cut to six months.

Fitting out: Contract: plumbing, plastering, floors, ceilings and interior woodwork (Swinegate panels). In-house: electrical, provided other in-house commitments elsewhere were deferred.

It was agreed a detailed costing and timetable would be drawn up in time for the Winter budget, for completion well within one year. The proposal would be for the WHOLE AREA, i.e. complete with rearranged railings, access ramps, kitchen alterations, cast iron urinal at end of the cul-de-sac, kerbs, pavements, road surfaces, landscaping, connections to services. A complete job.

Action: JS & MSM, by 5th October

4. Any Other Business:

a. Hole in road and junction box at top of street. Mr.Wright had drawn the Manager's attention to the problems caused by the very recent excavation (notes dated 28/7/96 & 18/8/96), regarding both the immediate implications for the August Bank Holiday/Period Street Traffic, and the unprototypical location of the junction box. It was confirmed that the proposals for the top of the street which had been agreed by the Board in 1992 (minute 10655, drawing dated 25.1.92) should be adhered to. The box should be parallel to the track beside the pole, not behind it. Another copy of the drawing was provided. The Manager was asked to ensure that these electrical alterations conformed to that drawing.

Action: MSM

b. Disability Direct (letter 20.8.96) had made several points regarding toilet access, ramps into the Lecture Room and removal of cobbles from the street/depot to provide a smooth path for wheelchairs. The contents were noted.

Next meeting: Sunday 13th October, 10.30am

Circulation: Those present, Board, Mins Sec.

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