

THE TRAMWAY MUSEUM SOCIETY

Development Committee

Minutes of meeting 62 held on 8 April 2001 at 10.30 am at Crich.

1. PRESENT:
A W Bond, D F Russell, I Musgrove, J Soper, J Miller
2. APOLOGIES
M C Wright
3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
Received and approved nem con without comment.

4. TOWN END DEVELOPMENT

Mr Bond reported that a quotation of £169,500 for the pre-contract works had been received from G F Tomlinson Building Ltd. This was thought to be too high (double the original estimate). The removal of the contents of the Eagle Press had been included and certain items (eg. the removal of lamp posts) were considered excessive. Consideration thus had to be given to either

(a) doing some of the work ourselves. This would not be significantly cheaper as staff, who needed to be identified, would still be a cost to the Museum and transferred from other work.

(b) changing the scope of the project. This had the alternatives of (i) changing the permanent way layout or (ii) making the Library extension smaller. Discussion followed option (ii).

This option would avoid the removal of the Eagle Press, allow the retention of the existing permanent way and overhead, avoid massive disruption of this part of the Museum, allow pedestrian access during the project construction and provide a simpler, less expensive scheme. Consideration of how to achieve this required a means of obtaining the necessary, albeit minimum, physical clearances from the track eg:

- chamfering the SE corner of the building - this was ruled out as the E facade was the Yorkshire Bank facade
- moving the S facade northwards - this would expose the E side of the Assembly Rooms
- narrowing the S end only of the building - this would result in non-rectangular rooms
- stepping all the E facade back, with a possible compensating move of the W side of the building envelope.
- stepping each element of the E side of the buildings back. Mr Soper stated that the architectural effect of stepping each building back, with their differing heights, required investigation. The option may yet require the building envelope to be moved W.
- moving the Ladies toilets into the eastern bay of the existing. This would provide space for the important ground floor public display room no smaller, possibly larger than the existing display. It would provide upgraded toilets.
- leave the existing Assembly Rooms display area and to make the Yorkshire Bank building into the stacking area.

Following a short site visit for measurements, it was agreed that all the E facade would be shown to be set back, with a possible compensating move of the W side of the building envelope. The SE corner would be a minimum of 8 ft from the centre line of the track, subject to checking with RSPG2G dimensions. This resulted in the building being narrowed from 6.800 metres (22'3½") to 5.600 metres (18'4"). This was thought to be still adequate. The existing Assembly Rooms display room would need to be redecorated / revamped as the "new" option was not now to be provided. The mezzanine floor in the Yorkshire Bank would now be included from the start.. Narrowing the S facade would probably require only one wider window rather than two even narrower windows than originally proposed.

Planning permission had already been granted. However, it was not thought that this would be affected by the relatively small amendments proposed. East Midlands Museum Service had previously given consideration to the internal room arrangements. This needed to be re-addressed. Mr Soper would revise the drawings to incorporate the changes after consulting with Mrs Thacker. A total cost check needed to be determined before Resource were advised of any reduction in the scope or cost of the project. How the alterations were to be "sold" had to be determined. Mr Miller stated that he hoped that building work could start by November 2001.

Action: J Soper

Mr Russell asked that the pinch point at the SE corner of the Forge shop be considered. It was a long perceived problem area. The diversion of the permanent way away from the building would ease the clearance problem. Would it still be possible to remove or reduce the problem now that the track was to

remain in situ? It was agreed that the Library scheme could not resolve this, and it would have to be resolved at another time and by other means.

5. ENTRANCE BUILDING and CAR PARK

The Board required a feasibility study of the new entrance building, which may not necessarily be a "final" building, and the car park. The public perception of the entrance was poor. A scheme was required for completion by Easter 2002 which would almost certainly be internally funded.

Various parameters needed to be considered: cash handling, security, staff facility, publication/literature store. Was this the only / best place for the entrance. This was the third location of the pay point, previous ones required payment whilst visitors were still in their vehicles. Separation of the Museum's and Quarry's traffics had followed from the exchange of land in 1977. Consideration could be given to providing a masonry like-for-like replacement of the existing facility. Mr Bond said that a separate sales outlet, accessible from outside the Museums pay area, would require the provision of a separate trading company, which was not a preferred option.

Mr Miller suggested removing the existing kiosk entirely and moving the point of payment to a new kiosk at the W side of the Bridge upper level. Intending visitors would have the enticement of standing on the Bridge whilst determining if they wished to enter. After entry, visitors would continue either via the picnic grounds steps or via the Bandstand slope. Steps, another steep slope and the excessive distance was considered to be too demanding for mobility impaired persons (MIPs). Much consideration was given to possible alternative access points and procedures for MIPs. It was determined that these considerations ruled out this proposal and that the present arrangements were basically sound.

The existing entrance kiosk was considered to be a very depressing appearance, and the toilets were not in good condition. A decision on the entrance was required by the Strategy Committee by 19 April. Mr Miller would obtain catalogues of up-market, off-the-shelf kiosks, which may or may not contain public toilets. Mr Soper stated that conservatory-type buildings did not need planning permission.

Action: J Miller

6. ASHTON SHELTER

Mr Miller had received a quotation from The Borough Foundry Ltd of Stourbridge of ££12,200, copy attached. Mr Miller would advise Mr Frodsham in his Subscriber Plus Fund role. **Action: J. Miller**

7. WOODLAND WALK

Mr Musgrove said that the area of land in question stretches from the north end of the Children's Play Area at the west end of the Bowes Lyon Bridge, across the Fleamarket, through Wakebridge woods, to Wakebridge. The land was purchased in 1971, 1982 and the majority in 1996. The land was designated in 1995 as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservancy (SINC), also known as a Wildlife Site, the highest non-statutory level of land protection. It abuts a Special Landscape Area and this is affected by special planning policies. It abuts the buffer zone of the nominated Derwent Valley World Heritage Site. Planning policies in these areas are weighted towards retention and improvement of the landscape. Development, even use, of the area, (especially if adverse to landscape protection) could be affected. The Local Authority has powers to enforce compliance with landscape policies. In particular, the suggested provision of depot buildings may not receive planning permission. However, the proposal for the Grand Union junction were not likely to be affected as they did not involve the provision of buildings.

The Woodland Wander concept stretches from the Children's Play Area to Wakebridge. It is not confined to the woods alone. The project has grown considerably since its initial concept as a work relief project. The land management plan from Groundwork Erewash Valley now provides a proper framework. It has been costed. Groundwork are confident that the cost (£25k) can be funded almost entirely from external sources e.g. Landfill Tax. The £5k contribution from Amber Valley Borough Council would only be made available when the rest of the funding had been secured, and then only by April 2002. Groundwork would not be committed to any future work unless the Museum decided exactly how it wanted the project to work, regarding storage areas. The more important part of the Woodland Walk was not, in fact, the woodland but the grassland of the Fleamarket on which material was being indiscriminately placed.

The project improves the area. It is of high educational value. It has the potential of adding value to the visitors' experience. The land has potential for use by external agencies (e.g. car rallies, exhibitions). Groundwork have had education leaflets in preparation all winter in association with the Museum's Education Department as an initial part of the project.

The alternative storage use has not been costed; it does not have a potential for adding positively to the visitor experience. Large and/or unwieldy material requires appropriate space for storage and access/ The impact on space for previously delivered material has been considered to be of no consequence and/or of short duration. Much of the material has not moved since delivery several decades ago. Further delivery of yet more material is now coming into conflict with the appearance, marketing and educational requirements of the Museum. The Society's use of land is poor; other notable areas are Field House field, the public entrance, the car park.

Mr Musgrove sought a policy which favoured use of the land for environmental uses rather than for storage, which was rapidly getting out of control. For example, the electric truck, various piles of scrap timber and the Dutton's Yard hoarding had been recently dumped. (Mr Miller reported that he had required the truck to be disposed of). Mr Soper stated that the land was used as a tip, the removal of material away from the premises would be very expensive. Mr Musgrove advised that he had started the rubble tip as being the only place for the disposal of the large quantities of such material still being generated within the Museum.

It was agreed that a request be made to the Board for a formal, land use policy which favoured environmental use and which supported the presentation on the perception of the Museum by focus groups made by Cheetham Bell.

Action: I Musgrove

8. CANNOCK DEPOT BUILDING

Mr Musgrove advised that a former bus garage in Cannock had been offered, initially free, later for a "nominal" sum. He had inspected the garage with Mr A Sharpe, but only from the exterior. The building was some 100 ft long, 30 ft wide and 14 ft high to the eaves. It was steel-framed with corrugated steel cladding. Photographs of the building were circulated. The condition of the building was not considered to be sufficiently high. Mr Miller said that he had estimated the re-erection of the building, the provision of foundations and services etc. would cost approximately £40k. The offer was declined.

Action: I Musgrove

9. DISPLAY BOARDS

Mr Longworth had agreed to update the entrance boards. It was noted that it was not the Museum's policy to use an individual's name on facilities. The title "Cox's Ices" had already been agreed and the sign prepared.

10. MUSEUM SIGNAGE

Mr Wright was to talk about the education report by East Midlands Museum Service to various people. This was still outstanding. Mr Soper said that many signs now required repainting. Mr Miller advised that these and new signs needed to reflect the new marketing image (eg. The Tramway Village at Crich or similar). This depended on Mr Longworth's deliberations.

Action: M C Wright, J Miller

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that this had been a very productive meeting

12. NEXT MEETING

Sunday 27 May 2001, 10.30 at Crich

Circulation: Committee, Board, Mins Sec