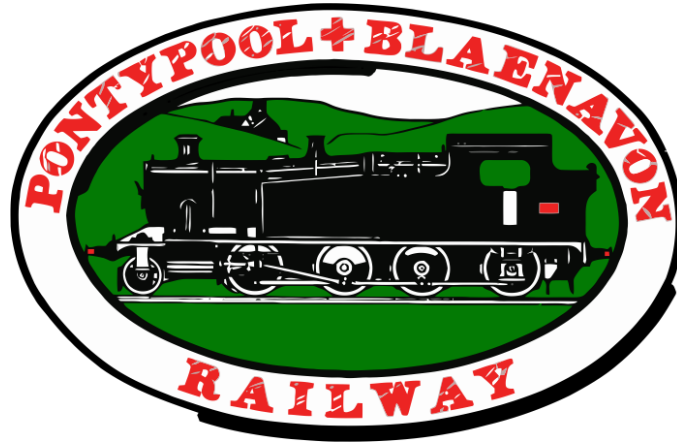


Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway Development Plan



Written by Alex Hinshelwood

Approved by the Board of Directors

Version 1 – 06/02/2020

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Part 1: Motive Power and Rolling Stock

Summary

Part 1 of the development plan for the Pontypool and Blaenavon Railway centres around Motive Power and Rolling Stock, split between facilities and the stock strategy. The proposed facilities will not only improve the directly affected assets but those currently sharing existing buildings that are not fit for purpose. The stock review is also a big part of the plan and the Carriage and Wagon Strategy, key to the development of the passenger experience. While extension is not covered in Part 1, an update is provided, and it be expanded on in part 4 of this plan.

The Eric Edwards Carriage Shed

Lead -Steve Vincent

Timescale – Completion by Summer 2020

With the building substantially completed during 2019, the attention falls on the completion of the track work and floor surfacing. It is hoped that this will be completed during the first quarter of 2020 to allow the shed to be fully operational for the 2020 season.



Figure 1: Carriage Shed complete

The Locomotive Shed

Lead - Steve Vincent and Richard Evans

Timescale – Completion by end of 2021

In preparation for the completion of the Eric Edwards Carriage Shed, the plans are being drawn up for the new locomotive shed and servicing facility. This will be an extension to the existing 'Cathedral' shed and will be a separated building (by roller shutter door) providing a home for our operational fleet.

It is to include a servicing pit, ash pit and coaling facility, smoke extraction and be sized to comfortably house four large 0-6-0 tank engines. The building will also be designed to enable the accommodation of bigger visiting locomotives with the availability of the space behind in the existing building for short time periods.

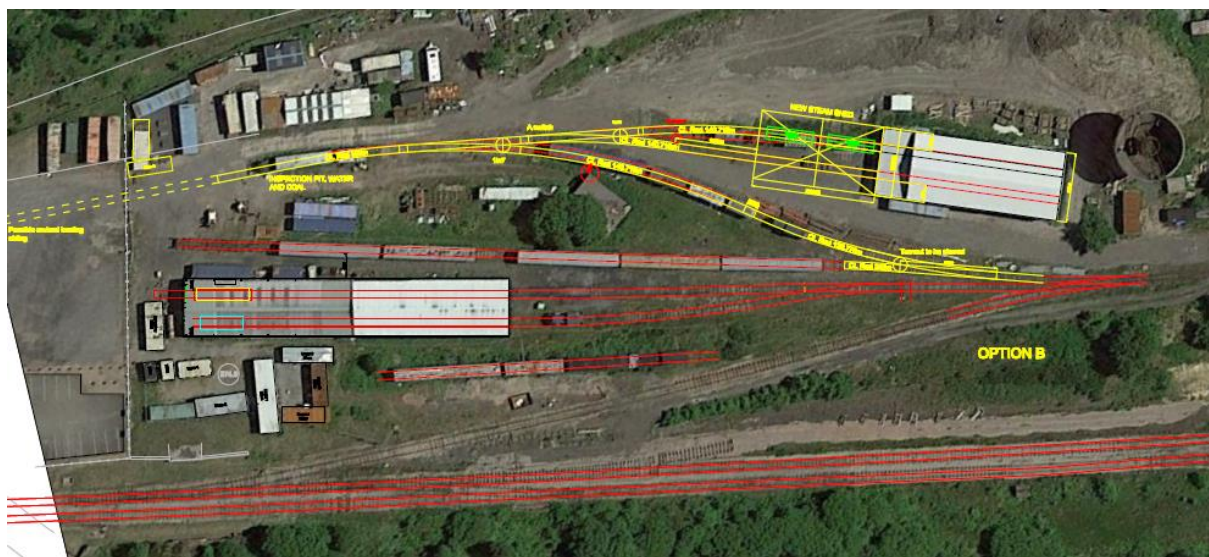


Figure 2: Concept Plan for Loco Shed

Enabling all steam activities in one place will bring many benefits. Free up space in the Top Shed for restoration as well as enabling a clean working environment for those projects. The bottom shed can be turned over to other projects such as Industrial Diesels or Wagons as required. Whilst also maintaining the historically important bottom shed in its current state (believed to be the last 'new' engine shed built in the UK). Other benefits include proximity to the workshop and tools for the operational fleet.

This project will require some track re-alignment on siding 5 and the installation of two sets of points.



Figure 3: Empress in the NCB shed

Services have also not been overlooked, the current power feed to the Cathedral will be assessed and upgraded if required. Potable and grey water supplies are easily diverted to the new shed from their current pipe runs.

Steve and Richard are also looking at possibilities of the building incorporating mess facilities, overnight accommodation, stores and toilets/changing rooms/showers. This will replace current mess facilities near the water tower.

The current plan is to utilise the existing steelwork (purchased into 2010) to keep costs down.

We hope that the drawings will be completed in the early spring 2020 and construction will begin in the summer 2020.

Water Tower and Crane

Lead - Alex Hinshelwood and Sam Fletcher

Timescale - Completion by main summer season 2021

It has been a long time coming and now we are making progress on the water tower. This will be situated adjacent to the footbridge on Platform 1 at Furnace Sidings and will initially feed a water crane near the current hydrant location near the crossing.

The aspiration is for the water tower to look like an LNWR water tower, examples at Blaenavon High Level, Llandovery and Argoed are currently the inspiration. With a stone base and a steel tank the water tower will feed an ex-GWR water crane acquired from Network Rail at Aberystwyth.



Figure 4: Location for Water Tower

The water tower will be sponsored and Network Rail are providing design consultancy free of charge along with considerable labour for construction. We are working with partners and sponsors on the supply of the tank and foundation material, with the construction stone coming from the remaining material from Pontypool Crane Street which currently languishes on site.

The plan is to provide ticket office and storage facilities in the base of the water tower to enable the continued growth and development of events such as our very successful Ghost Trains and Transport Rally.

We hope to have designs completed by early 2020 to allow the ground works to be completed by the start of the 2020 season to minimise disruption to our passengers.

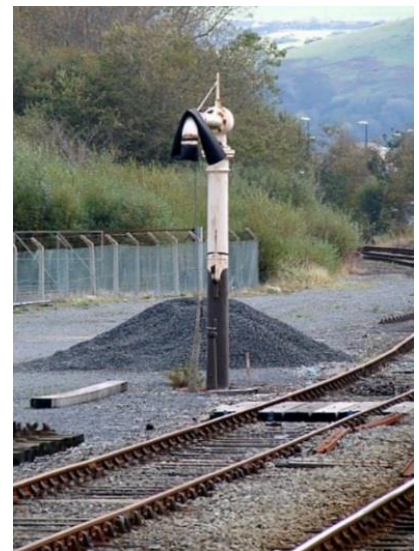


Figure 5: Aberystwyth Water Crane

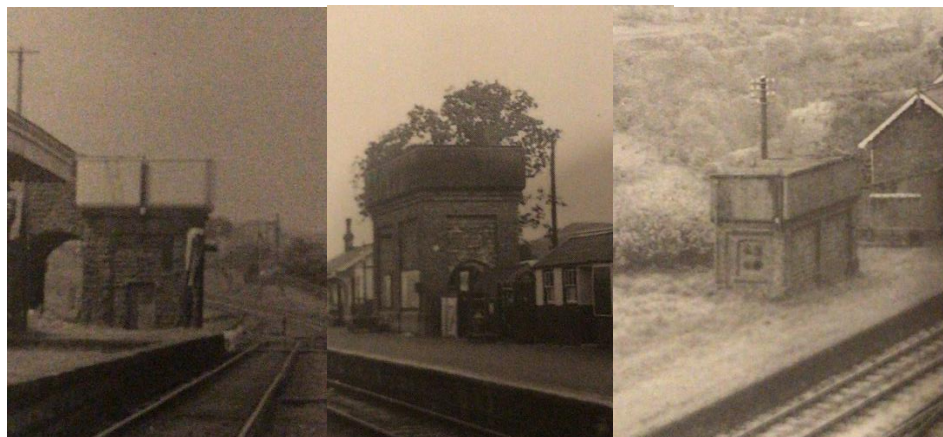


Figure 6: LNWR Water towers around South Wales

Carriage Strategy

Lead - Robin Cornelius

TSO 4677

Timescale - Completion by 2020 Ghost Train

After storage in the bottom sidings for a number of years, the board has decided to overhaul this carriage. The requirement for an additional TSO was demonstrated during the 2019 season, culminating in the hire of the Avon Valley TSO for the Ghost Train event.

4677 is in a poor state but very repairable, and with the receipt of a generous bequest, it has given us the chance to contract the overhaul to West Somerset Restorations, based at Williton. They provided a very competitive quote for the overhaul and the carriage will be departing in late January for its 6-month restoration to begin.

The internals, including full reupholstery will be undertaken in house by our team responsible for the high standard of the RMB fit out of a few years ago.

It is hoped that the carriage will be available for traffic in time for this year's Ghost Train event, resplendent in carmine and cream livery.



Figure 7: TSO 4677

SK 25444

Timescale - Completion by Summer 2020

This carriage has been under overhaul for several years and needs little to complete it. It has 6 new doors and has been subject to extensive bodywork repairs. Following completion of RMB 1854 the SK will enter the Top Shed to be finished off. It will be turned out in carmine and cream and join the operational fleet during the 2020 summer season.



Figure 8: SK 25444

Steam Locomotive Strategy

Lead – Alex Gourlay

AB2074 Llantarnam Abbey

Timescale – Ongoing Restoration

This long-term restoration project has appeared to stall a little over the coming years, however much has been progressing in the background. The aspiration for 2020 is that the locomotive will be reunited with its wheels to become a rolling chassis. With the support of Mike Pearce, the Steam Team will prepare the horn guides for the arrival of the refurbished axle boxes from our contractor.



Figure 9: Llantarnam Abbey

RSH 7169

Timescale – Completion by 2023 season

During 2020 the boiler is to be lifted from the frames, allowing the preparation for non-destructive testing of the boiler and full assessment of what will be required to return the locomotive to service. The locomotive motion and bottom end will also be assessed to ascertain the required intervention required.



Figure 10: RSH 7169

Stock Review

Lead – Karen Underwood and Alex Hinshelwood

Over the closing months of 2019 the board has undertaken a full stock review, this included private and company owned stock.

The outline stock plan is as follows:

Motive Power

Locomotives with service benefit or historic local connections shall be retained.

The aspiration is to maintain 2 or 3 steam and mainline diesel locomotives in operational condition to operate the service, while two serviceable industrial diesels are required to cover shunting and PWay requirements.



Figure 11: RSH 7169, Hunslet 5511 and D5627

The company will retain the 117 DMU for the future, with attention and funding turning to this when the carriage fleet is up to a reasonable standard.

Carriages

The formation of three serviceable carriage rakes, two MK1 trains of three carriages, with at least one spare for service strengthening and maintenance substitution. One vintage train set, the GE3 carriage will be replaced by the Barry Railway or Cambrian Carriage over the next few years to reduce the reliance of and cost of a hire. Spares requirements in form of the Dart Valley Carriages are currently under review.



Figure 12: D5627 heads the Mk1's towards Furnace Sidings

Wagons

Three rakes of wagons will be retained:

1. 7 Mineral Wagons with LMS brake van
2. BR mixed train comprising of box vans, conflat, lowmac and brake van
3. Permanent Way train, 3 dogfish, grampas, weltrol, and shark brake van



Figure 13: Empress on the Coal Train

A few other departmental wagons such as the warflat, tank wagon, CCT's and 4 wheel chassis will be retained as storage and to aid the moving of materials around the site.

All other stock is currently subject to review. A change in our insurance provider and tidying up the site have been the main catalysts for this strategy.

Part 2: Stock Maintenance and Restoration

Part 3: Visitor Facilities

Part 4: Permanent Way and Signalling

Line Extensions

Lead – Steve Vincent

We are currently looking into the feasibility of both northern and southern extensions.

The North – Waunavon

We are currently in discussions with the owners of the track bed to ascertain the appetite to grant us a lease on this corridor of land. Talks are slow but constructive and we hope to have some more information to share if not this year hopefully next. The fenceline and track alignment at the Whistle Inn will be attended too as soon as the small PWay team are freed up from the Carriage Shed Project. The alignment needs to be surveyed to achieve the optimum alignment with the bridge.

The South – Varteg and Varteg Hill

At this stage we are putting all our cards on the table. There are two plausible options continuing on the LNWR alignment to Varteg, or taking the branch to Varteg Hill. Both have many pros and cons, over the next few years we will investigate the feasibility of both routes.