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Fletton Quays Redevelopment: The old railway shed

Peter Waszak MSc.

October 2019

Fletton Quays Redevelopment: The old railway engine shed

Peter Waszak MSc.

If PLHS members have not recently visited the Fletton Quays area of land between the Peterborough to March railway line (to the north of the Peterborough United Football Ground) off London Road and the South bank of the River Nene, and that from the Town Bridge east to the Frank Perkins parkway in the last few years, the whole area has and is still being transformed and is well worth a visit. One can hardly miss the tower cranes that have been a feature of the skyline as construction work is in progress on the Hilton Garden Hotel and associated housing development. The former Peterborough East railway station and associated siding, engine and goods sheds and wagon works and the long established Cadge & Coleman Flour Mill are being replaced by a £120million mixed development of council offices, housing, arts and commercial use. In March 2016 the Peterborough City Council decided to relocate its administrative staff from the Town Hall in Bridge Street to Fletton Quays and be an 'anchor tenant' in the former Grade 2 listed railway engine shed. This it was claimed would help to kick start the redevelopment of the whole South Bank. There was, however, criticism that the move was just down-sizing for financial reasons and ignored any possible negative social effects. The new location is not served by public transport and is relatively remote; some argued that the council is in consequence less accessible.

Nevertheless the Peterborough City Council started to move into the refurbished Engine Shed during the second week of August 2018. The Planning Department moved in on 11th August. Other staff transferred to Sand Martin House, (the name of the new adjacent office block) over the following two weeks. It was announced that the Coffee shop Bewitched and the bakery Greggs were to open branches next to the council offices. Earlier this year PLHS member Nigel Barnes, Team Leader Planning Compliance Planning Services, Growth and Regeneration Directorate, kindly arranged for the writer to visit the building during the staff lunch break to photograph any surviving railway features preserved as a reminder of the building's heritage. His help is acknowledged with thanks.

A, RAILWAY HISTORY

It would firstly help to look at the railway history of the area. The area now renamed Fletton Quays was once part of the extensive Peterborough East station and yards and witnessed the first train to the city in 1845. The opening of the line from Northampton (the eastern portion of which survives as the Nene Valley Railway) was followed by lines from Leicester, Ely, Boston and in 1850 the present main line from London. There were three engine sheds in the area, a small wooden two-track structure for the Northampton line trains opened before 1846, and a larger brick six-track shed jointly for the Eastern Counties Railway, the line from Ely (later the Great Eastern Railway) and the Midland Railway's line from Leicester. The building that dates from 1848 was divided into two equal parts with a central wall and each Company owned their exclusive approach tracks, coaling and watering facilities. The shed was 185feet long by 95feet wide (115feet under the water tank-house and at the west end) and a 95feet by 40feet workshop containing belt driven machines powered by a small steam engine.

In December 1919 the loco had a capacity 18 tender engines and 24 tank engines. After Grouping, in 1923 Peterborough East came under the LNER Southern Area with an allocation of 38 engines. The workshops by then included a blacksmith's shop, stores and a carpenter's shop. Lean-to buildings on the south side had been added and included offices for the loco superintendent and his staff, (by the tank-house) bicycle shed, coals for heating the shed and a sand-drier. There were further additions on the north and west sides. An undated plan identifies the workshop area as a turners and fitters shop but the former stores and offices area were carpenter's shops. Between the engine shed itself and the workshops was a partitioned area below the two separate overhead water tanks each of 36,000gallon capacity) for stores and offices. In 1933 the shed was responsible for 33 locomotives. From 1929 onwards work was transferred to March and the engine shed closed in 1939. It became a carriage repair shed until railway use ceased in 1946. At some point prior to 1960 the approach tracks from the east were removed so work outside on rolling stock must have ceased during the 1950s. However, in January 1960 a 60foot turntable from M & GN Bourne was installed in the yard to the east of the shed, although it was primarily used for turning Travelling Post Office carriages. In 1975 it was recovered and moved to the Nene Valley Railway and installed at Wansford.

PHOTOS: Unless stated, differently all photographs are by the author.



The former Peterborough East Station and sheds on 11th August 1981 as viewed from the top of Apex House on the corner of Oundle Road/London Road. The timber (centre) is stacked on the former platforms. Left is the old Goods Sheds and centre the former engine shed with the workshop in front. Note the Grill Floors Ltd sign. Beyond are the Cadge & Colman flour mill, river Nene and the Embankment.

The east end of the GER Locomotive Shed in about 1923, probably from the coaling stage. Original photo Mr Johnson via David Mayhew whose father S F (Dick) Mayhew was a Forman at the shed. Left to Right the locomotives are believed to be 'Claude Hamilton', a LNER class D15, both top link express locomotives that have been polished up (Its cleaner is seen on the running plate?) a GE Y15, and a LNER J15. Note the mill on the right.





A ground level view from near the Black Bridge west to the Engine Shed yard including the coaling stage and east side of the shed with the goods shed in the distance. Photo Mr. Johnson c1935.

B, SHORT TERM USE 1960s – 1990s.

The building was then leased by the BR Property Board to a variety of tenants for light industrial use. Few alterations appear to have been made and that as the structure was in use and received some basic maintenance, this enabled the building to survive into the 21st century. At some point in the late 1960s or early 1970s the adjacent Cadge & Coleman flour mill added a mess room and lorry weighbridge by its north wall. In March 1971 a report 'Peterborough Place for the National Transport Museum' was prepared by the various local authorities and the then Peterborough Locomotive Society. This was a suggested alternative to moving the Transport Museum then at Chapham, from London to York. The case, supported by the Peterborough Development Corporation, was to use the engine shed as the new relocated museum but uniquely to link it to the then proposed Nene Valley Railway and the projected Nene Park. A 'Live Section' could be created at the Eastern terminus on the site of the former LNWR engine shed in Woodston. The Peterborough East shed was envisaged as the 'Static Section' and would incorporate the then disused Peterborough East Passenger Station. As is well known the National Railway Museum eventually relocated to York. Some may feel a unique opportunity was lost?



The engine shed in 1992 from the roof of the Mill grain silo. Note the marked sag in the south side roof. The Cadge & Colman weighbridge and mess room are by the north wall. Note also the top of the two water tanks.

In 1991 the writer received permission from Mrs. Dee George, Manager of County Timber Supplies, who leased the northern portion of the building to take photographs of historic features. Unfortunately it was discovered that much of possible interest was hidden behind machinery and stores. The following year I was invited to contribute to a report on the history of the surviving railway buildings including the adjacent contemporary Goods Sheds to the then Department of National Heritage for possible listing. On the 6th August 1992 the Government's Department of National Heritage added the former GER Locomotive and adjoining Goods Sheds in Peterborough to their statutory list of Grade 2 structures. The official recognition of their architectural and cultural significance was the successful end of a campaign spearheaded by Rev. Richard Paten, of Railworld, to safeguard the historic buildings. As a result of the listing, *'this will ensure that, in the event of any proposal to demolish or alter the buildings, their special interest will be properly considered by means of the listed building consent procedure'*. As the city's most substantial surviving nineteenth century railway buildings, Richard Paten argued that they *'represents the endeavours and economic contribution of thousands of local people who ran the city's railways for the last 100 years'*. With the passage of time and with the loss of many similar buildings it was possible to make a case that the engine and adjacent goods sheds were of particular significance and not just to Peterborough itself. It could be said that whilst the 'old' Peterborough grew up around the Abbey later the Cathedral, the 'modern' city owed much to the arrival of the railways in the mid nineteenth century and the transport revolution that came with it. As these buildings date from this early period, they symbolise this transformation. Furthermore because they retained many original features, with the demolition of many similar structures around the country, their retention had assumed a national significance.



The interior of the south portion of the shed as occupied by Grill Floors Ltd in 1991. Note the original roof smoke vents and the rails in the floor. The view is to the west wall.

The blocked cross passage between the shed and the workshop in 1991.





A general view of the County Timber Supplies side of the shed in 1991. It is probably the stacked timbers that hid further original features.

A surviving fireplace/heating hearth in 1991.



On Saturday, 25th September 1993 the Engine Shed Society held their Annual General Meeting in the engine shed that was attended by 20-30 members from all over the country. Mrs. George gave members a guided tour round the shed, stressing it was one of the best preserved sheds of its period in the country. Members noted the surviving features including gas lamp brackets, rails in the floor, fire places, the running foreman's office and the overhead water tanks, all with inlet and outlet pipes still connected! Mr. Eric Martin of Cadge & Colman's flour mill also showed members round the adjacent goods shed, then a flour store. Since 1965 this had been leased to Cadge and Colman's initially as a bagged flour store, but later for the storage of animal feed. Members noted the different designs of roof supports as the goods shed was originally two sheds, one for the Midland and one for the Eastern Counties Railway. The building also contained many original features including former stables located in the gap between the engine and goods shed. An 1875 timber office extension survived and was used by Cadge & Colman as a steel store and maintenance facility. Although all the old fittings have gone a fireplace survived as well as marks on the wall indicating the presence of an upright writing desk. Following the tour Mrs. Dee George, who had also kindly provided refreshments, spoke about her love for the building and her future plans. Despite both the loco shed and

goods shed being listed buildings, there was a suggestion that BR was attempting to de-list the goods shed. As both buildings were in the middle of a City Council development area this was viewed with great concern. Inside the shed the firm was developing some transport theme sets including an 18th century tavern and traditional railway booking office and waiting room. The Engine Shed Society made a contribution to the sheds' Fighting Fund.



Members of the Engine Shed Society on their visit, 25th September 1993. Photo Mr. Wolstenhome. Mrs. George is in the middle and to her left Nick Pigott. Note the decrepit south side of the building by that date.

C, REDEVELOPMENT PLANS

In March 1996 the Peterborough City Council produced a 'South Bank Opportunity Area Draft Planning and Development Brief'. The planners aimed for a high quality development with a mix of office, leisure, and cultural and residential uses. If Whitworths' ever closed or relocated their flour mill, a heritage Mill Square could be developed, and perhaps include a pub, restaurant or workshop for the lower floors with residential, heritage or workshops above. The engine shed might find community/leisure use, possibly a mixture of museum/art gallery/performance space. The goods shed might be adapted for a restaurant, health club or part of a riverside hotel. The Mill Square was considered to have tourism potential. It was hoped that the heritage buildings, dating from the earliest days of the railways in Peterborough would be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

During Public Consultation in the summer of 1996 the writer provided a written submission on the need to retain the historic buildings with imaginative conversion and public access and stressed their tourism potential. In March 1997 concerned about the lack of progress the writer contacted J S Cornell, Executive Director of the Railway Heritage Trust, and supplied documentation of the situation which it was believed Cornell followed up with a meeting with the BR Property Board. At the time there were proposals to build a major arts venue on

the South Bank and to relocate the National Cycling Museum from Lincoln to Peterborough to link in to the Green Wheel project. In October 1997 the Peterborough City Council produced a planning and development brief for the South Bank: the railway buildings were to be retained for *'leisure/cultural community use'*.

In December 1998 the writer had a meeting with Julian Sykes, Senior Planner, Peterborough City Council, at which he produced photographs, some taken from the top of the flourmill that showed the deteriorating condition of both buildings. It appeared that the Council were aware of the problem and were talking to Rail Property Limited, the then owners, and had threatened an enforcement notice if no repairs were undertaken. For Health and Safety reasons Mrs George of County Timber Supplies received notice to quit. The roof was considered unsafe and there were issues with the electrical supply equipment. She moved out in January 1999 and the building was left unoccupied. (At some point Grill Floors Ltd, Structural Engineers, which had occupied the southern half of the shed and the former workshop, had also left. In addition in February 1996 due to a large increase in rent by the then British Rail Property Board, Cadge and Colman were forced to pull out of the former goods shed building that too became unoccupied). Rail Property Limited (the privatised BR Property Board) intended to undertake the minimum necessary work to make the building secure for 2 to 3 years, by that time it was hoped a developer would have been found. At the time the City Council was talking to several interested parties and hoped to find a long-term favourable use for the buildings. In February 1999 after noticing that the vacant buildings had no security fence and concerned about vandalism and arson, the writer again approached the Railway Heritage Trust and was told that Rail Property *'works to prevent further deterioration are planned'*. During the summer of 1999 the engine shed windows were blocked up and certain later adjoining lean-to structures demolished.

During the spring of 2000 work was in progress to prevent further deterioration to the structure of the Engine Shed. This proved to be more extensive than anticipated. Unsafe chimneys were dismantled and the bricks stored. The heavy slate roofs were replaced with lightweight materials to reduce the load on the roof timbers. Some of the brick walls supporting the water tanks were taken down and rebuilt with modern block work forming an inside layer. As no developer had been identified the future of both the engine shed and the goods shed still remained unresolved.

On the night of Sunday 1st April 2007 a severe fire occurred in the former workshop area of the engine shed. The blaze was one of the largest in the city for years. There was major damage to the workshop area and below the tank house with the loss of original timber features. It is believed this was the result of an arson attack. Fortunately the actual shed itself escaped major damage. From the outside the building appeared largely intact. The area outside of the building at the southwest side had at some point been used for the storage of wooden pallets. In July 2007 a further fire was discovered and was believed to have been accidental caused by burning wood from damaged pallets. The fire in part of the roof of the shed was minor and the fire brigade extinguished it in 30 minutes. The goods shed was fortunately not involved although it too was discovered full of pallets.



The former Tank House and Workshops after the arson attack, 2nd April 2007.

Large quantities of wooden pallets had been stored around parts of the shed which added to the fire risk, 2nd April 2007.



It was obvious that both historic listed structures were at serious risk. In July 2007 Scott Wilson consultants of Birmingham were asked by the East of England Development Agency, owners since 2003, of the former Peterborough East railway land that also included the goods shed to prepare an options appraisal on both the old locomotive and the adjacent goods sheds. The writer was approached for background information on the significance of these structures. Jim Daley, the Peterborough City Council Conservation Officer, was also involved and following the second fire visited the site to assess the risks to the listed buildings and PCC Planning Services were also alerted. As a last resort it is believed an Enforcement Notice could be served. As it was the April fire caused serious damage to the workshop area with the destruction of original (and potentially unique) internal wooden finishes/surfaces including the old offices. There was further serious concern about the deterioration of the shed and that if allowed to continue, demolition might be the only option. It was clear that the land on which the buildings stood was potentially of greater value than the buildings themselves. At one stage the Nene Valley Railway considered if a developer might pay for its dismantlement and re-erection on its land. The dimensions, however, were simply too large for any possible site.

In January 2009 the draft City Centre Area Action Plan, commissioned by development agency 'Opportunity Peterborough,' was on display for public feedback. It was produced by EDAAW, an international urban planning consultancy. The document included outline proposals for the South Bank Development that included a University environmental facility and carbon-neutral

eco housing estate. The plan acknowledges the heritage buildings: ‘The retention and protected setting of the historic mill buildings and Grade II listed former railway buildings to be used for commercial, residential or community facilities.’

On 30th March 2009 the Peterborough Civic Society attempted to increase public awareness of the structure and arranged for a plaque to be placed on the former Engine Shed, outlining the history of the ‘Victorian Railway Engine Shed’. The plaque was unveiled by Councillor Matthew Lee, Peterborough City Council Heritage Champion and a Councillor for Fletton Ward (in which the building stands). Although various South Bank Development Plans have acknowledged the heritage buildings and have stated ‘the retention and protected setting of the historic mill buildings [Cadge & Colman were then trading as Whitworth Bros. Ltd., Fletton Flour Mills] and Grade II listed former railway buildings to be used for commercial, residential or community facilities’, the structures are nevertheless extremely vulnerable to and have suffered from vandalism and arson. Within a few weeks there had been further damage to the former Midland Railway stable block (on the south side of the goods shed) in a gap between the goods and engine sheds, that appeared to have been hit by a vehicle and a brick wall broken.



The former railway horse stables on south east side of the goods shed in 2008.

Work in progress to remove the heavy slate roof and make the building secure. Photo Brian Pearce. Around 2011.





It was not until 2010/11 that work was in hand to make the building more secure. The workshop looking east from the approach road, 27th December 2010.

The north side showing the removal of the heavy slate roof, 27th December 2010.



In December 2011 the former Cadge & Colman's flour mill then trading as Whitworth Bros. Ltd. Fletton Mills, finally closed and the riverside building that has local listing was looking increasingly neglected with leaking roofs and broken windows. The core of the building was contemporary with the adjacent railway sheds and was originally served by both rail and river. It was anticipated that the mill would form part of the redevelopment proposals of the wider area. It was once rail served (it often appeared in photographs as a backdrop to the station) and some rails still survive in the concrete on the railway side of the building.

The Peterborough City Council which purchased the two railway sheds in 2012 recognised that together with the mill buildings a heritage Mill Square is possible: 'The buildings are located roughly in the centre of the development site. There is an opportunity through their sensitive re-use, combined with the former mill building, to form a central focal point, creating an attractive public open space from their inter-relationship and opening out onto the river'.

In 2011 *Heritage Railway* September 2011 featured 'GER loco shed at heart of major redevelopment'. David Gray, a Peterborough City Council surveyor, told *Heritage Railway* that the regeneration scheme was planned to include 400 residential units, retail and office space, art and educational facilities and part-conversion of the mill into residential use. There would also be a leisure complex incorporating part of the mill and the locomotive shed and

goods depot, including a pizza house. The shed and depot are owned by the East of England Development Agency, and the council is currently concluding its acquisition of these buildings as well as the mill. "The former engine shed is a well-designed building, and we want to bring it and the old goods depot back into use," said David. "In addition, there is in existence a huge amount of historical items about Peterborough's railway history, and this redevelopment may be a good opportunity to incorporate that into a museum at the shed." David said that the redevelopment – the third and final phase of a massive £200-million scheme in the city, the first two of which are already in progress – could start by the end of next year, but would be depend on planning approval and negotiations with potential developers.

In mid-August 2015 there was a public consultation on the Fletton Quays development proposals. As reported in Nene Steam No 119, Autumn 2015.'The writer was approached to provide some information the areas railway heritage, the former East Station. The Peterborough Investment Partnership is a joint venture between the Peterborough City Council and Lucent Strategic Land Fund. The aim is for sustained growth and the development of local communities. The £120M development aims to regenerate the 6.4 hectare river front site that includes the refurbishment of the existing Grade II Listed former railway buildings and their incorporation into the scheme providing a link to the heritage of the site whilst also meeting the community's future needs. The concept is a mixed development of hotel, office, multi storey car parking, apartments, food/drink/leisure and retail..... The former Cadge & Colmans flour mill is not as yet part of the redevelopment and no mention is made of previous references to a riverside footpath/cycleway and associated bridge.

The latter point was taken up by the Peterborough Civic Society who in a letter to the Peterborough Telegraph on line (21 Oct 2015) criticised the proposed development as 'not good enough' that it 'lacks vision and ambition in both its fundamentals and details. As presented it will not give this neglected part of Peterborough the major transformation it has long been waiting for'. In particular 'the proposal has no committed use of the railway heritage buildings, the 19th century Whitworth Mill is not included in the site...there is no quay in Fletton Quays. Unbelievably the proposed riverside development would ignore the potential of its riverside location. Various on line responses also supported the PCS opinions. The PCS campaigned for a footbridge to link both sides of the river.

D, THE CITY COUNCIL MOVE

In February 2016 Jim Daley, the Peterborough City Council Built Environment officer approached the writer for historic information on the former railway buildings. The Nene Valley Railway in its archives has a number of old railway civil engineering plans, photographs and documents relating to the former BR Peterborough East Station and associated buildings and layout. There is also a family connection, my great uncle, Oskar Bird, worked in engine shed offices in the early years of the last century.



Some of the Peterborough GE Locomotive Shed office staff in 1906. The young lad centre back is Oskær Bird my great uncle.

Another view by the river. Young Oskær is on the left.

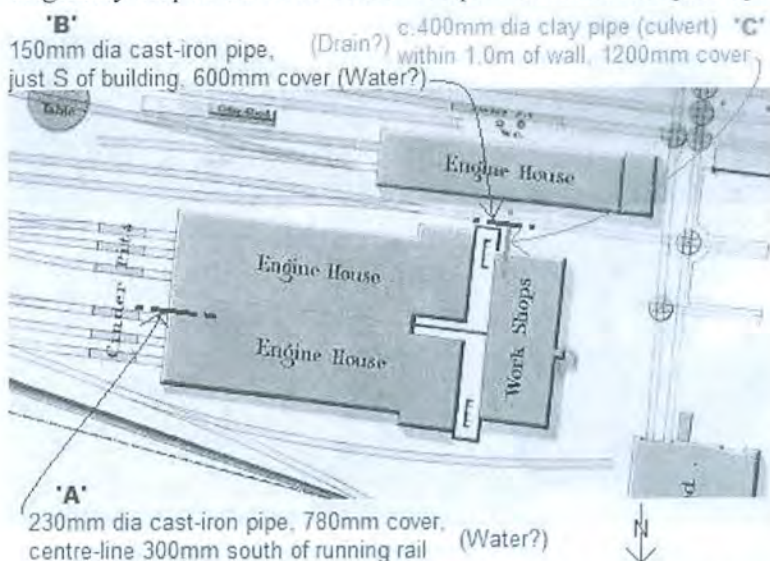


In *Heritage Railway*, April 2016, my article on 'Council to move into Peterborough East Sheds' appeared. There I outlined the engine sheds railway history and provided an update on progress with the Fletton Quays Redevelopment Area. 'The plan is to restore as far as possible the original appearance of three external elevations of the engine shed (north, west, and south) with slate roofs, smoke vents and cast iron windows and wooden doors. The old chimneys may also be reinstated including the sand dryer. A pedestrian area may be marked out with the former alignment of wagon turntables and tracks on the new surface and surviving rails and point work by the mill will be highlighted'.

In June WYG Engineering of Cockermouth Cumbria, consulting engineers, were working on the conversion of the Engine Shed and were interested in viewing old railway plans and documents. The old railway plans of the engine shed indicated that there was originally an open area between the shed and workshop on its south side. Parts of windows survive that indicate they were once external and in the floor there are remains of cobbles. At some point before 1865 this area was covered in. The intention was to recreate this by installing a glazed link between the original parts with a non-pitched roof and roof-lights. The area below the water tanks was to be the main public entrance to the new city council offices via the northern glazed link. The cast iron base of the tanks will be a feature. The former workshops are expected to have a café and community use. What survives of the old shed superintendent's office, clerk's offices and stores, some with cast iron fireplaces will be

retained, and likely used as meeting rooms. In the main shed the rails in the floors and inspection pits will be cleaned, recorded and retained in-situ under a new floor which will house necessary services. The large open character will be retained, particularly in the southern running shed as an open-plan office.

In September 2016 WYG Consultants conducted some trial pit exploration of the shed footings to establish ground conditions. Three pipes were identified. These were added on to an 1848 base plan. Pipe A was probably the main water supply to the sheds overhead tanks. Pipe B is of some other water supply, possibly that to the original two road LNWR Shed? Pipe C is more of a puzzle. It may be a culvert probably taking surface water from somewhere south of the site to the river. It could still be 'live' and be a pre railway land drain? However, part seems to be above the original pre developed land surface. As the land originally sloped down to Nene was part covered and part open?



The WYG Engineering trial hole findings superimposed on to a 1848 plan. Photo WYG Engineering.

There was also an underwater survey of the Cadge and Colman surviving riverside tunnel used for river craft which facilitated the unloading grain by hoist directly to the top of the mill. It now appears that the mill is in two portions. The original on the south (railway) side was at some point enlarged by a riverside half which actually extended the mill over the river. There was definitely two phases of construction as the two halves have slightly different detailing internally and there is a row of bricked-up former window openings at each floor level along the "spine" wall (below the valley gutter).



The old rails are still visible in front of the original mill building. Photo Peterborough City Council, 14th December 2016

While the 1930s Town Hall in Bridge Street would remain for civic purposes, council meetings, members, mayoral, ceremonies etc, the Fletton Quays offices would enable a number of services to be provided at one location. Outline planning permission for Fletton Quays as granted in December (2015) and was for a mixed use scheme. It was proposed to change the use of both listed buildings: the railway goods shed to cultural and leisure uses, and the railway engine shed to office use with café and ancillary community use together with a new building to the east for the new headquarters offices of Peterborough City Council.

Meeting rooms would be created in part of the northern running shed. In both running sheds the wooden roof beams would be on show as features. At the east end a further glazed section would connect the shed to the new city council offices that will be sympathetic in style with brick to complement the shed. Between the mill and the shed and to the west of the workshop by the goods shed, the pedestrian area may be marked out with the former alignment of wagon turntables and tracks in the new surface and surviving rails and point work by the mill will be highlighted. Goods sidings once existed in front of the station and were links with various industrial sidings. Also the intention is to feature the former transfer of goods between river and rail, once of considerable importance. Given the abundance of navigable water courses out in the Fens, but virtually no roads, in the 19th Century agricultural produce came to Peterborough by boat for onwards transhipment by rail. In the opposite direction came coal and manufactured goods. It was suggested that heritage goods wagon(s) may be on display on a reinstated section of track. Essential road access will be to the south of the shed that will unfortunately mean the removal of the surviving parts of the Peterborough East station platforms that have remained abandoned and overgrown since the early 1970s. The intention was for the city council offices to be complete by summer 2018. The steelwork for the new Peterborough City Council offices beside the old Peterborough East Engine Shed was erected in June 2017. During July the shed itself received a new roof and the old windows were removed.

In March 2016 the Peterborough City Council purchased the former Whitworths flour mill building from Milton Estates for £750,000 as part of the wider regeneration of the area. It is due to be converted into an arts centre. The Peterborough Telegraph (6 July 2017) announced 'Major grant for new "arts hub."' The adjacent 19th century flour mill is to be the new home for the City arts group 'Metal' and the conversion will include artistic studios and work spaces. A £490,000 grant has been received from the Arts Council.



Work in progress on the conversion of the engine shed 6th July 2017. Beyond the workshop the old tank house is visible and then the six road engine shed itself. In the distance are the new council offices on the site of the former yard, coaling stage and turntable. The foreground is the site of the old Peterborough East station platform.

E, REBIRTH – SURVIVING RAILWAY FEATURES

PLHS member Nigel Barnes kindly allowed me to tour the council offices and to photograph its original features. The rebirth has been a lengthily process with a protracted gestation. Photographs of the exterior of the new Peterborough City Council offices at Fletton Quays were taken on 17th September 2018.



The old Goods Shed (left behind the trees) and (centre) the GER Worksho and just visible (right) the old tank house. The photo is taken roughly on the site of the old station platforms

The north side with former tank house and shed beyond.



The new meeting 'pods' in the former engine shed. It is believed the rails still exist below the new floor. Note the roof beams some of which may be original.



The cross passage looking south between the old engine shed and workshop.

The glazed connecting link (right), between the old engine shed and the new offices.



On January 16th 2019 I returned to photograph the interior.



Ground floor view of the large diameter water pipes supplying the overhead water tank. [Photo PCC 9 11 2018]



A former furnace on the river side of shed. Note the recycling old rails and

The corresponding smaller GER furnace on the south side. The fire bars appear a modern replica.



The underside of the water tank.



5. In the summer of 2019 scaffolding appeared on the south side of the old shed. Possibly a problem with the roof? 28th June 2019.

NOTE: For a history of the GER Engine Shed see Nene Steam No 41 (Winter 1992/3), 62 (Winter 1999/2000) and 85 (Spring 2007).

This article first appeared in Nene Steam issues No 132 (Autumn 2018) and No 133 (Spring 2019) and has been revised and extended.

CHARLES I., ECONOMIST

Brigadier-General William Strong, of Thorpe Hall, Peterborough, has decided to dispose of his estate at Peterborough. The announcement was made at a farewell entertainment of the villagers, when General Strong stated he greatly regretted having to sell his estate there, but as one third of his income now went in taxation, it was impossible for him to maintain the Hall and the estate.

Thorpe Hall is a fine specimen of English country houses. It would have been more imposing had not Charles. I., when visiting it before completion, observed that the mansion was too grand for a subject. Its ornamentation from that time was completed on a scale of diminished splendour.

[Northampton Mercury Friday, 5 September 1919]

Additional photographs
courtesy of Peter Waszak



