

THE NORTHERN LINE EXTENSION TO BATTERSEA

by David Leboff, Principal Planner TfL London Underground & Rail

A report of the LURS meeting at All Souls Club House on Tuesday 9 April 2013

Our speaker was welcomed back to our monthly meeting, having talked about the Croyley Rail Link last year. The Battersea extension is of a similar length, but is a much larger project. It aims to serve a massive redevelopment area alongside the Thames from Vauxhall to Battersea, which is currently poorly served by public transport in many areas. The largest project is around the former Battersea Power Station which was constructed by the London Power Company from 1929, opening in 1933 with two chimneys. A similar station was built alongside after the War, opening in 1955. The stations, closed in 1975 and 1983, now have listed status. The whole site was sold for redevelopment in 2006.

Such a large redevelopment requires a high level of public transport. It was decided that an extension of the Northern Line from Kennington would best meet these needs. This will provide improved connectivity with central London, reduce pressure on Vauxhall station and provide relief for the Victoria Line and the current Northern Line south of Kennington. The extension meets the requirements of the Mayor's Transport Strategy to support economic and population growth, enhance the quality of life, improve safety and security, improve transport opportunities, and reduce transport's contribution to climate change whilst improving its resilience.

Consideration was originally given to the use of buses, trams, National Rail services and even a DLR extension, but capacity constraints ruled these out. Consideration was also given to extensions of or spurs off the Bakerloo, Circle and District, Victoria or Waterloo & City lines, but impact on current capacity was considered unacceptable. More recently a cross-river cable-car link was also studied. Preference was given to the extension of Kennington reversing trains from the Charing Cross branch of the Northern Line. Various possible routes were considered with or without an intermediate station at Vauxhall or in the Nine Elms area.

The final scheme will be just over 3km long, with a terminus at Battersea on Battersea Park Road and an intermediate station at Nine Elms west of Wandsworth Road. Station names will be finalised later. There will be overrun/stabling tunnels west of the terminus, with a crossover east of that station, and links with the current reversing loop south of Kennington station. Permanent shafts at Kennington Green and Kennington Park will provide emergency access, tunnel ventilation and smoke control. There will also be additional cross-passages on Kennington platforms. An earlier proposal for an intermediate crossover at Nine Elms has been dropped.

Five options for the terminus location were considered. The overrun tunnels will permit full-speed running into the platforms, and their location will not preclude any future extension. The station will be a stand-alone construction, but it is situated in a retail development area. The ticket hall will be at basement level, with the platforms at a lower level. The construction of both stations will be within a large station box in the style of Jubilee Line Extension stations.

Nine Elms station location was chosen from eleven options including a double-ended station, but will have a single surface-level ticket hall on Wandsworth Road with escalators down to the platforms. Pedestrian access to the new developments north of the Network Rail viaduct will be achieved through opening an archway at the end of Pascal Street.

Kennington Green Shaft on the northbound line is within a Conservation Area, so a surface building on the Green itself would be unacceptable. It is intended to link it to a head house on land owned by the adjacent Beefeater Gin Distillery, which will require the construction of a new water tank for them. Kennington Park Shaft on the southbound line is also within a Conservation Area and sited in place of an existing Park Lodge. This site is larger to accommodate a sub-station at basement level, and a replacement community building will be provided.

Kennington station will see little impact on entry/exit numbers, but increased interchange between branches will require additional cross-passages. Four in all are planned, towards both north and south ends of each pair of platforms. Powers and listed building consent are being sought.

When the extension opens, two-thirds of Charing Cross branch trains will continue to Battersea giving 16 trains an hour, with the remainder continuing to turn on the Kennington loop or going on to Morden. By 2031, with a further Northern Line upgrade 28 trains an hour could reach Battersea with

possibly a remaining few turning on the loop. In line with current policy, the new stations will have minimum staffing levels and associated accommodation, with passenger operated ticket machines and no ticket office.

A Transport and Works Act Order is required to seek the powers to allow construction, operation and maintenance of the new line. Public consultation was held in summer 2011 and again in autumn 2012. Our speaker reported that an application was close to completion and was due to be submitted by TfL on 30 April 2013, including a detailed Environmental Statement. Further consultation is to be undertaken before a public inquiry, likely later in the year. If successful, powers are expected to be granted by autumn 2014. Main works could commence on site in autumn 2015 with passenger services commencing by early 2020.

Planning issues include minimising impact of construction sites in their neighbourhood, construction noise, operational noise from tunnels, and station and commercial developments. Major interfaces include the existing Northern Line, the Battersea Power Station development, Nine Elms developers, residents and users at Kennington Park, business and community at Kennington Green, the Thames Water Tideway tunnel and the Battersea Dogs & Cats Home under whose property the overrun tunnels pass. The key partners are TfL as client, the Mayor and HM Treasury for financial support, Wandsworth and Lambeth local authorities who also provide financial contributions, Battersea Power Station developers as the largest development and also financial contribution, and also other private sector landowners along the route.

The estimated cost is within £1 billion, with the Government providing the Mayor with additional borrowing capacity. TfL will manage and let contracts. Future income will come from Section 106 contributions, Community Infrastructure Levy and business rates.

In reply to questions it was stated that two tunnel-boring machines will be needed, but they will be reclaimed for future use. Five additional trains are required and could be clones of the current Northern Line trains. An alternative is to cascade current trains to another line and purchase a new design of train for the Northern Line. These options are still under consideration. Three trains are likely to stable overnight at Battersea using the overrun tunnels and one platform. The other two trains will require additional stabling elsewhere, which is under consideration along with further stabling for extra trains for a possible second Northern Line upgrade. Station plans make only passive provision for platform edge doors due to the current uncertainty over train design, which will affect door size and spacing.

There have been suggestions for a further extension to Clapham Junction, but it is feared that this might attract heavy usage. Perhaps if Crossrail 2 could take most of that demand, a further extension of the Northern Line would then be possible, but Battersea proper and North Wandsworth could be alternative destinations.

Our speaker was thanked in the usual manner for his comprehensive presentation.

John Hawkins