

LATIMER ROAD – UXBRIDGE ROAD AND SINGLE LINE TO OLYMPIA

Continued from previous issue.

In reviewing the signalling arrangements the Western Region advised London Transport on 18 July 1956 that the intended provision of a pivoted stop lamp at the end of the bay platform at Kensington (Olympia) was called into question as to the difficulty in its operation, and instead a fixed stop light be provided to the left of the line with the aspect at 8ft from rail level. London Transport expressed its displeasure at the suggestion in that "it is customary to place the stop lamp at the end of a bay road or siding in the four foot and we should not depart from this practice at Kensington (Olympia)". The situation could be met by the provision of a stop lamp on a swivelled stand which could be lowered to sleeper level when the dead end was required for end-loading.

It was on 26 September 1956 when the Western Region replied, but could not give an answer to lowering a stop lamp as it had been passed to the Region's Signal Engineer for his consideration.

Almost two months then passed before a further response came from the Western Region on 14 November. It noted that the stop lamp in the 6ft was made solely because pivoted stop lamps in the 4ft were entirely new to the Region and requested to see a site where this was already installed and in operation. The letter concludes with "it is regretted that the use of the pivoted stop lamp is still not fully appreciated as, should a driver overrun a stop lamp placed in the 6ft and proceed to the sand drag, I cannot see what dangerous results ensue".

One week later London Transport conceded that they could not press their objection to the stop lamp being located to the side of the track, in view of the fact that this is the position in which signals are normally located, and agreed to the Western Region's proposals.

On 5 December 1956, London Transport wrote to the Western Region as they suggested that as the single line was to be used exclusively by London Transport trains, maintenance of it should be transferred to LT, who expressed concern about the signalling control for the interworking between LT and the West London Line – these had to be resolved before LT would takeover maintenance.

In a meeting held by London Transport on 2 January 1957, LT's Signal Engineer's view was that if LT takeover the signalling maintenance then control should be from West Kensington East, all signalling to be to London Transport standards and installed by them, the crossover between the Down Main line and the electric line be power worked and controlled by LT. Subsequent discussions agreed that takeover of the track would make it "a tidy arrangement".

On 22 January 1957 a meeting between all interested parties took place which set out the implementation of the plan, described as "Central Signal Box Scheme and Alterations to Track Layout". An 11-stage programme was drawn up with the hoped for completion date of August 1957. Much of the work was entirely related to British Railways so those parts need not be related here. The construction of new the new platform and line for LT trains was planned to be completed by 28 February 1957 with track and signal alterations taking place later in the programme. By the end of March it was realised that the work would not be completed in the timescale originally envisaged because there was more work to do and the authority to proceed hadn't been given.

The Western Region wrote to London Transport on 26 April 1957 that it was necessary to redesign the sand trap to the new bay platform at Kensington (Olympia) which, unless special arrangements could be made to accommodate this alteration, would have the effect of reducing the standing accommodation at the platform from 8 to 7 cars. A site meeting was held on 30 April where it was revealed that the Western Region Engineer had prepared the scheme for the sand troughs to be provided on the straight track alongside the bay road platform and for the trap points to deflect the train *towards* the platform in the case of overrunning, which was at variance to the original arrangements previously agreed. The change of plan was apparently made after seeing the arrangements for a similar arrangement at Holborn on the Aldwych branch. It was not appreciated that it had been considered desirable to make facilities available for Western Region wagons of circus animals or equipment to be loaded or unloaded not only over the ends of the wagons but from the side, and that in these circumstances there was no objection to the sand drags on the turnout spur as originally suggested. It was also suggested that if short hydraulic buffers were fitted this would eliminate the need for either sand troughs or the installation of trap points.

Subsequently it was agreed that sand troughs of rail level height would meet LT's requirements. Alternatively the bay road could be plain track without trap points and that a 30ft sand drag should be provided at the buffer stop end of this road. It was suggested that when the Western Region required to load or unload from wagons on this road the sand drag should be shovelled away by Western Region staff early before the loading or unloading took place and restored after the completion of the work.

On 8 May 1957 the Western Region agreed that the sand drag be provided through a lead to the left of the platform line at a point approximately 65ft from the buffer stops, leaving a straight road available for end loading, which would still allow an 8-car train to be berthed.

And that is where the correspondence ends. From the records, the following may be noted:

31 March 1957

Signalling alterations at Kensington South Main –

- Down platform starter to Up main with lower distant for Earl's Court Junction, out of use.
- Crossover between Up and Down main at Hammersmith Road bridge with facing point lock at north end, out of use.
- Connections from Up and Down main to bay sidings with associated facing point locks, out of use.

7 April 1957

Signalling alterations at Kensington South Main –

- New facing crossover between Up and Down main commissioned.
- New signals –
- Down platform starting signal to Up main.
- Earl's Court Junction Up main distant.
- Ground disc from Down main to Up main.
- Backing signal from Up main to Down platform or Down main.
- Backing signal along Up main.
- Ground disc at right of Up main starting signal for subsidiary movements in advance of that signal.

3 March 1958

- Segregation of District Line from main line on Olympia branch.
- Control of the single line from West Kensington East LT box.
- Earl's Court Junction Western Region signal box closed and abolished.
- New hand-worked crossover provided 500ft east of new bay for LT – WR freight transfers.

POST-WAR KENSINGTON OLYMPIA



Left: A four-car train of District H Stock stands at Kensington Olympia, which comprises 1910-14 C, D and (at the rear) E Stock. Viewed from the up platform looking north, the train is standing at the south end of the Down platform, which was the limit for District Line trains, although it was possible in an emergency for them to be shunted north of the station to cross over. To that end, all four tracks were once again electrified when District Line services began in 1946.

Opposite: (Top) Another four-car H Stock train is seen reversing at the south end of the Down platform. Nearest the camera is a 1914 E Stock motor car, which was one of four converted from trailers in 1928-30, the give-away being the enclosed headlights and destination plates under the left

side cab window. Original motor cars had destination plates placed externally under the motorman's cab window and the headlights were located at the car corners. The photo shows on the left what later (in 1958) became the segregated District Line bay platform, at that time fenced off for miscellaneous goods traffic. On the right can be seen two parcels vans in the south-east bay.



Left: With the District Line having a mix of different stocks, it perhaps wasn't surprising that the Olympia service was worked by a variety of stocks during exhibition periods. Still on the District Line in the late-1940s was the 1920 F Stock, of which two views of four-car trains are seen from the Up platform (*Left*) and the middle of the Down platform looking 'south' (*Lower*). The trailer car seen as the second car on the left-hand photo just about shows the non-stopping panel carried by early District stocks. Both trains have single-equipped motor cars nearest the camera which do not have a guard's position at the trailing end. A feature of the trains used on the Olympia exhibition service into the 1950s was large 'Olympia' stickers provided in the car windows, not visible in our photo selection here.

Overleaf: (*Top*) A six-car train of mixed Q Stock stands at the south end of the Down platform which includes a Q38 trailer fourth car back. The building on the left is the one called into question when the new bay platform was being discussed.



Left: Two views of R Stock in red livery at Kensington (Olympia). That (*at Opposite, Left*) was taken from the footbridge looking 'south' in the direction of Earl's Court. Both the two platform tracks and the two through roads have current rails, which indeed they had before services were withdrawn in 1940. Kensington South Main signal box can be seen above the far end of the train. The photograph (*Below, Left*) shows a six-car R Stock train departing, heading for High Street Kensington according to the headlight code. The rear of the train is still on the crossover from the Down platform to the Up line. When the segregation from British Railways took place in March 1958 the LT single line was provided on the left and used the partly obscured left-hand side of the bridge in the background. As it was still early days of the then new R Stock, it had unique beamless shoe gear. The use of this stock instead of the handworked door H Stock was seen as far preferable on such a 'prestige' service.



Above: The District Line's pride and joy in the mid-1950s was its train in unpainted aluminium, six out of the eight cars being seen in the Down platform. Note that there are no current rails on the through roads – these had been removed in 1956. In keeping with providing modern trains for a prestige service, the 1910-14 H Stock on this service was withdrawn as soon as possible.

Below: After many years in the planning and talking stage, the segregation of the District Line service from the main line was achieved on 3 March 1958, after which the current rails were removed from the Up and Down platform roads. A six-car mixed Q Stock train is seen in the new bay platform with Kensington South Main signal box on the right.

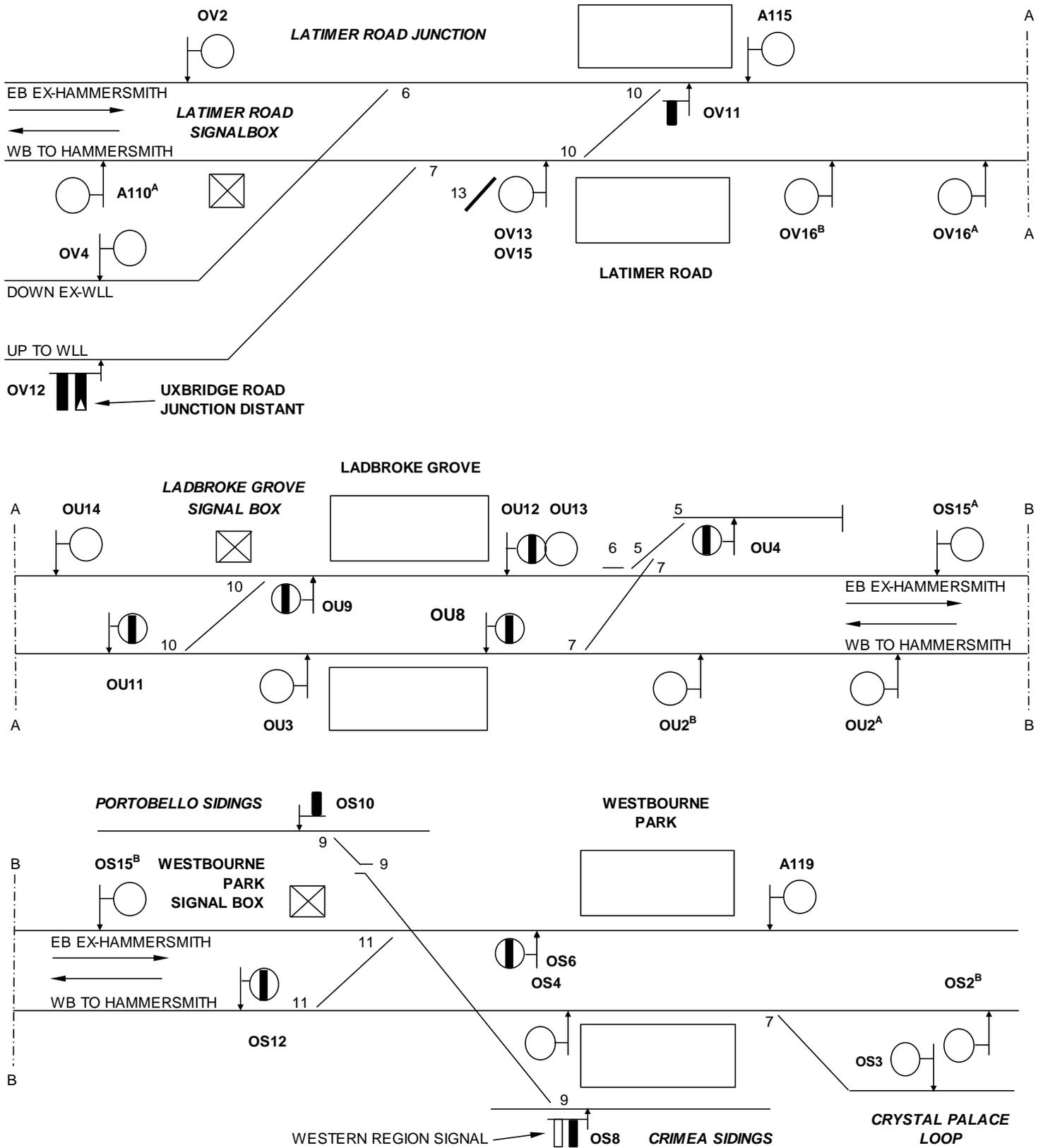




Top: The beginning of the District Line to Kensington Olympia is at West Kensington East Junction, seen here from Lillie Bridge depot. An eastbound train of R Stock approaches from the West Kensington direction. The electrified track on the right from Warwick Road Junction to West Kensington East Junction was provided from 25 January 1914. **Photo: Alan A. Jackson**

Above: A view of the Hammersmith & City Line in the foreground with the Western Region main line tracks to Paddington behind. Two C Stock trains are seen on the ramp to the flyunder leading to

west of Royal Oak with an HST in Inter City livery upper left and a class 117 suburban DMU in the distance. Mention has been made in these notes about the 'Crystal Palace Loop' (see also diagram below) and it is believed that this was the abandoned track to the right of the flyunder which joined the westbound Hammersmith & City Line roughly at the bottom centre of the photo.



Above: Not-to-scale diagram showing the signalling between Latimer Road and Westbourne Park after signalling modernisation on 28 August 1950 and 10 December 1950 respectively. The connection to the West London Line between Latimer Road Junction and Uxbridge Road Junction then remained in use for freight trains but passenger electric services hadn't used it since October 1940. When this link was severed, Hammersmith freight trains ran via Paddington. For reference, the signalling at Ladbroke Grove was modernised at the same time as that at Westbourne Park.



Left: Looking west from the west end of the eastbound platform at Westbourne Park with a six-car eastbound train of CO/CP Stock approaching the station. Westbourne Park signal box can be seen on the right which closed on 13 March 1970 and the area converted to automatic working. Note the flat crossing which, on the left, came from Crimea sidings and led to Portobello sidings on the right. Access to the westbound Hammersmith & City Line was east of the

station from what was known as the 'Crystal Palace Loop'. This was converted to a 'holding' siding and connections with the westbound Hammersmith & City Line were severed from 15 January 1956 with the removal of the relevant signalling and points.

Below: Looking 'west' at Latimer Road from the west end of the eastbound platform on 31 October 2013. Just to the right of starting signal A112 can be seen the brickwork for the viaduct which used to carry the line towards Uxbridge Road Junction and the West London Line. Nothing else of this route now remains as it was finally obliterated by the West Cross Route road (originally the M41 and, since 2000, downgraded to the A3220) which opened between White City and Shepherd's Bush in 1970. In the right background can be seen the former Central London Railway power station, now in use as bus accommodation at Westfield.

Photo: Brian Hardy

