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LONDON UNDERGROUND

Restoration of landmark façade complete at King's Cross St. Pancras

7 September 2006

Renovation of the Grade 1 listed, 130 year old Gothic façade at St. Pancras station has received a major boost with completion of extensive restoration works on the historic Pancras Chambers façade which now forms the exterior to the new Western ticket hall at King's Cross St. Pancras Underground station. The work, which has taken five years to complete, was undertaken as part of TfL's £10bn Investment Programme to improve and expand London's transport network. As part of the ongoing redevelopment of King's Cross St. Pancras Underground station, a new Western ticket hall has been constructed underneath the forecourt of the Pancras Chambers, doubling the Underground station's capacity. This extensive construction work had to be carried out whilst carefully protecting the forecourt's façade.

London Underground worked closely with English Heritage and the London Borough of Camden in order to ensure that appropriate conservation techniques were implemented, enabling this section of the landmark building to be returned to its original condition. 4,500 environmental readings were analysed every week to make certain the heritage building's tolerance levels for movement were not exceeded. The façade walls are made up stonework fittings and over 200,000 heritage bricks. During construction many heritage items had to be carefully labelled, removed and stored. Specialist restorers, Szerelmey Ltd., undertook a condition survey of the existing material, under the guidance of English Heritage, and produced full layout drawings, templates and moulds to reproduce the missing or badly damaged units. Once reinstated, a process of restoration and cleaning was then undertaken to conserve the Gothic Style architecture. Unfortunately, it was not possible to salvage all the brickwork from the façade walls and so specialist brick-makers and historic mortar suppliers were commissioned to recreate the colour, size, quality and texture of both the bricks and mortar. Dorchester-based firm Rose of Jericho developed a bespoke combination of materials to reproduce the mortar and Ibstock Brick Limited used a rare '5-cut brick' technique for critical areas of the façade, manufacturing each brick from the Roughdales plant in St. Helens.

The construction of the Western ticket hall formed a key part of the first phase of the redevelopment at King's Cross St. Pancras station, which has been underway since 2001. The new Western ticket will be the first port of call for visitors from Europe once the Channel Tunnel Rail extension opens in 2007 and will have the capacity needed to serve the new high speed Kent domestic services, the new Thameslink station and visitors to the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. Redevelopment work continues at King's Cross St. Pancras with construction of the Northern ticket hall which is due for completion in 2010.

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THE BEAT GOES ON 26 September 2006

The British Transport Police (BTP) today celebrates 180 years of service. It is one of the oldest forces in the world, pre-dating the Metropolitan Police by three years. Formed originally to protect railway passengers and cargo, today it also polices the London Underground system and the Docklands Light Railway. The BTP can trace its history way back to 1826, when mention is made of a police force in the records of the Stockton and Darlington Railway. Since then it has often been at the forefront of policing, pioneering the use of police dogs, and it was one of the first forces to recruit women. It was also the first to make use of information technology. In 1845, Sergeant Williams of the Great Western Railway Police arrested a murderer after a description of the man was passed to him via the newly invented 'electric telegraph'.

FEEL YOUR WAY AROUND THE UNDERGROUND 4 October 2006

Blind and partially sighted people will be able to feel their way around some of London's busiest Underground stations for the first time – thanks to a new initiative launched today by London Underground (LU), the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) and Describe Online. Blind passengers will be able to receive free books of tactile maps, made up of raised lines, which are read by touch instead of sight, to help them find their way around Old Street, Westminster and Earl's Court Underground stations. The maps, which are also available in large print for partially sighted people, were commissioned by LU from RNIB as part of a pilot project to provide information which sighted passengers take for granted. Currently blind and partially sighted people often have to rely on station staff to guide them around Underground stations.

Accessibility is about more than step-free access and features such as induction loops, tactile paving and additional and more visible Help and Information Points will be added to stations as modernisations and refurbishments of Underground stations are completed. In addition to these changes LU is committed to ensuring that by 2010, 25 per cent of Underground stations will have step-free access and this will increase to one third of stations by 2013.

The tactile and large print station maps were developed by RNIB with the help of 15 blind and partially sighted underground users who took part in research to specify their travel needs and review samples of the maps to evaluate their effectiveness. Station layout, including the location of the ticket office, manual gate, platforms, stairs, escalators, lifts and exits are all detailed in the plans. The plans are designed to be used alongside step-by-step online descriptions of stations. Books of tactile and large print station maps can be borrowed from RNIB (0845 702 3153) and NLB (0161 406 2525), viewed at the station, or obtained free of charge from London Underground's Customer Service Centre (0845 330 9880). Passengers are likely to get most benefit from these if studied before they travel.

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17 October 06

New digital Underground radio roll-out now underway

London Underground (LU) today reported that the new £2bn digital radio Connect system is now being rolled-out across the Underground, with 40% of the network now primed to operate with the new communications equipment. Connect is now live on the East London Line and roll-out is well underway on the District Line. Stations on the east end of the line from Tower Hill to Upminster are already using the new Connect system, with full implementation over the coming weeks. Next will be the Circle and Metropolitan lines. This will be followed by the Hammersmith & City, Bakerloo, Victoria, Piccadilly, Waterloo & City, Central, Northern and Jubilee lines (in that order). The new Connect system is far more resilient than the radio network it replaces. If cable damage does occur then the signal can be routed around the affected area allowing the radio system to continue operating. The existing radio system will remain in operation on the District Line alongside the new Connect system until the transfer to the new digital radio system has been successfully completed.

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23October 2006

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON AWARDS £363-MILLION CONTRACT TO BUILD NEW EAST LONDON RAILWAY

A new railway for East London moved a step closer today as Transport for London awarded a £363 million 'main works' contract to a consortium comprising Balfour Beatty and Carillion. This major investment is one of the cornerstones of Transport for London's £10bn Investment Programme and will deliver a key Olympic transport commitment – the construction of a new railway line between West Croydon, Crystal Palace and Dalston Junction, incorporating the existing East London Line. When the railway is completed it will join up with the existing North London Railway via a link at Dalston Junction, and become part of Transport for London's new London Overground network. This will be the first significant move towards an orbital rail network for London, as it connects 20 London boroughs and brings huge regeneration opportunities to some of the most deprived areas of the Capital. From June 2010, the East London Railway will operate as part of the London Overground network, providing frequent, Metro-style train services with new trains, staffed stations and Oyster ticketing.

Preparatory work for the East London Railway started in June 2005 and will be completed by the end of the year. Carried out by Taylor Woodrow, the work has involved replacing and refurbishing 22 bridges along the disused Kingsland Viaduct in Shoreditch, in preparation for the new railway.

The main construction work will commence later this year and will –

- Replace approximately 7.4km of track and signalling equipment on the existing East London Line (Whitechapel – New Cross) to convert it to National Rail operation.
- Install approximately 3.6km of new track and signalling equipment for the northern extension from Whitechapel to Dalston Junction.
- Construct four new stations with step-free access at Dalston Junction, Haggerston, Hoxton and Shoreditch High Street.
- Install a railway flyover just north of New Cross Gate, to connect the southern end of the line to the existing Network Rail line (New Cross – West Croydon).
- Construct a new train maintenance depot at New Cross.

In December 2007, the project will require the closure of the existing East London Line for the replacement of track and signalling.

The rail link from Dalston Junction to Highbury & Islington, connecting up the North and East London Railways, will be delivered in time for the Olympics. When the East London Railway opens in June 2010, twelve trains per hour will run between Dalston Junction and Surrey Quays. In addition, four trains per hour will run to and from New Cross, Crystal Palace and West Croydon.

The work to extend the line further north to Highbury & Islington via the 'Dalston link' is not

specified in this Main Works contract but it is intended to be incorporated into these works and completed in time for the Olympics. A second phase of the project, currently unfunded,

would extend the East London Railway west from Surrey Quays to Clapham Junction – forming a complete outer rail circle around London.

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METRONET

Metronet introduces radar technology to the UNDERGROUND

6 September 2006

London, 6 September 2006: Metronet Rail has introduced ground penetrating radar to investigate embankments and cuttings. The technology was first used on the London Underground in two trials on 10 June and 5 August when specialist rail geophysical company Zetica Ltd undertook surveys for Metronet between Chalfont & Latimer and Chesham stations on the Metropolitan Line. The radar antennae are fitted to a track trolley and send radio waves into the ballast. Readings from the reflected signal provide indications as to the thickness of the ballast and the underlying soils. Areas where the ballast or underlying materials are unusually thick may indicate historical settlement of the track. Although Metronet is using the readings initially in connection with stability assessment of earth structures such as embankments, the technology also has the capability to indicate areas where the condition of the ballast or drainage is poor, affecting track condition. This means the survey can also be used to guide maintenance regimes for ballasted track and drainage.

6 October 2006

Metronet COMPLETES NEW TRAIN CREW

Metronet Rail has transformed a derelict substation building adjacent to Loughton station into new accommodation for London Underground staff. The £3.5 million investment from Metronet has improved staff facilities for the 70-odd train crew who will work be based at Loughton. The refurbished building now has new booking-on, mess and locker facilities, as well as an office and a meeting room. The substation building, adjacent to the Grade II-listed station at Loughton, is situated very close to the station, which will enable London Underground to better position its drivers to operate its improved timetable.Exterior of the new train crew accommodation at Loughton, which was formerly a substation. **Photo: By kind permission of Metronet Rail**

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11 October 2006

Metronet improves security at South Woodford

Residents and passengers at South Woodford station are benefiting from new security cameras installed in an underpass as a gesture of goodwill by Metronet Rail.Crime statistics show South Woodford station has the highest record of violent crime in the Redbridge borough and the underpass was seen as a security risk, particularly after dark. With the intention of improving security and in addition to the multi-million pound station refurbishment work being undertaken, Metronet has installed five CCTV cameras in the station underpass. These are linked to the station security system and are monitored 24 hours a day by station staff.

26 October 2006

NEW FILM PROTECTS METRONET TRAINS FROM GRAFFITI

A range of new graffiti-resistant films is the latest line of defence in the campaign to deter vandalism by Metronet Rail. Film is being applied to protect exterior paintwork in some instances, while in others it is being used to protect internal glazed areas of the trains. External film is being applied to prevent damage to paintwork on the C stock fleet, which operates on the Circle and the Hammersmith and City lines. This protective film is being introduced as part of Metronet's on-going commitment to remove all incidences of non-scratched graffiti, or “tags” as they are referred to, from the outside of trains within 48 hours and from the inside within 24 hours. The product used for the C stock is colour-matched to the paintwork and is almost invisible to the naked eye. It can be replaced easily and quickly in the event of a graffiti attack. While tags are mostly aerosol paint or leather dye sprayed, vandals have recently been using paint-stripper. Traditional repair methods are time-consuming and include buffing and re-painting to restore the damaged surface. Metronet has introduced this protective film to speed up the time it takes repair teams to return the train to passenger service.
Metronet's second line of defence is to protect the inside surface of windows from scratched graffiti. To this end, the refurbished trains on the District and Waterloo & City lines have all had a sacrificial film applied internally. Ten trains on the Central Line have also been fitted with a similar product in preparation for the installation of protective film on all of Metronet's fleets in the New Year. Scratched graffiti has historically been very difficult to repair without replacing the entire glass panel at great cost. The new sacrificial films being applied are almost impossible to see to the naked eye and cure into the existing sheet of glass. Scratches are made visible by light reflecting on to the edges of the cut glass. In instances of minor scratches, the new film has the capacity to make the damage seem as though it has disappeared.

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DOCKLANDS LIGHT RAILWAY

Government gives green light to key 2012 rail link

25 October 2006

The Department for Transport today gave planning approval for the 6km extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Stratford International station and the heart of the Olympic Park – providing a vital rail link for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Stratford International Extension, due to open in 2010, is funded by Transport for London's £10bn Investment Programme and a contribution from the Olympic Delivery Authority. It involves the conversion of part of the North London Line to Docklands Light Railway operation between Royal Victoria and Stratford and the construction of a further link to the new CTRL station at Stratford International.

The Docklands Light Railway extension means that passengers arriving at Stratford International station in 2012 will be able to quickly and easily access the Olympic Park at Stratford and other Olympic and Paralympic venues using the Docklands Light Railway and its connections to the rest of London's transport network.

The Stratford International Extension will serve existing stations at Stratford, West Ham, Canning Town and Royal Victoria and will be converted to Docklands Light Railway specifications with improved accessibility and step-free access. Four new fully accessible stations will be built at Star Lane, Abbey Road, Stratford High Street and Stratford International to serve existing and future communities. The Docklands Light Railway station at Stratford International will provide an important interchange with Eurostar services from the CTRL station, as well as linking up to the Stratford City development and the Olympic Park.

When the Docklands Light Railway extension to Stratford International is complete, passengers will benefit from more frequent train services, increased from two trains per hour now to at least six trains per hour from 2010 and even more at peak times. During the 2012 Games, the extension will be able to run up to 27 Docklands Light Railway trains per hour, capable of transporting approximately 13,500 passengers per hour in each direction.

The planning approval includes the closure of part of the existing North London Line (Stratford to Canning Town) on 10 December 2006, in order to convert it to Docklands Light Railway operation. Following this closure, North London Line passengers will be able to make use of the Jubilee Line between Stratford and Canning Town and the Docklands Light Railway from Canning Town to King George V, which follows a very similar route. Docklands Light Railway has already started the process of selecting contractors to design and build the Stratford International Extension. Preliminary work will start in January 2007, with a target completion date of summer 2010. *(By sheer coincidence, the September 2006 Tube Map contains the first written confirmation (it is thought) that the NLR will close from 10 December 2006 (for DLR operation) – Ed.).*