B&MRR Engine House and Turntable Notes

Boston, Mass., including Boston, Charlestown, Cambridge, and Somerville. See also East Boston

By 1849 a B&M engine house (and machine shop) were located on “The Island,” a two-acre plot in the Charles River Basin granted to the B&M by the legislature in March 1845.

 In fye 30 Nov 1869 the FRR made improvements to the Charlestown engine house.

East Cambridge, Mass.

1st. A castellated roundhouse at the southeast corner of the intersection of Prison Point Bridge and Bridge Street (now Msgr. O'Brien Highway). Built by B&LRR by 1854.

2nd. Adjacent to the 1st and on same side of PP Bridge. Built by 1886.

The 1st and 2nd were demolished 1903 in connection with freight yard expansion in East Cambridge.

3rd. 1 November 1902. East Cambridge engine house [is] completed with 50 stalls and 14 pits. The engine house was located west of Prison Point Bridge and was demolished after World War II. Two mounted photos showing it new in Teed/Towle 2017.15.

East Somerville, Mass.

Addition made to engine house at East Somerville, Mass. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1900 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Somerville, Mass.

8 April 1929. B&M announces plans for a 50-stall roundhouse, later known as Boston Engine Terminal, to be built in Somerville between the Fitchburg and Southern Division Main Lines south of the inbound and outbound classification yards. It was planned as a smokeless terminal, engines dumping their fires in a water-filled pit prior to entry under the steam remaining in the boilers. Inside, the locomotives would be hooked up to lines bringing steam from the boiler house. (Taft/Lowell Sun, 8 Apr 1929). Opened 1930. Demolished August 1995. Replaced by MBTA maintenance facility.

Amesbury, Mass.

1885. A four-stall engine house is built on the north side of the Amesbury Branch near the throat of the freight yard.

Ayer, Mass.

During fye 30 Sep 1881 FRR built a six pit engine house and 60-foot iron turntable at Ayer.

The 13 stall engine house was retired in 1939 subsequent to damage in the 1938 Hurricane. 70 foot turntable was relocated from Ayer to East Fitchburg in 1932, suggesting perhaps that engine house was out of service by that time. (AFE Index)

Concord, N.H.

New turntable installed at Concord, N.H. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1899 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Old C&M shops converted to engine house at Concord, N.H. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1899 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

New engine house at Concord, N.H. in 1923.

Dover, N.H.

In September 1919 a new roundhouse opens at Oak Street, Dover, replacing the old one at Second Street.

East Boston, Mass.

4 November 1844. ERR directors authorize the construction of new engine house at East Boston.

East Deerfield, Mass.

In 1917, the Ann Rpt has a full paragraph on East Deerfield. A new 15 stall Enghouse, 85 foot turntable and machine shop. An 11-stall addition was added to the 15 stall Enghouse. And then a new 24 stall Enghouse was constructed.

Edgemont (Newbury), N.H.

In 1914 there was a 60 foot turntable north of tracks about 300 feet northwest of the passenger station.

Greenfield, Mass.

Turntable relocated at Greenfield, Mass. in fye 30 June 1902 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Lawrence, Mass.

There was an (enclosed?) EH on the “Triangle in the 1890s” See B&M Bulletin Vol. XXI, No. 3, p. 26 (PDF p. 25).

Lowell, Mass. (see also Middlesex)

An 1841 map of Lowell shows a round building described as a car house and depot on the east side of Thorndike Street north of Hamilton, now Middlesex Street. This was a domed roundhouse that could accommodate about 12 engines and which burned in the 1880s.

Semi-circular engine house south of Hale Street and Hale’s Brook.

New turntable installed at Lowell, Mass., in f/y ended 30 Jun 1900 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Lyndonville, Vt.

New engine house erected at Lyndonville, Vt. (old one burnt down) in f/y ended 30 Jun 1900 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Mechanicville, N.Y.

In fye 30 Jun 1912 a 25 stall (expandable to 50) engine house was built with an 85-foot turntable and coal, sand, and water stations.

Middlesex, Lowell, Mass. (See also Lowell)

Engine house active 1948. Middlesex Engine House closed 19 May 1958. Sold in 1960. Burned March 1975.

Nashua, N.H.

Torn down 1944.

Newbury, N.H.

 See Edgemont, N.H.

Newport, Vt.

New engine house. C&PRR Ann Rpt. Fye 6-30-1884

Peterborough, N.H.

The engine house and turntable were south of downtown. “A two-stall engine house burned in 1910, and its replacement was gone by 1950.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Portland, Me.

New turntable installed at Portland, Me. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1900 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Portsmouth, N.H.

An early map shows an engine house of approximately 180º arc in same position near North Mill Pond as those that follow. Part of it must have burned down and parts were extended in length.

New turntable installed at Portsmouth, N.H. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1900 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

In a c1920 track map, there are 6-stall and 9-stall engine houses grouped around the turntable. On a 6-27-1944 map S1-545 the 6-stall house has disappeared, and the 9-stall house has been reduced to 6 stalls.

Rochester, N.H.

New turntable installed at Rochester, N.H. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1899 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Rockport, Mass.

New turntable installed at Rockport, Mass. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1899 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

New engine house erected at Rockport, Mass. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1900 (year following the turntable installation) per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Rotterdam, N.Y.

 Enlarged in fye 30 Jun 1912.

Sanbornville, Wakefield, N.H.

Burned down April 1911. Replaced.

South Lawrence, Lawrence, Mass.

In fye 30 Jun 1911 A new engine house and turntable opened at South Lawrence to accommodate the “constantly increasing business.”

Troy, N.Y.

New engine house erected at Troy, N.Y. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1901 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Westboro, Lebanon, N.H.

“History: The history of the present locomotive roundhouse at West Lebanon has not yet been investigated in detail. The Northern Railroad, and later the Boston & Maine, maintained locomotive servicing facilities at West Lebanon (Westboro) beginning in 1847. The History of Lebanon, New Hampshire, 1761-1994 reportedly states that a brick roundhouse replaced a130-foot-long stone roundhouse (1848) in 1890. It is likely that this brick structure was the now-missing building, and that the two current units were

added still later. A study of Sanborn Insurance Company maps for West Lebanon should permit a fairly accurate dating of the existing roundhouse structures. Meanwhile, it can be said that the existing structures appear to be of modern, post-1900 construction and to have been built within a few decades of one another. The southernmost end wall of the southernmost roundhouse, measuring some 95 feet in overall depth (excluding an attached fan room at its rear corner) appears to be the oldest surviving fabric in the complex. It appears to be a former party wall shared by the current roundhouse and a now-missing older roundhouse to the south. Instead of having been built as a party

wall, this construction was perhaps the end wall of a free-standing building that pre-dated the current roundhouse, and to which the present building was attached. At the demolition of the earlier structure, the former interior face of its end wall would have been exposed to view and to the weather, explaining its rather underburned bricks, its bricked-up girder pockets, and its exposed areas of whitewash.

To judge from roof and wall outlines that are visible on the now-exposed face of this wall, the missing roundhouse apparently had low walls on both its front (facing the turntable) and rear, with an elevated clerestory at the center of the roof span, probably with sashes on both the front and rear faces of the clerestory. Brick-filled pockets for the ends of heavy girders that supported the lower roofs and the clerestory roof are visible in the brickwork that forms the end wall of the existing southern roundhouse.

“Description: The two surviving roundhouse units both have exterior walls of brick, thickened by pilasters at points where the walls support the ends of roof timbers. Where the frogs of bricks can be seen, most are marked “D B Co,” identifying their maker as the

Densmore Brick Company of Lebanon, New Hampshire. These are hard, sand-struck bricks. The rear or western brick walls of the southern roundhouse are pierced by expansive window openings, a few of which have been lengthened to the ground to become wide doors. Wherever fragments of the original sashes remain, they are multi-light steel industrial sashes of the type that were common in the early twentieth century. Window openings are (or formerly were) divided by steel transom bars placed somewhat above the mid-height of the openings, with independent sash units installed above and below these beams. Some former window openings have been entirely filled by concrete blocks.

The northerly roundhouse is similar in design and construction to the southern building, except that its northerly side wall is also pierced by a series of large windows. Window openings in both the western and northern walls of this building are spanned by lintels of reinforced concrete in place of the steel lintels employed in the larger roundhouse.

In both buildings, the roof membranes are supported by a series of wooden bents. These are composed of columns, measuring about twelve inches square and supported on concrete footings, which are arranged at the intersections of concentric circles and radii, both having their centers on the pivot of the former turntable (see attached floor plan). The tops of the columns support wooden beams that follow the lines of the concentric circles. These beams are further supported by diagonal wooden braces that rise from the four sides of the columns (see lateral section drawing, attached). The beams support wooden roof joists that follow the lines of radii. The joists are covered with wooden sheathing boards. The roof covering was not examined, but may be presumed to be some form of asphalt impregnated roll roofing. The openings of each locomotive bay are presently filled with hinged wooden doors, most of which have been damaged. The clerestory windows above the low, inner roofs of the two roundhouse structures have been covered with corrugated metal sheathing, applied vertically. Like the main windows in both roundhouses, the sashes behind these sheets may be presumed to be damaged or missing. Each of the eight locomotive bays in the larger roundhouse is (or was) fitted with a smoke funnel that projects through the roof near the faceted rear wall of the structure. These funnels appear to be composed of sheets of cement-asbestos board supported within a frame of steel angles. Cement-asbestos board was introduced to the United States shortly after 1900. The three locomotive bays in the smaller (but longer) northern roundhouse are ventilated both by smoke funnels (also placed near the

rear or western wall) and by rectangular metal louvers set into the flat roof above the center of each bay. The latter appear to be later additions to the building. Throughout both buildings, supplementary wooden framing of modern, pressure-treated Douglas fir planking has been placed at about the level of the feet of the diagonal braces that connect columns and roof beams. Attached to this framework are sheets of corrugated aluminum, much of it damaged by locomotive exhaust. It appears that these lower exhaust shields were placed in the building after World War II, probably to protect the flammable wooden roof framing from sparks generated by Diesel-electric locomotives. Unlike coal-fired steam locomotives, Diesel engines sometimes emit brands of burning carbon.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

West Lebanon, N.H. See Westboro, N.H.

Whitefield, N.H.

New engine house erected at Whitefield, N.H. in f/y ended 30 Jun 1899 per B&MRR “Additions and Betterments 1899-1914” B&MRRHS Archives Cat. No. 2010.14.7, R2452 BM 1899-1914.

Worcester, Mass.

In fye 30 Jun 1912 Interlocking was built at Millbrook St., Worcester, in connection with the new yard and engine house used jointly with New Haven.

Compiled by Rick Nowell

Issue A -- June 26, 2016

 B -- December 24, 2016

C – May 31, 2017

D – March 2, 2018

E – April 25, 2018

F – January 7, 2020

G – March 29, 2020

1. Model Railroad Planning 2000. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. REPORT ON THE LOCOMOTIVE ROUNDHOUSES WEST LEBANON (WESTBORO), NEW HAMPSHIRE by JAMES L. GARVIN APRIL 12, 2000. Published by NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES <https://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/lebanon_roundhouse.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)