

The Patchogue Project

looking for inputs — a chance for everyone to contribute to a new layout design element / STEVEN LYNCH

illustrations and photos are from the author's website <http://www.trainsarefun.com/lirr/lirrcontents.htm>

FOR MORE THAN TEN YEARS NOW, as information about the Long Island Railroad's presence in Patchogue accumulated on my website, I've had a concept in mind for a Layout Design Element (LDE) based not on the Patchogue we know today, but one that squeezed forty-plus industries into a village/yard/waterfront setting just two miles in length. When was that? Within the 1890–1920 time period when the arrival of rail led to an explosion of growth in the area and made Patchogue the shopping hub of the east end, a major commute terminus and the origin of summer Fire Island traffic to Davis Park.

Prior to then, the railroad through Patchogue consisted of the South Side Railroad's single track with a passing siding at the depot and a stub siding with west facing points, which was close enough to the depot to be a house track. Further west, across the Patchogue River, another stub with west facing points led to a turntable and then to an engine house, all of which can be seen on the map immediately below.

By the early 1900s the South Side Railway had become part of the LIRR, and Patchogue saw a dozen or more trains daily to and from Brooklyn and Queens and the ferry connections to Manhattan. In response to this traffic and the business it helped develop a yard had come into being, which extended westward from Railroad Avenue across West Street to the Patchogue River. This forced the relocation of the depot a block or so east between Railroad and South Ocean Avenues.

Locomotive servicing and turning was accessed by a couple of spurs with east facing points located at the top or north side of the yard and included a four stall roundhouse. A third siding led to the Weeks Co. coal trestle, which terminated adjacent to the roundhouse. A number of business, among them a lumber yard and planing mill, were located south of the yard.

September 8, 1910, the first train from Penn Station arrived in Patchogue, the tunnel under the East River having been com-

(Continued on page 6)



South Side Railroad through Patchogue circa 1873



Hyde Belcher map of the Long Island Railroad through Patchogue circa 1917

(Continued from page 5)

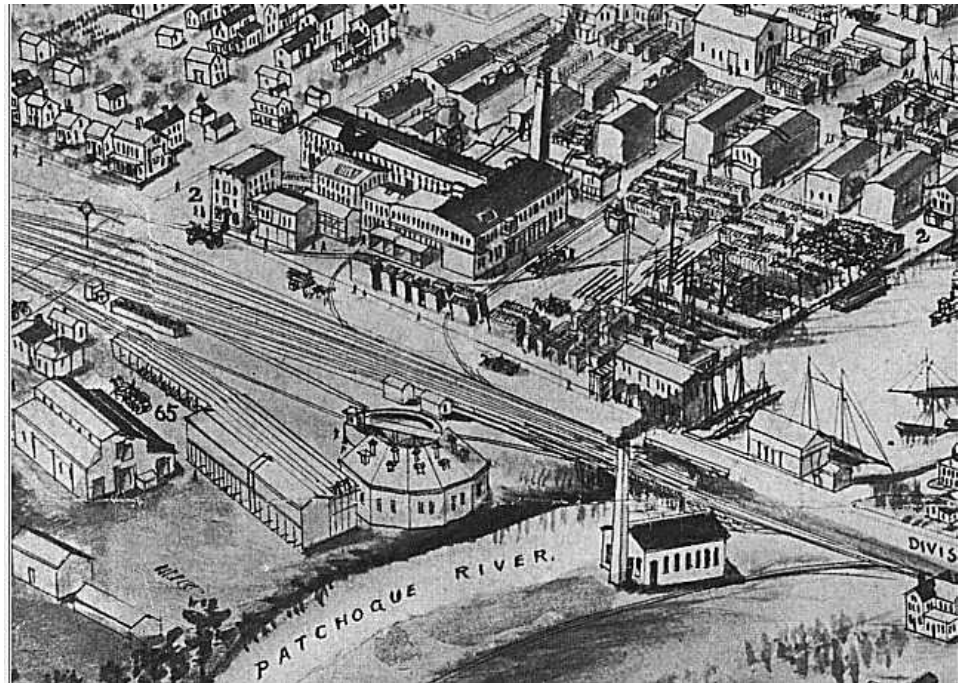


First train from Penn Station arriving in Patchogue

pleted and placed into service earlier in the year. By 1917 the track arrangement had reached its zenith with sidings added east of the depot, some of which were probably for temporary storage of passenger equipment being turned around for the westward journey back to the city.

PLANNING THE LDE

While prototype track arrangements are often the best place to start planning an LDE, a three-dimensional view of the area of interest almost always helps to better understand how it might be most effectively modeled. The following photograph and artist's rendering of the LIRR Patchogue yard from two different aspects aids in bringing the model trackplan to life. Visualize for example how the



Artist rendering looking southeast of the Long Island Railroad yard and southwest Patchogue.

Weeks' coal trestle might look in the background nestled up against the roundhouse with both sitting on the bank of the Patchogue River. And how about the traction-like, sharp radius curves to the south, which were necessary to navigate the tight waterfront spacing of an earlier era? What

LIRR locomotive was used to switch the customers reached by that trackwork?

For the most part, it appears that Patchogue might be modeled linearly, with perhaps a short perpendicular piece to deal with industries reached by the sharp

(Continued on page 7)



Aerial view facing northeast of southwest Patchogue and the Long Island Railroad yard. Patchogue River is to the left.

(Continued from page 6)

curves. A number of things need doing, however, before drawing a representative trackplan and developing the other pieces that go into creation of an LDE.

The most important of these, perhaps, is determining the era to be modeled. In the real world, demographics, technological and cultural changes, business cycles and more define the physical and operational characteristics of a railroad. In other words, the era determines the look. The railroad modeling world has the luxury of being able to work in reverse. We can choose the look we want for our railroad and let that determine the era we model.

A great proportion of model railroaders model the so-called “transition” era, because that gives them license to operate both steam and diesel motive power. In “Modeling Mineola”, a prior *Cannon Ball* series about creating an LDE of Mineola Junction, a timeline of LIRR equipment—passenger car types, as well as motive power—was presented to match up with the Junction’s changing track configuration over the years. An expanded version of that will be included in a subsequent part of this series, as well as a similar timeline for the Patchogue businesses the railroad served or might have served.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

There are a number of things that must be done before a Patchogue LDE might become reality, and determining its era (or eras) is only part of the task. A workable trackplan, of course, is one. Availability of appropriate rolling stock and motive power is

another. The mix of railroad customers to be served is yet another, which in turn will lead to whatever “signature structures might enhance the Patchogue feeling of the LDE. And the fact that all these things interact and impact each other to some extent adds to the complexity (and interest) of achieving a satisfying final design.

Contributors to my website have been more than generous where Patchogue information is concerned. That has been the starting point for this exercise and will continue to be a source of its progress. But a lot more is needed, and I’m looking for help from any “Patchoguephiles” out there in the reading audience. How and where we go from here could very well depend on a piece of information, no matter how large or small, you might be able to provide. So please let me know what *you* know about the LIRR in Patchogue by contacting the editor, whose particulars are available at the bottom of page 2, or by emailing me at slynch@tampabay.rr.com. And by all means, check out the website to see what’s already there. You can find the entire site at:

<http://www.trainsarefun.com/index.htm>;

the Long Island Railroad archives at:

<http://www.trainsarefun.com/lirr/lirrcontents.htm>;

and the Patchogue portion at:

<http://www.trainsarefun.com/lirr/lirrcontents.htm>

Enjoy it all, have a happy holiday season, and please come back for more next time!