



TfL Corporate Archives Research Guides

Research Guide No 20: Victoria Coach Station

Travel between London and the South Coast by motor bus began very early in the history of the motor bus. As early as 1904 Vanguard Omnibus Company operated double deck buses between London and Brighton. This service was withdrawn in 1906 but in April 1919, Len Turnham started a service from London to Brighton and this was followed by other operators. By 1920 it was clear that a good organisational back-up was needed at both the London and the coastal end. A group of operators came together and formed a pool for their services.

The rapid development of services made it essential for this pool to become an entity in its own right. On 30 April 1925, London Coastal Coaches was incorporated. That summer it operated services to the South Coast, Kent, Essex and East Anglia. It did not, however, have an operating base. Efforts were made to find such a base, culminating in the building of Victoria Coach Station, which opened in January 1932.

The 1930s saw a rapid growth of destinations and operators from Victoria Coach Station, so that most parts of England and Wales could be reached from there.

There were practically no coach services during the Second World War, and some 32,000 square feet of the coach station yard was requisitioned by the War Office. Services started up again on 22 March 1946 and Victoria Coach Station continued to see a growth in its services in the post-war era.

In 1968 the National Bus Company was formed and Victoria Coach Station then came under the control of National Travel (South East) Limited. In 1978 the London Coastal Coaches name was brought back and Victoria Coach Station Limited came into use as a business entity.

Following the privatisation of the National Bus Company, the management and operating of the coach station was transferred to London Regional Transport, with the majority of coach services organised by National Express. And in 2000 the management of Victoria Coach Station passed to Transport for London.

For a more detailed account of the history of Victoria Coach Station see Victoria Coach Station - The First Fifty Years: Frank Woodworth, Rochester Press 1982.

Victoria Coach Station: TfL Corporate Archives records

The TfL Corporate Archives records contain information only for the period from the 1980's when London Regional Transport became involved with the administration of Victoria Coach Station, apart from one item on war damage in the Second World War.

The information held is summarised under a number of headings below.

War Damage to Victoria Coach Station: TfL Corporate Archives records

Reference	Covering dates	Event/subject
(NEW)LT001829/005	Jan 1940-Sep 1943	Correspondence regarding War Damage to London Coastal Coaches Limited Property

Purchase of Victoria Coach Station: TfL Corporate Archives records

Reference	Covering dates	Event/subject
(NEW)LT000375/101	27 Feb 1974-29 Apr 1988	Correspondence and memoranda relating to the transfer of Victoria Coach Station to London Regional Transport, with the transfer valuation brief and acquisition and management of Victoria Coach Station operations and property.
(NEW)LT000340/262	14 Mar 1988-16 Aug 1989	Correspondence, memoranda and minutes of meetings of the London Regional Transport Property Board concerning leases and valuations; also includes a draft share purchase agreement, accounting policies and a valuation report with list of appendices.

Parking Issues and Replacement of Victoria Coach Station: TfL Corporate Archives records

(NEW)LT000227/223	Oct 1986-22 Aug 1989	Correspondence, reports and minutes concerning improvements and developments in Victoria Coach Station including details of its charging structure, the accident report system, management accounts, a map showing lease holds and free holds of the station, services and facilities, the search for a new coach station, the transfer of Victoria Coach Station from the National Bus Company to London Regional Transport, a technical report of the results of coach passenger surveys and a report concerning the options for the replacement of express coach parking at Battersea Wharf.
(NEW)LT000375/05	3 Jun 1988-9 Sep 1993	Correspondence relating to a notice of intention by Victoria Coach Station to remain in possession of land at Battersea Wharf; report of the auditors to the members of Victoria Coach Station Limited; report of the Directors and statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 1991 and IATA guarantee.

Improvement of Victoria Coach Station: TfL Corporate Archives records

Reference	Covering dates	Event/subject
(NEW)LT000879/009	29 Dec 1989-21 Dec 1990	Memoranda, correspondence, technical drawings and extracts from minutes of meetings concerning improvements to facilities at Victoria Coach Station, introduction of coach leases, market research study, costs of refurbishment and the selection of contractors.
(NEW)LT000879/010	2 Jan 1991-29 Sep 1994	Memoranda, correspondence, newspaper cuttings and extracts from minutes of meetings concerning improvements to facilities at Victoria Coach Station, garage improvements, market research study, costs of refurbishment, health and safety regulations, travellers fare and announcement of the Victoria Coach Station design award.

(NEW)LT000879/016	8 Mar 1990-25 Jan 1994	Correspondence and reports concerning Victoria Coach Station's long-term strategies, revised instructions for surveyors, study of the coach market, travelling facilities, station improvements, passenger journeys and the reasons for choosing coaches.
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Managing Director and Safety Reports: Victoria Coach Station: TfL Corporate Archives records

(NEW)LT000879/013	21 Dec 1989-29 Sep 1994	Summary concerning the Managing Director's reports on Victoria Coach Station financial matters, a budget review, travelling facilities, building improvements and refurbishing progress.
(NEW)LT000879/014	26 Feb 1990-20 Sep 1994	Reports and newspaper cuttings concerning Victoria Coach Station's health and safety facilities, investigation of accidents and incidents, safety precautions during the refurbishment and passenger safety policy.