

TALES OF A TRAM SHELTER.

The tram shelter latterly in Cosham Compound was built in the 1920s by David Rowell & Co. of Westminster, London, for Portsmouth Corporation Tramways. It was located in Town Hall Square almost directly opposite the Town Hall itself and approximately where the Civic Offices now stand. When Portsmouth became a city in 1926 the Town Hall was renamed Guildhall, with Town Hall Square becoming Guildhall Square.

The shelter as Thornton's cafe and shop on 4th March 2008.

In those days Commercial Road extended further south to encompass what is now Guildhall Walk. The tram shelter was aligned north-south for trams operating to Copnor and Cosham to the north and Clarence Pier and Old Portsmouth to the south.

The tram shelter was originally painted battleship grey (a rather darker shade than that used now by the Royal Navy) with black lining both inside and out. It was later painted silver, probably in the 1930s.



In 1948 the tram shelter in Guildhall Square was dismantled and about two thirds of it used in the construction of the shelter in Cosham Compound (now known as Cosham Interchange) near Cosham Railway Station. It retained the silver colour scheme until painted brick red, brown and cream in the 1980s.

In July 2003 the shelter was dismantled again and this time reconstructed in the new Gunwharf Quays shopping complex. It was fitted with doors and converted to a café as Madison's Coffee Shop. In June 2007 Madison ceased trading and the café was taken over by Thorntons plc. It was given external advertising for their coffee, chocolate and ice cream and is still a café in January 2009.

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Photograph and text, R.G. Smith, Portsmouth, 2009.