

Project Sluis (2)

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This is a sequel to the article about Project Sluis published in June 2020.

Due to the fact that Ronald visits the border region regularly, he managed to take photos of the former Customs office – especially the right hand side and the rear, which we didn't have photos of. This resulted in our model, which Ronald designed as a resin kit which he assembled and painted. Last December he delivered the completed model at my home, following which I set it up on the Sluis layout.

Below are some photos of the buildings we made, most fitted with an interior.



Photo 8 - The building group including the pub and fully equipped garage, depicted on the workbench.



Photo 9 – The same group of buildings and the pub on the corner location Hoogstraat - Kaai.



Photo 10 – Fully equipped garage with interior and lighting.



Photo 11 – Souvenir shop with interior and lights, selling picture postcards and local sugar buns. The dwelling next door is a modified Holland Scale kit, the shop is scratchbuilt.

The dead-end siding in front of the souvenir shop was moved slightly. At the end a weighbridge was built with an operating hut fitted with scales enabling the cargo weight of each wagon to be determined and noted on the manifest.



Photo 12 – weighbridge and hut. The operator is almost hidden behind the scales mechanism.

Hotel 'Central', situated at an angle behind the souvenir shop, was built using Flemish Bond brick sheet by Slaters. This material is fairly thin, less than 0.5mm, making it easy to cut using a scalpel or even a good pair of scissors. Each wall was fitted on 1mm card to prevent interior light shining through, before the building was assembled. The interior was detailed using photos of the hotel rooms and restaurant, found on the internet.



Photos 13 and 14 – the restaurant (left) and daily cleaning of the hotel rooms (right).



Photo 15 Hotel Central, also doubling as the tramway station, including guests on the covered patio.



Photo 16 – the statue of J.H. van Dale, a local schoolmaster who compiled a dictionary still in use in this country. The statue stands in front of the tram shelter next to the Customs office.

As of February 2021, all buildings were completed and fixed in place on the layout, except for the Customs office. This will be fitted with an interior – three small offices behind each of the front windows, to be fitted with desks and archives of cases under review by the staff. Think of the clearing of goods and luggage passing the Belgian border by steamer or on the steam tram. In addition, this is where passengers are subjected to border control, passing into Belgium or into the Netherlands, whether for business or pleasure.

The next photo gives an overview of the entire layout in its present state. It is still a bit bare – shrubs and trees are lacking as the Council greenery employees will have to do their thing. In addition the roads need to be populated with villagers and foreigners, and farm and commercial carts loaded with sugarbeet or bags of flour.



Photo 17 – overview of the layout, made in February 2021.

After constructing the Backer & Rueb tram locomotives we continued with rolling stock models. We now have two different passenger tram/trains, each consisting of a B&R steam tram loco, a bogie carriage and a van. At present we are busy with a number of goods vehicles on N gauge chassis. We need two closed vehicles with sliding doors, and four open wagons to transport sugarbeet, coal and bags of flour.



Photo 18 – One of the passenger trams with loco AARDENBURG, a tri-composite carriage and a luggage/parcels van.



Photo 19 – Hanomag steam tram loco № 13 CADZAND with wooden screens in the draughty cab openings.

Especially intended for haulage of long sugar beet trains, the SBM had two six-wheel Hanomag steam tram locomotives of considerable power: № 12 ZUIDZANDE and № 13 CADZAND. Some time ago, through Sven van der Hart's website (www.tramfabriek.nl) I found the site of JM Models (www.jmmodels.nl), which offers kits for a similar Hanomag tram loco in two sizes in H0 scale: a standard gauge version and a slightly narrower metre gauge version. The kits are made of milled styrene sheet and can be assembled with ordinary styrene cement. We ordered two of the metre gauge kits (€ 25 each) and etches with name, number and Hanomag works plates by Sven (€ 5 each). Even the wooden draught screens are included, milled to size. We will build these locos on an N gauge chassis, as we have chosen 9mm gauge instead of 12.