

Camborne in Cornwall

Expression of Interest: New home for GB Rail



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Executive Summary

This expression of interest presents both an appeal to the heart and mind of GB Rail to reach out further than might first have been envisaged to a region and town that has deep connections to heritage of the train and overwhelming need for economic regeneration.

Camborne played an instrumental role in the industrial revolution and has engineering at its heart. It is adjacent to wonderful countryside and is the heartlands of Cornwall. In recent years it has worked hard to become a home of innovation and has great educational organisations within its boundary and on its doorstep.

We have identified one potential building that could serve well as a visitor centre, that is adjacent to the statue of the inventor of the steam locomotive, Richard Trevithick. It is well connected to the town and transportation links. However, our initial estimate is that GB Rail may require some 7500 square meters of office space. We have further identified two potential locations within proximity that could fulfil this requirement from the local plan.

Cornwall retains engineering prowess and is forward looking. We have great full fibre infrastructure and a cutting-edge software capability in Pool, which is adjacent to Camborne. Remote working and digital transformation are persistent agenda for all organisations. Taking staff, partners, customers and stakeholders away from their day-to-day activities has proved to be a successful approach as demonstrated by the G7 at Carbis Bay and The Eden Project. We would hope to bring similar advantages to GB Rail.

Camborne provides a broad range of housing, excellent schools, and good infrastructure. It does however suffer economic and social challenges, that a national initiative of this kind would go some way to solving with considerable immediacy.

This expression of interest has yielded considerable indicative support from the local MP, the head of the council, the Local Enterprise Partnership, the town council, and a range of community organisations. It would be very welcome and provide synergy with other initiatives in the region that support broad initiatives around transformation of various verticals identified in the LEP and the needs and demands of levelling up.

Context

Camborne: its history and context

Camborne is the Cornish town that shaped the world. Once the centre of the industrialising world, we are now looking to our future to see how we can re-build a town that finds a new prosperity in an ever-changing world

Our Heritage

It's not every town that can justifiably claim to have changed the world. But Camborne has and more than once. Richard Trevithick built his 'Puffing Devil' – the steam carriage that gave rise to trains and cars here and tested it for the first time on Camborne Hill (Fore Street). Cornish miners took their skills and machinery around the globe. Much of the world's industrial expertise originated and was taught at Camborne School of Mines, much of the equipment used for mining built at Holmans Brothers.

We're all about community

Camborne is a town filled with passionate people who are staunchly loyal to the area. We pull together as a community, and we love where we live. One of the best ways for us to come together as one is in our celebration of Trevithick Day, celebrating the Cornishman who gave us and the world the steam engine.

The first Camborne Trevithick Day took place in 1984 and the community event has quickly become an important part of the Cornish calendar, attracting some 25,000 to 30,000 visitors. It is a day of free entertainment to celebrate Camborne's links with Richard Trevithick and local industrial heritage. There's a carnival atmosphere in Camborne as its main streets are closed to traffic for the day and steam engines, street stalls, bands and entertainers take over the town. Rosewarne car park is transformed into a funfair and many of Camborne's buildings are home to displays or offer refreshments.



Our Local Area

Here in Camborne, we're blessed. Some of Cornwall's finest scenery, heritage and nature can be found right on our doorstep.

Within just a few miles, we have the dizzying cliffs at Hell's Mouth, and the bluebell-strewn woodlands at Tehidy and Pendarves.

And our area's simply bursting with history – whether that's mining sites at East Pool, King Edwards Mine and the Great Flat Lode or ancient, mysterious remains at the Giant's Quoit and Carn Brea.

Camborne Today

Camborne is also forward looking. It is on the edge of the Pool Innovation Centre, where next generation technology firms are developing digital solutions, software companies are moving in and trailblazing AI, VR and AR products and many more to come. This is underpinned by a major initiative to develop and deploy gigabit fibre across the county, so Cornwall and its north coast will transcend from an isolated but idyllic tourist spot to an integrated economy offering a unique work/life balance in our new hybrid way of work.

Stakeholders

We have involved a range of stakeholders in the preparation of our bid, notably:

The town council

Sally Weedon will sponsor and represent the bid on behalf of the council

The local authority

The local authority has been involved in the preparation of the bid, most especially the department for transport and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

The community and heritage organisations

The Trevithick Society and Trevithick days committee were contacted and have lent support

West Cornwall Works

West Cornwall Works is a charity established to bring the proposed visitor centre building back into productive use. They have conducted much of the groundwork and business planning pertinent to the proposed site. This is led by David Atherfold who is a core member of the bidding team.

Local MP

George Eustace and his office have been very supportive and provided guidance and advice for the proposal.

Cornwall County Council

Cllr Linda Taylor the Council Leader of Cornwall County Council, our unitary authority, has mooted her support for the scheme. Cllr Taylor's specific responsibilities include strategy and place, as well as levelling up and equalities, subjects' core to this proposal.

Proposed Site as a visitor centre: The old Fire Station



The building in question at Camborne Cross was constructed in 1903 as the offices of the Camborne Urban District Council and remained in use as its offices until the Council was merged with the Redruth Urban District Council in 1934 and the new combined Camborne-Redruth Urban District Council moved to its offices at Veor. As built in 1903 the structure was rather smaller than at present, and incorporated offices with a storage area for the town's fire engine on its eastern side, but under the office accommodation itself, with the engine's storage room and offices facing east into a side lane.



The building is a fine example of provincial architecture constructed in granite and elvan. Its renovations and putting to use once more would secure its future in the town that gave birth to the steam road locomotive, first constructed and run in Camborne in 1801 by the great Cornish inventor and true father of the locomotive engine Richard Trevithick (1771-1833), whose statue, unveiled on 17 May 1932, stands before the adjacent library building at Camborne Cross.

A new lease of life for a railway-related purpose would be particularly appropriate for this fine structure, facing up the road towards Camborne's railway station, first opened to passengers in 1843, on the running lines of the industrial Hayle Railway from Hayle to Camborne, the tracks of which were laid down in 1837, 36 years after Trevithick's pioneering and world changing transport invention, which was conceived and fathered in Camborne.

Additional, potential expansion buildings are near the proposed building, which include the Basset Road school, which also has potential expansion parking facilities. We have also identified two potential development sites for the extensive corporate functions.

Reviving and Benefitting Camborne and Cornwall

When Camborne lost its manufacturing base (Holman Brothers), the town has experienced some of the most severe decline and has some of the worst economic outcomes in the UK. Restoration as the home of Great British Rail would be appropriate given the historic role that it played in Rail and the industrial history of the nation, and such a development and rejuvenation of local pride would have a major impact in both economic and social terms. Camborne, as much, or even more than most parts of the United Kingdom needs the establishment of well-paid jobs and productive economic activity, and with it the trickledown effect on local GDP. In addition, relocating the HQ for GB Rail would be to secure a vital anchor tenant for the property proposed as the visitor centre that may also be used for broader social objectives embodied by West Cornwall Works and the LEP.

Why Camborne is the best location

Camborne provides a unique opportunity to restore the position of the rightful inventor of the steam locomotive in the national psyche, a fantastic living environment and a forward-looking technology hub on its doorstep. The specific location is walking distance to the local train station which has considerable parking facilities. Camborne must rank as one of the most deserving locations in terms of the potential economic and social impact of having a prestigious national HQ within a gateway location.

The opportunities to take staff away from their normal working environment for training and conferences cannot be underestimated. New, hybrid ways of working are supported by great fibre infrastructure in the locale. There is a range of supporting infrastructure locally including a

technology and innovation hub and the largest education and training facility in the region at Cornwall College. There is still a legacy manufacturing base within the region.

Housing has been expanded rapidly in recent years and offers a broad range of housing and schooling opportunities for relocating staff, including Camborne Science and International Academy's Centre of Excellence for the education of the most able approximately 500 metres from the proposed visitor centre location.

Cornwall has an active and well-established tech sector that centres right next to Camborne. The 2018 Tech Nation report identifies it as one of the fastest growing in the country with 2,368 people working in digital tech occupations. Software Cornwall represents a diverse range of cutting-edge companies and providers that range from deep tech producers of embedded systems through healthcare systems to national level education providers. Digital Transformation affects all businesses, and this is likely to be no less pervasive in the Rail Sector.

So, our appeal is on the basis on the infrastructure available for contemporary digital engagement at industry level and the advantages that a slightly geographically more remote venue can have. Further Central London is approximately 5 hours by rail.

Proposed Sites

Camborne forms part of a set of conjoined settlements (Camborne, Pool, Illogan & Redruth – CPIR) which collectively make up Cornwall's largest conurbation. In recognising CPIR's scale; strategic economic role in Cornwall; and strategic transport links, the Cornwall Local Plan, the document that sets planning policy for the county, has targeted the CPIR area with delivery of 5,200 homes and 120,000sqm of employment space, the largest targets of any area in Cornwall.

The Cornwall Local Plan goes on to indicate 'Now seen as a regeneration priority, significant work and investment has and continues to be directed to the CPIR area. CPIR now has a relatively diverse industrial base and an unemployment rate that is generally below national levels. However, various economic challenges still remain for CPIR, including tackling worklessness and low wage levels, as well as providing more employment opportunities to support housing growth. In seeking to address wage levels there is an aspiration to provide more skilled employment opportunities. CPIR is recognised as a key economic hub for Cornwall, with continued promotion as a location for both office and industrial employment.'

Therefore, new strategic employment opportunities, fit will with the spatial strategy for Cornwall and specifically the CPIR area.

There have been two potential sites identified in the local plan for office space in relation to corporate functions.. One at Treswithian that is adjacent to the A30 and another in Tuckingmill that is to the East of the town and close to the Heartlands development area. However, there are other potential development that could accommodate a building of the kind and nature required by GB Rail. Our assumption is that a floor area of the order 7500 square meters would be required based on the current offices and the regional subdivision proposed by GB Rail. The outline locations are shown in the following page.

It must be noted that all necessary permissions would need to be sought and the current owners contacted. However, these sites have been previously identified as potential development sites and provided by the planning department. Others exist. These are provided as indicative at this stage due to the time constraints of responding to the EOI.

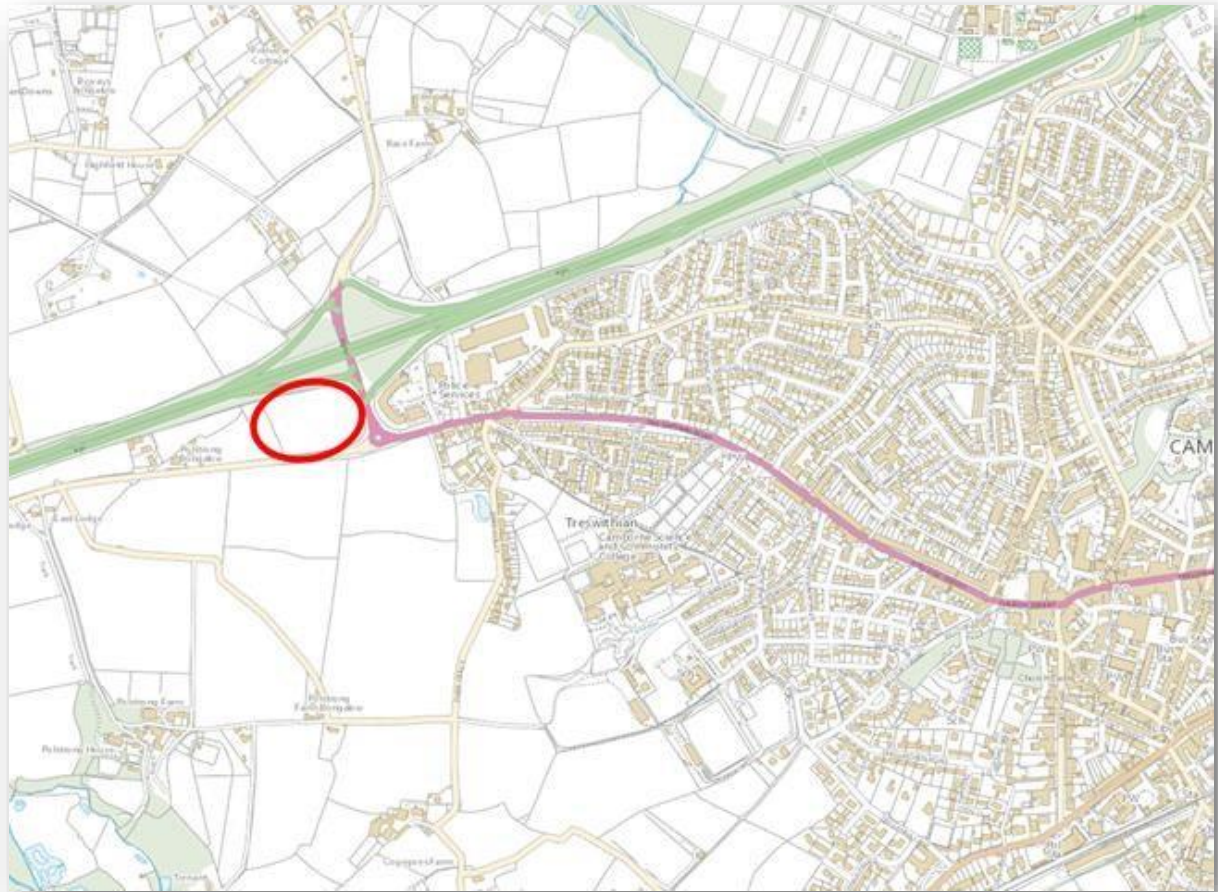
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Figure 1 Potential, Treswithian Site

This site is close to the A30 and main arterial road infrastructure. It is on the edge of the town and adjacent to the greenbelt.

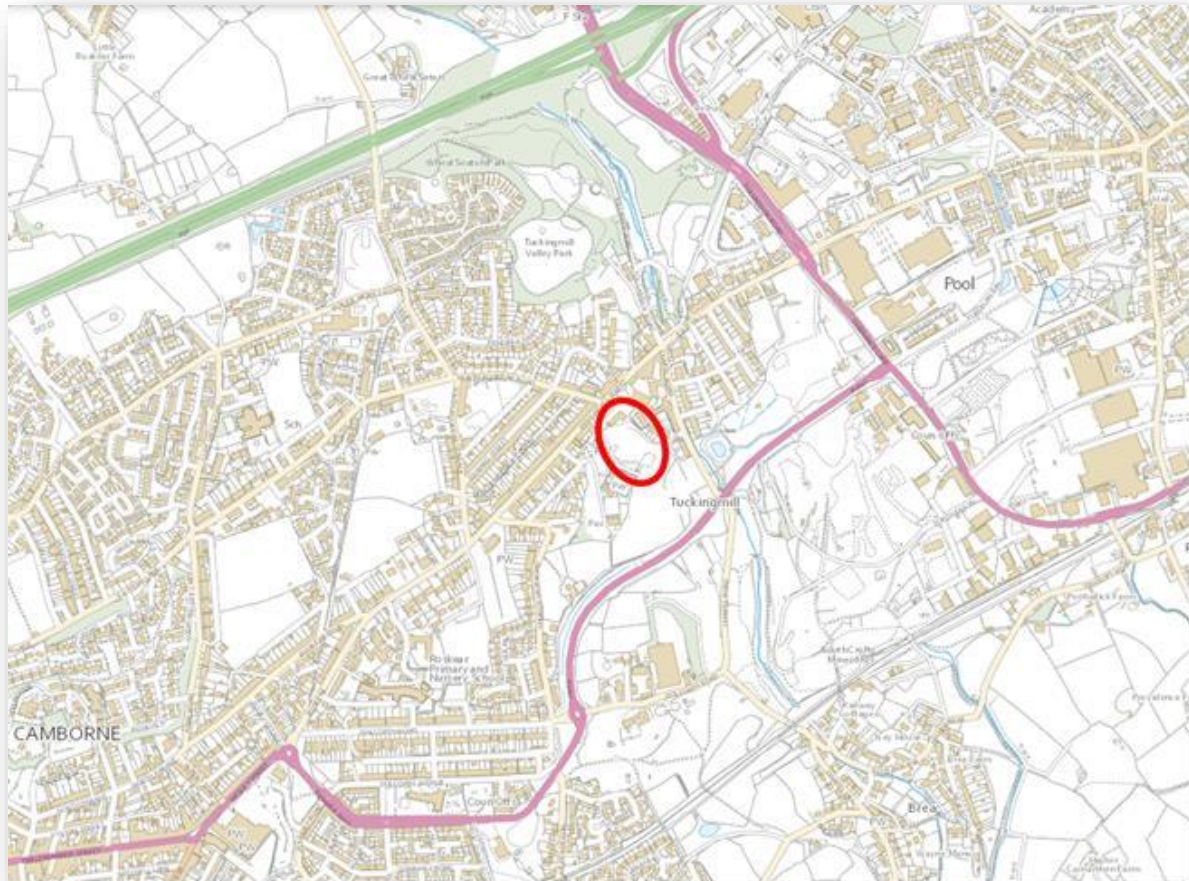


Figure 2 Potential Tuckingmill Site

The Tuckingmill site is adjacent to the Heartlands development, the innovation centre and close to the A30.

Levelling Up

Levelling up in Camborne and Cornwall

Camborne has been at the mercy of successive economic crises and economic deprivation. By some measures it has often been bypassed by productive inward initiatives and instead has a reputation for deprivation, popularised by Simon Reeve on BBC. It has poverty and outcomes of some of the most deprived parts of the UK.

The towns mining heritage of over 4,000 years ceased in 1998 with the closure of Holman Brothers and it has the highest suicide rate in the country¹.

¹ <https://byline.tv/the-poorest-towns-in-cornwall-next-door-to-the-g7/>

Camborne was identified as one of 100 deserving towns to share in the \$3.6bn Town Fund Initiative.

Current initiatives

In a broader context the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership has the following key ten areas as priorities which overlap those of Camborne although many relate to coastal areas and other initiatives, all would have synergies with rail and the needs of Camborne. Placing the HQ for GB Rail would be consistent with Camborne's history and make it pivotal in some of the other agenda. These are briefly described below:

1. Creative Sector – Predominantly around Falmouth University but also connecting to £160m investment in gigabit broadband
2. Space – Goonhilly Earth Station amongst other initiatives
3. Energy – There has been 1000% growth in the installed renewables and pioneering work in geothermal, highlighted by a major installation at the Eden Project.
4. Agri-food – Agriculture is a vitally important sector but a key success factor is shortened supply chains. Research in this domain is a focus area for the LEP and has synergy with rail
5. Tourism – Cornwall has a long-standing reputation as being amongst the best UK destination. Obviously, this is focused on coastal towns and villages but rail plays a vital link.
6. Marine – Cornwall has 300 miles of coastline. The ongoing development of rail in Cornwall supports access and development of its marine assets.
7. Mining – Mining contributes £70m in gross value added to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. There is growing interest in lithium exemplified by work at South Crofty that falls within the boundaries of the town.
8. Aerospace – Cornwall has the fastest growing airport. The South West Aerospace cluster is the 3rd largest in Europe and the 4th in the world.
9. e-Health – The vision is to use Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to develop a smart hub for data analytics to foster better health outcomes. Some of this is being created and developed within Cornwall
10. Location – Cornwall is unique

Camborne Town Initiatives

The Camborne Town Deal Board was formed in the spring of 2020, comprising a broad range of people from our communities, private and public sectors, with one uniting factor: they are all passionate about Camborne's future. The Board agreed its terms of reference, appointed a private

sector Chair and a Town Deal Co-ordinator, created several Partner Groups to explore specific priority areas and establish a vision for the town with local people.

Camborne will return to being a place where the extraordinary becomes possible. An innovative, inspiring, and welcoming town, which is generous of spirit and aspirational in its aims, it will be a healthy, clean, proud and loved town that celebrates its rich history, heritage and achievements, which will in turn act as a catalyst for its bold look to the future.

The ways of treating others and the ways of working articulated above were agreed and the Board set about developing a collective set of projects which address the challenges identified, whilst delivering against the agreed intervention themes of:

- Local transport
- Digital connectivity
- Urban regeneration, planning and land use
- Arts, culture, and heritage
- Skills infrastructure
- Enterprise infrastructure

Significant community engagement and co-production has been undertaken throughout the entire process of establishing the vision and selecting the appropriate mix of priority projects, including through:

- A continuous evaluation exercise to be conducted across the successful Cornish towns to ensure that public money is well spent and represents value for money,
- The intervention or well targeted and effective interventions and projects, that produce the desired outcomes and achieve learning opportunities for all stakeholders involved in the delivery of the programme.

The opportunities for Camborne

Bringing GB Rail to Camborne would provide a pivotal element of the future strategy for infrastructure to the town, which would support many of the broader verticals described above. It cannot be overstated what a transformational role a national HQ could make to the town, the objectives for development of the building, area and local economy more broadly.

Connected and easy to get to

The proposed visitor site is a gateway location in the town. It is approximately equidistant from both the railway station and bus station and a five-minute walk from either.

Access to the site

The two potential office sites are both adjacent to the main arterial A30. The town centre is served by a train station and bus station in Camborne.

Connections to nations and regions

Camborne has a mainline train station that connects to the rest of the rail network. The main road infrastructure is in the process of being expanded.

Accessibility

Accessibility has been considered in the development plans for the visitor centre.

Collaboration opportunities embracing all stakeholders

The LEP and County Council, as well as the Town Council have all developed a collaboration and development agenda as previously stated about. Further the intention is for the building to be additionally used for other tenants across a range of socially productive users. The introduction of a organisation that has utility across the strategic imperatives of the LEP would have significant broader benefits and synergies

At a more grass roots level, West Cornwall Works (the current developers of the proposed visitor centre building) primary role is to provide a community hub to support the people of Camborne and the surrounding area, providing information, advice and guidance about service access and support, employability services for those who are disadvantaged, a base for other organisations to work from, meeting rooms, youth facilities and a community café.

Opportunities for Great British Railways

Engagement with customer, private sector, and the wider transport industry

As previously stated above, the agenda of the LEP is a broad strategy around 10 verticals to foster innovation and growth in Cornwall. Specifically, rail is an apex of these verticals. For example, transformation of agri-food supply chains includes potential benefits provided by rail.

The broader aerospace sector is well represented in the region and the IT/ communications infrastructure is suitable for the kind of digital transformation being undertaken in most sectors.

Sadly, Camborne no longer has the manufacturing base that it once had, which provided the backbone of employment in the area. Camborne is a stage further along the trajectory of decline than other potential towns appealing for GB Rail to be hosted. In fact, this is a primary tenet and thrust of our desire to become a new home for GB Rail.

Working with the Rail Industry

The digital infrastructure, aerospace sector and facilities for high precision engineering all exist within the locale. In terms of contemporary working practices that tend to be more remote, then Camborne is potentially as good as anywhere in terms of its educational facilities and telecommunications infrastructure.

It is notable that previous global training and conference centres were purposelessly located away from the normal workplace to ensure focus on training and separation from the day-to-day work environment. This is a notable opportunity for the location. Examples of successful exploitation of Cornwall as a destination for conferences and summits are exemplified by the G7 at Carbis Bay and events at the Eden Centre.

So, our appeal is on the basis of the infrastructure available for contemporary digital engagement at industry level and the advantages that a slightly geographically more remote venue can have. Further Central London is approximately 5 hours by rail.

Collaboration with Retail, economic and environmental sectors

As stated above there is huge synergy and opportunities for collaboration between rail and the broad initiatives of the LEP. Camborne offers a vibrant town centre that would huge benefit from additional spending. It has been very resilient to the impacts of the Covid era. There are a range of hotels, pubs and restaurants in the town. The environment is a major thrust of the council's commitment to become carbon neutral by 2030.

The site and its development opportunity

In the early stages of the process a site was identified in the centre of the town with approximately 400 square meters space. There are a number of such historic properties that could be brought back into service. However, on closer inspection, and without further guidance, we have used a rule of

thumb based on the current offices and the subdivisions into regions and housing of corporate functions. Our estimate is based on 7500 square meters of office space with requisite parking and sufficient expansion space at both pre-qualified sites.

Railway heritage & links to the network

Heritage and Benefits

Camborne has heritage in abundance and more especially its where the steam locomotive was invented.



Richard Trevithick was born in a cottage a mile or so from Dolcoath Mine, where his father was a mine Captain. His curiosity about the engineering aspects of the mining area that he grew up in began when he was very young. Stories abound of him playing truant from school to hang out around the mines. This led to him pioneering new technology to use high pressure steam and increase the efficiency of the engines used to pump out the natural water that gathers in the lower levels of the tin and copper mines. At the time there was opposition to his ideas. He was called mad and dangerous but he persisted, and high-pressure steam engines became the norm.

Although mostly remembered for his innovative approach to the uses of steam power, Trevithick's inventive mind was never still – his ideas ranged from the first successful self-powered road vehicle and a steam railway engine to schemes for wreck salvage, iron cargo containers, land reclamation, mechanical refrigeration, agricultural machinery, water heating for homes, and for tunnelling under the Thames. Many of his ideas have since been developed by others and become reality. One of Trevithick's last ideas, for a competition for a memorial to the "Reform Bill" was for a thousand feet high cast iron column with an air operated lift to convey passengers up the inside!

Trevithick's career spanned the dawn of the industrial revolution, a time when Cornwall's engineering prowess was the envy of the world. Trevithick had a sense of adventure, leading him to spend eleven years in South America working for owners of silver mines. His steam engines were located at several sites throughout Britain, and he created a railway in South Wales (where they also put on a commemorative event!).

He did not acquire riches either – any wealth that came Trevithick's way soon disappeared as he ploughed it back into developing his next idea. Ironically one of the few relics of his lifetime in the museum in Truro is his purse!

Camborne, of course, is where Trevithick's steam powered Road Carriage made its debut journey in 1801. This was the first time that a full-sized vehicle had been able to run on a roadway under its own power. A replica of the Road Carriage has been built by enthusiasts, and this may be viewed on Trevithick Day.

The area around Camborne continued to be known as one that abounded with engineering inventiveness long after the times of Trevithick. Today, there is still cutting-edge innovation in technology in the area.

Dedicating Camborne's special day to Richard Trevithick is not just a tribute to the man himself, but a reminder of the way an open mind gets excited by new ideas. Trevithick's example is a reminder to have bigger vision, to take risks, to believe in yourself and what you could accomplish even when faced with opposition and to follow your dreams and your passion because you want to, not because there might be money in it. It is a reminder to look forward to the future as well as looking back at the engineering history of the area – and to enjoy the festivities of the day with the enthusiasm that Trevithick projected throughout his lifetime.²

Employment, Innovation and sector bodies³

This section is taken directly from the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP site. Their permission was sought to re-use this content:

The LEP was formally launched in May 2011. Private sector-led, it is a partnership between the private and public sectors and is responsible for setting and driving the economic strategy for our area, determining local priorities and overseeing activities to drive growth and the creation of highquality local jobs.

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP is one of 38 LEPs across England set up as part of the Government's approach to economic development. This approach puts businesses in the driving seat and empowers the private sector to determine regional priorities.

In 2030 the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly creative and carbon-neutral economy will be realising opportunities for its people, communities and businesses to thrive, benefiting the environment and providing an outstanding quality of life for all.

Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly are rich in natural capital and alive with opportunity. We must now move beyond the economy of the past, where a narrow definition of growth led to an imbalance between our natural and material resources, and between the income levels of our resident population. By mobilising our considerable cultural assets and social capital, our aim is to realise our region's full potential and deliver inclusive growth. Our Industrial Strategy sets a course for a

² <https://trevithickday.org.uk/richard-trevithick/>

³ <https://cioslep.com/about/>

decarbonised and sustainable future for business, for people and for our environment. Our pioneering spirit, strength of community, and culture of innovation and creativity will take us there.

We will look to the horizon in terms of ideas, global markets and even the potential of space to fully embrace the principles of a regenerative economy that can deliver for all. People are at the heart of our strategy; improvements to our economy must be inclusive and will have a net-positive impact on the environment, and the health and wellbeing of all our community.

Through the delivery of the Local Industrial Strategy, we aim to secure Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly's position as an internationally renowned rural creative region.

Preserving and Enhancing Camborne's Rail Heritage

The link between the town and its position as the home of the steam locomotive is an obvious one, however this is more noteworthy at a regional level than in the national psyche. We see the opportunity to rightly establish Camborne as instrumental, pioneering and recognised at a national level as transformative and meeting many of the objectives of local organisations.

Value for Money

Time constraints have not allowed a detailed economic assessment of the initiative. Costings are available for repurposing the visitor centre. These can be made available upon request. In terms of total value, it would be anticipated that the overall economic impact on Camborne would be very large in terms of:

- Well paid and stable employment
- Spend on supporting infrastructure
- Spend in the local town
- Spend on local services

The value to GB Rail would be a very welcome environment for investment, alignment with other synergistic initiatives (and sources of

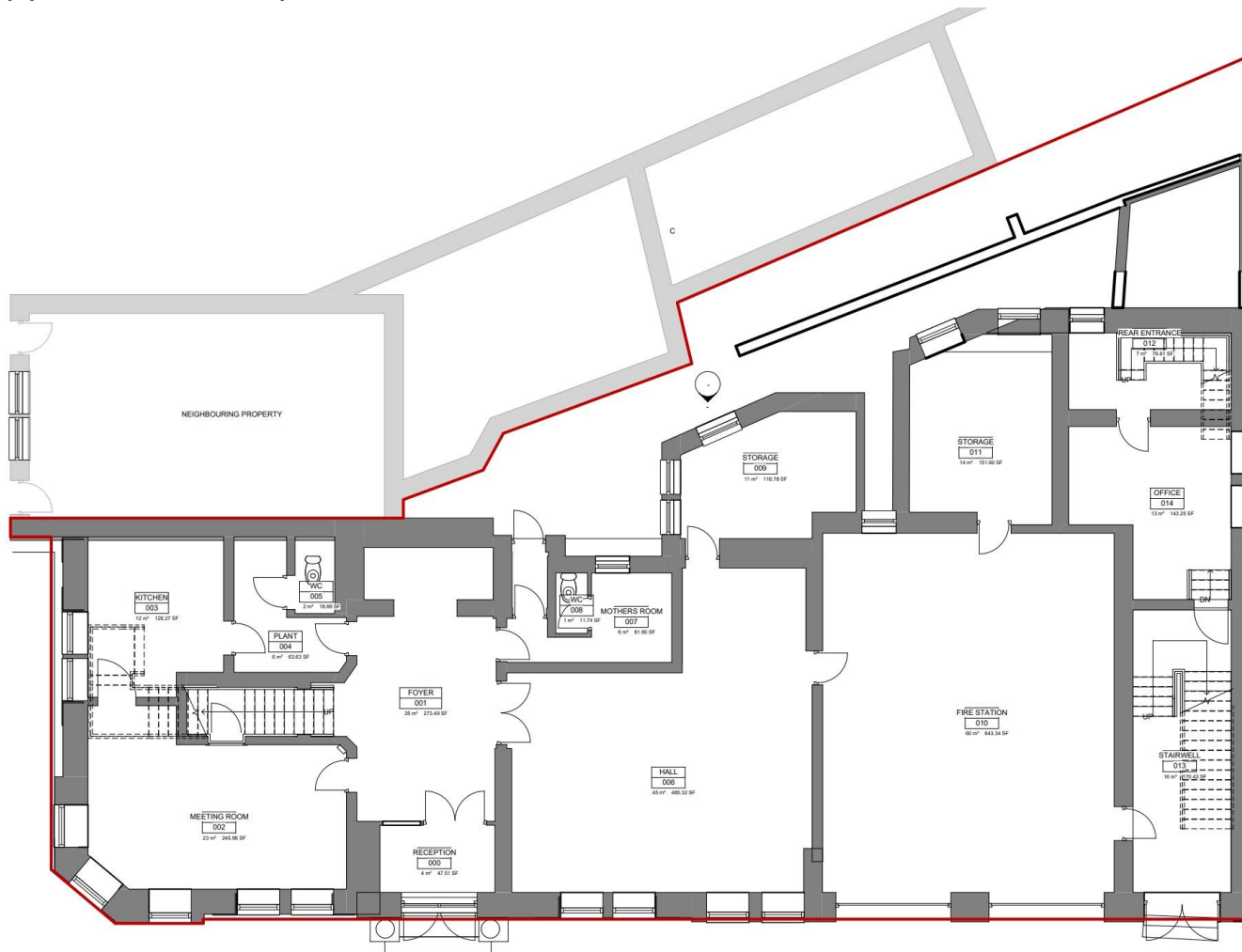
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Camborne Expression of Interest: New HQ for GB Rail

Appendix 1: A vision for Rail in Cornwall

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Appendix 2: Floor plan of Visitor centre: Ground Floor



First Floor

Camborne Expression of Interest: New HQ for GB Rail

