

Park Gwari-an-Park/Park Gerry, Camborne

Introduction

The Park Gerry Playing Fields are located to the north east of Camborne town centre on the edge of Tuckingmill. Whilst now forming an important recreation space within the town, the playing fields have their origins in agricultural fields and lie within the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site.

Camborne

The Camborne and Redruth Mining District became significant internationally for the pioneering technological progress made here, such as Richard Trevithick's steam engines, William Bickford's invention of the safety fuse (which saved countless miners' lives), and William Murdock's house, being the first in the world to be lit by gas in 1792.

The surrounding landscape has the highest concentration of historic mining sites anywhere in the world.

Part of the transformation in the landscape through this change was the associated ancillary requirements of towns, villages and hamlets, public buildings, chapels, preaching pits, housing and also mineworker's farms, smallholdings and buildings. Camborne itself is a 'new town' associated with mining engineering.

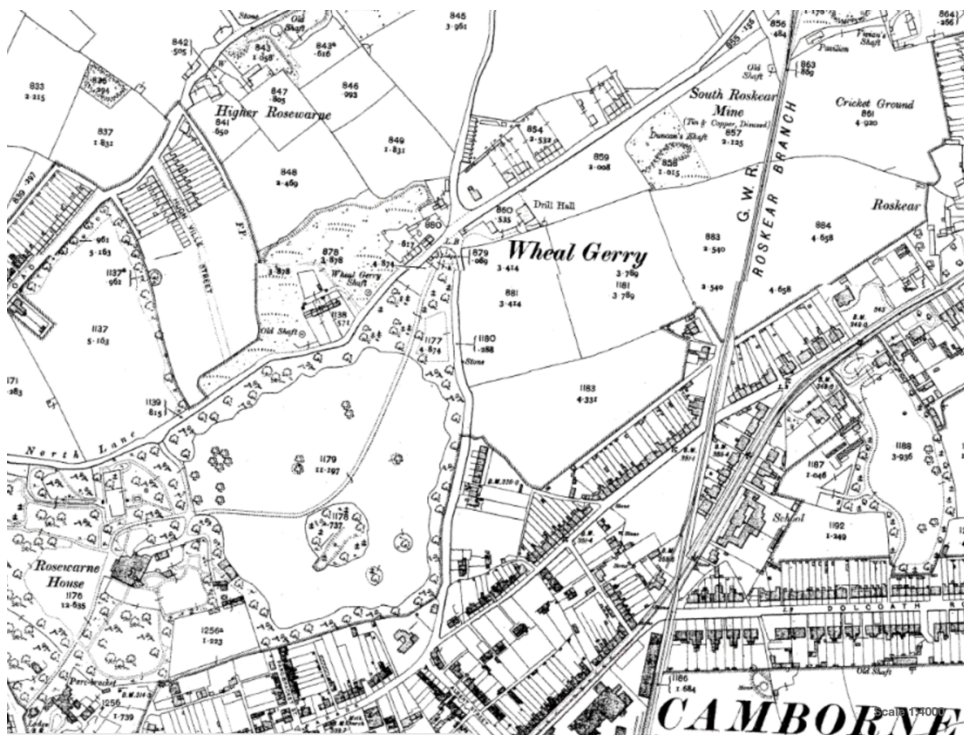
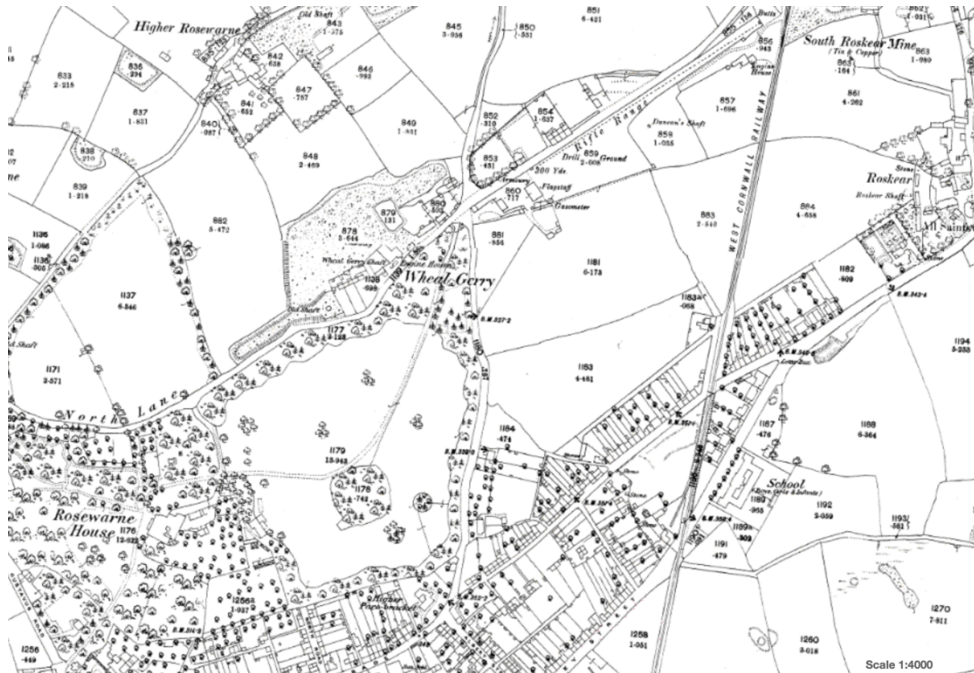


Historic postcard of Commercial Street, Camborne, 1874

PORTICO HERITAGE

Park Gerry/Park Road Playing Fields

Now surrounded mostly by modern development, Park Gerry/Park Road Playing Fields are formed from the remnants of agricultural fields. The following two maps, from the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, clearly show how the Park grounds have evolved from the historic boundaries.



Ordnance Survey Maps 1872 & 1906

PORTICO HERITAGE

Located close to Wheal Gerry to its west, the maps illustrate the ever-changing activity of the mineworks with the disused South Roskear Mine also marked to the north east. A Drill Hall forms what is now the northern boundary of the Park.

By the beginning of the 20th century the 'top field' had been divided into two and the 'T' shaped hedgerows still remain.

Proposals and consideration of their heritage context

A characteristic of the mining areas of Cornwall has been their ever-changing evolution – as new mines were opened, or new techniques developed. This was especially the case around Camborne and Redruth. Whilst this park is formed from former agricultural land, it is perhaps happenstance rather than planning that has meant it has survived un-developed, but it is now an important community facility.

As described in the documentation prepared by Mei Loci, the proposals aim to strengthen the underutilised community asset, enhancing the spaces in order to accessible to app, providing future-proofed community facilities within an enriched environment for generations to come.

As part of this an understanding and recognition of the historic relevance of the site as well as the evolution of the wider area has been incorporated into the design. Perhaps most importantly the proposals have retained the historic field boundaries – allowing the historic division of the spaces to be appreciated and the biodiversity to be retained.

The southern part of the park is to be cultivated as a wildflower meadow with paths mown through to maintain areas of biodiversity and retain the sense of semi-rural openness. Within this area a performance 'round' will be incorporated – a historically relevant feature paying homage to the preaching pits and outdoor gathering spaces that can be found across the World Heritage Site.

Sculptures and artwork will be developed through consultation that will further embed cultural references into the park, adding to the wider understanding of the historic significance of the area.

The proposals also include enhanced connections to other nearby historic features of the area, such as the old tramway to the south east.

Overall, the proposals have been developed to combine both modern, relevant and future-proofed facilities and space with an understanding of the historical evolution of not just the park itself but also Camborne and its surrounding mining heritage. The historic boundaries and sense of open space will be retained – a historic remnant in the centre of Camborne.

PORTICO HERITAGE

Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC
December 2022

The author of this report is Nick Collins BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS IHBC. Nick has over twenty years experience in the property sector, including most recently as a Director of the Conservation Team at integrated design consultants, Alan Baxter & Associates. Nick spent eight years at Historic England as a Principal Inspector of Historic Buildings & Areas where he led a specialist team of historic building inspectors, architects, and archaeologists on a wide range of heritage projects. Previously Conservation Officer at the London Borough of Bromley, Nick began his career at international real estate consultancy Jones Lang LaSalle as a Chartered Surveyor. This experience has given Nick an in-depth understanding of the property industry, listed building and planning process, heritage policy, guidance and funding bodies. Locally Nick has provided advice for The Lost Gardens of Heligan, The Market House St Austell, Kresen Kernow, Redruth and Hall for Cornwall as well as other projects across Cornwall.