

The new face of Cornish mining

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IT IS a tin mine but not one that a traditional Cornish miner will recognise.

This is how South Crofty should look if planning permission is given for its development.

Twelve years after its closure, Western United Mines (WUM), the company that owns South Crofty, has submitted two planning applications.

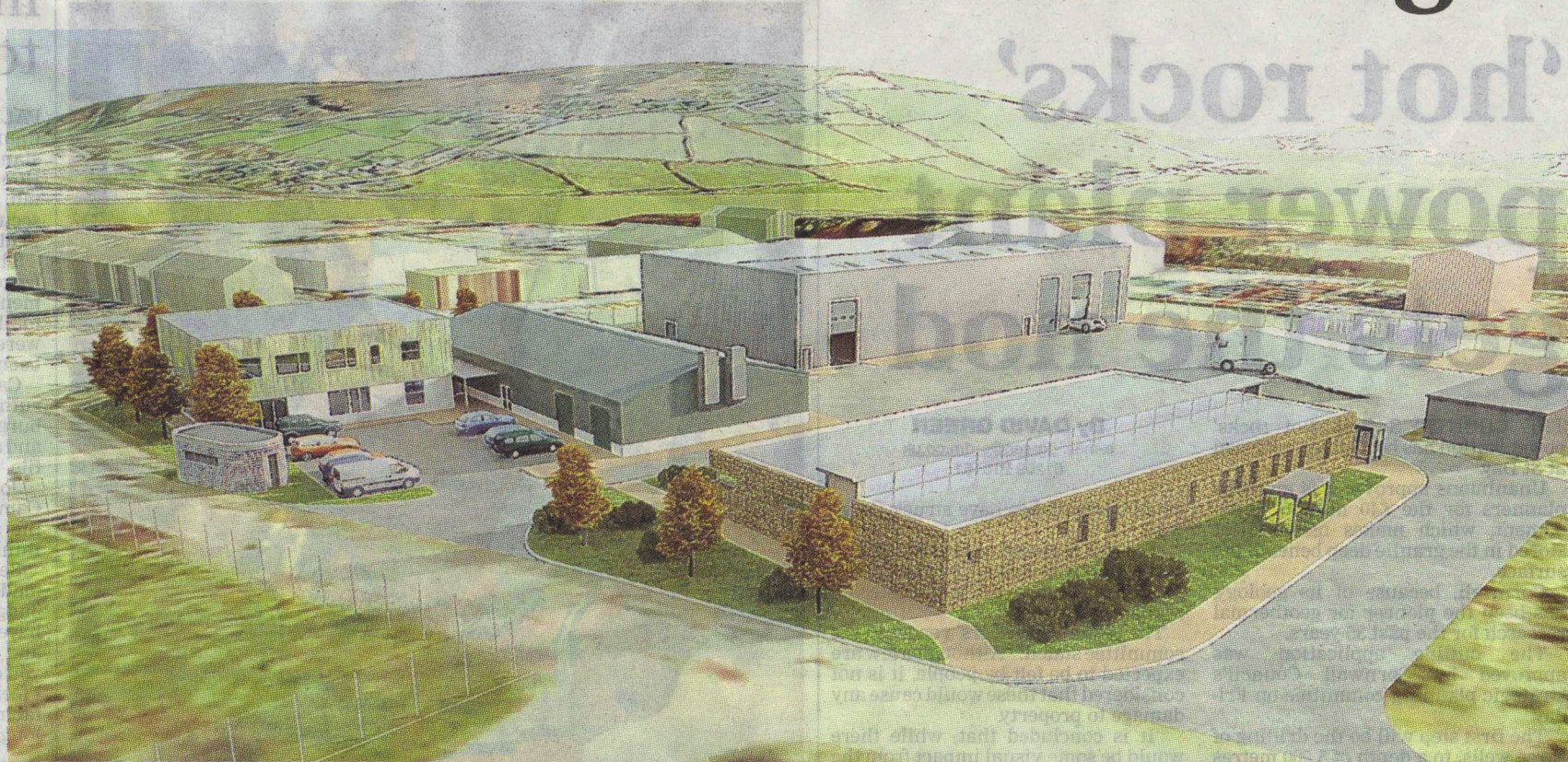
The first is for the relocation of all necessary surface buildings and infrastructure to the area adjacent to the railway and close to the Tuckingmill Decline mine entrance.

The second is for an extension to the mining permissions that will more than double its underground operating area.

The applications follow intensive joint planning, with WUM working closely with Cornwall Council and CPR Regeneration.

Cornwall Council's Cabinet has now approved proposals, subject to planning and legal formalities, for the council's acquisition of land from WUM for the future development of a section of the east to west link road across the South Crofty site and for WUM to acquire land from the council at Forth Kegnyn for construction of the mine's new surface buildings.

A planning decision is expected during the autumn and preparatory work on the



Looking a million miles from the iconic images of 19th-century mining, is this impression of what South Crofty mine's new surface infrastructure will look like.

mine's relocation is likely to start early next year.

This will include the construction of workshops, offices and the ore concentrator building.

In addition to housing the processing plant, a second ac-

cess tunnel is proposed to be mined with its portal located within the building.

The processing plant will be designed to accept a variety of ore types which are being identified during the current underground exploration and

development so that design and construction of the plant will be complete ready for mining production, which is scheduled to start in 2012.

Alan Shoemith, WUM's chief executive, said: "Submitting the plans is an exciting

milestone and one which the South Crofty team have been working doggedly towards since purchasing the mine in 2001.

"There have been lots of challenges to overcome along the way but these events, together

with the excellent results from our exploration activities, and the real sense of common purpose that now exists, means we are now much closer to securing the mining future for Cornwall that we always knew we could."

Famous mine will work again

THE CLOSURE of South Crofty in 1998 appeared to be the end of 4,000 years of mining in Cornwall. But it is proving to be no more than the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, as the mine prepares to resume production.

Kevin Williams, Western United Mines (WUM) mine manager and one of the two founding directors of the company which bought the mine nine years ago, expressed his delight that the next phase of South Crofty's transformation into a profitable modern mine was poised to go ahead.

"South Crofty closed because it had not been able to modernise and its huge potential was just not being exploited.

"We've got more than 60 people working here now and the results we're getting on a daily basis are proof of the enormous wealth of ore that is in the mine. This is a momentous time for everyone involved."

In addition to relocating the mine, the proposals that are now being put forward pave the way for the regeneration of the South Crofty site and enable adjoining developments, as well as the proposed link road, to move forward.

Infrastructure

Charles Stericker, director of Crofty Developments, explained: "Regrouping the mine's surface infrastructure around the Tuckingmill Decline means that we can progress our plans, in conjunction with adjoining land owners, to redevelop the area with a mixture of homes and new commercial outlets providing much-needed jobs. South Crofty has been a blot on the landscape for too long. This will change it into a different kind of landmark - one which everyone can be proud of."

Bill Radmore, investment director at CPR Regeneration, the urban regeneration company for Camborne, Pool and Redruth, said: "The submission of these applications is the culmination of a two-year working partnership to remove the existing blight of derelict buildings on the site, deliver a 21st-century mining operation and to bring forward overall regeneration plans for the area."

Councillor Carolyn Rule, Cornwall Council Cabinet member for economy and regeneration, said: "This development is crucially important for the future of the Camborne, Pool and Redruth area. In addition to the obvious economic benefits which will derive from the mining activity, this development paves the way for creation of a new link road, providing significant housing, regeneration and job creation opportunities for the area to the west of Dudnace Lane."

● Details of the planning application will shortly be available at <http://cornwall.gov.uk/> using reference number PA10/04564.



An aerial view of the proposed mine site - the new ore concentrator is the main building left of centre.



The proposed ore concentrator building, viewed from the west.



Mine manager Kevin Williams.