

Restoration of Cambrian Railway building in Oswestry to be considered by Cabinet

January 15, 2024



Shropshire Council's Cabinet will **this week – 17 January 2024** – be asked to approve a project to restore the exterior of the Cambrian Railway Building in Oswestry, a Grade II listed building owned by Shropshire Council.

The cost of the restoration is estimated to be £900,000 and a bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has been successful in securing 70 per cent of this – a total of £630,550. This grant offer requires 30 per cent match funding to be made available from the council's capital programme in order to proceed.

If Cabinet agrees the match funding the work will go out to tender with the aim of the external restoration being completed before March 2025 to comply with the grant terms.

Following many years of neglect, Shropshire Council took possession of the building in early 2023, after it had suffered storm damage the previous year. During the storm a number of corbels became loose and as a safety precaution scaffolding has been placed around the building to prevent any corbels or pieces of

masonry falling on pedestrians or visitors.

Shropshire Council has since been working with Cambrian Heritage Railways, Oswestry Town Council, the Future Oswestry Group and conservation experts to agree a programme of repairs for the Grade II listed building , to help secure a viable long-term use for it.

An inspection by the council's conservation team and building surveyors has also identified that at some time in the past 40 years, the original slates from the roof have been removed and replaced with tiles made of a ceramic composite which includes asbestos. These tiles have now become weathered, and the asbestos fibres are now exposed requiring their replacement.

Dean Carroll, Shropshire Council's Cabinet member for housing and assets, said: "Shropshire Council took possession of the Cambrian Heritage Railways building earlier last year to help secure a viable long term use for what is a very important historic building for Oswestry.

"It is now imperative that the exterior of the building undergoes a restoration to replace the corroded roof tiles and restore and secure the corbels.

"This together with repainting of the building and repairs of the guttering, soffits and drain-pipes is an essential first step to removing the scaffolding and making the building safe to enable it to be re-used and support the regeneration of this part of Oswestry.

"This grant funding offer is a significant opportunity for the council to realise one of our capital proprieties and I hope that Cabinet will agree to proceed with the project and assign the match funding."

Once the exterior works are complete, the council will need to undertake any necessary internal works required to bring the building fully back into a suitable end use. Funding has been secured to undertake more detailed building surveys and to commission a Conservation Management Plan (CMP). These surveys and the CMP will be undertaken during 2024 in parallel to the essential external works before a recommended end-use(s) and business case is brought back to Cabinet in the second half of 2024.

The building is a high-status Victorian building constructed largely of brick and with an ornate row of corbels forming part of the soffit under the eaves. The corbels are specifically referenced in the Listing by Historic England and are a key feature of the building.

For more information about Cambrian Heritage Railways, [visit their website](#).