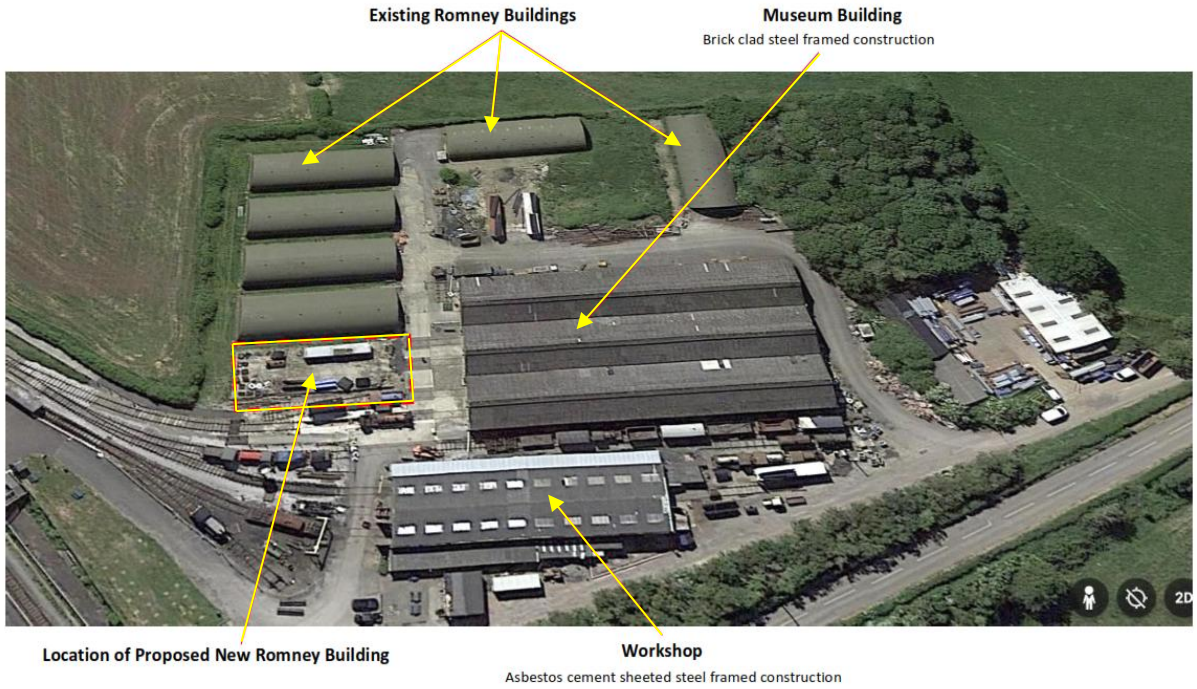
New Club premises – 2026 AGM Update

The option of renting half of a ‘Romney’ building on a long-term basis, at the Bucks Railway Centre (BRC) remains on the table. However, because of issues elsewhere on the site, this is not going to be possible within the foreseeable future. Therefore, we have been offered the concrete base, opposite the engineering facilities, to rent and on which we can erect our own building. BRC have also offered to include our proposals for a new building as part of their planning application for new buildings elsewhere on the site. This will cover various environmental, ecological etc. surveys which we would otherwise have to fund.

We know from previous experience that the new building will need, for heritage reasons, to be of the Romney type and research on designs and costs is being undertaken. The use of an existing concrete base will significantly reduce costs.

With so many false starts we will be taking this step by step and will keep members regularly updated.





Indicative illustration of possible new building

A short history of the story so far…..

It has long been the Club's ambition to have permanent Club premises where layouts can be permanently set-up and members can have 7-day access to Club facilities including a workshop. Over 10 years ago the hunt for suitable premises began in earnest. The main barrier has been finding suitable sized premises at an affordable cost. It quickly became apparent that the Club, despite significant financial reserves, could not afford to buy or rent at commercial rates. We therefore had to look for non-commercial options.

There have been a number of false starts. In 2016 we approached Princes Risborough School who were enthusiastic about renting us a plot of land on which we could build a new Club house. We drew up plans for a two-storey building which, despite a number of challenges, were approved by the Council in 2019. However, as we were in the throes of finalising the legal agreement with the school in early 2021, the Department of Education changed the rules and prohibited the sale or lease of any school land. Back to the drawing board……

Later In 2021 we approached the Quainton Railway Society about a similar arrangement to the school at the Bucks Railway Centre (BRC). They were very enthusiastic and quickly identified a suitable plot of land they could rent to us and on which we could erect a building. The Club voted overwhelmingly at an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to proceed with negotiations with QRS to establish a permanent Club building at the BRC (Quainton).

This time we worked with QRS to draw up a legal agreement before progressing planning permission but it was early 2024 before the Agreement, contingent on planning permission, was signed. Plans were submitted for approval but were unexpectedly rejected in June 2024. The principle of the building was acceptable but the modular design and materials were not considered to be compatible with the existing heritage buildings (the pre-war, arc shaped 'Romney' buildings). The cost of complying, particularly the need for a concrete base, was considered financially unsustainable. Back to the drawing board…….

QRS, keen to help, offered to rent us a building – the Brixton building – which they had recently acquired on lease from the Winwood Trust. The building was in need of complete refurbishment and was significantly smaller than our planned building but had potential as a workable alternative; at least, while we looked for something better. An outline agreement was developed – Winwood to pay to make the building secure and weatherproof. However, Winwood's funding priorities changed and refurbishment was cancelled.

In August 2025, QRS offered an alternative – renting half of Romney building 2 (opposite the museum) but the timescale for this has now become uncertain and therefore we have been offered the concrete base to rent and on which we can erect our own building. In fact, this was our original proposal to QRS in 2021 but, at the time, they had tentative plans for the plot themselves.

Roy Norton
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