

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING AND INTERPRETATION

The MoLAS historic buildings team has extensive knowledge and experience of interpreting and recording historic buildings, landscapes and gardens. Its work ranges from preparing historic building assessments for submission with planning applications or as part of environmental impact assessments to detailed analysis for the purposes of managing properties. Recent projects have included a wide variety of work on structures ranging in date from the Roman and medieval London city wall, to surveys of the medieval abbey at Torre in Devon, an area of 19th- and 20th-century townscape in the West Midlands, industrial buildings and 19th-century infrastructure, a survey of the structures and gardens at Raglan Castle in Wales (in conjunction with Plowman Craven Associates) and a full record of a 1930s electricity generating station in Bath.

The team bases its approach on understanding the fabric and value of standing structures, and is able to bring a multidisciplinary expertise to bear on each project, to suit the particular needs of each scheme. With a wide range of clients in the property and heritage sectors, the historic buildings team also has experience in Heritage Lottery Fund projects.

Refurbishment and development schemes demand a strong knowledge of **listed building consent and conservation area regulations**. Good working relationships with conservation and archaeology officers enable the team to prepare focused reports, which take account of the particular values of individual local and unitary plans, in support of planning applications. The team also prepares **conservation and management plans** which entail detailed survey and analysis as well as reconstruction and interpretation. The historic buildings team has established relationships with other specialist consultants, including environmentalists, surveyors and landscape architects.

Site survey can take many forms and is an essential part of understanding the construction and meaning of a structure or landscape. Depending on the scheme, this might range from **measured sketches**, using traditional hand survey to a detailed **metric survey**, using technology such as REDM (reflectorless electronic distance measurement). **Photographic survey** is also undertaken, using techniques such as rectified photography and photogrammetry with external specialists. **Geophysical investigation** is carried out in association with specialists in remote sensing. In collaboration with colleagues at Plowman Craven Associates, we also provide laser scanning as an efficient and detailed means of recording complex structures.

Analysis often takes the form of an interpretative record with clearly annotated drawings. **Illustrations** include analytical drawings, such as phase plans and 3D reconstructions. **Technological understanding** helps the team to address original design concepts and to identify and understand architectural fabric and details, which can have a significant influence on both management and planning decisions. **Materials analysis and interpretation** are carried out by experts in Specialist Services, who are skilled in the study of **ancient woodworking technology** and ceramic and other **building materials**. Conservators provide expertise in monument condition surveys and research details such as **architectural paint analysis**.