

CBA

10 Bolton Gardens, London, SW5

COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY

R e s e a r c h R e p o r t 2



THE RECORDING OF ARCHITECTURE & ITS PUBLICATION

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COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY : RESEARCH REPORT 2

THE RECORDING OF ARCHITECTURE AND ITS PUBLICATION

(Prepared by the C.B.A. Medieval Research Committee)

THE published records of architecture, especially of medieval buildings, at present fall far short of the requirements of students of the subject, in their range, comprehensiveness, and accuracy of presentation. What is most needed is a standard corpus of dated material, and all those who can are urged to contribute to this important work. To be properly useful, such a corpus should be based on uniform methods of measurement, draughtsmanship, and reproduction. This memorandum suggests standards and methods in making records, and indicates the most urgent needs.

1. STANDARDS AND METHODS

Buildings should be recorded with as much care as field excavations, and with as much attention to detail as is customarily given to pottery and small finds.

(a) The following are essential:

- (i) Accurate plans of all stages, with all main elevations and typical sections, to a scale of one-eighth inch to one foot, or one-quarter inch for elevations and sections when required.
- (ii) Details of vaulting, enriched timber roofs, window tracery, doorways, decorative panelling, to a scale of one-half inch to one foot.
- (iii) Profiles of all mouldings, preferably full size and in no case less than one-eighth full size.
- (iv) Accurate drawings of typical carved enrichments, metal furniture of doors, windows, etc., and of constructional details such as joints of timber-framing.

(b) The following methods and conventions should be adopted:

- (i) Original drawings should be in Indian ink, preferably on tracing linen, so that prints can be taken. Lines should be thick enough to permit reduction.
- (ii) Two scales, one in feet and inches and the other in metres, should appear on any drawing, including full-size drawings.
- (iii) A compass-point should appear on any plan.
- (iv) Lettering should be clear and legible, and the proper allowance made for reduction.

(c) Drawings should show:

- (i) All stone-joints in ashlar work, quoins, etc., and enough detail to indicate the scale of rubble or flint walling.
- (ii) All joints and pegs in timber work.
- (iii) Courses of bricks, and of slates or tiles on roofs.

- (iv) The limits of blocked openings, and straight joints or other non-conformities of build, such as changes from one brick size or bond to another.
- (v) The occurrence of masons' banker and assembly marks, carpenters' marks, and inscriptions and graffiti of all kinds, with references to photographs and (where possible) paper squeezes.
- (vi) Notes of kinds of stone, brick, and timber, made on the drawings themselves. With brickwork note the dimensions of bricks and the height of four courses including joints. The occurrence of modern work and 'restoration' of original forms should be noted.

2. THE REQUIREMENTS OF A CORPUS

The pressing need is for adequate records of *precisely dated* buildings, in two series: first, works of architectural character, such as cathedrals, colleges, larger churches, castles, and mansions; second, vernacular buildings of traditional design, such as farm-houses, barns, and dovecotes. Research Report 3 deals with the latter.

Of most English cathedrals no more accurate survey exists than the series published by John Britton between 1814 and 1835. These, and the earlier surveys of John Carter, though remarkable for their period and invaluable as records of work since lost, are inadequate by modern standards. Complete re-survey of these large buildings would be very costly, but individual builds (e.g. a nave, a cloister, or a chapter house) of known date form subjects of manageable proportions.

Admirable plans have been produced by the Ministry of Works of ancient buildings in their charge, and by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments of many buildings inventoried. Shortage of staff has generally precluded the preparation of elevations, sections, and details, though it is now the practice of the Royal Commission for England to record moulding profiles. Thus partial records exist of many buildings which should be included in the corpus, but complete records in very few cases.

Publication must necessarily be highly selective, but the corpus can be assembled in the form of original drawings, or of full-size photostatic copies. It is intended to add the material to the collection of the National Buildings Record, which is prepared to pay a reproduction fee to students who allow copies to be made by the Record of originals in their possession.¹ It is hoped that this further publicity will invoke a wider response to the scheme.

To avoid duplication, those undertaking the measured survey of an historic building are urged to consult the N.B.R. before starting work. Lists of dated buildings are being compiled by the Council for British Archaeology, and will be available for consultation at the N.B.R. A list of dated vernacular buildings is

¹The N.B.R. will pay a fee of one guinea for each measured drawing accepted on loan for copying at its expense. In the case of a set of sheets relating to one building, one guinea will be paid for the first sheet and 10s. 6d. each for the others. No size is stipulated, but it is expected that sheets will contain a reasonable amount of information. Copyright remains with the author; if a drawing is required for publication or for professional purposes, the N.B.R. will stipulate that the author must be approached and his consent obtained. Consideration will be given to drawings done at any time in the past. Enquiries should be addressed to: The Director, National Buildings Record, 31 Chester Terrace, Regent's Park, N.W.1.

also being compiled, and it would be helpful if instances could be sent to: The Secretary, Medieval Research Committee, Council for British Archaeology, 10 Bolton Gardens, S.W.5. The information should include a brief description of the building, its precise situation, and the evidence for its dating.

Close co-operation between all those involved is needed if knowledge of medieval building is to be advanced. It is to be hoped that schools of architecture will consider consulting the National Buildings Record before approving subjects for measured drawings made as testimonies of study or for awards, and that architects will bear in mind the standards here suggested. It is very desirable that historians editing documents concerned with buildings (e.g. series of fabric accounts, contracts, etc.) should arrange for graphic illustration of their publications. Local societies can help greatly in improving standards if they will adopt in their publications the canons of uniformity here set forth. It is of particular importance that all plans or elevations reproduced in the same publication or series should be to a uniform *and precise* scale (e.g. 16 ft. or 24 ft. to 1 in.), to permit of easy comparison.

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