



21 March 2024

Freedom of Information Request - Reference: F24-002

[REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 05 March 2024. We have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the 'FOI Act').

Request

You requested the following information:

Could I be provided with R&R surveys which took place in these areas on the following dates:

- 1) **Wednesday 14th - 15th February: Star Chamber Court**
- 2) **Thursday 15th February: Whips Court (no through access at this time)**
- 3) **Friday 16th February: Speakers Court**
- 4) **Saturday 17th – 18th February: HoC Terrace**

Our Response

We hold the information you have requested.

During the periods and locations referenced in your request, the Restoration and Renewal Delivery Authority conducted a series of photogrammetric (drone) surveys. These surveys involved flying a drone in a number of locations to obtain detailed images of the facades and roofs that would be fed into the Building Information Model (BIM). This is an ongoing survey that will gradually work its way across every facade and roof of the Palace.

The below information details the times and impacts of the drone surveys, and was communicated to members of the Houses via email on Monday 12 February 2024:

Wednesday 14th - *Star Chamber – on first day pilot will stand in NE parking bays within the courtyard and survey the North and North East facades (these car parking spaces will not be accessible during this time). Depending on progress, they will then move over to the SE corner of the courtyard, adjacent to the turn table and survey the South and South East façades. Anything that is not completed, will then be continued and completed in the morning of Thursday 15th. (Once again these car parking spaces will not be accessible during the time the drone is in the air)*

Thursday 15th - *Whips Area – 1 day only, access to Whips Court would be blocked for the day, no through route permitted.*

Friday 16th - *Speakers Court – drone pilot will stand in South West corner of courtyard – adjacent to doorkeeper hut. Car parking spaces in that area will not be accessible during the time of survey. R&R will be surveying the SE corner of the courtyard that was previously covered by scaffold from the Flat roof project.*



Saturday 17th – HoC River Terrace – standing on river terrace to capture the Speakers residence façade of the terrace. This is a re-attempt as it is very weather dependant due to the winds.

Sunday 18th – HoC River Terrace, continue the above if not completed in a single day. If it is all completed on Saturday then the plan would be to survey Commons Court – blocking the spine road, but bringing the drone down for the limited number of people/vehicles that require access.”

I have also attached to this response the Photogrammetric Site Survey Notification which provides further information on the purpose of the surveys.

In addition, the Delivery Authority also holds information on the Photogrammetric Survey Plan & Photogrammetric Survey Detailed Scope. However, we consider the release of this information to be exempt under Section 24 of the FOI Act on the grounds of national security. This is because we deem that the release of this information has the potential to compromise the security of the Houses of Parliament and therefore withholding this information is required for the purposes of safeguarding national security.

Section 24 is subject to a public interest test. In this case, we deem that the release of this information has the potential to cause harm to UK citizens by comprising the security of the Houses of the Parliament and those working within it, and therefore there is a greater public interest in withholding this information.

Further Information

Information provided in this response is correct at this time, however work on the Houses of Parliament Restoration & Renewal Programme continues, and any outcomes may ultimately differ from those presented herein.

If you are unhappy with the response or level of service that you have received in relation to your request, please contact us in the first instance and we will seek to reach an informal resolution. If you remain dissatisfied, then you may ask for an internal review. If you ask for an internal review of the decision, we will acknowledge this request and inform you of the date by which you might expect to be told the outcome. The following outcomes are possible:

- The original decision is upheld; or
- The original decision is reversed or modified.

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review then you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter. There is no statutory deadline for undertaking internal reviews and the timescale will depend upon the complexity of the matter.

We would normally endeavour to complete such reviews within 20 working days of acknowledgement, and exceptionally within 40 working days. We will keep you informed of the progress of the review. If you wish to request a review you should contact foi@r-r.org.uk. If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, then you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted via the ‘Making a Complaint’ section of their website or by phone on 0303 123 1113.

Yours sincerely



HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
R&R DELIVERY AUTHORITY

Freedom of Information Team

Houses of Parliament
Restoration and Renewal

The Information Request Team

SITE SURVEY NOTIFICATION – OPERATIONS GROUP

External Fabric: Photogrammetric Survey – ACTIVITY SUMMARY

1. Where is the Survey (Space ID's)?

This survey will cover:

All external fabric of on all elevations and roofs of the Palace including courtyards and covered external spaces, all phases of development. Elizabeth Tower is included up to roof level of the adjacent residences.

2. Proposed dates of Survey:

A contractor should be appointed in the Spring and then following the receipt of a Delivery Access Management Plan (DAMP) from them 2 months later we would hope to be on site in August time

3. Overall duration of survey:

In terms of the duration of these works, that is to be determined by the flight restrictions permitted by Parliament, Civil Aviation Authority and Natural England, as to when we can carry out works.

4. What is the purpose of the survey?

The key objective of this survey is to produce a comprehensive and consistent detailed photographic record of all of the external facades and roofs of the Palace of Westminster in order to record their current condition and enable the development of repair strategies, to inform early design proposals under the R&R programme and to provide a basis for costing and programming any required conservation and restoration work.

5. Why is the survey necessary?

The ongoing programme of repairs work at the Palace of Westminster includes urgent repairs to the external envelope, to address safety concerns. However, it has been noted in Parliamentary debates that the fabric of the building is 'deteriorating faster than it can be repaired'. A comprehensive and detailed photographic record of all the façades is required to enable the development of repair strategies, to inform early design proposals under the R&R programme and to provide a basis for costing and programming the work.

Full, hands-on access to inspect the facades and roof up close is not going to be possible in all locations; the best alternative method of acquiring a permanent record showing detailed information on the condition of the façades and roof would be a photogrammetric survey. The photogrammetric survey will be used to assist the design team as a diagnostic tool, in the assessment of the external fabric condition, to develop the scope of repair types and to inform design development where interventions are proposed.

6. What will happen during the survey?

There are a number of different methodologies that can be used for this survey to collect photographic imagery of the facades of the Palace, including, but not limited to;

- Mobile Elevated Working Platforms (MEWPs) or cranes.
- Ground and roof top based with normal tripods or indexed rotational scanning,
- Telescopic 'pole' mountings
- Tele-photo lens

- Drone platforms with dynamic positioning for elevated horizontal, hard to access via other means or very high-level surfaces, such the River Frontage and the Central Tower.

For drones, the operator will be required to maintain line of sight, using ground and roof top positions. Permissions specific to the use of a drone include:

- WCC (on the proposed planned and emergency drop zones)
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Port of London

Sufficient photographs should be collected to produce 2d scalable orthographic images of all accessible facades and roofs of the Palace of Westminster.

Use of a drone is preferable, as it will be faster, less intrusive and more cost effective.

7. How long will be required in each space/room (estimate)?

The contractor will confirm how long the survey will take to complete based on the selected methodology.

8. Likely impact to the room/space and personnel who use the room?

Impact to rooms and spaces is likely to be minimal, if a drone is used disturbance will be kept to a minimum and will only be flown during approved hours. If MEWPS are used, then they may block windows for periods of time and for short time slots they may block access roads within courtyards. Discussions with Andy Martin would be required to identify suitable times for each courtyard.

9. Does this piece of work need to go to the Admin & Services Committees/Has it been approved by the Committees?

This has not been to the committees as of yet

10. Has the survey received IWAG approval?

This survey has not received IWAG approval. We are looking to submit it to IWAG as soon as possible (March 2022) to allow Gatekeepers as much time as possible to query these works.

11. Who is undertaking the survey?

- Contractor names are still to be determined. Once confirmed, R&R will have a greater understanding of the durations in each space.
- R&R names + roles

12. Will Parliament staff supervision be required (including key contact details if known)?

It is not thought that Parliament supervision will be required. Parliament's falcon expert may wish to accompany the surveyors to ensure the safety of the falcons, if the drone methodology is selected. PSD & Met Police consultation required.

13. Will a Photographic Pass be required?

Yes

14. Health and Safety Considerations:

- General H&S
- CDM compliance
- Permits to work
- Pre-site commencement consent – Covid Checklist, IHSE sign-off & RAMS



- Asbestos register checks

15. Key contacts including contacts details:

- R&R:
 - Access
 - Onsite
 - Escalation
 - Health & Safety
- Parliament:
 - Access
 - Health & Safety
 - Relevant Gatekeepers

16. Proposed welfare arrangements:

TBC

17. Operations Group actions/outcomes:

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