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# SURVEY TECHNIQUES

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## INTRODUCTION

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The survey techniques used in site analysis depend upon the nature and scale of the project. The information which is necessary to complete the preparation of a design for a small infill site is quite different from that required for an investigation of inner city regeneration proposals. This chapter will outline survey techniques used in moderate- to large-scale projects; it will omit reference to small street improvements and projects for single buildings on individual sites. The techniques outlined here aim to build an analytical framework for the delivery of sustainable development which is the underlying theme of this book. A book of this size cannot cover survey techniques for all aspects of sustainable development but concentrates on the conservation of cultural identity and of the built environment. The first part of the chapter deals with historical analysis so important as a basis for conservation and for the promotion of ideas compatible with a developing culture. The second part of the chapter discusses townscape analysis including urban legibility, permeability and visual analysis.

## HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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Understanding the *genius loci* is a good starting point when beginning study of the site. The sensitive perception of the spirit or nature of a place often provides the key to charting the direction for future development. Peeling back the layers of history which encrust the modern city reveals the reasons for its present form and function. Knowing 'how that which is came to be' is a sound basis for future action. The richness of the urban realm is the product of a long process of historical development. The drabness of much late twentieth-century development is, in part, the product of a rather childish attitude commonly held by city designers, which treated history as irrelevant for 'modern development'. In the recent past the ideal platform for city development was considered to be the uninterrupted site cleared of all former traces of occupation.

'Peeling back the layers of history' is one of those ringing expressions which can have many meanings. It can mean, simply, the examination of an early ordnance survey map in order to determine