



# NEWS RELEASE

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November 12 2008

## AWARD FOR HISTORIC NAVAL BASE BUILDING

An historic building at Portsmouth Naval Base which has just undergone a £2.5m conservation programme has won a top architectural award.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century Grade 1 Listed Block Mills – a scheduled monument – won a top prize in the 2008 Georgian Group Architectural Awards sponsored by Savills.

The building – built in 1802 to manufacture wooden rigging blocks for the Royal Navy – triumphed in the Architectural Restoration of a Georgian Building in an Urban Setting category.

The awards recognise exemplary conservation and restoration projects in the UK and were presented by the Archbishop of York in London.

Judges praised the project, saying: “One positive feature is the lightness of touch. Much of the conservation work is visually unspectacular but is no less solid for that, and those undertaking it have done well to remember that Block Mills is a robust industrial building whose hard-edged roughness needs to be carefully and deliberately preserved.”

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Defence Estates - working alongside English Heritage - recently completed remedial work on Block Mills and a conservation management plan has been drawn up to ensure its future care. The Naval Base is now exploring a suitable use for the building.

The project, which took 18 months to complete, included work on its North Range roof and remediation work to its Centre and Southern Range roofs.

A parapet destroyed during WWII has been reconstructed, brickwork has been re-pointed and remediation work to the timber structure – including all the windows – has been carried out.

Sue Batting, of the Naval Base Estates Team, said: “The Georgian Group said the field for this year’s awards was remarkably strong so to win a prize is testament to the work that has been carried out at Block Mills.”

Graeme Wildridge of Defence Estates, who managed the project, added: “Awards and commendations like this raise the profile for the work Ministry Of Defence has to do in conserving the nearly 800 listed buildings and more than 700 scheduled monuments that are situated on the defence estate.”

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Caption for attached photograph: Sue Batting, of Portsmouth Naval Base Estates Team, at Block Mills which has just won a Georgian architecture award.

<i>For further information contact Press Officer Simon Smith on 02392 723025</i>
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