



Project Profile

Coal Drops Yard, King's Cross, London

The Coal Drops Yard at King's Cross consists of the Eastern Coal Drops (ECD), Western Coal Drops (WCD) and the Western Wharf Road Arches which frame the central yard area together with Lower Stable Street.

The grade-II listed Eastern Coal Drops dates from 1851. Wagons entered the ECD on tracks at the upper level and dropped coal into an hopper level and then down through chutes into either sacks or wagons below at yard level. To the west of the Coal Drops Yard site there was a canal basin. From there coal was transported in barges along the canal to the docks in the east.

Another set of coal drops were constructed to the west (WCD) by 1860, though advancements in coal drops technology left each building outdated within about 40 years. The coal drops were converted and used as warehouses for over a century. Thereafter the coal drops were left vacant and fell into a state of disrepair as a result.

MFA were appointed in 2014 as heritage consultants for the proposed new retail areas within the Coal Drops Yard site. Working closely with a design team led by Heatherwick Studio and BAM Design, MFA performed extensive condition surveying and repair scheduling to support the project's conservation philosophy of minimal cleaning and repairs to balance the long-term health of the historic building with maintaining a substantial 'patina of age' (weathering, graffiti, signage, archaeology, historic paint finishes, etc.) This is to provide the strongest possible contrast against the substantial contemporary interventions that are proposed.

