

The Office of Heritage of the Consell de Formentera has commissioned a team of archaeologists to draft plans to intervene at and restore the former penal colony of the island. This week preliminary efforts by the team involved drawing up an exhaustive planimetric survey of the remains. The work party is led by Felipe Mejías, a professional with extensive experience in the study of post-war prisons who is currently excavating the Albatera concentration camp in Alacant.

Promoting conservation

According to Raquel Guasch, heritage councillor, "the goal is to create a roadmap prioritising specific archaeological research and conservation actions to be carried out progressively". The former penal colony was designated a cultural interest site in 2014. "Whilst questions of land use are being resolved, the Office of Heritage sees advancing toward a space to dignify memory as crucial", said Councillor Guasch.

Field work

The three archaeological technicians –Mejías, Víctor Martínez and Eloy Poveda– are specialists in photogrammetrically recording and virtualising heritage assets and, for five days, thoroughly documented structures of the colony in field work. With centimetre precision, the crew geo-referenced the remains of barracks, piping and water storage ponds as well as the open spaces and walls marking the boundaries of the facility. They also used a camera-equipped drone to create a photographic record of the entire complex. With it, they hope to better understand the layout and characteristics of the complex and map it using orthophotos and geographic information systems (GIS). Finally, they will make 3D photogrammetric models of the most significant structures, such as a building were nets were stored and the remaining barracks.

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