



MARTIN THOMAS ASSOCIATES LTD

**BUILDING SERVICES CONSULTANTS  
HISTORIC BUILDINGS  
CULTURAL HERITAGE**

## HIGHCLIFFE CASTLE

### Brief Description

Highcliffe Castle is one of the most important houses of the Romantic and Picturesque style of architecture from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century/ beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its significance is recognised nationally by its Grade 1 status. The magnificent building, once lavishly furnished in the 18th century French style, remained a family home until the 1950s. In the late 1960s two fires rendered the building derelict. In 1977, to prevent further deterioration, Christchurch Borough Council purchased it.

The Castle's exterior was renovated in the 1990s, jointly funded by Christchurch Borough Council, English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund. In 2008 a further £1.2 Million programme of repair was completed to enable public access to the State Dining Room, Butler's Pantry and East Tower.

Christchurch Borough Council set the wheels in motion to achieve the next phase of the Castle's repair programme, with the help of funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund [HLF], in 2014. This project was to repair the East Wing and create a new public Heritage Centre with climate controlled exhibition space.

### Project Details

Location: Highcliffe, Dorset  
Client: Christchurch Borough Council  
Dates: 2007 and 2014-2019  
Contract Value: £1.9million (last phase)



### Professional Services

Martin Thomas Associates were appointed to undertake all the Mechanical and Electrical Consultancy Work in 2007 and again in 2014 for the Phoenix Files project. The opening took place in May 2019 (completed and handed over on time).

The major challenge for us was to incorporate high level services into the exhibition space (to V&A standards) within a Grade I listed building. This was successfully achieved through the use of underfloor heating, surface track lighting and spending sufficient time during the design process to fully understand existing service routes so these could be used without unnecessary damage to the building fabric. In addition, half the building remained open and operational for the public, necessitating close co-operation and planning with the operation staff, with very successful results.

