



Data courtesy of Getmapping

## Dudley MBC Business Case Study Brian Higgs, GIS Unit Manager

Dudley's Intranet GIS, branded as GIS-MO (Getting Information Simply – Mapping Online) currently holds eight vertical aerial photographic surveys dating back to 1945. The business requirement for such data sources has been clearly underwritten by the creative and innovative way that GIS-MO users (3,500 Council employees and 50,000 school pupils) use the data, resulting in new acquisitions requiring no further justification.

The oblique photography is seen as a complement to our vertical photography holdings and based upon our experience it was felt that the need for a defining application was not necessary. However, the user base was consulted and the potential applications listed below were identified.

- Interest has been shown by the Historic Environment Team, for oblique photography will allow them to view buildings and structures in better historical and architectural contexts and to make a response to initial planning issues. For example, to view fascias to judge importance/significance and general building condition. It will cut down on wasted site visits and help monitor sites not easily accessible. They suspect that it may help identify possible new candidates for listed building status.
- From a Development Control perspective, it would give officers a better indication of current buildings/structures on site. If subsequently demolished, it would help to establish whether problems may be encountered during development (e.g. asbestos roofing, a Victorian structure likely to have cellars, or other contamination issues not easily spotted from mapping or vertical photography). It could support the planning appeal process on aspects such as encroachment and rights to light, and help in visualising what new developments may look like when complete.
- As part of showcasing their work, the Urban Design and Landscape Section feel there is a role for this type of photography. Other sections such as Town Centre Management and Economic Regeneration have expressed interest in using it as part of their promotional and marketing activities.
- Oblique photography would help in the identification of locations and buildings when Dudley Council Plus staff are answering service calls from citizens ("it's in front of the three storey building..."; "...adjacent to the bungalow...", etc). Oblique views will reveal additional information to vertical photography and mapping, and may reveal what is hidden under tree cover. Oblique photography would help with better identification of assets such as street furniture, which are not always easy to spot from a vertical view.
- Uses in emergency planning include establishing viable access points and escape routes to and from buildings, and gaining more general information about buildings and their surroundings.
- Oblique photography would reinforce our ability to view sites in adverse possession cases and possibly provide better evidence of boundary changes and land use.
- Oblique photography would be a valuable addition to curriculum support in schools. At present, Key Stage 1 pupils identify their schools, homes and other local features using vertical aerial photography. This is more intuitive than maps but oblique photography would be better still.
- Land and Property Gazetteer maintenance and address matching processes may also benefit from oblique photography. It would at least provide an additional source of information about the height and possible layout of buildings.