

Hamilton Mausoleum (South Lanarkshire)

Standing in open parkland to the north of the former site of Hamilton Palace (demolished 1921) the mausoleum is constructed of local sandstone and comprises a rendered podium rising over a vaulted crypt with a crowning ashlar drum and dome.

A square-headed doorway to the west elevation gives access to an octagonal chapel. Now carrying oak replacements, the original bronze doors by Sir John Steel (b.1804 d.1891) and modelled on the baptistery at Florence are re-housed in the interior. The chapel itself rises to the full height of the dome and has a decorative marble mosaic floor. The black plinth which once carried the Egyptian sarcophagus intended as the final resting place of the 10th Duke stands to one side of the space (the faint outline of the sarcophagus can still be seen). The space is noted for producing an acoustical effect which allows a person standing at the far side of the chapel to hear the whispers conversations of those opposite. In addition the chapel is said to produce one of the longest-lasting echoes of any building.

To the east elevation, two lofty sandstone lions by Alexander Handyside Ritchie (b.1804 d.1870) guard the entrance to the crypt (located at lower ground level). The entrance comprises three archways each with carved keystones also by Handyside Ritchie representing Life (left), Death (centre) and Immortality (right). The crypt interior has a vaulted ceiling springing from a central supporting pier and contains 28 wall niches with a larger niche to each of the four corners.

Hamilton
South Lanarkshire
Scotland

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Architects

Year Built

Style

1842

Neo-Classical

Listing

Grade A (Scotland)

Condition

The mausoleum has suffered from historic subsidence and is prone to flooding.

History

Built as both a family chapel and final resting place for the 10th Duke of Hamilton, construction of the mausoleum commenced in 1842 and was completed, some 16 years later, in 1858. The structure rises to a height of 120 feet and cost in excess of 130 pounds.

An expert in Egyptian culture, the Duke sourced artefacts for the British Museums Egyptian collections. It is therefore, of no surprise that such a man should have chosen to be interred in the sarcophagus of an Egyptian princess, which rested on a marble plinth within the chapel of the mausoleum (now relocated).

The remains of the 10th Duke of Hamilton and his accompanying family members (who occupied the

crypt below) were reinterred in 1921 when concerns were raised over the structural stability of the mausoleum. Though now structurally stable the mausoleum is recorded to have subsided by 18 feet.

Sources

HAMILTON FAMILY. Available: http://www.sorbie.net/hamilton_mausoleum.htm. Last accessed 16th Jan 2013.

Photos



Location

SatNav Co-ordinates: 55.783416569985214, -4.03173663413669