

Darnley Mausoleum

This great Neo-classical monument is second only in magnificence to the mausoleum at Castle Howard. It was based on French Grand Prix designs and is thought by many to be Wyatt's masterpiece. Though square on plan, pairs of Doric columns, surmounted by sarcophagi, project diagonally from the corners. The structure is dominated by the massive stone pyramid rising above the cornice. As with all English mausolea of this size and status, there is a chapel in the upper chamber and a burial vault in the space below. The chapel, was originally fitted out with reddish brown, brocatello Corinthian columns and a coffered plaster dome. A stone table in a recess was designed to support the Earl's coffin. The vault contains thirty-two coffin shelves.

Cobham Park
Cobham
Kent
DA12 3BL
England

Scan for Google Maps Link



Architects

James Wyatt (1726 - 1813)

Year Built

1783

Style

Neo-Classical

Listing

Grade I (England and Wales)

Condition

Good. Restored (February 2009) and now in the guardianship of The National Trust

History

Built for the 4th Earl of Darnley (d.1781) but never consecrated or used (a quarrel with the Bishop of Rochester meant the mausoleum was never consecrated). Instead it took on the role of 'eye-catcher' in Cobham Hall's park. Following an arson attack in 1980 the mausoleum was in serious decline. However, in 2001 the mausoleum was acquired by Gravesham Borough Council and a recent restoration project under the auspices of the National Trust and English Heritage has secured its future. The building is now owned by the National Trust. In 2008, the restored mausoleum was re-opened by Adam Ivo Stuart Bligh, 11th Earl of Darnley, following its £3m restoration.

Sources

B oE: W Kent & Weald (1980), 236-7;

R Bowdler, 'A Mansion for the Dead: The story of the Darnley mausoleum', pp.4-11 in The National Trust: Historic Houses and Collections Annual 2009, (published in association with Apollo);

H Colvin, Architecture and the After-Life (1991), 338, fig. 314;

Shell Guide to Kent (1982), 73.

Online Links

The National Trust

Photos





Location

SatNav Co-ordinates: 51.39341, 0.419583