

Rescue and restoration

In 2001 the Cobham Ashenbank Management Scheme provided the funding for Gravesham Borough Council to purchase the Mausoleum and the surrounding woodland, on the understanding that the ownership and maintenance of the property would eventually transfer to the National Trust.

A series of measures have since been undertaken to successfully reverse the many years of decline, vandalism, and abuse that had affected the area, and detailed plans for the full restoration of the Mausoleum and surrounding landscape were produced. These were implemented in late 2005 under the Cobham Park Heritage Project.



Mausoleum under scaffolding, November 2006

In Summer 2006 the Cobham Park Heritage Project appointed PAYE as contractors to carry out the first phase of restoration of the Darnley Mausoleum.

The first task was to encase the structure entirely in scaffolding, with further internal scaffolding to provide access right up to the chapel ceiling. It was then possible to carry out the process of full external and internal cleaning.



Cleaned marble capital on chapel column



Chapel ceiling plasterwork undergoing cleaning



External stonework

The Mausoleum stonework had been damaged by vandalism and natural weathering. Where necessary, stonework has been replaced or indented (existing damaged stone being cut to make way for accurately carved replacements).

Corrosion of iron cramps, used to hold the stone together, had also resulted in stone damage, particularly to the pyramid; vegetation had then exploited gaps in the stonework and pushed the stones out of position. Where necessary, these cramps have been replaced with stainless steel and resealed with lead to ensure that the future integrity of the structure is maintained.