

Why does the Mausoleum matter?



The Darnley Mausoleum is an outstanding building in its own right and the important focus of a multi-million pound public green-space initiative:

1. The Darnley Mausoleum is a Grade 1 Listed Building of international significance and one of the outstanding buildings of English Neo-classicism, designed by one of Britain's most important Georgian architects James Wyatt.
2. It is an outstanding example of a mausoleum, a highly unusual building type and one closely connected with the culture of the Age of Enlightenment in the late eighteenth century. Its pyramid roof and the symbols of death on the walls create a powerful funereal presence. In terms of architectural quality it is surpassed only by the Carlisle Mausoleum at Castle Howard, Yorkshire.
3. The Mausoleum is a superb example of high-quality craftsmanship and masonry construction, which has withstood severe assault as well as the test of time and the elements on an exposed position.
4. It is a rare example of a mausoleum in a parkland setting; most such buildings are within cemeteries or churchyards. A key building in the landscape, it occupies a fine setting on a wooded ridge of the North Downs and until recently commanded extensive views over Kent and the Thames Estuary.
5. The Darnley Mausoleum and its long term future has been the focus of concern locally, and amongst historians and architectural experts across Britain, for several decades. It became a cause celebre amongst the heritage community and galvanised interest in the fate of the landscape around the Mausoleum.
6. The Mausoleum and surrounding Cobham Wood belong to the wider historic landscape of Cobham Park. The Park, an area of great historic and wildlife importance, has suffered decades of decline, fragmented ownership and vandalism. The Mausoleum acted as a catalyst for efforts to protect and conserve Cobham Park and its environs, and became a focus for fundraising initiatives to achieve that protection.
7. The fate of the Mausoleum is irrevocably tied to the rest of Cobham Park; it became clear during the development of the project that funds for works in the Park would not be made available unless efforts were made to improve the state of the mausoleum; likewise the restoration of the mausoleum could not be achieved unless park-wide measures to improve public access and protect and enhance a vulnerable historic landscape were developed.
8. The Cobham Park Heritage Project, which began works on site in Cobham Park in 2005, has raised over £6m for the restoration of a number of important features of the Park, including:
 - seven historic buildings within Cobham Park, including the Darnley Mausoleum
 - the parkland landscape and Repton's Pleasure Grounds around Cobham Hall
 - the traditional wood pasture landscape of Cobham Wood, an area of international importance for wildlifeThe project is also providing new opportunities for quiet recreation, education, and countryside access for the people of north Kent. The network of footpaths throughout the Park is being expanded and a new multi-user trail created. Some of the new routes link with others being created by neighbouring projects, providing an unparalleled area of publicly accessible countryside for all to enjoy.
9. Fundraising is currently underway to provide further visitor facilities and complete the restoration works, to enable the National Trust to take on the ownership and long-term care of the Darnley Mausoleum and Cobham Wood, and guarantee future public enjoyment of this internationally important property.

The Cobham Ashenbank Management Scheme (CAMS) is a partnership of:

■ Gravesham Borough Council ■ Natural England ■ The National Trust ■ Cobham Hall
■ Kent County Council ■ English Heritage ■ The Woodland Trust ■ Union Railways

