

Dashwood Mausoleum

The mausoleum is an unroofed hexagonal structure, formed by a series of linked triumphal arches. There is no obvious precedent for such a design save, perhaps, that of a Scottish 'lair' or sepulchral enclosure. In the centre stands a pedestal and urn dedicated to Dashwood's wife, Lady le Despenser (d.1769); a wall plaque commemorates his mother (d.1710) and stepmother (d.1719); and three inscriptions in the frieze refer to Dashwood himself, his friend, Dodington, and his uncle, the 7th Earl of Westmorland. There is also an urn containing the heart of the poet, Paul Whitehead, and there used to be busts of the painter Giuseppe Bognis and Dr Thompson (doctor to Frederick, Prince of Wales) in niches in the walls.

Church Hill
West Wycombe
Buckinghamshire
HP14 3AP
England

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Architects

Probably Sir Francis Dashwood, 2nd Bart. and John Donowell. The building was completed by the mason-architect John Bastard the Younger of Blandford.

Year Built

1763

Style

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Listing

Grade I (England and Wales)

Condition

Good (2000).

History

This extraordinary mausoleum was built by Sir Francis Dashwood, Lord le Despencer, 2nd Bt. (1708-81), creator of the so-called Hell-Fire Club and one of the founders of the Dilettanti Society. Between 1751 and 1763 Dashwood was engaged in rebuilding the Church of St Lawrence, placing a great gilded ball, fitted up inside for his drinking parties, on top of the tower. When this was finished he turned his attention to a new building project. His friend George Bubb Dodington, 1st Baron Melcombe, had left him a legacy of £500 for an "arch or temple"; and Dashwood used this money to construct the great walled enclosure, probably the largest mausoleum built since antiquity, to house the memorials of his family and friends. It is still in the ownership of the Dashwood family.

Sources

BoE: Bucks (1994), 739;

H Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life* (1991), 326;

H Colvin, *A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects* (1995), 110;

VCH: Bucks (1925), 3, 136; E Towers, *Dashwood* (1986).

Photos



Location

SatNav Co-ordinates: 51.647192301185335, -0.8048099544566135