

# Imperial Mausoleum of Emperor Napoleon III

A large and ambitious church, built in the utterly French 'Flamboyant' style, with a mausoleum in the crypt. Cruciform in plan, with an octagonal tower crowned by a copper dome. The crypt has a stone vault and is paved with red, white and black Corsican marble. The granite sarcophagus belonging to the Empress is raised on a plinth behind the altar against the east wall, while those of Napoleon III and Louis Napoleon stand in recesses to the north and south.

Abbey Church of St Michael  
Farnborough Rd  
Farnborough  
Hampshire  
GU14 7NQ  
England

Scan for Google Maps Link



## Architects

G. H. A. Destailleur

## Year Built

1883

## Style

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## Listing

Grade I (England and Wales)

## Condition

Good. The church has recently been fully restored with the help of a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (2003).

## History

This funerary church was built by Empress Eugenie, widow of Napoleon III of France (1826-1920). She and her husband had fled to England after the collapse of the Second Empire in 1870 together with their only son, Louis Napoleon, the Prince Imperial. But the misfortunes of the Empress were not over; in 1873 the Emperor died following an operation and then, in 1879, Louis Napoleon was killed fighting for the British in the Zulu War. The following year, having purchased the house known as Farnborough Hill, the Empress decided to build a church "in which we shall all three be at peace". The site chosen was another hill, clearly visible from her house, which lay to the south beyond the railway cutting. As well as building the church, she established a religious community whose monks were charged with the duty of saying masses for the souls of the members of her family buried in the vault.

## Sources

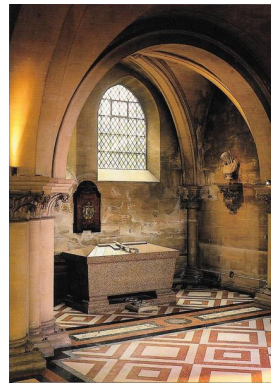
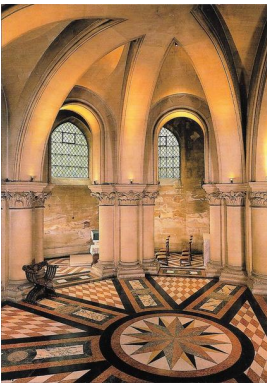
BoE: Hants (1967), 230;

H Colvin, *Architecture and the After-Life* (1991), 252, fig 220;

VCH: Hants (1911), 4, 15;

The Times, 15 July 1920, 11.

## Photos



## Location

SatNav Co-ordinates: 51.3009091657, -0.7462853766