

Kent Design Awards 2009/10 – IHBC sponsored conservation prize announced

A Kent family tomb which was lovingly restored after falling into a dire state of disrepair has scooped a top conservation award.

The **Darnley Mausoleum** in Cobham Wood, near **Gravesend**, which the National Trust says has been wonderfully restored, was named project of the year at the prestigious Kent Design Awards on 16th March 2010. Canterbury architects Purcell Miller Tritton, and PAYE Stonework and Restoration of London, were applauded for their labour of love which brought back to life the Grade 1 listed late 18th century building with its distinctive pyramid roof.

Eddie Booth presented the conservation and craftsmanship award on behalf of the Institute to the architects. Lady Bruce-Lockhart, widow of Lord Sandy Bruce-Lockhart, former Leader of Kent County Council and Chairman of English Heritage, presented the first-ever special award in Lord Sandy's memory for the Darnley project.



The panel of judges also paid tribute to the Cobham Ashenbank Management Scheme (CAMS) which began the huge task of restoring the mausoleum, with its associated buildings, and reclaiming the woodland of Cobham Park. The mausoleum took 12 years to repair and was featured on the BBC Restoration programme. It had previously been on English Heritage's national Buildings at

Risk register for more than 15 years, was badly vandalised and in 1980 suffered a major fire. The South East Branch had a study day at Cobham and the Mausoleum in 2007. At that stage the restoration of the Mausoleum was virtually complete but the management arrangements with the National Trust had not been formalised.

Kent County Council Leader Paul Carter said: “This has been an exceptional year for the Kent Design Awards, with some outstanding entries. The Darnley Mausoleum has been a superb restoration project, with its fine workmanship, for an internationally important heritage project of which Kent can be proud.

The other short listed entries in the Conservation category were;

- Westenhanger Barn - grade 1 barn lovingly restored over the past six years by the Forge family
- Mercery Court – restoration and conversion of the former Boots shop in Canterbury as apartments and retail units
- Elms Farm barn – conversion of a II* barn at Sarre into offices
- Leeds castle – repair of stone work

Darnley Mausoleum – which was never used – is now open to National Trust visitors. It was restored as part of a £4.9million Heritage Lottery Fund project, after being handed over by Gravesham council. For more details, go to Cobham@nationaltrust.org.uk or www.discovergravesham.co.uk.

The other Kent Design Awards winners were:

Architects Allison Brooks Associates won the public buildings category for **The Quarterhouse, Folkestone**, a 220-seat multi-purpose auditorium and cultural centre in the town’s heart. The judges were impressed by the way the building is spectacularly lit up at night. They also liked the quality of the interior finishes, and the large areas of glazing which allow good views inside and out on Tontine Street, which is at the heart of Folkestone’s Creative Quarter.

Kent County Council’s ground-breaking **Ashford shared space** - with its open road, special lighting and unusual design features – picked up its 10th award by winning the town and village renaissance category. Whitelaw Turkington were the designers.

Hythe architects CTM won the category award for schools with the new **St James the Great** primary and nursery school at **East Malling**. Other winners were –commercial, industrial and retail: **Deal pier cafe**; residential (major development): **The Quays, Chatham Maritime**; minor development: **El Ray, Dungeness**.

The Kent Design Awards attracted more than 60 entries. Sponsors for the event were, the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (SE Branch), the Homes and Communities Agency and Maidstone-based planning consultants, David Hicken Associates.