



Press Release, April 2015

Sir John Soane's Museum unveils restoration of historic Model Room and second floor private apartments

In May, Sir John Soane's Museum will publically open Soane's private apartments and Model Room, located on the second floor at number 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London. The apartments have been fully restored, and have not been seen by the public in over 160 years. The rooms include Soane's Model Room, Bedroom, Bathroom, Book Passage, Oratory and Mrs Soane's Morning Room.



The Model Room Looking North c.1834 - 35 by C J Richardson

©The British Library Board c.190 b.22 I-2 Soane Image 7

The Museum has worked with conservation specialists Julian Harrap Architects since 2009 to fully reinstate these spaces, which began to be dismantled soon after Soane's death. The project has been made possible thanks to the generosity of the Monument Trust, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Wolfson Foundation, and many other individuals and organisations.



This extensive conservation and restoration work is part of the Museum's long-term Opening up the Soane (OUTS) project. The newly completed second phase has been the most exciting and ambitious stage of the OUTS project. Visitors to the Museum will once again be able to explore Soane's collections of models, drawings, watercolours and stained-glass as he intended. Until now, many items from these rooms have sat in storage away from public display.

In 1834, three years before his death, Soane decided to transform his wife Eliza's bedroom, left preserved since her death in 1815, into his Model Room. The room featured a show-stopping custom-built central stand displaying some of Soane's 121 architectural models, one of the largest collections of its kind in the world. Chief amongst these was an impressive cork model of the ruins of Pompeii, enriched and romanticised with other cork models of ruined Roman and Greek buildings placed upon it. The Model Room and its impressive model stand was a miniature architectural museum in its own right. By 1835, it is thought that Soane would invite visitors to view the Model Room and Eliza's Morning Room, and that they would probably be permitted a glimpse of the Bath Room through the door. This would have been intriguing for visitors, as Soane's home was one of the very few town houses to have a bath room with a plumbed in hot water bath at the time.

The Model Room and the entire second floor were altered after Soane's death when they were converted into the Curator's private living quarters. Based on detailed drawings, sketches and watercolours from the time, Julian Harrap Architects have been able to reinstate the rooms to their original condition. Extensive documentation from the Soane's archives were also used for research including Soane's original invoices, the Museum's first inventories, from 1837, which list the contents of the rooms, curator's diaries, photographs and much more. Some 40 models will be back on display in the room, including Parisian model-maker François Fouquet's elegant white plaster models of antique buildings as they might have looked when first constructed; cork models of ancient ruins, often directly relating to the demise of the buildings immortalised in Fouquet's creations; and the models made as part of Soane's own architectural practice. The Museum's model collection is not only a rare and important survival but is also of great significance from a contemporary point of view, demonstrating the pivotal role that model making plays in the architectural profession, still to this day.

The reopening of the Model Room takes place alongside the Museum's long-term Adopt-a-Model initiative, whereby the models in the collection can be adopted for a ten-year period. The money raised from the project goes towards the Museum's Permanently Magical endowment fund, which will provide an annual contribution towards the Soane's activities. With a target of raising a £25million endowment by 2025, Adopt-a-Model not only celebrates this world-class collection, it also supports its future conservation and the Museum's work.

Sir John Soane's Museum Director, Abraham Thomas says, "It is wonderful to see Soane's private apartments and Model Room reopen, so that they can be enjoyed by future visitors as he intended. Unseen in over 160 years, the restoration of the second floor offers an intriguing view into Regency life and will allow visitors to further explore the astonishing collection of the



Museum. They also are a stunning demonstration of how a combination of in-depth research and skilled craftsmanship can return historic environments to their former glory.

Soane's model collection was also at the heart of his endeavour to ensure his Museum was a space for learning and inspiration, and architectural models continue to have that function today. That is why we are delighted with the response we have had to our Adopt-a-Model initiative, where each of Soane's models can be adopted for a ten-year period. The money we have raised so far towards our endowment target not only supports the future conservation of these rare artefacts, but also plays a critical role in allowing us to continue Soane's vision of using his collection as a launch pad for creative practice and contemporary debate."

Soane's Private Apartments and Model Room will open to the public from Tuesday 19 May 2015. Access is only available through pre-booking. For more details about how to visit and to book, please see the Museum's website: www.soane.org

- ENDS -

Listings

Dates: Opens 19 May 2015
Address: Sir John Soane's Museum: 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3BP
Opening hours: Tuesday to Saturday 10am-5pm. Last entry 4:30pm
Admission: Free
Booking: <http://bit.ly/1J6w1v8>

PRESS OFFICE Contact details

Press Office at Caro Communications; 020 7713 9388; @carocomms
Marta Bogna, Account Director: marta@carocommunications.com
Jordan Lewis, Account Manager: jordan@carocommunications.com
Rachael Jones, Account Executive: rachael@carocommunications.com

NOTES TO EDITORS

Sir John Soane's Museum

Sir John Soane's house, museum and library at No. 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields has been a public museum since the early 19th century. On his appointment as Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy in 1806 Soane (1753-1837) began to arrange his books, classical antiquities, casts and models so that students of architecture might benefit from access to them. In 1833 he negotiated an Act of Parliament to preserve the house and collection after his death for the benefit of 'amateurs and students' in architecture, painting and sculpture. Today Sir John Soane's Museum is one of the country's most unusual and significant museums with a continuing and developing commitment to education and creative inspiration. The museum is open free: Tuesday to Saturday inclusive, 10am-5pm. It is also open on the first Tuesday evening of each month from 6-9pm. www.soane.org

Sir John Soane's Museum is a Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB) whose prime sponsor is the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.



Opening Up The Soane

The £7m project has set out to restore key elements of the Museum, opening up more areas to the public, as well as providing new facilities and enhancing the visitor experience. OUTS is the culmination of 30 years' worth of research and restoration and the first phase was delivered in 2013, with the restoration of Soane's exquisite first house, No. 12 Lincoln's Inn Fields and the creation of a new temporary exhibition gallery, the purpose-designed John A and Cynthia Fry Gunn Conservation Centre and the Museum Shop.

Collaborators

The Model Stand and the model of Pompeii have been meticulously restored to its original dimensions by Arlington Conservation and the Museum has been incredibly fortunate to be able to employ Dieter Coellen, probably the world's best architectural cork model maker, to reconstruct the missing half of the Pompeii model – a remarkable achievement.

All the rooms on the second floor were originally wallpapered in the same pattern, from 1813 (when Soane built the house) until Soane's death. Most of the wallpaper was subsequently removed but on one wall of the Bath Room it was uncovered virtually intact, in 2009, from beneath many later layers by wallpaper specialist Mark Sandiford. Miraculously, a sample of Soane's wallpaper also survives, in its original vibrant colours, in the Cowtan Order book in the Victoria & Albert Museum. This has enabled the wallpaper to be precisely recreated by Adelphi Paper Hangings of Sharon Springs, New York State, who re-carved the blocks to enable it to be hand block-printed, just as the original was. This is just one example of the care that has been taken throughout the restoration works.

To coincide with the reopening of Soane's private apartments, a new book *At Home with the Soanes* by Soane Archivist Susan Palmer has been reprinted and published by Pimpernel Press. The book documents the life of Sir John Soane and his family including how they used the second floor of their home. The book will be available from 21 May, including from the Soane Shop and online at shop.soane.org

About the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF)

From the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife, we use National Lottery players' money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about. www.hlf.org.uk.

With generous support from:

