



Sir John Soane



THE MUSEUM HE CREATED

The architecture of Sir John Soane, R.A., was highly idiosyncratic. Soane was born in 1753, the son of a bricklayer, and died after a long and distinguished career, in 1837.

As an English architect of significant influence during the last quarter of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Soane worked within the parameters of the classical idiom to create unique commercial and residential structures. The Dulwich Picture Gallery and portions of the Bank of England are among the few remaining examples of his distinctive style of public architecture. His London home located at Numbers 12 and 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields has become the Sir John Soane's Museum and remains as the best example of his genius in the design of the residence. Currently under renovation is Number 14, which was also designed by Soane, and will house the Robert Adams Study Center while further providing much needed additional space for the museum.

Soane was a visionary who used his home as a laboratory for his ideas, the repository for his vast collections of 30,000 drawings; paintings including Canalettos, Hogarths and Turners; architectural models; Greek and Roman sculpture and Egyptian Antiquities; 10,000 rare books, including first editions of Milton and Shakespeare, as well as his very personal dwelling space.

No discussion of Soane's work would be complete without mentioning his use of light. The Museum is filled with mirrors, domes, fantastic ceilings and skylights with colored glass, used not only to light the rooms but also to create dramatic effects and to highlight the numerous plaster casts and marble fragments that are artistically arranged in every available space throughout the house.

Due to his foresight in leaving his home to the public by Act of Parliament in 1833, Soane's house and its contents survive today, exactly as they were in his time, giving the visitor a rare glimpse into a middle class home of the period.

Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation in America was founded in 1991 in order to further Soane's goal to educate the general and professional publics in architecture and the fine and decorative arts and to support Sir John Soane's Museum. Its programs have so far attracted more than four thousand students, educators, curators, architects, decorators and collectors.

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