

Rare painting saved

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English Heritage secures rare painting for Chiswick House.

Image



English Heritage Photo Library

A View of Chiswick from the South-west by Pieter Andreas Rysbrack

English Heritage has successfully purchased its sixth major artwork by renowned Dutch landscape artist Pieter Andreas Rysbrack (c.1685-1748). The painting, entitled *A view of Chiswick House from the south-west*, was secured through the generous support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), the London Historic House Museums Trust, the National Arts Collection, Friends of Chiswick House, and private individuals.

Richard Green, from Richard Green Galleries, Bond Street, bid on English Heritage's behalf securing the painting, which went under the hammer at Sotheby's on 6th June. A highly desirable piece of artwork and a high priority for English Heritage, it attracted a great deal of interest from both private collectors and dealers.

One of the eight 'Bedingfeld set' that were originally commissioned between 1729 and 1732 by Lady Bedingfeld, sister of the 3rd Earl of Burlington (patron of Chiswick House), this new acquisition is a significant piece of work in its own right. Depicting the Old and New House it shows the remains of the formal landscape, before it was swept away and replaced by a more naturalised style.

Cathy Power, Senior Curator (London) commented on the purchase: “This acquisition is a great achievement and wonderful news for Chiswick House. It is important to stress that its successful purchase has only been possible thanks to the combined generosity, once again, of our partnering organisations along with a number of private individuals.

“This painting is extremely significant and recognises the importance within architectural history and garden design of the patron, Lord Burlington and his protégé William Kent. After minor conservation and cleaning over the summer, this new painting will join the five others that are currently on display at Chiswick House and will offer visitors a unique opportunity to see such a rare set of paintings alongside the actual landscape they portray.”

Carole Souter, Director of National Heritage Memorial Fund, said: “Chiswick House is a glorious example of 18th-century British architecture and this magnificent painting by Rysbrack, one of the period’s prominent landscape painters, shows it in all its glory. This National Heritage Memorial Fund grant will ensure the painting is returned to its natural home for future generations to enjoy.”

Notes to editors

Chiswick House is one of the finest examples of neo-Palladian architecture, and the gardens, which were designed by Lord Burlington with help from his friends William Kent and the poet Alexander Pope, are widely considered to be the birthplace of the English landscape movement.

Decades of wear and tear and limited funding have taken their toll on the site, prompting the need for a major cash injection to secure its future. To date, £7.9million has been earmarked by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) as part of a £12.1million project to restore the gardens. Gifts and pledges have already been secured through a major fundraising campaign, with just £2.2million to go to complete the work.

The interests of English Heritage, which manages the House, and the London Borough of Hounslow, which is responsible for the park and gardens, have been integrated into the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust. The trust was established in April 2005 and is made up of a broad spectrum of people that can actively contribute to the future of the entire historic estate, under the independent chairmanship of Rupert Hambro.

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