Architectural model - Model of the Crystal Palace

Object: Architectural model
Place of origin: London (made)
Date: 2001 (made)
Artist/Maker: Armiger, Richard (designer and maker)
The Network Modelmakers (designer and maker)
Historic Classic Houses (designer and maker)
Materials and Techniques: Acrylic, brass and Alaskan cedar
Museum number: E.3836-2004

Public access description

The Crystal Palace was designed by Joseph Paxton (1801-1865) and built in 1850-1851. It was designed to house the Great Exhibition of 1851 in Hyde Park, London, and was one of the most famous and innovative buildings of the 19th century. This scale model shows part of the vast structure, which was constructed principally from pre-fabricated cast iron and had 300,000 panes of glass. It was designed to be built very quickly, using a number of standard components that could be assembled easily on site.

The model was specially commissioned for the Victoria and Albert Museum, to illustrate in detail the construction and scale of the Crystal Palace. It represents a section of the front of the building, including part of the nave (the central arch), and is reflected in a mirror to complete the arch. The model is built at a scale of 1:32. If a model of the whole building had been made at this scale it would have been about 18 metres long.

The Great Exhibition was organised very quickly and planning permission was only given to build a temporary structure in Hyde Park to house the exhibition. Any building that was erected in the short time available also had to be dismantled again at the close of the exhibition. Paxton's design for a building mainly constructed from prefabricated parts fulfilled the brief. The design was flexible (it was altered to accommodate the trees on site), could be constructed quickly, and could be dismantled and re-erected elsewhere. In 1852 this popular building was moved to Sydenham, south London, where it stood until it was destroyed by fire in 1936.

This model was made by Richard Armiger and produced by the Network Modelmakers, London, 2001 for the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Descriptive line

Architectural model of the Crystal Palace made by Richard Armiger in about 2001 for the British Galleries at the V&A.

Physical description

Model (twenty-first century) of the Crystal Palace.

Dimensions

Length: 147 cm, Height: 108.5 cm, Width: 89 cm

Museum number

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URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O233875/model-of-the-crystal-palace-architectural-model-armiger-richard/