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Joseph Paterno (Bradley) Mausoleum
Chestnut Avenue, Woodlawn Cemetery
Bronx, New York

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Joseph Paterno (Bradley) Mausoleum

The Joseph Paterno mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY is an elaborate, impressive structure surrounded by a spacious lot. It was built in ca.1911.¹ Though it is named after its deceased owner Joseph Paterno, its construction was commissioned by its original owner, William Bradley in 1911. William Bradley, born in New York, was the son of Irish immigrants and had established himself successfully as a pioneer builder.² In the initial years of 20th century, New York's first subway was introduced and his firm won the major contracts for the construction. He constructed a major part of the subway loops in the Manhattan region. His firm "Bradley Contracting Firm" was among the biggest construction firms in the city of New York in the early part of the twentieth century. His firm constructed the sections from Pearl Street to the Park row.³ In 1911 he gave the commission of the Greek (Doric) mausoleum to the Harrison Granite company.⁴ In 1924, Mr. Bradley made his wife Celia Bradley a joint owner of the mausoleum and the following year this mausoleum was sold to the Paterno family for a sum of 10000\$. No evidence has been found to suggest that on for what particular reason this transfer of deed was done, but we can conclude that owing to economic hardships, this severe step was taken. In 1918, William Bradley had filed for bankruptcy as he had faced losses in his business. It was bought by Mr. Joseph Paterno (1876 -

¹ William Bradley Mausoleum Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University, 27 September, 2012.

² Year:1910; Census Place: Manhattan, New York, New York; Page: 4B; Enumeration District:: 1343

³ "TO BUILD SUBWAY LOOP: Bradley company gets contract for three remaining sections" New-York Tribune (1900-1910) June 14, 1907; Proquest Historical Newspapers: New York Tribune ©1841-1922) pg9.

⁴ William Bradley Mausoleum Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University, 27 September, 2012.

1834), who was a second generation Italian immigrant.⁵By early part of the 20th century; he had become one of the influential builders in the New York City. He was a pioneer in skyscraper apartment construction, Morning side heights was his first major successful ventures. During his illustrious career, he had constructed and sold more than a 100 skyscraper apartments. The principal reason because which he bought the mausoleum, is still not clear. There are two factors we could consider. First, the siting of the mausoleum, the monumental structure perched on top of a raised roundabout. Thus providing a great vantage point and overlooking other structures. Second was the Grecian Doric architecture style of the mausoleum. This would have meant much to Mr. Joseph Paterno as his family originally hailed from the southern part of Italy, where there are a lot of classical style ruins. Associative values attached would have played a role in framing his decision to buy the already used mausoleum. In 1920's a female member of the Bradley family had died and she was buried here. When the transfer of deed took place, it was decided that the body of the female would be exhumed sometime later. In 1929, the body was exhumed and taken to an unknown location.⁶

The siting of the (13m x 8.5m x 6.5m) mausoleum is quite unique. It's located in the center of a raised roundabout (80 feet in radius) at the Chestnut Avenue. As the mausoleum is raised by more than two feet from the ground level, thus it has a distinct vantage point, hence maintaining visual connectivity by overlooking at neighboring mausoleums. The mausoleum was built with a capacity for twenty catacombs out of which five are occupied as of now. The architectural character is influenced from classical Greek architecture. The layout of the mausoleum is influenced by the columnar arrangements of the plans of the Parthenon, Selenius temple (pseudo-dipteral, in which the inner range of columns in the peripteral is omitted) and peristyle.⁷The superstructure is essentially granite and the base foundations are 1:2:4 (1 cement: 2 fine aggregate: 3 coarse aggregate).The building is symmetrical, with stairs flanked by Doric columns (without a base) reinforce the central axis .Its compact rectangular form, forces the

⁵ JOSEPH PATERNO, BUILDER; 58, DEAD: Pioneer in the Construction of...v. Laviosa, 1934*New York Times* (1923-*Current file*); Jun 14, 1939;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2008) with Index (1851-1993)pg. 29

⁶ William Bradley Mausoleum Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University, 27 September, 2012.

⁷ p 437Harris,Cyril *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*; Dover Publications,Inc.,New York

visitor to approach the building head on. Due to the "entasis" of the peripheral columns, the shaft of the columns feels less accentuated. The entablature consists of a repetition of equidistant Quadra glyphs and Guttæ run around the entire length of the building, thus creating a continuity framing the elevations. This along with the circumambulatory narrow corridor pushes the visitor to perceive the building as a single entity.⁸ However, a visual tension is created by the central frontal columns, as they have the intricate embellished bronze door in the background. The mathematical rhythm of the plan and the elevations reads as c, b, a, c, b, a. Where the basic unit of repetition is the module. The inherent correlation between the three variables is $a=3c=3/2b$. Essentially the central component is thrice the width of the corner component.⁹ In the classical world, architects experimented with columnar arrangements. There is a three column width between the central columns which is known as the *diastyle*. This central diastyle focusses the attention towards the central axial entry into the building and the family name. Similarly, the spacing of the central columns¹⁰ indicates the width of the central hallway, thus indicating the structure's use. The bronze door at the entry is reminiscent of the Roman lattice pattern, where a network of rectangular bands crosses at right angles creating smaller triangles.¹¹ The interior floor is granite. There are two Christian influences on the building. First, the cross mounted on the top of the ridge cap. Second is the stained glass door in the interiors of the mausoleum. This is a later addition as the archival drawings and research show no mention of a stained glass doorway.¹² The stained glass panel shows a lady dressed in biblical clothing, but its theological significance is not fully legible, as no record exists of when this was added on to the building. Significant amount of seepage of water has taken place inside the building. Water percolates down to the walls and flooring during the rainy season. On the northern façade, there are patches of vegetative growth. The dampness inside the

⁸ William Bradley Mausoleum Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University, 27 September, 2012.

⁹ Tzonis and Lefaivre, *Classical Architecture*, 14.

¹⁰ Tzonis and Lefaivre, *Classical Architecture*, 14.

¹¹ Fred S. Kleiner, *A History of Roman Art* (Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth, 2007), 68. Calder Loth, "Classical Comments: Roman Lattice"

¹² William Bradley Mausoleum Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University, 27 September, 2012.

building will not decrease as the portico and the closed bronze stops the light from entering into the tomb itself.

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