

The Eidt Mausoleum

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Historic Preservation Studio 1

Woodlawn Project

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The Eidt Mausoleum is located on Border Avenue in the Lotus plot of Woodlawn Cemetery, not far from the Northwest corner of the cemetery at Jerome Avenue and 233rd street (see image 1). A series of large buildings abuts the road directly across from the mausoleum. The mausoleum is surrounded by lawn. A stone path leads up the slope from the cemetery road to the mausoleum steps.

The mausoleum itself is of average scale, and it is comparable in size to other mausoleums nearby. The exterior is constructed of light grey granite. It features battered walls at each of the four corners, a carved lintel, and a relatively simple cornice (see image 2). The roof has a gable with a low, gentle slope. The door to the mausoleum is made of a cast metal, probably bronze due to the green tint. It has a complicated pattern of vines, leaves, and flowers surrounding a central pair of lions. Above the door, the Eidt name is carved into a series of shields with a scroll pattern around the edges. The overall style of the mausoleum is gothic.

The interior of the mausoleum is clad in a combination of salmon-colored Tennessee Pink marble and variegated pink and black Rainbow granite¹. Each of the twelve Rainbow granite wall panels is carved with a pointed arch design. There are two sarcophagi, each with a carved lid, inscribed dates, and carved wreaths and geometric designs (see image 3). Ornamental cast metal feet add detail to the

¹ Though it is impossible to be sure about the stone types, the specifications for the mausoleum indicate Tennessee Pink marble and Rainbow granite. The stones also display properties associated with each type such as color and texture. Rainbow granite is also known as Morton Gneiss, and it likely came from a quarry in Morton, Minnesota. Frank T. Lang. "John C Eidt Mausoleum". Contract. June 4, 1928. Columbia University Avery Library Woodlawn Archive. Major Monuments Collection. Box 5, Folder 66.

bottom of the sarcophagi. A diminutive granite bench sits along the rear wall (see image 4). Three stained glass windows with metal frames provide light (see image 5).

The exterior of the mausoleum is in relatively good condition. Mortar is missing from joints in a few small areas, but the vast majority is still intact. There is significant biological growth on the north side of the structure, but it does not appear to have damaged the stone (see image 6). Three exterior vents also appear to be missing their metal covers.

The interior of the mausoleum shows significant signs of decay. Upon opening the door, one is immediately greeted by large brown stains near the door threshold (see image 7). Within a few feet of the door the floor begins to make a crunching sound underfoot. Closer inspection shows that the granite surface has deteriorated to the point where pieces are flaking off of the main stone body (see image 8). In addition, there is significant efflorescence on the stone floor and walls (see images 9 and 10). This is particularly evident directly under the north and east windows, though it is also present higher up.

This damage is likely caused by water infiltration, but it is difficult to determine exactly how water is making its way to the interior.² The mortar in the central joint of the ceiling cladding is almost entirely missing, but there is no obvious staining on the ceiling that would indicate the presence of water (see image 11). The windows did not appear to have any obvious decay that would allow water

² It is also possible that the damage is from a cleaning solution that was used on the floor, or from salt used to melt snow on the steps that made its way under the door. It's impossible to tell what the cause of the damage is without further testing.

to enter. However, the location of two of the windows above the sarcophagi makes it difficult to access them for a close inspection. Due to equipment limitations it was not possible to examine the roof, which is another possible source of water infiltration.

The mausoleum is the final resting place of John C Eidt and Katherine Eidt. John Eidt was born to German parents in 1862.³ Katherine (Katie) Eidt was born two years later, in 1864. The two were married in 1886.⁴ The Eids lived in the Bronx in a relatively modest two-family townhome on Beck Street.⁵ They had no children. John Eidt owned a feed and grain business with his brother, Jacob.⁶ By 1908 he had been in business with his brother for years.⁷ In 1908 John's brother, Jacob Eidt Jr., died, kicking off a dispute over his will that would last for three years.⁸

³ US Census, 1920, Bronx Assembly District 3, Bronx, New York; Roll: T625_1134; Page: 12A; Enumeration District: 181, John C. and Katie Eidt, August Rebstock. Digital Image. Accessed 9/26/2018. <https://www.ancestry.com>.

⁴ US Census, 1910, Bronx Assembly District 32, New York, New York. Roll: T624_997. Page: 13B. Enumeration District: 1275. John C and Katie Eidt. Digital Image. Accessed 9/26/2018. <https://www.ancestry.com>.

⁵ This house is part of the Longwood Historic District. It was built in 1900 and designed by W.C. Dickerson.

"Longwood Historic District Designation Report". City of New York Landmarks Preservation Commission. 1980. Page 2. Accessed 9/26/2018.

<http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/lp/1075.pdf>

⁶ New York Bar Association, Supreme Court Appellate Division, First Department, Volume 1760. *In the Matter of Proving the Last Will and Testament of Jacob Eidt Jr, Deceased, as a Will of Real and Personal Property*. Accessed 9/26/2018.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=6Mex2fjetHkC&pg=RA2-PA89#v=onepage&q&f=false>

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ "Eidt vs Eidt et al.", 680-686. *The New York Supplement, Volume 127, New York State Reporter Volume 161, Containing the Decisions of the Supreme and Lower Courts of Record of New York State, February 23rd to April 3rd, 1911*. (St. Paul West Publishing Company, 1911) Accessed 9/26/2018.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=aYM7AAAAIAAJ&dq=john%20C%20Eidt&pg=PA680#v=onepage&q=john%20C%20Eidt&f=false>

John Eidt had written a new will for his brother as Jacob Eidt lay on an operating table, hours from death.⁹ Perhaps suspiciously, it left everything to his brother John and his widow, excluding all four other Eidt siblings and their mother.¹⁰ The remaining siblings challenged the will in court, but it was declared valid.¹¹ However, the wording of the will was vague, which led to further argument. John Eidt was to receive 2/3 of his brother's share in their business (worth about \$8,000 in 1911), but he also wanted his brother's shares of their co-owned real estate.¹² In the end, the courts gave those shares to his brother's widow, along with a 1/3 share in the business and the house she lived in.¹³

Not much is known about Katie Eidt. Records indicate that her stepfather lived with her from 1917 (or possibly earlier), until his death in 1924.¹⁴ It is possible that she provided care for him during this time. The settlement of his will indicates that he owned a separate residence at the time of his death, suggesting that he was

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹New York Bar Association, Supreme Court Appellate Division, First Department, Volume 1760. *In the Matter of Proving the Last Will and Testament of Jacob Eidt Jr, Deceased, as a Will of Real and Personal Property*. Accessed 9/26/2018.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=6Mex2fjetHkC&pg=RA2-PA89#v=onepage&q&f=false>

¹² "Eidt vs Eidt et al.", 680-686. *The New York Supplement, Volume 127, New York State Reporter Volume 161, Containing the Decisions of the Supreme and Lower Courts of Record of New York State, February 23rd to April 3rd, 1911*. (St. Paul West Publishing Company, 1911) Accessed 9/26/2018.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=aYM7AAAAIAAJ&dq=John%20C%20Eidt&pg=PA680#v=onepage&q=John%20C%20Eidt&f=false>

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ "New York, New York City Directory 1917". August Rebstok. *U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995*. Accessed 9/26/2018. <https://www.ancestry.com>.

not simply in need of a place to live,¹⁵ If she did care for him in his old age, his will did not reflect that, as she received the same share in his estate as her other stepsiblings.¹⁶

In 1928, John Eidt commissioned the construction of a mausoleum from a mausoleum builder named Frank T. Lang.¹⁷ It was to be "high class throughout".¹⁸ Mr. Lang had a large showroom in Middle Village, Queens.¹⁹ He designed several mausoleums at Woodlawn, including at least three others in the Lotus plot.²⁰ John C. Eidt obviously wanted a lavish resting place, and he took great care to ensure that the mausoleum would be kept up in the future. He paid \$8400 in 1924 for a perpetual maintenance fund, with the provision that a \$5 wreath of flowers be placed on the mausoleum at seven occasions throughout the year.²¹ The mausoleum remained empty until Katie Eidt's death on August 29th, 1941. John Eidt followed her on November 4th, 1943.

¹⁵ "Last Will and Testament of August Rebstok". Bronx, New York Probate Administration Records, New York, #0583-0593, Case 586. Surrogate's Court (Bronx County). Digital Image. Accessed 9/26/2018. <https://www.ancestry.com>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Frank T. Lang. Correspondence to Woodlawn Cemetery. May 4, 1928. Columbia University Avery Library Woodlawn Archive. Major Monuments Collection. Box 5, Folder 66.

¹⁸ Frank T. Lang. "John C Eidt Mausoleum". Contract. June 4, 1928. Columbia University Avery Library Woodlawn Archive. Major Monuments Collection. Box 5, Folder 66.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ "Major Monument Records". Columbia University Avery Library Woodlawn Archive. Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Excel Spreadsheet. Accessed 9/26/2018. <https://library.columbia.edu/locations/avery/da/collections/woodlawn.html>

²¹ Christian H. Eidt. Correspondence to Woodlawn Cemetery. October 12, 1944. Columbia University Avery Library Woodlawn Archive. Major Monuments Collection. Box 5, Folder 66.

Appendix

Image 1: Site Plan.

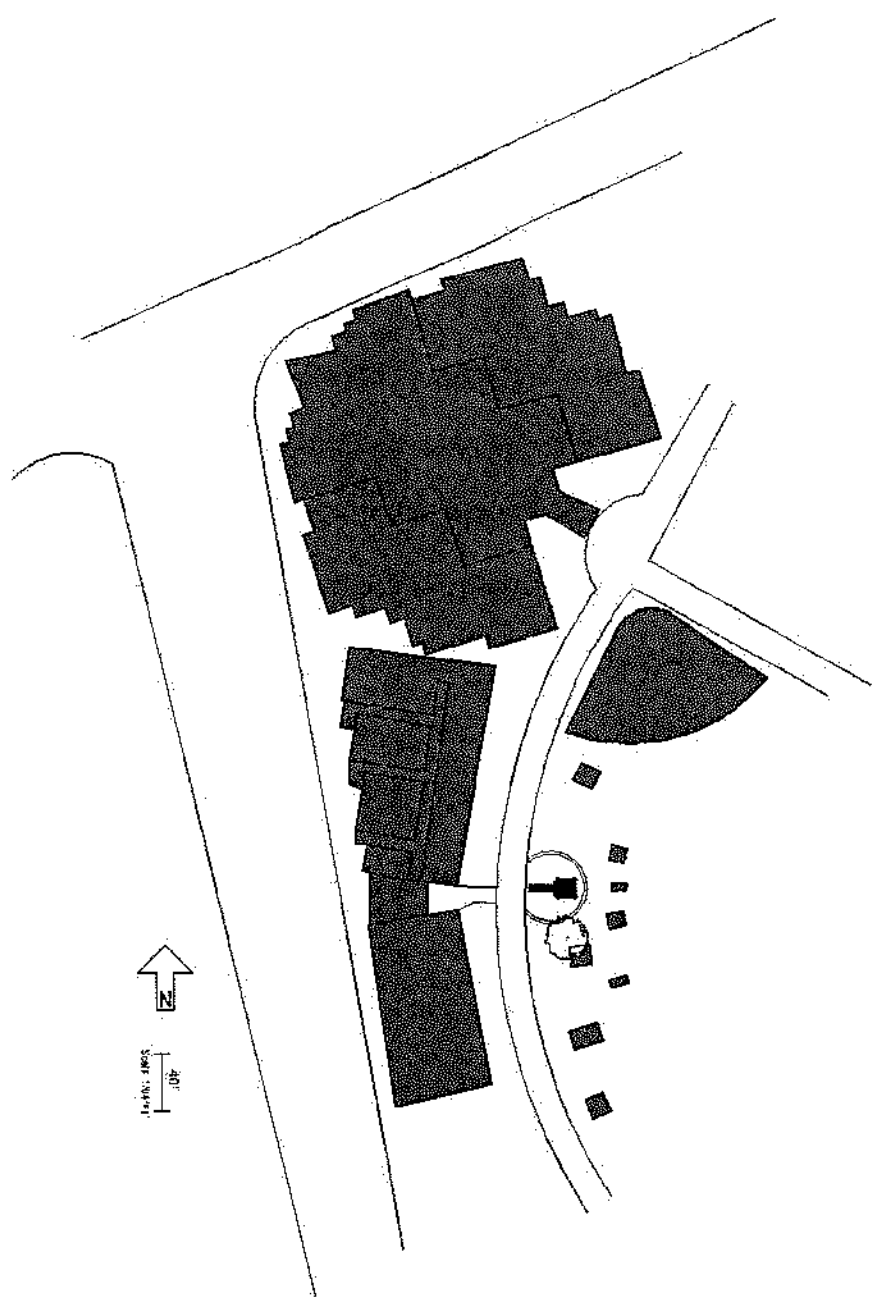
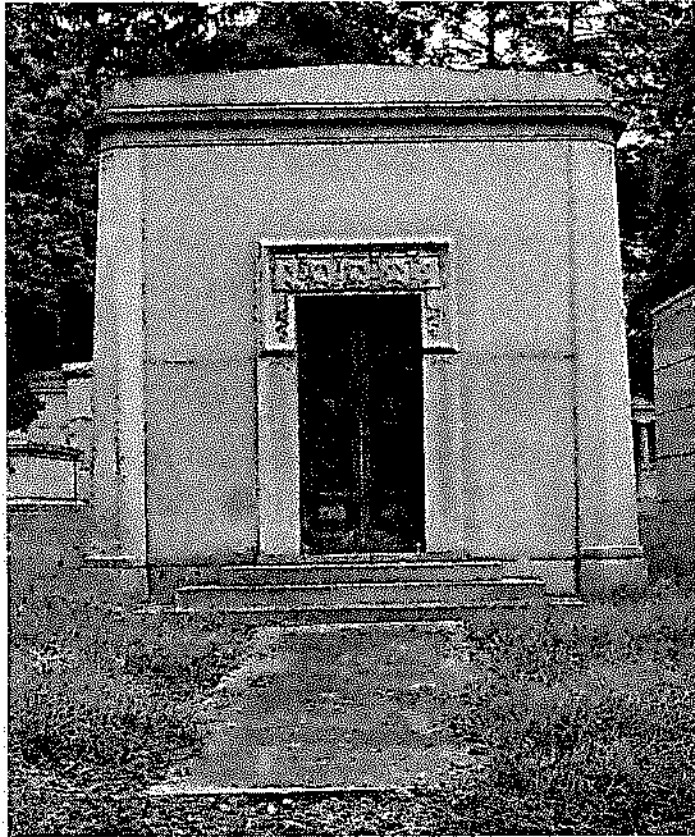


Image 2: Front Elevation.



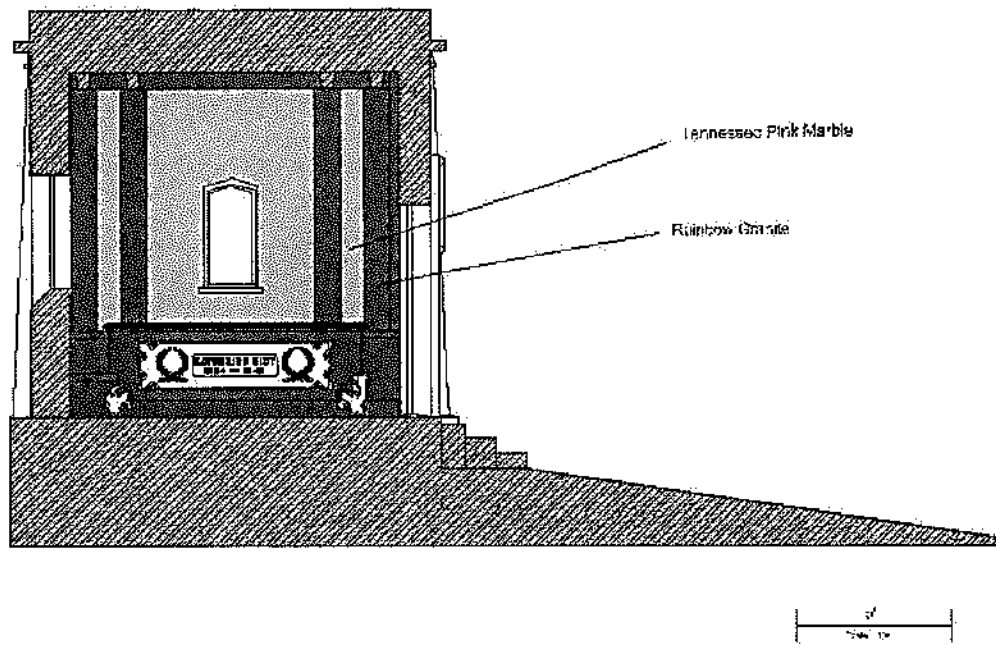


Image 3: Section. Note the carving on the sarcophagus and the wall materials.

Image 4: Floor Plan

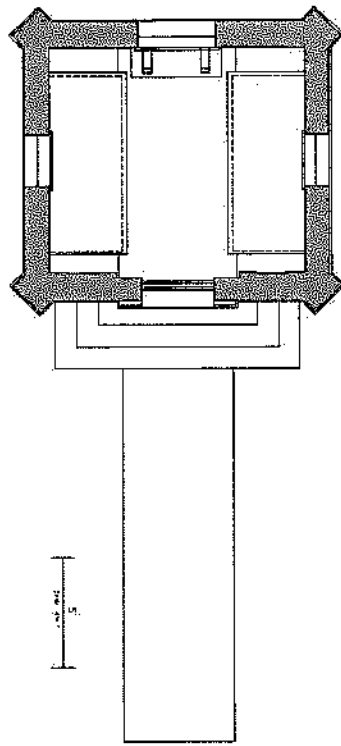


Image 5: The interior, showing the largest of the three stained glass windows.

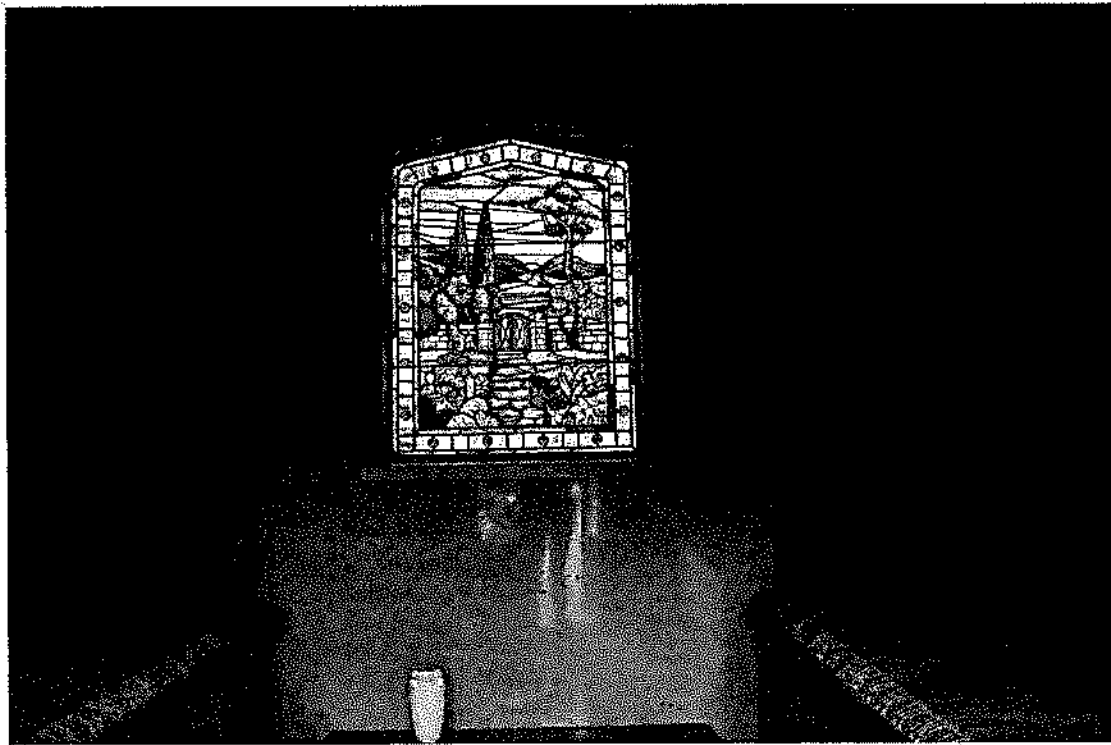


Image 6: The north elevation. Note the significant biological growth.



Image 7: Brown stains near door threshold, likely from water infiltration.



Image 8: Close up of the granite floor. Note the deterioration and flaking.



Image 9: Efflorescent staining on the interior walls.

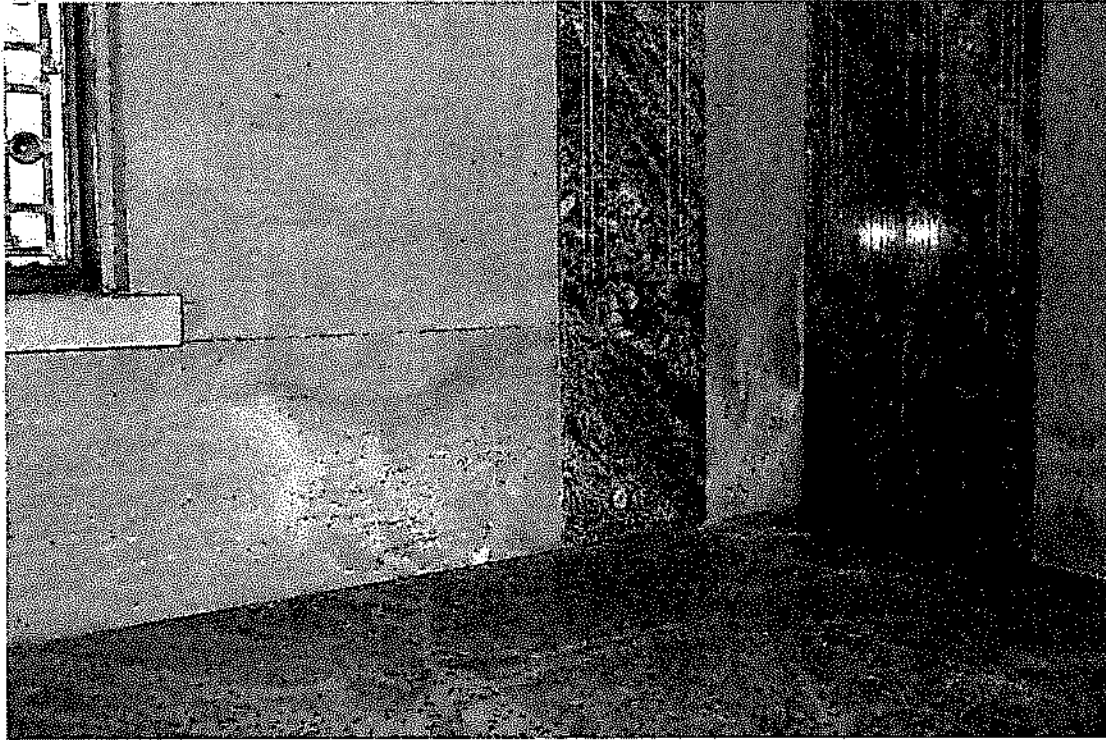
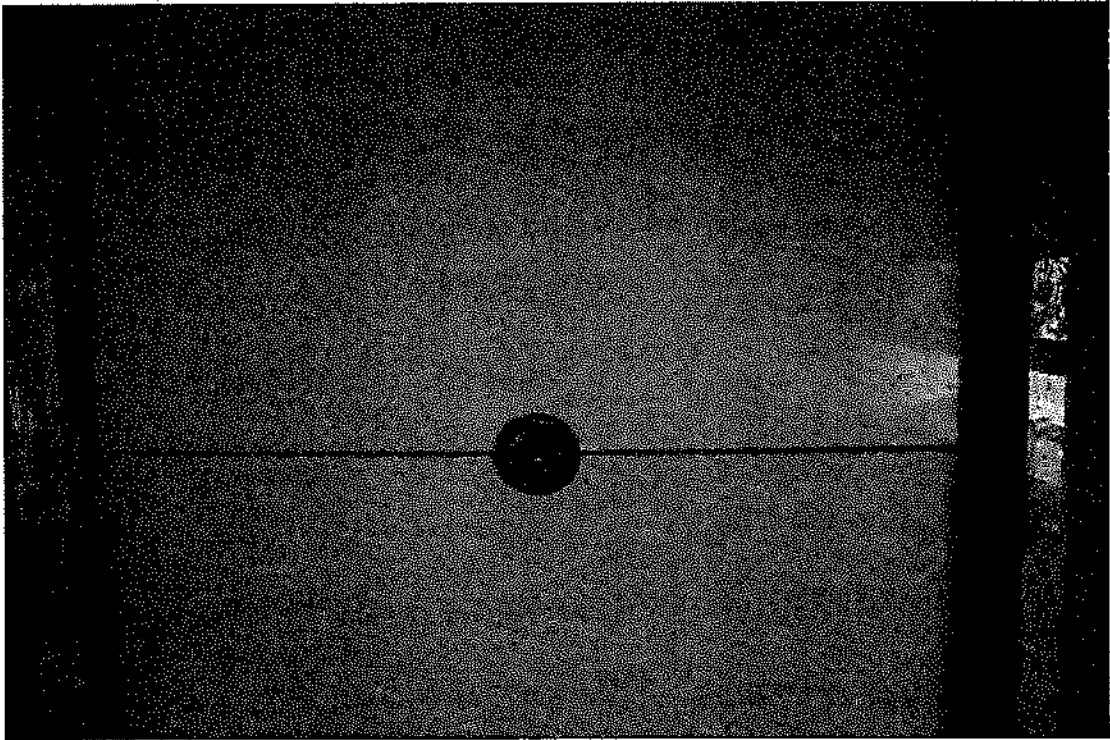


Image 10: Efflorescent staining on the floor.



Image 11: The ceiling. Note the lack of mortar between the two stones.



Drawings and Supplemental Material

Photo: West Elevation



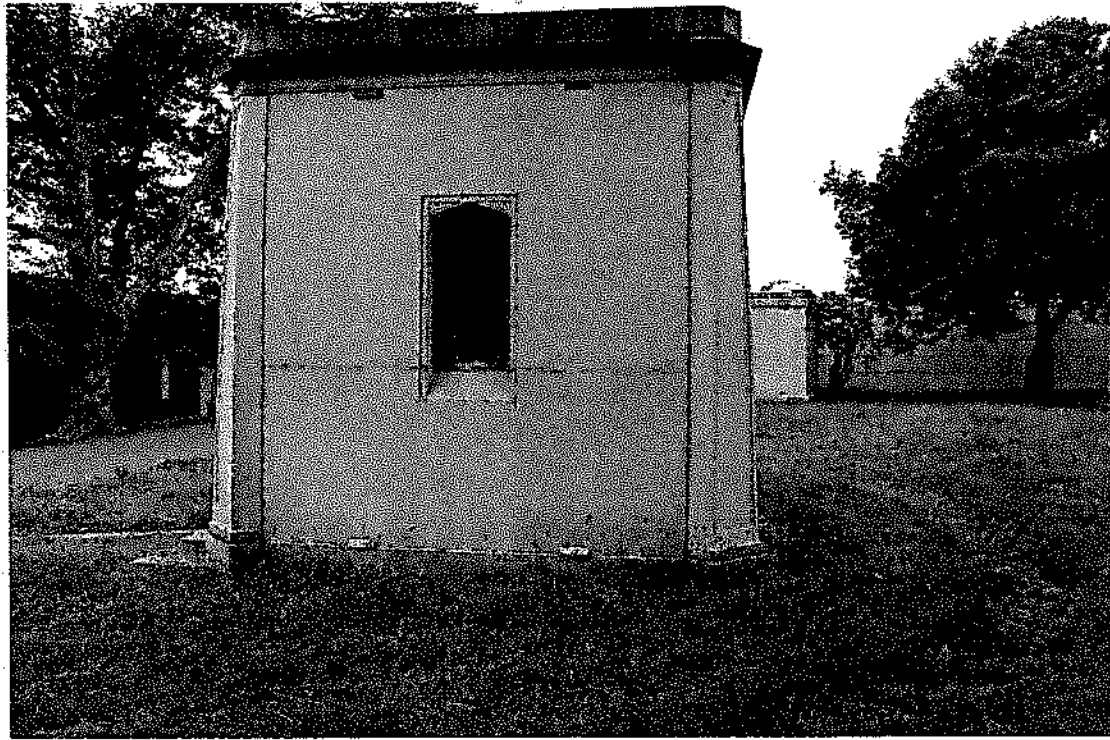
Photo: North Elevation



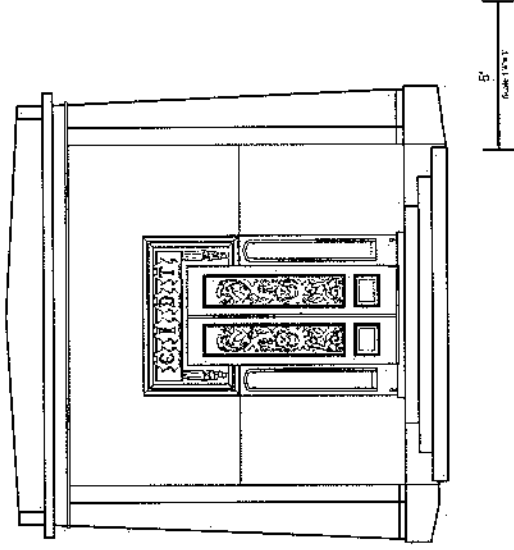
Photo: East Elevation



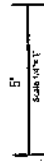
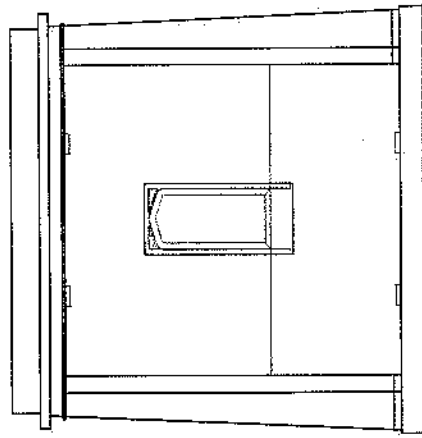
Photo: South Elevation



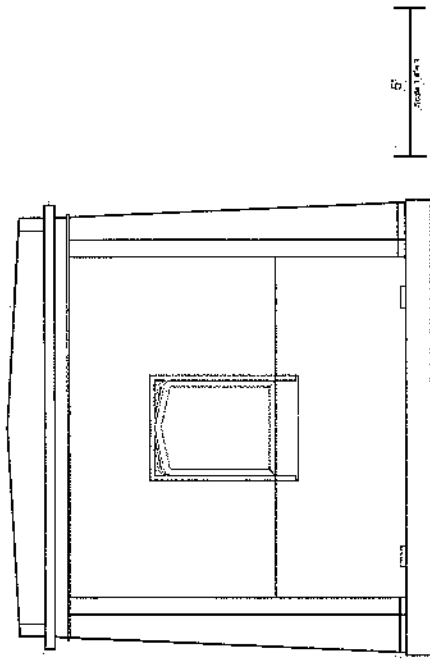
West Elevation
Note: the dimensions of the exterior walls and roof in all 4 elevations are approximate and are based on a combination of measurements and photographs.



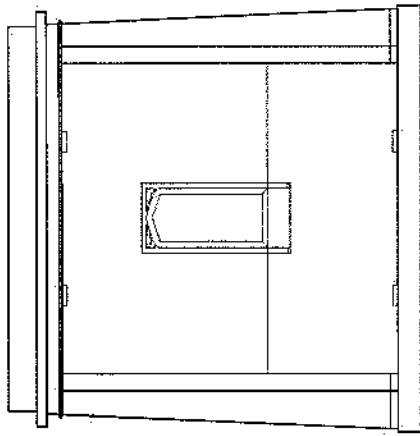
North Elevation



East Elevation

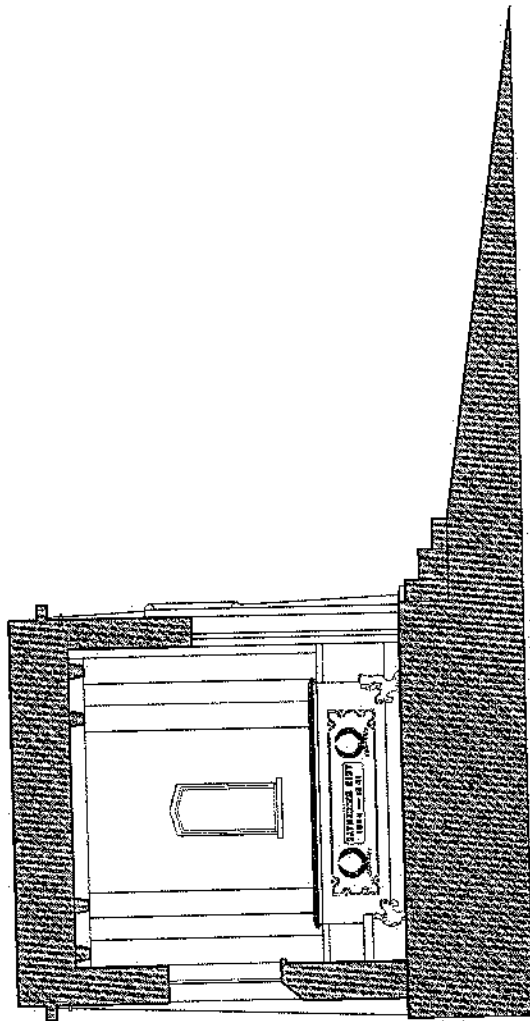


South Elevation



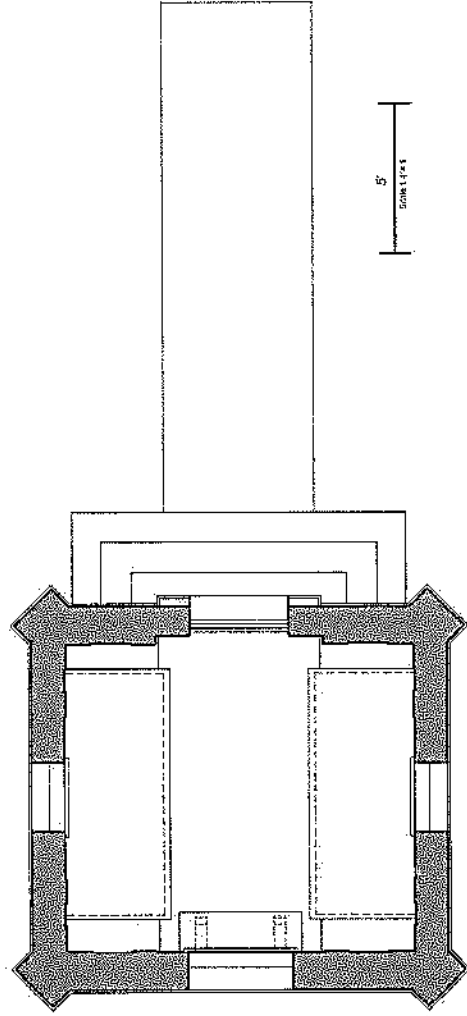
6
Scale 1/8" = 1'

Section



5'
EQUAL LENGTH

Floor Plan



Site Plan

