

Heather Hartshorn

Problem 3: Field Documentation and Formal Analysis

**William Charles Stewart Mausoleum**, Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, NY.

**The Family.** The mausoleum of William Charles Stewart, located in the Heather plot of Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York, was commissioned in 1915 by his daughters, Nancy and Margaret, after his death on January 23, 1914.<sup>i</sup> He was interred there with his first wife Mary Holden Stewart who preceded him in death. William Charles Stewart was born the son of a semi-prominent railway man<sup>ii</sup> in 1855 in Zanesville, Ohio. He worked as a banker in Cleveland supporting a middle-class lifestyle with his wife and two daughters.

His first daughter Nancy "Nonnie May" Stewart became the most well-known member of the family, as she married three times and was active in society. Her first marriage to George H. Worthington ended in divorce in 1889. Two years later, Nancy married William Bateman Leeds, the "Tin Plate King" and former president of the Rock Island Railroad.<sup>iii</sup> Upon her husband's death in 1908, Nancy inherited an estimated \$30 to \$40 million.<sup>iv</sup> In 1910, Nancy moved her father to her Newport residence, where he died four years later.<sup>v</sup>

In 1920, Nancy married Prince Christopher of Greece and Denmark, attaining the title of Her Royal Highness Princess Anastasia of Greece, the highest rank held by an American woman at that point in time.<sup>vi</sup> In 1923 at the age of 40, she died in her London home of "cancer complicated by cirrhosis of the liver" after 3 years of illness. Although members of the Greek royal family called for her burial in Athens, the political situation (particularly the exile of her husband) in Greece prevented it, and Nancy had expressed her wishes to be buried with her father and mother in Woodlawn Cemetery.<sup>vii</sup>

Margaret Stewart Green, her husband Henderson Montgomery Green, and their daughter Nancy Stewart Green were buried in the three remaining catacombs in the Stewart mausoleum upon their death. On the floor lies a plaque in memory of Nancy Stewart's son, William Bateman Leeds, Jr.

**The Architect.** John Russell Pope was commissioned by Nancy Stewart Leeds to design the Stewart mausoleum. Previously, the architect designed her late husband's, William Bateman Leeds, mausoleum at Woodlawn following his death in 1908. At the time of Mr. Leeds' death, Pope had been commissioned to design the Leeds family's Fifth Avenue residence.<sup>viii</sup> Although in the early stages of his career, John Russell Pope had already established himself as a talented architect. Born and raised in New York City, Pope studied architecture at Columbia University. He traveled abroad, studying at the American School of Architecture in Rome and the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. This experience allowed him a great understanding of classical proportions and ideas, earning him a place in history as one of the greatest Neoclassical architects of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He is well-known for his many public buildings (i.e. Scottish Rite Temple, Washington D.C., 1910) and museums (i.e. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1937).<sup>ix</sup> Pope's buildings often incorporate ideas of the Greek Temple, so it is no surprise that the design for the Stewart mausoleum draws inspiration from the

Temple of the Winds in Athens, an octagonal structure set upon tiered steps. However, the mausoleum design departs from the forms seen there, most obviously in the square (rather than octagonal) steps and in the variance of the interior space.

Both the Leeds and Stewart mausoleum contained similar motifs and materials. A popular material with Pope, Knoxville (Tennessee Pink) marble, makes up the building exterior where the pink color has faded due to weathering over the years. A better preserved honed Knoxville marble adorns the walls, floor, and ceiling of the interior space. Upon the bronze door, a lion's head with a ring in its mouth serves as the handle.

**The Sculptor.** Adolph A. Weinman, the sculptor of the bas-relief sculptures on the Stewart mausoleum, worked previously with Pope on the Leeds mausoleum (1908) and the Scottish Rite Temple (1910).<sup>x</sup> Born in Germany, Weinman moved to the United States at a young age where he apprenticed with a wood and ivory carver before attending Cooper Union and the Art Students League.<sup>xi</sup>

**Motifs.** The decoration on the Stewart mausoleum reflects Christian theology in classical motifs associated with the cult of the dead. Weinman contributed several bas-relief sculptures on the front façade of the mausoleum. Two sculptures flank the name plate and inscription, which reads: "vita mortuorum in memoria vivorum est posita" which loosely translated means "the lives of the deceased are hereafter in the memory of the living."<sup>xii</sup> The left sculpture, entitled "The Flowers of Memory," depicts a winged figure carrying a basket of flowers, which represents immortality against the fleeting brevity of life,<sup>xiii</sup> an appropriate theme for a funerary monument. The right sculpture, "The Fruits of Life," depicts a winged figure with a bundle of wheat symbolizing life and resurrection.<sup>xiv</sup>

Two winged figures also flank either side of the alcove entryway. The piece to the left of the door, entitled "The Light Eternal," depicts a figure holding a lamp light, representing the divine presence and the eternal soul within the human body.<sup>xv</sup> In the piece to the right, "Silence," the figure holds the index and middle finger of its right hand over its mouth, reflecting the eternal silence of death,<sup>xvi</sup> while the left hand holds dead flowers representing the end of life and youth.<sup>xvii</sup> The winged figures may be angels who act as intermediaries between God and the world,<sup>xviii</sup> transitory beings who lead the souls to heaven.<sup>xix</sup>

Several architectural features echo the idea of the eternal flame, such as the two urns on either side of the front elevation on which fires may be built as well as the urn in the apse where a flame may be lit.

**Monumentality.** Situated at the fork of two avenues, the Stewart mausoleum intentionally looks northwest rather than north so that the front facade faces the intersection. Set back with a large lawn leading up to the entrance, the octagonal mausoleum is a prominent yet removed structure, meant to be recognized while retaining a sense of exclusion. Three stepped levels raise the mausoleum off the ground, reasserting its monumentality while isolating itself from the public space. Facing away from the surrounding structures, the

Stewart mausoleum intends to be recognized rather than to acknowledge the surrounding mausoleums and gravestones already dwarfed by its height.

**Inward and upward.** The relation of the elements both on the façade and in the plan of the mausoleum leads the viewer inward and upward. As the viewer approaches the mausoleum, the tiered steps lead up from the ground to the door and in from the grassy lawn to the alcove entryway. The door of the mausoleum is recessed, and the slanted walls funnel the viewer in toward the door. The design of the interior space continues this theme. The pilasters accentuate the height of the space drawing the eye upward, while the apse draws the viewer inward toward the centered urn. The edges of the exterior octagonal structure lead the eye upward from the relatively flat façade to the masonry projections and frieze. Beyond that, the tiered roof echoes the design of the steps and continues to lead the eye upward.

**Variation from earthly to ethereal.** The geometries and symmetries of the Stewart mausoleum plan vary from bottom to top. The space with which the viewer interacts is only longitudinally symmetrical in plan. Features of the interior, the entryway, and the exterior urns account for this lack of symmetry. From the cornice up, the plan takes the form of a perfect octagon and, therefore, contains 4-fold symmetry. An evolution of geometry also occurs from the steps, which are square, to the roof which is closer to a circle. Such an effect reflects the transition from the earthly world to the infinite heavenly realm.

**Balance and seriality.** Although particular parts of the plan may lack an abundance of symmetry, a balance exists where everything has its counterpart in weight or assists in the directionality to a focal point. Longitudinally symmetrical, the interior space lacks other symmetry but remains balanced, using the idea of the rectangular nave that leads towards the semi-circular apse. The front façade is vertically symmetrical, and although lacking horizontal symmetry, the masonry projections and cornice balance the tiered steps and base. Between these projecting elements, the smooth masonry blocks create a seriality and repetition through the center square of the façade.

**Public v. Private Space.** The difference in interior and exterior structure acts as a clear distinction between public and private space. Neither one reflects the other. The exterior octagonal structure gives no indication of the interior basilica plan. Inside the mausoleum, the space is much smaller than indicated by the monumental exterior. In fact, the differences between the exterior and interior plan are accommodated by hollow spaces in the walls as well as above the interior space, which are functionally unnecessary except perhaps for ventilation. A dichotomy exists between the spatiality of the interior and the exterior. The interior is closed and dark, the only light from a small window and the glass pieces in the door. It is a private space, while the exterior is light and open in public space. The viewer of the interior space is most likely a member of the family or close friend, as access to the mausoleum interior requires a key. However, the exterior space

remains available to any viewer who passes through the cemetery, its monumental character meant to impress.

**Significance.** The characteristics presented here distinguish the Stewart mausoleum from the surrounding mausoleums, many of which have a rectangular plan as well as corresponding interior and exterior spaces. Another distinguishing feature is its inspiration from classical ideas and their application by the prominent architect, John Russell Pope. Although as a whole the members of the Stewart family interred here remain relatively unknown, they do not go unnoticed. A monumental presentation on a corner lot allows much recognition, while a smaller interior space proves more reflective and personal.

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- <sup>i</sup> "Specification for Stewart Mausoleum, Woodlawn Cemetery, New York City," William Charles Stewart Mausoleum File, Woodlawn Cemetery Archives, Avery Archives Collection, Columbia University.
- <sup>ii</sup> Special to The New York Times, "William C. Stewart Dies in Leeds Home," *New York Time*, Jan 25, 1914.
- <sup>iii</sup> "Ohio Princess Anastasia Dead," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, August 30, 1923.
- <sup>iv</sup> Associated Press, "Anastasia, Former Mrs. Leeds, Dies in London," *Boston Daily Globe*, August 30, 1923.
- <sup>v</sup> Special to The New York Times, "William C. Stewart Dies in Leeds Home," *New York Time*, Jan 25, 1914.
- <sup>vi</sup> Bagger, Eugene S., "Mrs. Leeds, by Baptismal Rites Becomes of Blood Royal," *New – York Tribune*, February 8, 1920.
- <sup>vii</sup> Associated Press, "Anastasia, Former Mrs. Leeds, Dies in London," *Boston Daily Globe*, August 30, 1923.
- <sup>viii</sup> Special to the New York Times, "Leeds Left Widow Most of His Estate," *New York Times*, September 4, 1908.
- <sup>ix</sup> Kalfatovic, Martin R. "Pope, John Russell." *American National Biography Online*, 2000.
- <sup>x</sup> "Adolph A. Weinman papers," Series 8: Project Files, Collections Online, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian, <http://www.aaa.si.edu/collectiononline/weinadol/series8.htm>.
- <sup>xi</sup> Marcus, Lois Goldreich. "Weinman, Adolph Alexander." *American National Biography Online*, 2000.
- <sup>xii</sup> Translated by Allyson Walsh, Cultural Heritage Management student, Department of Archaeology, University of York.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. "Flower" in *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. "Wheat" in *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994.
- <sup>xv</sup> Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. "Lamp" in *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. "Silence" in *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994.
- <sup>xvii</sup> Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. "Flower" in *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Chevalier, Jean and Alain Gheerbrant. "Angel" in *A Dictionary of Symbols*. Translated by John Buchanan-Brown. Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1994.
- <sup>xix</sup> Biedermann, Hans. "Angel" in *Dictionary of Symbolism*. Translated by James Hulbert. New York; Oxford: Facts on File, 1992.

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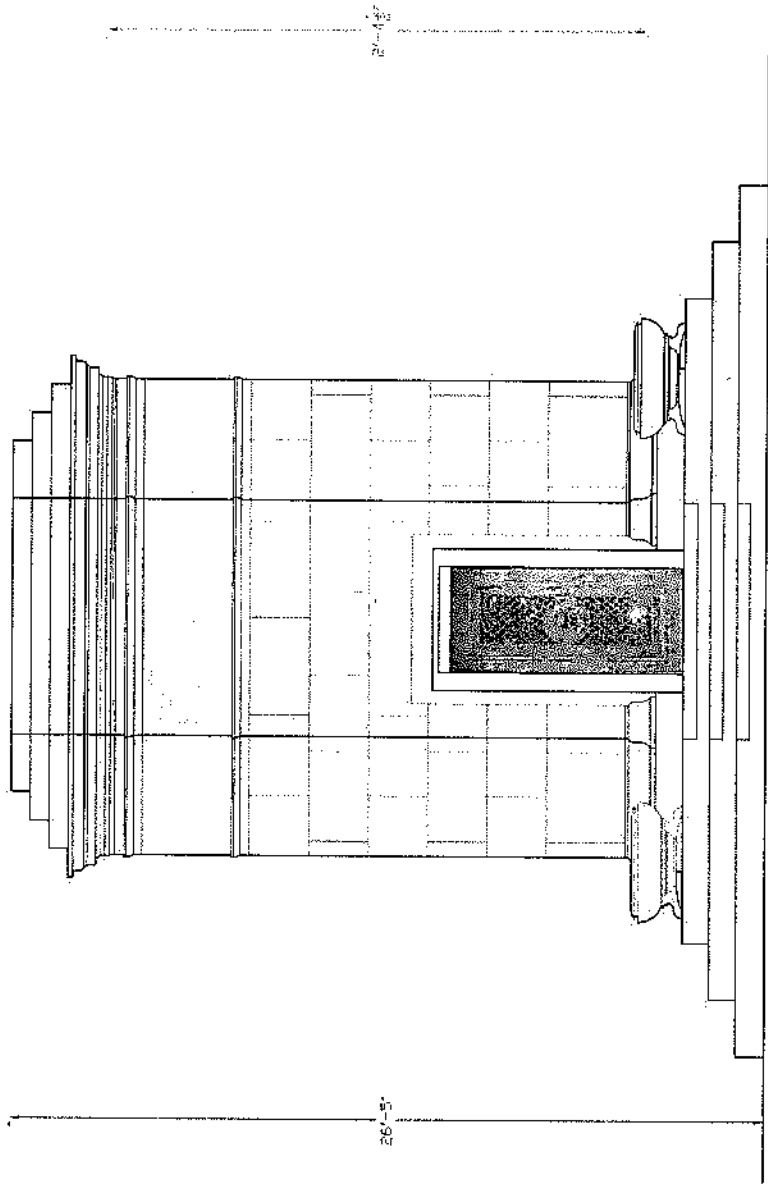
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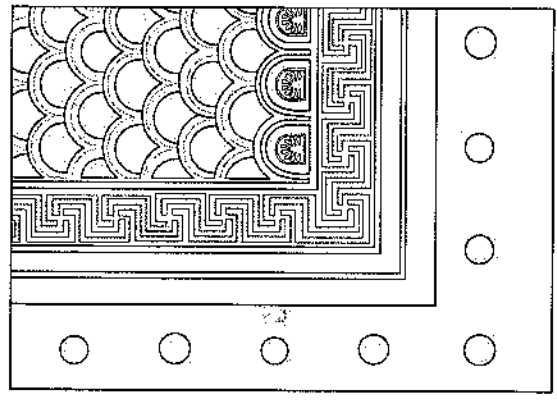
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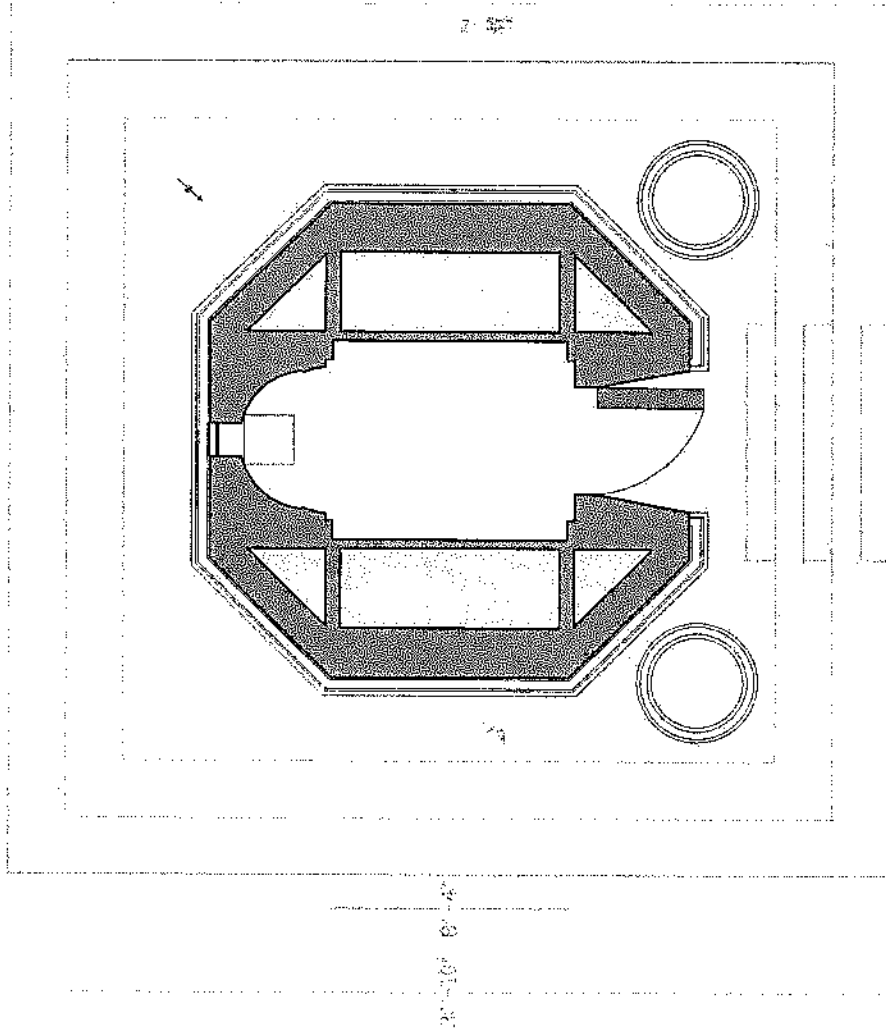
Front Elevation (1/2" = 1')  
Estimated Height



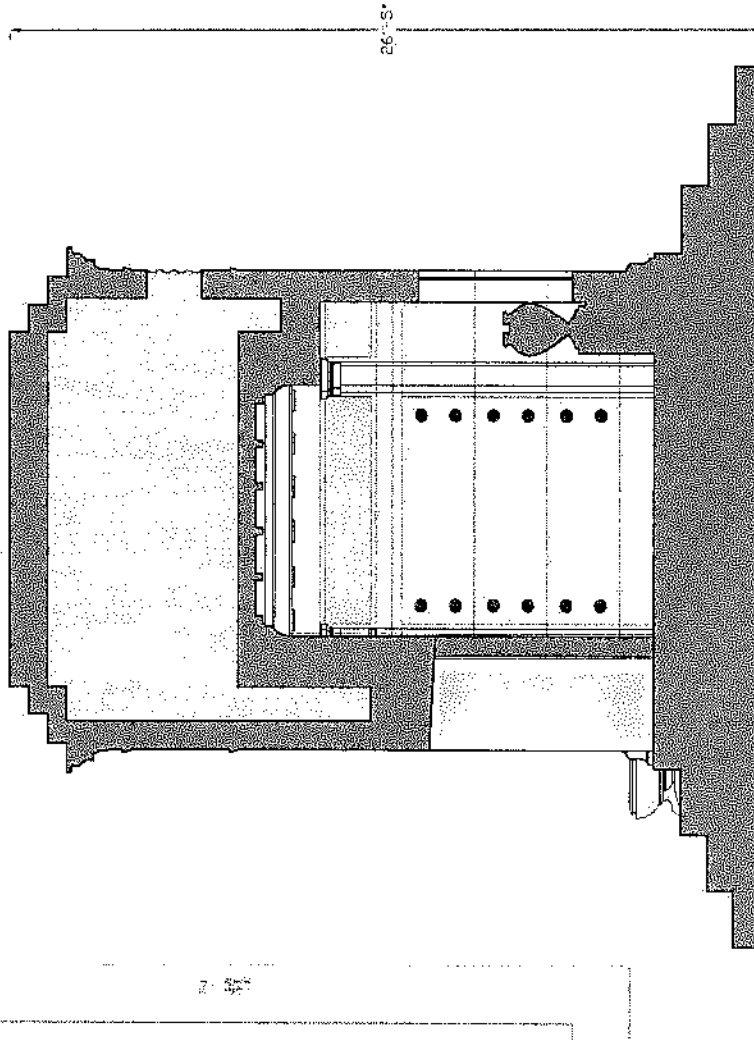
Detail of Bronze Door (4" = 1')



**PROBLEM 3: FIELD DOCUMENTATION AND FORMAL ANALYSIS - Stewart Mausoleum, Heather Plot, Woodlawn Cemetary**  
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 Heather Hartshorn - October 18, 2010



Plan (1/2" = 1')



Side Section (1/2" = 1')  
Estimated Height

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