

Kaity Ryan

Fall 2010 HP Studio: Reading Historic Buildings

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Problem 3 // October 18, 2010

The Weiskopf mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery was constructed in 1930 from a plan by Adler's Monument and Granite Works of Maspeth, New York. The patriarch of the family was Levi Weiskopf, a German cigar manufacturer that emigrated to Cincinnati, Ohio with his family.¹ It was Levi's son, Daniel K. Weiskopf, that commissioned the family mausoleum.

Daniel Weiskopf learned the cigar industry from his father and ultimately branched into the whiskey business through an apprenticeship with one of the American whiskey industry's notable founders: Julius Kessler.² It is possible that Kessler was a patron of Levi Weiskopf's cigar business because 'he used to buy 10,000 cigars whenever he went to Havana for molasses'³ or that he met Daniel Weiskopf in his travels to Cuba. This relationship in tandem with the immense popularity of whiskey in America contributed to Weiskopf's prosperity. He co-owned two distilleries in Ohio and Pennsylvania: Nivison & Weiskopf and Schenley respectively. With the enactment of Prohibition in 1919, Weiskopf sold the Schenley Distillery in Pennsylvania to Lewis Rosenstiel for the manufacturing of medicinal whiskey; Rosenstiel later become the second-largest whiskey manufacturer in the United States⁴. Nivison & Weiskopf converted their business into a glass bottle and label-producing company called the Nivison-Weiskopf Company.⁵ They manufactured some of the early cylindrical gallon jugs used to store and transport whiskey for clients including Jack Daniel's.

Upon moving to New York, Daniel Weiskopf and his wife, Josephine Berman Weiskopf, took up residence at the Bryant Park Hotel at 270 Park Avenue.⁶ They later moved to the McKim, Mead and White- designed Park-Savoy Hotel on Fifth Avenue.⁷ Their names appear on

¹ "City of Cincinnati Population 10 April 1910" US Census Bureau (Ancestry Library, 2010.)

² Nicholas Faith *The Bronfmans: The Rise and Fall of the House of Seagram* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), p 129.

³ "Whiskey Names" TIME Magazine, 26 August 1935.

⁴ Nicholas Faith *The Bronfmans: The Rise and Fall of the House of Seagram* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006) p. 132.

⁵ *National Bulletin* Volume V, No. 1, (Ohio: National Wholesale Liquor Dealers Association of America, 1913) p. 339.

⁶ "US Passport Applications, 1795-1925" (Ancestry Library, 2010)

⁷ "NY Passenger Lists 1820- 1957: List of United States Citizens: S.S. Scaronia 26th February 1929" (Ancestry Library, 2010):

"NY Passenger Lists 1820- 1957: List of United States Citizens: S.S. Bremen 26th September 1929" (Ancestry Library, 2010).

records of passage for ships like the S.S. Bremen and Scaronia that traveled to Europe and Cuba respectively. These records indicate that the Weiskopfs had established themselves as distinguished members of New York's jazz age society.⁸ Perhaps in an effort to showcase their permanence in New York, Daniel Weiskopf commissioned a mausoleum site at Woodlawn Cemetery in 1930.

The Weiskopf mausoleum is situated on the western section of a large plot (40' L x 28.8' W) in comparison to the building size (18.7' L x 13' W) and the surrounding plots. The mausoleum's western placement distances it from Whitewood Road, which runs along the eastern border of the plot. A gradual slope in the eastern and northern sections of the site likely contributed to the placement in the western quadrant. The mausoleum's location in its own plot and in the context of the surrounding plots also showcases the Weiskopf's prominence: more land indicates more wealth. Siting the mausoleum toward the rear of the lot on a slight knoll communicates that wealth to passersby.

The provision of open space in front of the mausoleum plays into the viewer's experience. Despite its small size relative to other mausoleums at Woodlawn, the Weiskopf mausoleum conveys a sense of substantial presence. This effect is accomplished by proportioning the upper component of the building, the pediment, as over-sized in relation to the lower portion. The lateral width of the pediment lends a substantial heaviness to the mausoleum and projects a sense of lofty grandeur. Additionally, the pilasters lack capitals and therefore meet the lintel abruptly which accentuates the pediment's mass.

⁸ "NY Passenger Lists 1820- 1957: List of United States Citizens: S.S. Scaronia 26th February 1929" (*Ancestry Library*, 2010).

"NY Passenger Lists 1820- 1957: List of United States Citizens: S.S. Bremen 26th September 1929" (*Ancestry Library*, 2010).

The mausoleum draws upon the basis of order and symmetry. It is a post and lintel construction built upon a square foundation. The building's mass is distributed in thirds horizontally and vertically. The horizontal elements can be broken down into two components: the rectangular body and the pediment. The body constitutes two-thirds of the overall height while the pediment represents one third. Longitudinally, the mausoleum can be divided into six equal modules.

This presence of symmetry is pervasive: the interior mirrors the use of evenly-distributed proportions. This is largely due to the building's function dictating its structure in that the family required ten catacombs. However, it is also an aesthetic choice as reflected in the marble veneer on the walls and floor. The viewer enters the mausoleum through a narrow doorway and upon doing so, steps into an interior of order created by the shallow alternating solids and voids of the Tennessee Pink marble walls, floor and ceiling.

Ordered symmetry also plays a significant role in the mausoleum facade. A ratio of 1:2:1 is rendered by the alternation of solid-void-solid with the pilasters and recessed doorway. The vertical lines of these segments project a directional cue that points the viewer's eye upward. The motive quality of the doorway details serve a similar purpose in that the vines swirl upward and draw the eye with them. The bronze door is grounded by a circle and rectangle that create a sense of foundational mass from which the delicate, arched motif of the bronze window details spring skyward. The doorway's detailed window and recessed placement make it a central focus and therefore an effective tool for emphasizing the upward vertical motion of the facade. This upwardly motive quality culminates at the triangulated pediment, its beveled interior triangle detail and ultimately the peak of the roof which is not coincidental. The convergence of vertical

cues and the oversized proportioning commands the viewer to focus on the structural element that projects power and prominence.

Further underscoring the Weiskopf's prominence, a stained glass window by Albert Brink decorates the western wall. The intricate design can only be viewed from the interior, which distinguishes the mausoleum's private space from the public. Brink was a prominent stained glass artist in New York who worked for Louis C. Tiffany Studios before opening his own studio in 1926.⁹ It is notable that the stained glass depicts a pastoral landscape scene because typically such details include religious references. However, the classically-influenced design scheme of the building combined with this lack of religious symbolism in the stained glass window may be emblematic of the Weiskopf's faith.

Currently the mausoleum suffers from water damage on both the exterior and interior. Its landscaping is overgrown on all sides and obstructs views of the building. Correspondence shows that Daniel Weiskopf's nephew and heir, Marc Haas, routinely questioned pricing/billing quotes for the maintenance of the plot.¹⁰ These factors in tandem with the mausoleum's architectural design projects the appearance of a fabled, once-grand structure in disrepair.

⁹ Barbara Krueger "Albert Brink" [The American Glass Guild](#), accessed 4 October 2010.

¹⁰ Woodlawn Archives, Columbia University Avery Library, accessed 6 October 2010.

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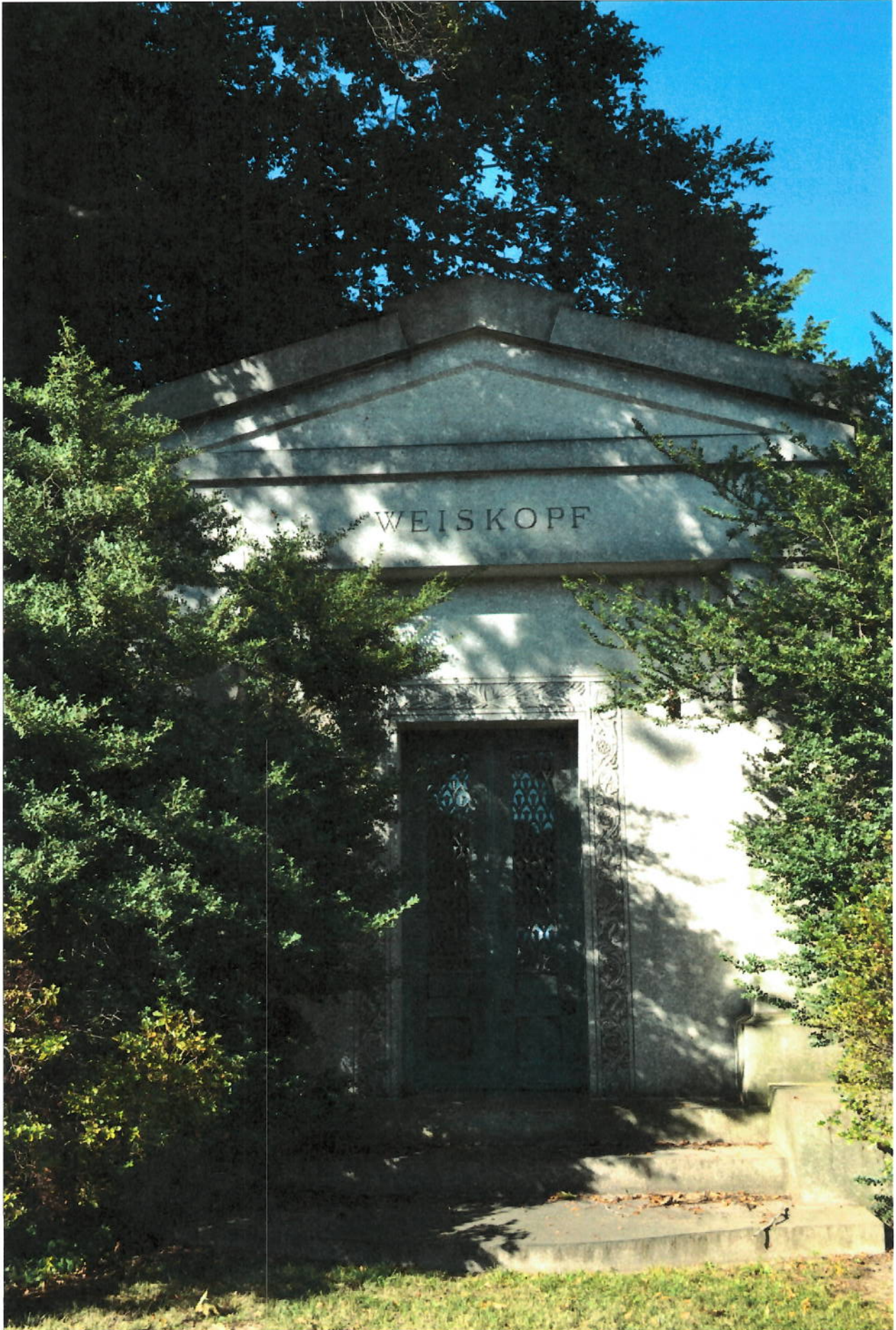
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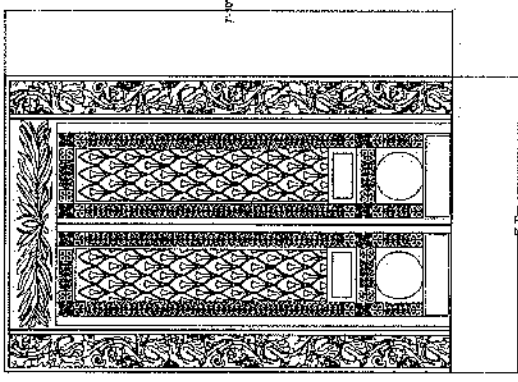
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Tiffany, Louis Comfort, Autumn Landscape, 1923-24. Tiffany Studios 11 ft. x 8 ft. 6 in.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York.

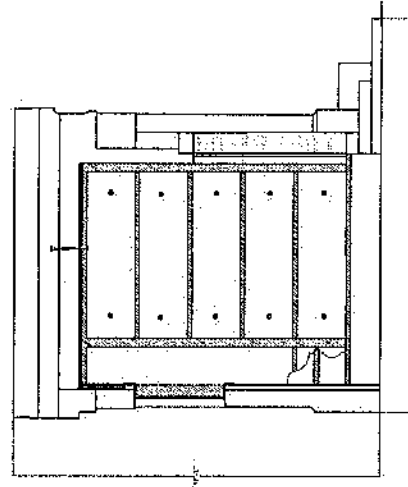
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Weiskopf vertical file, 6 Oct. 2010. Woodlawn Archives Collection, Columbia University Avery
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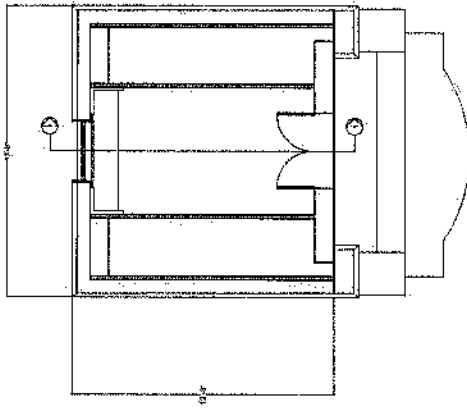




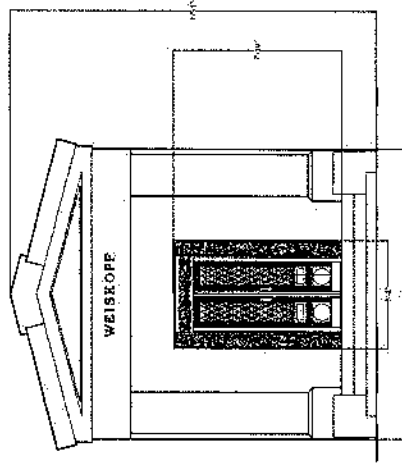
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LONGITUDINAL SECTION SCALE: 3/8" = 1'



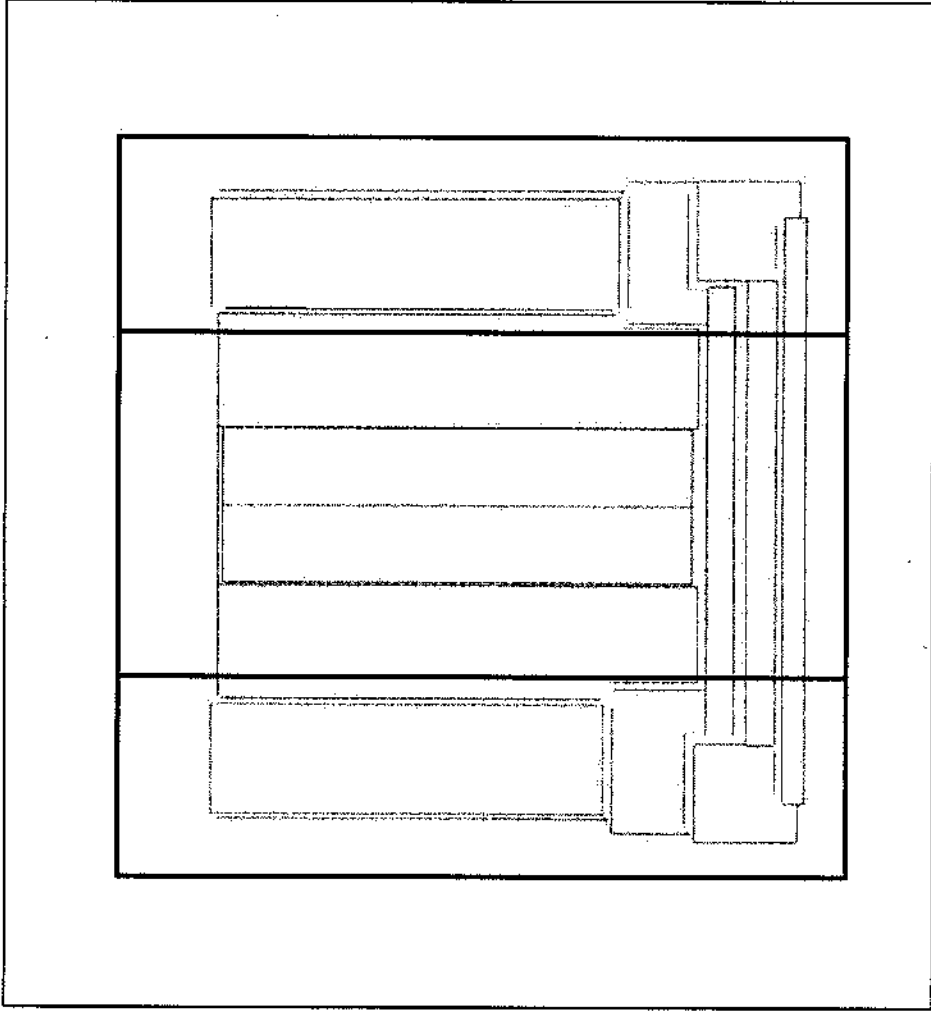
PLAN SCALE: 3/8" = 1'



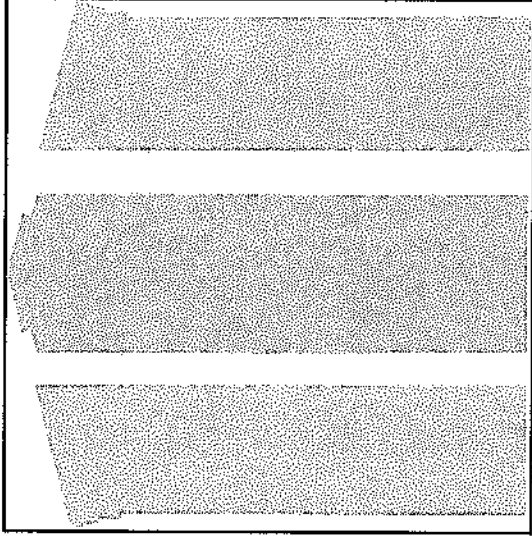
ELEVATION SCALE: 3/8" = 1'

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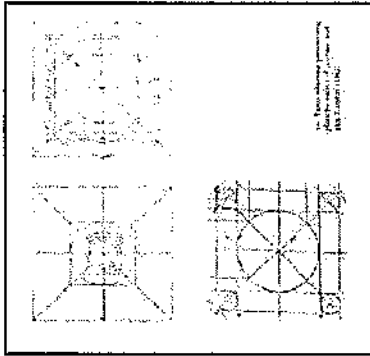
Rule of Thirds



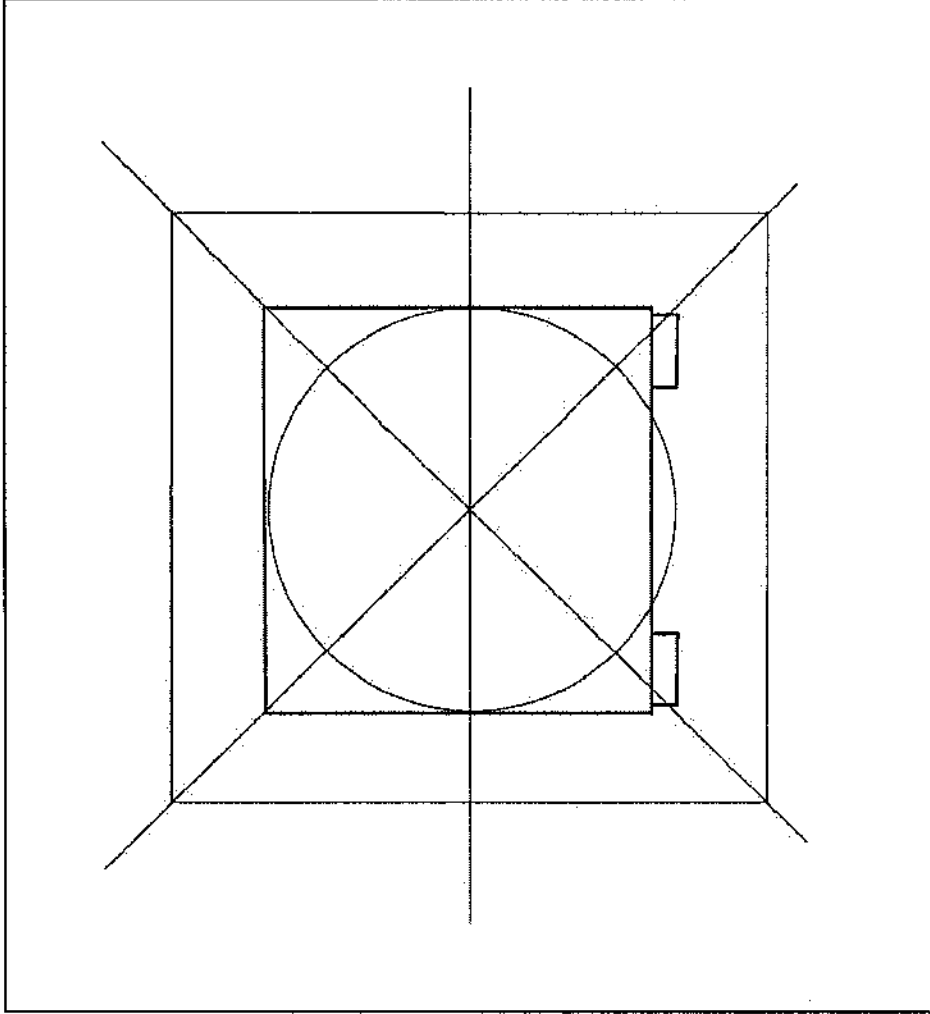
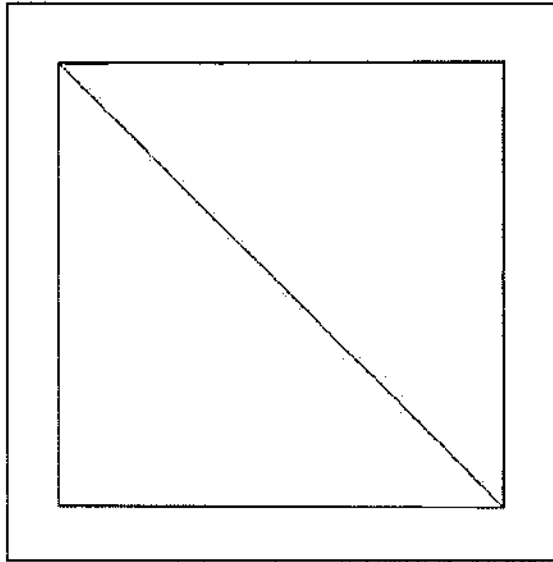
East elevation arrangement
in thirds



“Taxis Schemata”



Classical Architecture:
The Poetics of Order
Tzonis; Lefkovic p. 30

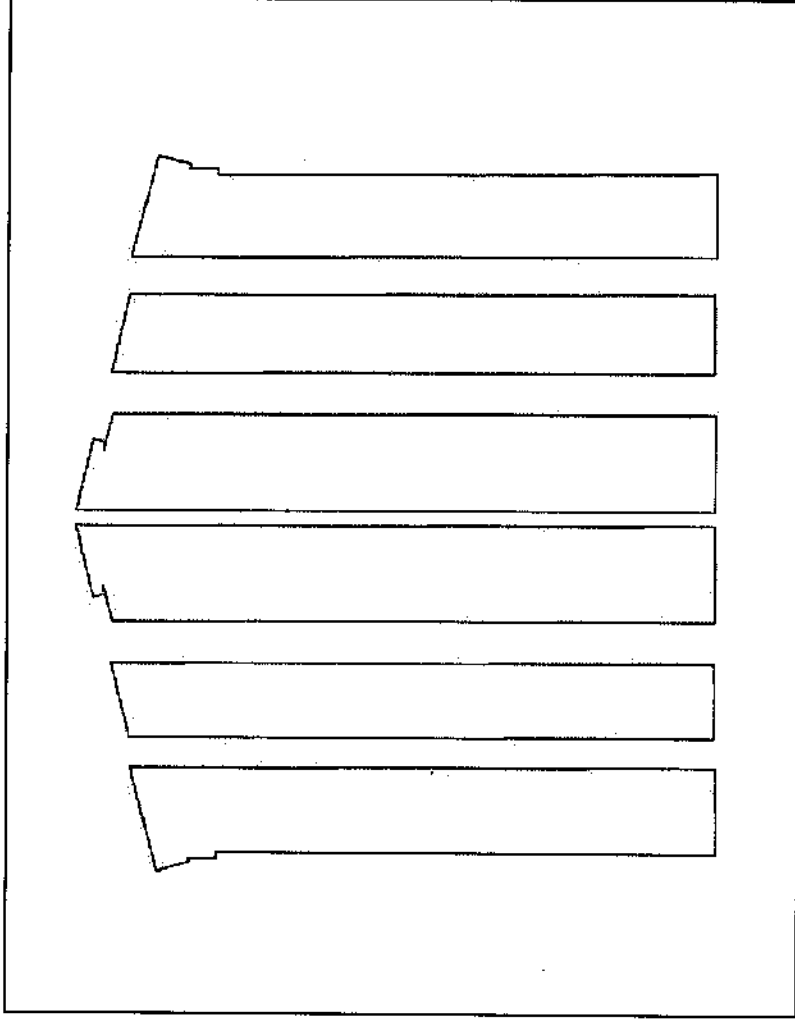


Vertical Proportioning

- Symmetry

- Rhythm of bays

- Module of repetition



Horizontal Proportioning

