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Historic Preservation Studio 1 A4510
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Assignment 3 - Woodlawn Mausoleum
Due Date - 10/18/10

The Rathbone-Bacon Mausoleum

When it came time for the Members of the Rathbone-Bacon family to begin to plan for the hereafter, they fashioned themselves a mausoleum that fit the style that they lived – opulent yet reserved. Walter Rathbone Bacon sent out specifications for his Mausoleum that would call for "materials and workmanship of the highest grade"¹ to be built by the Presbrey-Coykendall Co. The result was an extravagant affair built of polished and honed Stony Creek granite outside with polished Tennessee Pink limestone interiors. It was excavated to a depth of 6 feet below the finished floor of the structure accommodating his brother, Edward (who passed in 1915) himself (who would die later that year) and up to 3 other relatives. Eventually only his wife Virginia joined him and his brother in 1919.

The mausoleum itself is a relatively simple form, basically a garden pavilion executed in the Corinthian order that sits on top of the cube that delineates the rest of the vault. Mostly symmetrical, with stairs leading up to it from every side, the only thing that gives the structure and frontal emphasis is the decorative door surround and a pair of urns. The urns are decorated in a Greek fashion, showing cow skulls an indication of a man's ability to provide for his family and wheat stalks, symbol of plenty.² It is at once secluded away from view by copious trees and shrubbery, and yet dominating the landscape by virtue of its position on a small rise above neighboring monuments. In this way it is able to block the view of these monuments from the street, and co-opt them as

of they lie in the Rathbone-Bacon's back yard. The plant life adds to the idea of this structure being a pavilion, a folly in the garden of the rich and powerful. The building itself is very simple beneath the accreted layers of decoration. Vertically the massing is reminiscent of that most ancient of megalithic tombs, the dolmen. Beyond this doorway within a doorway post and lintel massing, one can see that the building is rigidly stable: a grid can be imposed that shows the door surround to the pilaster area being in a 2:3 ratio. Finally the main façade can be inscribed within a circle and square, the two most stable forms. In fact the designers of the mausoleum "cheated" the pilasters out an inch and a half beyond the edges of the walls to maximize this effect. This stability of form tells a lot about the owners, people whose family motto is "Medocrita firma" as shown in the stained glass window above the sarcophagi. Meaning: "Moderate things are best"³, it is another example of the dual nature of the occupants; an ostentatious, yet stable and hidden mausoleum, "moderation" for very wealthy and otherwise extravagant people.

The Bacon family has long roots in the course of Western history. The name is first attested to as coming to England as part of the Norman Invasion and has been associated with royalty and wealth ever since.⁴ Bacons were part of the first wave of British colonization of the new world in the mid 17th century. Old money tends to stay wealthy, and by the late 19th century the Rathbone-Bacons had made good for themselves in a most dramatic fashion. Edward was a prominent lawyer both in London and in New York, but Walter was a railroad baron. He eventually became the Vice President of Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and enjoyed wealth and great family connections. His resume and biography reads like a who's-who of American plutocrats and their doings, including collusion with George Arents (buried nearby in Woodlawn

Cemetery) to buy controlling interest in a railroad line through stock manipulation.⁵ He married into the Vanderbilt family by marrying Virginia Purdy Barker. At this point, the accumulation of wealth and art started in earnest. Virginia showed her appreciation of the arts by patronizing some of the most popular artists of the day, John Singer Sargent and Anders Zorn.^{6,7} Other than their forays into the art world and their business dealings, there is not a lot written about this family. They kept to themselves and did not act to extravagantly in life, and never had children. In death Virginia Bacon dissolved their estate, leaving large sums of money to Columbia University, Harvard College and the Smithsonian Institution. While a few of the paintings made especially for the family are now on display at the Biltmore Estate in North Carolina, the majority of their art collection was donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁸

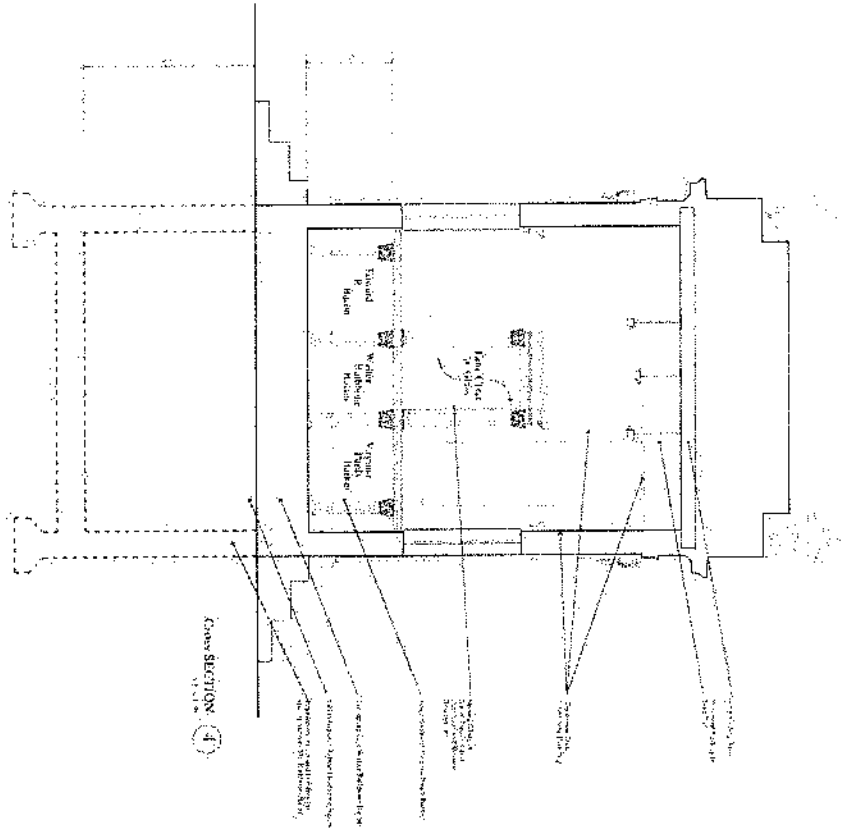
The Rathbone-Bacon Mausoleum sticks out amongst the mausolea of Woodlawn just enough to make sure that you notice the noble lineage of the occupants, and then recedes into the trees introspectively. It chooses the middle ground believing that "Moderation is Best" even in death. Which is exactly how Walter Bacon would have wanted it, how his specifications requested it.

Works Cited:

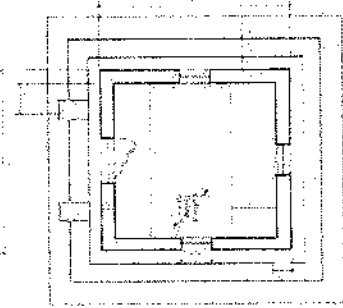
1. *General Specifications of the W. Rathbone Bacon Mausoleum* by Presbrey–Coykendall Co. of New York, NY and Barre, VT – Courtesy Columbia University Avery Archival Library
NOTE: - This is the sources for all information regarding the building's composition.
 2. Cemetery Symbols by the Forest Lawn Cemetery of Buffalo, NY (Online)
<http://www.buffaloah.com/a/forestL/symbols/index.html> 1999
 3. Bacon Coat of Arms and Name History HouseofNames.com (Online)
<http://www.houseofnames.com/xq/asp.c/qx/bacon-coat-arms.htm> 2000-2009
NOTE: - Motto Clarification Courtesy of Wikipedia
 4. *ibid*
 5. Edward R. Bacon Biography from the Farmers Loan and Trust Co. (Online Record)
<http://www.smokershistory.com/Farmers.html>
 6. Painting 1 Athenaeum – from the Biltmore Collection
 7. Painting 2 – Anders Zorn Painting Of Virginia Bacon Courtesy of the NY Metropolitan Museum
http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/collection_database/european_painting_s/mrs_walter_rathbone_bacon_virginia_purdy_died_1919_anders_leonard_zorn/objectview.aspx?collID=11&OID=110002419
 8. Mrs. Bacon's Will Courtesy of the New York Times as found on their online archive: Original Printing 5/17/1921 Copyright The New York Times
 9. Imagery of the Bacons and Vanderbilts Courtesy of genealogy.com
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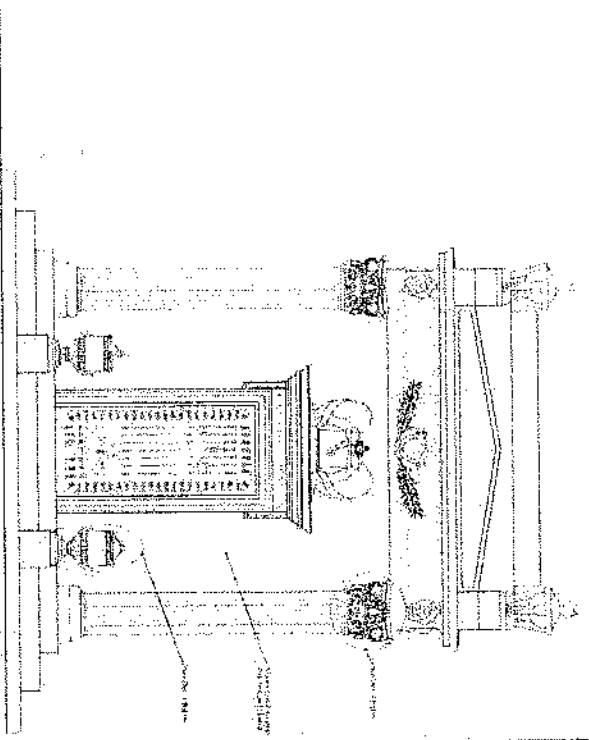
Base and Capital - DETAILS (3)



Cross SECTION (4)

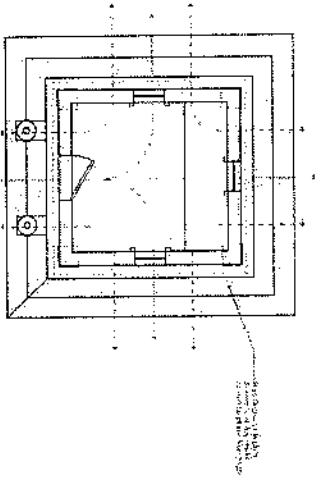
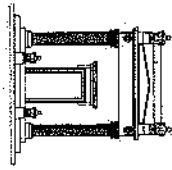
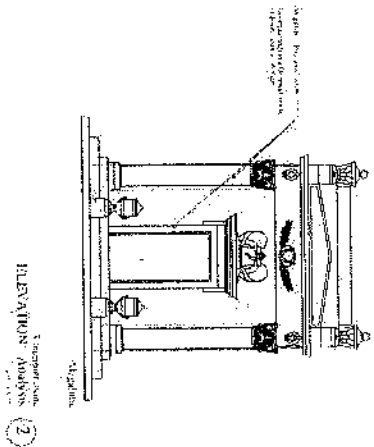
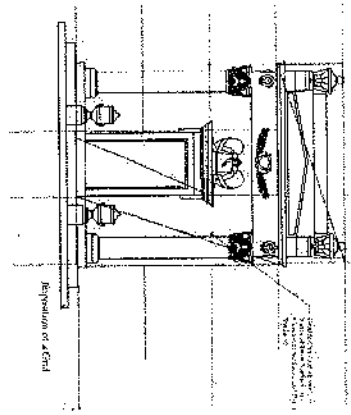
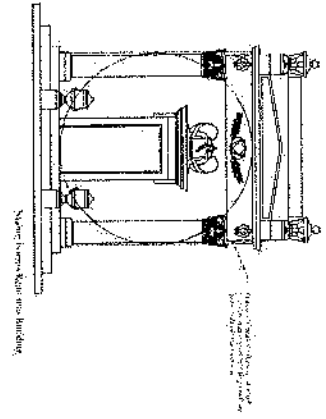


Mausoleum PLAN (1)

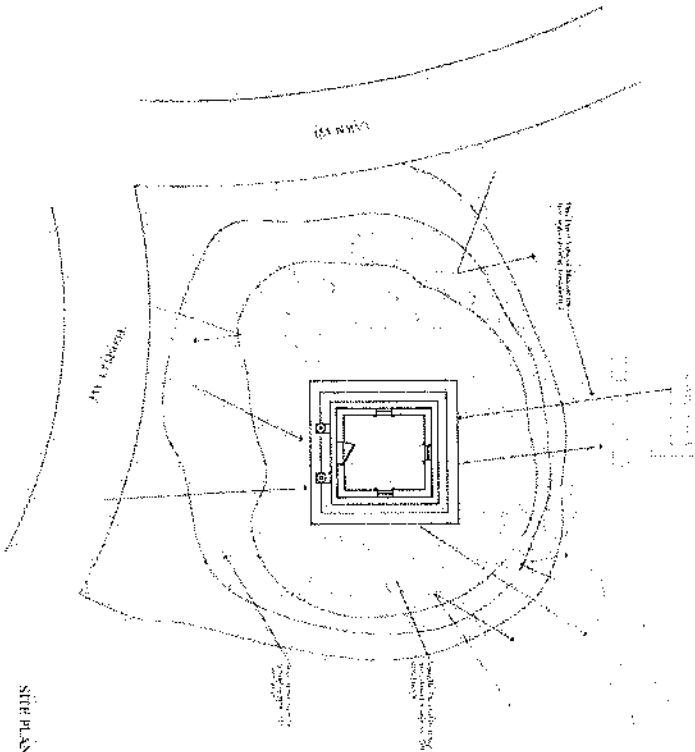


ELEVATION (2)

PROBLEM 3 - Field Documentation and Formal Analysis
 RATHBONE-BACON FAMILY MAUSOLEUM
 Historic Preservation Studio I - Fall 2010
 Françoise Bullock, Ward Dennis, Andrew Dolkart & Cleary Larkin
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Architectural Analysis: Architectural Plan (3)



SITE PLAN - Analysis (1)

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