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Documentation and Analysis of Historic Buildings

One approaches the Hertz mausoleum from the road. Walking on the grass, one seems to be directed towards the door by the wall of hedges and two trees whose symmetry draws attention to the center of the site. Next come three steps that lead to a door at the center of the mausoleum. Upon entering through two bronze doors that open outwards, one encounters the large sarcophagi laid out in front of them. One can move in three directions, forward, left, or right, before being directed through the center and out the doors once again. The entrance doorway is relatively small and unadorned compared to its more monumental neighbors. The Hertz mausoleum is noticeably larger than similar family mausoleums in its immediate vicinity. Given its lack of ornamentation, the twenty foot façade seems stark and massive. However upon entering the building, one interprets the dimensions from a new perspective. Four sarcophagi are laid next to one another, the two couples resting side by side. Compared to the more common arrangement of sarcophagi stacked on top of one another, the Hertz' layout feels more like a comfortable resting place for a family. Thus, the large dimensions of the mausoleum plan allow for the creation of an intimate space that belies the cold austerity of the exterior walls.

Constructed in 1969, the Hertz mausoleum was built at a time when modernism had recently asserted itself as the dominant architectural style. While this is not a modernist building, the structure's relative lack of ornamentation and detail is arguably a product of this movement. Interestingly, the 1952 Presbry-Leland catalog features a section entitled "Mausoleums of Oblong Plan-Modern Detail," featuring an "[a]lmost severely conservative" building not too different from the Hertz mausoleum. Nevertheless, the doorway flanked by pilasters and topped by a pediment connects the Hertz building to the more traditional classicism and monumentality so familiar for mausoleums at Woodlawn. While many of the

classically inspired mausoleums take the physical forms of ancient buildings, the Hertz mausoleum simply has Roman classical elements plastered onto a modernistic form. Besides the classical entryway, the Hertz Mausoleum is a large, plain building with a base of slightly darker stone. The entire building is capped by a simple cornice made of a slightly darker stone than the rest of the structure. On the side elevations of the building, one can clearly see that the building is located on a slope as the ground rises from the front to the rear of the structure. In the center is one rectangular stained glass window. The only other ornamentation is four small bronze vents located at the base of the building and directly under the cornice. One also notices how short the sides of the building are when compared to the front. The rear elevation has three stained glass windows evenly spaced from one another. Two bronze vents punctuate the blank wall here as well.

The mausoleum is placed in the center of its lot facing the road, flanked by two rows of bushes and two trees. Landscaping is a key component in the historical understanding of the Hertz Mausoleum. There are numerous pieces of correspondence in the Woodlawn archives that detail the planting and maintenance of a variety of bushes, trees, and flowers on the property. An attentively cared for, colorful landscape would have created a sense of home and warmth to this family mausoleum. This image contrasts sharply from the austere scene of today. However, the remaining rows of bushes flanking either side of the building, as well as the pair of weeping cherry trees, reinforce this sense of centrality that channels visitors' attention towards the entrance. The hedges of *taxus hicksi* also help to delineate the Hertz property from its neighbors. These bushes create a strong image of an isolated unit, separated from the relatively open layout of the plots surrounding it.

Symmetry is the most prominent principle of design in the façade. The line of symmetry divides the doors, steps, pediment, and roof into two mirrored components. Additionally, the pair of identical pilasters flanking the entrance reinforces this idea of symmetry and centrality. On the lot, the identical hedgerows and weeping cherry trees on either side of the building continue with the theme. Given all of these balanced features, the asymmetrical placement of the family name, placed to the right of the entrance, leaves an impression on the viewer as they approach the mausoleum. It's all the more powerful given the unornamented frieze resting above the doorway, seemingly asking for a name to be there. The façade of the Hertz mausoleum does not provide the passerby with much knowledge as to what lies inside its walls. Given the aforementioned contrast between the massiveness of the exterior walls and the intimacy of the interior layout, a visitor might be surprised upon entering the building. Nonetheless, one can infer some key features of the interior from the building façade. With just a few small stained glass windows punctuating the granite walls, one can safely assume that the interior of the mausoleum is a dimly lit and fairly unornamented place. Understanding the building's history enriches our interpretation of the interplay between inside and out.

The Hertz Mausoleum was commissioned by Helen Hexter for her and her parents seven years after her father, John D. Hertz, passed away. Hertz was an Austrian-born immigrant from Chicago who had founded a massive taxi cab and rental car empire that brought him much success. Rather than being an ostentatious display of family wealth, this was designed to be a place for a daughter to reunite with her parents after moving their remains from Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago. This might prove to be a clue as to why Hexter opted to pay for a larger structure rather than a highly decorated one. The emphasis was on the resting place, family members laid side by side, rather than what the outsider saw.

