

Project 3: Field Documentation and Formal Analysis- **BAILEY MAUSOLEUM**

Fall 2011HP Studio I: Reading Historic Buildings

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Inside the stoic mausoleum that I chose to assess and analyze resides the exciting owner and founder of the Barnum and Bailey Circus, James A. Bailey. Initially I was shocked that such an interesting character would be kept in such an architecturally Greek and serious-looking mausoleum but upon further in depth research and formal analysis of the mausoleum and the man inside it, the pairing became less of a paradox for me. In this paper I plan to show how the mausoleum and the plot of land it resides on both come together in such a way as to orchestrate a type of interactive performance with the visitor that even a showman such as Bailey would of approved of; the performance starting at the front lawn of grass and culminating at the foot of the catacomb in the mausoleum.

To understand the architecture and layout of the building and how it reflects Bailey and his lifestyle one needs a quick biography of him. Essentially, Bailey was a hardworking and ambitious man who fulfilled the American Dream of transforming himself from a poor boy to a multimillionaire and the “Caesar” or “Napoleon” of the circus world.”¹ Because this man was such a legend in the entertainment world I came across multiple stories of Bailey’s early childhood and most illustrated Bailey as having a type of rags to riches themed life. Some articles portrayed Bailey’s rags as more torn and soiled than others with an abusive father whom he escaped by running off to the circus, whereas other articles, portrayed his childhood as merely boring with an oppressive father whom he escaped by running off to the circus.² The later very disturbing biographies painted by the press involving insanity as a Bailey family trait occurred

¹ “The Remarkable Career and Character of James A. Bailey,” *New York Times*, April 15, 1906.

² “King of Circus Men Dead,” *New York Times*, April 12, 1906.

“P.T. Barnum’s Successor: J. A. Bailey the Man Who Now Rules the Circus,” *New York Tribune*, Apr 12, 1891.

after his wife's death 6 years after him, and were the result of an ugly family lawsuit involving Bailey's will and the terms of his wife's will after him. The sister of Bailey's wife, Anne Hutchinsen, tried to illustrate Bailey and her sister as insane and mentally weak people and therefore prone to be easily manipulated by her brother Joseph T. McCaddon into being given most of the Bailey wealth in the Bailey will.³ This case was later thrown out due to insufficient evidence and the original terms of the will were upheld.⁴ The scars left behind from such an ugly lawsuit amongst family members must have healed quickly since descendants of the plaintiff and defendant now both reside on Bailey's plot alongside his wife and himself.

Bailey's plot of land is quite large relative to other surrounding mausoleums giving it plenty of space for relatives to be buried on the outside of the mausoleum. A total of 6 people reside on Bailey's plot. One has to walk across quite a large expanse of grass of about 30 feet before they actually hit the mausoleum itself. Joseph McCaddon, his wife, and their son lay to the outside left of Bailey's mausoleum, however, there is only one stone marker there with Joseph McCaddon's wife's name, Caroline McCaddon, and their son, Joseph Terry McCaddon III, etched upon it. To the right side of Bailey's mausoleum there are no grave markers however two people, Charles R. Hutchinsen and Matilda Hutchinsen, are said to be buried there according to Woodlawn records.⁵ Surprisingly, there exists no landscape plans for such a large plot of land besides a tiny scrawl in the corner of a letter written by the contracting and building company, Lazzari and Barton, addressed to Woodlawn on where to place the foundations (rubble and Portland cement) of the mausoleum on the property.⁶ The landscape is such a crucial element in

³ "Try to Prove Bailey to Have Been Insane: Relatives Contesting Showman's Will Begin Court Action," *New York Times*, January 29, 1907.

⁴ Anna Isabelle Hutchinson, Respondent, v. Joseph T. McCaddon and Theodore D. McCaddon, Supreme Court of New York, Appellate Division, Second Department, May 16, 1913.

⁵ "Record of Interments," *Woodlawn Cemetery*, April, 6, 1971.

⁶ "Bailey Architectural Plans," *Woodlawn Cemetery Archives*, Department of Drawings and Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University.

understanding the building and ultimately the man buried there himself that I found it unfortunate that Lazzari and Barton did not draft a more official landscape plan. Bailey's wife and her brother, Joseph McCaddon, shed light on just how important they too believed the landscape to be in their correspondence letters with Woodlawn Cemetery complaining about the substandard quality of landscape upkeep of their family plot.⁷

As one proceeds towards the mausoleum, halfway across the grassy lawn one finally takes notice of the Greek façade of the mausoleum. Bailey was the Alexander the Great of the circus world and so the Classical Greek façade was an excellent choice in reflecting Bailey as a strong and powerful man. Standing atop 3 stairs, flanking either side of the portico and entryway of the mausoleum, are two Doric columns, holding up a simple triangular Greek pediment. Shells adorn each corner of the roof of the mausoleum and larger shells top the structure in the front and in the back. The entire façade is made up entirely of huge pieces of granite called Barre Vermont stone which contributes to the already heavy and serious Greek exterior.⁸

As one finally makes it across the front lawn and up the stairs of the mausoleum they have yet to journey roughly another 6 feet across the portico to the front doors of the mausoleum. The front double doors of the mausoleum, like the façade, are heavy in nature in that they are made entirely of bronze with a strong geometric Roman lattice design which the grilles on all window exteriors on the sides and back of the mausoleum exhibit as well. In sum, the exterior of the mausoleum is that of a weighty and fortified square-shaped Greek temple structure that reflects Bailey's immense power and strength in the entertainment world.

⁷ "Correspondence," *Woodlawn Cemetery Archives*, Department of Drawings and Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University.

⁸ "Bailey Mausoleum Specifications," *Woodlawn Cemetery Archives*, Department of Drawings and Archives, Avery Library, Columbia University.

Upon entering the interior of the mausoleum, due to the yellow stained glass windows, one is enveloped in a golden light that bounces off the white marble clad walls giving the interior of the mausoleum an ethereal feel. The Greek letters on the stained glass windows- *χρ*ι which stand for the Greek word *χριστός* meaning “Christ” are not an important aesthetic feature for Lazzari and Barton, who let Mrs. Bailey choose the stained glass window designs herself.⁹ My research does not indicate that Mrs. Bailey or her Bailey himself were spiritual individuals suggesting that she chose these windows purely for aesthetic reasons and not for religious reasons.

In sum, the mausoleum is quite a good representation of Bailey. The simple and strong Classical Greek façade reflects Bailey’s character of being a hardworking and powerful man. And also, Bailey’s life as a journey and the nomadic lifestyle required of one who owns a traveling circus is perfectly portrayed in the journey that it takes one to cross his plot to reach his catacomb. The landscape and entire building read like a performance with the climax occurring at the portico and the grand finale occurring at the foot of the stacked marble clad catacombs; and so Bailey even in death still manages to give us a show!

⁹ Ibid.

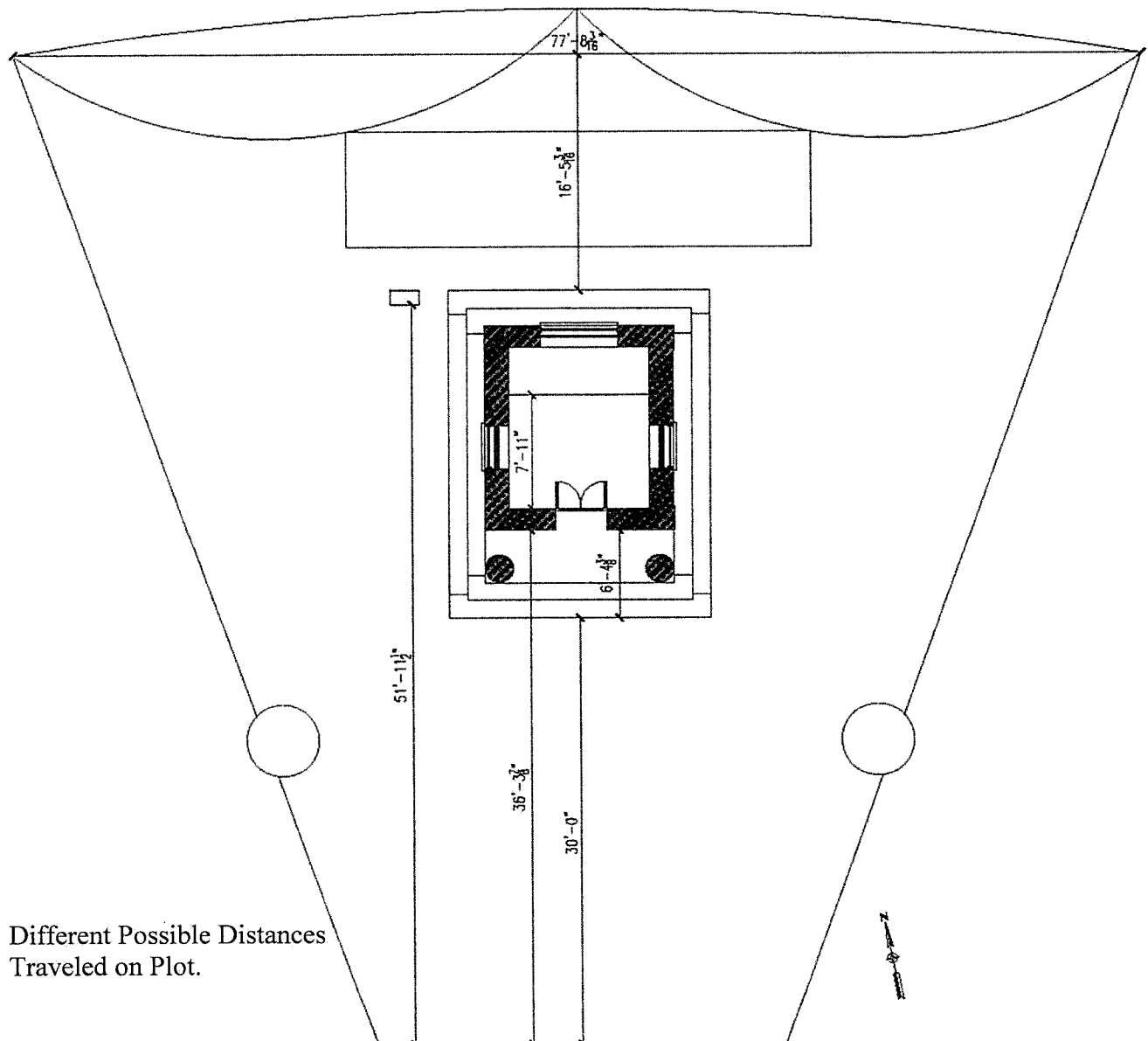
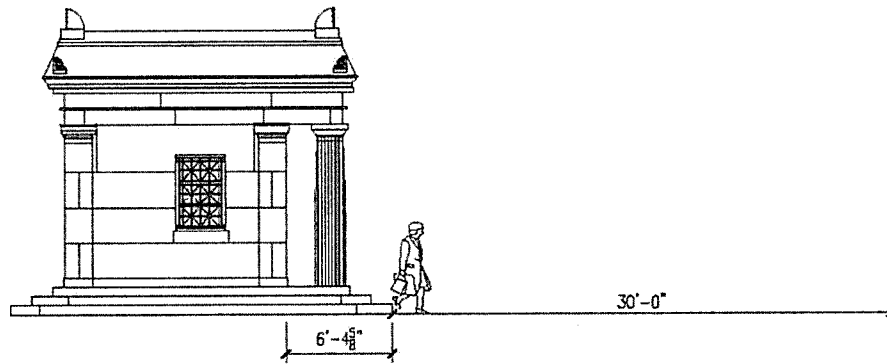


Front Façade

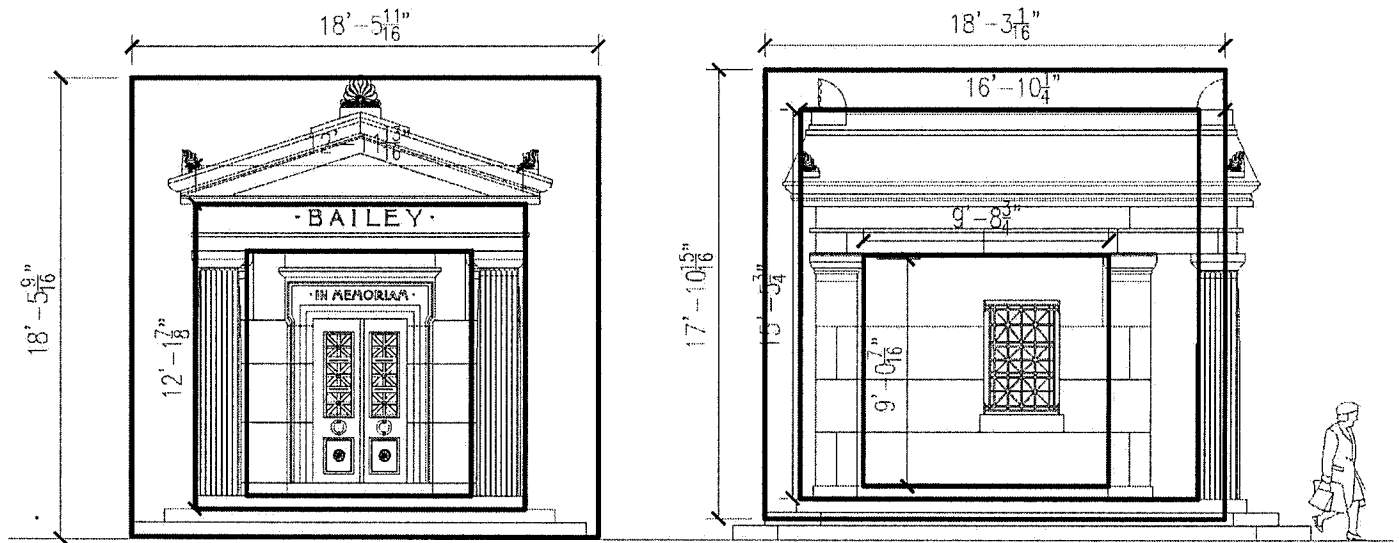


Right Side of Mausoleum

Formal Analysis of Bailey Plot



Formal Analysis continued...



Square-like Quality of Structure.



Aerial View of Woolawn Cemetery Route to Bailey Plot.