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Delafield Mausoleum

Project 3: Field Documentation & Formal Analysis

Woodlawn Cemetery

October 15, 2012

ARCH 4510: Bollack, Dennis & Dolkart



The Delafield Mausoleum is located on Linden Avenue and adjacent to the corner lot on the southwest corner of Linden Avenue (north-south) and Whitewood Avenue (east-west) in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. The structure is set back from Linden Avenue just about as far as it can be within the property lines; two trees corresponding with the back corners of the mausoleum are the only features separating the rear of the building from its western boundary. The mausoleum is also located on an incline that slopes upward away from the street.

This distant and rising procession from the street does a few things. Though it is not completely visible from the intersection of Linden Avenue and Whitewood Avenue, as observers proceed south along Linden Avenue they will be invited to look up and find this structure at a distance with only a lawn of green grass between them and the mausoleum, creating an undisturbed view. This designed approach gives the mausoleum a grandness. It refers to the idea of an Ancient Greek temple on top of a hill. The Delafield Mausoleum is demanding reverence.

Designed and erected by Farrington, Gould & Hoagland, a well-known firm that specialized in mausoleums, monuments, and statuary, it was constructed quite uniquely in comparison to others in Woodlawn as well as to those in their own portfolio. In their 1927 catalog of completed projects, a total of 194 mausoleums were listed - 85 of which were located at Woodlawn Cemetery. Also worthy of note might be that they are the only one listed under the category "Monuments" in the 1930 New York Blue Book Business Directory.¹

The builder evidently wanted to set this mausoleum apart from what surrounds it, in terms of landscaping and building design. Though several mausoleums reference Ancient Greece in style, I was unable to find another mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery that looked like this one. It has a rectangular footprint with a base, an engaged square column on each corner and a roof framing a pediment, but a couple of features make this particular structure unique - the rock-face exterior walls and the oblong entry.

¹ Farrington, Gould and Hoagland, Inc. catalog, 1927. Avery Classics Library; 1930 New York Blue Book Business Dictionary. <<http://www.bklyn-genealogy-info.com/Directory/Blue/1930.Blue.html>> Accessed October 4, 2012.

The design undoubtedly is influenced by Hellenistic architecture. The ashlar between the pilasters is all rock faced with bold projections made to look as uniform as possible. All of the other exterior surfaces are fine hammered. The Delafield coat of arms is located above the doorway, and the name "Delafield" is carved into the lintel. In reference to the fortification of sanctuary at Eleusis (mid-4th century B.C.E.), A.W. Lawrence mentions that the "majority of walls were left with a fairly uneven surface. The bulge resulting from the preliminary hammering was often allowed to remain in all its roughness, or was only slightly trimmed, especially on the exterior of the wall; the interior was dressed." This was apparently common in the Hellenistic age.²

Apart from the doors and vents, the exterior is entirely composed of fine grained Mount Airy Granite.³ The facades are symmetrical. In addition to the rising procession of lawn toward the mausoleum, one must climb 4 stone steps before arriving at the central entry which faces east southeast. The opening is 4' wide and 7'3" tall within which are two bronze doors decorated by Roman latticework that is flanked vertically by 6 rosettes on either side. The use of the Roman latticework on the door might also be a reference to Christianity as well. According to Calder Loth, Senior Architectural Historian for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, "The Latin word for Roman lattice or grating is transenna. Transenna is derived from the Latin term for a net for catching birds, which the form resembles. In early Christian times, the word transenna was used to describe an openwork screen enclosing a shrine in a church."⁴ The rosette was a common feature in Greek architectural ornament and strongly conventionalized even in the Mycenaean period.⁵

The doors open inward, hinging on the interior wall. They are recessed from the exterior and framed by trim. The doorway is crowned by a 6'6" wide lintel with vertical inner jambs and battered outer jambs. The lintel and jambs are emphasized by terminal mouldings. This entry feature is referenced numerous times in Ancient Greek and Mycenaean architecture. According to Allan Marquand, former

² Lawrence, A.W. *Greek Architecture*. Revised with addition by R.A. Tomlinson, 4th edition. Penguin Books, (England: 1983) 293.

³ Avery Library Drawings & Archives.

⁴ Loth, Calder. "Classical Comments: Roman Lattice." *Institute of Classical Architecture: The Classicist Blog*. Posted by Kelly Price on December 1, 2010. <<http://blog.classicist.org/?p=1506>> Accessed October 11, 2012.

⁵ Marquand, Allan. *Greek Architecture*. The MacMillan Company, (New York: 1909) 159.

professor of art and archaeology at Princeton, vertical and inclined jambs occur, “especially in monumental constructions, throughout all periods... Doorways of trapezoidal form ... are found in temples and tombs of the archaic and classic period[,] ... [and the] Hellenistic Greeks appear to have seen in this form a device for giving greater height to doorways.”⁶

Very few mausoleums are entered through the cross axis. I have only seen one other mausoleum with the same form of entry; it was also designed by F,G&H at Kensico Cemetery in Valhalla, New York and is pictured in their catalog.⁷ Ancient Greek structures were entered through the short end most of the time, especially temples. Though it is unusual for the entry to be located where it is, upon entering the Delafield Mausoleum one experiences the feeling of a long narrow temple/sanctuary-like procession because on either side are walls of catacombs. At the other end of the space is a window above an altar: I believe the entry functions aesthetically and practically. It provides the viewer with an unexpected interior experience and also allows for a large number of catacombs, 25 on either side making a total of 50. Twenty-two are occupied thus far.

Gray Tennessee Marble is used as facings for walls of catacombs on either side. The catacombs are separated by marble stringers, and each catacomb face is decorated by a bronze rosette placed highly and centrally. Though not visible, slate was used in the construction of the catacombs. The ceiling is made of 5 marble panels as well which are joined by large rosettes. An altar, also made of marble, is located on the back wall below the window, and both are centered. The altar has Christian-themed objects sitting on top including a cross and a glass chalice. The interior walls and the floor are made of granite and presumably are other faces of the same stone visible from the exterior. The existing window is frosted and chicken-wired with a thin bronze frame, but the original window was most likely stained glass which was removed at some point. The “art glass window” was noted as the “responsibility of the owner”;⁸ further research may yield more information regarding the original window design.

This mausoleum was originally owned by Maturin Livingston Delafield (1836-1917), who was native to New York as were his parents. The Delafield family is a long-established family and according

⁶ Ibid., 76-77.

⁷ Farrington.

⁸ Avery.

to numerous sources of high social status. The *American National Biography* and newspaper articles, especially the *New York Times* indicate this family included several physicians, merchants, and army officers.⁹ Members of the family were often talked about in society columns.

One of Maturin's sons, Brig. Gen. John Ross Delafield was a lawyer who was very involved in much the design and construction of the mausoleum. He was also interested in genealogy and wrote a book about his family background going back to the Middle Ages, entitled *Delafield: a family history*. I did discover that another (older) Delafield Mausoleum is located in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York.¹⁰ From the exterior, it seems that it was originally owned by the John Delafield (1748-1824).¹¹ It also appears to have been built into the earth. It is evident that the structures erected by the Delafield's were designed to exhibit solid tradition and to receive respect.

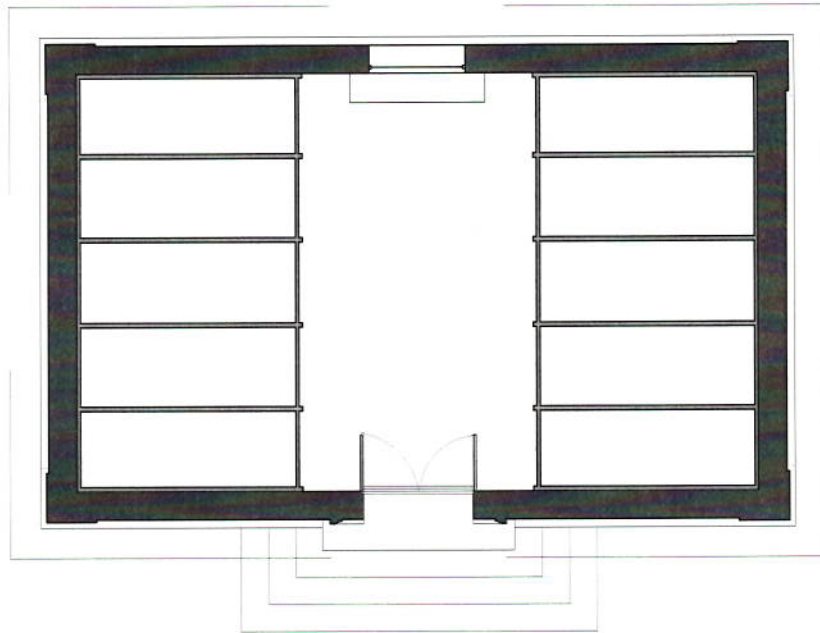
⁹ *American national biography online*. Oxford University Press, New York: c.2000-____.

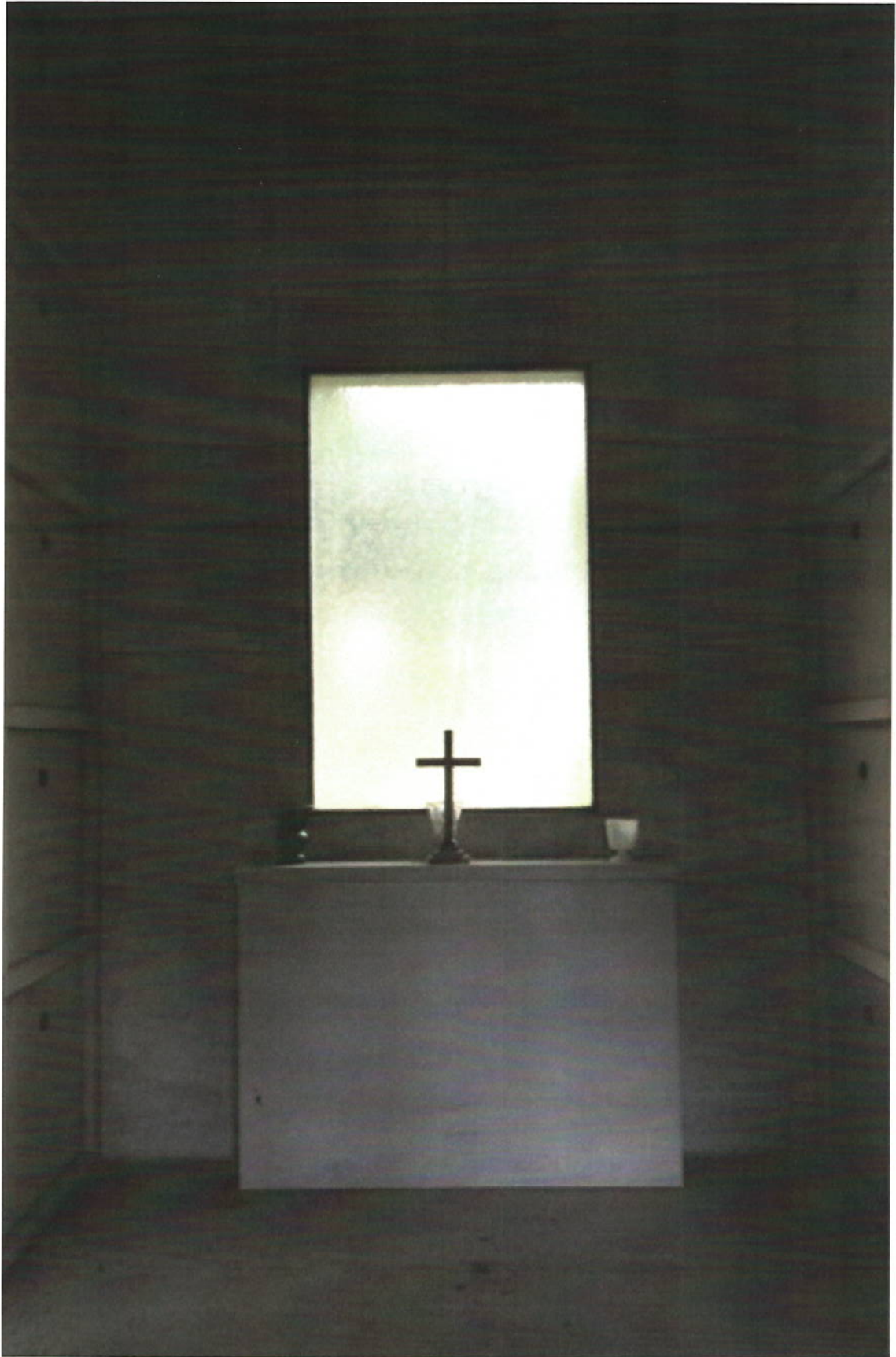
<<http://www.anb.org.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/articles/index.html>> Accessed October 8, 2012;

¹⁰ Delafield, John Ross. *Delafield: the family history*, Volume 2. Privately printed, (New York: 1945) 480.

¹¹ Delafield Family Mausoleum photos by joebe21. Panoramio website.

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