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Studio: Reading Buildings

Project 3: Field Documentation and Formal Analysis

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Moritz Bernard Philipp Mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery

Moritz Bernard Philipp was a wealthy corporate lawyer and art collector. His first wife, Abby Ann Baker, had passed away in 1922 after 45 years of marriage, leaving him with two grown children.ⁱ In 1925, he married the well-known artist Jane Peterson, who was 29 years his junior.ⁱⁱ He bought her a townhouse at 1007 Fifth Avenue, across the street from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and installed a glass-covered art studio on the top floor for her painting. They also shared a summer estate in Ipswich, Massachusetts.ⁱⁱⁱ After an unsuccessful abdominal operation, Moritz passed away on September 28, 1929 at age 81.^{iv} Upon his death, he left a vast fortune of four million dollars to his family.^v

Jane Peterson had come to New York City with almost no money at age 16, in pursuit of a career in painting. She spent years studying and teaching art, exhibiting her canvases and living in near poverty. After finally captivating the interest of wealthy patrons around the turn of the century, Jane began to travel the world and socialize in the affluent circles of New York and Europe, painting everything along her way. While attending the opera as the guest of one of her rich patrons, she met her first husband, Moritz Bernard Philipp.^{vi} When Moritz passed away in 1929, he left her with enough wealth to spend the remainder of her life traveling and painting. Jane briefly married again in 1939, to Dr. James S. McCarthy; however, they divorced in 1941.^{vii} One of Jane's paintings, *Parade*, is currently in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.^{viii}

On July 6, 1931, Jane Peterson purchased Lot One of the Columbine Plot of Woodlawn Cemetery in order to erect a mausoleum for her late husband Moritz Bernard Philipp.^{ix} As noted on the Record of Interments held by Woodlawn Cemetery, the mausoleum was "for the exclusive interment of the remains of said Moritz Bernard Philipp deceased & Jane Peterson Philipp, his widow."^x Although the mausoleum would ultimately shelter the remains of an additional member of their family, the original intent of the mausoleum as a grand statement exemplifying the life and interests shared by the couple is still very evident.

The Presbrey-Leland Mausoleum Company constructed the mausoleum, as can be seen by the blueprints in the Woodlawn Cemetery Archives.^{xi} Although there is no found correspondence between Jane Peterson and Presbrey-Leland, it can most likely be assumed from the appearance of the mausoleum that it was an example of the symmetrical, oblong style model of Presbrey-Leland

mausoleums, with specific elements personalized by Jane. This concept of ordering a pre-determined model and personalizing certain elements appears to have been in vogue in the 1920s and 30s, as can be seen in mausoleum catalogues and in contemporary mausoleums at Woodlawn Cemetery. ^{xii}

In addition to the other known Presbrey-Leland Mausoleums in Woodlawn Cemetery, the 1929 and 1932 editions of the Presbrey-Leland Mausoleum Catalogues present many models of mausoleums that, while not exact, look very similar to the Philipps' mausoleum. This mausoleum, which is rectangular in plan, has four projecting pilasters across both the front and rear facades, which separate the facades into three sections. The outer two sections are almost equal, and the center section is slightly larger. These three sections consist of large, uninterrupted pieces of granite between the pilasters, creating an imposing grandness. There are two projecting pilasters on each side façade, creating a single mass of granite on each. Above the massive slabs of granite on all four sides, projecting horizontal rows connect the vertical pilasters. Like the contemporary mausoleums, these horizontal rows are very delicately carved, producing a touch of elegance on the colossal façade. ^{xiii}

The main focus of the mausoleum is the single entrance in the center of the front façade. As noted, this center section is slightly larger than its neighbors, and is therefore emphasized. The recessed entrance is highlighted by two half columns projecting out from the sides of the two center pilasters. Moreover, the steps leading up to the front façade extend beyond these center pilasters, reaching to the center of the massive sections of granite, connecting the right and left sides of the front façade. These dramatically horizontal steps are punctuated by bulky pieces of granite on each end. As a result, the spectator's focus is drawn straight to the main entrance of the mausoleum. Additionally, the front door is made of dark bronze, a striking contrast to the gray granite, which constitutes the rest of the exterior façade. The recessed dark entrance pulls the spectator into the mausoleum.

As can be seen with many of the completed Presbrey-Leland mausoleums, the Philipp Mausoleum's entrance is very personalized. ^{xiv} For example, the blueprints of the Philipp Mausoleum state that the capitols surrounding the doors were "to be modeled and approved by client." ^{xv} One can see that within the intricate capitols of the two half columns surrounding the front door, there are two faces poking out: a man on the left, and a woman on the right. Furthermore, Opus A. Franco of Venice signed his name on the engraved bronze doors of the entrance, causing one to assume that they too were a personalized detail, imported from Europe. On the interior side of the doors, there is a carved plaque, stating that the engraved pictures in the panels on the front of the door were Moritz and Jane's favorite paintings from their home on Fifth Avenue and the projecting rosettes between the

pictures are examples of their favorite flowers from their gardens. As the plaque states, "the things we enjoyed together in life, we will keep near us in death."

The inside of the mausoleum is covered in marble panels, punctuated by rosettes on the ceiling and slightly projecting pilasters on the sides, corresponding with the exterior pilasters. These pilasters are connected by slightly recessed beams on the ceiling of the interior, continuing the separation of space into three large sections, as can be seen on the front and rear facades of the mausoleum. Both Moritz and Jane's sarcophaguses are on raised platforms; Moritz is all the way to the left of the mausoleum and Jane to the right. This corresponds with the male and female faces on the half column capitals surrounding the doors. One can therefore assume that the mausoleum was definitely split up into three sections architecturally and physically: the left for the male, the right for the female, and the middle as a shared space, constituting the very personalized door, and connecting the two other sections with the oversized steps.

Per her request, and the approval of Jane, Dorothy Philipp's urn is also located in the mausoleum. Dorothy was a granddaughter of Moritz by his first marriage. Although it was obviously not the original intent to have anyone else interred in the mausoleum, as can be seen in Dorothy's correspondence with Woodlawn Cemetery in the late 1950s and the Cemetery's Record of Interments, she never married and appeared to have no other options.^{xvi,xvii,xviii} Dorothy's urn is located on a pedestal attached to the middle of the rear wall. This urn neither encumbers the three divided sections of the mausoleum nor adds an undesirable element to the interior space. The urn is located in the shared space of the center of the mausoleum, which doesn't impede on Moritz or Jane's sections. Moreover, the verticality of Dorothy's pedestal and urn adds to the immense verticality of the inside of the mausoleum.

Since there is nothing above the sarcophaguses or the urn, there is a feeling of vastness in the inside of the structure, corresponding to the massive nature of the granite slabs on the exterior. Furthermore, the vast space in the interior of the mausoleum is complemented by the large plot on which the mausoleum is located. The structure rests near the rear of a circle-shaped piece of land, surrounded in part by a stone path, which connects to the fork in a paved road. Today, two small trees punctuate the two spots where the stone path meets the paved road. There is also a very large pine tree directly behind the mausoleum, and a wide bush to the left of the structure. However, there are no records of the original intent for the landscaping around the mausoleum. Nevertheless, the general feeling of colossal proportions and importance embellished by intricate and personal details, a trend in the construction of mausoleums in the 1920s and 30s, was definitely the intention of Jane when she commissioned this mausoleum and its elements to be built for her late husband Moritz.

ⁱ U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Twelfth Census, 1900, Manhattan, New York, New York, "Abbie A. Philipps." 30 September 2010 <<http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1900usfedcen&indiv=try&h=67018860>>

ⁱⁱ "Miss Jane Peterson, Artist, the Bride of M. Bernard Philipp, Retired Lawyer," *New York Times*: 20 March 1925, page 21. 30 September 2010 <<http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu>>

ⁱⁱⁱ "Once Poor Artists Leaves Fortune," *New York Times*. 10 July 1966, page 40. 30 September 2010 <<http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu>>

^{iv} "Moritz B. Philipp Dies At Age Of 81," *New York Times*. 29 September 1929, page N6. 30 September 2010 <<http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu>>

^v "M. B. Philipp Willed \$4,000,000 to Family," *New York Times*. 23 October 1929, page 28. 30 September 2010 <<http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu>>

^{vi} "About New York: The Girl Who Came Here in Second-Hand Dresses Now Walks With Princes," *New York Times*. 12 December 1956, page 65. 30 September 2010 <<http://proquest.umi.com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu>>

^{vii} Patricia Jobe Pierce, "Peterson, Jane," *American National Biography Online*. February 2000. 30 September 2010 <<http://www.anb.org/articles/17/17-01581-article.html>>

^{viii} Jane Peterson, "Parade," Metropolitan Museum of Art Online. 11 October 2010 <http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_of_Art/collection_database/american_paintings_and_sculpture/parade_jane_peterson/objectview.aspx?OID=20012122&collID=2&dd1=2>

^{ix} Ralph Bullock, letter to Woodlawn Cemetery, 15 February 1957, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Archives, Columbia University.

^x Record of Interments, Woodlawn Cemetery.

^{xi} Presbrey-Leland Studios, Blueprints of Moritz Bernard Philipp Mausoleum, 1931, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Archives, Columbia University.

^{xii} Presbrey-Leland Studios, Book of Presbrey-Leland Memorials (New York: Presbrey-Leland Studios, 1929 & 1932)

^{xiii} Ibid

^{xiv} Ibid

^{xv} Presbrey-Leland Studios, Blueprints of Moritz Bernard Philipp Mausoleum, 1931, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Archives, Columbia University.

^{xvi} Record of Interments, Woodlawn Cemetery.

^{xvii} Ralph Bullock, letter to Woodlawn Cemetery, 15 February 1957, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Archives, Columbia University.

^{xviii} U.S. Department of the Interior, Census Office, Fifteenth Census, 1930, Manhattan, New York, New York, "Dorothy Philipp." 30 September 2010 <<http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?rank=1&gsfn=dorothy&gsln=philipp>>

MORITZ BERNARD PHILIPP



