

WARREN MAUSOLEUM  
Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, New York



HP Studio I : Reading Historic Buildings  
Fall 2015 • Faculty Françoise Bollack, Ward Dennis & Andrew Dolkart  
Project III: Field Documentation & Formal Analysis

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## WARREN MAUSOLEUM Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, New York

Lewis Baker Warren died prematurely at the young age of 23 on November 5, 1912. This must have been a distressing and lonely time for his parents, Charles Howard Warren and Lillian Baker Warren, especially since he was their only son. Lewis was born into an affluent and well-connected family in New York City.<sup>1</sup> From a seemingly perfect upbringing, it must have been shocking for his parents to have tragedy strike right after his freshman year at Yale University. Forced to leave due to illness, he never returns to his sophomore year.<sup>2</sup> Shortly after, Mr. Warren commissions the design of the Warren Mausoleum in April 1913.<sup>3</sup>

Lewis Baker Warren's father, Charles Howard Warren, was born in Carlton, New York<sup>4</sup> and made his name as the protégé of James J. Hill, helping to manage the Great Northern Railway. After moving to New York City, he held the prestigious position of treasurer at the billion-dollar Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York from 1906 to 1925.<sup>5,6</sup> Mutual Life was the first and largest insurance company in New York, and later the entire country. The company only had losses during the Great Depression, and even thrived throughout the war years. Through his position, Mr. Warren was exposed to other prominent socialite families of America. He was an active member of numerous organizations, including the New York Chamber of Commerce, Union League, Metropolitan Club, Bankers Club, Economic Club and Oakland Golf Club.

Not much is known of Lillian Baker Warren, except that she was born in Ohio and outlived both her son and husband. As a family, they were extremely conservative and upheld the Protestant Christian values of many other elite American families at the time. Upon his death, Mr. Warren left a \$1.4 million (valued today at over \$23.8 million) endowment to Yale University in memory of his son, but only for "scholarships of boys of the Anglo-Saxon race," specifying they must be Christian and American-born.<sup>7, 8</sup> This was an interesting directive in the year 1935, especially with Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany on January 20, 1933.<sup>9</sup>

It seems that no direct relatives were left after Mrs. Warren's passing, and this is evident in the melancholy and permanent architecture envisioned by Mr. Warren and the C.E. Tayntor Granite Company.<sup>10</sup> What is striking when you first walk up to the site is

1 Announcement in Society page *Vogue*: 40.11 (Dec 1, 1912). Pgs. 146, 148. "Died at home at 1 West 72nd Street, New York."

2 For Anglo-Saxons. *Time*, Dec 30, 1925. Vol. 26, Issue 27.

3 Examination Sheet. Order No. 489. Warren Mausoleum, Folder 1. Woodlawn Archive, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.

4 Charles H. Warren Dies; Once Insurance Official; Former Mutual Life Treasurer, Great Northern Manager. *New York Herald Tribune* (1926-1962), Nov 30, 1935, New York Tribune/Herald Tribune, pg. 12.

5 Founded February 1, 1843. The oldest continuous writer of insurance policies in America.

6 Clough, Shepard B., *A Century of American Life Insurance: A History of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York, 1843-1943*. Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 1970.

7 Warren left \$1,662,393 Estate: Yale to Get \$1,400,000 Fund as Memorial to His Son at Death of Widow. *New York Times* (1923-Current file), Feb 3, 1937, The New York Times with Index. Pg. 14.

8 Given As Memorial to Anglo-Saxon Race. *The Sun* (1837-1989), December 17, 1935, The Baltimore Sun, pg. 17.

9 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Hitler Comes to Power*. <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007671>.

10 Estates Appraised. *New York Times* (1923-Current file), Feb 4, 1937, The New York Times with Index, Pg. 42. "Gross assets, \$1,789,533; net \$1,662,393. To Lillian Baker Warren, widow, jewelry, personal effects, \$155,455 and life estate in residue; Ruth Stiles Johnson, niece, \$25,000; Elizabeth S. Merchant, Nancy T. Ragland, nieces, and Harold

its prominence on a corner lot, demonstrating the Warren family's affluence and high place in society, but also how it is set in a field of rhododendron flanking the mausoleum and pine trees to the back creating a dark, verdant background. It is clear that the Clyde Fitch mausoleum to the north existed previously, and the Warren Mausoleum was built taller in scale and grander within the existing context.<sup>11</sup>

Placed at the bottom of a gentle slope at the corner of Whitewood and Linden Avenues, you approach down Whitewood Avenue to the corner. It is clear that the temple-front façade is the main emphasis and was designed to be situated as an object within this highly intentional setting of natural elements to separate it from other present structures.<sup>12</sup> (Figure 1) The mausoleum is meant to endure in isolation, as if nothing else existed nearby.

The design by C. E. Tayntor Granite Company was clearly appropriated from a Greek temple façade. Though the proportions are not perfectly classical, this allowed for practical adaptations. For example, the sarcophagus dimensions needed to fit in the interior cella, and can explain why the front tetrastyle columns are not evenly spaced, as it would be in a perfectly classical façade. A classic Ionic temple front and protruding pediment dominates the west façade, with the entrance symmetrically placed in the center.<sup>13</sup> (Figure 2) The prostyle tetrastyle plan was also typically depicted with Ionic columns.<sup>14</sup> (Figure 3) The choice of Ionic columns also points to the traditional affinities of the Warren family, as Summerson points out was "...used for matronly saints – neither too tough nor too slender and also for men of learning."<sup>15</sup> The virtues of the slender and delicate Ionic order play throughout the classical façade and provide a harmonious temple front.

One enters the main ingress, by ascending two steps to a main platform (stylobate) on the third level that provides a plinth around the entire mausoleum. This makes it appear as an object on a pedestal, another similarity to Greek and Roman temples. The fluting on the Ionic columns gives a textured appearance, to further contrast the receding, smooth granite façade beyond. The portico is relatively narrow. You are not meant to linger there. It provides a dynamic entrance into the main inner cella space where the three sarcophagi lie. The sarcophagus of Lewis Baker Warren in the center is flanked by his two parents to either side, demonstrating that he was the epicenter of their lives and his hierarchy on the main central axis of symmetry is intentional.

The entrance creates a dramatic use of shadow and provides depth to the front portico, pulling you into the interior space. The main door is composed of United States standard bronze and highly articulated with beautiful geometric patterns, creating a

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V, Sotry, not related, \$2,000 each; Lewis Baker Warren Memorial Fund at Yale University, New Haven, Conn., remainder in residue; one other bequest. Chief assets, stocks and bonds, \$1,718,792. White & Case, attorneys, 14 Wall St.<sup>11</sup>

11 *Dimensions and Grades Map*. Warren Mausoleum, Folder 1. Woodlawn Archive, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York. April 15, 1930.

12 *Map of Lot No. 13218, Section 121, Plot Wintergreen, Planting Plan*. Warren Mausoleum, Folder 1. Woodlawn Archive, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York. Feb 5, 1914.

13 Similar to the Temple on the Ilissos (Temple of Artemis) in Athens, possibly designed by Kalikrates in Ancient Greece, from 449-430 B.C.E. Fletcher, Banister. *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*. Sixth edition, rewritten and enlarged. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. Page 97d.

14 Temple "B", Selinus. Source: Fletcher, Banister. *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*. Sixth edition, rewritten and enlarged. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. Page 76.

15 Summerson, John. *The Classical Language of Architecture*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1963. Page 13.

further contrast to the smooth white Barre granite of the façade composition. The entrance doesn't even have a proper handle to ensure informal ingress and egress, perhaps a deliberate choice by Charles Warren to avoid access by various guests into this sanctified space. All the main elements, commencing from the bronze doors, are mirrored from this central, symmetrical axis, including the sarcophagus of Lewis Baker Warren and the opalescent stained glass window above.

As the only source of light in the mausoleum, the stained glass window depicts a verse from John 14:1 and a pictorial scene of what I believe to be St. John the Evangelist writing the Book of Revelations from a window overlooking an ocean scene with the sunrise to the background.<sup>16-17</sup> (Figure 4) This is symbolic of the early passing of Lewis Baker Warren, and parallels the early death of Jesus Christ as explained here, "...howsoever they might see him treated, they should believe in him more firmly, as his sufferings, death, and resurrection should be to them the most positive proof of his being the Messiah, the Savior of the world."<sup>18</sup> Though no other overtly religious symbols are present in the mausoleum (or in the historical research of the Warren family's involvement in specific churches or religious organizations), it is clear from their wishes in the description of the Lewis Baker Warren Fund to Yale University that the scholarship recipients are of "Christian faith."<sup>19</sup>

Aside from these decorative elements, the mausoleum was designed to be austere, yet of the best quality Barre Vermont granite available. (Figure 5) The construction of the building is a study in granite. It is the only material used in the construction, aside from the bronze doors, stained glass, and metal framing elements. In the manufacturing specifications, the C. E. Tayntor Granite Company specifies that the "...construction of the entire work is to be of the best and most substantial kind in every respect."<sup>20</sup> Even through it's conservative in design, the family's desire to represent themselves with the best material available is impeccable.<sup>21</sup>

The interior plan can be determined from the façade. You can tell as you approach that it will be a rectangular interior space, with a main axis to the corner of the Linden and Whitewood Avenues. It is unclear from the exterior gable roofline what the interior will be and later as you enter, you find out that it is a flat interior roof made of a single piece of granite.<sup>22</sup> (Figure 6) The construction demonstrates the permanence desired by Charles Howard Warren, especially since no immediate relatives lived on past Lillian Baker Warren.

The choice of C. E. Tayntor Granite Company<sup>23</sup> was a popular one in 1913; in Woodlawn Cemetery alone they are responsible for the construction of 161 other mausoleums. They were experts in monuments and mausoleums, even taking out

16 John 14:1 "Do not let your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."

17 Encyclopedia Britannica. *Saint John the Apostle*. Often depicted writing the Gospel of John in The New Testament in artwork.

18 Draper, Richard D. *Teaching the Book of Revelation: Five Considerations*. *Religious Educator* 14, no. 1 (2013): 83-107.

19 \$1,000,000 for Yale in Warren Will. *New York Times* (1923-Current file), Dec 17, 1935; *The New York Times with Index*, Pg. 27.

20 *Specifications for the Manufacture and Completion of Mausoleum to be Erected in Woodlawn Cemetery by C. E. Tayntor Granite Company for Charles H. Warren, New York City*. Woodlawn Archive, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.

21 Final bill was \$53,937; estimated to have cost \$1,256,261.47 today.

22 This design was patented by C. E. Tayntor of May 14, 1907. This was significant because it was waterproof by design and meant to be in structures that would not frequently need maintenance. <http://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com/pages/US853657-0.png>

23 They filed as a public company in 1906 with the US Stock Exchange and had offices in a prominent location of 29 West 34th Street, New York Incorporation – Stock Quote 9. *New York Times* (1857-1922), Feb 9, 1906, *The New York Times with Index*, Pg. 12.

advertisements branding themselves as suppliers to the best architects in the country and had projects in almost every state in America.<sup>24</sup> (Figure 7) Charles E. Tayntor himself was a notable figure and “wealthy granite dealer”, who made news after being robbed in a theatrical fashion, at his home at 4320 Fifteenth Avenue, Brooklyn. As experts in their field, it is certain that Charles Warren knew he was getting the foremost granite mausoleum one could commission.<sup>25</sup>

The Warren Mausoleum portrays a prominent New York City family that lost their only son before he reached his prime and had to mourn that ill-fated loss. Through the Lewis Baker Warren fund, his memory lives on, but it is doubtful that anyone has visited the interior of the mausoleum in decades since the passing of Lillian Baker Warren in 1951, besides an immediate niece or nephew.

Due to the superb construction and high-quality materials, the mausoleum has stood the test of time. There is weathering where water has collected on the granite surface underneath windows as well as a substantial separation in the center of the roof pediment that needs attention. The interior needs basic maintenance work and the overall rhododendron plantings need to be trimmed back to provide a more curated backdrop for the mausoleum façade. An endowment for maintenance did exist upon the passing of Charles Howard Warren, and the endowment plaque at the front of the mausoleum shows that it should still be funded presently. It would be stunning to see the mausoleum fully restored to the original intention of the timeless Greek temple prostyle tetrastyle Ionic façade in a organized landscape of foliage that Charles Howard Warren originally commissioned at the untimely death of his only son.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Year Book of The Architectural League of New York (1909)*.

<sup>25</sup> *New York Tribune (1900-1910)*, Nov 17, 1908, Pg. 2.

<sup>26</sup> *Bankers Trust Company letter of receipt, December 15, 1939*. Warren Mausoleum, Folder 1. Woodlawn Archive, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.

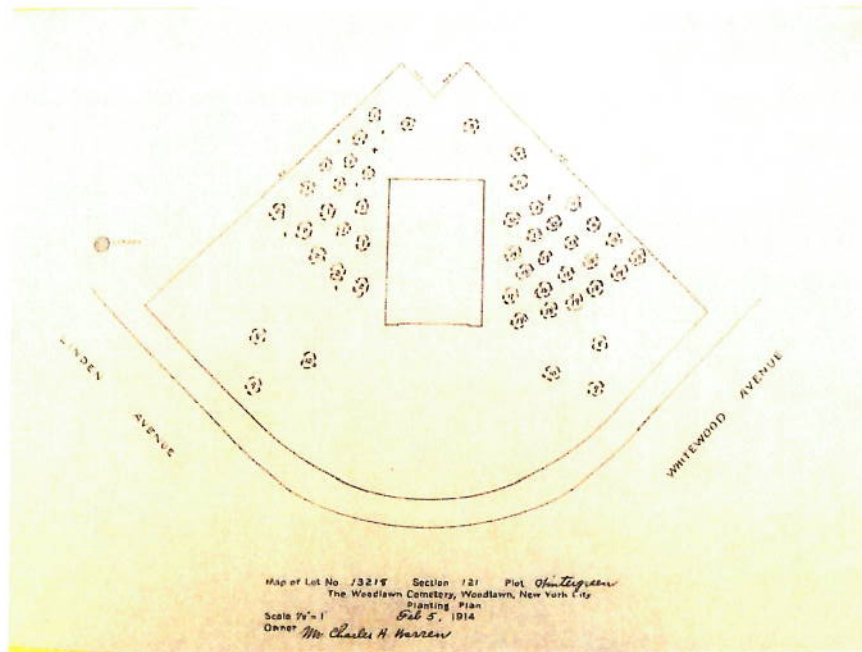


FIGURE 1

Map of Lot No. 13218, Section 121, Plot Wintergreen. Planting Plan. Warren Mausoleum, Folder 1. Woodlawn Archive, Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York. Feb 5, 1914.

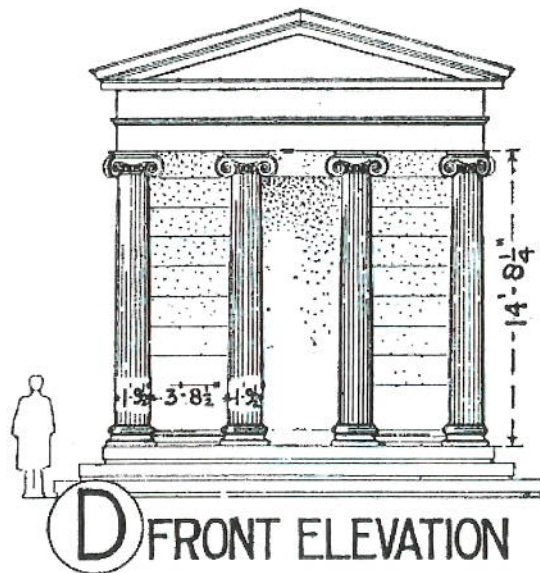


FIGURE 2

Similar to the Temple on the Ilissos (Temple of Artemis) in Athens, possibly designed by Kalikrates in Ancient Greece, from 449-430 B.C.E. Fletcher, Banister. A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method. Sixth edition, rewritten and enlarged. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. Page 97d.

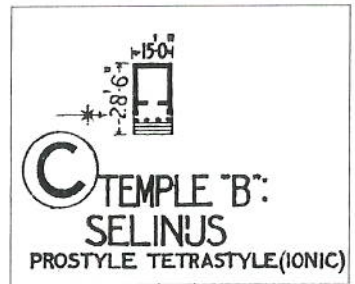
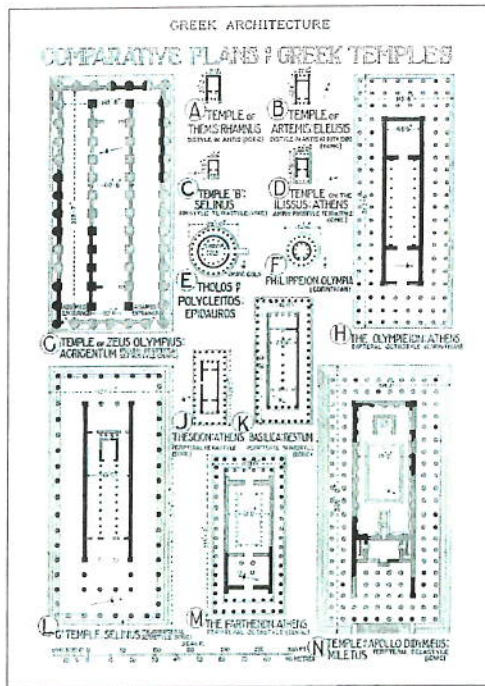


FIGURE 3

Temple "B", Selinus. Source: Fletcher, Banister. *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method*. Sixth edition, rewritten and enlarged. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1921. Page 76.

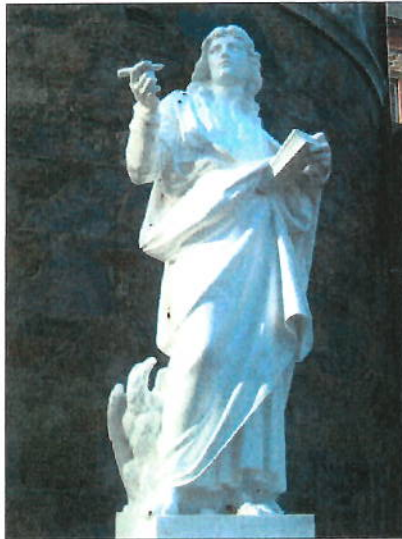


FIGURE 4

(Left to Right): St. John the Evangelist by Zampieri (1621–29), National Gallery, London; Statue of John the Evangelist outside St. John's Seminary, Boston; Stained Glass Window in Warren Mausoleum. John 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me."

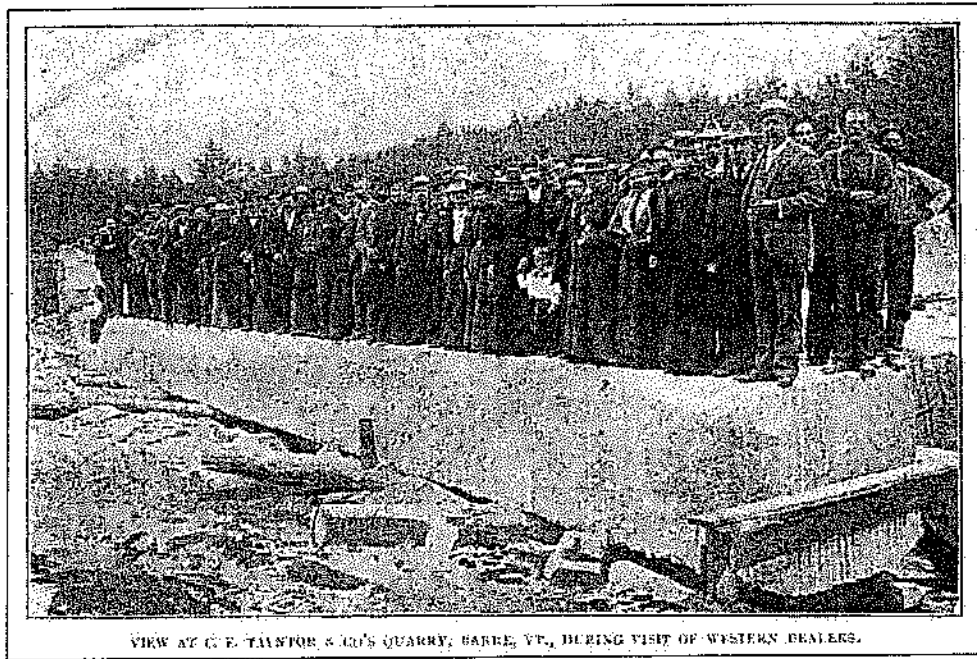


FIGURE 5

Hills, C. W. "The Excursion to the Quarries" (at Barre, Vermont) Monumental News, Vol. 7, No. 10, October 1895, pp. 621-622

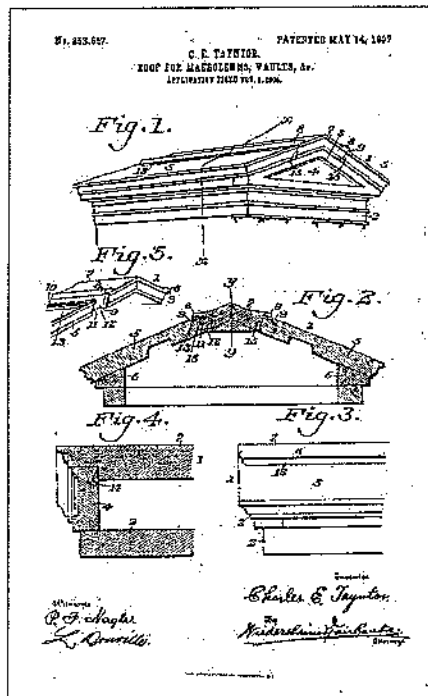
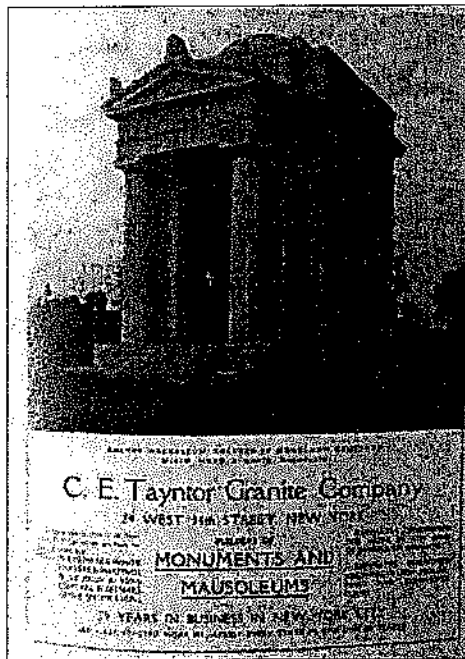


FIGURE 6

This design was patented by C. E. Tayntor of May 14, 1907. <http://patentimages.storage.googleapis.com/pages/US853657-0.png>





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FIGURE 7  
Year Book of The Architectural League of New York (1909).

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