

The Thomas Dimond Mausoleum

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Columbia University Historic Preservation Studio - Fall 2018

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In 1919, Jennie Dimond commissioned the W.W. Leland Company to design a large mausoleum in Aster plot, on the eastern edge of Woodlawn Cemetery, for her recently deceased husband. Prominently located on a large circular lot at the intersection of Butternut and Park Avenues—albeit on the less fashionable side, where plots were smaller than those near Central Avenue--the mausoleum makes a clear statement of the family's relative wealth and status.¹ An aerial photograph taken shortly after the mausoleum's completion cogently illustrates the building's scale and prominent position vis-à-vis neighboring monuments (Figure 1). The design of the mausoleum is characterized by the restrained use of classical vocabulary and a strong emphasis on the central entrance. The building's sober lines and massive, smooth hammer dressed granite blocks—presumably sourced from Mt. Airy, North Carolina as per construction specifications--give a strong impression of solemnity well suited to its function.² Two Greek Doric columns, in the central porch, frame a sculpted bronze door. The door, depicting a female figure surrounded by blooming flowers, is signed by artist Tina Gustafson, who also collaborated with William Henry Deacy, the Columbia-trained head architect of the Leland Studios, on a door for the Fried-Needle-Stern mausoleum at Woodlawn.³ The use of sculptured doors with symbolic figures was gaining in popularity circa 1920,⁴ and a number of monuments in the

¹ Andrew Scott Dolkart. "Designing Woodlawn: Buildings and Landscapes." *Sylvan Cemetery: Architecture, Art & Landscape at Woodlawn*. ed. Charles D. Warren, Carole Ann Fabian and Janet Parks. (New York: Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library : The Woodlawn Conservancy, 2014), 61-65.

² General Conditions, Specifications for the Dimond Mausoleum, 1919, Folder No. 38, Drawer No. 1.3, Major Monuments, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library.

³ Notable Mausoleums of the Year. *Monumental News* 34, no. 2 (1922): 95: <https://books.google.com/books?id=bUNBAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA95&lpg=PA95&dq=stina+gustafson+artist&source=bl&ots=7qMuQVR5xH&sig=xUokBSqgEF9LpxDv7zdSeSbMi5U&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewj4k8Lgm9TdAhUPwlkKHbt9AsIQ6AEwC3oECAQQAQ#v=onepage&q=stina%20gustafson%20artist&f=false>.

⁴ *Ibid.* 93.

mausoleum's vicinity feature doors with strikingly similar iconography, most noticeably the Bruckner Monument on Dahlia plot, which was, however, built much later⁵ (Figure 2).

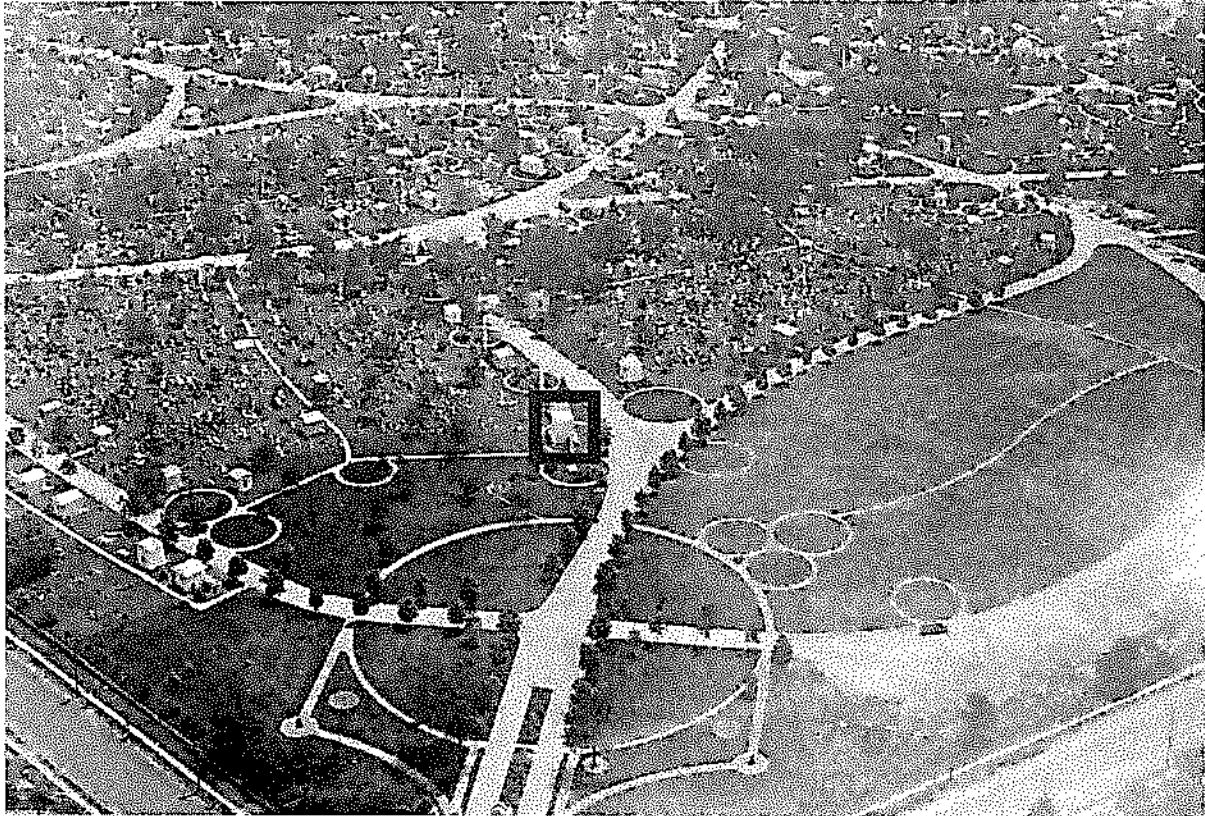


Figure 1. Aerial view, circa 1920, showing newly constructed Dimond Mausoleum, highlighted. (Aerial Views of Woodlawn. Woodlawn Cemetery Photographs, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library.)

⁵ Notes and calculations, correspondence, specifications, lot diagram, examination sheet, 1956, Folder No. 4, Box 3, Major Monuments, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library.

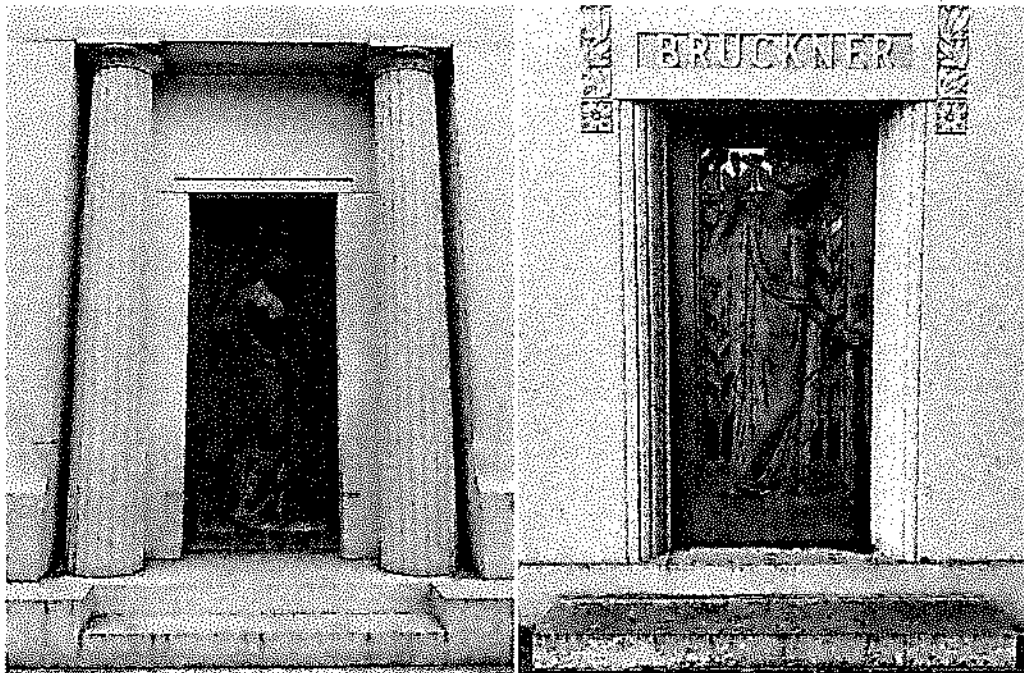


Figure 2. Comparison of Dimond and Bruckner Mausoleum doors

Crossing the threshold, the stolid lines of the exterior give way to fine materials and rich ornamentation. According to building specifications, eggshell or highly polished light-veined pink Tennessee Marble is affixed to the interior walls with bronze anchors, while slabs of the same material are suspended from the granite roof by means of bronze rods, finished with decorative bronze rosettes.⁶ Directly in line from the bronze door, a brilliant stained-glass window shows purple irises burgeoning vigorously against a sunburst of yellow and orange glass. Pride of place goes to two handsome ornamental sarcophagi on either side of the door—one for Thomas and one for Jennie Dimond—sculpted from white Italian marble.⁷ The sarcophagi stand on large stone lion paws; each sarcophagus is decorated with two finely carved anthemions flanking the epitaphs, as well as leaf and dart and running-dog motifs on the trim

⁶ General Conditions, Specifications for the Dimond Mausoleum, 1919, Folder No. 38, Drawer No. 1.3, Major Monuments, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Architectural & Fine Arts Library.

⁷ *Ibid.*

elements (Figure 3). In short, the Dimond Mausoleum is an elegantly building, dignified in its scale, built with fine materials and designed with an eye for the occasional dramatic gesture.

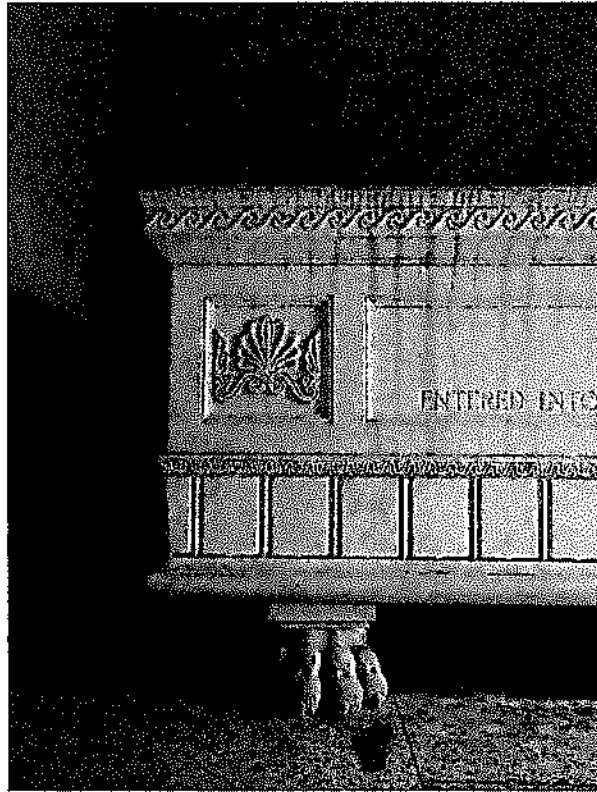


Figure 3. Sarcophagus Detail

Thomas Dimond

Thomas Dimond was born at Garrison, Putnam County, New York on September 1, 1854 to William Dimond and Katherine Smith Dimond. He learned the iron business from his father, and headed the Thomas Dimond Iron Works, in which he made a respectable fortune.⁸

⁸ *American Biography: A New Cyclopedia*, Volume 5, s.v. "Dimond, Thomas," accessed September 27, 2018, <https://books.google.com/books?id=x2UUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA160&lpg=PA160&dq=thomas+dimond+cyclopedia+of+american+biography&source=bl&ots=uIGljF9qru&sig=9rUd08a-F9fZF1UKDDRKzQaCSI8&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiY18bkrMXdAhVPgt8KHc2IAAIQ6AEwA3oECACQAQ#v=onepage&q=thomas%20dimond%20cyclopedia%20of%20american%20biography&f=false>.

The company was reputed to be a leading firm in the iron trade and produced a wide range of ironwork for buildings.⁹ Although ads for the company are not hard to come by (Figure 4), unfortunately no catalogue for the company could be found. Thomas Dimond was a member of the Society of Architectural Iron Manufacturers, president of the Iron League of New York and New Jersey, director of the Building Trades Association of New York City, member of the Mechanic's and Tradesman's Society, and member of the Chamber of Commerce, among other business and financial associations.¹⁰

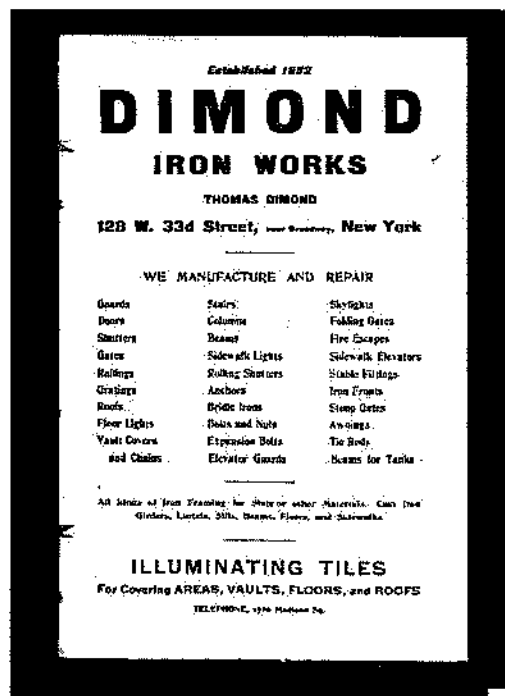


Figure 4. Ad for Thomas Dimond Iron Works
(<http://www.waltergrutchfield.net/images/dimond-1906.jpg>)

⁹ "Thomas Dimond" *New York Times*, Dec 31, 1902.

¹⁰ "Dimond, Thomas." *American Biography: A New Cyclopaedia*, Volume 5.

Thomas Dimond also had extensive real estate interests in the Middle West Side that landed him in the press at significant junctures in the area's development. *The Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide* jocosely noted in 1905 that Thomas Dimond had greatness thrust upon him, when he found his foundry on 32nd street sandwiched between property belonging to the Pennsylvania and the McAdoo Railroad Companies¹¹ (Figure 5). Dimond's property was surprisingly spared from the condemnation proceedings initiated by the latter company, possibly because it did not want to overstep into territory slated for use by the other company. Dimond sat on these "Dimond Mines" until 1912, when he sold the property--then valued at approximately two million dollars--to the Stuyvesant Real Estate Company, a holding company for the Pennsylvania Railroad.¹² By then, Penn Station had been completed across the way and Gimbel's to the East of the property (Figure 6). The former location of the foundry is now home to McKim, Mead and White's Hotel Pennsylvania (Figure 7). As a leading business and property owner in the Middle West Side, Thomas Dimond was also president of the Seventh Avenue Association, which proposed the extension of lower Seventh Avenue and advocated for the construction of the original route for the Seventh Avenue subway as part of the H-subway system we see today. The association had contended that an alternate plan proposed by the Interborough Rapid Transit Company in 1912 bypassed the area's business section.¹³ He was the chairman of its Civic Conditions Committee, charged with purging Seventh Avenue of the "Tenderloin" element¹⁴. In the working-class district referred to as the Tenderloin department

¹¹ "A Remarkably Valuable Location." *The Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide* 76, no. 1970 (1905): 950.

¹² "This Week in Real Estate" *The Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide*, vo. 90, no. 2323.

¹³ "Seventh Avenue: A New Association Asks the City to Build a Subway for the Middle West Side." *The Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide* 89, no. 2288 (1912): 134.

¹⁴ *The Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide* 89, no. 2291 (1912): 282.

stores, theaters, factories, and warehouses were interspersed with dozens of brothels.¹⁵ Following the sale of his foundry on 32nd St Thomas Dimond retired from the iron industry¹⁶ and was president of the Dimond Apperson Motor Company, the appointed distributor of Apperson cars for New York and its environs.¹⁷

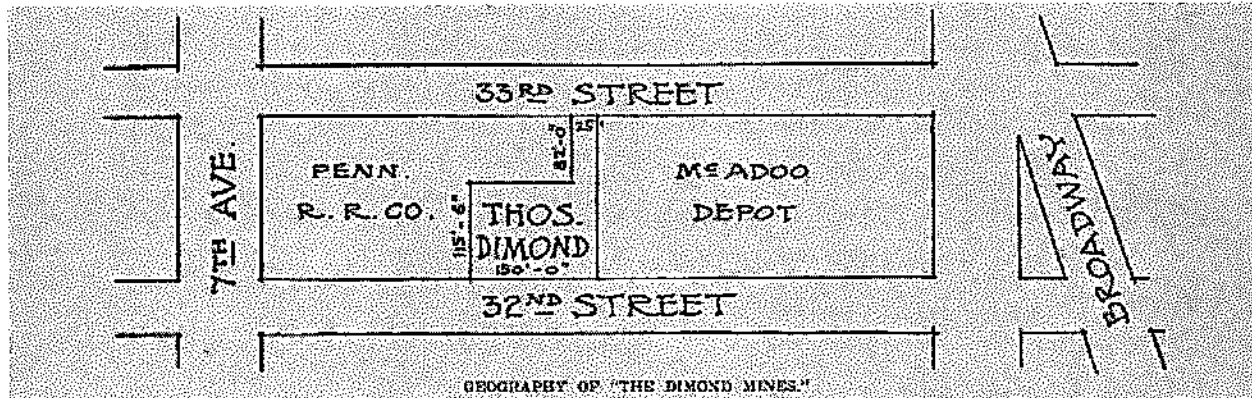


Figure 5. Dimond property in 1905

(“A Remarkably Valuable Location.” *The Real Estate Record and Builder’s Guide* 76, no. 1970 (1905): 950.)

¹⁵ Timothy J. Gilfoyle. *The City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 203-208.

¹⁶ “Thomas Dimond Dead” *New York Times*, Apr 24, 1918.

¹⁷ “News and Notes from the Automobile Trade” *New York Times*, Dec 13, 1914.



Figure 6. Location of Dimond property in 1911

(Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library. "Manhattan, V. 5, Plate No. 35 [Map bounded by 7th Ave., West 37th St., 6th Ave., West 34th St.]" New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed September 27, 2018.)

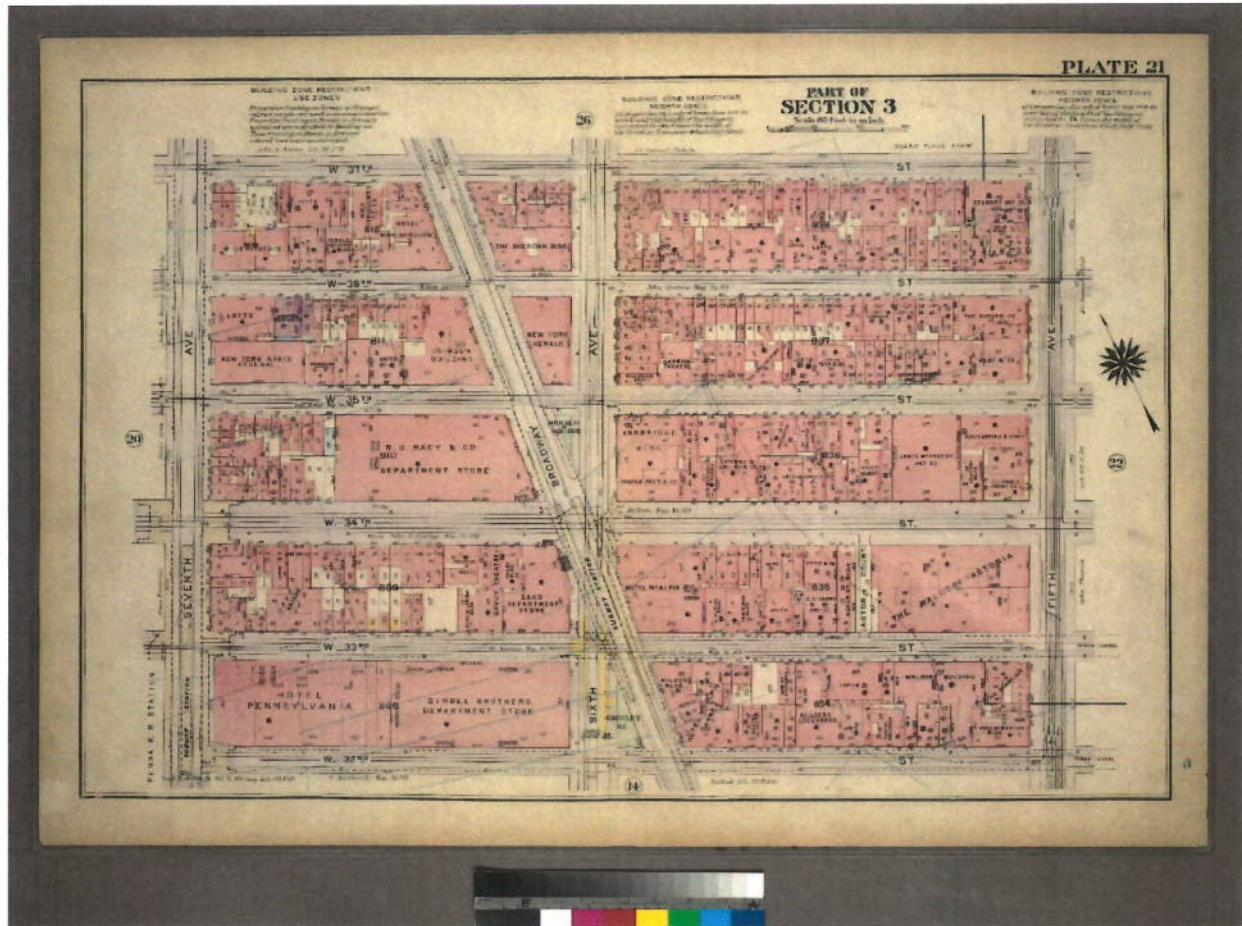


Figure 7. Hotel Pennsylvania, on the former location of Thomas Dimond's foundry in 1920
 (Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division, The New York Public Library.
 "Plate 21, Part of Section 3: [Bounded by W. 37th Street, Fifth Avenue, W. 32nd Street
 and Seventh Avenue.]

Thomas Dimond was educated in public schools, went to night school and the Packard Business College, later studying architecture for three years under the architect James Renwick.¹⁸ Though a manufacturer of iron, he acted as his own architect on at least one occasion, making improvements to a mixed-use building on West 32nd Street in 1912.¹⁹ Thomas

¹⁸ *American Biography: A New Cyclopaedia*, Volume 5, s.v. "Dimond, Thomas."

¹⁹ *The Real Estate Record and Builder's Guide* 89, no. 2294 (1912): 449.

married Jennie Kelly, the daughter of an Irish butcher, on July 10, 1879.²⁰ They had a daughter, Florence Dimond D'Olier, and two surviving sons, James Renwick Dimond and George Arnold Dimond, both buried at the mausoleum at Woodlawn. The 1880 census shows Thomas, already listed as an iron merchant, living modestly in the boarding house owned by Jennie's parents on West 74th Street with his young wife and a four month old James Renwick.²¹ After residing in Westchester circa 1900,²² the family, by now well established, returns to the Upper West Side, residing on 20 West 73rd Street, near Central Park.²³ Thomas Dimond was a Colonel of the Seventh Regiment, a vestryman in All Angel's Church in the Upper West Side, and a member of the Museum of Natural History, as well as numerous social clubs and organizations.²⁴ At his death in 1918, he willed an estate valued at more than \$500,000 to his wife and children.²⁵

Current Conditions

The mausoleum displays alarming signs of water infiltration that merit close attention. There are clear indicators that water is penetrating into the interior. Streaks of soiling extend from the bronze rosettes in the marble ceiling down to the joints in the walls, most noticeably in the northeast corners of the mausoleum (Figure 8). Drops of water left marks on soil on the marble sarcophagi, beneath the rosettes. On a rainy day, moisture can be seen in the ceiling panels. The exterior building also exhibits telling signs of a long-standing issues related to water,

²⁰ *American Biography: A New Cyclopedia*, Volume 5, s.v. "Dimond, Thomas."

²¹ United States Census, 1880; Census Place: New York City, New York, New York; Roll: 892; Page: 245C; Enumeration District: 524.

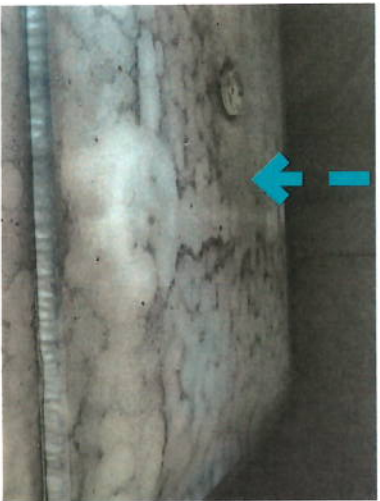
²² United States Census, 1900; Census Place: Rye, Westchester, New York; Page: 21; Enumeration District: 0112; FHL microfilm: 1241177.

²³ United States Census, 1910; Census Place: Manhattan Ward 22, New York, New York; Roll: T624_1045; Page: 6B; Enumeration District: 1304.

²⁴ *American Biography: A New Cyclopedia*, Volume 5, s.v. "Dimond, Thomas."

²⁵ "Col. Dimond Left \$500,000." *New York Times*, May 5, 1918.

notably flaking in the granite porch and north facade, which may be aggravated by wet-dry cycles (Figure 9-10). In the former case, water appears to be dripping down from the roof through vertical joints, then horizontally into the side walls and soffit of the porch. Also, a vertical joint on the eastern elevation shows considerable build-up of calcium containing deposits, clearly indicating that the mausoleum's problems with water are long-standing, given that gradual nature of such build-up (Figure 11). The vertical joints in the roof are often missing mortar, and appear wider than most other joints in the mausoleum (Figure 12-14). These are likely the points of entry for water. The fact that joints in the roof are concentrated on the corners of the building might account for the signs of considerable water infiltration in the interior corners. These joints may need to be attended to in order to restore the Dimond Mausoleum to its former glory.



marks from falling drops of water

moisture in ceiling

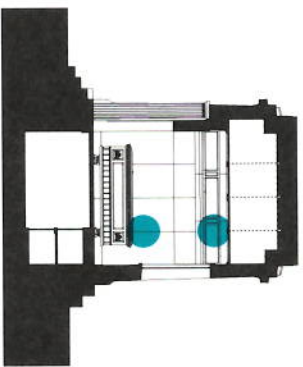


Figure 9: evidence of water in interior

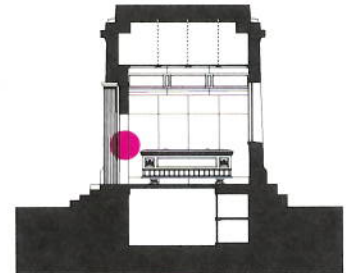
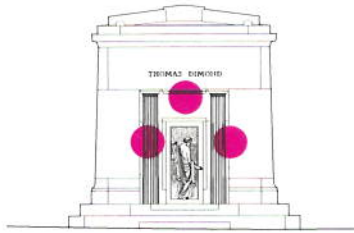


Figure 10: flaking around porch

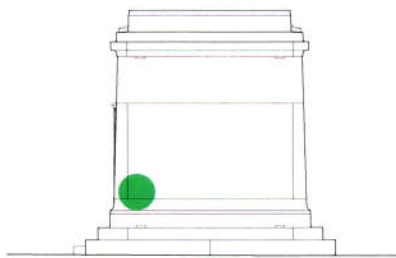
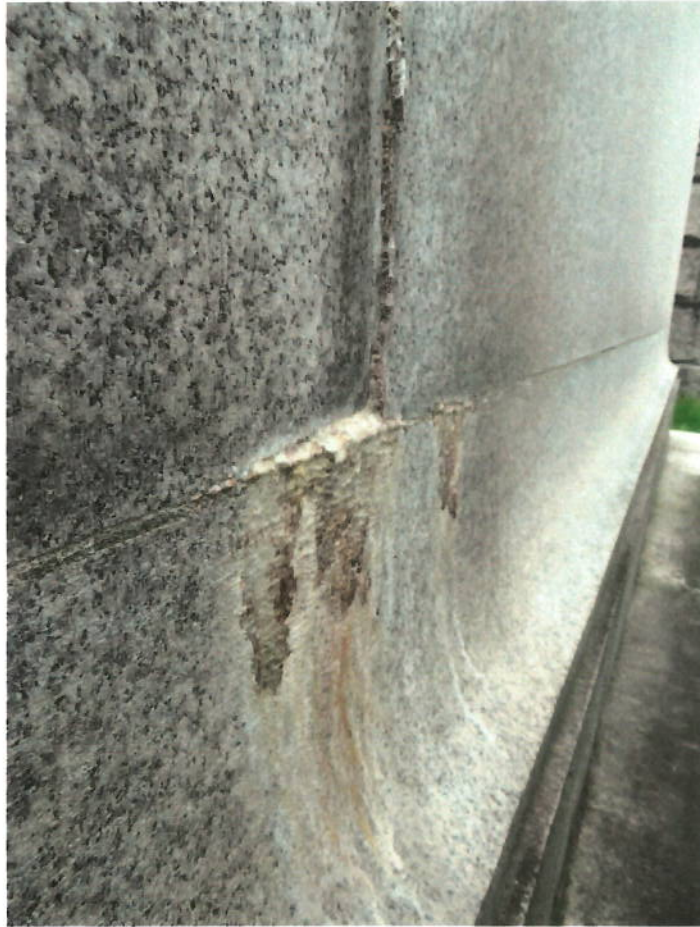


Figure 11: calcium containing deposits

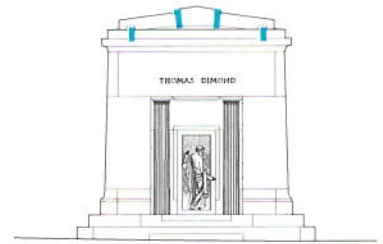
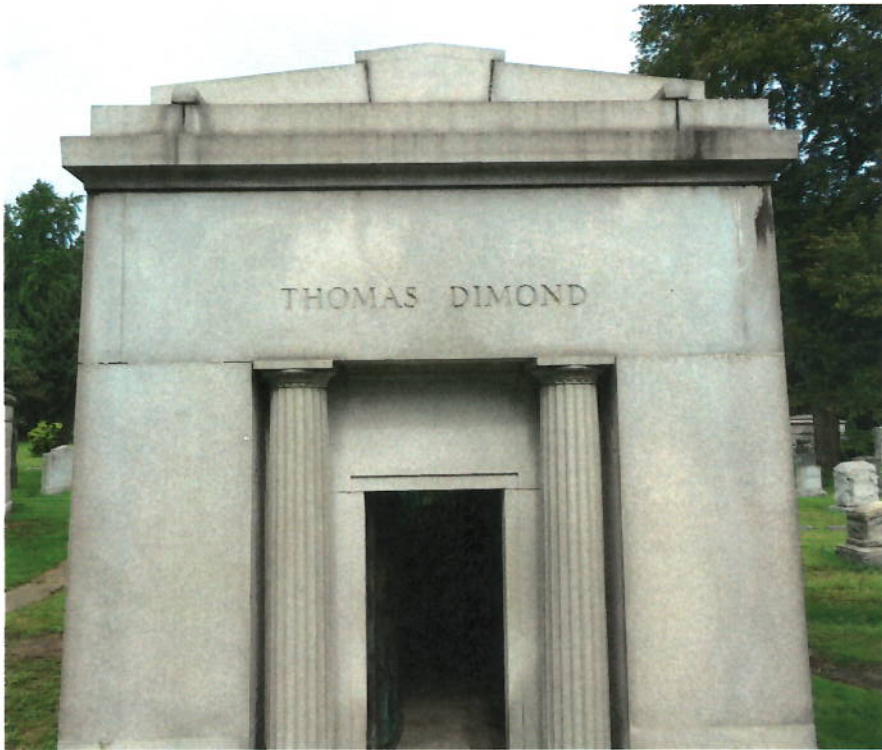


Figure 12: joints in roof likely points of entry for water

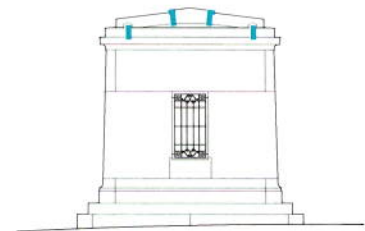


Figure 13: joints in roof likely points of entry for water

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<https://books.google.com/books?id=bUNBAQAAMAAJ&pg=PA95&lpg=PA95&dq=stina+gustafson+artist&source=bl&ots=7qMuQVR5xH&sig=xUokBSqgEF9LpxDv7zdSeSbMi5U&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj4k8Lgm9TdAhUPwlkKHbt9AsIQ6AEwC3oECAQQAQ#v=onepage&q=stina%20gustafson%20artist&f=false>

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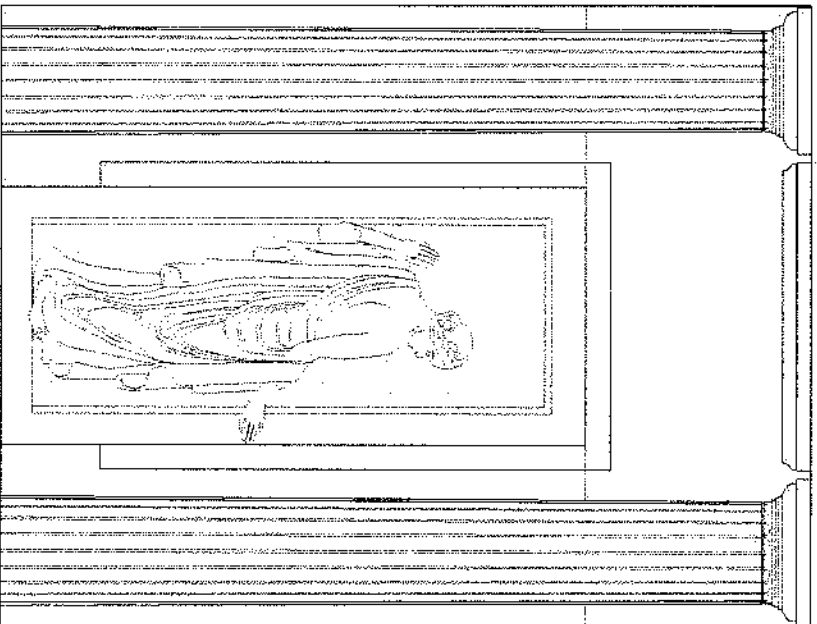
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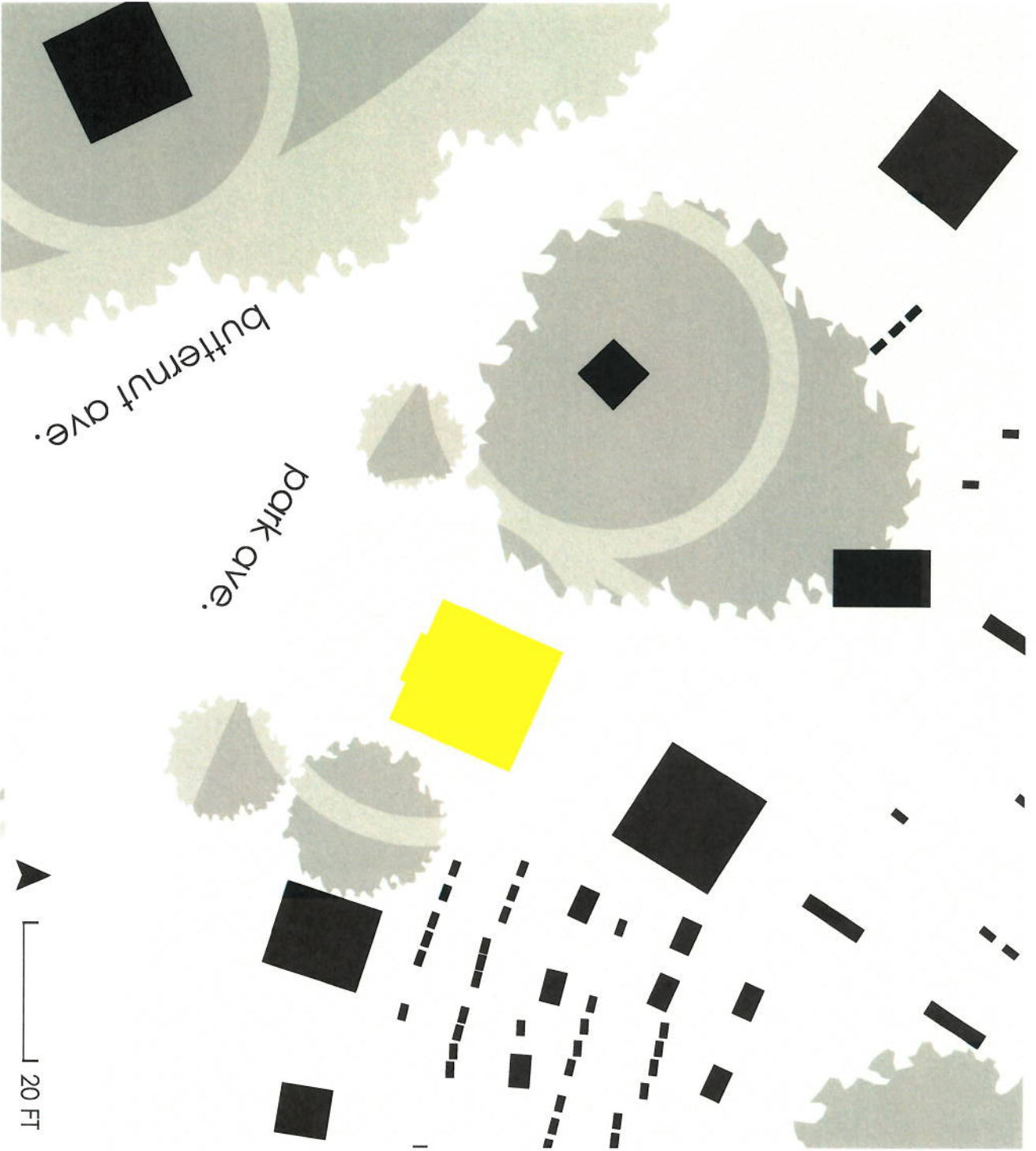
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DIMOND MAUSOLEUM
at WOODLAWN CEMETERY, THE BRONX
ANDRES ALVAREZ DAVILA



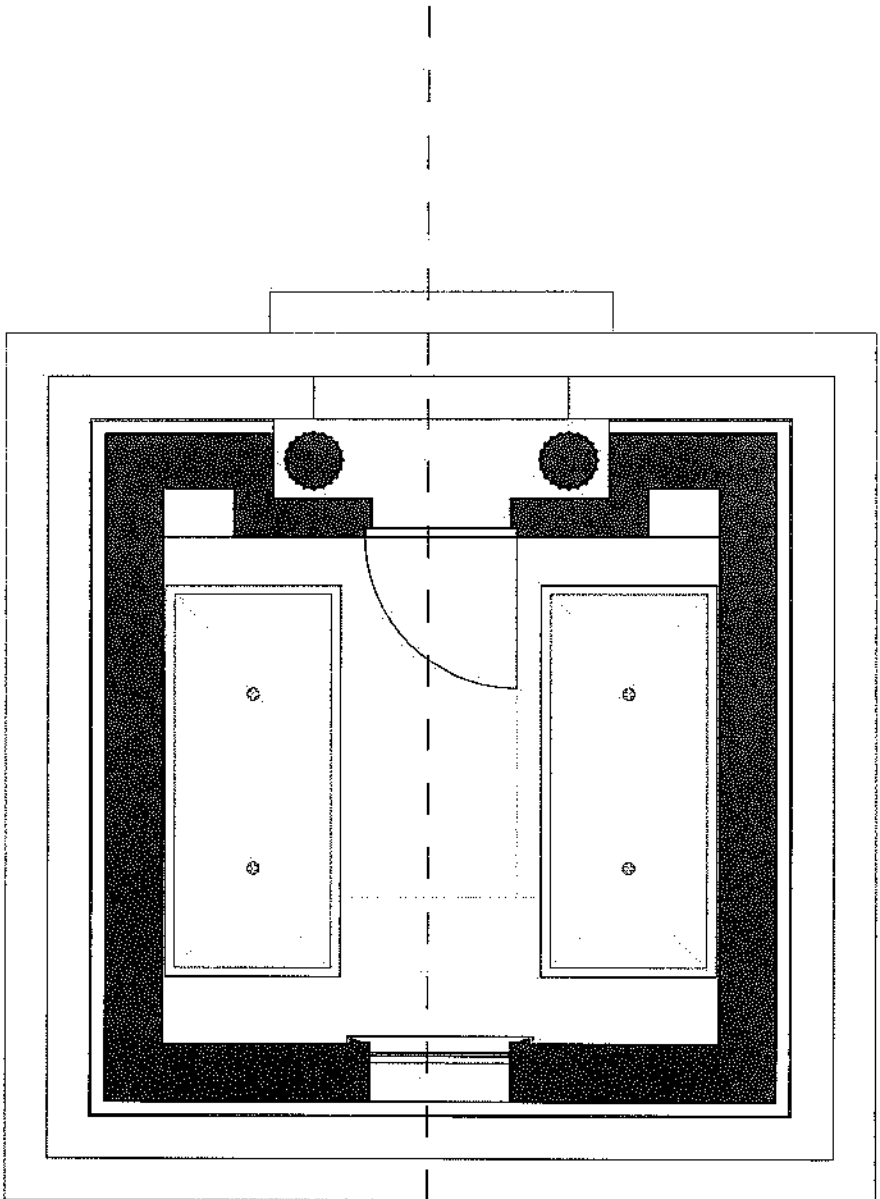


butternut ave.

park ave.

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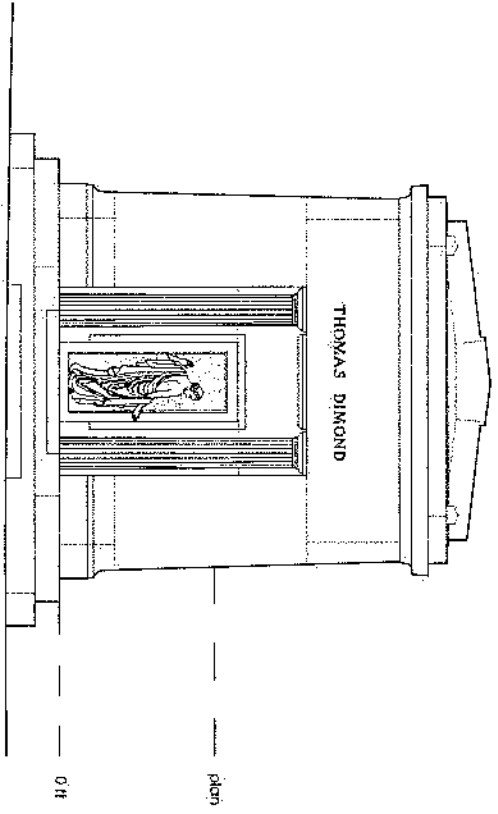
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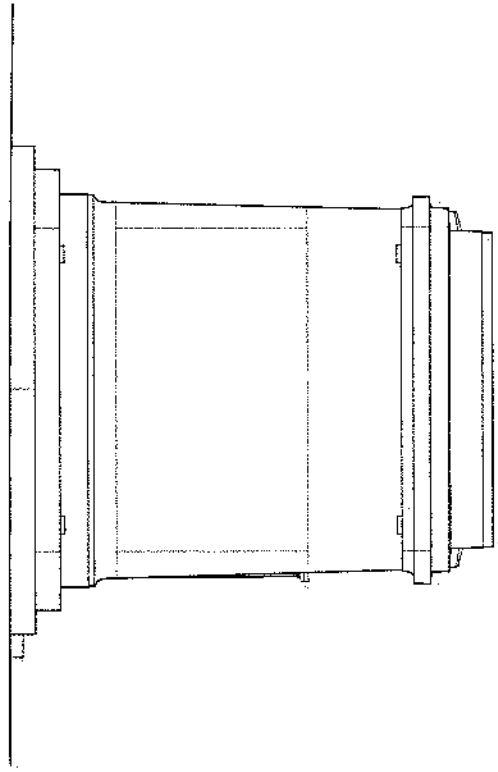
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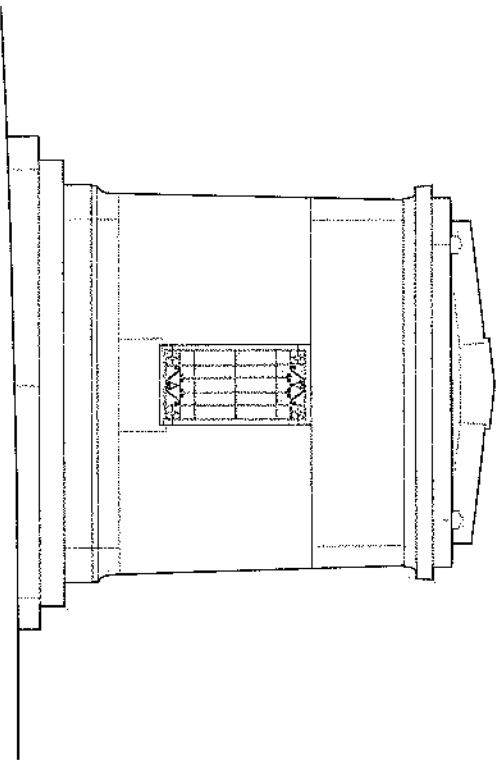


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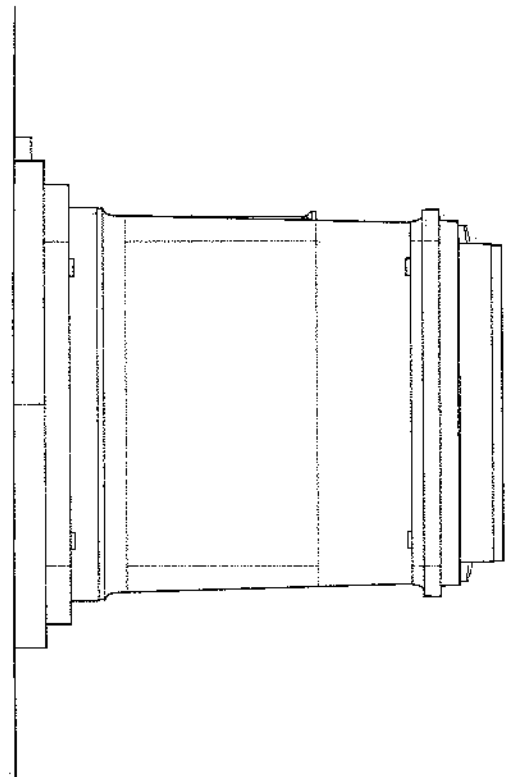


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rear elevation

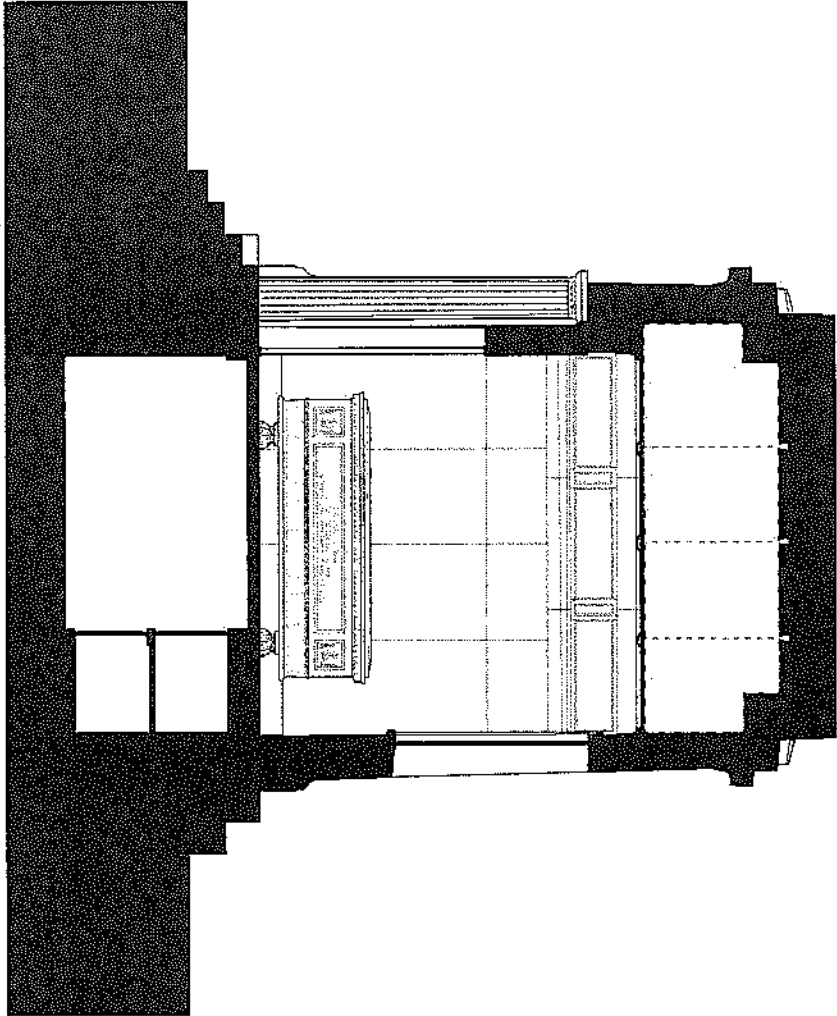


south side elevation

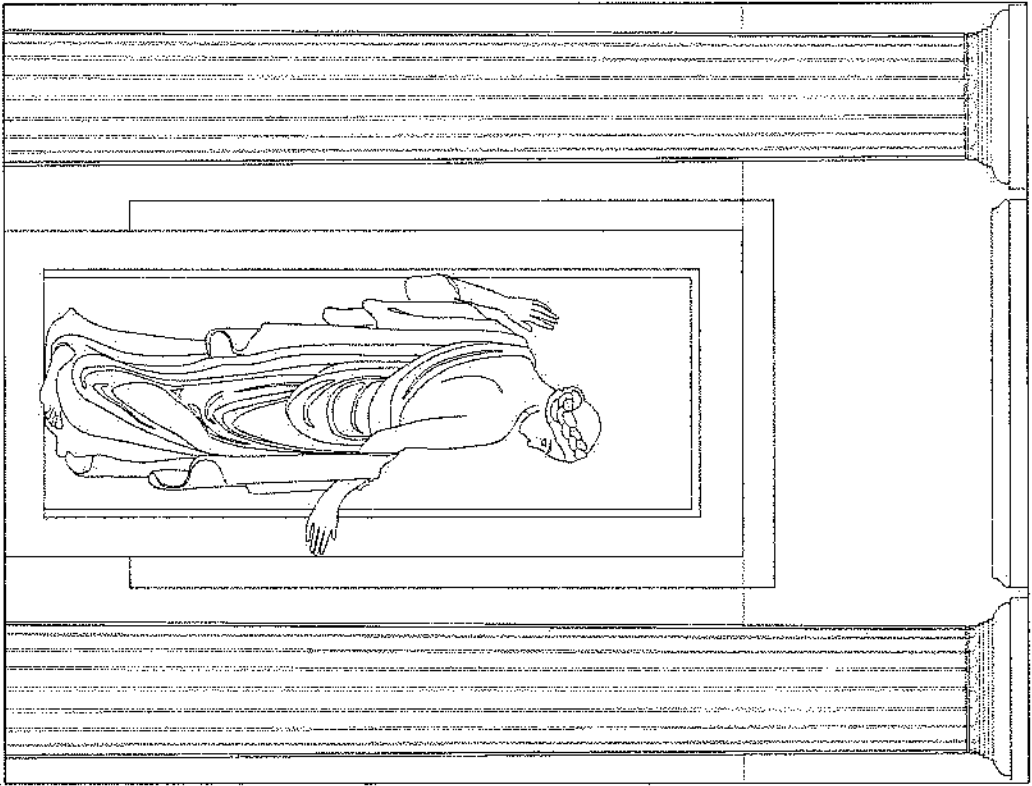
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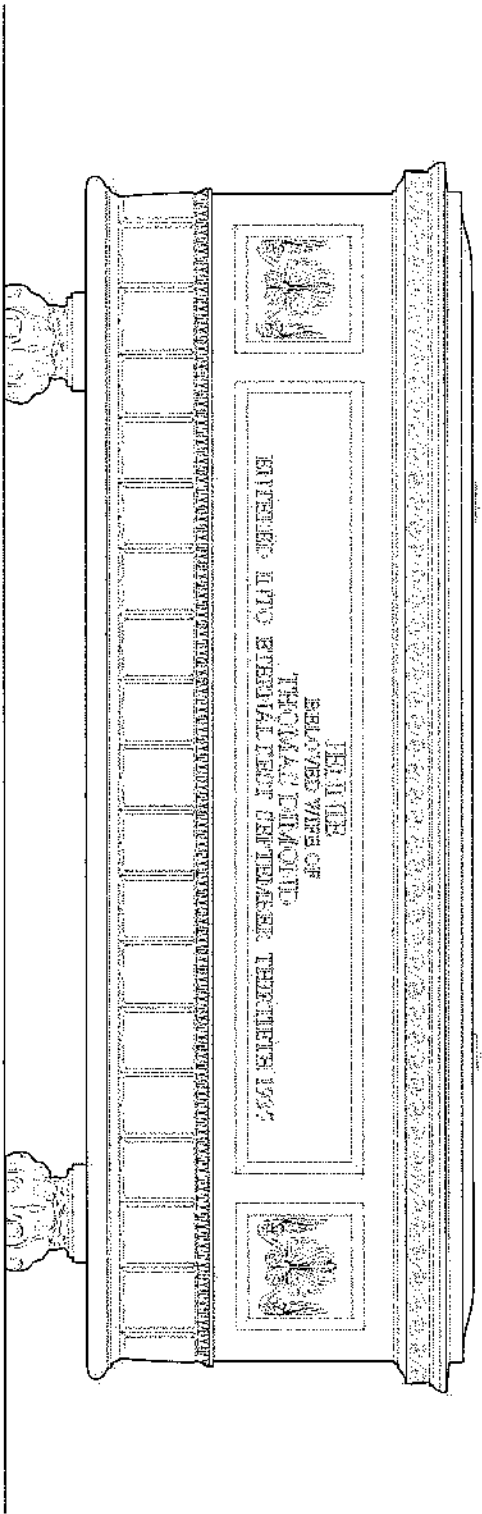


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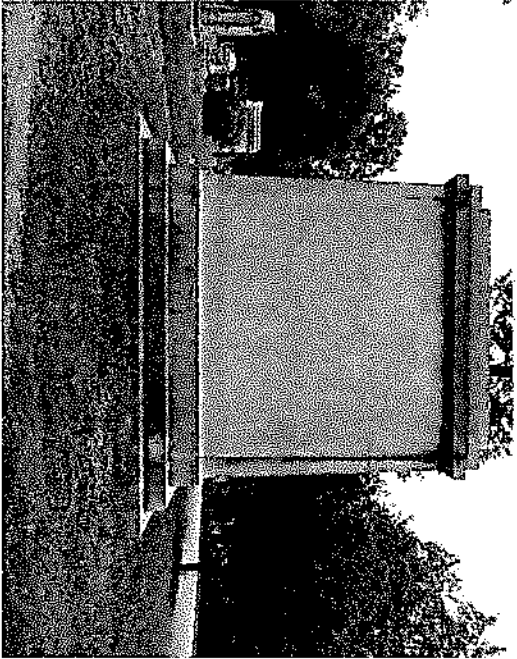
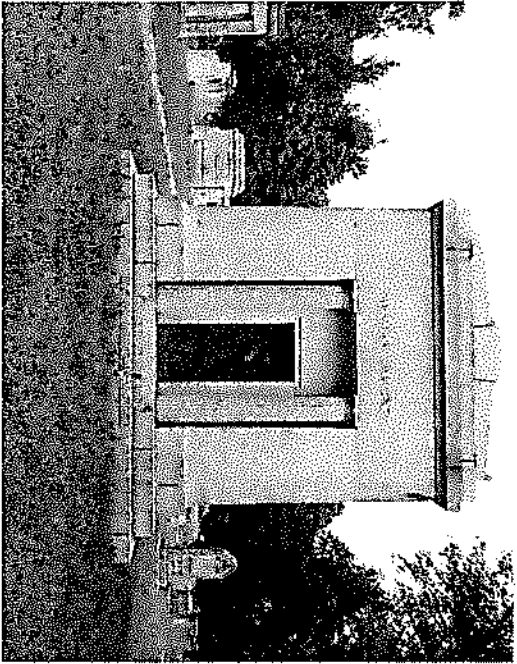


door detail

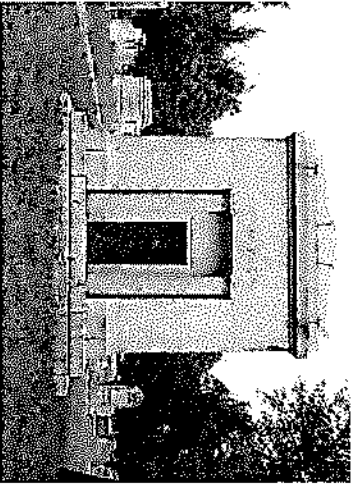
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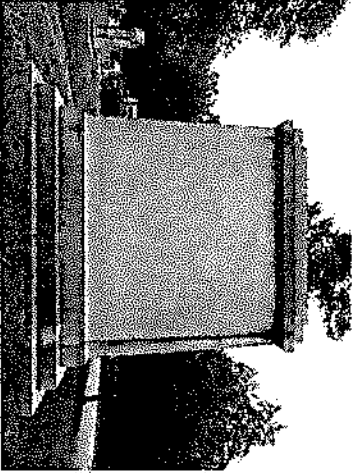
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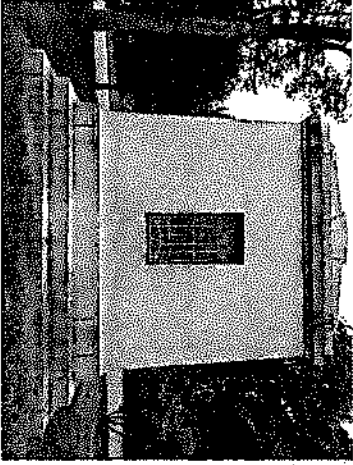
overall images of front and side



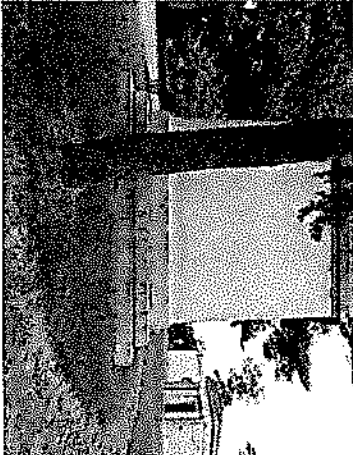
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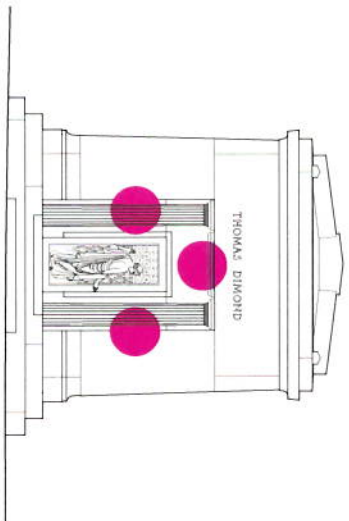
north side



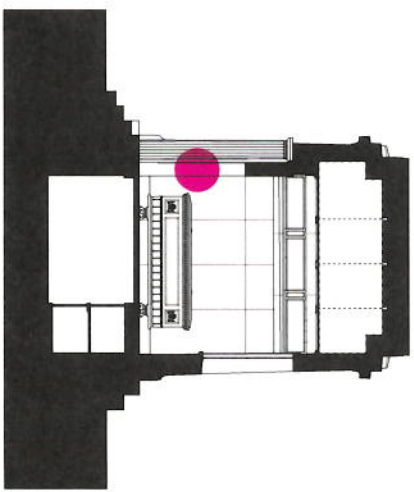
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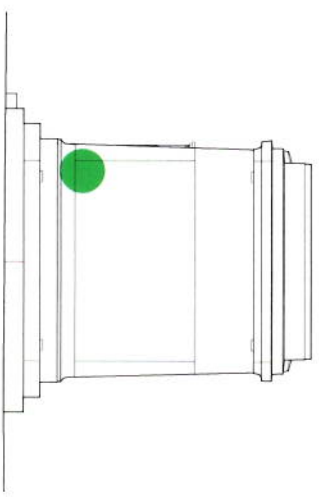
south side



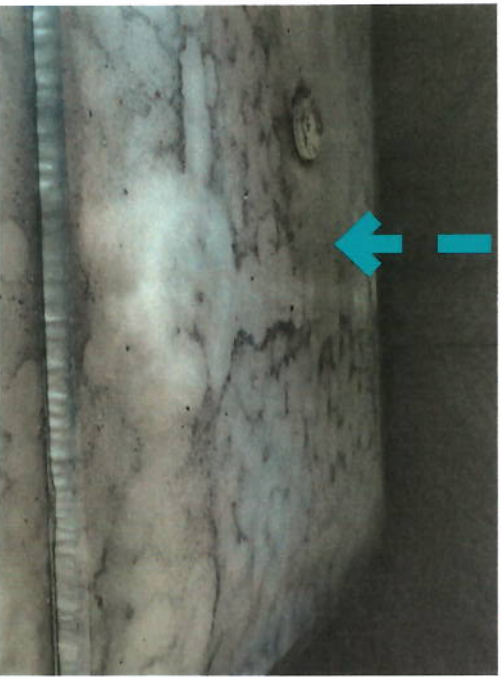
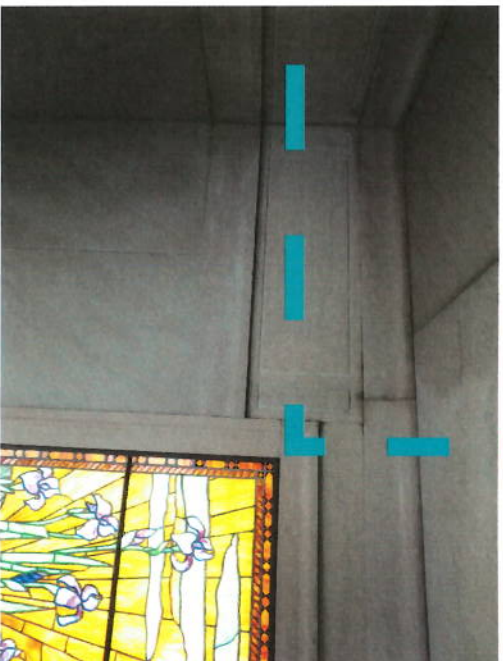
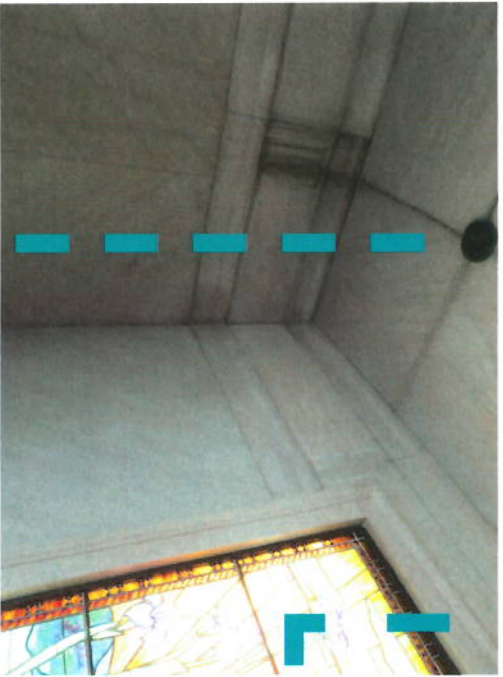
flaking on principal facade



flaking in interior

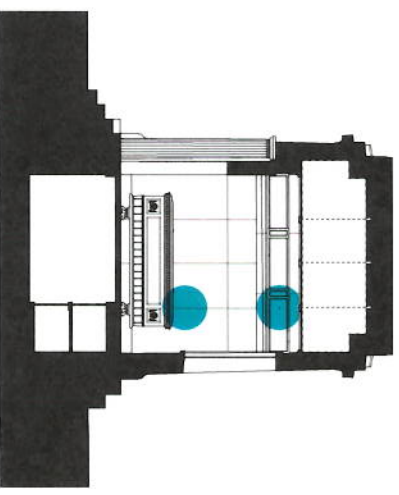


calcium containing deposits
south elevation

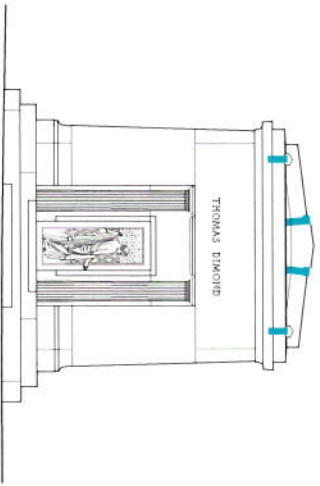


marks from falling drops of water

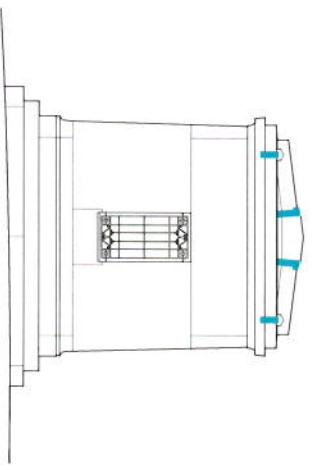
moisture in ceiling



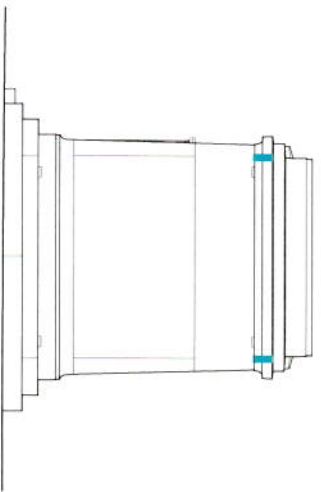
evidence of water in interior



joints in roof likely points of entry for water



joints in roof likely points of entry for water



close up of joint in south
side elevation