

John W. Butler Mausoleum
Woodlawn Cemetery

James E. Churchill

Studio I: Historic Preservation

Professors Andrew Dolkart, Kimberley Yao, and Claudia Kavenagh

GSAPP, Columbia University

27th September 2018

Mausoleum lot number 13782 at Woodlawn Cemetery, found in the Holly plot is an archetypal funerary edifice designed in the fashionable Egyptian revival style. As was customary, the commission came from a younger wife, following the death of her eminently successful and wealthy husband. Greenwood Cemetery had already started such a trend of “impressive, sophisticated mausoleums, many in the Gothic, Classical, and Egyptian styles”.¹ Josephine King Butler bought the advantageously situated roadside circular plot in 1916 for her beloved husband John Washington Butler, sixteen years her senior. Deterioration of the monument warrants a further appraisal from the management company to stem what appears to be the tide of time and neglect, and more specifically water damage. It is my aim here to document the background and the proposed measures to be put in place.

The Butler family consisted of a four person household: husband, wife and two servants. John, born of Irish parents, moved to New York at the age of four. His wife, Josephine King, was half-American, with parents from France and Georgia. Butler, a butter and egg merchant, set up John W. Butler Inc., holding offices at 216 Washington Street next to the Washington Market, the gateway for produce for over a century in what is now the Tribeca neighbourhood. An obituary in the Chicago Dairy Produce magazine in 1916, stated he had “specialised in the hotel, restaurant and steamship business” and that “he was one of the heaviest buyers of butter and eggs in the market” (Fig. 1).² The same article confirms John was active socially and a member of the Veterans of The Seventh Regiment, The Hotel Men’s Association, The Thousand Islands Yacht

¹ Andrew Dolkart, “Designing Woodlawn: Buildings and Landscapes” in Charles D. Warren et al., *Sylvan Cemetery: Architecture, Art & Landscape at Woodlawn* (New York: The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York), 53.

² “Death of John W. Butler,” *Chicago Dairy Produce* 41, no. 16: 568.

Club, and The New York Athletic Club. No military record however could accurately confirm his enlistment but a Seventh Regiment obituary confirmed he was in the third company. His residence was listed as 616 West 114th St. in the 1905 census (Fig. 2), but this changed to the Hotel Ansonia in the 1910 census (Fig. 3), recorded as his place of death in his obituary in The New York Times. His wife was reported as hosting a lavish dinner for the marriage of her niece at The Plaza and living at 950 Park Avenue in 1934, yielding some clues as to the sufficient wealth of the widow nearly eighteen years on (Fig. 4). No knowledge of the continuation of John W. Butler Inc. has been found post his passing.

Woodlawn Cemetery was founded in 1863, in the romantic picturesque style found throughout Anglo-Germanic gardens. While many books point to the development of the Parisian Père Lachaise Cemetery as the springboard for the rural movement in design, it is likely that local developments in landscape architecture such as Olmsted's Central Park and connections with old world practices at Stourhead and beyond played a similarly important role. Serpentine roads were used to create picture postcard views, and circular plots were introduced to cater to the rich and famous, while emphasising the varied topography.³ As with life, the social elite demanded an ostentatious death and by 1916, Woodlawn, with its accessible railroad access, had joined Greenwood as a distinguished place of burial.

The site itself is positioned in the heart of the Cemetery. Just one block from Park Avenue, it was opened around 1915 and is close to some of the famed circular plots off Central Avenue, namely Jay Gould of Lake View, Joseph Paterno of Chestnut Hill, H. McK. Twombly and W.

³ Charles D. Warren, "Garden Necropolis: Planning Woodlawn's Landscape" in 13.

Seward of Oak Hill (Fig. 5). The Woodlawn archive has numerous correspondence confirming the architect and builder as Harrison Granite of 200 Park Avenue, New York. It seems evident that the entire building is made from Devonian granite shipped from Barre, Vermont. Harrison Granite was a family business and had been practising since 1845, incorporating in Michigan in 1895 under the current name and stewardship of the general manager William Henry Harrison. A memorialist, their 1918 catalogue demonstrates extensive coverage across the United States and displays an early photograph of the newly completed Butler mausoleum (Fig. 6), standing in stark contrast to the current condition in a contemporary photograph of the frontal elevation (Fig. 7).⁴

Constructed entirely out of granite, the mausoleum has a polished finish on the interior. The design of the Mausoleum is somewhat conflicted. The exterior is in a restrained Egyptian revival style and, indeed, makes use of the emblematic cavetto moulding on the interior ceiling, yet there is a Christian altar topped with a stained-glass window of Jesus Christ. According to archival information, the foundation appears to be made out of concrete evidenced by the aggregate hatch and runs six feet deep with five footings. The façade faces south-east, yielding ample sunlight but there is a large tree that hangs over the north-east elevation. The structure is rectilinear with Egyptian features that include battered walls, a double bronze entrance door with lotus plant and chevron decoration, and papyrus plant columns. Vases, similarly decorated with papyrus plant leaf motifs, sit on pedestals protruding from a double curvilinear low front wall that doubles as a bench. The interior houses four double vertically stacked sarcophagi with entombed husband and

⁴ Andrew Dolkart, "Designing Woodlawn: Buildings and Landscapes" in *ibid.*, 59.

wife with two seemingly empty and unmarked. A cavetto moulding with multiple steps (see detail in cross-section) juts in from the ceiling ending at the base of the uppermost roof slab.

Egyptian revival architecture had been born out of a fascination for the terrible and sublime in the romantic movement of the eighteenth century and indeed this is covered in Richard Carrott's study of the Egyptian revival movement.⁵ George Dance's Newgate prison of 1782 paved the way for a Piranesian architecture, and while the pyramids and the form of the Mastaba emphasised the concept of death, it was the Napoleonic exhibitions and archaeological evidence in 1829 that raised Egyptology to fever pitch in the western canon. Highgate Cemetery's Egyptian Avenue of 1839 led to many copycat structures in the United States including the Egyptian gateway of 1845 in the Grove Street Cemetery in New Haven, Connecticut. There was a further revival after the discovery of Tutankhamen in 1922 but this post-dates the grave. It is more likely that Greenwood Cemetery played more of a role; the William B. Crosby mausoleum of 1846 shows the quick dissemination of fashion across Anglo nations but had yet to perfect the 70 degree angle and trapezoidal pylon.⁶

The condition of the mausoleum is fairly poor. There has been little, if any, maintenance over the last few decades and evidence on the exterior and interior suggests extensive water infiltration. On the exterior salt deposits appear evident on the title block and are most likely calcite due to open joints that could encourage rain or water penetration and subsequent slow chemical excretions. Minor rust coloured stains are likely due to weathering and have discoloured the stone; no evidence of iron in the architectural blueprints supports this theory (Fig. 8). The façade interior

⁵ See Richard G. Carrott, *The Egyptian Revival: Its Sources, Monuments, and Meaning, 1808-1858* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

⁶ Elizabeth Broman, "Egyptian Revival Funerary Art in Green-Wood Cemetery," *Markers XVIII* (2001).

pylon displays minor blistering (Fig. 9). Recently there has been research about such cases in this igneous rock, and while some have speculated it is due to micro-fissures from explosive quarrying, there is also evidence to support some granite having this inherent characteristic.⁷ Biological growth is evident, especially on the side elevation of the north-east near the overhanging tree (Fig. 10). Various joints throughout have crumbling mortar and this is most likely the channel for interior water damage (Fig. 11). Upon entry there was a noticeably higher humidity and heat level which may suggest a blockage or inadequate ventilation. A dried out green puddle in front of the altar (Fig. 12) needs analysis as to source while there are significant moisture patches around the upper back corner joints (Fig. 13) most likely due to water penetration with further indication of mortar loss.

Proposals for the maintenance and restoration of the structure are multi-fold. The site on the whole is slightly sloping downwards and the use of a highly water resistant rock should act as a barrier to capillary action suggesting that the source of the water-related damage is from above. The neighbouring tree should be examined for shading and rain runoff. From a construction perspective, potential leaks need to be verified as mortar appears loose or non-existent in the ceiling and roof joints. It is particularly noticeable that the edge of the triangular pedimented block sits very close to a joint for the lower roof block that houses the cavetto moulded ceiling (Fig. 14). Granite blistering also suggests potential water penetration so all joints near this area also need to be examined. Ventilation needs to be checked and cleared. Biological growth requires attention with examination of the deposits found on the exterior to confirm source.

⁷ Karen Stone, "Sheet Scaling: Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors in Mohegan Granite," (Columbia University, 2014).

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHICAGO DAIRY PRODUCE

13

sels at prices which enabled holders to nearly break even at least, which is short of marvelous. At present, however, the elements are playing right into the hands of the holders, and the several inches of snow, which precipitated during Wednesday night, was worth thousands of dollars to those in possession of the remainder of last Spring's lay.

Government Continues Search.

Government inspectors continued their search for excess moisture butter, and since last writing quite a number of additional tests have been made and more stock is tied up awaiting investigation. The arrival of the government's agents in the market and the published accounts of their operations, have made the receivers more cautious than ever and lots of stock has been returned to the creameries when private tests showed too much water. Whether or not Washington officials have definitely reported on the samples forwarded to the nation's capital for analysis could not be ascertained.

John W. Butler Dead.

On Sunday, Jan. 30, another of the older members of the butter trade crossed the Great Divide, namely: John W. Butler, president and owner of John W. Butler, Inc. Mr. Butler was 65 years old and has for years specialized in hotel, restaurant and steamship end of the business. While the corporation received some goods direct, purchases were mostly made on the street, and the concern is one of the heaviest buyers of butter and eggs in this market.

Now Nichols Bros. Incorporated.

Beginning the first of the present month, the old firm of Nichols Bros. became a corporation, with H. T. Nichols as president and

vice president. The firm has been in business since 1880, and has a long record of success. The new corporation will continue to operate at the same address, 121

Change at Pratt's.

S. T. Pratt, Harrison street butter and egg house, will be continued by Arthur Pratt, his brother John and Spencer withdrawing. The house of Pratt is one of the old concerns in this market. John Pratt is a minister with a charge over in Jersey.

5-lb. Cheese Wanted.

A. F. Lopez & Co., exporters of cheese, have inquiries from the Tropics for 5-lb. full cream cheese of Young America quality and would like to get in touch with factories up state or in Wisconsin making this package. Distributors of dairy products in the Tropics are partial to small packages, as their trade demands them to put up.

Other Visitors.

R. P. Moran, of the Morgan Produce Company, Cookeville, Tenn., was here the fore part of the week. He reports light gathering of eggs in Tennessee just now, owing to the recent cold wave. From York, Neb., journeyed B. E. Smith, who has since returned West; J. Dixon Avery, of Pittsburgh, was here for a few days; Baltimore was represented this week by W. H. Rector, of the company bearing his name.

New Concern.

Plans are being formulated for the organization of a new butter and egg firm to be known as Lynch & Blackman, which will share the spacious store at the Armstrong & Swift address, 321

the Michigan Buttermakers and Dairywomen's convention at Kalamazoo are Foster Fitch, of Fitch, Cornell & Co.; Albert and Walter Lowenfels, of F. F. Lowenfels & Son; S. P. Case, of Egbert & Case, and Robert A. Barry, of the Uyrner-Barry Company.

Selling Out.

Frank Luedcke, surviving member of the firm C. H. Luedcke & Son, 659 Hudson Street, is offering the established business for sale. Some weeks ago C. H. Luedcke died, leaving the business to Frank, whose health does not warrant his retaining it. The firm has for years been wholesale dealers in butter, cheese and eggs.

"Nic" at Eau Claire.

The New York butter contingent was represented at Eau Claire, Wis., by "Nic" Eschenbrenner, with Gude Bros., Kieffer Co. "Nic" went west via Ithaca, and at the convention spoke on the changed methods of quoting the New York butter market in contrast with the former procedure, when the Exchange had its quota-

NEW YORK SCORING.

One Entry in January Contest Scored 92.50—Two Samples of Milk.

Ithaca, N. Y., Jan. 31. Editor CHICAGO DAIRY PRODUCE:

The January scoring was held on Jan. 21. Six packages of butter were received, of which one scored 90 or above. One cheese was scored, and two samples of milk. The following is the report: Butter—A. C. Hall, Millbrook, N. Y., 92.50.

Cheese—Wilbur Fosgate, Worcester, N. Y., 95.25.

Milk—R. C. Stillwell, McLean, N. Y., 90.33.

In the December scoring there were two packages of butter that were not reported.

Heratan Williams, of Marillac, N. Y., received a score of 92.06, and A. C. Hall, of Millbrook, N. Y., got a score of 91.66.

Dept. of Dairy Industry, Cornell University.

Marlin, Tex.—W. S. Boyd, of Arkansas, will open and operate a creamery here, beginning about Feb. 15.

BUTTER OF ALL GRADES WANTED!

REMEMBER that my returns for Butter are on a NET BASIS at top value for your grade.

FRESH EGGS

CARLOTS or small lots handled to advantage. Drafts honored for a reasonable amount with bill of lading attached.

Write for stencil and market letter and don't overlook MARKING YOUR NEXT SHIPMENT TO

W. W. ELZEA 327-9 Washington Street
New York City

Fig. 1. Chicago Dairy Produce, Vol. 22, No. 38, Feb 8, 1916.

(E-7a)

V

Enumeration of the Inhabitants living in 47 Election District, Block 1
23 Assembly District, Borough of MANHATTAN, County of NEW YORK, State of NEW YORK, on June 1, 1905.

Name of Institution Thompson St. School, Enumerator ...

| RESIDENCE | NAME | RELATION | COLOR, SEX AND AGE | | | NATIVITY | CITIZENSHIP | | OCCUPATION | | FOR INHABITANTS OF INSTITUTIONS ONLY |
|-----------|------|----------|--------------------|--------|-----|----------|-------------|---------|------------|-------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | Male | Female | Age | | U.S. | Foreign | Occupation | Class | |
| 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 4 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 6 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 9 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 10 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 11 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 12 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 13 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 14 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 15 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 16 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 17 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 18 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 19 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 20 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 21 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 22 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 23 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 24 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 25 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 26 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 27 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 28 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 29 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 30 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 31 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 32 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 33 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 34 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 35 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 36 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 37 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 38 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 39 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 40 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 41 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 42 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 43 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 44 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 45 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 46 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 47 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 48 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 49 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| 50 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | U.S. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |

Fig. 2 1905 New York Census, confirms John as Irish and his wife from the U.S.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
THIRTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1910 POPULATION

State: *New York*
City: *New York*
Ward: *Ward 1*
Block: *Block 1*
Household: *Household 1*

| NAME | SEX | AGE | RELATION | INDUSTRY | EDUCATION | ETHNICITY | PROPERTY | RENT | VALUE | REMARKS |
|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| <i>John W. Butler</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>40</i> | <i>Head</i> | <i>Wholesale Produce Merchant</i> | <i>High School</i> | <i>White</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Married</i> |
| <i>Mrs. John W. Butler</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>38</i> | <i>Wife</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>High School</i> | <i>White</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Married</i> |
| <i>John W. Butler Jr.</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>Son</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Elementary</i> | <i>White</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Single</i> |
| <i>Josephine Frances King</i> | <i>F</i> | <i>18</i> | <i>Daughter</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Elementary</i> | <i>White</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Single</i> |
| <i>Frank Scott Cooper Jr.</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>18</i> | <i>Son</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Elementary</i> | <i>White</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>None</i> | <i>Single</i> |

6347

Fig. 3. 1910 New York Census confirms John's profession as wholesale produce merchant.

DINNER FOR BRIDAL COUPLE

Mrs. John W. Butler is hostess for Josephine King and fiance.

Mrs. John Washington Butler gave a dinner last night in the Persian Room of the Plaza for her niece, Miss Josephine Frances King, and Frank Scott Cooper Jr., who will be married this afternoon at the home of the hostess, 950 Park Avenue. Among the other guests were Mr. and Mrs. William Lawrence King, parents of the bride-elect, and the following:

Dr. and Mrs. Frank Scott Cooper, Mr. and Mrs. William Lawrence King Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Edwin Crane, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth B. Bourne, the Misses Eugenie C. Greenley, Mary Dewart, and Barbara L. Bourne; Paul Cooper, Thomas Dewart and A. Severin Bourne Jr.

The dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Julius W. Noyes in the Starlight roof garden of the Waldorf-Astoria were Mr. and Mrs. Earl E. T. Smith; Mr. and Mrs. James Russell Lowell, Mr. and Mrs. A. Coster Schermhorn and Mr. and Mrs. Bernard M. Baruch Jr.

A farewell reception was given by Bogart A. Fretlow at the Plaza for Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Hefner Jr. of Oklahoma City, who were married last Tuesday and who will sail for Europe shortly on their wedding trip. Mrs. Hefner is the former Miss Louise Gunter.

Fig. 4 New York Times, 30 June 1934.

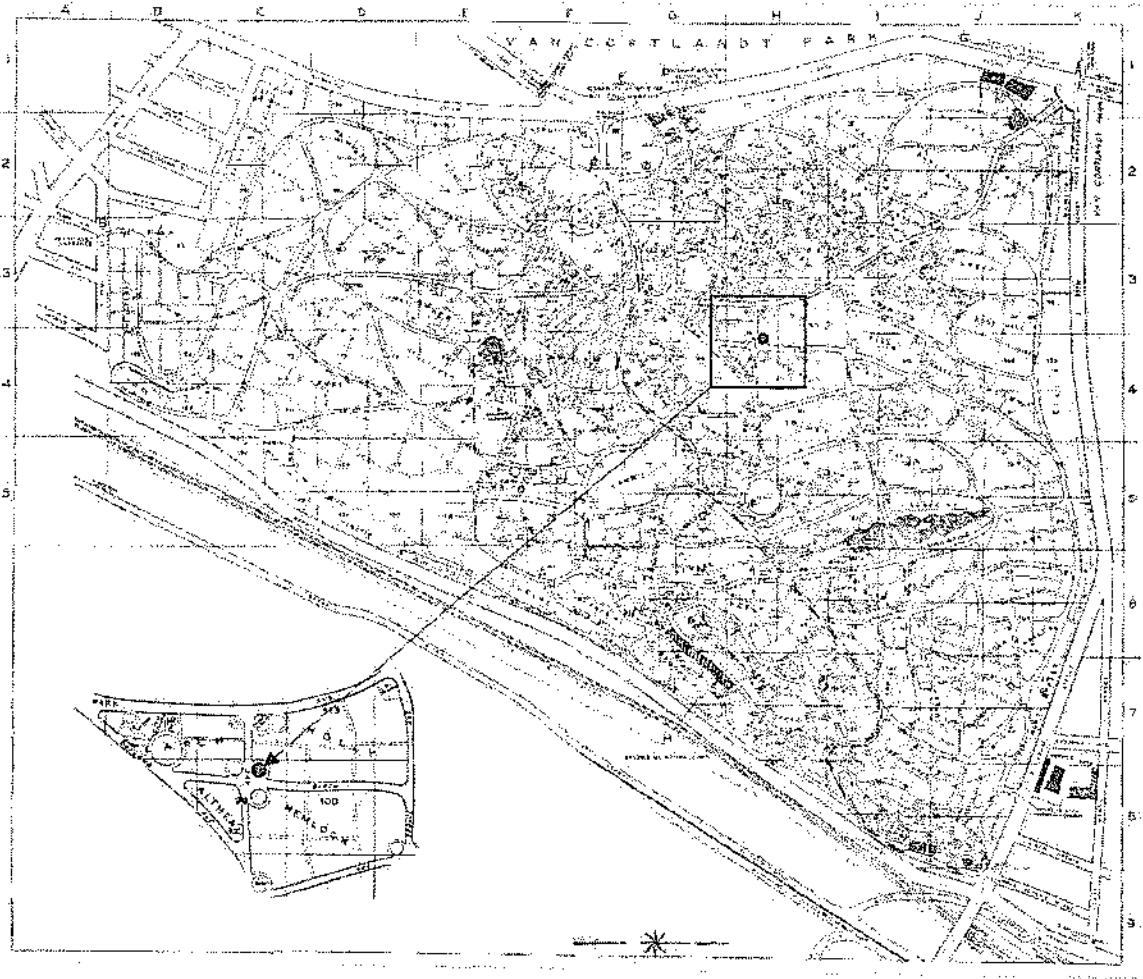


Fig. 5 Map of The Woodlawn Cemetery, courtesy of the Cemetery.

Site is found on the south-eastern border of the Holly plot.

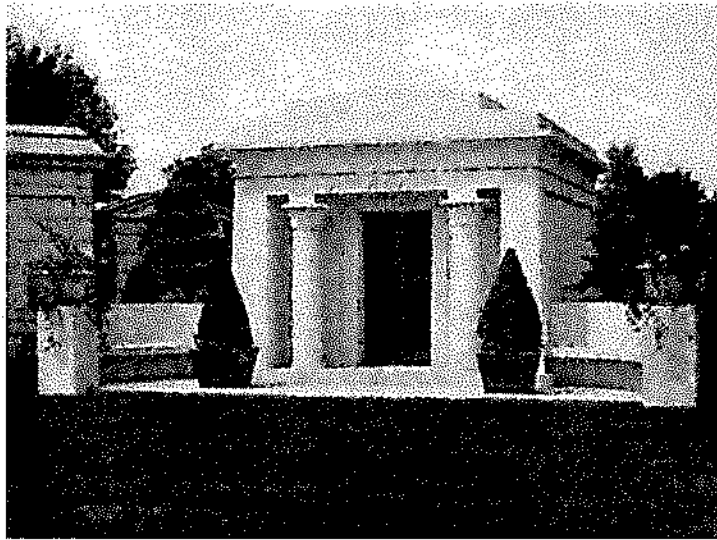


Fig. 6 Early photograph from the 1918 catalogue of Harrison Granite Co.



Fig. 7 Front elevation of John W. Butler mausoleum in its contemporary setting, Woodlawn Cemetery. September 2018



Fig. 8 Calcite deposits and rust-colored staining.



Fig. 9 Interior of front façade right pylon.

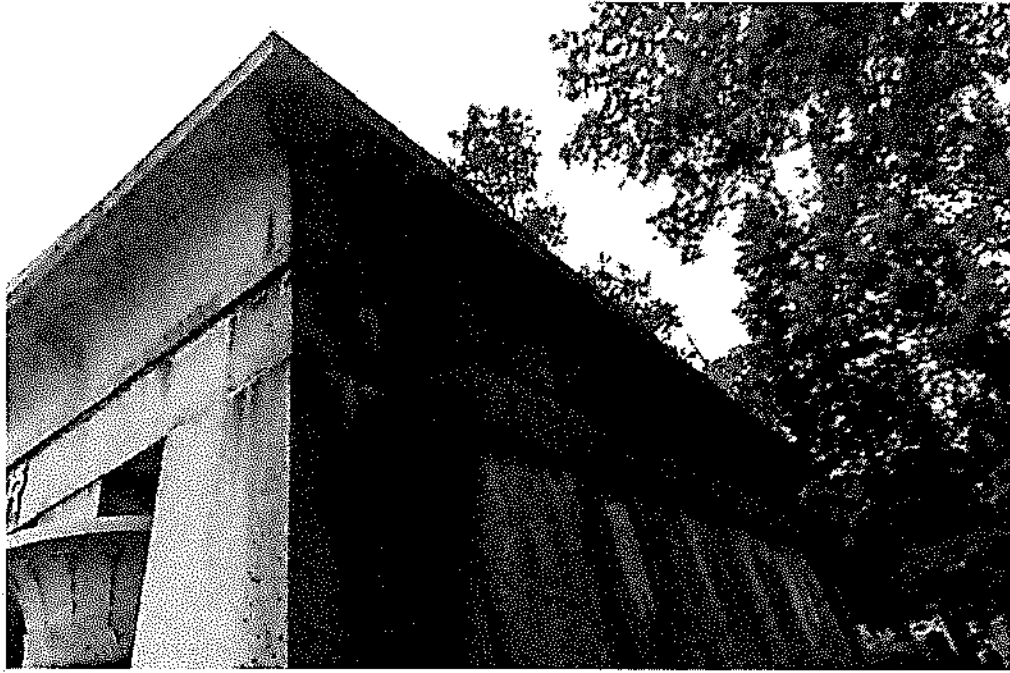


Fig. 10 Biological growth on the north east elevation below the tree

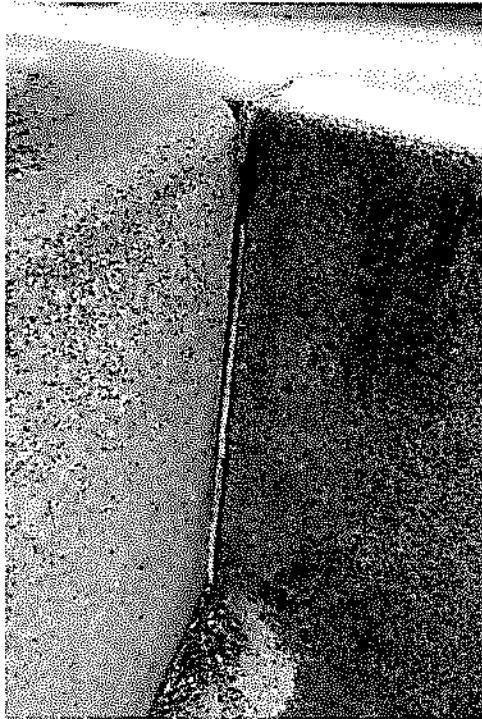


Fig. 11 Crumbling mortar joints



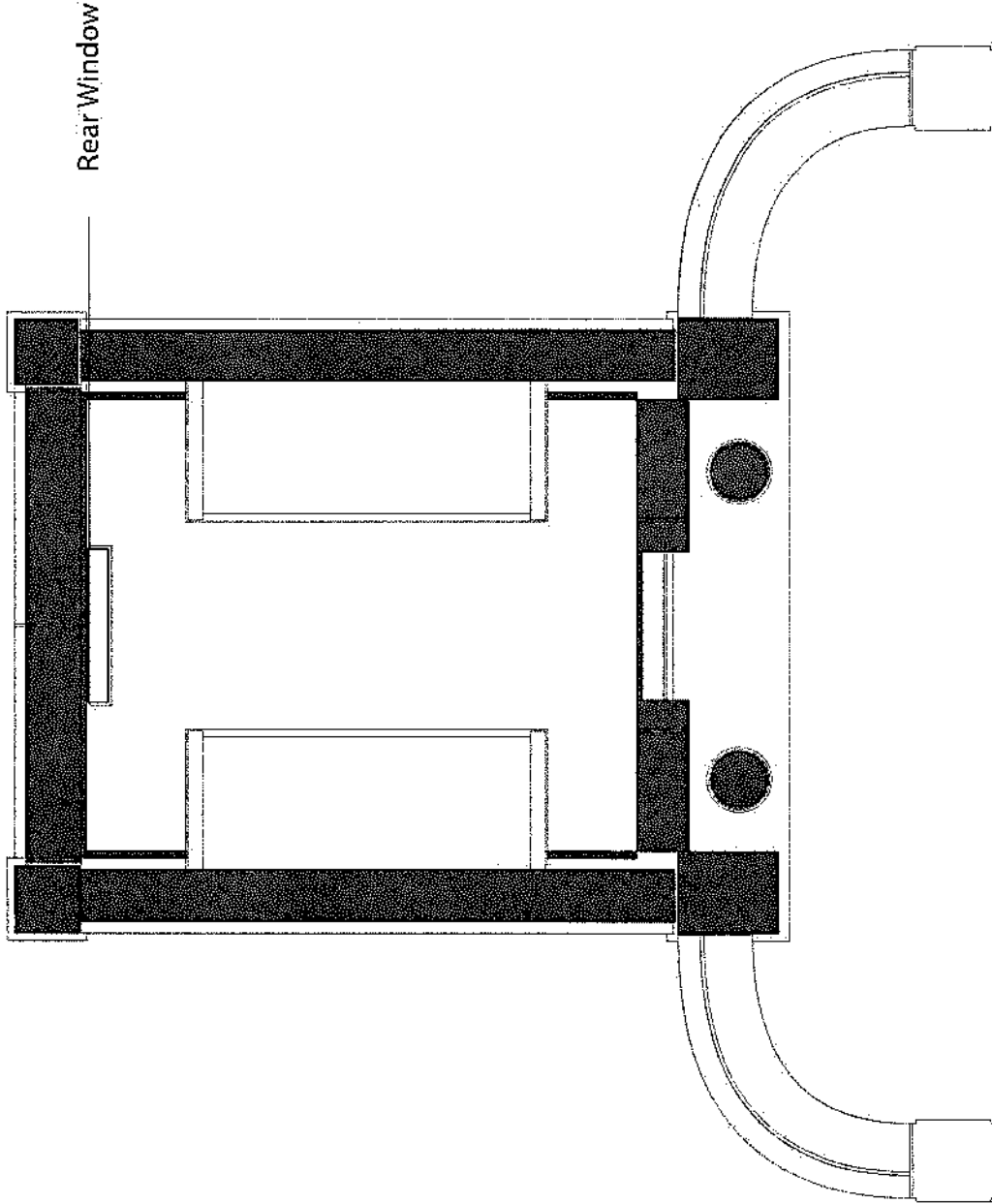
Fig. 12 Biological growth and salt potential in dried-up puddle.



Fig. 13 Wet patches around the upper back corner joints.



Fig. 14 Visibly hollowed-out joint near the pediment



Historic Preservation: Studio I

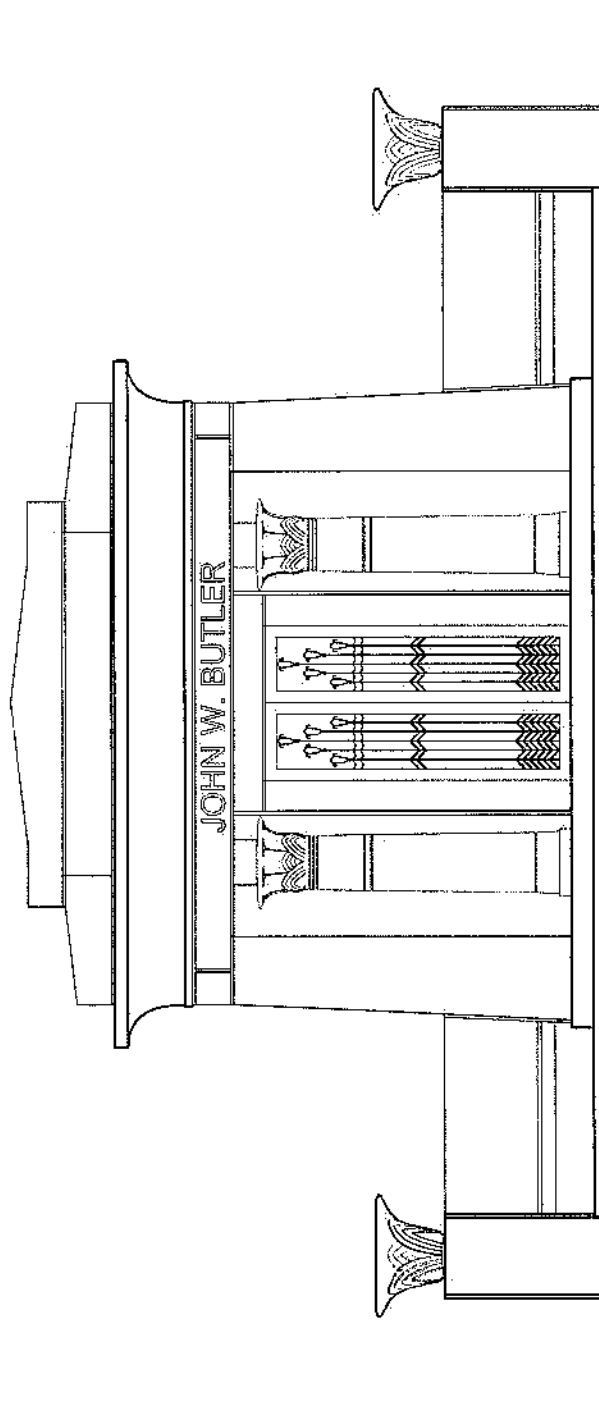
Woodlawn Cemetery, Holly Plot

Butler Plan

Scale: 1/4" = 1'

James E. Churchill





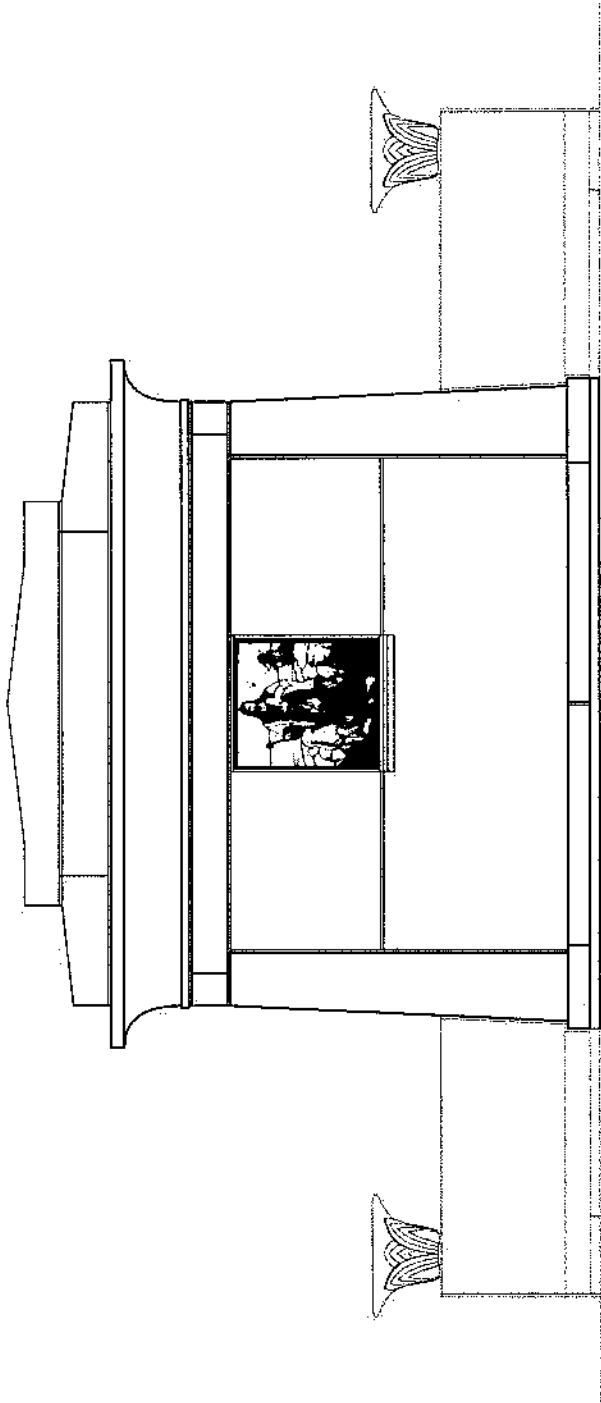
Historic Preservation: Studio I

Woodlawn Cemetery, Holly Plot

Butler SE Elevation

Scale: 1/4" = 1'

James E. Churchill



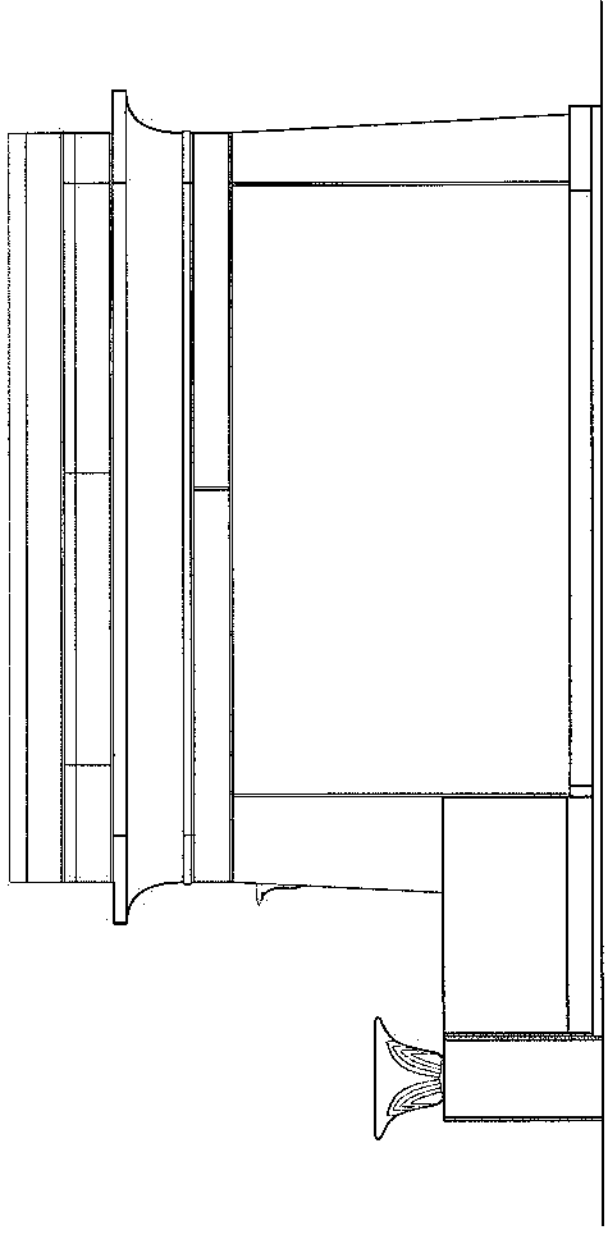
Historic Preservation: Studio I

Woodlawn Cemetery, Holly Plot

Butler NW Elevation

Scale: 1/4" = 1'

James E. Churchill



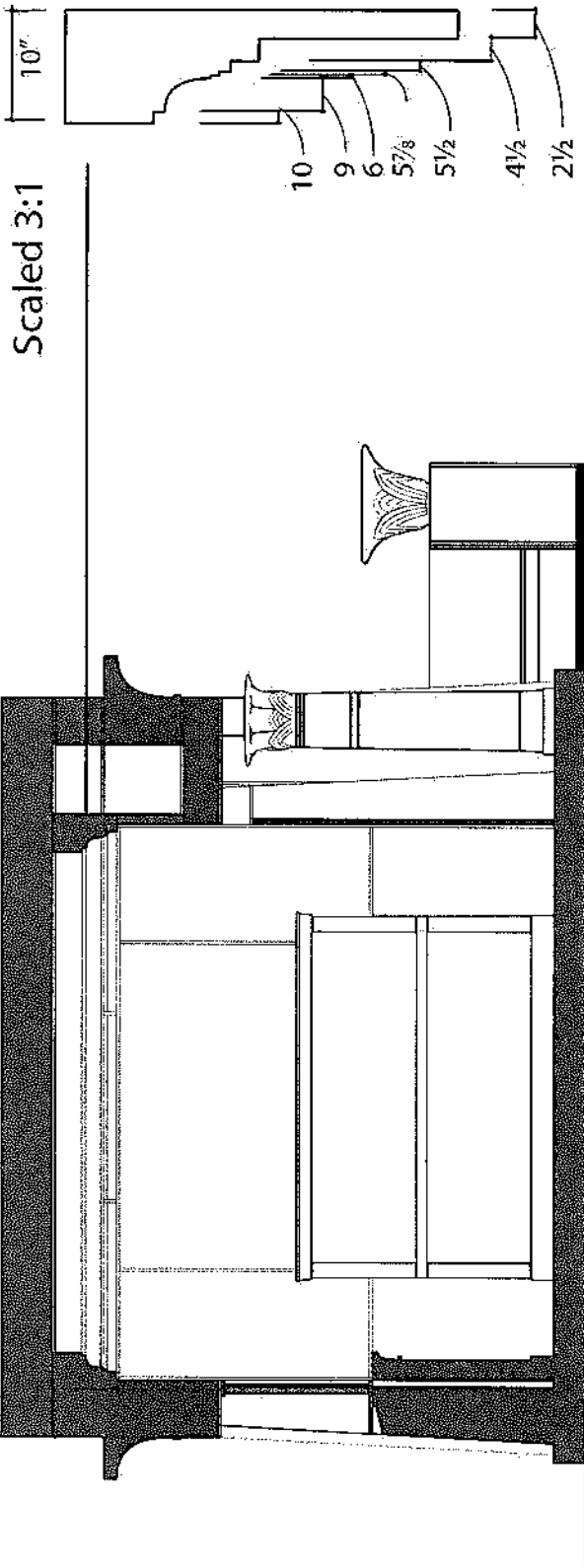
Historic Preservation: Studio 1

Woodlawn Cemetery, Holly Plot

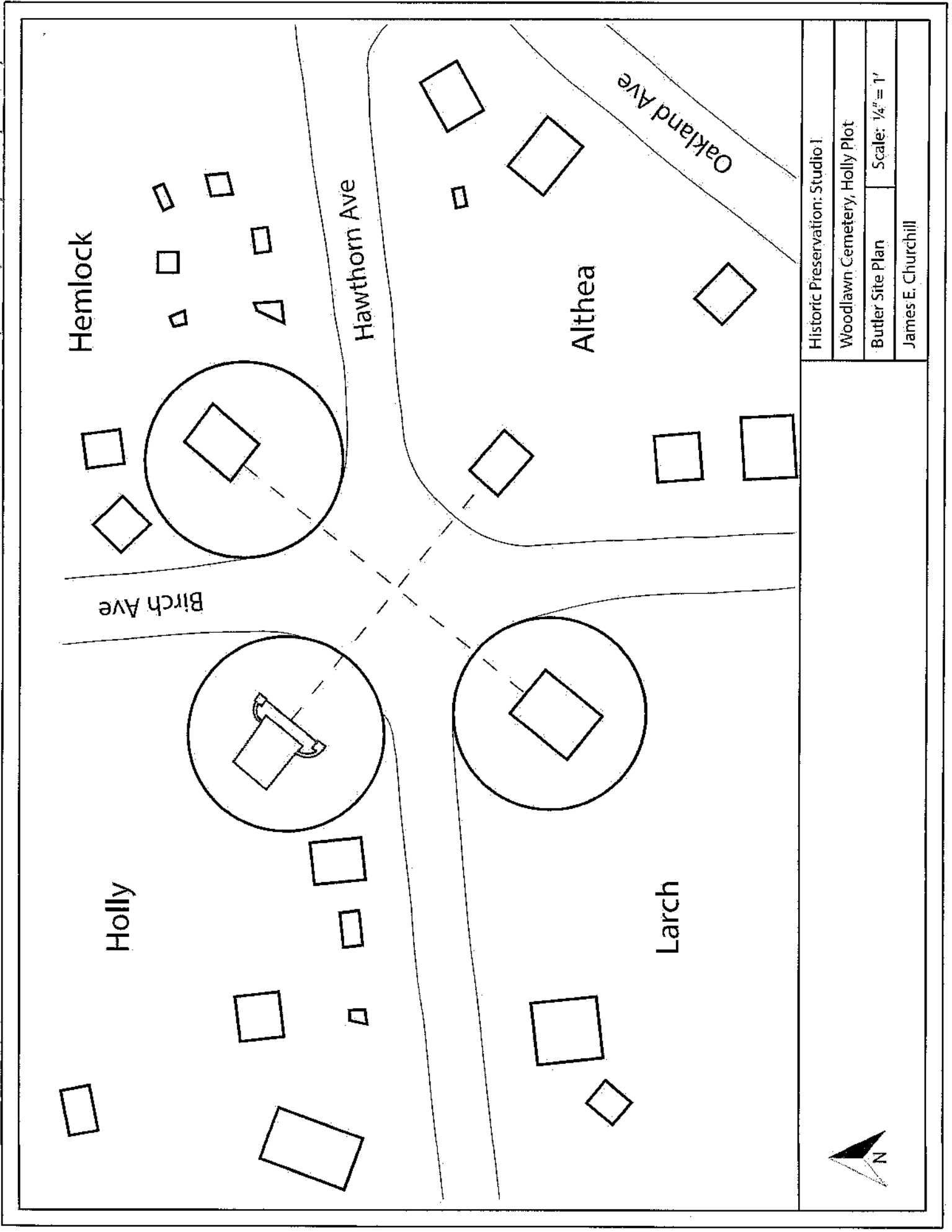
Butler NE Elevation

Scale: 1/4" = 1'

James E. Churchill



| | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Historic Preservation: Studio I | |
| Woodlawn Cemetery, Holly Plot | |
| Butler Cross Section | Scale: 3/4" = 1' |
| James E. Churchill | |



Historic Preservation: Studio I

Woodlawn Cemetery, Holly Plot

Butler Site Plan

Scale: 1/4" = 1'

James E. Churchill