

The Stein Mausoleum

Woodlawn Cemetery

Fall 2011 HP Studio: Reading Buildings

Problem 3: Documentation Analysis

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Stein Mausoleum Paper

The Stein Mausoleum was built in 1917 for the women's clothing manufacturer Julius Stein and wife Hulda Stein. It is a small, simple and elegantly designed mausoleum set back from the main road and immersed into its surrounding landscape. The mausoleum has the grave sites of fourteen Stein family members, five of which have been cremated, four who are buried in the catacombs of the mausoleum and the rest whom are located in the crypts of the mausoleum.¹The domed octagonal shaped structure was designed by the architectural firm of Carrere and Hastings and erected by the Presbrey Leland Company².

Carrere and Hastings were famous architects who initially started off working for McKim, Mead, and White Architects before they ventured into a successful partnership of their own. They were known for their Beaux-Art style of architecture.³ In the early 1860s when Woodlawn Cemetery was established as a rural cemetery, it had the convenience of having both road access as well as proximity to New York City's Harlem Line, allowing it to be a popular burial site for many who lived in Manhattan. Amongst the many famous people who were buried in the cemetery, Woodlawn also had the fortune of having many mausoleums built by famous architects of the time. Carrere and Hastings were one of the many architects commissioned and have six mausoleums built in Woodlawn. The Stein Mausoleum is one of the six exemplary mausoleums.⁴

As visitors approach the mausoleum they do not see the structure instantly with the current arrangement of the landscape. Instead, since the mausoleum is set back from the main road, visitors have to walk up a small hill and look past the various trees that surround the structure to fully view it. This dynamic relationship between the placing of the building on its plot and its surrounding landscape helps to create a sense of importance for the structure. In the original plans for the mausoleum, the relationship of the landscape and mausoleum was very different. The architects had planned to have a very sparse arrangement of plants surrounding the mausoleum so that when visitors approached it from any part of the cemetery they would see the structure atop the small hill and apart from all of the other surrounding structures.⁵ Once the viewer is standing in front of the mausoleum they notice the vertical symmetry of the structure and its octagonal shape. The octagon and its circular dome on top (often seen in Byzantine architecture) of the mausoleum creates a sense of roundness to the building and helps to contribute to the original

¹ Mausoleum Notes provided by Woodlawn Cemetery

² Letter from Walter J. Stein to John Plumb of Woodlawn Cemetery. Julius Stein Mausoleum. Woodlawn Archives. Avery Library, Columbia University. 3, May 1956.

³ Hewitt, Mark Alan, Kate Lemos, William Morrison, and Charles D. Warren. *Carrere and Hastings Architects*. Vol. 1. New York: Acanthus Press, 2006. 17.

⁴ Hewitt, Mark Alan, Kate Lemos, William Morrison, and Charles D. Warren. *Carrere and Hastings Architects*. Vol. 2. New York: Acanthus Press, 2006. 204-205.

⁵ Drawing of Mausoleum plan and landscape. Julius Stein Mausoleum. Woodlawn Archives. Avery Library, Columbia University.

idea of being able to view the building from all angles equally.⁶ As the visitor walks around the structure he or she will notice the granite that is used on the exterior façade. The material's smoothness creates a harmonious balance with the natural surroundings of the mausoleum and the structure itself. The exterior side and rear elevations all have a centrally located oval window with granite surrounds, ornately decorated bronze grills, and a curvy bracket located on the top center. The location of the windows is the only factor, which break apart the smoothness of the granite on the structure in those elevations.

Once the visitor walks around the mausoleum and reaches the front again, he or she feels the idea of importance being emphasized once again on this elevation of the structure. The doorway is flanked by two Doric columns that sit on a small portico resting on top of the octagonal base of the structure. As the eye moves in, past the two columns into the recessed doorway area, the eye moves up and down scanning the intricate granite relief of an angel feeding a doe above the doorway and the bronze ornate doorway itself. Two bronze doors open on the small mausoleum's airy and rich interior.

The Stein Mausoleum's interior is a well lit and richly decorated area. There is a tremendous amount of light, which enters the mausoleum through the three oval Tiffany windows and illuminates the space.⁷ This helps to give the sense that the mausoleum was never meant to be dark but instead in as much light as possible. The original plans for landscape also emphasize this concept, since without the presence of the trees that are there currently a greater amount of light would enter the space. The rich materials of the interior, which were specified by Carrere and Hastings in their building contract, consists of Tokeen Alaska marble and white granite equal to the Victoria white of Westerly, and Guastavino tiles and mosaics for the dome. The mosaics are based in coloring and quality of work on those from Kate Harbeck's Mausoleum, another Carrere Hastings design.⁸ The use of the pristine marble and granite walls, create sharp squares and rectangles that are juxtaposed against the mausoleum's smooth white and gold mosaic dome and oval tiffany windows making the Stein Mausoleum a dynamic visual space.

The beautifully elegant Stein Mausoleum was commissioned by Julius Stein, a German-American dressmaker. He immigrated to America with his wife Hulda from Germany in the 1880's and originally lived in Evanston, Illinois.⁹ By 1900 the couple, their two children Walter and Grace, and their maid were living in New York City on 345 Convent Street.¹⁰ While in New York City, Julius Stein established a medium sized women's clothing

⁶ "Byzantine Architecture." *American Architect and Building News*. 07 May 1892: 77-79. Print.

⁷ Hewitt, Mark Alan, Kate Lemos, William Morrison, and Charles D. Warren. *Carrere and Hastings Architects*. Vol. 2. New York: Acanthus Press, 2006. 207.

⁸ Specifications for Construction of a Mausoleum for Mr. Julius Stein, in Woodlawn Cemetery, New York. Julius Stein Mausoleum Archives. Avery Library, Columbia University. August, 1916.

⁹ "1880 United States Federal Census." *Ancestry Library n. Ancestry Library*. Web. 15 Oct 2011. <<http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=1880usfedcen&indiv=try&h=29835843>>.

¹⁰ "1900 United States Federal Census." *Ancestry Library n. Ancestry Library*. Web. 15 Oct 2011. <<http://search.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&db=1900usfedcen&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=0&msT=1&gss=angs->

factory which was initially located on 104 Bleecker Street in 1899.¹¹ Eventually, by 1912 his factory had been moved to 303-305 Fifth Avenue and as quoted in the *American Cloak and Suit Review*, it “sold costumes, street dresses, wraps and suits which also included copies and adaptations of French styles.”¹² According to the *Annual Industrial Directory of New York State* both first and second editions (1912 and 1913) Julius Stein and Company was a medium sized company, however, he was still managed to be successful enough to have a small, yet elegant mausoleum built in his honor by the famous Carrere and Hastings architects.^{13 14}

For many years after its erection, the Stein Mausoleum was well maintained. It was taken care of primarily by Julius Stein's children, Walter J. Stein and Grace Walters. On April 4, 1967 in a correspondence between Raymond Walsh, the Stein family lawyer and Dudley Clarke, Woodlawn Cemetery's general manager, it is noted that Grace Walters established a Special Care fund that consisted of a one-time donation of \$3,000. This would go towards the overall maintenance of the family mausoleum.¹⁵ Though the endowment for the mausoleum maintenance was generous it was clear it would not be appropriate for long-term care. Today, the mausoleum is in good condition, however, there is clear biological growth on the exterior façade and dome of the structure and rusting of the bronze doors and window grills. The interior also needs to be cleaned and has some water damage on the granite floors. Despite all of these facets, the mausoleum is in good condition and should be preserved as a remembrance of a Carrere Hastings mini masterpiece, as well for its structural and decorative value.

The Stein Mausoleum is a small monumental piece of architecture. Its placement in its surroundings helps to give the mausoleum a feeling of importance and alerts the viewer to its presence. The mausoleum is an ideal candidate for preservation for it not only is conserving the Stein family legacy, but, also because it is a structure which has a compilation of rich design and materials making it an elegant and dynamic creation of Carrere and Hastings.

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¹¹ "Help Wanted- Female." *World* 17, .8, 1899. 10. Print.

¹² O'Connor, John M. Comp. *The American Cloak and Suit Review*. 7. 4. New York: John M. O'Connor and Company Publishers, 1914. 33. Print

¹³ Williams, John. Comp. *Annual Industrial Directory of New York*. 1. 1. Albany: State Department of Labor, 1912. 315. Print.

¹⁴ Lynch, James M. Comp. *Annual Industrial Directory of New York*. 2. 2. Albany: State Department of Labor, 1913. 543. Print.

¹⁵ Letter from Raymond Walsh To Dudley Clarke. Julius Stein Mausoleum. Woodlawn Archives. Avery Library, Columbia University. 4, April 1967.



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Bronx, New York