

**Report on the
Louis Ungrich Mausoleum**

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family; it also implies a motivation for the eventual construction of the Ungrich mausoleum at Woodlawn Cemetery.

By Louis Ungrich's death in 1908, the Ungrich brothers had invested mightily in Manhattan real estate.³ But that business only had begun around 1886, when Louis Ungrich was at the age of thirty-six. Prior to entering the building industry, the brothers had undertaken another long-term joint enterprise: the production and sale of pickles and preserves. Those provisions were available for purchase at the Weisbecker Manhattan Market (Figure 1).⁴ Louis and Louis K. were born in New York to a German baker and his wife, and their first business reflected that upbringing. But like many first-generation Americans of the era, the Ungrich brothers sought to elevate their socio-economic standing by repositioning out of traditional jobs. In real estate and building Louis Ungrich and Louis K. Ungrich found notable success.

As has been noted by cemetery historians, funerary monuments - and mausoleums in particular - often were a reflection of this kind of aspirational thinking in the nineteenth century.⁵ As symbols of wealth and prestige, a mausoleum frequently represented to its owner a final affirmation of socio-economic achievement. Its construction symbolically staked a claim for an entire family in the landscape of the social elite. Indeed, Louis Ungrich may have held a similar belief: he regarded funerary monuments with such importance that his last will and testament mandated as a first order of business that a "suitable monument" bearing his name be erected to his memory.⁶

Upon their husband's deaths, Henrietta Ungrich and Matilida Weisbecker both enlisted C. E. Tayntor Granite Co. to design and build grand mausoleums on their Woodlawn plots. The Louis Ungrich mausoleum's design reflects that of a tetrastyle Greek temple (Figure 2). At the temple's portico, Doric columns support an entablature featuring triglyphs and a set of

³ *A History of Real Estate, Building, and Architecture in New York City* (New York, New York: The Real Estate Record Association, 1898), 145-148.

⁴ *New York City Directory, 1880-1886* (New York, New York: The Trow City Directory Company).

⁵ Kenneth Ames, "Ideologies in Stone: Meanings in Victorian Gravestones," *Journal of Popular Culture* 14:4 (1981): 641-656, and David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

⁶ Last Will and Testament of Louis Ungrich, New York County, District and Probate Courts. Accessed through subscription service Ancestry.com, *New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999* [database on-line].

neighbors follow the 1908 accident, likely in support of Henrietta and her two sons Frederick and Louis K. B. Ungrich.⁸

Henrietta lived until 1942, when she was interred in the vault opposite her husband in the Louis Ungrich mausoleum. She was survived by both of her sons. Neither Frederick nor Louis K. B., however, had spouses or children, and ultimately they were interred in the vaults immediately below their parents in 1951 and 1959, respectively. Today, only these four of the mausoleum's ten vaults are filled.

Despite the mid-twentieth century conclusion of the Louis Ungrich family lineage, the mausoleum appears to have experienced recent commemorative use. Glass and plastic flower vases rest in front of the altar window, which may have been filled at points by members of the Louis K. Ungrich family. The mausoleum also remains in fair condition, although staining on the interior marble ceiling (Figure 5) and accretion at its cornice ventilation (Figure 6) suggest that water entry has been an issue. Although deterioration appears to be minimal, determining the extent of water damage would require investigation of the area above the marble ceiling. This investigation also could reveal where and how much water is entering the structure.

The Louis Ungrich mausoleum appears in Woodlawn's mortuary landscape as a singular symbol of a family's wealth and social standing. However, closer investigation reveals that the image projected by the mausoleum is complicated by a set of intra-monumental dynamics. By considering the Ungrich mausoleum in concert with those memorializing Charles Weisbecker and Louis K. Ungrich, we come to a more complete understanding not only of the history of the Ungrich family, but also the ways that the deceased conceived of monumental practice. This suggests that further exploration of the historical relationships between monuments at Woodlawn Cemetery would be of benefit to further understanding of the cemetery's history and of funerary customs during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

⁸ United States Census, 1890, 1900, 1920 1920, and New York State Census, 1900, 1905. Accessed through subscription service Ancestry.com [database on-line].

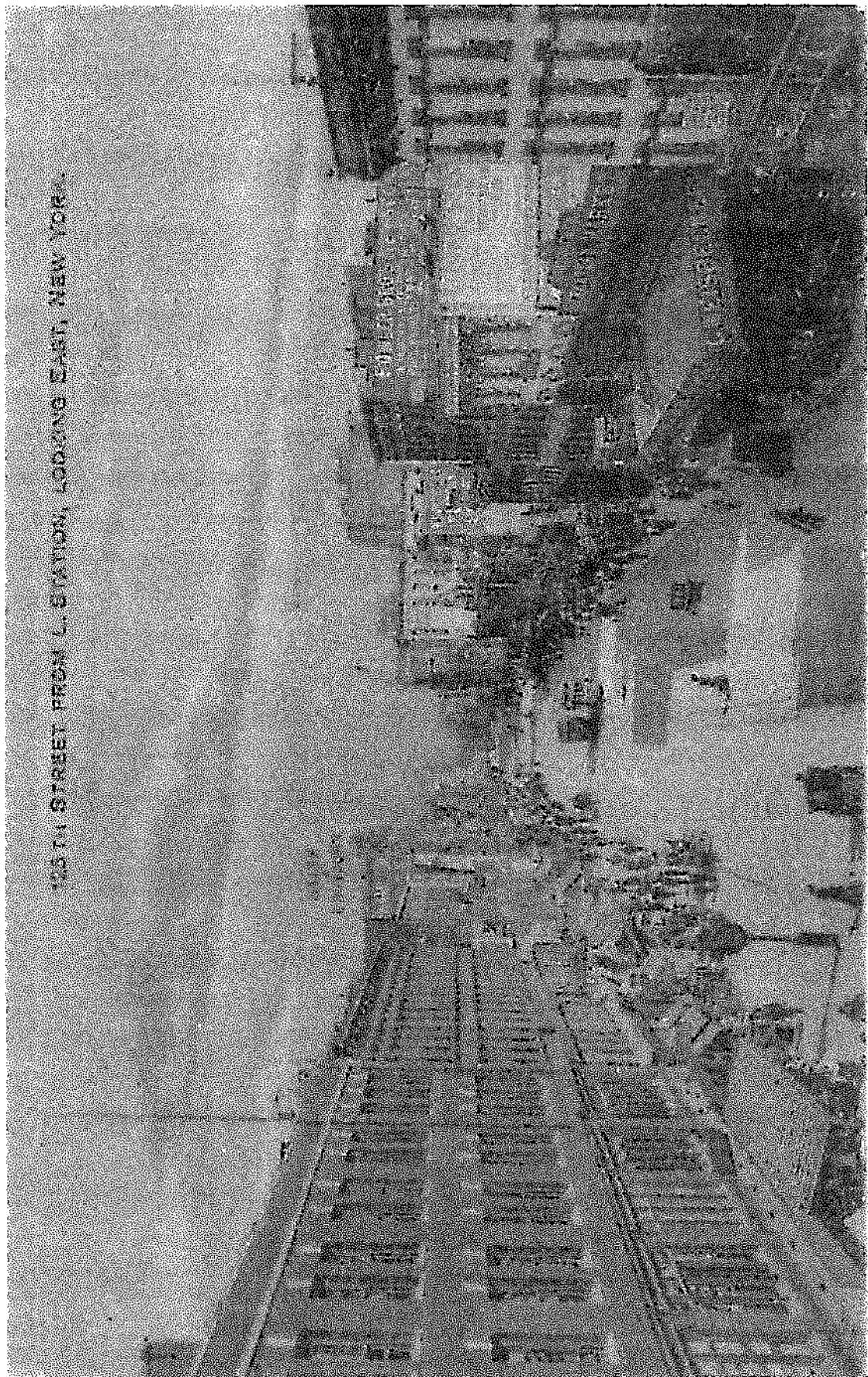
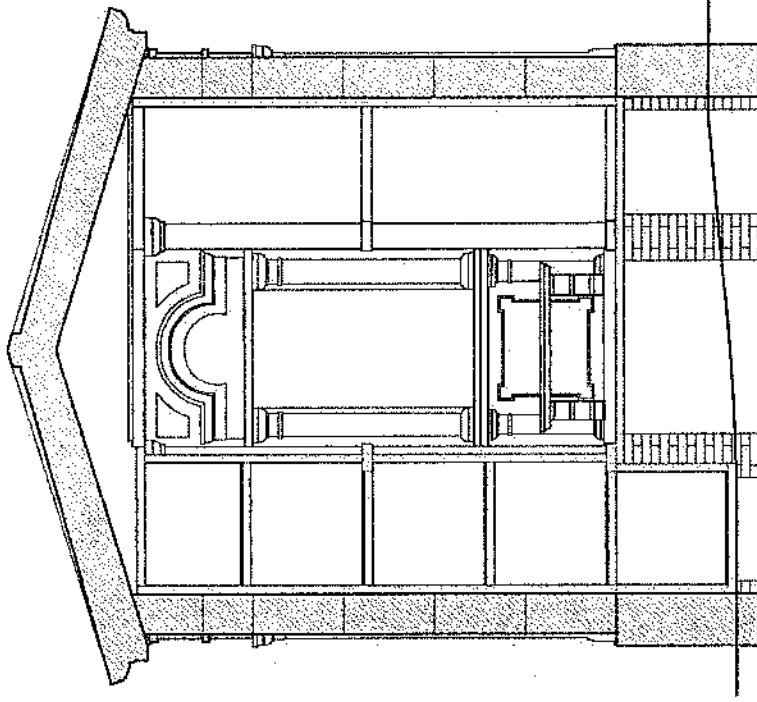
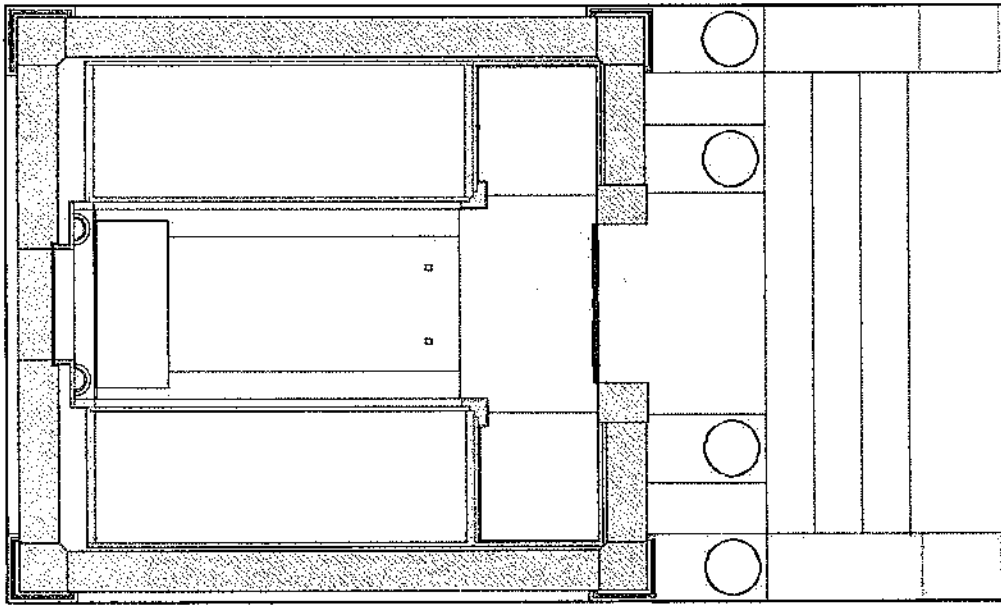


Figure 1. Postcard view of West 125th Street ca. 1910 with Charles Weisbecker's Manhattan Market in the bottom right corner
(Source: Old New York Post Cards #15, stuffnobodycaresabout.com)



1/4" = 1'

Figure 3. Plan and Interior Section

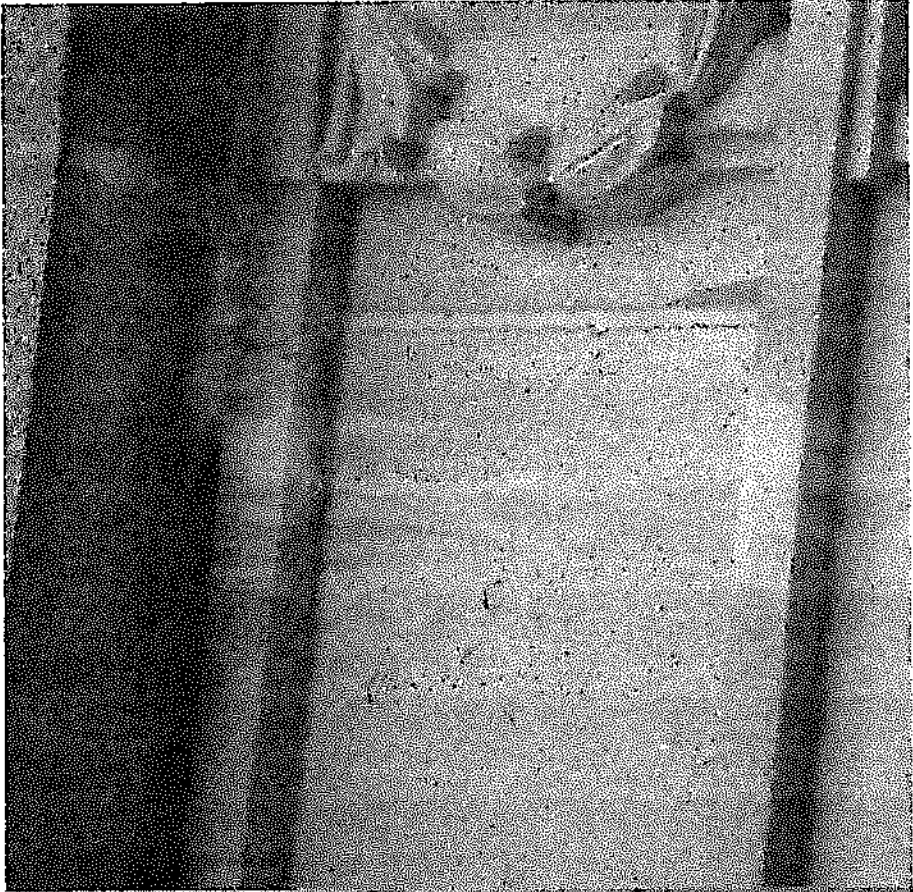


Figure 6. Accretion at the a cornice vent, south side

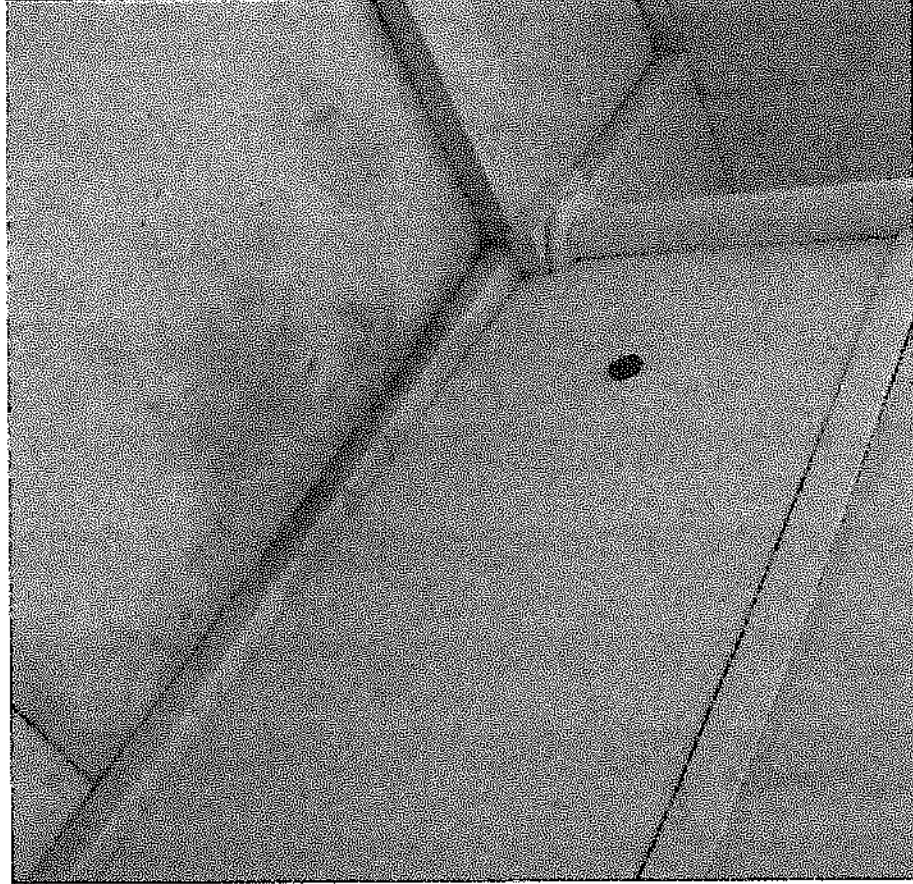
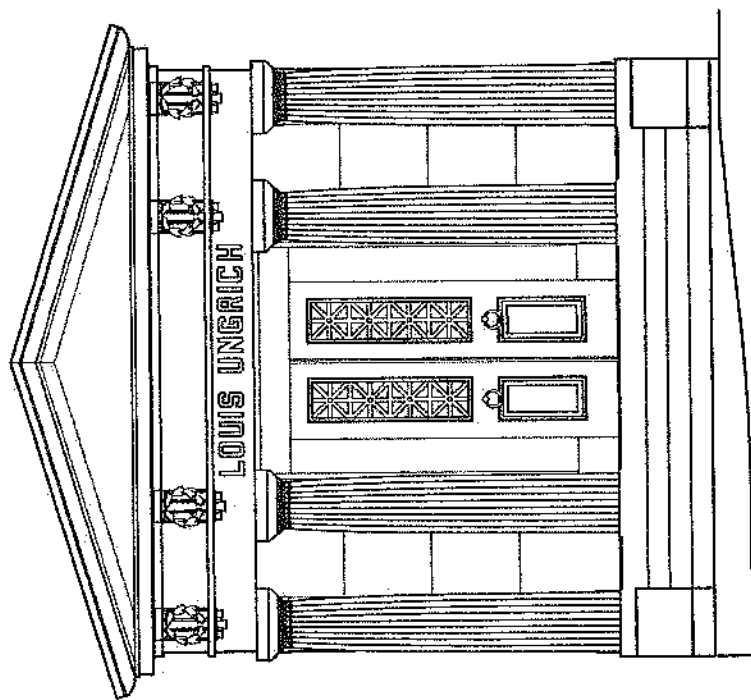
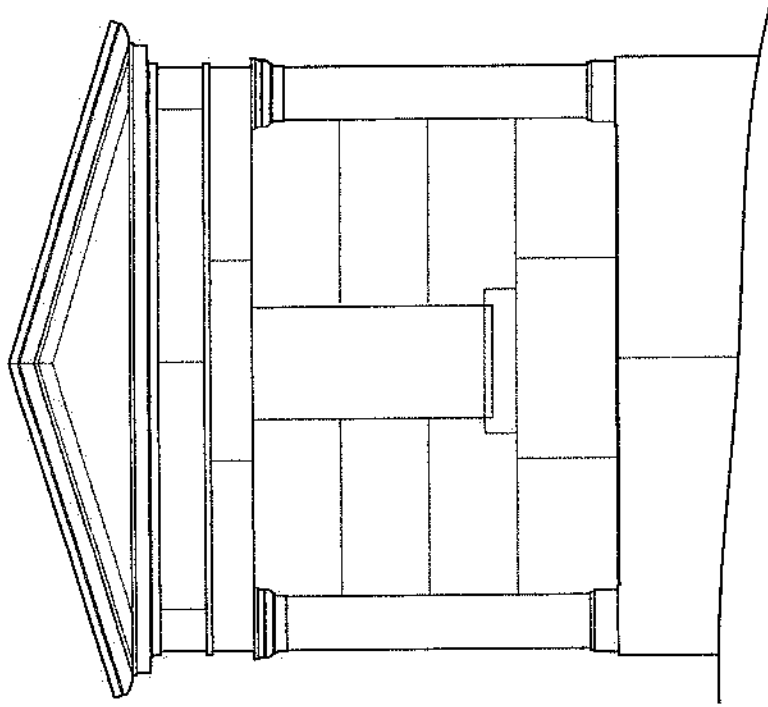
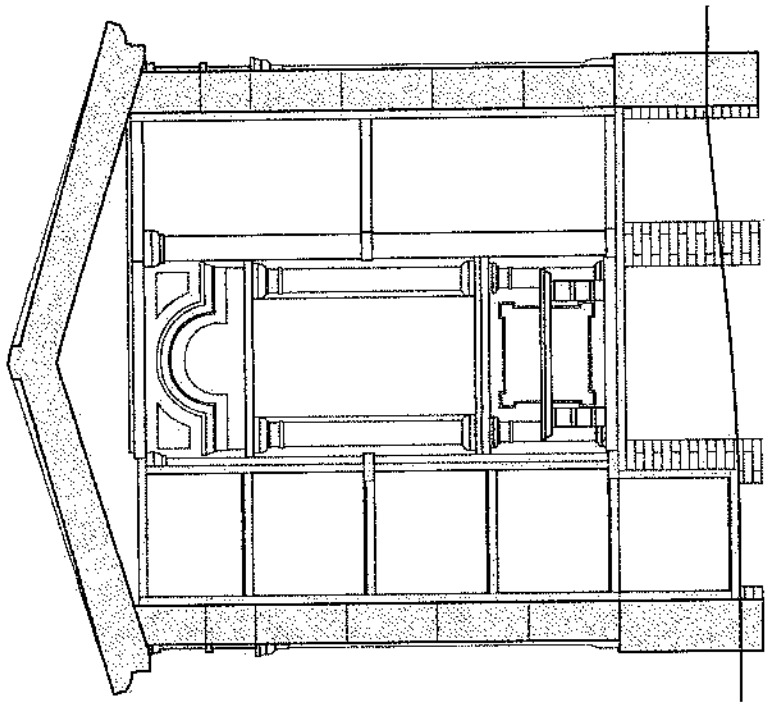
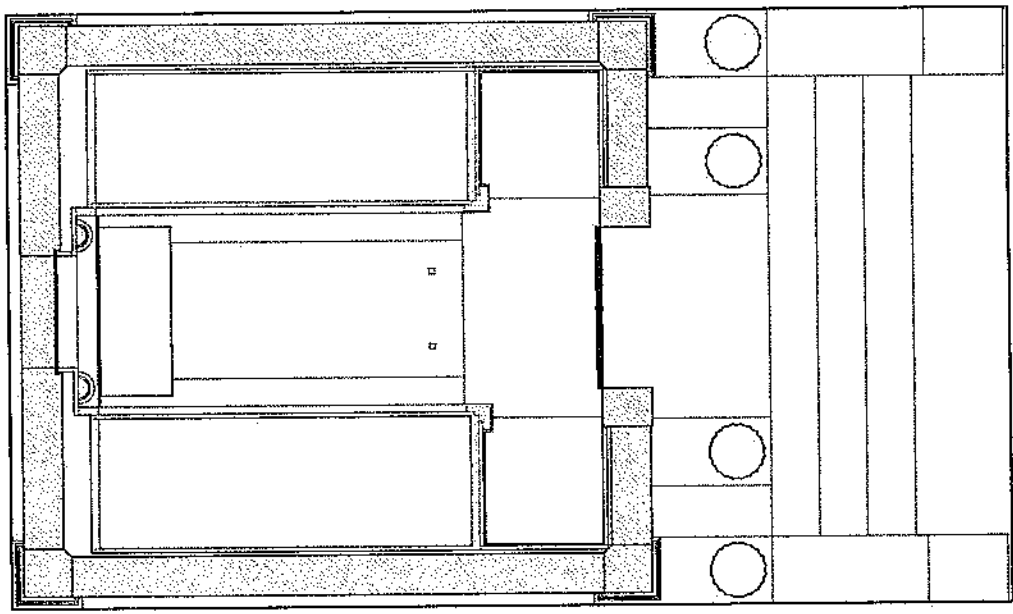


Figure 5. Staining on the marble ceiling



Front and Rear Elevation

1/4" = 1'



Floor plan and Interior Section