

## The Louis N. Hartog Mausoleum



Designed 1939-1940 and built in 1940, this mausoleum was built for businessman Louis N. Hartog, Sr., by Adler's Monument and Granite Works on lot #11 of the Columbine Plot at Woodlawn Cemetery.<sup>i</sup> The building footprint is approximately 22 ½ feet wide and 19 feet deep, and the mausoleum sits to the rear of its 40 foot by 35 foot site directly underneath the three expansive elm trees. "Architect" designation is given to Adler's, but the point man on the project appears to be a J. A. Doolittle, the "Engineer."<sup>ii</sup> Little indication is given as to whether or not Hartog had a great deal of input with regards to the overall shape and form of his mausoleum, but notes from Doolittle and the builder's contract reveal that Hartog was consulted on several matters of style, from granite choice for the platform step, to the designs for the stained glass windows and the bronze door, to the final placement of the mausoleum on the site.<sup>iii</sup>

Hartog's structure replaced a previous monument, whose only remains were its foundations. Doolittle consulted with a Mr. G. R. Williams and a Mr. Frank as to whether or not they would be using the previous foundations for the new monument, but it appears that the

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engineering team ultimately removed all traces of the previous construction.<sup>iv</sup> As well as pre-existing foundations, the mausoleum also needed to accommodate the three mature elms as well as an oak, now gone, closer to the road. At the time of the mausoleum's planning and construction, all of the surrounding lots had mausolea in situ.<sup>v</sup> As one of the last mausolea on the "block," the Hartog monument was designed in direct response to the pre-existing fabric, and the Hill monument across Berlin to the north became especially important for the development of Hartog's structure, which bore a strikingly similar design to Hill's.<sup>vi</sup> For a time, gargoyles were proposed as the solution to the problem of creating sufficient contrast, but were not added in time to be included in the roof slab before cutting.<sup>vii</sup>

Constructed out of fine hammered, E.L. Smith Certified Barre Vermont mausoleum granite, genuine United States Government certified bronze, rubbed slate, Atlas Portland cement, stained and clear glass, lead frames, and poured concrete foundations, the Hartog Mausoleum is a study in austere monumentality.<sup>viii</sup> The massive slabs of granite that make up the mausoleum body rest on a raised plinth framed by a front porch with facing benches, each cut from a single, solid block of granite. A rare moment of delicacy, each corner of the symmetrical building recedes away in a series of set-backs, creating multiple planes of depth, which are then echoed by the horizontal tiers resting atop the main bulk.

The Hartog Mausoleum strives in design, material, and construction to embody a key phrase repeated throughout its builder's contract: "the most substantial manner." Austere and made of remarkably few pieces of stone, the mausoleum relies on scale and weight to assert itself in the landscape: it is by far the largest of the mausolea in its "neighborhood" and completely shields the Schnitker-Bunke mausoleum situated in the lot to the rear. When the granite was new and clean the transitions across the joints would have disappeared and the entire monument may

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have read as a single, utterly massive boulder that a master sculptor had carved into submission.

The soiling of the Barre granite facilitates the identification of the independent slabs used across all of the building's faces; consequently, discovery of the size of the slabs is rather quick.

The design employs a most ancient of construction technologies, trabeation, but amplifies the scale of the building members from humble post-and-lintel architecture to a massive, impenetrable wall. The trabeation gives a nod to the archaic architecture of Knossos while the constructed-mountain form of the building implies the Mesopotamian ziggurat (temple-tower) or a Native American funerary mound. Yet a walk around the cemetery reveals that the Hartog monument is one of the largest and most impressive examples of a movement of substantial architecture of reduced classicism, austerity, and tiered roofs. Such style is a product of the Modern age but perhaps also speaks to the age from which America was emerging: The Great Depression. Hartog was president of the North Kensington Refinery, a malto-dextrine (glucose) company involved in sales of thousands of tons of product to the British government during the first World War as well as brewers-sugar to beverage companies in the United States. Through business, Hartog became embroiled in several high profile lawsuits in the 1920s that pitted Hartog against not only Tammany Hall leaders but even his own brother, Hartog must have felt the need to ensure the security of his family's remains.<sup>ix</sup>

Hartog's monument calls to mind the power and impenetrability of a bank vault as it strives to create a highly controlled, exclusive, and safe environment separate from the outside world. The assertive mass of the facade intimidates, and spatial manipulation organizes visitors into hierarchical groups by using the benches and platform as a funneling device. Admission to the vault requires an even more drastic selection process, and the single (oversized and surprisingly heavy) door implies a one-at-a-time procession. Inside the mausoleum, the

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catacombs for Hartog and his wife push out at the entrant in somewhat aggressive presentation.

Interior space feels more constrained than one expects: ceiling height is a mere 9 ½ feet, contrary to the implications of the roof tiers visible outside.

This is a mausoleum about weight and power, and it brings a person from a vast, textured natural world into a compact, smooth, and highly crafted environment. The wash of gray granite (with subtle contrasts of slate) imply a blank slate or another realm of existence. Light is severely limited; nature feels very far away. The east-west orientation of the site means that direct morning and evening sun should flood the interior with light, but the iconographic tree of life of the bronze door and the stained glass offer few opportunities for penetration. When direct light again hits a window, the afternoon sun pours in through the three stained-glass windows, which modify the light in such a way that the windows glow a faint rose color pierced by beams of blue and yellow. The only natures offered are painted on glass: dawn and dusk. In all, the mausoleum presents death, somber and cold, rather than celebrating the life of the dead.

#### Notes

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- <sup>i</sup> Woodlawn Cemetery. "Series II: Mausolea and Monument Files." Woodlawn Cemetery Records. Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City. Accessed 17 Oct. 2010.
  - <sup>ii</sup> Woodlawn Cemetery. "Examination Sheet #2—Description of Project Details (31 Oct. 1939)." Louis Hartog Mausoleum File, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City.
  - <sup>iii</sup> Adler's Monument and Granite Works. "Louis N. Hartog Monument Building Contract." Louis Hartog Mausoleum File, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City, 3-5.
  - <sup>iv</sup> Doolittle, J.A. "Document 21 (18 March 1940)." Louis Hartog Mausoleum File, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City.
  - <sup>v</sup> Woodlawn Cemetery. "Series II: Mausolea and Monument Files." Woodlawn Cemetery Records. Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City. Accessed 17 Oct. 2010.
  - <sup>vi</sup> Doolittle, J.A. "Document 16—Letter to Adler's Monument and Granite Works (8 Nov. 1939)." Louis Hartog Mausoleum File, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City.
  - <sup>vii</sup> Doolittle, J.A. "Document 17—Letter to Louis N. Hartog (28 Nov. 1939)." Louis Hartog Mausoleum File, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City.
  - <sup>viii</sup> Adler's Monument and Granite Works. "Louis N. Hartog Monument Building Contract." Louis Hartog Mausoleum File, Woodlawn Collection, Avery Library Department of Drawings and Archives. Columbia University, New York City, 3-5.

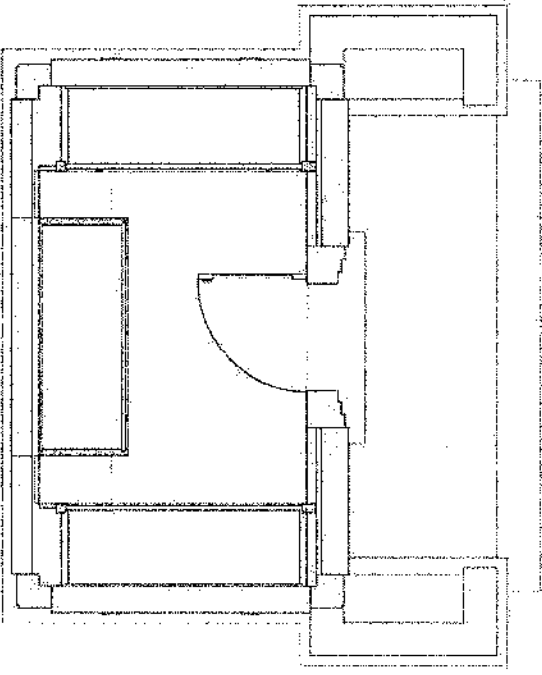
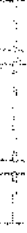
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<sup>ix</sup> "Hartog Loses \$329,000 Suit Against Brother." *New York Tribune* (27 Nov. 1919), 18. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Accessed 29 Sept. 2010.

"Indicted as Tax Perjurer." *New York Times* (2 Apr. 1921), 23. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Accessed 29 Sept. 2010.

Detailed Chimney Plan (Enlarged from New Wall)

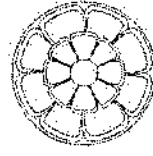


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Plan

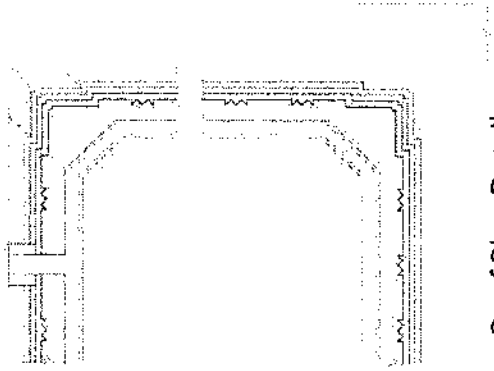


Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"



### Detail of Bronze Rosette Slab Pulls

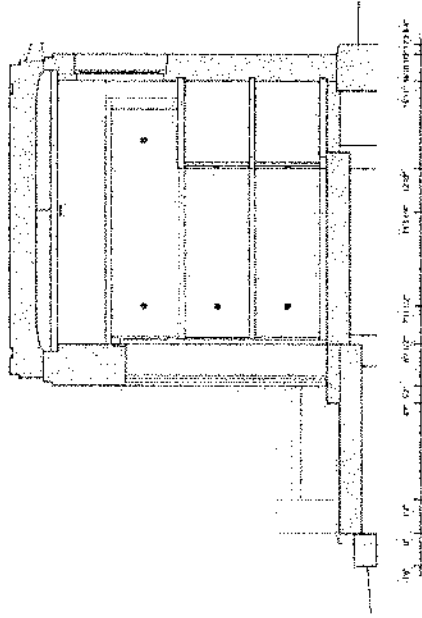
Shown Actual Size



Roof Plan Detail



Scale 3/4" = 1'-0"



Longitudinal Section

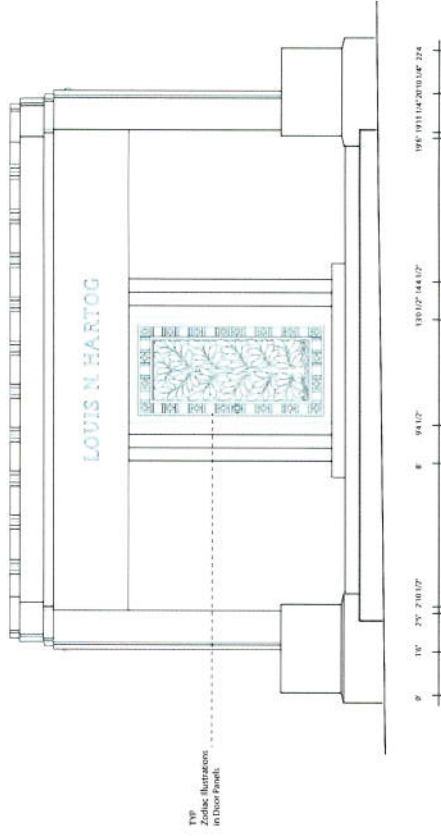
Scale 1/2" = 1'-0"

The Louis N. Hartog Mausoleum 1940

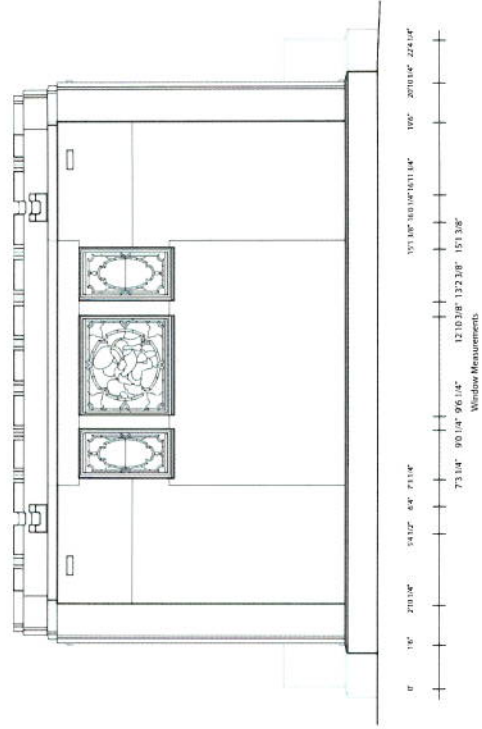
Built by Adler's Granite and Monument Works and J. A. Doolittle, Engineer  
Collaborative: Hill, Woodlawn Cemetery, Bronx, New York

Susie Ramney  
Project 3: Documentation and Analysis of Historic Buildings

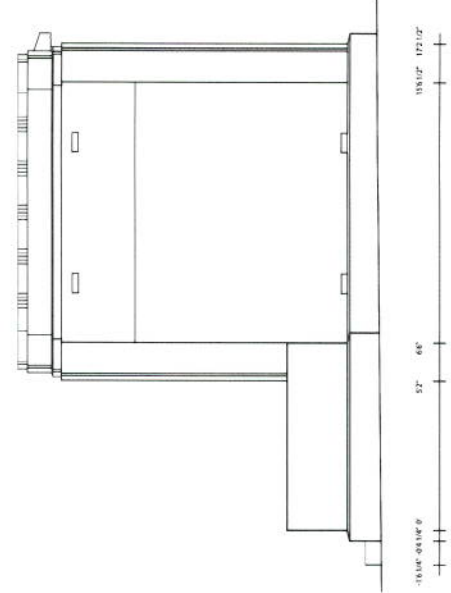
HP Studio 1, Fall 2010  
Faculty: Francine Baker, Ward Bennett, Andrew DeJure, Cheryl Lurie  
Teaching Assistants: Ashley Albahary, Zach Ulfar, Lonna Reed



**Front Elevation**  
Scale 1/2 in = 1 ft



**Rear Elevation**  
Scale 1/2 in = 1 ft



**Side Elevation**  
Scale 1/2 in = 1 ft



**Detail of Interior Rear Wall**  
Scale 1 in = 1 ft