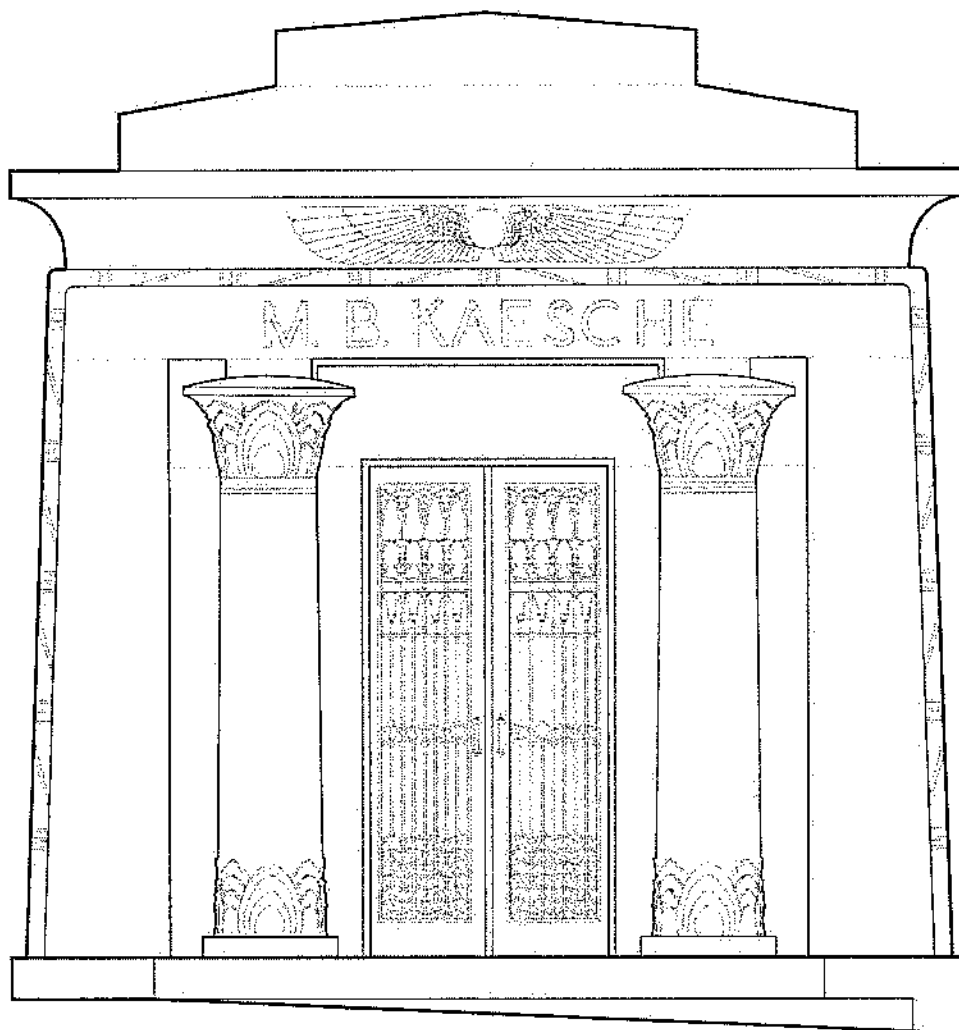


# Max B. Kaesche Mausoleum

Conditions Assessment & Biographical Research



Gwen Stricker  
HP Studio 1  
GSAPP

The Max B. Kaesche mausoleum, situated in the Butternut plot of Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, New York was erected following the death of its namesake on October 11, 1921 in the summer of 1922.<sup>1</sup> Max B. Kaesche was born in Germany in 1859 and immigrated to New York City with his parents, arriving in 1865 and residing in and around the city until his death.<sup>2</sup> His sister, German-born Eliza A. Kaesche (1856-1924), his wife, German-born Emma Dorothy Kaesche (1865-1946), and their children Emma Kaesche, Max Kaesche (1896-1948), and William Kaesche (1898-1935) are also entombed within the family mausoleum. According to U.S. census records, Kaesche was in the chemical business, manufacturing and selling unspecified chemicals for Sandoz Chemical Company.<sup>3</sup> Both sons William and Max also join the company when they come of age and remain there until their deaths. The family does not appear

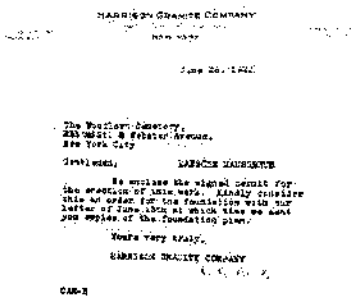


Figure 1 Woodlawn Cemetery and Harrison Granite Company Correspondence

in the U. S. Federal Census until 1910, and they moved around New York City and its suburbs between 1910 and 1930, residing at Helena Avenue in Westchester in 1910, 190 Riverside Drive in Manhattan in 1920, and Emma lived with her son Max in Bergen, New Jersey in 1930.<sup>4</sup>

From archived records of cemetery transactions, it is evident that Max's wife Emma was responsible for the decisions surrounding the mausoleum design and placement in Woodlawn Cemetery (Figure 1). She enlisted the Harrison Granite Company as the architect and contractor of her family's

<sup>1</sup> "Kaesche." Major Monument Records, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Drawings and Archives, accessed September 19, 2018.  
<sup>2</sup> Emma Dorothy Kaesche, U.S. Passport Applications. Ancestry Library, accessed September 11, 2018. <https://search.ancestrylibrary.com>  
<sup>3</sup> "Max B. Kaesche Dies." *New York Herald Tribune*, October 3, 1948, pg. 64.  
<sup>4</sup> Max Baldwin Kaesche, U.S. Federal Census, 1910, 1920, 1930. Ancestry Library, accessed September 14, 2018. <https://search.ancestrylibrary.com>

mausoleum, although there is no evidence or indication of the influences upon her design decisions.<sup>5</sup> Harrison Granite Company was established by its president, William H. Harrison of New Rochelle, New York in Barre, Vermont, and the company designed and built mausoleums all over the country, including more than 200 other Woodlawn monuments.<sup>6</sup> Harrison Granite was also responsible for the materials of McKinley Tomb and several mausoleums in the Soliders' Cemetery at Westpoint.<sup>7</sup>

The mausoleum follows Egyptian motifs in its design, much like several other mausoleums in Woodlawn Cemetery, most notably the Woolworth Mausoleum. Kaesche's mausoleum follows a form referred to as a trapezium, meaning the dimensions at the frieze are less than dimensions at the base (Figure 2). The ornamental stonework above the portal



Figure 2 Front elevation of mausoleum showing Egyptian Revival Style and significant natural growth

contains a winged circle and two cobras which is a symbol of immortality of the soul in ancient architecture<sup>9</sup>, an ornamental detail that appeared in Egyptian Revival mausoleums as early as the 1830s.<sup>10</sup> The ornamentation on the columns replicates lotus blossoms commonly used in ancient Egyptian architecture. Within the mausoleum, there is a stained-glass window that keeps with the

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<sup>5</sup> "Kaesche." Major Monument Records, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Drawings and Archives, accessed September 19, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> "Strike at M'Kinley Tomb." *The Washington Post*, September 28, 1907, pg. 5.

<sup>7</sup> "Monumental News." *American Periodicals*, APTI Building Technology Heritage Archive. January 1, 1901; 22,1 pg. 68.

<sup>8</sup> "Modern Types of Mausoleum Work." *Park and Cemetery and Landscape Gardening*, 29, 12 February 1920. APTI Building Technology Heritage Archive.

<sup>9</sup> "Modern Types of Mausoleum Work." *Park and Cemetery and Landscape Gardening*, 29, 12 February 1920. APTI Building Technology Heritage Archive.

<sup>10</sup> James Stevens Curl. *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt As the Inspiration for Design Motifs in the West*. (Florence: Routledge, 2005) 291.

Egyptian aesthetic, containing images of palm trees on a sand shoreline (Figure 3). There was no indication of the design origins of the windows, however in the general contractor notes there are instructions for the contractor to fabricate the window.<sup>11</sup>



*Figure 3 Egyptian Stained Glass Window*

It is likely that the mausoleum was a catalog design (although more research needs to be completed to confirm), given that the Kaesche family had no direct ties to the ancient Egyptian culture. Harrison Granite Company and most other leading mausoleum companies were designing similar Egyptian Revival mausoleums, including the earlier mentioned Woolworth mausoleum designed by Farrington, Gould, and Hoagland. Emma's decision of an Egyptian design could provide referential clues to the possible religious associations of the family since the Egyptian Revival was typically favored by families associated with sects of Christianity other than Anglican.<sup>12</sup> The exterior of the mausoleum is entirely light Barre Vermont granite, and the interior is pink or grey Tennessee marble, as specified in the historic contractor notes.

Comparing measurements and documentation of the structure as it exists today to the blueprint drawings of the mausoleum revealed minor differences. The design and construction details of the window opening do not match directly with the existing measurements and details, with the window sitting in a different depth within the opening than indicated in the drawings. Additionally, the ornamentation in the frieze above the portico is much smaller in the drawings

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<sup>11</sup> "Kaesche." Major Monument Records, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Drawings and Archives, accessed September 19, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> James Stevens Curl. *The Egyptian Revival: Ancient Egypt As the Inspiration for Design Motifs in the West*. (Florence: Routledge, 2005) 299.

than as it exists today. It is also evident from the drawings that originally the mausoleum would only have “Keasche” identifying it, but “M. B.” was added to the drawing later as a note that it was to be included in the construction. Most of the other measurements match almost exactly what was ultimately built, although all details could not be reached to obtain the most accurate measurements. These differences are minor, and do not indicate much change was made following the drafting of the drawings or during the life of the structure.

The current condition of the mausoleum indicates a great need for repair due to long-term water infiltration and damage to the interior and exterior faces of the materials (Figure 4). Biological growth on all four facades of the structure (especially so in the northeast (Fig. 5) and southeast facades which are highly shaded by trees and do not receive sunlight) indicate a lack of effective waterproofing and draining systems. The contractor report of the mausoleum indicates that waterproofing and drainage were not required given the construction method of the mausoleum, a decision that is now causing the surface of the materials



*Figure 5 Interior biological growth on granite and marble surfaces.*



*Figure 4 Biological growth on exterior facades (pictured is northeast).*

to suffer.<sup>13</sup> There is enough moisture to support the growth of moss at some joints where mortar has deteriorated, creating an open space for water to penetrate the façade. Additionally, faces of the granite pieces on the southwest façade are blistering, causing flaking of the outermost layer of stone. On the interior, there is natural growth covering the granite floor slab and parts of the marble walls of the catacombs. Upon observing the interior after heavy rain, there was water dripping from the ceiling and any marble pieces that stand proud of the catacomb surface. I believe the water is entering the structure from deteriorated mortar joints at high elevations on the façade, and the lack of a drainage system causes it to sit inside the mausoleum with no means of exiting or venting out. The window frame also exhibited water infiltration. The Kaesche Mausoleum needs to be cleaned up, and the deteriorated mortar joints need to be filled to avoid continued water damage.

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<sup>13</sup> "Kaesche." Major Monument Records, Woodlawn Cemetery Records, Avery Drawings and Archives, accessed September 19, 2018.

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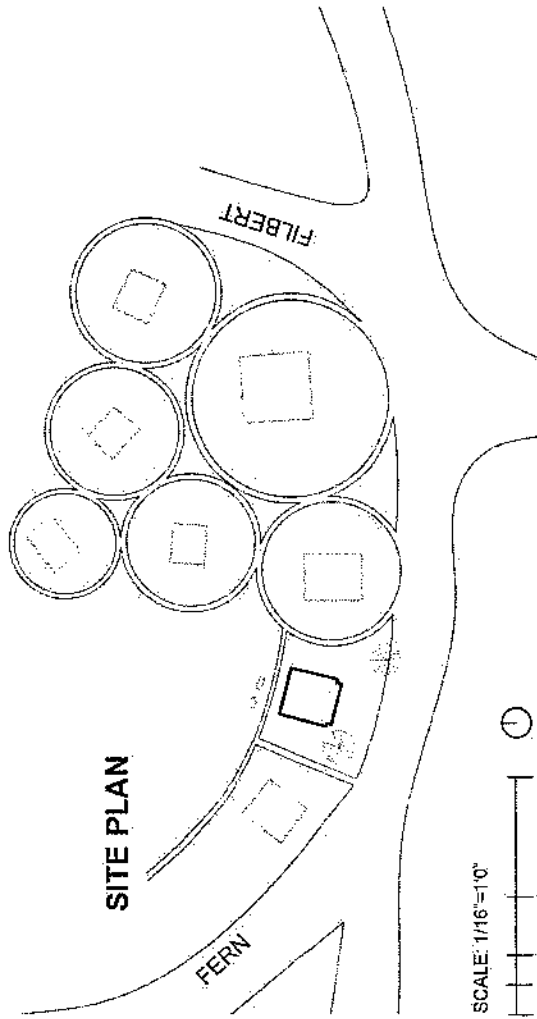
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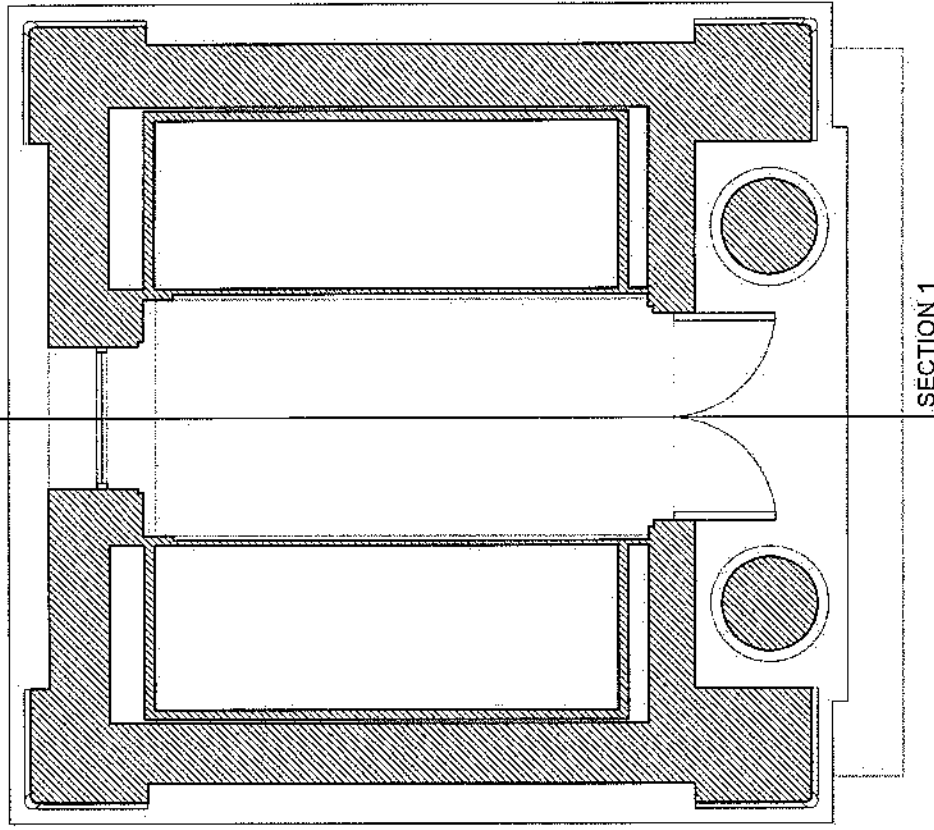
"Strike at M'Kinley Tomb." ProQuest Historical Newspapers. The Washington Post, September 28, 1907, pg. 5.

# MAX B. KAESCHE MAUSOLEUM DRAWINGS

DRAWN BY GWEN STRICKER SEPTEMBER 28, 2018



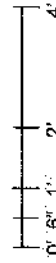
PLAN



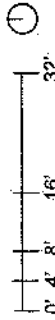
SECTION 1

Catacomb dimensions and wall thicknesses taken from historic blueprints (Not verified in field)

SCALE: 1/2"=1'0"

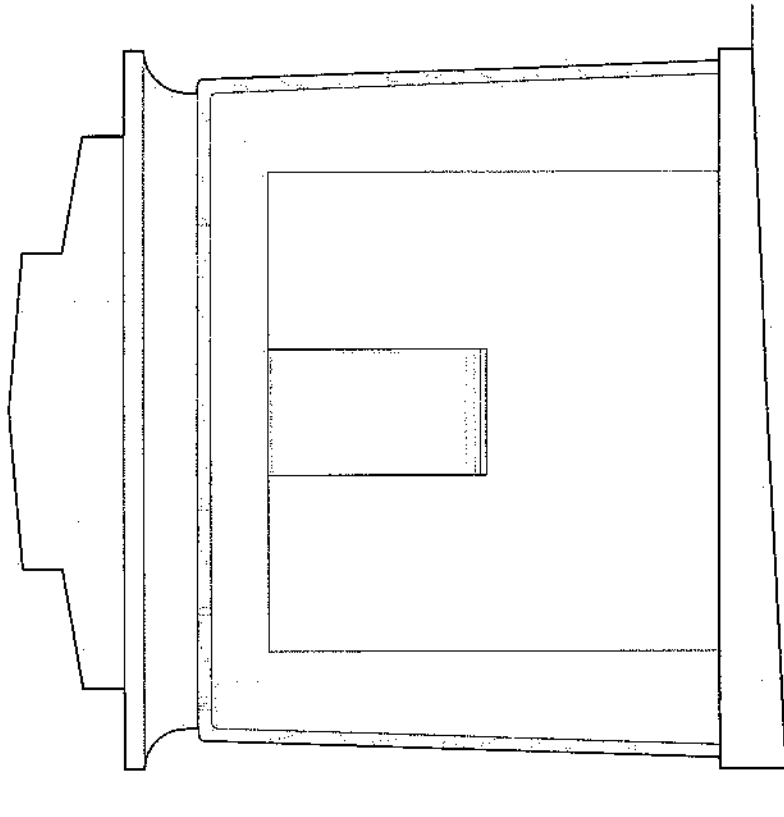


SCALE: 1/16"=1'0"



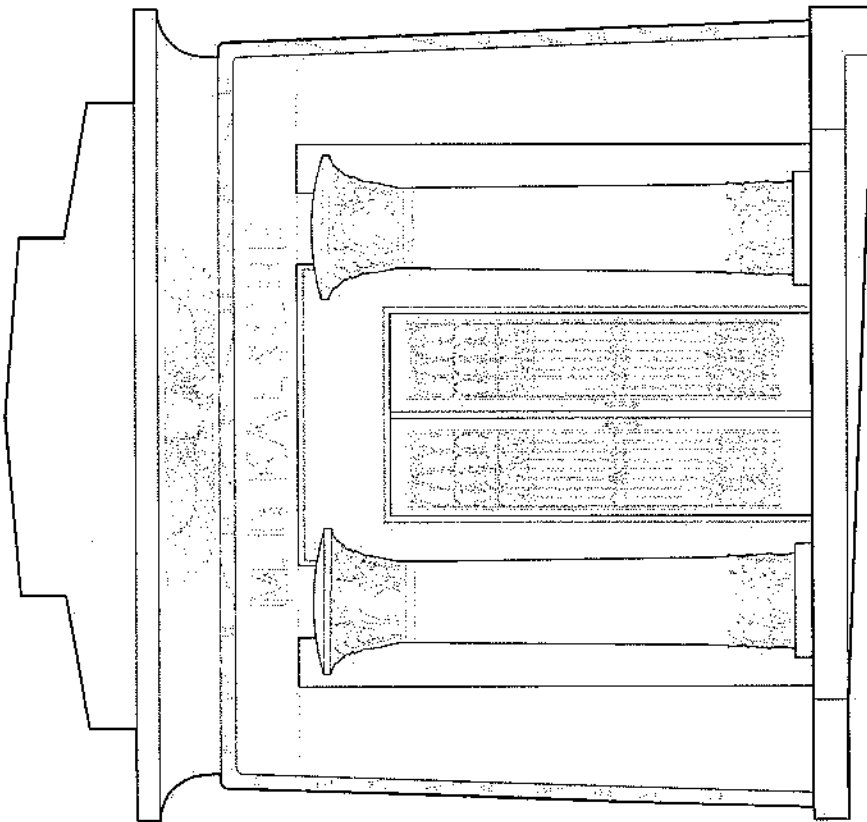


REAR ELEVATION



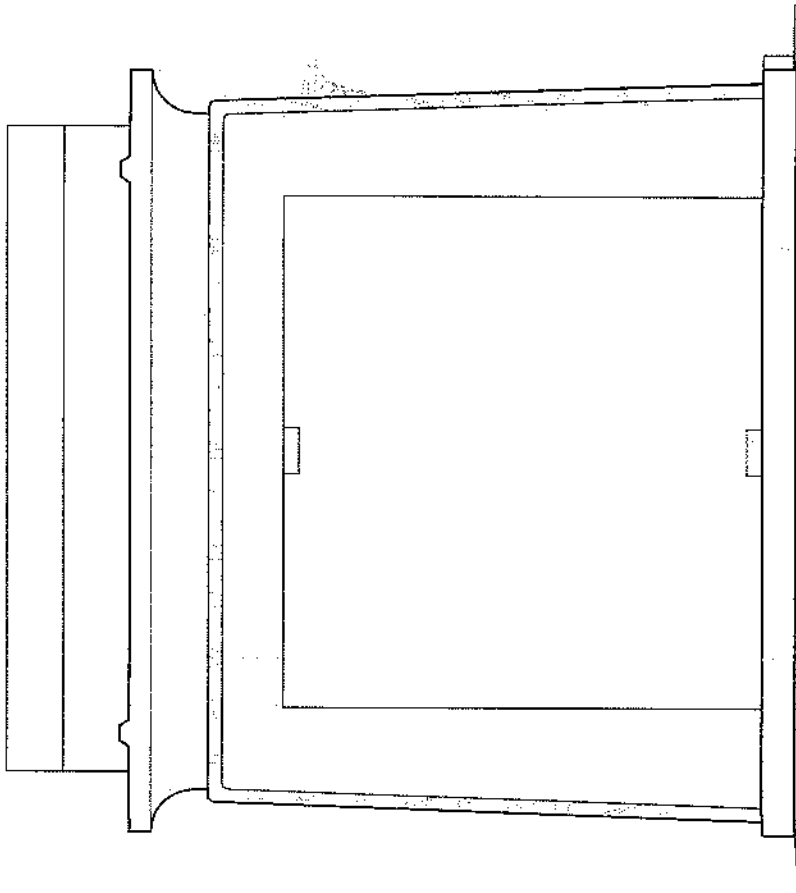
SCALE: 1/2"=1'0"  
0' 6" 1' 2' 4'

FRONT ELEVATION



SCALE: 1/2"=1'0"  
0' 6" 1' 2' 4'

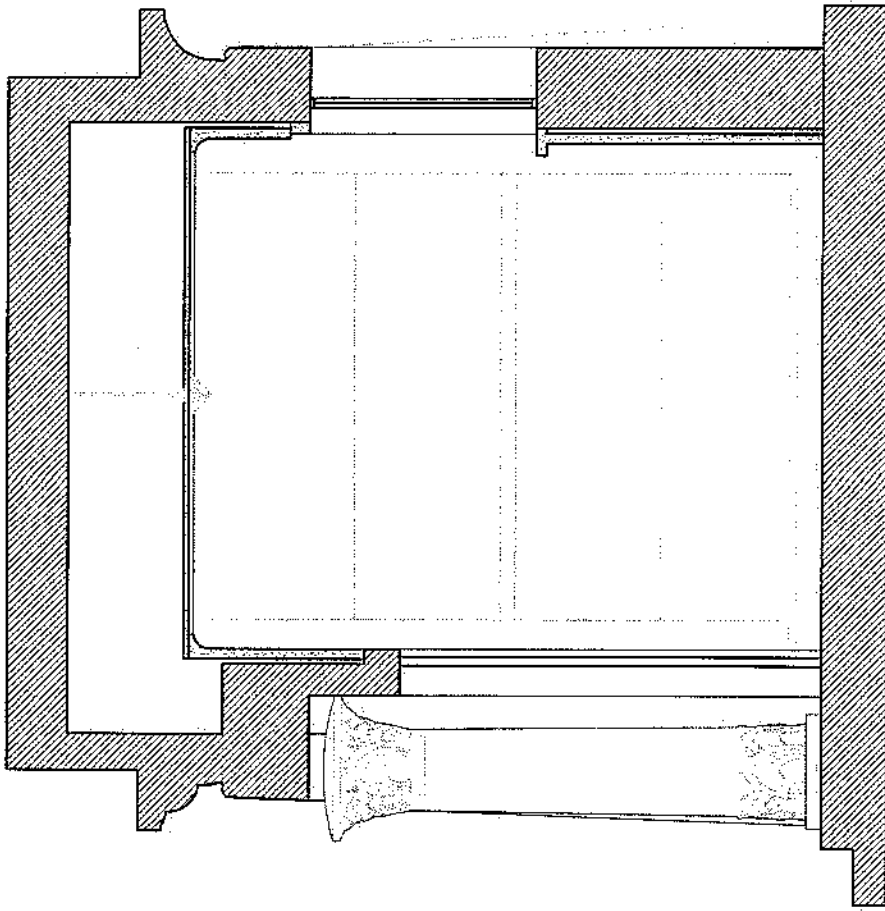
SIDE ELEVATION



SCALE: 1/2"=10"  
0' 6" 1' 2' 4'

Two vents at each side elevation. Northwest (elevation shown above) top vent has fallen out (placed on mausoleum back ledge).

SECTION 1

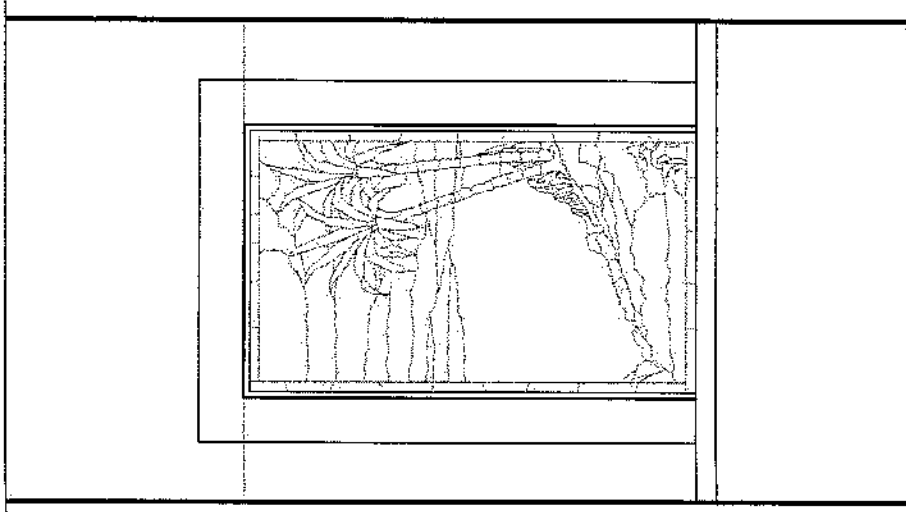


GRANITE  
MARBLE

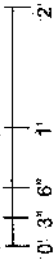
SCALE: 1/2"=10"  
0' 6" 1' 2' 4'

Catacomb dimensions, wall thicknesses, and stone joints taken from historic blueprints (Not verified in field). Bronze catacomb handles depicted 2 on each enclosure in above drawing.

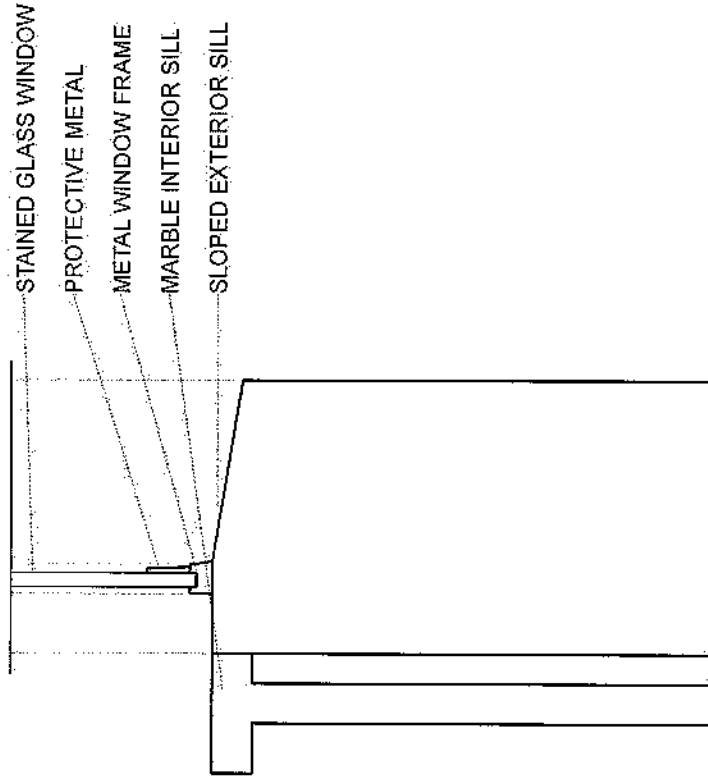
INTERIOR WINDOW ELEVATION



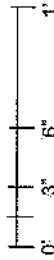
SCALE: 1"=1'0"



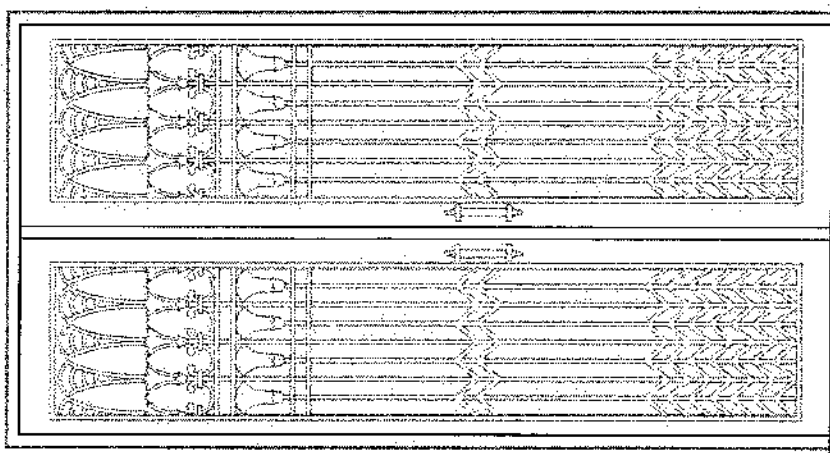
WINDOW DETAIL SECTION



SCALE: 2"=1'0"



DOOR ELEVATION



SCALE: 1"=1'0"

