

Landmarks Preservation Commission
April 12, 2016, Designation List 487
LP-1208

VANDERBILT MAUSOLEUM, Staten Island

Built: c. 1884-87; Richard Morris Hunt, architect; F. L. & J. C. Olmsted, landscape architects; John J. R. Croes, landscape engineer

Landmark Site: Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 934, Lot 250 in part, consisting of the entire mausoleum, its steps, and retaining walls; the hillock enclosing the mausoleum; the terrace in front of the mausoleum's main facade and the base and walls of the terrace; the pathway leading from the terrace northeasterly, southeasterly, southwesterly, and southeasterly, beneath the arch near the southernmost entrance to the lot, to the lot boundary; the entrance arch and gates, and the adjoining stone retaining walls extending from the south face and sides of the arch northeasterly and southwesterly to the north and south lot lines; the stone retaining walls extending from the north face of the arch along both sides of a portion of the pathway; the land beneath the opening in the entrance arch; and the land upon which these improvements are sited.

On September 9, 1980, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum and Cemetery and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 5). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the trustees overseeing the property testified in opposition to the proposed designation. A representative of New Dorp Moravian Church also testified in opposition to the proposed designation. Two people spoke in favor of the proposed designation, including a representative of the Preservation League of Staten Island. The Commission also received letters in favor of designation from the Municipal Art Society and the National Association for Olmsted Parks. On November 18, 1980, a second hearing was held on the proposed designation as a Landmark of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum and Cemetery and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 4). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. At this hearing, a representative of the trustees overseeing the property testified in opposition to the proposed designation. Two other people testified in opposition to the proposed designation, including a representative of New Dorp Moravian Church. Four people spoke in favor of the proposed designation, including representatives of the Municipal Art Society, Preservation League of Staten Island, and New York Chapter of the Victorian Society in America.

On October 22, 2015, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a special public hearing on Backlog Initiative Items in the Borough of Staten Island, including the Vanderbilt Mausoleum and Cemetery (Item II—Borough of Staten Island Group 2, G). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. A representative of the Vanderbilt Cemetery Association testified in favor of the proposed designation. Five other speakers testified in favor of the proposed designation, including representatives of the Historic Districts Council, New York Landmarks Conservancy, and Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America. There were no speakers in opposition to the proposed designation. The Commission also received four letters and emails in support of designation, including letters from Council Member Steven Matteo, the Municipal Art Society, and the Biltmore Company. The Commission received an additional letter from an attorney representing Moravian Cemetery, which stated that the Cemetery was not opposed to designating the Vanderbilt Mausoleum and entrance gate but had reservations about designating additional land surrounding the mausoleum.

Statements about support for the Vanderbilt Mausoleum during the backlog process reflect specific testimony given or submitted during the hearing or while the record was open. In addition, the Commission received numerous more general communications about the backlog that were directed at all

items on the backlog. These items were not specifically submitted while the record was open. Due to the volume and variety of these more general emails they are not tallied for individual buildings.

Summary

The Vanderbilt Mausoleum is an extraordinary monument to America's Gilded Age. Built by the country's wealthiest family of the time and combining the talents of two of America's greatest designers—Richard Morris Hunt and Frederick Law Olmsted—it was hailed as “the most magnificent tomb of any private individual” and “the most costly mausoleum in America” following its 1886 completion. Planned by William H. Vanderbilt, it was completed, following his death, by his son George W. Vanderbilt. William was the son of “Commodore” Cornelius Vanderbilt, the Staten Island native who had amassed America's largest fortune through his steamboat and railroad lines, which played a major role in the development of New York City and State. When he died in 1885, William H. Vanderbilt was the richest person in American history.



Dramatically sited on private land adjoining Moravian Cemetery near the apex of Todt Hill, the mausoleum overlooked the New Dorp farm of William H. and his wife Maria, as well as Lower New York Bay. An imposing structure of gray Quincy granite, its location within a large family cemetery was especially rare and prestigious at a time when most ultra-wealthy New Yorkers were interred in suburban public cemeteries. Hunt's design is primarily Romanesque Revival in style, featuring three arched doorways, keyhole openings, and luxurious but restrained carved tympana and diaperwork reflecting William's direction that the mausoleum not be too “showy.” Two unusual lanterns, consisting of austere classical drums supporting attenuated domes with fish-scale roofing, crown the structure. Its ornate bronze gates, designed by Hunt, were fabricated by workers imported from leading Parisian bronze foundries; described as “marvel[s] of workmanship,” they were among the largest such castings made in America up to that time. The mausoleum is one of the few remaining New York City buildings designed by Hunt for the Vanderbilts, one of the most successful architect-patron relationships in American history.

The country's most celebrated landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted designed the mausoleum grounds, although most of the original Olmsted plantings have been lost or replaced. One of the earliest collaborations between Hunt and Olmsted, the mausoleum was their first joint effort for the Vanderbilt family and led to their subsequent hiring by George W. Vanderbilt for his North Carolina estate, Biltmore (completed 1895), one America's most impressive unions of architecture and landscape design. The designation includes four landscape features: the broad terrace in front of the mausoleum, designed by Hunt and Olmsted; the hillock surrounding the mausoleum, which originally covered its roof; the stone entrance arch and adjoining walls at the plot's entrance; and the winding pathway connecting the entrance arch with the terrace.

Interment within the mausoleum was reserved to those with the Vanderbilt name, including sons, their wives, and unmarried daughters. It houses the remains of Commodore Vanderbilt and his two wives; William H. and Maria Vanderbilt; and four of William and Maria's sons and three of their wives, who are best known today for their spectacular homes designed by outstanding American architects including, along with Biltmore, Marble House (completed 1892) and The Breakers (1895) in Newport, Rhode Island, both designed by Richard Morris Hunt. Like these houses, the Vanderbilt Mausoleum is an exceptional remnant of the Gilded Age, constructed by Vanderbilt family members at the height of their wealth, power, and prominence, when they were commissioning some of America's finest and most enduring works of architecture.

DESCRIPTION

The Vanderbilt Mausoleum designation includes the mausoleum itself, designed by Richard Morris Hunt and constructed between 1884 and 1886, as well as site features including the hillock enclosing the mausoleum; the terrace in front of the mausoleum, designed by Hunt and Olmsted; the winding pathway connecting the terrace with the plot's entrance, which was designed by Olmsted in 1886; and the stone entrance arch and adjoining retaining walls at the plot's entrance, apparently designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and John J. R. Croes in 1887.

Mausoleum and Hillock

Historic: Constructed of Quincy granite and primarily Romanesque Revival in style, with Gothic buttresses and two rooftop lanterns combining classical and Romano-Byzantine influences; tripartite main facade, with pitched roof and projecting central pavilion crowned by raised pediment; three square-headed main-entrance openings containing elaborate, heavy bronze gates set within round-arched recesses; semicircular granite steps in front of central entrance opening; paving stones arranged in six-pointed star within circular border on top step; straight granite steps in front of outer entrance openings; projecting buttresses and engaged columns on high plinths with grotesque capitals flanking entrance openings; central doorway set within larger concave recess composed of curved granite blocks; carved relief within tympanum over central entrance depicting Christ in Majesty, surrounded by the symbols of the Four Evangelists; carved reliefs within tympana over outer entrances depicting angels within a field of acanthus vines; Byzantine-influenced carvings framing the entrance openings, within a continuous frieze over the doorways, within the entrance arches, and comprising diaperwork on the central pavilion; dogtooth and scallop moldings within the doorway arches; foliated corbels with scallop moldings supporting raised central pediment; central pediment composed of carved foliated molding, recessed keyhole openings set within round-arched recesses and flanked by engaged colonnettes with foliated capitals, and square crown molding; curved retaining walls extending outward from sides of mausoleum with Gothic buttresses and Romanesque colonnettes with foliated capitals; granite front portion of roof with peaked granite coping stones; two rooftop lanterns composed of classical drums with square pillars and scalloped capitals, attenuated domes with scalloped or fish-scale granite roofing, and ball finials with foliated bases; artificial hillock enclosing mausoleum. *Alterations:* Steel security doors installed in front of bronze gates; small portion of right gate within central opening missing; bronze-and-glass lantern guards and frames removed from lantern drums and replaced with brick-and-stucco panels; hillock, which originally covered mausoleum roof and was planted with ornamental foliage, removed from roof; remaining portions of hillock overgrown; concrete slab installed on roof.

Terrace and Terrace Walls

Historic: Terrace is essentially rectangular in shape with curved viewing platform at eastern end; enclosed by low rough-faced ashlar gray granite or schist walls with curved coping stones and bush-hammered posts. *Alterations:* Elliptical central portion of terrace, originally paved with light-colored stone screenings, has become overgrown with grass; terrace base overgrown.¹

Pathway

Historic: From terrace winds northeasterly, then southeasterly, southwesterly, and southeasterly, underneath entrance arch, to lot line; flanked by gutters. *Alterations:* Originally a macadam surface composed of a six-inch stone foundation, topped by a four-inch layer of broken stones, with a surface layer of stone screenings, now paved with asphalt; gutters originally made of “smooth, water-worn cobbles, not over four inches in greatest diameter, set on edge and touching each other, bedded in a layer of coarse sand,”² since widened and replaced with Belgian block.

Entrance Arch and Adjoining Retaining Walls

Historic: Arch constructed of rough-faced ashlar gray granite or schist; round-arched opening with gauged voussoirs; smooth, convex stone cornice with foliated reliefs at each end and square crown molding; stone plinths with pyramidal caps on roof; pair of wrought-iron gates, each consisting of a pair of panels joined by a hinge, attached to interior of arch opening with heavy iron hinges and mounting plates with lobed central portions and sawtooth motif; each gate panel decorated with a budded cross and spiral motifs; portion of pathway under arch paved with Belgian block embedded with curved iron rails for gate wheels; rubble granite or schist walls curving outward from south face of arch; rough-faced ashlar granite or schist retaining walls extending outward from sides of arch before turning into rubble walls that curve forward and extend across entire lot to north and south lot lines; granite or schist rubble retaining walls extending from north face of entrance arch along both sides of a portion of the pathway. *Alterations:* Chain-link fencing on top of or behind retaining walls.

SITE HISTORY

Todt Hill and Moravian Cemetery³

The Vanderbilt Mausoleum sits on the eastern slope of Todt Hill, in the New Dorp section of Staten Island, adjacent to Moravian Cemetery. Rising to a height of 410 feet, Todt Hill is the highest natural point on the Eastern Seaboard between Cape Cod and Florida. It is part of a chain of serpentine hills extending through the center of Staten Island to Upper New York Bay. At the time of Giovanni da Verrazzano’s arrival in New York Harbor in 1524, Staten Island was occupied by the Lenape people. Its northern portion was the domain of the Hackensack and Canarsie tribes, while its southern portion, including the Vanderbilt Mausoleum site, was occupied by the Raritans, whose territory extended southward and eastward from present-day Seaview Hospital to the area around Great Kills Park. Prehistoric chert (stone) artifacts found on Todt Hill confirm the presence of Native Americans there, although it is unknown if they maintained a campsite on the hill. Richmond Road, which runs along Moravian Cemetery’s eastern boundary, together with Amboy Road, follow an ancient Native American trade route that connected the Grymes Hill area with Tottenville.

To Staten Island’s early settlers, Todt Hill was known as “Yserberg” (“Iron Hill”) because of its rich deposits of Limonite iron ore, which were mined as early as 1644. The origins of the Todt Hill name are mysterious—“todt” is Dutch for “death”—but it is said to have taken hold after the Revolutionary War, and may refer to a deadly encounter between the Dutch and Native Americans or to the hill’s use by early settlers as a burial ground.⁴ In the mid-19th century, Todt Hill, like other picturesque Staten Island locations, became the site of country

homes on large estates owned by wealthy businessmen and other professionals who wanted to live in semi-rural surroundings close to New York City.

One of Christianity's oldest Protestant denominations, the United Brethren's Church, commonly known as the Moravian Church, traces its origins to Moravia and Bohemia within the present-day Czech Republic and to the Hussite Movement of the early 1400s. Staten Island played a crucial role in the church's early years in America. Moravian evangelist David Bruce was active on the island by 1742, and in 1745, work began on the sailing ship *Irene* at the Staten Island shipyard of John Van Deventer, on the present site of Fort Wadsworth. Following its 1748 completion, the *Irene* made 14 voyages across the Atlantic, bringing Moravian missionaries and settlers from Europe to the New World. Among the church's earliest Staten Island members were converts Jacob and Neiltje Van Der Bilt, the first of their family to settle on the island, on land purchased in the late 1600s by Jacob's father Aris. In 1762, Jacob was one of a group of worshipers who petitioned Moravian Church authorities in Pennsylvania for the establishment of a Staten Island congregation. Their petition was approved, and the following year, the Moravian Church at New Dorp was consecrated. At that time, the church property had already been in use for many years as a burial place. Until 1819, church trustees permitted free burial of the dead on the property, whether or not they were church members; in 1826, the trustees began selling burial lots, and in 1842, the cemetery was officially incorporated under New York State law.

At that time, the Moravian Church property, including its burial ground, remained at its original 5½ acres. In the early 1860s, church trustees acquired an additional three acres, and in 1865, "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, the great-grandson of Jacob and Neiltje Van Der Bilt, donated 8½ acres to the northeast. Three years later, the Commodore donated an additional 45 acres to the northwest, comprising the bulk of the present cemetery and the privately owned Vanderbilt plot containing the Vanderbilt Mausoleum. This "heavily forested upland" was part of the Vanderbilts' original Staten Island land holdings purchased by Aris Van Der Bilt in the late 17th century.⁵ By the early 20th century, Moravian Cemetery had "grown [into] the beautiful cemetery which is justly the pride of all Staten Islanders, and which is acknowledged to be the principal cemetery on Staten Island."⁶

"Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt and William Henry Vanderbilt⁷

The Vanderbilt name is synonymous with America's Gilded Age. Upon their deaths, "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, who established the family's fortune, and his son William H., who doubled it in just a few years, were the wealthiest men in the United States, if not the world. The steamboat and railroad companies they founded and led played a major role in the development of New York City and State.

Cornelius Vanderbilt was born in 1794 in the Stapleton community of Staten Island, one of nine children of Cornelius and Phebe Van Der Bilt.⁸ Young Cornelius had no interest in school, and at the age of 11 he spent most of his time working on his father's farm and helping him transport hay, fish, produce, and passengers on his periauger, a kind of two-masted flat-bottomed boat similar to those used on the Dutch canals. Using a \$100 loan from his mother at the age of 16, Cornelius purchased his own periauger, and he soon became known along the Staten Island waterfront for his toughness and seemingly limitless ambition. He expanded his business, purchasing two additional boats, and in 1813 he married 18-year-old Sophia Johnson. In 1818, he went to work for Thomas Gibbons, a wealthy Georgia attorney who ran a small steam ferry, the *Bellona*, on the Raritan River in New Jersey. At that time, a steamboat monopoly existed in New York, with Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston granted exclusive rights to offer

steamboat service within state waters. Vanderbilt challenged the monopoly by running the *Bellona* across the Kill Van Kull to Manhattan, dodging New York authorities along the way, and Gibbons ultimately sued to have the law overturned. In *Gibbons v. Ogden*—argued for Gibbons by Daniel Webster—the U. S. Supreme Court ruled in Gibbons’ favor, breaking the monopoly and establishing “the principle that only Congress had the authority to regulate commerce on the navigable waters of the United States, a landmark decision that helped build a unified nation and a national economy....”⁹

In 1829, Vanderbilt went back into business for himself. The Vanderbilts moved to Stone Street in Manhattan, and Cornelius established a steamboat line between New York and Philadelphia, undercutting the established operators until “several lines joined together and paid him handsomely not to compete on their route.”¹⁰ Vanderbilt then turned his attention toward the Hudson River, establishing a bottom-rate New York-to-Albany line that incurred the wrath of the powerful Hudson River Steamboat Association. The Association paid Vanderbilt more than \$100,000 to leave the river for ten years; money in hand, he soon established lines on Long Island Sound, in New England, and along the East Coast as far south as Havana. By the 1840s, Vanderbilt owned more than 100 steamboats and was the country’s largest employer.

Vanderbilt continued to grow his steamboat operations through the 1840s and 1850s, becoming involved in railroads for the first time in his sixties. In the early 1860s, he took over the New York and Harlem Railroad, which was the only railroad with a Manhattan terminal. Soon gaining control of the Hudson River Railroad, Vanderbilt was able to cut off the highly profitable New York Central Railroad—which connected Albany and Buffalo, traversing the industrial heart of the state—from New York City, and in 1867, he was named president of that line as well. By the end of the 1860s, Commodore Vanderbilt “had consolidated his Harlem, Hudson, and New York Central lines to create a unified rail system that spun like a spider’s web, touching every major city in the growing Northeast.”¹¹ In 1871, he opened Grand Central Depot, the largest railroad terminal in the world, at 42nd Street in Manhattan.¹²

Sophia had died in 1868, and in 1869, Cornelius married a 31-year-old cousin, Frank Crawford.¹³ Frank, along with the Rev. Charles F. Deems of the Church of Strangers, persuaded Cornelius to donate \$1 million toward the founding of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee in 1873. When he died in 1877 in his mansion at 10 Washington Place, Vanderbilt left a fortune of \$105 million. He willed the bulk of it—\$95 million, more than was possessed by the United States Treasury—to his oldest son, William Henry Vanderbilt.

William was born in 1821 in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He was one of only three Vanderbilt sons to survive into adulthood and the only one of Cornelius and Sophia’s sons to have children of his own. William attended Columbia College Grammar School, worked in a brokerage house, and married Maria Louisa Kissam when he was 19. After falling ill in his early twenties, he was advised to leave the city for the sake of his health. His father gave him an old, neglected 72-acre waterfront farm in New Dorp along with an allowance of \$3,000 a year, and William and Maria expanded it to 350 acres, making it the most profitable farm on Staten Island. They also raised their sons—Cornelius, William Kissam, Frederick William, and George Washington—and four daughters—Margaret Louisa, Emily Thorn, Florence Adele, and Eliza Osgood—there.¹⁴ For most of his life, Cornelius had been dismissive of William, but when William was in his fifties, the Commodore appointed him receiver of the modest Staten Island Railroad. Exhibiting excellent business judgment and turning the moribund line around, William was rewarded by his father with a Fifth Avenue mansion and ultimately, the vice presidency of

the New York Central Railroad. Upon his father's death, William H. Vanderbilt became its leader, earning the nickname "Colossus of Roads."¹⁵

The New York Central was enormously profitable and powerful at that time, the great trunk line moving freight and passengers between New York City and the Great Lakes. Soon after inheriting the New York Central's leadership, William tired of running it. Racked by anxiety in 1879, he sold a large portion of his railroad stock, invested it in secure bonds, and commissioned from the architect of Grand Central Depot, John B. Snook, a pair of Fifth Avenue mansions—one for Maria and himself, and the other for daughters Margaret Shepard and Emily Sloan, who did not yet have Fifth Avenue houses.¹⁶ In 1883, at the age of 62, William retired from business, devoting himself largely to his racing trotters and his art collection, which was displayed in a gallery in his new home. At that time, he was worth nearly \$200 million and was the wealthiest person in American history.

Toward the end of his life, William Henry Vanderbilt remained devoted to his old Staten Island home. "He spent more and more time in a tiny corner of the library of his 58-room mansion, sitting in an old rocker that had come from his Staten Island farmhouse. He complained of feeling suffocated in the city, and sought fresh air on weekends at his farm. During the week a wagonload of milk, produce, and flowers from the farm arrived at ... 640 Fifth Avenue to remind him of the home he loved."¹⁷ He died of a stroke on December 8, 1885, five days after visiting the site of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum, which was then under construction in New Dorp.

The children of William H. and Maria Vanderbilt played an active role in the city's institutions, continuing in the tradition of their parents, who provided substantial support to the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, St. Luke's Hospital, the Y.M.C.A., the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the American Museum of Natural History, and who had funded the removal, transportation, and erection in Central Park of the ancient Egyptian obelisk known as Cleopatra's Needle between 1877 and 1881. Emily Vanderbilt Sloane also supported the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and Cornelius Vanderbilt, who ran the Vanderbilt railroads following his father's death, served as a director of several major city institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of Natural History, and as president of the New York Botanical Garden. Anne Harriman Vanderbilt, the second wife of William K., funded the construction of the Shively Sanitary Tenements (Henry Atterbury Smith, 1910-11, a designated New York City Landmark) as model tenements for tuberculosis patients, among other notable philanthropic efforts.¹⁸ Today, William H. and Maria's children are most widely known for their spectacular homes designed by outstanding American architects, many of which survive and are popular tourist destinations. These include Marble House (completed 1892) and The Breakers (1895), two of the signature houses of Gilded Age Newport, which were designed by Richard Morris Hunt. Vanderbilt houses designed by McKim, Mead & White include Woodlea (completed 1895) in Scarborough, New York, now the Sleepy Hollow Country Club; Florham (1897) in Convent Station, New Jersey, now part of Fairleigh Dickinson University; and Hyde Park (1899) in the Hudson Valley, now the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. Peabody & Stearns designed the summer houses Elm Court (completed 1887) in Lenox, Massachusetts and Rough Point (1891) in Newport; and R. H. Robertson, with Frederick Law Olmsted as landscape architect, designed Shelburne Farms (1899) overlooking Lake Champlain in Vermont. Biltmore (completed 1895) is the crown jewel of Vanderbilt residences, constructed by George Washington Vanderbilt. Set within a forested 125,000-acre tract in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains, it was the largest private house in the United States upon its completion, and its architect, Richard Morris Hunt, and landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, were hired

following their successful collaboration on the Vanderbilt Mausoleum and its grounds. The Vanderbilt Mausoleum is one of a select group of buildings commissioned by Vanderbilt family members at the height of the family's wealth, power, and prominence, serving, like these houses, as a singular monument to the Gilded Age.¹⁹

Richard Morris Hunt²⁰

The designer of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum, Richard Morris Hunt (1827-95) was one of America's preeminent, most honored, and most influential 19th-century architects. Born in Brattleboro, Vermont, Hunt was the first American architect to be trained at the French Ecole des Beaux-Arts and was credited by architect Charles McKim with being "the pioneer and ice-breaker who paved the way for recognition of the profession by the public."²¹ Hunt came to be considered the "dean" of American architects. In 1857 he was named secretary of the newly formed American Institute of Architects and opened a New York atelier, based upon the principles and methods of the Ecole, that would train some of the country's foremost architects, including Henry Van Brunt, Charles D. Gambrill, George B. Post, William R. Ware, and Frank Furness. From 1888 to 1891, Hunt served as the third president of the American Institute of Architects, and in 1892 he was the first architect to receive an honorary degree from Harvard University. In 1893, Hunt received three significant honors, as he was selected for membership in the Academie des Beaux-Arts, became the first American to receive the Gold Medal of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and served as the architect of the Administration Building—the most prominent commission—at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

Although Hunt has become most widely identified with his residences for the Vanderbilts and other wealthy patrons of the Gilded Age, he executed a wide range of commissions, including commercial and institutional structures, monuments, and mausoleums, in a variety of styles. Upon his return to the United States from Europe in 1855, Hunt first worked with architect Thomas U. Walter on the extension of the U.S. Capitol. His first major work in New York City, the Studio Building at 51-55 West 10th Street (1857-58, demolished) contained residential and studio space and became a center of the city's artistic life. Hunt is credited with designing the city's first apartment building, the Stuyvesant Apartments at 142 East 18th Street (1869-70, demolished). His work in Newport, Rhode Island began in the early 1860s and included, among his early commissions, the Stick style Griswold House (1861-63). Hunt's Tribune Building at Nassau and Spruce Streets (1873-76, demolished) was one of New York's earliest skyscrapers.

Hunt began his long association with the Vanderbilt family in 1878, designing the Francois-I or Chateauesque style "Petit Chateau de Blois" at 660 Fifth Avenue for William K. and Alva Vanderbilt (completed 1882, demolished) that immediately set the trend for the rest of Fifth Avenue. Hunt designed a number of other Fifth Avenue mansions, all since demolished, including those for William V. Lawrence (1890-91) and Elbridge Gerry (1891-94) and a double residence for Mrs. William Astor and John Jacob Astor IV (1891-95). Relatively little of Hunt's New York City architecture survives; of some 75 structures known to have been designed and built by Hunt in the city, fewer than 20 are still standing. In addition to the Vanderbilt Mausoleum, these include the cast-iron Roosevelt Building at 478-482 Broadway (1873-74, within the SoHo-Cast Iron Historic District); the Association Residence for Respectable Aged Indigent Females at 891 Amsterdam Avenue, pedestal and base of the Statue of Liberty, and 166 East 73rd Street Carriage House (1881-83, 1881-85, and 1883-84 respectively, all designated New York City Landmarks); the Sidney Webster House at 245 East 17th Street (1883, within the

Stuyvesant Square Historic District); and the 1894-1902 central pavilion of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, incorporating the iconic main facade of this designated New York City Landmark.

Social historian Louis Auchincloss noted that “The role [the Vanderbilts] played in the social life of New York City and in all the rural resorts and watering places to which the wealthy of that metropolis retreated was at least comparable to that of the Medici in Florence.”²² The Vanderbilt Mausoleum is one of the very few New York City buildings representing the Hunt-Vanderbilt alliance, one of the most successful architect-patron relationships in American architectural history.

Frederick Law Olmsted²³

Frederick Law Olmsted has been hailed as “the veritable inventor of landscape architecture as a modern profession” and “the greatest advocate and impresario of the public realm this country has ever known.”²⁴ Born in Hartford, Connecticut in 1822, he held a variety of jobs before arriving in New York City and finding work as a mercantile clerk. In 1848, he established a model farm at the former Akerly homestead on Staten Island, and in 1850, he embarked on a study tour of English agriculture, detailing his journey in *Walks and Talks of an American Farmer* (1852). During this trip, Olmsted visited “People’s Park” in Birkenhead, witnessing his “first example of a large public park set aside for the enjoyment of all citizens.”²⁵ Between 1852 and 1857, Olmsted traveled throughout the American South, documenting the effects of slavery on Southern economies and society for the *New York Times*, before joining with architect Calvert Vaux on the winning proposal for New York’s Central Park (a designated New York City Scenic Landmark), which catapulted him to national prominence. Applying the naturalistic, Romantic traditions of English landscape design, Olmsted and Vaux collaborated on several of the country’s largest and most celebrated parks and park systems, including Brooklyn’s Prospect Park (designed 1865, a designated New York City Scenic Landmark) and the Buffalo Park System (designed 1868), as well as the pioneering suburban community of Riverside, Illinois (designed 1869). Other New York City projects designed by Olmsted and Vaux include Eastern and Ocean Parkways (designed 1870 and 1874, respectively), Morningside Park (original 1873 and revised 1887 plans), and Riverside Park and Drive (designed 1873-75), all designated New York City Scenic Landmarks.

In 1872, Olmsted and Vaux ended their partnership, although they would continue to collaborate periodically. In 1875, Olmsted took his nephew and stepson John C. Olmsted into his practice, and in 1881, he moved the firm to Brookline, Massachusetts.²⁶ In 1884, John was made a full partner and the firm was renamed F. L. & J. C. Olmsted. From the 1870s into the 1890s, Olmsted and his firm designed or collaborated on dozens of major landscape projects, including the U.S. Capitol grounds (1874), Boston Park System (1879-81), Stanford University (1886), the Niagara Reservation—America’s first state park, designed in 1887—the park systems of Rochester (1888), Milwaukee (1889), and Louisville (1891), and the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago, as well as dozens of other parks, cemeteries, parkways, and institutional, educational, and estate grounds in cities and towns across the United States. Following Olmsted’s retirement in 1897, the firm was continued by John Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. as Olmsted Brothers. Renamed Olmsted Associates in 1962, it ceased operations in 1979.

The Planning and Construction of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum²⁷

As he approached his 1883 retirement, William H. Vanderbilt started planning a new mausoleum that would reflect the family's status and wealth. The Vanderbilts already had a tomb in Moravian Cemetery, built by the Commodore several years before his death, but it was a modest temple-fronted structure, 12 feet square and crowned by a 20-foot obelisk.²⁸ The *New York Times* found it unimpressive, describing it as being "of plain granite" and "only a few feet from other graves that have very ordinary tombstones."²⁹ William appears not to have considered any other cemeteries for the tomb, likely because of the church's special place in family history. Owing its existence largely to the efforts of Jacob and Neiltje Van Der Bilt—William's great-great-grandparents and his earliest ancestors to settle on Staten Island—it was the church of William's baptism and received substantial support from both William and the Commodore throughout their lives.³⁰ New Dorp itself was a nostalgic place for William, as it was his and Maria's home for much of their adult lives and a place where they spent many years raising their children. Visiting his old farm a few days before his death, William told its resident farmer, "I have enjoyed more peace of mind and quietness here than I ever have in the big city yonder."³¹

Although the Vanderbilt Mausoleum stands on private land adjacent to Moravian Cemetery, William originally intended to build it within the cemetery proper. Instead, the church agreed to sell William two hilltop parcels at the northern end of the cemetery, which he combined into a single L-shaped tract of more than 22 acres.³² Although heavily forested and in need of extensive grading and filling, the new site was far superior to the old one. Accessed through Moravian Cemetery but separate from it, the hilltop site was completely private, and thus more secure; only a few years earlier, the body of department store magnate A.T. Stewart had been snatched from its Manhattan tomb and held for ransom, instilling fear among the city's millionaires that the same thing could happen to their family members. Its privacy, moreover, added to its prestige.³³

But perhaps the greatest advantages of the hilltop site were its visibility and exemplary views. From the site, visitors would be treated to an expansive panorama, taking in the Brooklyn Bridge, Green-Wood Cemetery, Coney Island, Rockaway, Sandy Hook, Staten Island's South Shore, and Lower New York Bay. As Vanderbilt biographer W. A. Croffut wrote in 1886, "Every steamship and sailing craft which enters New York Harbor must pass in sight of this mausoleum. It will be the first prominent object seen on Staten Island by those who come from Europe to America. The farm where Mr. William H. Vanderbilt spent some 20 years of his life lies spread out below the tomb like a map. It is fitting that his last resting place should dominate the landscape that he knew and loved so well."³⁴

William apparently commissioned Hunt's office for the project by the summer of 1883. Five years earlier, Hunt had designed the trendsetting "Petit Chateau" for William K. and Alva Vanderbilt, the standard for elite Manhattan residences. By contrast, William's own "twin houses" designed by John B. Snook had been derided by critics, leading him to conclude that Hunt was the superior architect.³⁵ His youngest son George, to whom William would deed all of his Staten Island property shortly before his death, played an active role in the mausoleum's planning. By August of 1883, George had already visited the site several times with Hunt.³⁶ Assuming that William's taste for extravagance rivaled those of William K. and Alva, and knowing that cost was no object, Hunt initially proposed a massive Gothic structure crowned by a towering copy of Brunelleschi's famous dome for the Florence Cathedral.³⁷ William, according to Croffut, was direct in his response:

No, Mr. Hunt; this will not answer at all. You entirely misunderstood me. We are plain, quiet, unostentatious people, and we don't want to be buried in anything so showy as that would be. The cost of it is a secondary matter, and does not concern me. I want it roomy and solid and rich. I don't object to appropriate carvings, or even statuary, but it mustn't have any unnecessary fancy-work on it.”³⁸

Hunt scrapped that design, and a watercolor rendering of the final design was completed by early December of 1884.³⁹ In the middle of that month, William H. Vanderbilt, his sons, and Hunt visited the site. At that time, a new road was being constructed through the cemetery to the Vanderbilt plot “so that the immense stones and blocks of granite that are to form the costly structure can be conveyed over it. Quarrymen are now at work cutting the huge pieces for this great sepulcher.”⁴⁰ St. Clair & O’Brien, builders of the Vanderbilts’ Fifth Avenue mansions and Grand Central Depot, were the contractors. Construction continued through the summer of 1885, and William H. Vanderbilt visited the site for the last time on December 3rd of that year. He died in his Fifth Avenue mansion five days later, with news of the event claiming the entire front page of the *New York Times*.⁴¹ Following services at the old St. Bartholomew’s Church on Madison Avenue, his remains were placed in a receiving tomb at Moravian Cemetery until the new mausoleum was finished. By December of 1886, the mausoleum was essentially complete, and under the cloak of secrecy, William’s body was moved from the receiving tomb into one of the mausoleum’s 72 above-ground interment spaces. (Additional interment spaces exist under the mausoleum’s floor.⁴²) Shortly after Christmas, the mausoleum was briefly reopened for the installation of the stone panel that sealed his vault.⁴³

Commissioned to design the mausoleum grounds, Olmsted formulated his plans for reshaping the site—an immense challenge requiring the excavation and relocation of almost 40,000 cubic yards of earth—by August of 1886. In consultation with Hunt, Olmsted apparently modified his plans, deciding to push the terrace farther out from the front of the tomb and steepening the grade in front of it “so that it would look right down the declivity and thus appear bolder and more necessary.”⁴⁴ The site’s grading was primarily overseen by John J. R. Croes, a civil engineer and frequent Olmsted collaborator.⁴⁵ In May of 1887, the contract was let for the winding pathway connecting the plot’s entrance with the mausoleum terrace, and Olmsted sent a preliminary sketch “for preparing the gateway” to Hunt, who responded that he was too busy with other work to take the project on, recommending that “Mr. Croes … be called upon to work with your ideas.”⁴⁶ Two months later, George W. Vanderbilt wrote to Olmsted that he had recently “visited the cemetery at New Dorp and was very much pleased with the progress of work there. I think the final effect will exceed even my expectations.”⁴⁷ Olmsted, who was already working on the adjacent retaining walls, sent him two schematic proposals for the entrance arch; Vanderbilt responded that Olmsted should proceed with the arch, adding, “I think it wise to keep it as simple as possible.”⁴⁸

By 1888, the bodies of Cornelius Vanderbilt, his parents, his two wives, and daughter Frances were reinterred within the new tomb. At that time, it was described as “the most magnificent tomb of any private individual” and as “the most costly mausoleum in America,” costing several hundred thousand dollars.⁴⁹ Continuing the practice of Commodore Vanderbilt’s earlier mausoleum at Moravian Cemetery, and furthering William’s “dynastic pretensions for the family,” interment was reserved to those with the Vanderbilt name, including his sons, their wives, and unmarried daughters.⁵⁰

Following his death in 1892, 22-year-old William H. Vanderbilt, the son of Cornelius and Alice, was interred in the new mausoleum, as was Maria Kissam Vanderbilt, who died in 1896. The name of Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, who died in the 1915 downing of the *Lusitania*, was added to one of the vaults, although his body was lost at sea. All four of William H. and Maria's sons who survived to adulthood, and three of their wives, were interred there starting in 1899.⁵¹ Among them was George Washington Vanderbilt, who had supervised the mausoleum's completion following his father's death. In 1887, he commissioned Hunt to design a free circulating library on West 13th Street (later the Jackson Square Branch of the New York Public Library, within the Greenwich Village Historic District) and would reunite Hunt and Olmsted to design his Biltmore estate, the "most significant joint venture" of these two acclaimed designers and one of America's most impressive unions of architecture and landscape.⁵²

Design of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum⁵³

The design of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum reflects William H. Vanderbilt's desire for a restrained but self-assured monument to the family's wealth and power. Although smaller than the tomb originally proposed by Richard Morris Hunt, at nearly 60 feet wide and 43 feet high—not including its two lanterns, which project about 15 feet above the roof—it is an immense structure. Primarily Romanesque Revival in style, its design reflects Hunt's classical training and his fluency and grounding in a variety of historical styles, as well as his predilection for French influences. Many scholars, including Paul R. Baker, have identified Hunt's main inspiration as the 12th-century abbey church of St. Gilles-du-Gard in Provence, which is reflected in the mausoleum's large central arch flanked by two smaller arches, each framed by columns on high plinths, as well as its pointed central gable. While the mausoleum's doorways are shallower than those of St. Gilles-du-Gard, lacking their deep, complex moldings, its facade has a crisply modeled quality, with projecting buttresses—more Gothic than Romanesque in style—and a sharply defined central pavilion. This pavilion, with its seven attenuated keyhole openings, injects a strong vertical element into the design, drawing the eye upward. The entire facade projects forward from its flanking 20-foot-long retaining walls, which are ornamented with buttresses and Romanesque colonnettes. Along with the six semicircular steps in front of the central doorway, the walls curve forward to embrace visitors and draw them toward the tomb.

The main facade is of smooth, ashlar Quincy granite, light gray in color, with carved checkerboard diaperwork covering much of the central pavilion. Originally, and for much of its history, the main facade, its adjoining walls, and the rooftop lanterns were the mausoleum's only visible features. Most of the mausoleum was covered by an artificial hillock to symbolize the Christian tradition of burial and to moderate its interior temperature. At Olmsted's direction, the ground on top of the tomb was planted with a variety of foliage, including osage orange, staghorn sumac, and hoptrees, with grapevines rooted directly behind the main facade. Ailanthus trees—the "tree of heaven"—were planted in a wide swath behind the mausoleum, providing a sylvan backdrop to its imposing stone facade.

The stylized foliate carvings comprising the diaperwork of the central pavilion and the tympana over the three doorways reflect the Byzantine influence on the Provencale Romanesque. Likely resulting from William H. Vanderbilt's directive that the mausoleum not be too showy, the ornament is shallow and restrained, blending in with the surrounding smooth stone. A frieze of interlaced foliage, punctuated by column capitals with grotesques, extends the length of the facade above the door openings. The tympana of the outer portals depict angels within a field of acanthus vines, while the relief over the central portal shows Christ in Majesty, surrounded by

the symbols of the Four Evangelists: an angel, symbolizing Matthew; a lion, for Mark; a bull, for Luke, and an eagle, for John.

Two rooftop lanterns are among the mausoleum's most unusual features, each consisting of an austere classical drum supporting an attenuated dome. The drums recall that of Bramante's early-16th-century Tempietto, which commemorates St. Peter's crucifixion, while the shape of the domes and their scalloped or fish-scale roofing may have been influenced by Paris' Sacre-Coeur Basilica, begun in 1871 and designed in what its architect, Paul Abadie, termed the Romano-Byzantine style. Similar roofing was used on the 12th-century Notre-Dame-de-la-Grande in Poitiers. In addition to their decorative function, these lanterns enabled natural light to reach the interior and served as essential elements of the mausoleum's passive ventilation system, which equalized interior air pressure and allowed moisture to freely exit the building. As preservation architect Frank J. Prial Jr. of Beyer Blinder Belle has pointed out, far from being a "simple building," the mausoleum is technically advanced, incorporating several ingenious features intended to ensure the building's long-term survival with minimal maintenance.⁵⁴ Along with openings in the lantern drums, the ventilation system included three pairs of exterior bronze entrance gates as well as vents within some of the keyhole openings.

The exterior gates and lantern grilles, as well as interior gates guarding the vaults, were intended to make the mausoleum "practically burglar-proof" and add to its sense of inviolability.⁵⁵ They were fabricated by the Henry-Bonnard Bronze Company of New York, which was prominent in the casting of bronze architectural elements and statuary by artists including Karl Bitter, Daniel Chester French, Philip Martiny, Frederick MacMonnies, Charles H. Niehaus, John Massey Rhind, Augustus St. Gaudens, and John Quincy Adams Ward.⁵⁶ The firm cast one set—designed by Martiny—of the three sets of bronze doors given, as part of a grand Romanesque style entrance portal, to St. Bartholomew's Church by Alice Vanderbilt in 1902; Henry-Bonnard also cast the Astor memorial doors (1890-96) designed by Bitter, Rhind, and Niehaus for Trinity Church in a project overseen by Hunt.⁵⁷ The mausoleum's bronze exterior and interior gates as well as "16 lantern guards and frames with glass work seven feet high and four feet wide" were designed by Hunt. They were among the largest single bronze castings of their kind made in the United States up to that point, completed by workers imported from leading Parisian bronze foundries. One account of January 1886 noted that Hunt "personally inspects each piece as soon as cast, and his approval after such examination is necessary before it can be sent to the finishing room."⁵⁸

Although the exterior of the mausoleum remains almost entirely intact, a few alterations have occurred. These include the installation of steel doors in front of the entrance gates and the replacement of the original lantern guards with brick-and-stucco panels. These steps were taken as security measures. About 50 years ago, the portion of the hillock covering the mausoleum was removed and a concrete slab was installed on its roof. Moisture has since been able to seep into the mausoleum's interior under the roof slab, and the security doors and lantern panels have compromised the tomb's passive ventilation system.

The Cemetery Grounds⁵⁹

Although much of Frederick Law Olmsted's original design for the cemetery grounds has been lost due to overgrowth, some major landscape features of the site are covered by this designation. These include the hillock enclosing and formerly covering the mausoleum, the stone arch and retaining walls at the plot's entrance, the terrace and terrace walls in front of the mausoleum, and the winding pathway that connects the arch and terrace. The tomb's dramatic

siting on Todt Hill, with its expansive views and forested surroundings, provided an ideal canvas for Olmsted and his naturalistic, Romantic approach rooted in 18th-century English gardening. Long before Olmsted became the main American proponent and practitioner of this mode, it was adopted for the country's first rural cemeteries, including Mount Auburn (1831) outside of Boston and Green-Wood (1838) in Brooklyn, which were developed with curving pathways, picturesque water features, and gently rolling hills punctuated by monuments. In Olmsted's designs, "there is an almost cinematic quality to his gradual revelation of one breathtakingly arranged Arcadian tableau after another," according to architectural critic Martin Filler.⁶⁰ Olmsted knew Staten Island well, having owned a farm there in the late 1840s and 1850s, and having created a master plan for its development in 1871.

The entrance arch and walls appear to have been the work of Olmsted and Croes. Located at the foot of the Vanderbilt plot at its entrance from Moravian Cemetery, the arch is constructed of rough-faced dark stone, a material often used by Olmsted because of its rustic hand-crafted qualities and tendency to blend in with the natural landscape. The opening itself is formed by heavy gauged voussoirs, and its smooth quarter-round cornice with Romanesque reliefs is an unusually "architectural" touch for such a rustic structure, auguring similar design features of the mausoleum ahead and possibly reflecting Hunt's influence. Two elaborate hinged, paired wrought-iron gates with budded crosses roll open and closed on iron rails embedded in Belgian block paving. Rough-faced ashlar stone retaining walls adjoin the arch, as do curved rubble walls, which project in front of the arch and extend across the full width of the lot to the north and south lot lines. Additional rubble stone retaining walls extend from the north face of the arch along both sides of a portion of the pathway. Photographs taken in 1900 show the arch largely covered in ivy and the adjoining walls almost entirely concealed by foliage, providing a picturesque, almost wild appearance. The arch, gates, and walls remain almost entirely intact, although chain-link fencing has been installed on top of, or behind, the ashlar walls.

Olmsted considered several options before settling on the pathway's course. Given the steepness of the site, he decided on a gradually curving route that turns immediately to the right after the gate before taking a long turn leftward and approaching the tomb at an angle. This route was both practical—providing a gentle grade for the horse-drawn vehicles of the day—and dramatic, offering an initial view of the mausoleum from underneath the arch, then concealing it, before fully revealing it only at the pathway's end. Now paved with asphalt, the pathway was originally macadamized, composed of a six-inch stone foundation, topped by a four-inch layer of broken stones, with a surface layer of stone screenings. Gutters flanking the pathway were originally made of "smooth, water-worn cobbles, not over four inches in greatest diameter, set on edge and touching each other, bedded in a layer of coarse sand," but they have been widened and repaved with Belgian block.⁶¹

Because of the site's irregular topography, the terrace was constructed on more than 75,000 cubic feet of fill. Correspondence between Olmsted and Hunt, as well as drawings by the two in Olmsted's collections, indicate that the terrace's final design resulted from a collaboration between the two.⁶² Bounded by a low rough-faced ashlar granite or schist wall with bush-hammered posts, it measures approximately 200 feet wide and 100 feet deep. In addition to serving as a forecourt for the mausoleum, the terrace provided a curved platform for taking the view of the Lower Bay before it became blocked by trees. The terrace is essentially intact, although an elliptical portion directly in front of the mausoleum, which appears to have been paved with light-colored stone screenings similar to the pathway's, has become covered with grass.

Later History⁶³

Over the decades following the death of William Henry Vanderbilt, the mausoleum witnessed the interments of his and Maria's sons and three of their wives. (For a full list of those interred within the mausoleum, see the Appendix.) It remained heavily guarded during its early years, with the *New York Times* noting, following the 1899 death of Cornelius, that "there is always an unusual number of visitors daily to the Vanderbilt mausoleum ... after a Vanderbilt funeral, and for this reason it has been the custom to keep a more strict guard over the tomb. At all times, both day and night, a watchman is supposed to be on duty at the mausoleum, and he always has extra work to do in watching the visitors to the tomb at that time."⁶⁴ The mausoleum was apparently closed to the public by the mid-1920s and its 24-hour patrol was ended by 1930, when three aspiring grave robbers managed to enter the mausoleum's vestibule after sawing off the lower portion of one of the exterior gates. They were unable to get any further and fled.⁶⁵

Although William Henry's sons maintained the mausoleum and its grounds during their lives, by the time of Frederick W.'s death in 1938, the family's once mammoth fortune had been cut into by income and estate taxes and fragmented by its sheer number of descendants. Only a small endowment was left for the site's maintenance, and its upkeep slowly declined. By 1970, the tomb had begun to attract vandals, and around that time, its caretaker, Morgan Guaranty Trust, installed the brick-and-stucco panels within the lantern openings and steel security doors in front of the exterior gates that remain today. The mausoleum's last interment was of Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt Jr., the breeder of Native Dancer and other champion thoroughbreds, in 1999. In that year, an existing conditions assessment found the mausoleum to be in excellent structural condition but experiencing the effects of age, weathering, vandalism, and deferred maintenance and in need of repointing. Since then, security has been tightened and limited repairs made. In recent years, the Vanderbilt Cemetery Association, an advocacy group for the preservation of the mausoleum and its grounds, was founded by Alfred G. Vanderbilt III, the son of Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt, Jr. Vanderbilt serves as chair of the Association's board, which includes Vanderbilt family members, scholar Percy Preston Jr., and the historic preservation architect Frank J. Prial Jr.

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NOTES

- ¹ The elliptical shape of the terrace's now-overgrown central portion is shown in Olmsted's planting plans for the site and in the 1924 aerial map of New York City, viewable at: maps.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap/.
- ² F. L. & J. C. Olmsted, "Contract for Grading and Road Making Around the Vanderbilt Tomb at New Dorp, Staten Island, New York, May 1887," Olmsted Associates Records, Library of Congress, Box B23, Reel 17.
- ³ Portions of this section are adapted from LPC, *Gillett-Tyler House Designation Report* (LP-2231) (New York: City of New York, 2007), prepared by Tara Harrison. Other sources include Richard Bayles, *History of Richmond County (Staten Island) New York, From its Discovery to the Present Time* (New York: L. E. Preston & Co., 1887), 423-28; Richard Dickenson, Ed., *Holden's Staten Island: The History of Richmond County* (New York: Center for Migration Studies, 2002), 24, 104; Marjorie Johnson, "New Dorp" and "Todt Hill," in Kenneth T. Jackson, Ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York City, Second Edition* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2010), 889-90, 1321; Charles W. Leng and William T. Davis, *Staten Island and its People: A History, 1609-1929* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1930), vol. 1, 104, 280, 346; and vol. 2, 651, 965-66, and 983-86; Evan T. Pritchard, *Native New Yorkers: The Legacy of the Algonquin People of New York* (San Francisco: Council Oak Books, 2007), 99-102; Dorothy Valentine Smith, *Staten Island: Gateway to New York* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1970), 24; Patricia M. Salmon, *Realms of History: The Cemeteries of Staten Island* (Staten Island, New York: Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, 2006), 103-10; Arthur J. Freeman, "Moravian Church," in *Encyclopedia of Christianity Online* (Koninklijke Brill NV, 2015), accessed February 16, 2016 at referenceworks.brillonline.com.i.ezproxy.nypl.org/browse/encyclopedia-of-christianity; and F. W. Beers, *Atlas of Staten Island, Richmond County, New York* (New York: J. B. Beers & Company, 1874), Sec. 16.
- ⁴ Another theory proposes that it is simply a corruption of the word "toad," according to Leng and Davis, 5. Todt Hill Road is shown as Toad Hill Road on the 1874 Beers map.
- ⁵ Edward J. Renehan Jr., *Commodore: The Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 3.
- ⁶ Leng and Davis, vol. 2, 986.
- ⁷ Sources for this section include Louis Auchincloss, *The Vanderbilt Era: Profiles of a Gilded Age* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1989); Bayles, 587-606; Renehan; Smith, 85-86 and 104-10; and Arthur T. Vanderbilt II, *Fortune's Children: The Fall of the House of Vanderbilt* (New York: Quill William Morrow, 1989).
- ⁸ Regarding the spelling of the family name, Renehan (5) notes that Commodore Vanderbilt wrote his name as "Van DerBilt" into early adulthood.
- ⁹ Vanderbilt II, 10.
- ¹⁰ Vanderbilt II, 10.
- ¹¹ Vanderbilt II, 37.
- ¹² The terminal, designed by John B. Snook, was extensively remodeled and expanded between 1898 and 1900 according to the designs of Bradford L. Gilbert. Following a fatal 1902 collision in the Park Avenue tunnel, Gilbert's terminal was replaced with present-day Grand Central Terminal (Reed & Stem and Warren & Wetmore, architects; William Wilgus, engineer, 1903-13, a designated New York City Individual and Interior Landmark), which was designed for electric rather than steam trains.
- ¹³ Frank's unusual name, according to Vanderbilt University history professor Paul K. Conkin, resulted from "a ... promise by the parents to name their first child, regardless of sex, after a close family friend." Cited in Gaynelle Doll, "Tales of the Commodore: Cornelius Vanderbilt at 200," *Vanderbilt Magazine* (Summer 1994), 9.
- ¹⁴ An additional son, Allen, died as a baby in 1847 and is interred within the mausoleum.
- ¹⁵ James T. Howes, "Our New York Letter: Description of the Most Costly Mausoleum in America," *Bismarck (North Dakota) Weekly Tribune*, July 27, 1888, 3.
- ¹⁶ These houses, at 640 and 642 Fifth Avenue, have been demolished.
- ¹⁷ Vanderbilt II, 134. The former Vanderbilt farm in New Dorp was sold by George W. Vanderbilt to the Federal Government in 1919, and the Vanderbilt house and stables were subsequently demolished. Repurposed as an Air Defense Station named after Captain James E. Miller, the first American airman killed in World War I, the farm, now called Miller Field, is part of Gateway National Recreation Area. See Dickenson, Ed., 83, 167; and James W. Mueller and Dana C. Linck, *Archeological Testing for Two Miller Field Road Improvements, Gateway National Recreation Area, Staten Island, New York, Gate Package 185* (Rockville, Maryland: United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service Denver Service Center, Eastern Applied Archeology Center, 1991), 3-10. Photos of Vanderbilt's house and barns appear in Dorothy Valentine Smith, *This Is Staten Island* (Staten Island, New York: Staten Island Historical Society, 1968), 104-5.
- ¹⁸ On her charitable work, see "Mrs. Vanderbilt Dies in Hospital," *New York Times*, April 21, 1940, 1.

- ¹⁹ House completion dates, owners, and architects are from John Foreman and Robbe Pierce Stimson, *The Vanderbilts and the Gilded Age: Architectural Aspirations, 1879-1901* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991). The Breakers was constructed by Cornelius Vanderbilt and his wife Alice; Marble House by William Kissam and Alva Vanderbilt; Woodlea by Margaret Shepard and her husband Col. Elliott Fitch Shepard; Florham by Florence and Hamilton Twombly; Hyde Park and Rough Point by Frederick William and Louise Vanderbilt; Elm Court by Emily Sloan and her husband William; and Shelburne Farms by Eliza and Dr. William Webb. In addition to the houses at 640 and 642 Fifth Avenue, demolished Vanderbilt homes in New York City include Cornelius and Alice Vanderbilt's mansion at the southwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 57th Street (George B. Post, completed 1882 with 1894 addition by Post and Richard Morris Hunt) and William Kissam and Alva Vanderbilt's Petit Chateau at 660 Fifth Avenue (Richard Morris Hunt, completed 1882).
- ²⁰ This section is largely adapted from LPC, *Association Residence for Respectable Aged Indigent Females Designation Report* (LP-1280) (New York: City of New York, 1983), prepared by Jay Shockley.
- ²¹ Ormonde de Kay, Jr., "Richard Morris Hunt," in Joseph J. Thorndike, Jr., Ed., *Three Centuries of Notable American Architects* (New York: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1981), 92.
- ²² Cited in Percy Preston Jr., "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum on Staten Island, New York City," *Antiques*, September 2005), 109.
- ²³ This section is partially adapted from LPC, *Morningside Park Scenic Landmark Designation Report* (LP-2254) (New York: City of New York, 2008), prepared by Jay Shockley, 10-11. Other sources include "Frederick Law Olmsted," in Adolf F. Placzek, Ed., *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects* 3 (New York: Free Press, 1982), 319-24; Julius G. Fabos, Gordon T. Milde, and V. Michael Weinmayr, *Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.: Founder of Landscape Architecture in America* (Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1968), 3-14; and Elizabeth Stevenson, *Park Maker: A Life of Frederick Law Olmsted* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1977); and Lucy Lawliss, Caroline Loughlin, and Lauren Meier, *The Master List of Design Projects of the Olmsted Firm* (Washington: National Association for Olmsted Parks, 2008), 1-7 and 311-13.
- ²⁴ Martin Filler, "America's Green Giant," *New York Review of Books*, November 5, 2015.
- ²⁵ Fabos, Milde, and Weinmayr, 8.
- ²⁶ John C. Olmsted was the son of Frederick's brother John. Following John's death, Frederick married his widow, Mary, who had had three sons with John, including John C.
- ²⁷ Sources for this section include William A. Croffut, *The Vanderbilts and the Story of Their Fortune* (Chicago: Bedford, Clarke & Company, 1886, 215); Leng and Davis, vol. 1, 321-22; Paul R. Baker, *Richard Morris Hunt* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1980), 290-92; Preston Jr.; Nancy Goeschel, "The Vanderbilt Cemetery and Mausoleum," *Newsletter of the Association for Gravestone Studies* (Summer 1981), 7; Goeschel, *The Vanderbilt Cemetery and Mausoleum* (Draft for LPC Designation Report, April 1, 1982); Robert B. King and Charles O. McLean, *The Vanderbilt Homes* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989), 176-81; Frank J. Prial Jr. and Glenn Boornazian, *Existing Conditions Assessment and Proposed Restoration Report for the Vanderbilt Mausoleum* (May 1999); "Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *Salt Lake Herald*, April 16, 1882, 9; "The Vanderbilts Family Mausoleum," *Lancaster (Pennsylvania) Daily Intelligencer*, April 17, 1882; "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *New York Times*, November 23, 1883, 10; "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *Douglas Independent (Roseburg, Oregon)*, January 26, 1884; "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *New York Times*, April 17, 1884, 8; "Talk About a Vanderbilt Tomb," *New York Times*, November 28, 1884, 3; "The Tomb of the Vanderbilts," *New York Tribune*, December 16, 1884, 2; "The Vanderbilt Tomb," *New York Herald*, December 16, 1884, 9; "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *Richmond (Virginia) Dispatch*, December 18, 1884; "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *New York Herald*, January 18, 1885, 6; "Leaving It to Mr. Vanderbilt," *New York Times*, March 19, 1885, 2; "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum: Visit of the Millionaire to the Moravian Cemetery," *New York Herald*, September 18, 1885, 2; "Conveyed to George Vanderbilt," *New York Times*, December 5, 1885, 5; "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *New York Times*, December 6, 1886, 8; "The Mausoleum at New Dorp: Description of the Tomb in Which the Millionaire Will Rest," *New York Herald*, December 9, 1885, 10; "At the House of Mourning, Messages and Visits of Condolence," *New York Herald*, December 11, 1885, 3; "Mr. Vanderbilt Buried: Simple Services at House and Church," *New York Tribune*, December 12, 1885; "At the Vanderbilt Tomb: Four Detectives on Guard in the Cemetery at New Dorp," *New York Herald*, December 14, 1885, 5; "At Vanderbilt's Tomb," *New York Herald*, December 22, 1885, 2; "Where the Vanderbilt Mausoleum Stands," *New York Tribune*, November 25, 1886, 8; "Vanderbilt in His Mausoleum: Secret Removal from New Dorp of the Money King's Body," *New York Herald*, December 4, 1886, 3; "Closing W. H. Vanderbilt's Tomb," *New York Tribune*, December 28, 1886, 2; "Mr. Vanderbilt's Tomb Sealed," *New York Herald*, December 28, 1886, 9; "That Staten Island Ramble: Many Pedestrians Turned out to Enjoy the Romantic Old Road," *New York Herald*, July 9, 1888, 7; "New Dorp to Tottenville: A Ten Mile Tramp

Through Staten Island Neighborhoods,” *New York Herald*, July 7, 1888, 4; “William H. Vanderbilt Dies of Typhoid Fever,” *New York Herald*, May 24, 1892, 12; “Vanderbilt Buried with Simple Rites,” *New York Herald*, May 28, 1892, 4; “Mrs. Vanderbilt Buried,” *New York Tribune*, November 11, 1896, 5; “The Vanderbilt Mausoleum,” *San Francisco Call*, September 15, 1899; “The Vanderbilt Tomb: A Magnificent Mausoleum with Beautiful Surroundings,” *New York Tribune*, October 1, 1899, 4; “Closely Guarded: Armed Force at the Vanderbilt Mausoleum Has Been Doubled,” *Indianapolis Journal*, October 9, 1899, 5; “Though They Roam ‘Midst Pleasures and Palaces, the Vanderbilts Lie at Last in Quaint New Dorp,” *New York Tribune*, September 12, 1920; Robert Miraldi, “The Vanderbilt Mausoleum: Genius and Money Combine and a Magnificent Tomb Results,” *Staten Island Advance*, September 24, 1978, 1, 12; Miraldi, “The Vanderbilt Mausoleum: Two Designers Work Together to Fashion a Hillside Tomb,” *Staten Island Advance*, September 25, 1978, 1, 8; and Miraldi, “Vanderbilt Mausoleum: Tomb Is Closed to the Public, but it Still Attracts Many Visitors,” *Staten Island Advance*, September 26, 1978, 1, 8.

²⁸ There is no technical difference between a tomb and a mausoleum, according to Russell Sturgis, who defined the mausoleum as “a tomb of the most magnificent sort.” Sturgis, *A Dictionary of Architecture and Building* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1902), vol. 3, 809.

²⁹ “The Vanderbilt Mausoleum,” *New York Times*, April 17, 1884, 8.

³⁰ In addition to donating most of the property for Moravian Cemetery, Cornelius gave \$1,000 toward a new church building in 1845; William donated a new parsonage in 1880, as well as four additional acres for the residence of the cemetery’s superintendent. William also donated \$100,000 to the church upon his death.

³¹ Croffut, 262.

³² The total price was \$8,541. Richmond County, Office of the Register, conveyances from Nathaniel J. and Maria Louise Ostrander to William H. Vanderbilt (September 9, 1883) and from United Brethren’s Church to William H. Vanderbilt (February 14, 1884). In 1886, William’s sons Cornelius and William K. Vanderbilt conveyed the northern portion of the parcel, containing slightly more than 12 acres behind the mausoleum, back to the church for unknown reasons. In 1928, Frederick W. Vanderbilt and two other trustees of the late Alfred G. Vanderbilt received back from the church the western portion of the site conveyed in 1886, as well as a small portion of the eastern portion that held a water tower proving irrigation for the grounds’ plantings. The site of the water tower, which has been demolished, was conveyed to the church in 1960. See Richmond County, Office of the Register, conveyances from United Brethren’s Church to Frederick W. Vanderbilt, Henry B. Anderson, and Frederick L. Merriam (July 23, 1928) and from Morgan Guaranty Trust Company to United Brethren’s Church (May 10, 1960).

³³ As a large family cemetery, it was a rarity even in the Gilded Age, as the vast majority of ultra-wealthy New Yorkers, including the Goulds, Belmonts, Huntingtons, and Baches, were interred within suburban public cemeteries like Woodlawn in the Bronx. At Woodlawn, large, opulent mausoleums designed by the country’s most prominent architects for some of the country’s richest families stood in close proximity in a kind of “millionaires’ row” akin to that of Fifth Avenue.

³⁴ Croffut, 215.

³⁵ In 1882, Montgomery Schuyler described the twin houses as “architectural failures.” See Schuyler, “The Vanderbilt Houses,” in William H. Jordy and Ralph Coe, Eds., *American Architecture and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Belknap Press, 1961), 488-501.

³⁶ “A Vanderbilt Mausoleum,” *Los Angeles Herald*, August 22, 1883.

³⁷ The AIA/AAF (Hunt) Collection of the Library of Congress’ Prints and Photographs Division contains renderings of this first proposal.

³⁸ Croffut, 213.

³⁹ This rendering, now in the AIA/AAF (Hunt) Collection of the Library of Congress’ Prints and Photographs Division, is dated December 2, 1884.

⁴⁰ “The Tomb of the Vanderbilts,” *New York Tribune*, December 16, 1884, 2.

⁴¹ *New York Times*, December 9, 1885, 1.

⁴² Family members interred below the mausoleum’s floor include Frances Lavinia Vanderbilt (1828-68) and George Washington Vanderbilt (1832-36), children of Cornelius and Sophia Vanderbilt; and Allen Vanderbilt (1846-47), the son of William H. and Maria. All are interred near their parents’ above-ground spaces.

⁴³ This panel was incorrectly described as a “bronze plate” in contemporary accounts.

⁴⁴ John C. Olmsted to Cornelius Vanderbilt, September 1, 1886, Olmsted Associates Records, Library of Congress, Box B23, Reel 17.

- ⁴⁵ David Schuyler and Gregory Kayliss, Eds., *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Volume 9: The Last Great Projects, 1890-95*, 154.
- ⁴⁶ Richard Morris Hunt to Frederick Law Olmsted, May 9, 1887, Olmsted Associates Records, Library of Congress, Box B23, Reel 17.
- ⁴⁷ George W. Vanderbilt to Frederick Law Olmsted, July 11, 1887, Olmsted Associates Records, Library of Congress, Box B23, Reel 17.
- ⁴⁸ George W. Vanderbilt to Frederick Law Olmsted, July 22, 1887, Olmsted Associates Records, Library of Congress, Box B23, Reel 17.
- ⁴⁹ Howes estimated the cost of the mausoleum at \$250,000; Leng and Davis' estimate was \$500,000. An exact figure is probably impossible to determine.
- ⁵⁰ Preston Jr., 107.
- ⁵¹ Cornelius died in 1899; his wife Alice died in 1934. William K. died in 1920; his second wife Anne Harriman Vanderbilt died in 1940 but her ashes were not interred within the Vanderbilt Mausoleum until 1976 (see the Appendix notes). William's first wife Alva remarried Oliver Hazard Perry Belmont after their divorce and is interred with Belmont in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. Frederick W. died in 1938; his wife Louise died in 1926. George W. died in 1914, and his wife Edith remarried and is buried elsewhere.
- ⁵² Francis R. Kowsky, "The Central Park Gateways: Harbingers of French Urbanism Confront the American Landscape Tradition," in Susan R. Stein, Ed., *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1986, 87.
- ⁵³ Sources for this section include Baker, 290-92; Goeschel, *The Vanderbilt Cemetery and Mausoleum*; Prial Jr. and Boornazian; Preston Jr.; and drawings by Olmsted and his firm for Job 218 (Vanderbilt Mausoleum) in the collection of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, National Park Service. The author wishes to thank T. Michele Clark and Sara Davis of Olmsted National Historic Site for their exceptional assistance in providing digital images of these drawings.
- ⁵⁴ Cited in Preston Jr., 108.
- ⁵⁵ "An Immense Bronze Gate Cast for the Vanderbilt Mausoleum at New Dorp, S.I." *Richmond Dispatch*, January 28, 1886, 3. Montgomery Schuyler (526) noted that in Hunt's mausoleum designs, including that of the Vanderbilt Mausoleum, "the primary notion is that of inviolability."
- ⁵⁶ Henry-Bonnard Bronze Company, *Recent Examples of Architectural Bronze Work* (Mount Vernon, New York: Henry-Bonnard Bronze Company, c. 1904).
- ⁵⁷ The author wishes to thank Percy Preston Jr., who clarified which of the Vanderbilt memorial doors of St. Bartholomew's Church were cast by Henry-Bonnard and designed by Martiny (email from Percy Preston Jr. to Frank J. Prial Jr., March 24, 2016, forwarded to the author on March 25, 2016). Alice Vanderbilt gave the doors and portal in memory of her husband Cornelius, who had died in 1899. The portal, which was designed by McKim, Mead & White and based, like the Vanderbilt Mausoleum, on the abbey church of St. Gilles-du-Gard, was moved from the old church at Madison Avenue and East 44th Street (which was subsequently demolished) to the present St. Bartholomew's Church on Park Avenue between East 50th and 51st Streets. St. Bartholomew's Church and Community House (Bertram G. Goodhue, 1917-19) is a designated New York City Landmark. In addition to the designation report for St. Bartholomew's, see "St. Bartholomew's Doors: Mrs. Vanderbilt's Gift as a Memorial," *New York Times*, June 22, 1902, 9.
- ⁵⁸ "An Immense Bronze Gate Cast for the Vanderbilt Mausoleum at New Dorp, S.I."
- ⁵⁹ Sources for this section include drawings by Olmsted and his firm, and photographs taken by Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. in 1900, for Job 218 (Vanderbilt Mausoleum) in the collection of the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, National Park Service.
- ⁶⁰ Filler.
- ⁶¹ It was described as a macadamized roadway in "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *Dillon (Montana) Tribune*, July 31, 1886. F. L. & J. C. Olmsted, "Contract for Grading and Road Making Around the Vanderbilt Tomb at New Dorp, Staten Island, New York, May 1887."
- ⁶² It is unclear who—Hunt or Olmsted—designed exactly which portions of the terrace, although Hunt appears to have designed the walls, and both seem to have collaborated on the plan and other aspects. On August 11, 1886, Olmsted wrote to Hunt stating that "We sent you a fortnight ago a drawing in which elevations were given for the surface of the terrace and for the base of the terrace wall. I do not understand what it is you need in addition.... I have written Mr. George Vanderbilt and if he authorizes work John Croes will write you fully and send you copies of the plans and sections. Mr. [Cornelius Vanderbilt] was not willing to consider anything as settled and intimated that nothing probably would be until after the return of his brothers from Europe and in consultation of

the three brothers. I presume that he wants estimates from you with reference to such consultation. I am thinking, however ... that if the leading ideas of the plans of approach prove satisfactory ... I shall propose a modification the result of which would be a more rapid decline of the surface from the base of the retaining wall of the terrace. This would be accomplished by narrowing the terrace from east to west and extending to the south and by broadening the upper part of the cutting for the approach road opposite.... This would make no difference in your designs for the parapet I presume and would leave your estimates applicable..." (Frederick Law Olmsted to Richard Morris Hunt, August 11, 1886, Olmsted Associates Records, Library of Congress, Box B23, Reel 17). The drawings referred to by Olmsted in this letter may have included a plan by Olmsted dated July 8, 1886 that differed slightly from the final plan, with a broader east projection and three pathways extending radially from the front of the mausoleum. An undated plan of the terrace in Olmsted's collection of drawings, possibly following Olmsted's letter, was clearly completed by Hunt's office, as the handwriting and drafting style match those of Hunt's other drawings. This plan included a small semicircular southern projection that was omitted from the final design, but otherwise matched it. Olmsted's plan for stripping the site dated September 10, 1886 shows the terrace plan and design, with the radial pathways replaced by an elliptical central portion, as it ultimately would be built.

⁶³ Sources for this section include Prial Jr. and Boornazian; and Miraldi, "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum: Genius and Money Combine and a Magnificent Tomb Results," "The Vanderbilt Mausoleum: Two Designers Work Together to Fashion a Hillside Tomb," and "Vanderbilt Mausoleum: Tomb Is Closed to the Public, but it Still Attracts Many Visitors."

⁶⁴ "Guarding the Vanderbilt Tomb," *New York Times*, September 21, 1899, 6.

⁶⁵ "Vandals Try to Batter Way Into Vanderbilt Mausoleum," *Buffalo Courier-Express*, December 26, 1930.

FINDINGS AND DESIGNATION

On the basis of a careful consideration of the history, the architecture, and other features of the building and site, the Landmarks Preservation Commission finds that the Vanderbilt Mausoleum has a special character, special historical and aesthetic interest, and value as part of the development, heritage, and cultural characteristics of New York City.

The Commission further finds, that among its important qualities, the Vanderbilt Mausoleum is an extraordinary monument to America's Gilded Age, built by the country's wealthiest family of the time; that it combines the talents of two of America's greatest designers, architect Richard Morris Hunt and landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted; that it was hailed as "the most magnificent tomb of any private individual" and "the most costly mausoleum in America" following its 1886 completion; that it was planned by William H. Vanderbilt, the richest person in American history at the time of his 1885 death and was completed, following his death, by his son George W. Vanderbilt; that William H. Vanderbilt was the son of "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt, the Staten Island native who had amassed America's largest fortune through this steamboat and railroad lines, which played a major role in the development of New York City and State; that the Mausoleum is dramatically sited near the apex of Todt Hill, overlooking Lower New York Bay; that it is an imposing structure of gray Quincy granite; that its location within a large family cemetery was especially rare and prestigious at a time when most ultra-wealthy New Yorkers were interred in suburban public cemeteries; that its design is primarily Romanesque Revival in style, featuring three arched doorways, keyhole openings, and luxurious but restrained carved tympana and diaperwork; that two unusual lanterns, consisting of austere classical drums supporting attenuated domes with fish-scale roofing, crown the structure; that the mausoleum's ornate bronze gates, designed by Richard Morris Hunt, were fabricated by workers imported from leading Parisian bronze foundries; that these gates were described as "marvel[s] of workmanship" and were among the largest such castings made in America up to that time; that the Mausoleum is one of the few remaining New York City buildings designed by Hunt for the Vanderbilts, one of the most successful architect-patron relationships in American history; that the site includes landscape features designed by the celebrated landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, including the broad terrace in front of the mausoleum, designed in collaboration with Richard Morris Hunt, the hillock surrounding the mausoleum, the stone entrance arch and adjoining walls at the plot's entrance, and the winding pathway connecting the entrance arch with the terrace; that the Vanderbilt Mausoleum project represented one of the earliest collaborations between Hunt and Olmsted and led to their subsequent hiring by George W. Vanderbilt to design his North Carolina estate, Biltmore, one of America's most impressive unions of architecture and landscape design; that the Mausoleum houses the remains of Commodore Vanderbilt and his two wives, William H. and Maria Vanderbilt, and four of William and Maria's sons and three of their wives, who are best known today for their spectacular homes designed by outstanding American architects; and that like these houses, the Vanderbilt Mausoleum is an exceptional remnant of the Gilded Age, constructed by Vanderbilt family members at the height of their wealth, power, and prominence, when they were constructing some of America's finest and most enduring works of architecture.

Accordingly, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 74, Section 3020 of the Charter of the City of New York and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York, the Landmarks Preservation Commission designates as a Landmark the Vanderbilt Mausoleum, and designates Borough of Staten Island, Tax Map Block 934, Lot 250 in part,

consisting of the entire mausoleum, its steps, and retaining walls; the hillock enclosing the mausoleum; the terrace in front of the mausoleum's main facade and the base and walls of the terrace; the pathway leading from the terrace northeasterly, southeasterly, southwesterly, and southeasterly, beneath the arch near the southernmost entrance to the lot, to the lot boundary; the entrance arch and gates, and the adjoining stone retaining walls extending from the south face and sides of the arch northeasterly and southwesterly to the north and south lot lines; the stone retaining walls extending from the north face of the arch along both sides of a portion of the pathway; the land beneath the opening in the entrance arch; and the land upon which these improvements are sited, as its Landmark Site.

Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair

Frederick Bland, Diana Chapin, Michael Devonshire, Michael Goldblum, Kim Vauss,
John Gustafsson, Wellington Chen, Commissioners

APPENDIX⁶⁶

List of those interred within the Vanderbilt Mausoleum.⁶⁷

Cornelius Vanderbilt
Born August 28, 1764—Died May 20, 1832
Married
Phebe Hand
Born April 15, 1767—Died January 22, 1854

“Commodore” Cornelius Vanderbilt
Born May 27, 1794—Died January 4, 1877
Son of Cornelius and Phebe Hand Vanderbilt
Married
Sophia Johnson
Born May 7, 1795—Died August 17, 1868
First wife of Commodore Vanderbilt

Frank Armstrong Vanderbilt
Born January 13, 1839—Died May 4, 1885
Second wife of Commodore Vanderbilt

CHILDREN OF COMMODORE AND SOPHIA JOHNSON VANDERBILT

William Henry Vanderbilt
Born May 8, 1821—Died December 8, 1885
Married
Maria Louisa Kissam
Born June 24, 1821—Died November 6, 1896

Frances Lavinia Vanderbilt
Born December 8, 1829—Died May 24, 1868

George Washington Vanderbilt
Born September 23, 1832—Died November 16, 1836

George Washington Vanderbilt
Born April 10, 1839—Died December 31, 1863

CORNELIUS VANDERBILT (SON OF WILLIAM HENRY AND MARIA VANDERBILT) AND HIS DESCENDANTS

Cornelius Vanderbilt
Born November 27, 1843—Died September 12, 1899
Married
Alice Claypoole Gwynne
Born November 26, 1845—Died April 22, 1934

Alice Gwynne Vanderbilt
Born February 3, 1868—Died October 31, 1873
Daughter of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt

William Henry Vanderbilt
Born December 21, 1870—Died May 23, 1892
Son of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt

Cornelius Vanderbilt
Born September 5, 1873—Died March 1, 1942
Son of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt
Married
Grace Graham Wilson
Born September 3, 1870—Died January 7, 1953

Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt
Born October 20, 1877—Lost at Sea May 12, 1915⁶⁸
Son of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt

Reginald Claypoole Vanderbilt
Born December 19, 1880—Died September 4, 1925
Son of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt

Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr.
Born April 30, 1898—Died July 7, 1974
Son of Cornelius and Grace Graham Wilson Vanderbilt
Grandson of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt

Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt
Born September 22, 1912—Died November 12, 1999
Son of Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt and Margaret Emerson⁶⁹
Grandson of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt

Nicholas Harvey Vanderbilt
Born September 21, 1958—Lost on Mount Robson, British Columbia, August 21, 1984
Son of Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt and Jean Harvey Vanderbilt⁷⁰
Great-grandson of Cornelius and Alice Claypoole Gwynne Vanderbilt

ALLEN VANDERBILT (SON OF WILLIAM HENRY AND MARIA VANDERBILT)

Born December 11, 1846—Died November 20, 1847

**WILLIAM KISSAM VANDERBILT (SON OF WILLIAM HENRY AND MARIA VANDERBILT)
AND HIS DESCENDANTS**

William Kissam Vanderbilt
Born December 12, 1849—Died July 22, 1920

Married
Anne Harriman⁷¹
Born February 17, 1861—April 20, 1940
Second wife of William Kissam Vanderbilt

William Kissam Vanderbilt II
Born October 26, 1878—Died January 8, 1944
Son of William Kissam and Alva Erskine Smith Vanderbilt⁷²
Married
Rosamond Lancaster
Born April 19, 1897—Died August 28, 1947
Second wife of William Kissam Vanderbilt II

William Kissam Vanderbilt III
Born October 26, 1907—Died November 15, 1933
Son of William Kissam Vanderbilt II and Virginia Graham Fair Vanderbilt⁷³
Grandson of William Kissam and Alva Erskine Smith Vanderbilt

**FREDERICK W. VANDERBILT (SON OF WILLIAM HENRY AND MARIA VANDERBILT)
AND HIS WIFE**

Frederick William Vanderbilt
Born February 2, 1856—Died June 29, 1938
Married
Louise Holmes
Born September 4, 1854—Died August 21, 1926

GEORGE W. VANDERBILT (SON OF WILLIAM HENRY AND MARIA VANDERBILT)

George Washington Vanderbilt
Born November 14, 1862—Died March 6, 1914

NOTES

- ⁶⁶ The main sources for this appendix are plaques within the interior vestibule of the mausoleum stating the names of family members interred there, as well as notes by Frank J. Prial Jr. dated August 18, 2000 that detail the inscriptions on the stone plaques of the above- and below-ground interment spaces within the mausoleum. The mausoleum's interior is not part of this designation. The author wishes to thank Alfred G. Vanderbilt III for providing access to the interior so that these plaques could be viewed. The vestibule plaques state that Jacob Vanderbilt (January 25, 1692-December 14, 1759), his wife Neiltje Denyse Vanderbilt (February 10, 1698-December 9, 1770), and their son Jacob Vanderbilt (January 6, 1723-October 20, 1768) are "interred in adjoining cemetery."
- ⁶⁷ Although the bodies of Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt (lost at sea aboard the *R. M. S. Lusitania* in 1915) and Nicholas Harvey Vanderbilt (lost on Mount Robson in 1984) were never recovered, they are included in this list because commemorative vault plaques have been installed in their memory.
- ⁶⁸ The May 12 date is from the stone plaque in front of his vault; the vestibule plaque states "Lost at Sea May 7, 1915," which is the date of the *Lusitania*'s sinking.
- ⁶⁹ Margaret Emerson remarried following Alfred Gwynne Vanderbilt's 1915 death and is not interred in this mausoleum.
- ⁷⁰ Alfred Gwynne and Jean Harvey Vanderbilt divorced in 1975.
- ⁷¹ According to Frank J. Prial Jr., Anne Harriman Vanderbilt was cremated following her death and the urn containing her ashes was interred elsewhere. The urn was reinterred within the Vanderbilt Mausoleum in 1976 (email from Frank J. Prial Jr. to Michael Caratzas, April 12, 2016). See also "Vanderbilt Rites Held in St. Thomas," *New York Times*, April 24, 1940, 29, which mentions her cremation at Fresh Pond Crematory.
- ⁷² Following William K. and Alva Vanderbilt's divorce, Alva married Oliver Hazard Perry Belmont and is interred in the Belmont family mausoleum in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.
- ⁷³ Virginia Graham Fair Vanderbilt was William Kissam Vanderbilt II's first wife; they divorced in 1927 and she died in 1935. See "Mrs. Vanderbilt Dies in Home Here," *New York Times*, July 8, 1935, 15.



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Borough of Staten Island Block 934, Lot 250 in part
Main facade and portion of terrace wall
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Main facade and retaining walls
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2015



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Main facade and retaining walls
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Main facade detail
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Bronze central entrance gates
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Rooftop lantern
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Roof
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Portion of terrace looking eastward
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Pathway approaching terrace and mausoleum
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Pathway
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
South face of entrance arch, gates, and adjoining ashlar and rubble walls
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
North face of entrance arch, gates, and adjoining rubble retaining walls
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



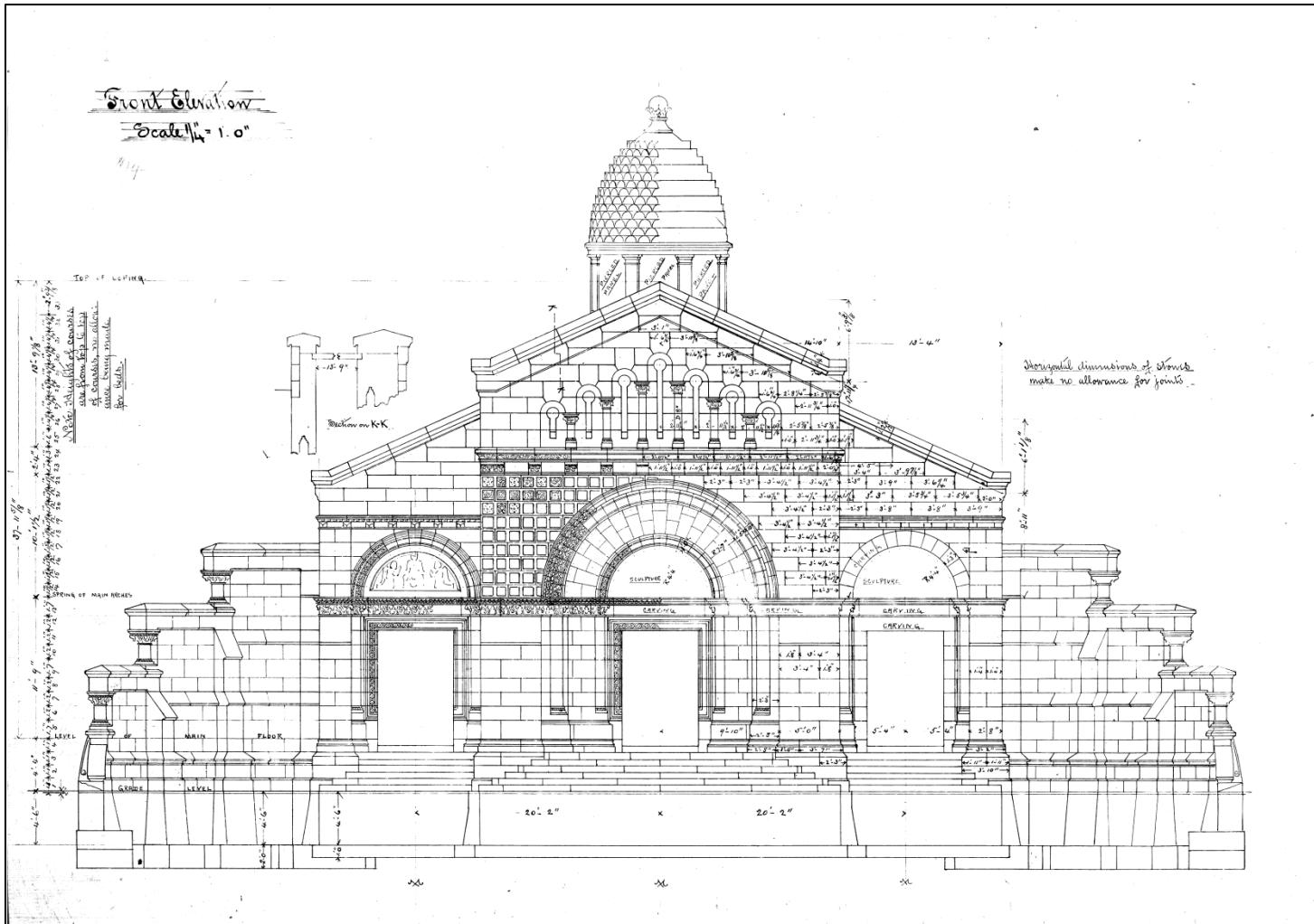
Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Entrance gate detail
Photo: Michael Caratzas, 2016



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
“Received from R. S. Prindle, March 27, 1897”
Olmsted Photograph Album Collection
Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



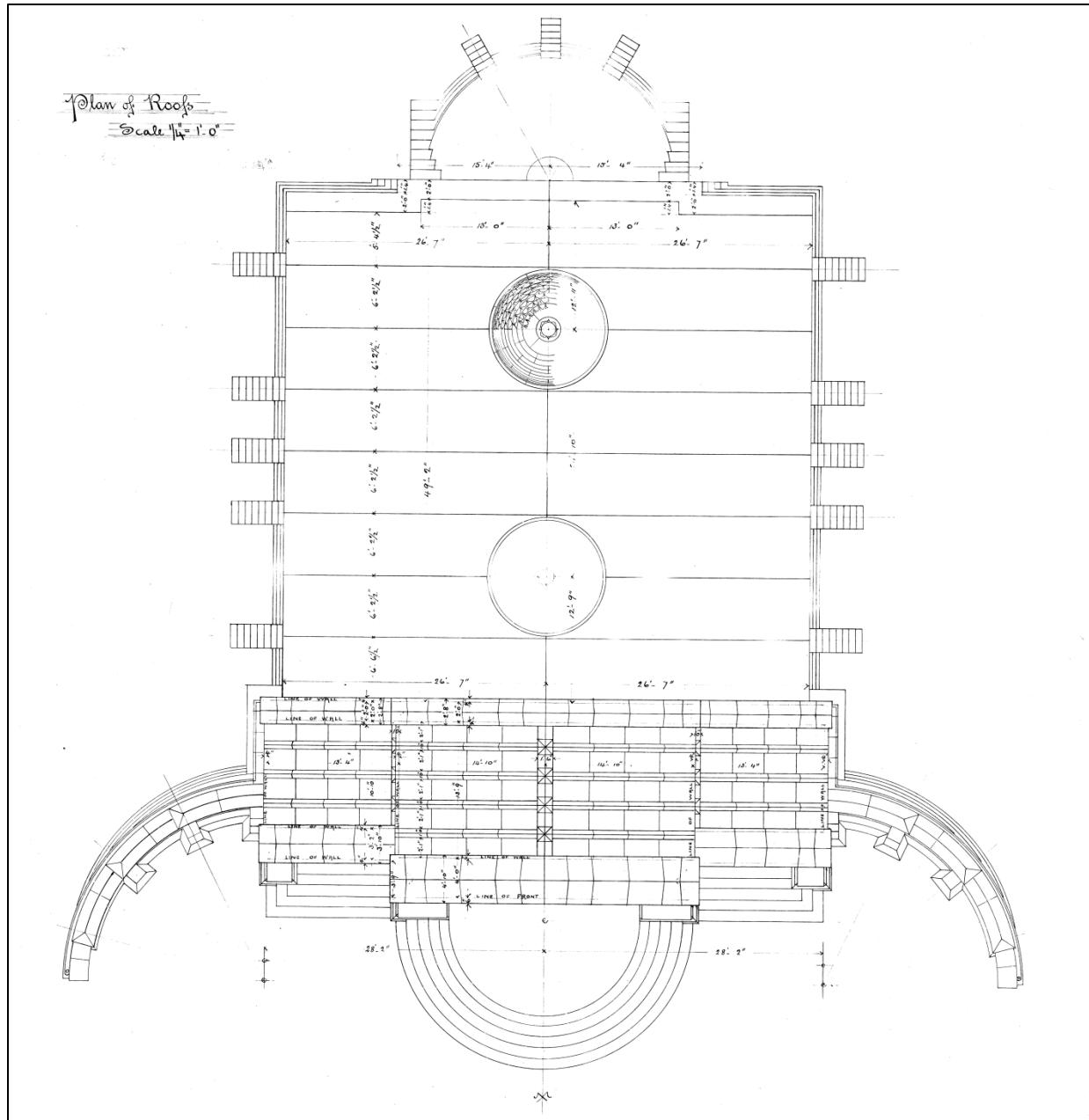
Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Entrance Arch Photo by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., November 14, 1900
Olmsted Photograph Album Collection
Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



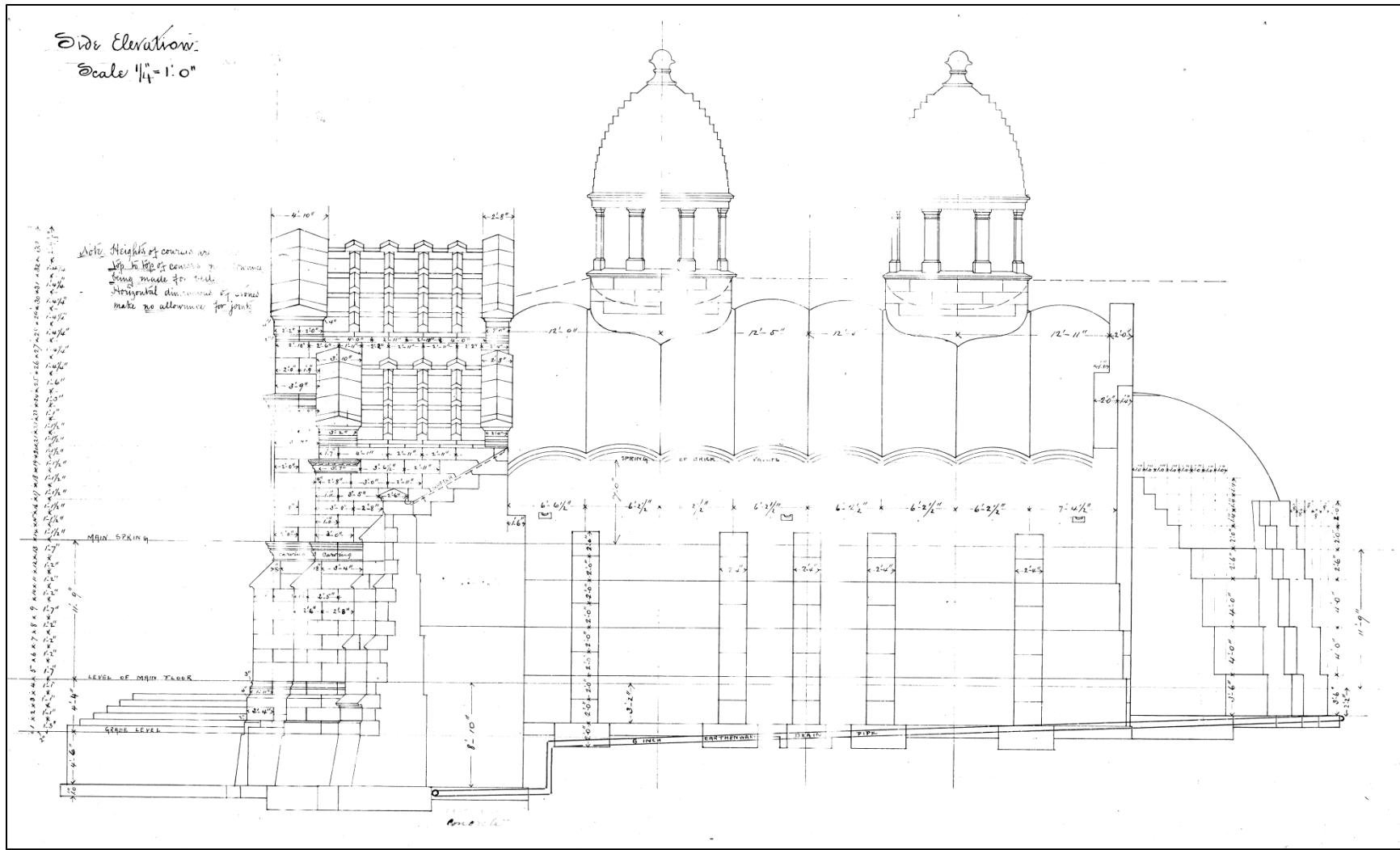
Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Richard Morris Hunt Construction Documents—"Front Elevation"
Olmsted Plans and Drawings Collection

Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

(Note: this and the following three images have been identified as construction drawings by Hunt by Frank J. Prial Jr. and Glenn Boornazian, *Existing Conditions Assessment and Proposed Restoration Report for the Vanderbilt Mausoleum* (May 1999).



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
Richard Morris Hunt Construction Documents—"Plan of Roofs"
Olmsted Plans and Drawings Collection
Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



Vanderbilt Mausoleum
 Richard Morris Hunt Construction Documents—"Side Elevation"
 Olmsted Plans and Drawings Collection
 Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

VANDERBILT TOMB,
Moravian Cemetery,
New Dorp, S. L.

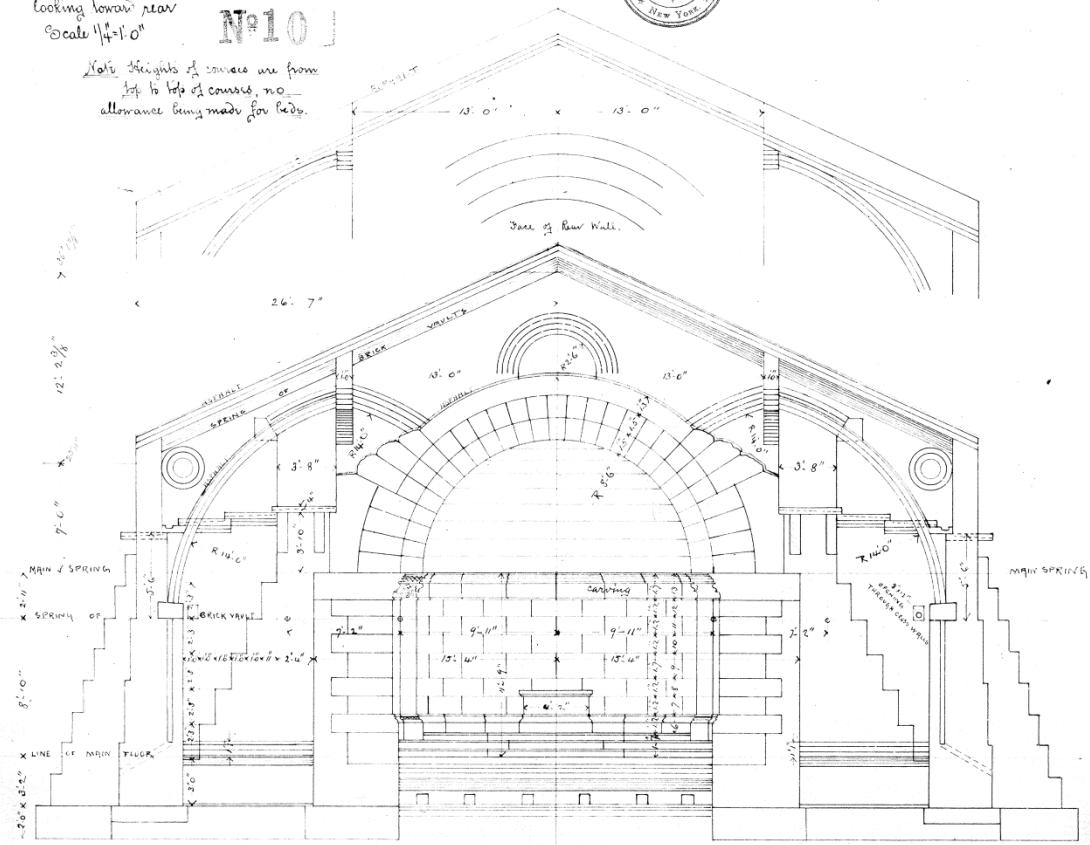
RETURN TO
Richard M. Hunt, Arch't



Cross Section on line C-C
looking toward rear
Scale 1 1/4 = 1'-0"

No. 10

Note: Heights of courses are from
top to top of courses, no
allowance being made for beds.



Vanderbilt Mausoleum

Richard Morris Hunt Construction Documents—"Cross Section on Line C-C Looking Toward Rear"
Olmsted Plans and Drawings Collection

Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

