

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Van Ness Mausoleum

AND/OR COMMON

Van Ness Mausoleum

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Oak Hill Cemetery, 3001 R Street, N.W.

N.A. NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Washington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

N.A. VICINITY OF Walter E. Fauntroy, Congressman

STATE

District of Columbia

CODE

11

COUNTY

N.A.

CODE

001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- N.A. IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- N.A. OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: Mausoleum

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

See attached list.

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

n.a. VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

6th and D Streets, N.W.

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites *

*The Van Ness Mausoleum has also been recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey.

DATE

December 14, 1977

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

DC/NCPC Historic Preservation Office

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

District of Columbia

7 DESCRIPTION

| CONDITION | | CHECK ONE | CHECK ONE |
|------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED | <input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GOOD | <input type="checkbox"/> RUINS | <input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1872-3</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FAIR | <input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Van Ness Mausoleum, designed by George Hadfield c. 1823-4, stands on a high knoll on one of the terraced hills of Oak Hill Cemetery in Georgetown. Hadfield's design for this circular classical temple incorporates the Greek Doric order and Roman elements and was inspired by the Romantic Classical Revival movement that dominated American architecture during the first half of the nineteenth century. The mausoleum originally stood on the south side of H Street, N.W., between 9th and 10th Streets. It was moved to its present site, lot 173E of Oak Hill Cemetery, high above the Rock Creek valley, in late 1872 or early 1873. The simplicity and dignity of the mausoleum create a monumentality and presence beyond what its physical size might dictate. The Romantic landscape of Oak Hill Cemetery, one of the most beautiful cemeteries in Washington, provides a suitable environment for the tomb and reinforces the design and romantic spirit of the structure.

Nineteenth-century writers described the Van Ness Mausoleum as a copy of the Temple of Vesta at Rome, without its elaborate ornamentation. However, in reality the tomb is Hadfield's personal interpretation and combination of various classical sources. Indeed, it resembles several 4th century B.C. Greek buildings. The architect chose the Greek Doric order, with unfluted columns, for his circular temple. The form of the mausoleum was Greek before it was Roman, and not necessarily copied from the Temple of Vesta. The dome, however, is Roman. The doors and steps are reminiscent of the Temple of Vesta. Hadfield combined these classical elements in a simple, straight-forward manner. The proportions and geometry of the mausoleum were carefully conceived and executed.

The mausoleum stands in the center of a circular lot approximately 45 feet in diameter. The base of the tomb is approximately 23'9" in diameter and the cella is about 12'6" in diameter. The height of the mausoleum, to the top of the urn-finial, was approximately 25 feet. The podium and cella are brick, originally covered with stucco scored to simulate stonework. The columns, entablature, and roof of the tomb are yellow sandstone and the steps and stylobate are red sandstone. The approach to the mausoleum is by four steps that rise up to the stylobate. The steps are flanked by low sandstone walls and span the width of four columns, or about one-third the circumference of the mausoleum. A peristyle of twelve unfluted Greek Doric columns surrounds the circular cella. The columns carry a full Doric entablature. The cornice projects beyond the roof, which steps up and slopes back to the low drum that provides a base for the five-stepped dome over the interior space. An urn-shaped sandstone finial on a stepped base originally topped the dome.

A pair of panelled iron doors, 1974 copies of the bronze doors that were installed in 1872 or 1873 when the mausoleum was moved, provide entrance into the cella. The entrance is surrounded by architrave trim and capped with a section of entablature. The two sandstone memorial plaques above the doors were installed when the mausoleum was moved. The one on the left is dedicated to Ann Van Ness Middleton and her daughter, Marcia Helen, for whom the mausoleum was originally built. The one on the right is dedicated to Marcia Van Ness. Because of the deteriorated condition of the stone the inscriptions are almost totally illegible.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

| PERIOD | AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING | <input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC | <input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION | <input type="checkbox"/> LAW | <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS | <input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE | <input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> ART | <input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING | <input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC | <input type="checkbox"/> THEATER |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE | <input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY | <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY | <input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT | <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION | | |

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1823-4 BUILDER/ARCHITECT George Hadfield

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Joint Committee on Landmarks has designated the Van Ness Mausoleum a Category II Landmark which contributes significantly to the cultural heritage and visual beauty of the District of Columbia.

The Van Ness Mausoleum, which today stands on the terraced slopes of the Oak Hill Cemetery in the Georgetown Historic District is significant both historically and architecturally. It was built c. 1823-24 by John Peter Van Ness and his wife, Marcia Burnes Van Ness, as the family mausoleum. The architect was George Hadfield. Both the owners and the architect were prominent figures in the early history and development of Washington. John Van Ness was active in local politics and finance and Marcia Van Ness devoted much of her life to working for charitable institutions. George Hadfield was one of the first professional architects to practice in this country. His interpretation of classical prototypes for his design of the Van Ness Mausoleum resulted in one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in the District of Columbia.

The Van Ness Mausoleum was originally built for Ann Elbertina Middleton, the only child of John and Marcia Van Ness, and her daughter, Marcia Helen Middleton, who both died in November 1823, shortly after Marcia Helen's birth. The Mausoleum was erected on Burnes property in Square 375, lot 118 (now 819). It stood on a rise on the south side of H Street, N.W., between 9th and 10th Streets. The site, known as Mausoleum Square, later became part of the churchyard of the Church of the Ascension.

The Burnes and Van Ness families both occupied important places in the early history of the Federal City. David Burnes, who received the patent for his land in 1774, served in the Revolutionary War and as a magistrate for Prince George's county. Burnes was one of the original proprietors of land that was to become the Federal City. He owned a plantation of about 600 acres, which was later converted into city squares. On his death in 1799 his daughter, Marcia (1782-1832), inherited his vast landholdings and became known as the "heiress of Washington." Marcia Burnes attended the Georgetown School for Young Ladies and Madame Lacombe's Female Academy in Baltimore. On May 9, 1802 she married John Peter Van Ness (1770-1846), a congressman from New York. In 1815-16 Mrs. Van Ness helped organize the Washington City Orphan Asylum. She became the director, succeeding Mrs. James Madison, in 1818 and held the post until 1831. Marcia Van Ness died on September 9, 1832, and was buried in the family mausoleum the following day. Rev. William Hawley of St. John's Episcopal Church officiated at the service,

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See attached list.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approximately .04 acres.

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|-------------|---------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1 8 | 3 2 1 8 8 0 | 4 3 0 8 7 6 0 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Van Ness Mansoleum stands on lot 173E of the Oak Hill Cemetery. The lot is a circular lot approximately 45 feet in diameter (approximately 1590 square feet) in the southeast section of the cemetery (city square 1285, lot 809).

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| N.A. | | | |
| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Anne H. Helwig, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

D.C. Historic Preservation Office, DHCD

DATE

June 1978

STREET & NUMBER

1325 G Street, N.W.

TELEPHONE

724-8668

CITY OR TOWN

Washington,

STATE

District of Columbia

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Director, Department of Housing and Community Development

DATE

7/31/80

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

12/17/82

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Patricia Andrews*

DATE

12/7/82

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Owners of lot 173E - Oak Hill Cemetery

Mrs. Hoffman Philip
663 Picacho Lane
Santa Barbara, California 93108

Mrs. Nicholas Philip
507 E. 84th Street
New York, New York 10028

Mr. J. Van Ness Philip
507 E. 84th Street
New York, New York 10028

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The interior of the cella is stuccoed to match the original exterior of the mausoleum. An eight-foot long metal trap door in the cella floor opens into a crypt which contains three tiers of cells, six cells per tier. The niches are twenty-seven inches wide and twenty inches high. According to cemetery records, all but one niche has been filled.

Unfortunately, years of neglect have taken their toll on the Van Ness Mausoleum. The stucco has deteriorated, exposing the brick construction of the cella and podium. Trees and plants, particularly those growing in the roof, have separated the stones and allowed for damage to the interior of the mausoleum. The sandstone elements of the structure have begun to deteriorate. The most noticeable damage is on the cornice and at the base of the columns. The elaborate finial, visible in a mid-1950's photograph, is no longer present. However, in spite of the deterioration of the mausoleum, the structure is still a focal point in the eastern section of the cemetery. Enhanced by the landscaping of the cemetery, the Van Ness Mausoleum still presents an impressive and dignified image from its commanding site.

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which was attended by the Congress of the United States; Mrs. Van Ness' funeral was the first time that Congress had adjourned for the funeral of a woman.

John Peter Van Ness was born in 1770, in Ghent, Columbia County, New York. He attended Columbia and studied law, although he never practiced. Van Ness lived at Lindenwald, in Kinderhook, an estate later owned by Martin Van Buren. He inherited a sizable fortune from his father, allowing him to pursue activities that interested him. Van Ness came to Washington as a Congressman from New York to attend the first session of Congress held in the new capital city. In 1803 he lost his seat in the House when he became a Washington resident and accepted a commission from Thomas Jefferson as a major in the militia of the District of Columbia. From that time on Van Ness played an active role in local affairs, both political and commercial. He rose to the rank of general in the militia, was one of the three city commissioners who supervised the reconstruction of public buildings destroyed by the British in 1814, and served four terms as mayor. In 1814 Van Ness organized the Bank of the Metropolis, which became the National Metropolitan Bank, the oldest national bank in the District of Columbia. He served as the bank's president until his death. Van Ness was also the president of the Branch Bank of the United States in Washington. In 1832 he was a delegate to the first Democratic convention in Baltimore, supporting the Jackson-Van Buren ticket. In 1834 Van Ness became the president of the Commissioners of the Washington Canal. He was also a warden of St. John's Episcopal Church. General Van Ness died in March 1846, and was buried in the family mausoleum.

Among the many civic-minded acts of the Van Ness family was the donation of land to various local organizations and groups. They donated a lot on H Street to the west of Mausoleum Square (on the south side of H Street, N.W., about half-way between 9th and 10th Streets) to the Washington City Orphan Asylum in 1828-29. This institution exists today as the Hillcrest Children's Center, part of Children's Hospital. They also donated property on H Street to the east of Mausoleum Square to the parish of the Church of the Ascension, which was formally organized in 1845. The parish built its first home on this site and worshipped there until 1874, when a new church was built on Massachusettes Avenue at 12th Street, on land donated by William W. Corcoran. The church is now known as the Church of Ascension and St. Agnes. General Van Ness also donated land for the Washington Theater, which was designed by George Hadfield in 1804.

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George Hadfield (c.1764-1826), the architect of the Van Ness Mausoleum, was one of the first professional architects to practice in this country and one of the major architects working in the Federal City in the early years of its growth. Hadfield, best known for his work on the Capitol, was born in Italy, the son of American parents, and was educated in England. He studied architecture at the Royal Academy and with James Wyatt, a Romantic Classicist who is best remembered for his surprising Gothic ruins at Fonthill Abbey. In 1784 Hadfield won the Gold Medal at the Royal Academy and in 1790 he travelled to Rome for further study. He arrived in the United States late in 1795 and, through the influence of John Trumbull, was invited by the Commissioners of Washington to succeed Stephen Hallet as Supervising Architect of the Capitol. Hadfield took the position in October 1796. Although a dispute with the City Commissioners led to Hadfield's resignation in May 1798, he remained in Washington in private practice for twenty years. He was elected to the District of Columbia City Council in 1803. Among Hadfield's public commissions were the original Treasury and Executive Offices (1797-8), which were destroyed by fire during the British attack on Washington in 1814, the Washington County Jail (1802), and the United States Branch Bank (1824). The Old City Hall (a Category I Landmark listed in the National Register of Historic Places), the architect's only surviving building in Washington, is a National Historic Landmark. Hadfield is also credited with the design or remodeling of the Custis-Lee Mansion at Arlington Cemetery (c.1820).

On May 4, 1872, a suit of equity was filed by Colonel William W. Philip and other Van Ness heirs to allow the land on which the mausoleum stood to be sold and the structure moved. On June 8, 1872, the lot was sold to Jesse B. Wilson and later that year, or early the following year, the mausoleum was moved to lot 173E in Oak Hill Cemetery. The John P. Van Ness Estate paid \$2,280 for lot, which was transferred to Mrs. Eliza W. Philip in June 1873. Jacob Viehmeyer was paid \$4,500 to move and rebuilt the mausoleum. The job was supervised by Edward Clark, a local architect, for a fee of \$100. A. Schneider made a pair of bronze doors for the mausoleum for \$160. Joseph Gawler was paid \$90 to transfer the coffins already installed in the vault to the new location and John F. Hanna was paid \$300 for legal services rendered.

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Oak Hill Cemetery, the current site of the Van Ness Mausoleum, is perhaps the most beautiful cemetery in Washington. The original 12½ acres of the approximately 16-acre site were conveyed to the Oak Hill Cemetery Company by William W. Corcoran in 1848. Corcoran spent over \$100,000 on landscaping and beautification of the land and provided in the cemetery charter that the property should "be forever inalienable." Captain George de la Roche, the civil engineer responsible for the Naval Observatory, was hired to survey and lay out Oak Hill Cemetery. The Romantic landscape created by de la Roche has matured over the years and the wooded terraces of the cemetery are covered with lush vegetation. This picturesque setting is ideal for the Van Ness Mausoleum.

Since its erection in the early 19th century the Van Ness Mausoleum has been considered a beautiful tomb and a fine example of the Greek Revival trend in American architecture. Even in the 1870's, when Greek Revival design was generally out of favor, people recognized the architectural merit and beauty of the mausoleum. In 1874 a writer for Scribner's wrote that the Van Ness Mausoleum was "one of the most beautiful mausoleums every constructed in this country." The Sunday Herald and Weekly National Intelligencer of May 17, 1873, in an article on Marcia Burnes, proclaimed that General Van Ness "provided for a tomb unrivaled in the New World,where the Burnes and the Van Ness alliance should be monumentally inurned." The mausoleum, still owned by the heirs of Mrs. Eliza W. Philip, continues to serve as the family burial place (see attached list). Although it no longer stands in pristine condition due to weather, pollution, and general neglect, the mausoleum is still a focal point in the cemetery and continues to present an impressive and dignified classical appearance.

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Persons entombed within the mausoleum prior to 1872-3

John Peter Van Ness
Marcia Burnes Van Ness
Cornelius P. Van Ness
Ann Elbertina Van Ness Middleton and daughter Marcia Helen
George W. Montgomery

Burials since 1873

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------|---|
| William Henry Philip, Jr. | 4 years | 1875 | |
| Charles Worthington Philip | 7 years | 1875 | |
| William C. Philip | 1 year | 1882 | } removed from New York to Van Ness Mausoleum |
| William H. Philip | 57 years | 1882 | |
| infant of Charles Newbold | stillborn | 1886 | |
| Eliza P. Worthington | 79 years | 1889 | |
| | | | |
| Eliza Worthington Philip | 51 years | 1897 | |
| Gaston Pearson Philip | 39 years | 1913 | |
| Leila S. Philips | 1 year | 1927 | |
| J. Van Ness Philip | 83 years | 1950 | |
| Hoffman Philip | 79 years | 1951 | |
| Helen Stott Philip | 89 years | 1973 | |
| Nicholas W. Philip | | 1975 | (cremated and ashes buried near, not in, the mausoleum) |