NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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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	et, N.W.	N.A	•NOT FOR PU	BLICATION	
CITY,TOWN Washington	N.A.VICINITY OF	Walter E.		IONAL DISTRICT Congressman	
STATE District of Columbia	code 1	1	COUNTY N.A.	CC	DDE 001

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGO	RY OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESI	INTUSE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC		AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
-X-BUILDING(S) XPRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	вотн	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	N . A_{ullet} IN PROCESS	-X-YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	_INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
• 1 D		NO	MILITARY	xother: 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.

^{C.} Recorder of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE District of Columbia

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS IIILE District of Columbia Lumentour of Mistoria Sites * * The Van Ness Mausoleum has also been recorded by the Historic American Buildings

District of Columbia Inventory of Historic Sites *

6th and D Streets, N.W.

DATE

December 14, 1977

__FEDERAL X_STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

Survey.

DEPOSITORY FOR			
SURVEY RECORDS DC/NCPC	Historic_	Preservation	Office

CITY.TOWN Washington

District of Columbia

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONI	DITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK O	NE
EXCELLENT	XDETERIORATED	X_UNALTERED	ORIGINAL	
G00D	RUINS	ALTERED	MOVED	DATE 1872-3
FAIR	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 Classicial 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 is 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 architcave 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)



PERIOD	AF	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	IECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
X1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	INDUSTRY INVENTION	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
SPECIFIC DAT	ES c. 1823-4	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT George Hadi	Eield

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.

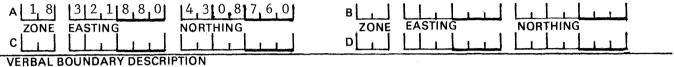
The Burnes and Van Ness families both occupied important places in the early history of the Federal City. David Burnes, who received the patent for his land in 1774, served in the Revolutionary War and as a magistrate for Prince George's county. Burnes was one of the original proprietors of land that 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 (1270-1846), a congressman from New York. In 1815-16 Mrs. Van Ness helped erganize the Washington City Orphan Asylum. She became the director, suc**cee**ding 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.

10GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY <u>approximately .04</u> acres. UTM REFERENCES

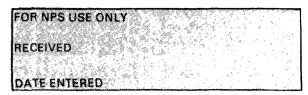


VERBAL BOUNDANT DESCRIPTION

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 COUNTIE	S FOR PROPE	RTIES OVERLAPPING S	TATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
N.A.	@ 6		
, STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
11 FORM PREPARED BY			
NAME / TITLE			
Anne H. Helwig, Architectura	1 Historia	In	···
ORGANIZATION			DATE
D.C. Historic Preservation Off	ice, DHCD		June 1978
STREET & NUMBER			TELEPHONE
1325 G Street, N.W.			724-8668
CITY OR TOWN			STATE
Washington,		Di	strict of Columbia
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESE THE EVALUATED SIG	GNIFICANCE C	DIN OFFICER (DF THIS PROPERTY WI ATE <u>X</u>	
As the designated State Historic Preservation hereby nominate this property for inclusion criteria and procedures set forth by the Nation STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNA Director, Department o	in the Nationa nal Park Servid NURE f Housing	I Register and certify th	
Developmen	t		1 12/170
FOR NPS USE ONLY	Y IS INCLUDE	D IN THE NATIONAL R	• EGISTER
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 4 PAGE

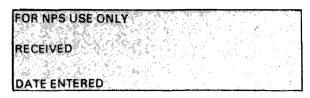
Owners of lot 173E - Oak Hill Cemetery

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



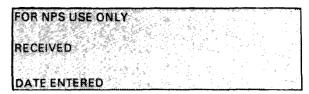
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ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE

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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE

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. 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.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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ITEM NUMBER

8 PAGE 2

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.

(Continued on Form 10-300a)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 3

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 <u>Scribner's</u> wrote that the Van Ness Mausoleum was "one of the most beautiful mausoleums every constructed in this country." The <u>Sunday Herald and Weekly National Intelligencer</u> 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 serves 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.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

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ind daughter Marcia Hel	en
4 years	1875
7 years	1875
.	1882 removed from New
2	1882 York to Van Ness
	1886 Mausoleum
/9 years	1889
51 years	1897
39 years	1913
l year	1927
83 years	1950
79 years	1951
89 years	1973
	1975 (cremated and ashes
	and daughter Marcia Hel 4 years 7 years 1 year 57 years stillborn 79 years 39 years 1 year 39 years 1 year 83 years

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1975 (cremated and ashes buried near, not in, the mausoleum)