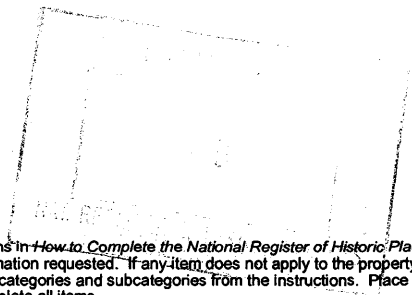


United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable". For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.



1. Name of Property

Historic name West Lawn Mausoleum
Other names/site number DO09:0420-001

2. Location

Street & number 5701 Center Street Not for publication []
City or town Omaha Vicinity []
State Nebraska Code NE County Douglas Code 055 Zip code 68106

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] nomination [] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [] statewide [X] locally. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official [Handwritten Signature] Date 11/15/04
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- [X] entered in the National Register.
[] see continuation sheet.
[] determined eligible for the National Register.
[] see continuation sheet.
[] determined not eligible for the National Register.
[] removed from the National Register.
[] other, (explain):

[Handwritten Signature: Edison R. Beall] 12/30/04

[Handwritten Signature] Date of Action

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- X Private
Public-local
Public-state
Public-federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- X Building(s)
District
Site
Structure
Object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing and 4 rows: Buildings, Sites, Structures, Objects, Total. Values: 1, 0, 0, 0, 1.

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

FUNERARY/Cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Greek Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Foundation Concrete

Walls Marble

Roof Ceramic tile

Other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B Removed from its original location.
C A birthplace or a grave.
X D A cemetery.
E A reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F A commemorative property.
G Less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1915

Significant Dates

1915 - date of construction

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Henry Bacon - Architect

Colorado-Yule Marble Company - Builders

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
Previously listed in the National Register
Previously determined eligible by the National Register
Designated a National Historic Landmark
Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location for additional data:

- X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
Local Government
University
Other
Name of repository:

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Less than one

UTM References (place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet).

Table with 7 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows 1-4. Row 4 contains a reference to a continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jill M. Ebers - Historic Buildings Survey Coordinator
organization Nebraska State Historical Society
street & number 1420 P Street
city or town Lincoln
date July 13, 2004
telephone (402) 471-4773
state Nebraska zip code 68501-2554

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name/title Westlawn-Hillcrest Memorial Park - Mr. Greg Easley
street & number 5701 Center Street
city or town Omaha
telephone (402) 556-2500
state Nebraska zip code 68106

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determined eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, (15 USC 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 1

Safe and Secure, They Shall Sleep Forever in Peace and Beauty

The West Lawn Mausoleum was constructed in an existing cemetery, atop the highest hill in order to create an approach to the building that would inspire awe and reverence. Upon entering the grounds through the north entrance, the mausoleum is accessible from the first and second drives that proceed east from the main drive. From the base of the hill, the mausoleum is sited like the Parthenon atop the acropolis, looking over the city of Omaha to the north.

This late Greek Revival mausoleum is a cruciform, one story marble structure with a green Spanish tiled gabled roof on the north half of the building and a hipped asphalt roof with several skylights on the south half. It has a marble foundation and is constructed entirely of Colorado-Yule marble blocks, not veneer. The building is large, measuring 83.5 feet by 148 feet.¹ The mausoleum evinces the design of a Greek temple through the use of stylized Doric pilasters in place of the columned colonnades of a classical temple. Windows do not punctuate the facades of the mausoleum at regular intervals, but spaces that read as windows are found between the pilasters along each side that give the appearance of a stylized colonnade. When present, the windows are comprised of small pieces of green or orange art glass with similar transoms, such as those found flanking the entrance.

The façade contains a central entrance located under the pedimented gable end. The entrance itself is located under a pediment, adorned with vines and anthemias, a honeysuckle motif, located at the apex and corners of the pediment. The pediment is supported by pilasters on either side of the door, embellished with a Greek key design topped by marble wreaths. A dentil molding is found under the pediment, accompanied by a winged hourglass motif, signifying the fleetingness of time. The entry is comprised of double doors constructed entirely of bronze, decorated with cross-hatched strips of bronze. A cross-hatched transom is situated above the doors.

Upon entering the West Lawn Mausoleum through the main entrance, one finds oneself in a small vestibule, which leads to a large chapel with a carved marble lectern and a marble bench directly across from the entrance. The walls are all highly polished white Golden Vein marble, and white marble tiles cover the floor. Two large light fixtures, decorated with rams' heads with swags and acanthus leaves, light the chapel area. A pipe organ with Westminster Chimes was installed in a balcony off the chapel in the 1930s, and was used during memorial services and every Sunday afternoon and evening during visiting hours. It has been removed, but the loft space remains.

Four private compartments and two larger family compartments are located just off the chapel, along with four columbaria with niches for 300 urns flanking the entryways to the family compartments. For those who preferred cremation, the columbaria were provided to house family or individual urns, some fitted with bronze and glass doors. An additional four private compartments are located further down the two hallways leading to individual tombs. The two hallways are lit with diffused sunlight from the skylights above.

The passage to each hallway has an inspirational passage painted above the doorway. The quote over the west hallway reads, "Safe and Secure, They Shall Sleep Forever in Peace and Beauty." And on the eastern hallway, "The Resting Place of Our Beloved Dead is a Sacred Shrine." Upon exiting the mausoleum, one would read over the doorway, "Fades

¹ Kristine Gerber and Jeffrey Spencer, *Building for the Ages: Omaha's Architectural Landmarks* (Omaha, Nebraska: Eventive Marketing LLC, 2003), 139.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 7 Page 2

the Light: and Afar Goeth Day. Cometh Night: and a Star Leadeth All to their Rest." Additional, lengthier, quotes by Dixon and Gladstone are painted behind the podium in the chapel.

The mausoleum has a capacity of 650 crypts, allowing the ability to house the remains of 950 individuals. The tomb walls were made of four-inch marble slabs, not the usual cement with marble veneer that is common in mausoleums. The tomb-fronts are tablets of bronze, commemorating the name and dates of birth and death of the deceased. Several are more descriptive, detailing hometown, occupation, and in one case, the location of its occupant's shops. In advertisements, agents responsible for selling spaces boasted the number of counties and states that were represented by crypt owners, and you can see tablets for people from Wahoo, Merriman, and apparently other more distant, places. The mausoleum is not completely occupied; there are roughly eighty tombs still available for purchase.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 1

The West Lawn Mausoleum is located in Omaha, Nebraska, a city established in 1854, the year the Nebraska Territory was organized. Omaha's growth was spurred by the city's position along the Mormon and Oregon Trails, its proximity to the Missouri River, and its selection as the hub for the first transcontinental railroad, completed in 1869. As a function of its position along such a significant transportation corridor, Omaha became an important supplying point that provided many business opportunities for enterprising newcomers to the region. In fact, many savvy business leaders made their fortune in Omaha, either in land or business, during the early years of the Nebraska Territory, and consolidated their holdings throughout the remainder of the 19th century. By the early 20th century, Omaha had experienced the real estate boom of the 1880s and the depressions of the 1890s, and had entered a new phase of relative prosperity. It was thought by developers that a large, elegantly designed, community mausoleum would be immensely popular with the prosperous business leaders of Omaha, as well as having a larger appeal regionally as a unique option for purchasers' eternal rests.

The West Lawn Mausoleum is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance, having the distinction of being the work of a master, Henry Bacon. The mausoleum is the only Bacon-designed building in Nebraska, although his work can also be seen in the pedestal setting for the Daniel Chester French statue of Abraham Lincoln, found at the Nebraska State Capitol in Lincoln. Bacon was best known for his monumental and memorial architecture, so it is fitting that the solitary architectural example of his work in Nebraska be a mausoleum. Henry Bacon (1866-1924), best known for designing the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C., designed the West Lawn mausoleum in 1913.

Bacon was born in Watseka, Illinois, and was sent to Boston to study at the Chauncey Hall School at the age of fifteen. He matriculated at the University of Illinois in 1884, but left within a year to launch an architectural career. He was hired as a draftsman at the Boston firm of Chamberlin & Whidden, but later moved to New York to work for McKim, Mead & White.² While he worked there, he was awarded the Rotch Traveling Scholarship, which afforded him the honor of studying European architecture during two years of overseas travel, including study in Italy, Turkey, and Greece. While the influence of his European studies can readily be observed in many of his works, he appears to have been fond of Greek-influenced architecture, often applying the classical orders to his designs. He rejoined McKim, Mead and White upon his return in 1891. He formed a brief partnership with James Brite from 1897 to 1902, and worked independently thereafter.

Bacon became interested in monumental work early on in his career, designing the settings for statues and memorials and working with prominent sculptors such as Augustus St. Gaudens and Daniel Chester French. Bacon designed the pedestals and architectural settings for more than fifty of French's monuments, including the General Hooker Monument at the Boston State House, the statue of Abraham Lincoln on the grounds of the Nebraska State Capitol, and the memorial to Lincoln in Washington, D.C. The latter was designed by Bacon in 1911, and eventually dedicated in May 1922. The memorial was designated a National Shrine, and Bacon was awarded the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects by President Warren Harding.³ The West Lawn Mausoleum was constructed in the midst of the Lincoln Memorial project, initiated in 1913 and completed in 1915.

Mausoleum entombment was once reserved for royalty. The pyramids were built to house the remains of pharaohs and their families. The kings and queens of England are buried within the structure of Westminster Abbey. More than half of American presidents are entombed in mausoleums. Mausoleums for the "common", though perhaps no less wealthy,

² Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)* (Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956), 29.

³ *Ibid.*

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 8 Page 2

man have a far shorter history. In Nebraska, mausoleums of any size are relatively rare, with the bulk of them supplying a private place of rest for individual families. As rural cemeteries established in the mid-19th century, such as Mount Auburn outside of Boston and Wyuka Cemetery in Lincoln, matured in the 1910s and 1920s, they became pastoral havens of memorial statuary and small private mausoleums. Larger community mausoleums were a way to offer such elegance to the masses, without as burdensome a price. Nevertheless, community mausoleums' popularity was limited to larger cities, such as Chicago, Nashville, and Cincinnati.

The West Lawn Mausoleum was built on land donated by N. P. Dodge, Omaha real estate magnate, to the Omaha Mausoleum Association. Crypts and niches within West Lawn Mausoleum were sold individually, as one might sell any real estate, with the exception that a portion of the purchase price would be set aside for the perpetual care of the building. The building would be administered by a board of vault owners, who would make requests for repairs or other uses for the perpetual care funds. For numerous reasons, not the least of which was the onset of the Great Depression, the crypts did not sell as quickly as expected, and the building went into receivership, eventually being acquired and managed thereafter by West Lawn Cemetery.

The West Lawn Mausoleum is unique in Nebraska. No mausoleums compare to it within the state in regards to its size, its age, or the richness of its materials. In terms of its style, it is an excellent interpretation of the late Greek Revival style, and its site atop the highest hill of the cemetery is reminiscent of other, more ancient, examples of memorial architecture. It is the solitary architectural example of the work of Henry Bacon in the state. The mausoleum's historic integrity is intact with the minor exception of the loss of the pipe organ. The West Lawn Mausoleum is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C for its architectural merit.

Criterion Consideration D: Cemeteries

The West Lawn Mausoleum, found in the West Lawn Cemetery, is eligible for listing due to its architectural significance. Its architect, Henry Bacon, was well known in the field of monumental architecture, and is an acknowledged master. In addition, it beautifully conveys the ideals of Greek Revival architecture, both in its form and details, and its acropolis-minded placement at the top of the cemetery's highest hill. For these reasons, it more than meets the criteria considerations for the listing of cemeteries or collections of graves.

West Lawn Cemetery was established in 1910, and today encompasses approximately 180 acres. While the cemetery itself is a well maintained and attractive green space in the midst of Nebraska's largest city, it is not considered eligible for listing as a whole because it does not exceed criterion consideration D for cemeteries.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 9 Page 1

Bibliography:

Gerber, Kristine, and Jeffery Spencer. *Building for the Ages: Omaha's Architectural Landmarks*. Omaha, Nebraska: Eventive Marketing LLC, 2003.

Harris, Cyril M., ed. *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

"West Lawn Mausoleum to Be Dedicated Today." *Omaha Bee*, 13 September 1915.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. *Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased)*. Los Angeles: New Age Publishing Co., 1956.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

West Lawn Mausoleum

Name of Property

Douglas County, Nebraska

County and State

Section 10 Page 1

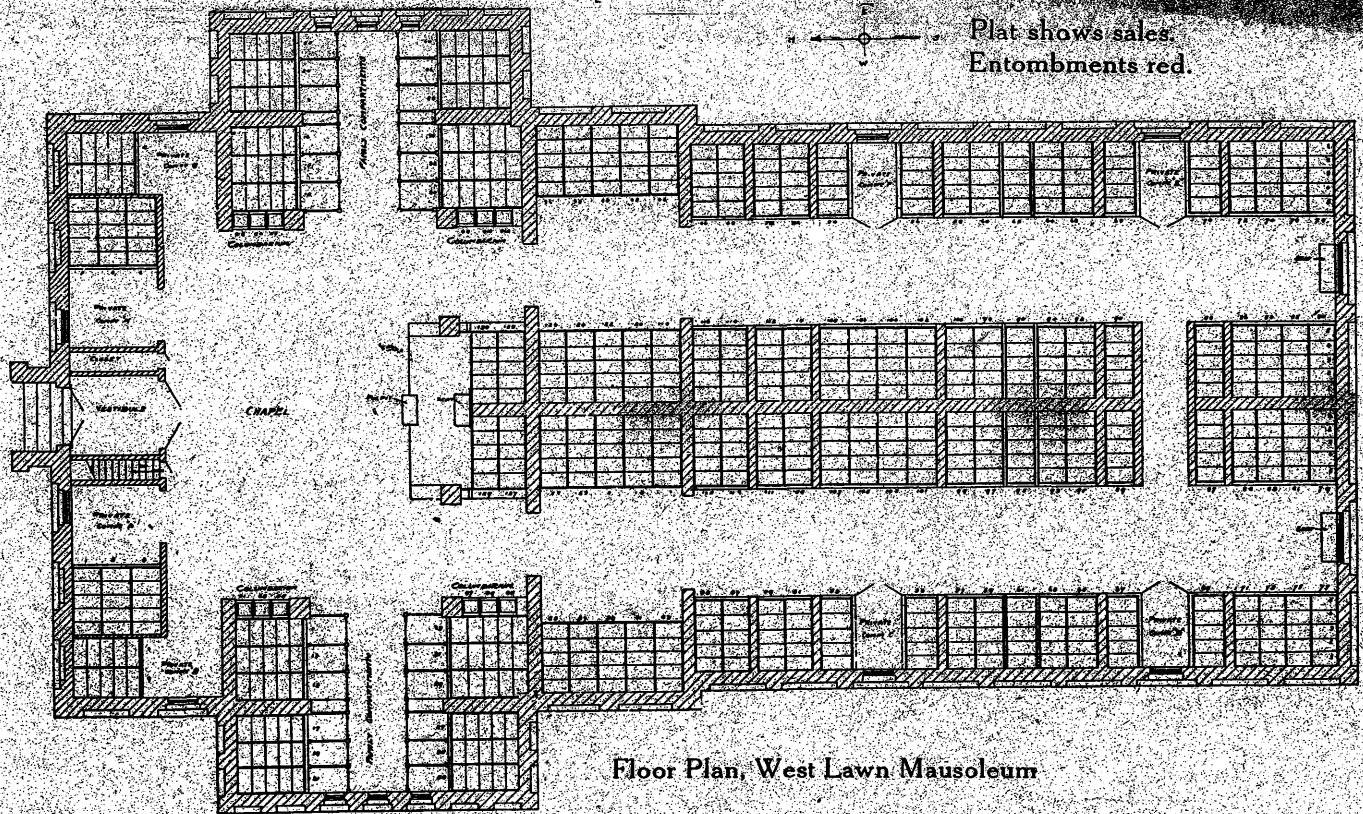
Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundaries of the West Lawn Mausoleum include only the footprint of the building, excluding the remainder of the cemetery in which it sits.

Boundary Justification:

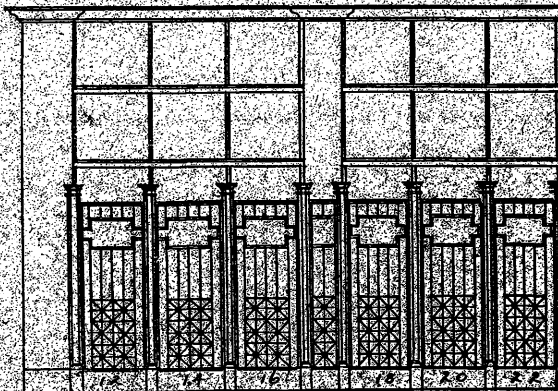
Because West Lawn Cemetery itself does not meet criterion consideration D for the listing of cemeteries, the boundaries of the mausoleum, which is eligible, do not include any portion of the cemetery in which it sits.

Plat shows sales.
Entombments red.



Floor Plan, West Lawn Mausoleum

Elevation Family Compartments
in Transept



Private family compartments of five tombs, with bronze gate and lock, \$2,500

Private Family Rooms, all marble, ten tombs, bronze doors, locked, \$5,000



\$275
300
350
350
325
each

Elevation of Part of West Corridor, Showing Tombs and Private Family Rooms