

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SENT TO D.C.

7-9-12

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 National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. 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 certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 1011 Auburn Street not for publication
city or town Rockford vicinity
state Illinois code IL county Winnebago code 139 zip code 61103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this 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 meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide local

Anne E. Heald 7-6-12
Signature of certifying official/Title DSMPO Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official _____ Date _____

Title _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ___ entered in the National Register
- ___ determined eligible for the National Register
- ___ determined not eligible for the National Register
- ___ removed from the National Register
- ___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper _____ Date of Action _____

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property
 (Check as many boxes as apply.)

Category of Property
 (Check only one box.)

Number of Resources within Property
 (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Current Functions
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Religion-Religious facility (non-denominational)
Funerary-Mortuary-Crematorium; Receiving vaults
Business-Office

Funerary-Mortuary-Crematorium

7. Description

Architectural Classification
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Materials
 (Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Victorian-Richardsonian Romanesque

foundation: Limestone, Concrete
 walls: Limestone, Concrete
 roof: Composite shingle, rubber membrane
 other: Marble (interior), copper, leaded and art glass

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Narrative Description

Summary

The Greenwood Chapel and Crematory is located in the oldest cemetery in Rockford IL. The cemetery has had a number of homes over the years, but was relocated to its present location at the corner of North Main and Auburn Streets in 1852. Now an urban oasis on Rockford's northwest side, the cemetery is home to beautiful mausoleums, stately monuments, and simple grave markers. Circular roads and simple landscaping complete the picture. The original chapel was constructed in 1891 to serve as an inside alternative for graveside services during inclement weather. It was designed by Chicago architect, Henry Lord Gay. The Richardsonian Romanesque building features rusticated limestone walls, round arched doors and windows, and a large tower. Other design details include stained glass and leaded windows; copper cornice, scuppers, roof ridge tiles, and downspouts; and ornamental stone embellishments. Today the chapel also includes an historic 1921 addition by architect and mortuary expert, Frank B. Gibson. Gibson designed the space to be compatible with the original building, yet took a practical approach by using less-expensive concrete block for some of the exterior. Gibson worked with the cemetery Trustees on economy, but did not compromise beauty. He insisted that the Trustees build the receiving vaults for the new addition above ground. He then designed an elegant, marble-lined room with green and white floor tile and a striking Tiffany-style conservatory roof. Gibson gave the chapel a facelift and designed a garden-like reception room filled with plants and a water feature, a peaceful retreat for grieving loved ones. Finally, Gibson's remodel added Rockford's first crematory, answering a growing demand for a local facility to provide cremation services. The Greenwood Chapel and Crematory has evolved over the years in order to meet the community's changing mortuary needs, yet the building still retains historic integrity. The current Trustees have embarked on a capital campaign to raise money for renovation and restoration, hoping to give this quaint Romanesque gem new life for generations to come.

Surroundings

The Greenwood Cemetery is approximately 100 acres in size, making it Rockford's largest. It is bounded by Auburn Street to its south, Brown Avenue to the north, North Main Street on the west side, and St. Mary's/St. James' Cemetery to the east. When the cemetery was moved to its present location in 1852, the area was rural and mostly prairie. Today the area is urban, and considered a vibrant part of northwest Rockford. There is a small business district known as North End Commons located to the south of the cemetery. The district is comprised of one and two-story brick buildings, most constructed in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Retail continues on the west side of the cemetery along the North Main Street corridor. Three of Rockford's older west side residential neighborhoods are in the immediate vicinity. These include Edgewater to the east, Churchill's Grove to the south, and North End Square to the west. Most of the homes in these neighborhoods were also constructed during the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The topography of the cemetery is relatively level. The overall design plan for the Greenwood Cemetery is a series of three circular plots, each with a center axis and radiating arms (Appendix_0002). The chapel is located in the center of the first circular plot on the south end of the cemetery. There are three entrances to the cemetery. The main entrance is on the south end off of Auburn Street. There is a western entrance off of North Main Street. Finally, the northern entrance, which leads to the cemetery office, is off of Brown Avenue. Landscaping in the cemetery is simple, consisting of a variety of mature deciduous trees, and grass as the primary groundcover. The chapel is surrounded by a number of coniferous trees and shrubs. The main road for vehicular and foot traffic is paved and runs from one circular plot to the next, circling around each center axis. The cemetery has expanded away from the circular design on its northeast side, but continues in a curvilinear pattern. Throughout the cemetery, there are fine examples of decorative tombstones, funerary statuary, and mausoleums, as well as very simple flat-lying grave markers. The cemetery itself is a collective example, illustrating the trends of funerary customs, memorial markers and cemetery planning throughout the years.

Current Description

Exterior

The limestone chapel was built in 1891. The architect for the chapel, Henry Lord Gay, planned the space using a common rectangular Basilica Plan. This includes a rectangular sanctuary and a semicircular apse on the end. Although the chapel is small in scale, it is designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque style. The exterior is appropriately picturesque with the typical bulky massing commonly found in a late Victorian Romanesque Revival. All the windows in

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the original portion of chapel are leaded and art glass. Other materials used for the original chapel include rusticated limestone for the exterior foundation and walls; copper for the cornice, scuppers and downspouts; and wood for doors, window frames, and tracery.

Entrance

The chapel is oriented to the southwest, with the entryway in this corner of the building. Two steps lead to the recessed doorway of the entrance and there are decorative stone buttresses on each side of the stairs. The doorway is made up of two single panel wooden doors painted white. An arched, stained glass transom tops the double doors. The window is divided into three parts. The stained glass design is inspired by nature with ferns, flowers and shells. Over the exterior entryway is a large, long arched canopy suspended with the help of two chains anchored to the building and resting on stone embellishments. The arched section is constructed of wood with the top and side fascia covered in a silver sheet metal. The sides are painted a bluish green to look like aged copper; the top of the arch is silver, and the underside is white painted bead board. There are small wooden signs on either side of the canopy with faded paint that read "CHAPEL." The gable of the entrance is accented by three stone finials appearing as short columns with a stone flower-shaped terminus. These are found at the peak of the gable and the base of each corner.

South Elevation

There are several prominent architectural features on the south elevation that merit mention. These include a large rose window, part of the original chapel; a three-story stone tower, also part of the original chapel; and the one-story office addition.

The large rose window is a feature on the gable endwall. Decorative stonework encircles the window. The gable endwall also has two round applied columns on each side that extend beyond the roofline and are topped with the flower-themed stone finials. Another similar finial is located on the peak of the entrance gable. There is a small arched niche on the wall near the gable peak with a recessed wooden plaque on which there is a painted cross.

The tower is found to the east of the gable endwall on this south elevation. The bottom third of the tower forms a base and is slightly larger in circumference. Two arched stained glass windows punctuate the base. A third window was likely covered when the addition was built. Above the broad base, the tower narrows slightly and becomes octagonal, made up of eight rounded stone columns topped with cushion capitals. Rough-cut stone fills the void between each column with the top half left open. Stonework at the top frames the eight arched openings. An additional stone transom bar is found going across the top of each arch opening. Rounded corbels are located at the eaves and finally, an octagonal roof covers the tower. The tower roof has a copper cornice, ridge tiles, and finial.

The one-story office addition is situated on the eastern end of this elevation. The office entrance is slightly off center. The entrance has several features similar to that of the original chapel including stone stairs flanked by two decorative buttresses. A triangular parapet above the office entrance mimics the chapel's gabled roof entrance. The parapet also has three finials. These differ from the chapel entrance as they are pyramid-shaped instead of floral. The office door is multi-paned and topped with an arched glass transom. There is a security storm made of wrought iron grillwork that has been painted white. A small arched wooden sign over the door reads "CHAPEL OFFICE." The office entryway is built of limestone like the original chapel; however, the rest of the building is constructed of concrete block made to simulate rough cut stone.

To the left of the door is a pair of small recessed double-hung, four-over-four arched windows and to the right is a single rectangular window opening. This opening has two double-hung, six-over-one windows. Exterior decorative wooden trim gives these windows the appearance of being arched. All of the addition windows on the south elevation have wrought iron grills covering the window openings. These were presumably for added security. The metalwork is painted white, as are the wooden window frames.

East Elevation

The most prominent feature on the east elevation is the semicircular bump-out that makes up the exit to the cemetery from the receiving vault hallway. Like the office entrance, there is a triangular parapet above the doorway accented with pyramidal finials. This is a double door consisting of two heavy, multi-paned French doors. The inside of the glass panels are mirrored and the exterior is white so that you cannot see through the glass in the doors. There is a large multi-paned glass transom above the doors with the same opaque treatment. A wrought iron grill protects the doors. The ironwork is painted white and features decorative wreaths and a large iron door ring. Once again, the entrance/exit is constructed of stone and the other parts of the addition are concrete block cast to look like stone.

On the north end of the east elevation are the two exterior doors to the retorts. The first door is located a few steps below grade and the second door is on grade. Both doors are wooden with a twelve-light window. There appears to be a slight color difference in the concrete block near the second retort door. This second retort room was added in the early

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1950s. Like the other wooden trim on the chapel and crematory, the doors are painted white. These doors are not arched and are utilitarian in design. The east elevation is part of the 1921 addition. The addition has rounded stone corbels under the eaves, similar to the original chapel; however, it does not have a copper cornice. Instead the cornice is wood covered with vinyl.

North elevation

The north elevation is partially obscured by a large overgrown coniferous bush. On the east side of the elevation is the wall of the later retort room. A small square window opening is found here with a six-over-six arched window. In the middle of the north side is a service entry with an overhead garage door. There is a metal awning over the entrance. The service entrance is used as a place to deliver the corpse for cremation services. Beside the entrance is a set of concrete stairs that lead to the chapel basement. The stairway curves around the semi-circular apse. The apse, on the west side of the north elevation, has eight arched windows grouped in pairs. The windows are leaded, each with a small circular crest design centered two-thirds the way up the window.

West Elevation

The north end of the west wall is slightly recessed. There is a chimney with a stack that begins narrowing at the cornice level. There is also a door-sized indentation in the wall chimney with two stone steps leading to it. Stonework frames the apparent doorway, however the indentation is filled with stone. Historic documents indicate that the original chapel did not have heat, so the historic use of this chimney is not known. It is possible that the stack was a later addition. According to a local newspaper article, heat was added to the chapel in 1906. Building records show that a coal furnace was added in 1941. If this were a doorway in the original chapel, it would have led to the front of the sanctuary. Perhaps it was used for bringing in a body before the funeral services. There is another large roof chimney in the northeast corner of the building used for venting the retorts.

The west elevation also has two rectangular window openings. One opening houses a single arched stained glass window and the other houses three arched stained glass windows. The window openings in the stone have a wide copper band across the top.

Interior

Narthex

The Narthex, or foyer of the chapel is a small space with the approximate measurements of 6' 3" x 7' 2". A pair of single panel doors leads to the exterior; however, these are not painted on the inside. Instead they are stained in a dark finish. A pair of multi-paned French doors separates the foyer from the nave. The entryway has bead board that runs about a third of the way up the wall. This is stained with a medium finish. Within the space there is a single overhead fixture and two recessed and narrow arched stained glass windows on each of the side walls.

Nave

The interior of the original chapel is simple in its décor. The nave is a large open rectangular room measuring approximately 49' 5" x 29' 11". The walls are finished in plaster. The original hardwood floor has been covered with a green, broadloom carpet. There are no pews in the sanctuary, but the original Windsor chairs that were designed for the chapel are still owned by the Association and are in storage. The room has a soaring cathedral ceiling, featuring two large scissor trusses stained dark brown. Decorative plaster reliefs can be found where the large timber meets the wall. Tudor-style, eight-bulb electroliers hang from each truss. Sconces mounted on either side of a large rose window at the back of the chapel provide additional lighting. The dominant color of the large stained glass rose window is a dusty rose. The window also has shades of gold, olive green, dark red, and a touch of blue. Flat and textured glass is used and this window, along with others in the chapel, is embellished with rondels and jewel-cut glass. The chapel is non-denominational and the stained glass designs are primarily geometric or nature-themed. The artist responsible for the chapel's stained glass is unknown.

Apse

The semi-circular apse is separated from the nave by a large arched opening. Four pairs of leaded glass windows light the dome-vaulted area. The floor of the semi-circular domed area is a multi-level platform and a semi-circular coffered wooden knee wall separates the choir. The arched opening is lined with wall lights of a later vintage so that the area can be backlit. The back wall of the apse has the lower section covered in stained bead board.

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Columbarium

The columbarium is found in the tower, in the southeast corner of the original chapel. This room is not currently in use, but at one time it was used for urn storage. Its usage prior to the construction of the crematory is not known; however, when plans for the new chapel were being made there was also talk of building a soldier's memorial. A Trustee was appointed to work with representatives from the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) on the plans and historic newspaper articles describe polished onyx wainscoted walls inscribed with the names of locals who had perished in the Civil War. It is believed that this memorial was located in the tower room.

A pair of multi-paned French doors open to the room. The ceiling in the room is domed. The rounded tower room has an octagonal base. The diameter of the room is roughly 15'. The floor is covered with white hexagon tile and embellished with a green and white Greek key border. Three recessed window openings are found in this room. Two of the windows are arched stained glass and the third has been plastered-in for the 1921 addition. Along the walls are wooden benches with wooden corbel supports. There is a hanging chandelier in the columbarium that matches those in the nave.

Reception Room

Two sets of French doors on the east wall of the nave lead to what was once the Reception Room. The rectangular room measures 27' 6" x 9' 10". It is located just inside the service entrance and now functions as a storage area.

The room has white hexagon tile flooring with green hexagon tiles set in a flower pattern throughout. A green and white Greek key tile pattern borders the room. This area has the service entrance on the north side and the doorway to the retorts on the west wall.

Retorts

The two gas-fired cremation furnaces are found to the west of the Reception Room. The first one is located slightly below grade and a small set of steps leads down to it. This area has white subway tile running partially up the wall. The first furnace bears the name of the architect that built the addition, which included the crematory. The stamped metal says "GIBSON MORTUARY CREMATORY." A small arched window adorns the room, as does a skylight with a roof lantern. Beside this room is the second retort, added c. 1954.

Receiving Vaults

Perhaps one of the chapel's most striking interior spaces is the Receiving Vault room, part of the 1921 addition. The hall-like space is located just off the original Reception room. The area measures 31' x 9'. Each side of the room is lined with marble faced vaults, seventy-two in all. Wrought iron rings serve as hardware for the vaults. In years gone by, the vaults provided a keeping area for caskets until the winter ground could be excavated. Historic literature indicates that the vaults were also used for temporary storage before cremation. The room feels like a conservatory, as the ceiling is a leaded glass roof lantern. A Tiffany-style stained glass border in green and gold embellishes the enclosure. At the end of the room is the cemetery exit, comprised of a pair of multi-paned French doors with a multi-paned arched transom. Near the cemetery exit there are eight glass cases built to house urns.

Office Area

A series of small interior rooms transition from the Reception Room, around the tower, and eventually lead to the office that faces south. These rooms are primarily used for storage. This is also where the small bathroom is located. The bathroom has white subway tile walls and a small arched window above the toilet. There is a wall-mounted radiator and a single sconce light fixture. A separate niche for the sink is located in the hall next to the restroom. The office space is rectangular in shape, measuring 19' x 10'. The room has green 1"x1" square tiles. In some areas it is covered with a utilitarian brown carpet. There is a niche in the wall that creates a desk area and a deeper indentation above creates a ledge for book storage. Next to the desk area is a walk-in safe. The metal door is painted brown. The room has three arched windows and a storage closet.

Alterations

Over the years, a few alterations have been made to the Greenwood Chapel and Crematory. These include the addition of carpeting to the chapel. It is believed the plaster wall finish in the chapel was modified. A small area of the wall was uncovered revealing what looks to be the original plaster that was painted with a faux finish to look like stone. This is consistent with the appearance of the Chapel and Reception Room photos (Appendix_0003) published in the *Rules and Regulations of the Greenwood Cemetery* issued by the Rockford Cemetery Association in January 1922. One of the windows in the tower was blocked when the office addition was constructed. Several of the basement windows of

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the apse are now boarded. A gas retort was added c. 1954, and the original retort was converted from oil to gas. The original slate roof has been replaced. There have been changes to the building's heating system. The chapel was not heated when it was built. A heating system was installed in 1906, but the heating source is not known. Changes were made again in the early 1940s. The present system is gas. The most current roof work was done in the fall of 2011. At that time a slate-inspired composition shingle was used. Rubber membrane was used on the flat roof. Care was taken to replace the decorative roof features with copper, like the original. The canopy over the entrance of the chapel was not part of the original design. The date of its construction is not known; however, it was most likely added before 1962 and therefore within the period of significance.

The most significant interior alteration has been to the Reception Room. As built, this room had a wall fountain and small decorative pool at the end and was dressed with plants. There were once three leaded glass windows behind the fountain. In the late 1970s, the wall that featured the fountain was removed and a service entry with an overhead garage door was added. The mosaic floor tile, complete with the border that outlined the collection pool, still remains.

Condition

It has been many years since the Greenwood Chapel has been used for funeral services; however, the crematory is functional and still in use. Because of a leaking roof, the building has sustained some water damage. There has been some damage to the interior plaster and to the floors. Heavy rain in the spring of 2010 forced staff to move their offices to a newer building on the northern edge of the property. The 2011 roof repair was a positive and necessary step to slow the building's decline. Almost all of the original windows survive, with the exception of the ones lost for the addition and those sacrificed for the service door. Nearly all of the stained glass windows require varying degrees of restoration. The Greenwood Cemetery Board is embarking on a capital campaign to raise funds for renovation and restoration of the chapel and crematory. They would like to re-establish the use of the chapel for funeral services, as well as expand the chapel's use for other community events.

Despite some deterioration caused by deferred maintenance, the Greenwood Chapel and Crematory has excellent historic integrity as defined by the National Park Service. The building remains in the same location as when it was built. The original Richardsonian Romanesque design remains intact with the original building materials evident. Although the area around the cemetery is now urban, the cemetery itself continues to provide a respite from the busy city life. The winding roads, the elaborate sculptural monuments, the tall trees, and the grassy plots all remain - a setting very similar to when the Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and its crematory addition were built. The beautiful workmanship and materials are still apparent on both the exterior and interior of the building. The cathedral ceiling, glass skylights, and beautiful stained glass windows evoke the same reverence today as they did in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

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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.
- 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 grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture
Social History

Period of Significance

1891 - 1962

Significant Dates

1891- Chapel Construction
1921- Addition of crematorium, office and receiving vaults.
c. 1954- Construction of the second retort room

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Original Chapel-Henry Lord Gay
Crematory and Office Addition-Frank B. Gibson

Period of Significance (justification)

Because the building is being nominated for its local architectural significance, the period of significance begins with the year the chapel was constructed. This time period also covers significant years in Rockford's social history when the chapel and crematory reflected trends in US mortuary practice. Although the crematory continued to be operational and the only such building in Rockford until the 1990s, the period of significance ending date of 1962, adheres to the 50-year-standard generally applied to National Register properties.

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Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Summary

The Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. It is significant as an excellent local example of a mortuary building that represents the changing funerary practices in the United States during the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Greenwood Cemetery is the oldest and largest cemetery in Rockford. The chapel, a nondenominational church located within the cemetery, was the first of its kind in the City. The crematory was also a first for the city of Rockford and provided a local option for those who preferred cremation to interment. Although the cremation movement had gained some acceptance by the twentieth century, crematories were often only found in larger metropolitan areas. There was also continued debate surrounding the practice of cremation. To this extent, the new crematory inspired a number of local newspaper articles on the topic and not only provided an opportunity for the community to debate the practice, but also provided an opportunity to demystify the process.

The Greenwood Chapel and Crematorium is also noteworthy in a local context for its significance in the category of architecture. Two master architects were responsible for the Chapel and Crematory. Chicago architect, Henry Lord Gay, designed the original chapel. Gay played an important role in rebuilding Chicago after the fire of 1871, and was a contributor to the growing architectural scene in San Diego in the early twentieth century. He was also prolific in church architecture, with commissions across the country. Frank B. Gibson, a national expert in mortuary architecture carried out the crematory addition. Gibson is also credited for advancements in the cremation process. Finally, the Greenwood Chapel and Crematory is an excellent local example of a diminutive Richardsonian Romanesque.

The period of significance for the chapel is 1891 – 1962. These years encompass the construction of the original chapel, the subsequent chapel remodel and crematory addition, and the years that this served as Rockford's one and only crematorium. There have been only a handful of changes to the building since the crematory addition, most carried out to keep the crematory operational. Although the building is in need of some repair and restoration, the chapel is still a fine local example of a diminutive Richardsonian Romanesque, a style in keeping with the picturesque rural cemetery movement. The solid original materials and fine workmanship have helped the chapel survive and retain architectural integrity. With a dedicated group of preservation stewards now serving as cemetery Trustees, the goal is to restore and preserve the chapel for future generations.

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel

History of the Greenwood Cemetery Chapel

Greenwood Cemetery is considered the oldest cemetery in Rockford; however, it has not always been in its present location. In 1838, only a few years after Rockford founders arrived and established a small settlement along Kent Creek, the community's first burial in a designated public area took place. There had been only two recorded deaths in the area prior to this. One was an unidentified man who was found murdered in 1835 and he was buried where he was discovered; the second was Sampson George, an Englishman who died in 1836 and was buried on his own farm. Sources state that the first death and burial in the public graveyard was that of Mr. Harmon who drowned in the Rock River in 1837. The interment was near the current intersection of Cedar and Winnebago Street, north of Kent Creek. This was block 35 of the original plat of Rockford. The second burial to take place in this spot was that of Sarah Kent, who died the same year. She was the daughter of Germanicus Kent, one of Rockford's original founders.

A stagecoach route was established in Rockford in 1838. Rockford was also named the Winnebago County seat. In 1839, Rockford was incorporated as a village and soon after had its own post office and weekly newspaper. In the early 1840s the community began using another area for burials. This was on the south side of State Street, on the opposite end of Horsman. This location only lasted a few years and an 1844 agreement exchanged the site for blocks 37 and 48 on the north bank of Kent's Creek. The cemetery was officially chartered in 1845, under the name of The Rockford Cemetery Association (The Rockford Cemetery Association: Charters).

Another Rockford cemetery association formed a little later, but followed a similar timeline. Cedar Bluff Cemetery Association was formed in 1847 and they located their burial grounds on the east side of the Rock River. The Association organized with a Board of Directors in 1851, and was chartered in 1853. People in Rockford began to refer to Rockford Cemetery as the West Side Cemetery, presumably to differentiate it from Cedar Bluff located across the river.

In the early 1850s, the village officially became the City of Rockford. In 1851, a group of local business leaders formed the Rockford Water Power Company. The organization replaced the earlier ramshackle dam, a source of constant maintenance, with a strong and permanent structure further downriver. The new 750-foot dam was constructed of stone and wood and bolted into the rock of a ford that spanned the Rock River. The structure was completed in the

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spring of 1853 and new businesses located in what would come to be known as the Water Power District. This was the beginning of Rockford's industrial legacy.

In 1852, the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad reached Rockford. The land owned by the Rockford Cemetery Association was condemned for use by the railroad for its depot grounds and freight yards. After selling the land, the Association purchased a 33-acre tract from Charles Reed, George Haskell, and Nathaniel Wilder. The land was located at what is now the northeast corner of the North Main and Auburn Street intersection. The Rockford Cemetery Association was incorporated on June 23rd, 1852 and George Haskell, Anson Miller, Charles Horsman, Harry Spaulding, and John Fisher made up the first Board of Directors.

The land selected for the new cemetery was located almost one and a half miles north of the Rockford city limits. The move to the outskirts of town followed a larger trend in cemetery planning that began on the east coast in the early 1830s. Graveyards, during the formative years of our country, tended to be associated with churches. The exceptions were Puritan communities who rejected the church graveyards and chose instead to set aside public spaces in the community for burial. By the early nineteenth century, church graveyards had become over-crowded and graveyards within city boundaries were rapidly being edged out by urban development. There were also health concerns. Furthermore, attitudes about death and burial were changing. People desired more permanent burial locations and lasting memorials. As a result, communities began to establish garden-like cemeteries in the rural areas outside of the city. The trend, later identified as the *Rural Cemetery Movement*, was believed to have started with the Pere' Lachaise Cemetery in France, established in 1804.

In the United States, Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge MA is generally considered the first of the planned rural garden cemeteries. The trend prevailed on the east coast with a number of other planned cemeteries established over the following decade. Among them were Mt. Hope Cemetery in Bangor, ME established in 1834, and Laurel Hill in Philadelphia, PA established in 1836. Later examples of the rural cemetery movement were Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum in Dayton, OH established in 1841, and Elmwood Cemetery in Detroit, MI founded in 1846.

The rural cemeteries constituted a designed landscape. Influenced by the Romantic Movement, and popularity of pastoral beauty and the picturesque, the cemeteries rambled over the countryside with curving roads and planned vistas. The West Side cemetery in Rockford took advantage of the rural landscape. It was close to the Rock River. Although the topography was rather level, the driveways and winding walks, with various shaped blocks, gave the cemetery variety. Cedar Bluff, on the east side of the river, also followed this trend. They provided refined outdoor spaces filled with public sculpture and art in the form of grave markers. In Rockford, like other locales, the garden-like rural cemeteries became places of public recreation and a precursor to the public parks movement.

The railroad brought a large number of Swedish immigrants to Rockford and, by 1854 there were almost 1000 citizens of Swedish descent living in the city. The newcomers tended to settle on Rockford's east side and 7th Street became a primary business district for the new settlers. This stretch of 7th Street, and the surrounding neighborhood, became known as "Little Sweden." In 1869, a group of early Swedish residents met and formed a new cemetery association. The group purchased five acres of farmland about five blocks east of Cedar Bluff, and established their own burial area. This became known as the Scandinavian Cemetery, and was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in March of 1872. One other cemetery rounded out Rockford's earliest burial grounds. The Catholic Cemetery was established in 1859. Members of Rockford's Catholic community purchased land just east of the Rockford Association's West Side Cemetery. A hedgerow separated the two burial grounds.

Rockford Cemetery continued to grow and, in 1879, an additional 17 acres of land was purchased from D.C. Littlefield. Beginning in 1882, The Rockford Cemetery Association contemplated building a chapel for the cemetery. Northern Illinois' weather was unpredictable and its winters were often long and cold. The chapel was planned to provide shelter for services in inclement weather. In addition, there were plans to use the chapel to pay tribute to the community's fallen soldiers who had served the Union in the Civil War. The Association pledged to work with the local chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) on the soldier memorial.

In 1887, the Rockford Cemetery Association began the planning phases. Trustees at the time were G.A. Sanford, Ralph Emerson, T.D. Robertson, John P. Manny and Robert Tinker. Mr. Tinker was instructed to secure plans for the new chapel and present them to the board. Robertson was selected to work with the GAR. Tinker, a businessman and one-time Rockford Mayor, chose a Chicago architect by the name Henry Lord Gay to design the chapel.

Henry Lord Gay (1844-1921) - Architect for the Chapel

Gay was born in Baltimore, MD in 1844. As a young man, he studied architecture in New Haven, Connecticut within the office of Sidney Mason Stone (1803 -1882). He moved to Chicago c.1864 and began working in the office of architect William W. Boyington (1818-1898). His tenure there was short, and by 1865, Gay was a draftsman in the office

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of John M. Van Osdel (1811–1891). While working in Van Osdel's office, Gay had the honor of designing President Lincoln's catafalque used when the President lay-in-state in Chicago ("Designed Catafalque for State Funeral for Lincoln" 9).

In 1867, Gay began his own practice. He located in an office on LaSalle Street. One of his early commissions was the First Congregational Church in Chicago. The church was designed the same year his previous employer, W. W. Boyington, designed the Chicago Water Tower. Unlike the Water Tower, the First Congregational Church was destroyed in the 1871 Chicago Fire (qtd. in Miller 3).

After the fire, Gay immediately set up office in very small quarters in a building at the corner of Halstead and West Madison. One of his first tasks after the fire was working on the temporary Board of Trade building. Gay became actively involved in the rebuilding of Chicago after the Great Fire (Industrial Chicago 608). Gay's connection to a number of wealthy Chicagoans helped further his career. After the fire, some of Chicago's successful businessmen relocated or built country estate homes in the small resort-like town of Lake Geneva. Henry Lord Gay designed many of the early homes in the community. Among his numerous commissions were homes for R.T. Crane, John Johnston Jr., F.R. Chandler, S.W. Allerton, Charles H. Wacker, George A. Weiss, C.C. Boyles, T. J. Lefens, and Francis Lackner. Gay himself had a small hunting lodge in Lake Geneva. The lodge was known as Gay Lynne and is now a part of the Wrigley Estate. The culmination of his Lake Geneva work was the grandly scaled Younglands Manor, built in 1901 for Otto Young.

In 1875, Winnebago County officials selected Gay to design a new County Courthouse for Rockford, IL. The building contract was given to W.D. Richardson of Springfield. ("Give Us A Decent Court House"). Construction of the County Courthouse was started in 1876, but tragedy struck in May of 1877. During construction, the dome of the courthouse collapsed killing twelve workers and severely injuring many others. A court found both Henry Lord Gay and the Board of Supervisors guilty of negligence. It was a devastating blow to the young architect's career.

In 1881, Gay went to Italy to continue his study of architecture and sculpture. While overseas, he entered a design competition for a national monument to King Victor Emanuel of Rome. Of the 293 entries, Gay placed second and was presented the silver medal.

He returned to Chicago in 1882 on a high note and proceeded to create an impressive portfolio of accomplishments including schools, businesses and homes. He also added to the architectural community through publishing and his work with professional organizations. For nearly eight years he wrote and published *The Builders Budget*. He is also credited as a founding member of the Western Association of Architects, a group whose membership quickly outpaced the original American Institute of Architects. Gay was the Western Association's first Secretary. He later was instrumental in the merger of the two architectural groups, which occurred in 1889 (Gay, Henry Lord AIA Membership File, *Industrial Chicago* 610). By the time he was asked to design the chapel in Rockford, he had already completed a number of churches across the country. *Industrial Chicago: The Building Interests*, published in 1889, attributed 33 churches to Gay. His ecclesiastical designs could be found in the states of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas and Illinois (609).

Gay's Chicago work is noteworthy, but he also had a successful career on the west coast. He visited California in 1904 and, in the summer of 1906, moved his practice from Chicago to San Diego. He was quite prolific in the San Diego area, and a number of his designs are now San Diego landmarks. These include the Sanford Hotel, the Western Supply Building and the Golden Hill Grotto in Balboa Park. Gay was also a leader in San Diego's art community. He was the first president of the San Diego Art-Guild that formed in 1915. He stayed active with the group during the last years of his life. In 1919, Gay suffered a debilitating stroke that resulted in paralysis. He died in 1921 at his sister's home in Oceanside, CA.

A Diminutive Richardsonian Romanesque

The architectural style Gay chose for the Greenwood chapel design was Richardsonian Romanesque, a late Victorian Revival style made popular in the later half of the nineteenth century by architect, Henry Hobson Richardson (1838 – 1886). Romanesque Revival found its way into American architecture during the mid-1800s. Richardson developed a unique interpretation using a mix of styles including Spanish; Byzantine; and 11th century French, English and Italian Romanesque.

Richardson studied architecture in France and traveled in Europe during the 1860s. His design for The Brattle Square Church in Boston (1870-1872) is believed to be one of his earliest uses of Romanesque forms. He followed with Trinity Church in Boston's Copley Square (1872-1877). Richardson's Romanesque style was identified by his use of rusticated stone, strong picturesque massing, and round arched door and window openings. In examples like Trinity Church, Richardson used a tower as a focal point of the composition. The Trinity Church tower is square and draws inspiration from Italian campaniles. Later interpretations of his Romanesque style included rounded towers more like the Greenwood Chapel. His design for the Thomas Crane Memorial Library (1880 - 1882) in Quincy, MA included a rounded

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tower to house the stairwell. Other common features of Richardsonian Romanesque included ribbon windows and cross gable roofs. Most architectural historians agree that Richardson's Romanesque Revival Style reached its peak during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a period that lasted from roughly 1870 to 1900. During that time Richardson's Romanesque Revival became a popular choice for not only churches, but also civic, educational, and service buildings. Examples could be found all across the country.

A number of Romanesque Revival buildings were constructed in Rockford during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, but most were more traditional Victorian in style. The William Brown Building, located at 228-30 South Main Street, was completed in 1891. The National Register-listed Romanesque Revival is a commercial building constructed of red brick with a base of rusticated red sandstone. Significant architectural features include two corner turrets which once had conical roofs and windows grouped to form large arches. Another late nineteenth century building exhibiting Romanesque Revival influence is the old YMCA Building located at 104 N. Madison Street. The building was constructed in 1889. The eclectic design is generally considered a Queen Anne and includes a mix of materials such as brick, terracotta, and stone; a large corner turret; and bands of decorative friezes. It does, however, have a strong Romanesque influence reflected in the large Roman arched entrances and windows and the heavy, rusticated stone base. Along these same lines, is a much smaller and simple building located at 316 West State Street. The retail building was constructed c. 1885. It is built of red brick and significant architectural features include a castellated parapet and a corner turret. Like the YMCA building, the brickwork, massing, and details are more reflective of late Victorian than Richardsonian Romanesque.

Something closer to Richardson's Romanesque variation was Rockford's old post office and federal building located at 401 South Main. The Romanesque building was completed in 1885 and was constructed of red sandstone. The substantial building had two large recessed round-arched entrances and a multi-story polygonal tower. The windows of the building were not arched; however the transoms were trapezoid in shape, narrower at the top than the bottom, giving an overall rounded, arch-like appearance. The post office was razed in 1932 (Johnson 33).

Richardsonian Romanesque architectural examples in Rockford are few, but the Second Congregational Church located at 318 N. Church could be classified as a very good example. The church was designed by Chicago architect, D.S. Schureman, and dedicated in 1892. The imposing three-story building has a six-story crenellated square tower. A fire destroyed the Romanesque building in 1894, but it was rebuilt using the same basic plan and dedicated the following year. Another fire in 1979 destroyed the church sanctuary, the roof, and most of the education wing. The church is a local landmark, and care has been taken to preserve its historic integrity. Although there have been alterations, additions, and repairs over the years, the church still retains its original Richardsonian Romanesque characteristics including an Indiana Bedford Stone exterior, deep Roman arched entries, and arched ribbon windows.

The Greenwood Chapel was under construction the same year as the Second Congregational Church. Although the church and the chapel had different architects, Robert Tinker served on the building committee for each project. The chapel is a simple design compared to the Second Congregational church, yet it exemplifies Richardson's Romanesque style very well. As Richardson's Romanesque style evolved, his later works took on a broader form, and more elemental shape. Richardson's Thomas Crane Memorial Library, mentioned before, is a good example. Leland Roth, architectural historian, analyzes the Crane Library in his book *A Concise History of American Architecture*. He states, "the general form of the building is simplified to one comprehensive shape with a minimum of elements each of which articulates a particular interior function..." Gay's Greenwood Chapel design draws from these very Richardsonian characteristics. The rectangular nave, the semi-circular apse, and the rounded tower are all simple geometric shapes denoting distinct interior spaces with specific functions. The original chapel uses cylindrical shapes embedded in the walling, and cross gable rooflines. The rusticated limestone creates the feeling of weight and strength that was common in a Richardsonian Romanesque building, even in this diminutive chapel.

Romanesque Revival was a popular choice for churches during this time period, but its trendiness may not have been the only reason Gay chose the style. A castle-like appearance seemed particularly fitting for a chapel that would serve a dual purpose as a war memorial. In the spring of 1892, as construction on the chapel was nearing completion, the local newspaper described the architecture of the new chapel as a combination of Roman and Norman. The writer stated that the new chapel's tower was an exact reproduction of the old Roman War Towers. Although interior photos of the newly constructed chapel are not available, the newspaper article described interior finishes that were added at the time to honor Civil War Veterans. These included a 7 foot high wall of polished onyx engraved with the names of fallen soldiers, as well as stained glass windows embellished with insignias and badges of the Grand Army of the Republic, the fraternal organization comprised of Civil War veterans. It is assumed that the stone tablet walls were in the tower room, but this has not been verified. Use of the chapel as a soldier's memorial might have been short-lived as a new Memorial Hall was built in 1903 to serve as a tribute to soldiers of all conflicts. Whatever the motivation for the

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design, the Greenwood Chapel and Crematory stands as one of the few Richardsonian Romanesque buildings in Rockford; it is a small and simple yet powerful architectural statement.

Greenwood Cemetery Crematory Addition

History of Modern Cremation and the Crematory

The twentieth century saw a number of changes in cemetery planning and mortuary practices. The ideas of the rural cemetery movement started to give way to the perpetual-care, lawn cemetery design. Guided by practicality, these cemeteries encouraged tombstones laid horizontally and unbroken areas of lawn. This made groundskeeping easier. These cemeteries were often called memorial parks. In addition, cremation as an alternative to burial, had slowly been gaining favor since the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Cremation, defined in this case as the act of disposing of a corpse by fire or heat, is an ancient custom that has been practiced throughout the ages. Ornamental urns containing human ash and bone remains dating back as early as 3900 BCE have been found in Russia. Evidence of open pyre (fire) cremations has surfaced in nearly every culture with only a few exceptions. It was practiced in India, preferred by the ancient Greeks, and practiced by the Romans. Despite its widespread acceptance by many civilizations in very early times, it fell out of favor around the time Christianity began its rise. According to Stephen Prothero, author of *Purified By Fire: A History of Cremation in America*, early Christians based their burial preference on Hebrew tradition and were further motivated by the story of Jesus' entombment and resurrection. The burial tradition slowly began to replace cremation and according to Prothero, it had totally supplanted it in the Christian West by the 4th century CE (6).

Cremation would again gain favor in the Western world, but it would take nearly 1500 years. Modern interest in the process was piqued at the Vienna Exposition of 1873. The exposition featured a cremation retort (furnace) designed by Professor Brunetti, along with a glass box containing cremated remains.

In Britain, the movement gained legitimacy, in part, due to the writings of Sir Henry Thompson, surgeon to Queen Victoria. Mr. Thompson published the book, *The Treatment of the Body After Death*, in 1874. The book became a core text for the American cremation movement. The same year the book was published, the first cremation society in the US was formed in New York (Prothero 15).

The topic of cremation was frequently addressed in the local Rockford media. The February 28th, 1874 issue of the *Rockford Register* reviewed a paper written by Sir Henry Thompson entitled "Disposal of the Dead." Local publications covered other cremation-related events that year, too. For instance, one article reported a pro-cremation meeting held in New York. There were also reports on the cremation movement in Germany and Italy. Generally the local articles were informative, but tended to show a negative bias. There were even some comedic attempts here and there, such as the quote found in the April 25th, 1874 issue of the *Rockford Journal*. "Oh bother cremation... we have to earn our living and we don't want to be compelled to urn our dead."

Julius LeMoyne built the first crematory in the United States. LeMoyne was a physician who lived in Washington, Pennsylvania. He was known to be a political activist as well as a community leader. LeMoyne suffered from arthritis and diabetes and eventually gave up his private practice. At that time, he turned his attentions to medical research. He became particularly interested in cremation as an alternative to burial. LeMoyne theorized the community water sources were becoming contaminated by ground water running through graveyards. To remedy this situation, LeMoyne advocated building a crematory in his hometown. When others were not convinced of the need, LeMoyne took it upon himself to construct the building on his own property. John Dye was the actual contractor for the simple structure and LeMoyne designed the unique retort. LeMoyne's furnace was constructed so that the flame of the oven would not actually touch the body (Sickles).

The building measured 30' by 20' and was constructed of brick. It had a simple reception room and a furnace room. There was one retort. It is said that LeMoyne built the crematory for his own cremation; however, the small crematorium became the location for one of the first public and highly publicized cremations in America, that of Baron DePalm.

Mr. DePalm was an Australian born aristocrat who came to America nearly penniless. Henry Steel Olcott, a leader of cremation reform and one of the co-founders of the Theosophical Society, befriended him. The Baron became a member of the Theosophical Society. He died on May 20th, 1876 and left instructions for his body to be cremated. Olcott was the executor of his Will and had the body embalmed until he could find a suitable crematory. Olcott became aware of the crematory LeMoyne built through an article on the subject, and wrote to him asking if DePalm's body might be cremated there. It took awhile to work out the details, but on December 6th, 1876 the cremation took place.

People from across the nation attended the cremation. Journalists were represented, as was the general public. It was the topic of articles and editorials across the nation. Usually the reviews were negative, but it held the public's curiosity, none-the-less.

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Dr. LeMoyné died in 1879 and he was cremated at the facility he built in Washington, PA. His was the third cremation to take place. The crematory remained essentially private and cremations continued to take place there until 1901; however, many requests to use the facility were turned down. In total, forty-two cremations were performed in the LeMoyné crematory (Developmental History of Pennsylvania Cemeteries).

By the 1880s, the cremation movement was gaining converts. The New York Cremation Society, who had disbanded for a time, was reinstated. Scientific research gave new talking points for cremation advocates. Dr. Robert Koch, a researcher studying bacteria and tuberculosis, gave credence to the disease germ theory and cremation advocates used this emerging science to stress the dangers of burying bodies, especially those who had died from contagious diseases. They warned that burying bodies into the ground, where their decomposition might contaminate soil and water supplies, was a community health threat.

Pennsylvania continued to be the incubator for the cremation movement. In 1884, the first public US crematory was completed in Lancaster, PA. The crematorium was established by surgeon, Miles Davis, and was designed by architect, Frederick Philip Dinkelberg (1858 – 1935). Dinkelberg later worked with Daniel Burnham on the Chicago World's Fair and the Flatiron Building. The Lancaster Crematory was constructed of red brick and designed in a simple Gothic Revival style. There was one large room and two retorts.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, cremation continued to be a topic of much debate. According to Stephen Prothero, two types of cremation groups, or societies, began to emerge. The first type of group had a reform mission; their motivation was to educate the public on the advantages of cremation and win followers. The second type of group also touted the advantages of cremation; however, they were more intent on raising funds to build new crematoriums. In most cities, where there was an interest in cremation, a society was formed to sell stock and/or "incineration certificates." Proceeds would then be used to erect a crematory. Often these groups were not successful in their mission, but occasionally they were. Despite the attention, cremation was still just a novel idea in the U.S. In 1884, the year the first public crematory was built in Lancaster, PA, there were only 16 cremations performed in the entire country. However by 1891 that number had grown to 471. By that time, there were crematories in New York, Buffalo, St. Louis, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, Detroit, Pittsburgh and Baltimore.

Some of the earliest crematoriums were very simple, but there was a growing trend to give this new building type an identity. Pro-cremationists realized that the public was more comfortable with a refined setting buffered, at least in a design sense, from the process that took place within. The humble form of the earliest crematoriums soon gave way to more elaborate structures. A variety of architectural styles were utilized for these earlier crematoriums, with Roman and Greek revival being the most prominent. Many of the early crematoriums consisted of two or three simple spaces. These included a place to conduct a funeral service, a reception area, and the retort room. Often the retorts were located in the crematory basement, and it was common to have a trap door so that the casket and body could be lowered to the retort room after the service (The Modern Cemetery).

In 1890, a new crematory was opened in Troy, New York. The Gardner Earl Chapel and Crematory was located in the Oakwood Cemetery and was built by William and Hannah Earl as a memorial for their son, Gardner Earl. Gardner, who died at the age of thirty-seven, was a cremation advocate converted after traveling in Europe. The architectural firm of Fuller and Wheeler designed the Richardsonian Romanesque chapel and crematory. Earl Gardner was one of the most architecturally distinguished crematoriums built up to this time with Tiffany-designed stained glass windows and opulent rich finishes. Although a number of other crematoriums were grand in their design, the Earl Gardner was certainly one of the most extravagant (Shaver 13).

Three periodicals helped with the pro-cremation message. These were the *Columbarium* out of Philadelphia, The *Um* published in New York, and the *Modern Crematist* published in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. In addition, a number of books, brochures, and pamphlets were published on the topic. In the year 1895, The *Um* highlighted ten of the country's early crematoriums, giving attention not only to the option of cremation but also to the new building type associated with cremation, the crematory.

Locally, the idea of cremation had begun to take hold. However, Rockfordians wishing to uphold a loved one's desire to be cremated had to have the body delivered to another town. The closest crematory at the time was in Chicago. Other crematory locations in the mid-west included St. Louis, Des Moines, and Davenport. The forward-thinking businessmen who served on the board of The Rockford Cemetery Association considered adding to the cemetery's services by constructing a new crematorium. In the spring of 1921, they began an inquiry process to find someone who could help them with their project.

Frank B. Gibson (unknown- 1930): Architect for the Addition

Frank B. Gibson is the architect of record for the chapel's crematory addition. His career was diverse but a majority of his work was dedicated to mortuary architecture and he specialized in cremation facilities. Gibson was born in

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Indianapolis, Indiana and moved to San Francisco when he was young. It is unknown when Gibson got his start in the mortuary business, but according to Stephen Prothero, Gibson attended the De Palm cremation in 1876. In the years that followed he worked for the Cypress Lawn Crematory and later for the Odd Fellows Crematory, both in the San Francisco area (124).

By his own admission, Gibson spent a good part of his career advocating for cremation. Various sources acknowledge Gibson's contributions to not only mortuary architecture and crematory design, but also the overall practice and process of cremation. In the earliest days of cremation practice in the US, it was customary to remove the corpse from the casket before cremation. This proved to be very distressful for the family and loved ones who witnessed. In 1897, while working at the Odd Fellows Crematorium in San Francisco, Gibson tried a new method of inserting the entire casket into the retort, instead of taking the body out. The procedure slowly became common practice for cremations. Stephen Prothero states that Gibson started another cremation practice while working at the Denver Crematory, this time quite by accident. Gibson, who was not informed regarding a Mason cremation ceremony scheduled to take place, had no other choice than to perform the cremation starting with a "cold" retort. It was customary at that time to heat the retorts to very high temperatures before inserting the casket and body. To Gibson's surprise, starting with a cold furnace reduced the amount of smoke produced, and Gibson continued to use a cold retort from that day forward (Prothero 126).

Gibson was the Secretary of the San Francisco Cremation Company in 1898, when a cremation advocate from Portland, Oregon, B. P. Cardwell, came to visit the Odd Fellows Crematorium. Cardwell was impressed with what he saw in San Francisco and went back to his hometown to report his findings to the press and to the people. Two years later a group waged a campaign to build a new crematory in Portland. Gibson kicked off the campaign with a lecture at the Portland Unitarian chapel in February of 1900. He stayed in the city and was named a director of the crematorium stockholder's board. The board was formed to raise money for the proposed crematorium, primarily by selling stock and "incineration certificates." When the crematorium was built, Mr. Gibson supervised the erection of the facility. Architect Ralph Miller designed the plant. The crematorium was finished in 1902.

Gibson went on to form the Western Crematory Construction Company of Portland. One of Gibson's early crematory commissions, in which he was actual designer, was the Riverside Cemetery Crematorium in Denver, Colorado in 1904. The Denver Post stated that at the time it was built, it was the only crematory located between St. Louis and San Francisco. The original Riverside Crematory had two oil-fired retorts. Gibson also designed the chapel and a greenhouse wing. The same year, Gibson was awarded the contract for construction of a new crematorium and columbarium in Mt. Pleasant Cemetery on Queen Anne Hill in Seattle, WA.

Between 1910 and 1911, Mr. Gibson joined forces with architect Bernard J.S. Cahill (1866-1944). Cahill's specialty was mausoleum design and mortuary architecture. One example of his work is a beautiful neoclassical columbarium, built in 1898 as part of the Odd Fellows Cemetery. The columbarium still stands and is a designated San Francisco landmark. Cahill was also an early advocate of city planning, and designed the San Francisco Civic Center with fellow architects George Wright and George Rushforth. The architectural firm of Gibson & Cahill designed a number of Portland, OR buildings including the Multnomah Hotel, built in 1911 and now listed in the National Register of Historic Places (The AIA Historical Directory of American Architects "Cahill"). The team designed buildings in Portland, Spokane, and Seattle.

In 1915, Gibson added another west coast crematory to his list of accomplishments. This was the year the Mount Scott Park Cemetery crematorium was completed. The building cost nearly \$50,000 and was touted as one of the finest and most modern in the country. It was constructed of blue-gray granite in a Gothic Revival style. Historic newspapers described the clean-look of the white glazed tile in the retort area and the beautiful art glass windows incorporated into the columbarium chamber. By this time, Gibson had a growing list of completed crematoriums across the country including Mt. Olive Cemetery in San Francisco, California and the Bonnie Watson Undertaking in Seattle, Washington (Obituary for Frank B. Gibson).

In the spring of 1921, the Rockford Association Trustees began the process of searching for an architect to build the new crematorium. Letters in the cemetery archives show that the Trustees queried a number of architects, engineers, and even other cemetery owners regarding the project. Frank B. Gibson was one of the people the Board contacted. During the inquiry phase, Gibson was based in St. Louis, Missouri finishing a project for the Valhalla Mausoleum Company. He was working for the American Mortuary Company at the time, but told the cemetery directors to contact him personally, as the company was in the midst of reorganization. The Board received a written recommendation from D. W. Newcomer's Sons Undertakers in Kansas City. They relayed that Gibson had designed a crematory and columbarium for them for which they were very satisfied. Correspondence during this time highlights Gibson's excellent salesmanship. He repeatedly sent notes to the Board urging them to make a decision so that new offers did not delay starting their project.

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Gibson was a man in demand. He had just finished adding two new oil-fired retorts to the Denver Crematory and told the Board he had projects that year in Texas and California. Gibson's persistence paid off as he was selected to do the chapel remodel and the crematory addition. His proposal included the installation of two oil-burning retorts. One was installed and is still in operation today; however, it has now been converted to gas.

Gibson was known more for his work with crematories, but the chapel remodel and the reception room, receiving vault, and office addition added great beauty to the chapel structure. Gibson consulted with the Trustees in regards to building materials and the overall layout of the addition. By all accounts, Gibson was a practical architect and offered options to the trustees that he felt would honor the integrity and design of the original chapel, yet save money for the Association. One of those suggestions was to build the addition in a stucco finish. Gibson suggested covering this section of the building with vines and landscaping so that the differing construction material would not be as noticeable. Gibson also insisted that the Trustees put the receiving vaults above ground.

Construction commenced in the summer of 1921, and a compromise was reached in the case of the construction material for the addition. Gibson used concrete block, which looked like rough-cut limestone for the majority of the building. For the entrances, however, Gibson used limestone and made them prominent in scale. In addition, they were embellished with stone details very similar to the original chapel.

The Trustees took Gibson's advice for the receiving vault area, and did not build it underground. Instead the interior finishes of the vault area are some of the most ornate in the building. The faces of the vaults are covered in marble. The floor and crown molding is tile. A beautiful glass canopy roof lights the space.

The addition and remodel were finished in the fall and the first cremation took place on October 20th, 1921. Frank B. Gibson oversaw the event. Harry B. Burpee made the arrangements for the ceremony, and a Chicago undertaker brought the body to the crematory.

When the crematory was officially opened, the Trustees also announced a new name for the Rockford Cemetery, often called West Side. The cemetery was given the name Greenwood. Tasteful advertisements were taken out in local publications touting the remodeled chapel, receiving vaults, and new crematory. When asked by the local media about the advisability of adding a new crematory, one of the Directors responded, "the growing demand for cremation has caused the cemetery association to arrange for installation of a modern crematory in connection with the cemetery chapel. It will be the most attractive in all its appointments and will remove all the unpleasant apprehension regarding cremation that is felt by many who have not visited..." ("Greenwood is the New Name"). The Association continued to run large advertisements in the local papers for the next couple of years. The local newspapers also printed articles about the process and reported the growing acceptance of cremation.

Gibson, the Greenwood Crematory architect, continued his work in mortuary architecture and crematory design. He died in 1930 and was cremated at the Hollywood Crematory, one of his commissions. At the time he died he owned the Westwood Memorial Park in Los Angeles, California and bequeathed it to his daughter, La Dessa Gibson Schaffnit, who continued to own and operate the facility after her father's death (Wanamaker 40).

The Years Following Construction 1921 - 1962

Gibson was also known for his skills in landscaping and made proposed changes to the cemetery plats when he designed the crematory addition. The Trustees adopted some of his ideas for laying out new roadways. One suggestion, carried out in September of 1921, was the construction of a new entrance on the south end of the cemetery off Auburn Street. The entrance provided a road from Auburn that led directly to the chapel. Gibson called the roadway "Avenue of Pines," and the Association lined the lane with coniferous trees. New iron gates were installed at this new main entrance a few years later.

Gibson planned for urn storage as part of the receiving vault area, where he included a number of glass front cases for this purpose. However, the storage space eventually became inadequate. By the 1940s, board minutes document a reoccurring discussion regarding the need for a new columbarium. The Greenwood superintendent, Sidney Mariner, championed the idea. Many cemeteries across the country built stand-alone columbaria that provided the community with a space for urn storage. Mariner was keenly aware of such a demand in Rockford and for that matter, the surrounding communities served by the Greenwood crematory.

In making the case for a new structure in the Greenwood Cemetery, Mariner began reporting on the number of cremations performed at Greenwood. According to Mr. Mariner a total of 557 cremations were performed from the time the crematory opened in 1921 until 1944. Although a new columbarium was a top priority for the superintendent, the Trustees voted to delay any new construction until after the war ended. At some point, the idea of building a separate structure to house urns was abandoned. Instead, the Board elected to remodel the tower room for this purpose.

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory

Winnebago IL

Name of Property

County and State

Over the years, growing acceptance of cremation was reflected in the number performed at Greenwood. A survey of the cemetery records indicates that there were 18 cremations in 1930, 44 in 1940, 104 in 1950, and 179 in 1960. The numbers continued to grow.

Last year, 2011, Greenwood performed 317 cremations. Unlike the earlier years when Greenwood was the only crematory in town, today the community can choose from five locally operated crematoriums. Rockford numbers echo national trends that indicate the growing acceptance and preference of cremation. The Cremation Association of North America provides statistics regarding the percentage of the deaths in the U.S. that are cremated. In 1960, the cremation rate was less than 4%. By 2010, that number had risen to nearly 41%, and is expected to continue to grow.

Conclusion

The Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory is an important historic asset to the Rockford, IL community. The building represents a number of "firsts" in local funerary events. It is located in Rockford's first cemetery. It was the first non-denominational chapel to be built in association with a local cemetery, offering an indoor alternative to graveside services. The crematory, added in 1921, was the first building of its kind in Rockford. That same year it was the location of the first cremation in the city. Although cremation had gained some acceptance by this time, it was still a practice that stirred considerable debate.

Nationally recognized architect, Henry Lord Gay, designed the chapel. Gay, who experienced a tragic blow early in his architectural career here in Rockford, went on to salvage his reputation, excel in his profession, and also to build again in the City. Over his lifetime, Gay's list of accomplishments included the funeral catafalque for President Lincoln while he lay-in-state in Chicago, numerous prestigious homes in the Lake Geneva area, and the Balboa Park Golden Hill Grotto in San Diego. These were but a few of his notable commissions.

Cremationist and architect, Frank B. Gibson designed the crematory addition. Gibson witnessed the public cremation of Baron DePalm. He later worked as a Supervisor in several crematories. Gibson became an outspoken advocate of cremation and was often asked to speak and raise funds for new crematories. He had a successful architectural career but was best known as the designer of a number of the country's early crematories. In addition, he is credited for some of the cremation procedures used today. Gibson's many talents included architecture, landscape design, and mechanical engineering. Although little information is available regarding Gibson's work on retort design, the Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory is equipped with an original retort that bears his name.

The building is a beautiful local example of a diminutive Richardsonian Romanesque design. The Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places. From the time the picturesque chapel was built in 1891, to well into the twentieth century, the chapel has played an important role in Rockford's architectural and social history.

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
Name of Property

Winnebago IL
County and State

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Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory

Name of Property

Winnebago IL

County and State

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Name of Property

Winnebago IL
County and State

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Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
Name of Property

Winnebago IL
County and State

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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 # _____
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: The Greenwood Cemetery files

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than 1 acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)
less than 1 acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 328717 4684019
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
Name of Property

Winnebago IL
County and State

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Legal Description of cemetery: EXC TR FROM SW COR OF CEMETERY TO CITY BY 82-05-0445 EXC E 90 FT W 120 FT S 50 FT N 80 FT EXC E 75 FT W 332 FT S 100 FT N 130 FT ALL BEG INSECTN C/L N MAIN ST & AUBURN ST TH E 1227 FT TH N 1576 FT TH E 537 FT TH N 264 FT TH E 423.39 FT TH S 264 FT TH E 66 FT TH N 1072.5 FT TH W 1359 FT TH SWLY ALG C/L N MAIN ST TO POB NW1/4 SEC 13 & NE1/4 SEC SEC: 14 TWP: 44 RANGE: 1

*The Greenwood Chapel and Crematory is reached entering the cemetery's main entrance off of Auburn Street. The chapel is in the center of the first circular plot. The building is separated from the rest of the cemetery by roadway.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The description includes the Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory and the natural property surrounding it, separated by roadway.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Pam Hein

organization Prepared for The Greenwood Cemetery Association date 1-24-2012

street & number 1722 Harlem Blvd. telephone 815-979-3241

city or town Rockford state IL zip code 61103

e-mail pamhein@sbcglobal.net

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Map of Cemetery** with Chapel/Crematory location indicated
- **Appendix** on Continuation Sheets
- **Photo Log**

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
Name of Property

Winnebago IL
County and State

Photograph Log Page

Name of Property: Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
City: Rockford
County: Winnebago
State: IL
Photographer: Pam Hein, unless otherwise indicated
Date of Photographs: March 14, 2012, unless otherwise indicated
Location of Original Digital Files: 1722 Harlem Blvd. Rockford, IL, unless otherwise indicated
Number of Photographs: 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0001
Entrance; Southwest corner; Camera facing northeast
1 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0002
South elevation; Camera facing north
2 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0003
East elevation; Camera facing west
3 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0004
North elevation; camera facing southwest
4 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0005
West elevation; Camera facing east
5 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0006
Interior of chapel; Camera facing south
6 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0007
Interior Apse, Camera facing north
7 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0008
Service entrance; Camera facing south
8 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0009
Original Gibson retort; Camera facing east
9 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0010
Photographer: Nels Akerlund
Date of Photograph: October 25, 2010
Location of original digital file: 1022 Auburn Street, Rockford IL
Receiving Vault area, Camera facing east
10 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0011
Office area; Camera facing north
11 of 15

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
Name of Property

Winnebago IL
County and State

Photograph Log Page continued

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0012

Stained glass in Columbarium showing design and also current condition; Camera facing southeast
12 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0013

Rose window in chapel; Camera facing south
13 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0014

Second retort addition; Camera facing west
14 of 15

IL_Winnebago County_Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_0015

Stairs to chapel basement; Camera facing northwest
15 of 15

Property Owner:

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

name Greenwood Cemetery Association
street & number 1022 Auburn St. telephone 815-962-7522
city or town Rockford, IL state IL zip code 61103

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine 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 (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including 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 Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet
Appendix**

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
Name of Property Winnebago County, IL
County and State N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

IL_WinnebagoCounty_GreenwoodCemeteryChapelandCrematory_Appendix_0001
Floor Plan with proposed remodel courtesy of Hagney Architects-project architect

IL_WinnebagoCounty_GreenwoodCemeteryChapelandCrematory_Appendix_0002
Site Plan of Greenwood Cemetery with location of chapel

IL_WinnebagoCounty_GreenwoodCemeteryChapelandCrematory_Appendix_0003
Historic photo of chapel wall treatment c. 1921
From: Rules and Regulations Greenwood Cemetery published January 1, 1922

IL_WinnebagoCounty_GreenwoodCemeteryChapelandCrematory_Appendix_0004
Historic Photo of Cemetery Groundskeepers; date unknown

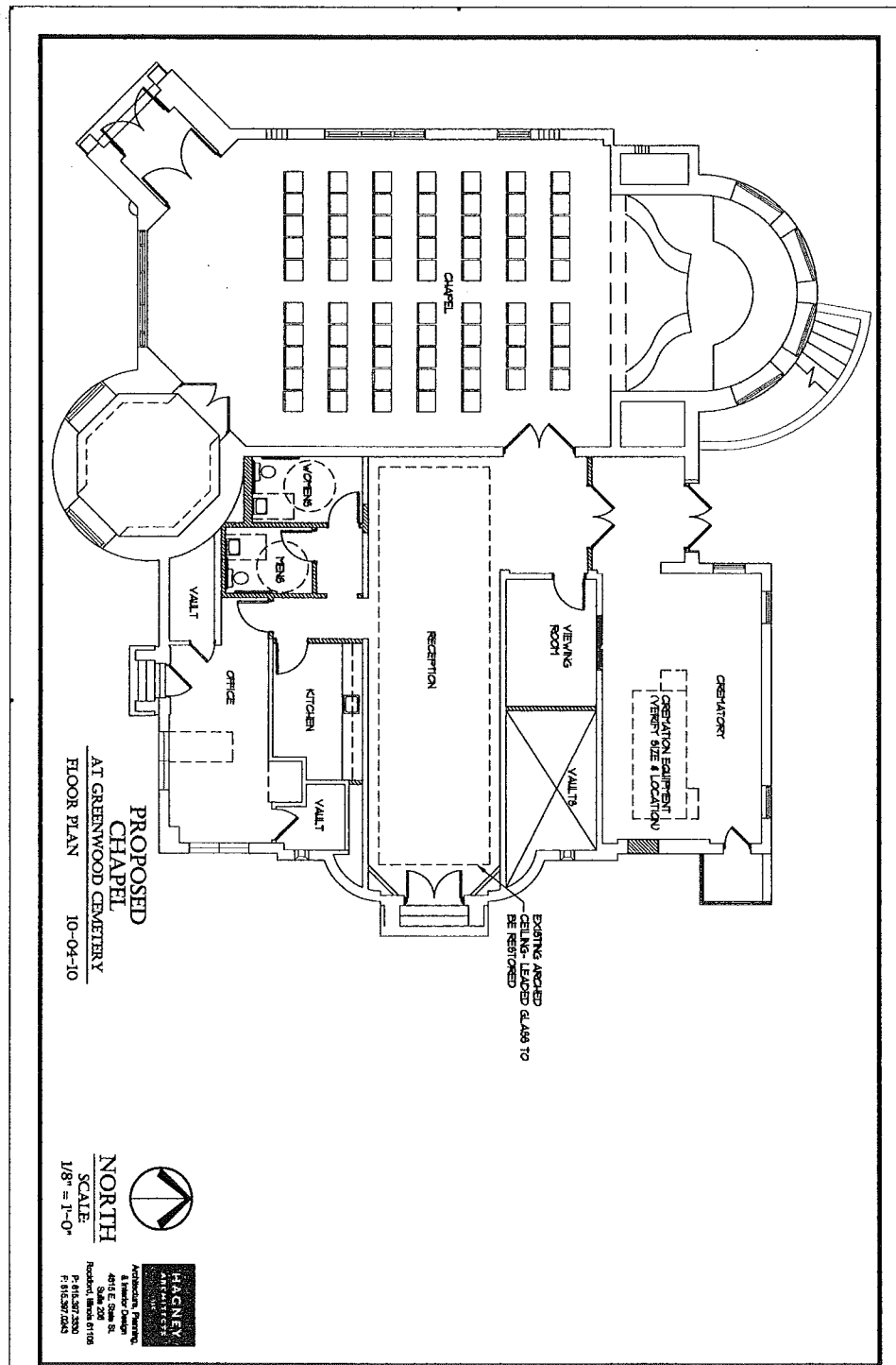
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory
Name of Property
Winnebago County, IL
County and State
N/A
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Appendix

IL Winnebago County Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and Crematory_Appendix_0001
Floor Plan with proposed remodel courtesy of Hagney Architects



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and
Crematory

Name of Property

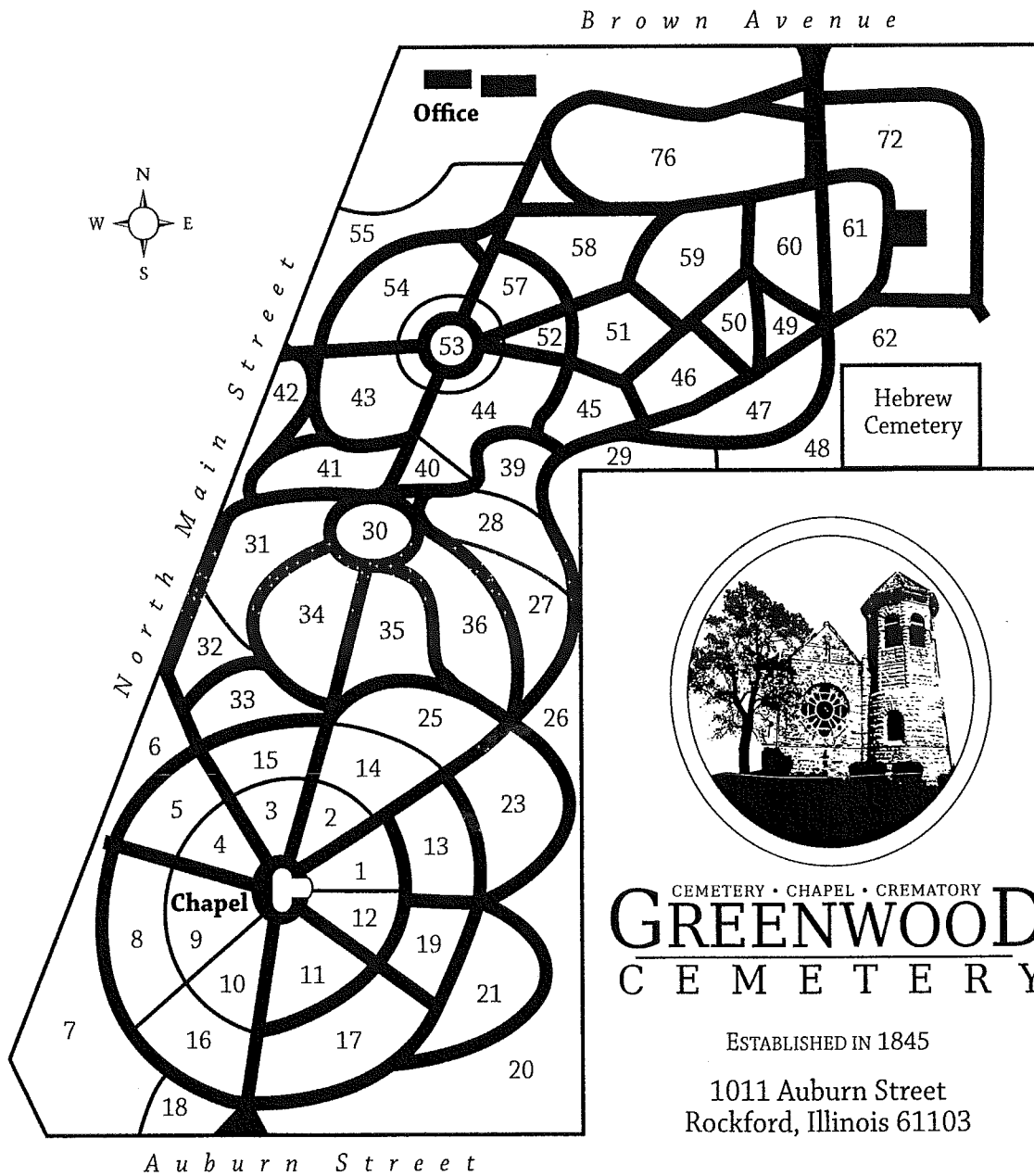
Winnebago County, IL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Appendix
IL_WinnebagoCounty_GreenwoodCemeteryChapelandCrematory_Appendix_0002
Site Map



C E M E T E R Y • C H A P E L • C R E M A T O R Y
GREENWOOD
C E M E T E R Y

ESTABLISHED IN 1845

1011 Auburn Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and
Crematory

Name of Property

Winnebago County, IL

County and State

N/A

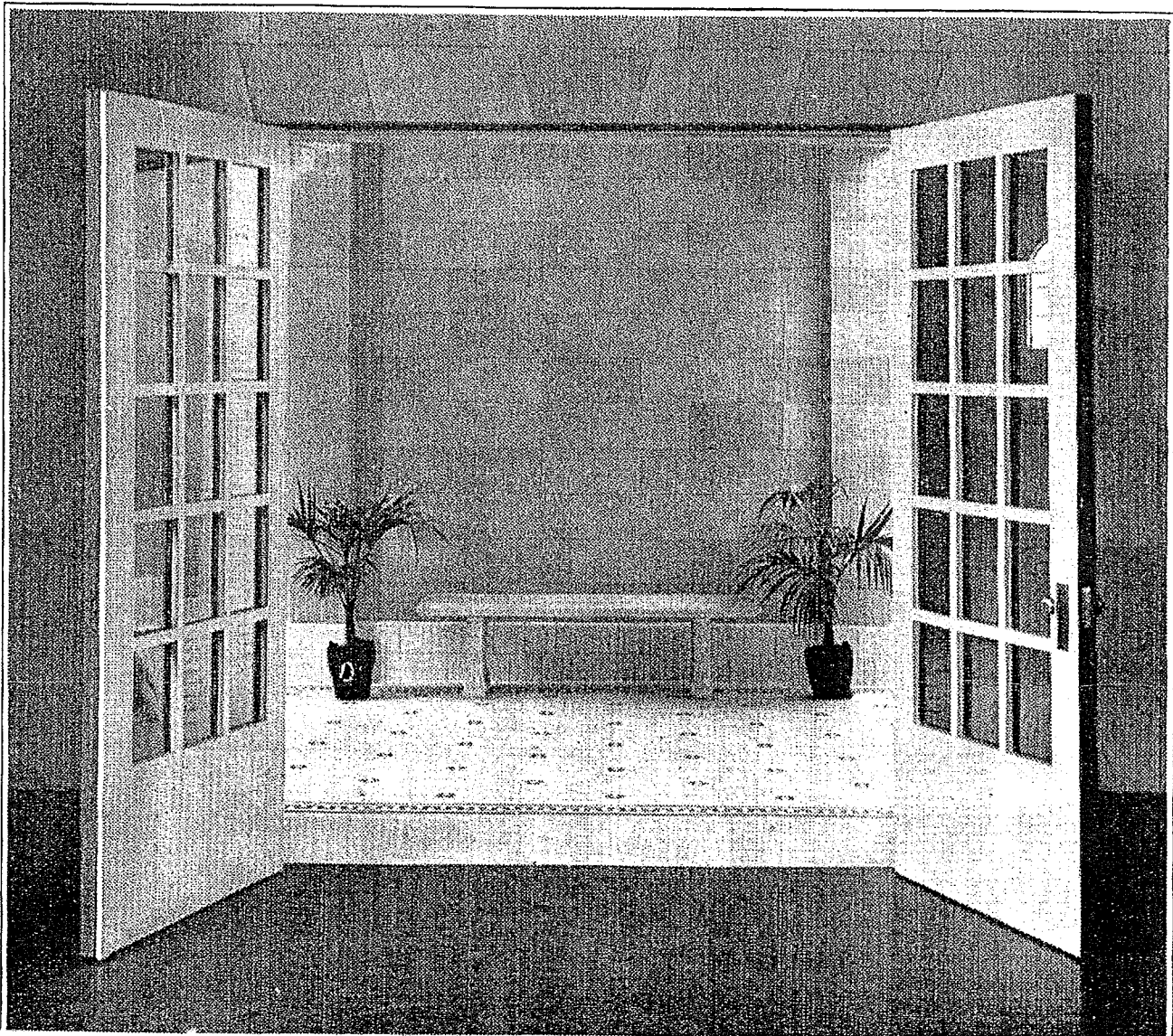
Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Appendix

IL_WinnebagoCounty_GreenwoodCemeteryChapelandCrematory_Appendix_0003

Historic photo of chapel wall treatment c. 1921

From: Rules and Regulations Greenwood Cemetery published January 1, 1922



**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Greenwood Cemetery Chapel and
Crematory

Name of Property

Winnebago County, IL

County and State

N/A

Name of multiple listing (if applicable)

Appendix

IL_WinnebagoCounty_GreenwoodCemeteryChapelandCrematory_Appendix_0004

Historic Photo of Greenwood Groundskeepers- date unknown

