

MEMORANDUM

TO: Denise Cameron
FROM: Jeanne Lukenda, Horace Aikman
DATE: January 12, 2014
RE: Evergreen Cemetery, Columbarium Narrative

The expansion of burial capacity at Evergreen Cemetery will include new grave plots for casketed remains and new columbarium walls for cremated remains. The addition of columbarium walls to Evergreen Cemetery serves the increasing demand for cremation in Maine. A relatively recent burial practice, cremation is increasing in popularity in the United State and in Maine in particular. Over 50% of burials in Maine are with cremated remains.

In order to serve this relatively new burial need, Evergreen Cemetery will build new columbarium walls. When Evergreen Cemetery was being built up during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, cremation of bodies was not common. As a result, there are no historic precedents for columbarium walls within the existing inventory of historic stone monuments and structures within the historic cemetery.

Columbarium walls within Evergreen Cemetery represent a contemporary design solution to a new burial practices. The new columbarium walls of Evergreen Cemetery will provide approximately 300 new niches. The columbarium walls will be placed in the rear center of the existing cul-de-sac island and aligned to face towards the approach road. The walls will be approximately 6 feet tall. Setting on top of a low rise in the island of the cul-de-sac, the overall height of the new columbarium monument will be approximately 8 feet, smaller in height than the large cemetery monuments and structures in this area of the cemetery, including the Wilde Memorial Chapel, the Baxter Monument and the Chisholm Mausoleum.

The exposed, exterior surfaces of the columbarium walls will be smooth, sand-blasted gray New England granite, similar in color and texture to the majority of the historic granite monuments in the Cemetery.

Each columbarium niches will measure 12-inches tall and wide and 16-inches deep. The walls will be double sided and measure approximately 3 feet wide. The interior, hidden-from-view niche boxes will be fabricated from aluminum. The doors to each niche will be powder-coated and protected against moisture. Niche covers will be fitted against individual niches and will be fabricated from flat panels of the same New England gray granite as the base, capstone and end wall panels. The granite base stones of each columbarium wall will be 6-inches high and the cap will be 4-inches thick. Granite, half-column will be placed at the ends of each wall, the sole embellishment to the simple, contemporary lines of the granite columbarium monument. The size, scale and materials of the new columbarium monuments will be in keeping with the historic character of the cemetery.

The columbarium plaza will be accessible by a central walkway with a low set of granite steps. Universal access is provided by an adjacent, accessible walkway with grades less than 5 percent. Walkways will be paved in non-slip concrete, broom finished and exposed aggregate to differentiate the different areas of the pavement.

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In keeping with the name of Evergreen Cemetery, a screen buffer of evergreen Spruce and Fir trees will be planted between the cemetery expansion area and Stevens Avenue. Evergreen trees have been selected for hardiness and drought resistance and will include Concolor Fir, Serbian Spruce, Norway Spruce and White Spruce. These trees branch to the ground and when grown to maturity will establish a dense back drop to a staggered row of white flowering crabapples. Crabapple varieties will include Donald Wyman, Snowdrift, Jackii and Harvest Gold. The evergreen screen will grow into a dense, even and full backdrop to the flower and fruit display of the flowering crabapples.

The evergreens will be planted in a meandering, staggered row of trees on a relatively close on center spacing, anticipating that the trees will provide near term, full screening effect. As the trees grow into one another, intermediate trees can be transplanted to other locations in the Cemetery. Flowering and evergreen trees will be grouped by species so that their aggregate effect will be visually cohesive and strong.

Within the cemetery expansion area, trees will be deciduous shade trees, trees that grow taller than 60 feet and provide extensive shade. These tree species will include Sugar Maples, White Ash, White Oak, Red Oak and American Linden. These trees will provide deep, lush green shade from late spring through the fall leaf drop. Each tree is native to New England and can be found within the existing limits of the cemetery. The trees directly behind the columbarium plaza will be Zelkovas, a lower growing shade tree adapted to Portland and providing a deep wine colored fall foliage and a vase shape.