

THE
COLUMBARIUM
RESTORATION PROJECT
Keeping History Alive

The Journey

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2004, Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery's mission is to "promote the historical significance, enhance the beauty, and preserve the artistic heritage of Bohemian National Cemetery".

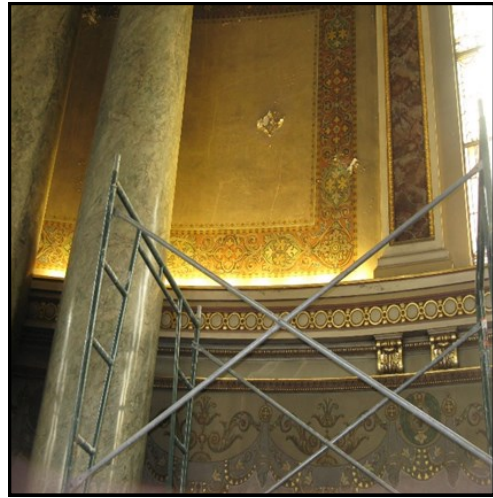
After a series of smaller and successful preservation projects at the cemetery, Friends of BNC turned its attention to the long-term task of restoring BNC's historic columbarium building which has been in continuous use for over 100 years. First came rebuilding and repairing areas of the building's complex roof.



Friends then began raising money to restore the interior of the building's Ceremony Hall. Funded in part by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, this work focused on large sections of ornate wall paintings done by John Anton Mallin, a well-known artist and church decorator.



views of restoration work on the decorative wall painting in the Ceremony Hall

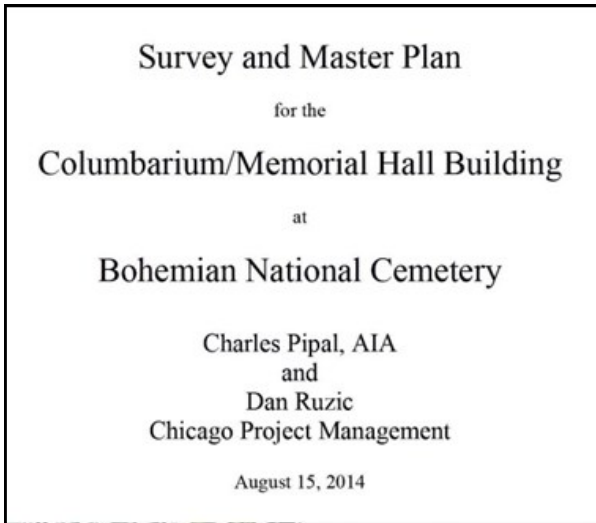


During the work, it became apparent that water infiltration was an on-going problem, likely getting into the building through both the roof and the walls. Restoration of the decorative painting was suspended and preservation professionals were hired to assess the building exterior's overall condition and to identify likely water entry points.



Advice from Experts Defining Next Steps

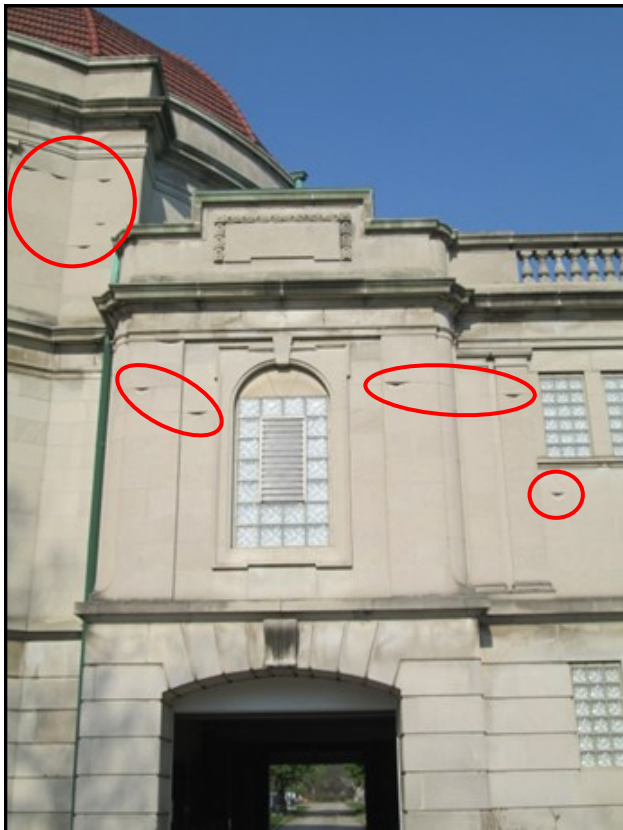
Friends of BNC secured the services of historic preservation architect Charles Pipal, AIA to conduct an extensive survey of the building's exterior. Assisted by professional masonry and roofing experts, a detailed survey and master plan was submitted to Friends in 2014.



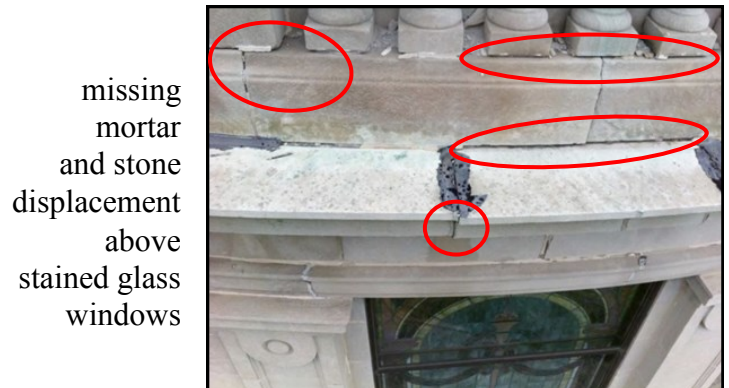
“Typically, water infiltration is the cause of most of the problems seen in historic building fabric and this building is no exception. When conducting a condition survey, exterior telltale signs of spalling stone, stone displacement, stone cracking, accelerated mechanical weathering, and foundation cracking are all indicative of potential water problems. In addition, interior finish conditions like efflorescence (or chalking), peeling paint, plaster discoloration or even ceiling or wall failure can all be signs of water infiltration. Many of those things were found in the Columbarium/Memorial Hall Building.”

“The most essential task is to first secure the building envelope.”

spalling of the limestone wall cladding



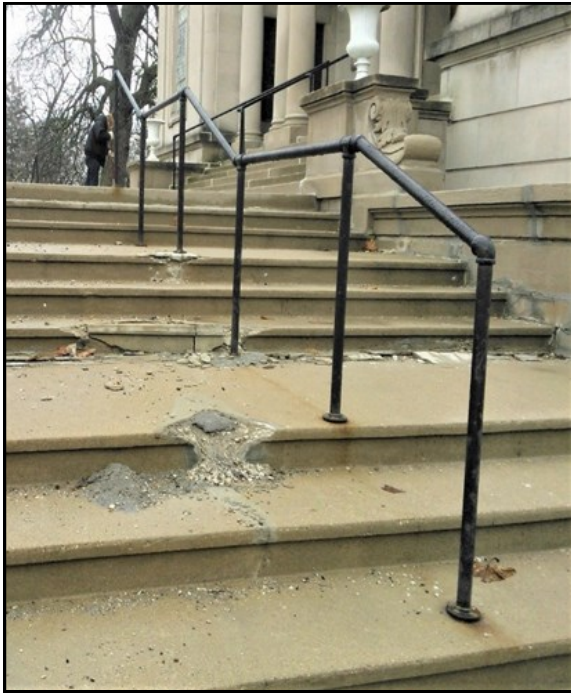
damaged tile on dome roof



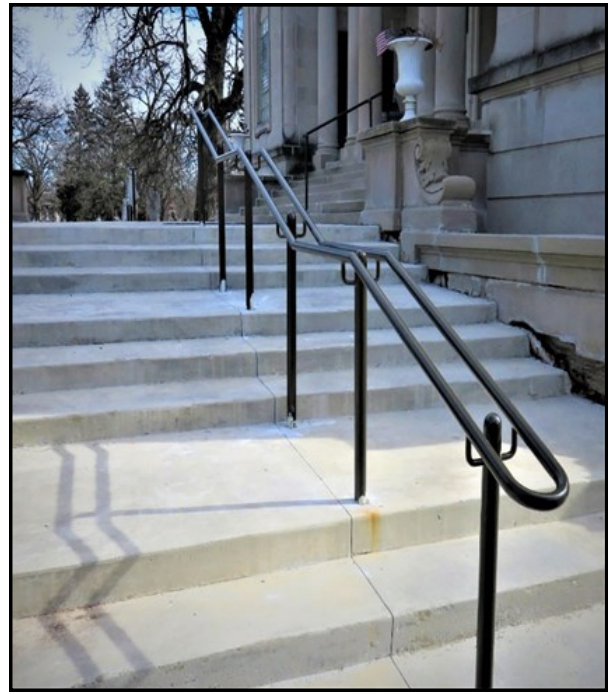
missing mortar and stone displacement above stained glass windows

In addition to water infiltration, the report noted the deteriorated condition of the terrace and stairs at the columbarium building's main entrance. A top priority because of safety concerns, Friends raised money to replace them, and the old handrails as well.

before



after



While the low limestone walls abutting the terrace and stairs are unsightly and need to be rebuilt, their condition presents no danger and does not compromise the building's integrity. As such, Friends will follow the recommendation of building preservation experts and not work on this area until other critical repairs are completed in order to secure the building against water infiltration.



Repairs to the Dome Roof

Weatherproofing began at the top of the building. More than \$114,000 was raised to repair the dome roof and replace its deteriorating copper gutter system.

Several roofing contractors familiar with historic buildings were contacted and Friends of BNC submitted a recommendation to the Bohemian National Cemetery Association's Board of Directors that Knickerbocker Roofing Co. be selected to do the work. During the summer of 2017, Knickerbocker Roofing initiated and completed repairs to the dome including replacement of the copper gutter system surrounding the dome and resurfacing and repairs to the cupola at the top of the dome.



cupola before



cupola after



gutter system, membrane

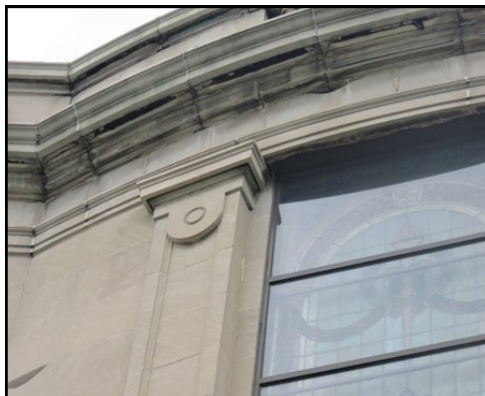
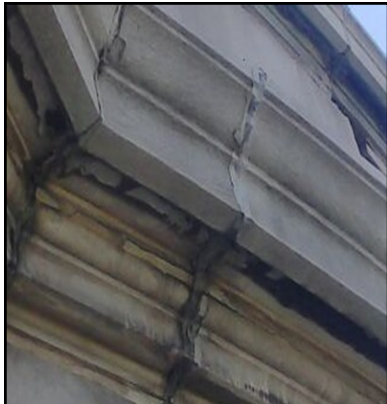
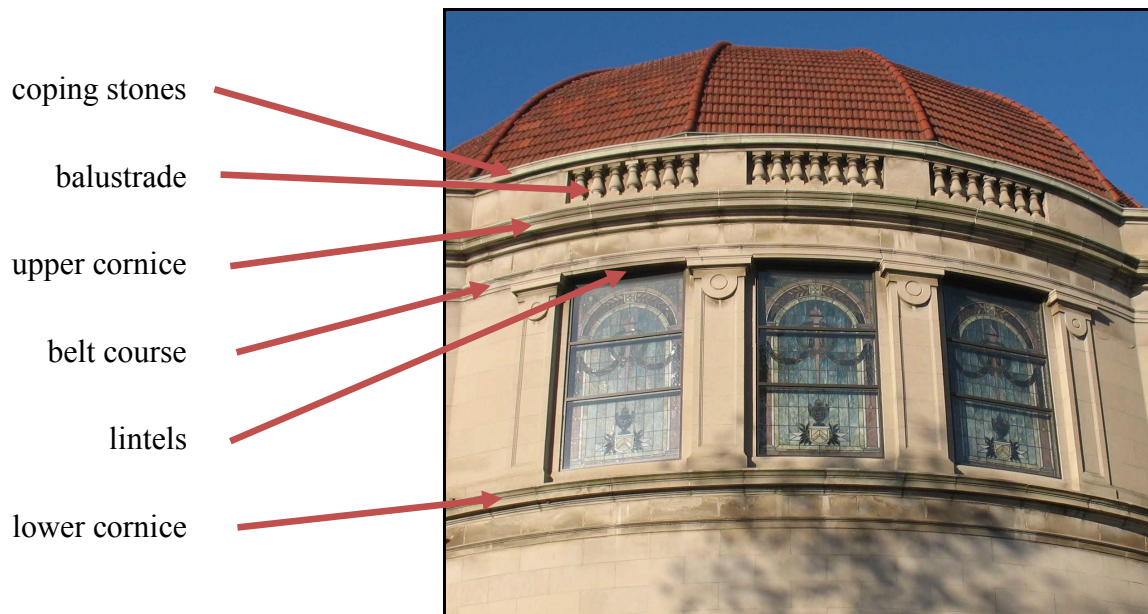


gutter system, new copper



Exterior Wall Masonry Restoration . . . Starting at the Top

The extreme Chicago weather has taken its toll on the exterior limestone walls of the columbarium building. Recommendations from preservation masonry experts indicate repairs to the exterior walls will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Current fundraising income will be used to reset and repair masonry at the top of the building's three-story drum (the curved-walls section) and to replace the lintels (horizontal supports) above the Ceremony Hall stained glass windows.



Future Masonry Repairs



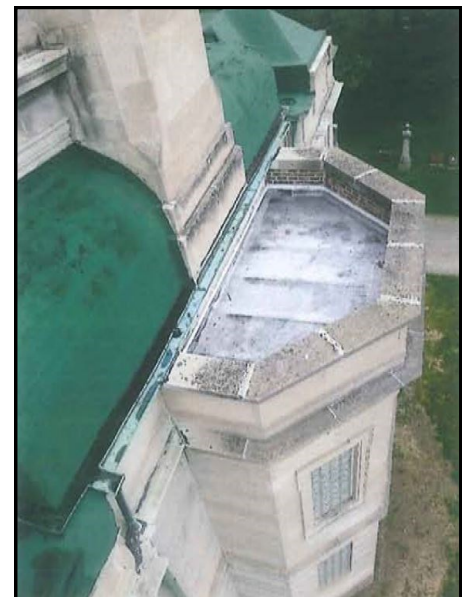
Spalling, the popping off of lunate pieces of the limestone slabs which cover the columbarium's exterior walls, is evident on all levels of the building. It's the result of infiltrating water rusting the metal anchors that attach the stone to the building.



Future Roof Repairs

The tower roof has missing and damaged tiles that will be replaced, as will its worn-out copper gutters. Being over unfinished interior space, it's not high-priority work.

Larger gutters and scupper boxes are needed above the rear flat roof



Please help Friends of Bohemian National Cemetery save this historic building.



Be part of *keeping history alive* for generations to come.

Friends of BNC welcomes contributions from individuals, families, and organizations. All donors will receive recognition in *Heritage Happenings*, the quarterly newsletter of Friends of BNC. Donors contributing \$1000 and above will have their names inscribed on the project's Donor Appreciation Wall located in the columbarium building next to the Ceremony Hall



donor appreciation wall
on installation day



artist rendering of name plates
on donor appreciation wall

If you would like more information about the Columbarium Restoration Project and how you can donate, or if you would like a presentation on the project for your group or organization, please contact Chuck Michalek at restoration@friendsofbnc.org.

To donate securely online, [click here to go to Friends store](#) and scroll down to the Columbarium Restoration Project donation button.



Thank you for helping us save the columbarium building at Bohemian National Cemetery. Its conservation is essential to preserving our heritage and keeping history alive for generations to come.