

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

SPRING GROVE CEMETERY

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Spring Grove Cemetery

Other Name/Site Number: Spring Grove Cemetery & Arboretum

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 4521 Spring Grove Avenue

Not for publication: \_\_

City/Town: Cincinnati

Vicinity: \_\_

State: Ohio County: Hamilton Code: 061

Zip Code: 45232

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: X

Public-Local: \_\_

Public-State: \_\_

Public-Federal: \_\_

Category of Property

Building(s): \_\_

District: X

Site: \_\_

Structure: \_\_

Object: \_\_

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

12

1

11

3

27

Noncontributing

6 buildings

\_\_ sites

\_\_ structures

\_\_ objects

6 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 17

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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**4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Certifying Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Commenting or Other Official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

**5. 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 Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

Historic:	Funerary Agriculture	Sub:	cemetery horticultural facility
Current:	Funerary Agriculture	Sub:	cemetery horticultural facility

**7. DESCRIPTION**

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: Gothic Revival: Historic Office

Romanesque: Norman Chapel, Receiving Tomb, Reservoir Tower  
 Mausoleums and monuments: Early Republic (Early Classical Revival);  
 Mid-19th century (Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Exotic Revival,  
 Baroque), Late Victorian (Gothic, Renaissance, Romanesque), Late 19<sup>th</sup>  
 and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals (Beaux Arts, Classical Revival, Late Gothic  
 Revival, Romanesque Revival).

**MATERIALS:**

Foundation: Stone  
 Walls: Stone (sandstone, limestone), brick  
 Roof: Stone (slate)  
 Other: Stone (granite, marble) - monuments and vaults

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**Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.****Summary**

Spring Grove Cemetery is nationally significant as the original site and model for the landscape-lawn concept, the dominant trend in American cemetery design from the mid-nineteenth century well into the twentieth century. Founded in 1845 as the first rural cemetery located west of the eastern seaboard states, after 1854 superintendent Adolph Strauch transitioned away from these foundations and began establishing a new, internationally-admired aesthetic standard for cemetery landscapes. Instead of a romantic tableau thick with plantings, fencing, and grave markers and mausolea, Strauch reduced the number and variety of monuments, arraying them on an open, grassy lawn lacking lot divisions and enlivened by grouped stands of trees and shrubs. He also upheld notably high standards for the design and construction of monuments, tombs, and such requisite buildings as gate houses, buildings for the administration and other staff, and chapels. The cohesive and alluring composition resulting from these efforts set the direction of cemetery design for more than a generation. Importantly, Strauch's solid foundations for the landscape-lawn concept at Spring Grove were upheld and nurtured by his successor William Salway, who was superintendent from 1883 through 1925. Salway maintained intellectual and practical continuity, which cemented an institutional purpose focused on the careful preservation of Spring Grove Cemetery's pioneering and character defining features. The site and its contributing buildings, structures, and objects retain a high degree of integrity.

**Overview**

Spring Grove Cemetery, formally known as Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum since 1987, encompasses 733 acres of gently rolling terrain some four miles north of Cincinnati's central business district, of which 345 acres are part of this proposal for National Historic Landmark designation. The cemetery is bounded by Spring Grove Avenue on the south, Winton and Gray Roads on the east, and Crawford Avenue on the west. The northern part of the cemetery, which includes some 300 undeveloped acres, extends into a wooded area south of College Hill. When the cemetery was founded in 1845, the surroundings were a mixture of woods, farmland, and the country estates of well-to-do Cincinnati families; today it is a densely built part of the city that includes residences, churches, and factories, and the street with the cemetery's principal entrance, Spring Grove Avenue, is a busy four-lane thoroughfare.

Once inside the cemetery's gates, the busy outside world disappears as visitors encounter broad lawns, tall shade trees, flowering shrubs, and ornate Victorian monuments and family vaults. Substantial stone buildings dating from the second half of the nineteenth century flank the main entrance drive, which passes through an 1850 stone arch erected to carry the embankment of a railroad line that passes through the southern part of the cemetery. Built by the Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad and last operated by the Chessie System, the line is no longer in service. The archway leads to the historic portion of the cemetery, where five roads fan out in different directions, curving past seven artificial lakes. This part of the cemetery was created from low-lying swamp land in the late 1850s by excavating the lakes and creating low rises surrounding them. It was here that Adolph Strauch, superintendent from 1855 to 1883, first developed the landscape-lawn concept that became influential throughout this country, and even abroad.

North of the lower lake area is an even older part of the cemetery, dating from its initial layout as a "rural cemetery" in 1846. Here the topography is steeper, and the winding roads follow a dense maze-like pattern on both sides of a broad ridge top that provides about 130 feet of elevation above the lower part of the cemetery. Six additional lakes are found beyond the north slope of the hill. Several acres known as the Woodland Area remain undeveloped and are characterized by dense vegetation consisting of mixed hardwoods and diverse undergrowth species. Although it was started a decade earlier, there is no clear visual break between the upper and lower part other than a somewhat greater density of monuments in a few sections. The original part was by

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no means fully used before Strauch's landscape-lawn principles were put into effect, and some nonconforming features, such as most of the fences, hedges, and walls around family plots, were removed.

The road that runs past the Woodland Area to the North Gate, created in 1884, marks the transition from the parts of the cemetery developed in the period of significance to a more modern landscape. North of the road, which is the northern boundary for the proposed designation, the monuments are predominantly mid- to late-twentieth century in origin, and the preponderance of granite slabs, some of which are arranged in regular rows, forms a distinct contrast to the obelisks, urns, sarcophaguses, columns, and statuary found in the historic portion.

**The Cemetery's Landscaping**

In the landscape-lawn plan, evident throughout the parts of the cemetery proposed for National Historic Landmark designation, monuments generally are limited to one per lot, with markers for individual burials set low or flush with the ground. The lot boundaries reflect the curving course of the roadways and the topography, so the monuments are not aligned to any grid. Areas of lawn surround the monuments, forming a continuous grassy setting uninterrupted by fences, curbs, hedges, or other obtrusive indicators of lot boundaries. Instead, stands of shade trees and conifers break up the assemblage of monuments into small groups. The tall trees form a backdrop for the groups, with smaller flowering trees, willows, and shrubs filing in other areas in between. Coupled with the curving roadways, the planting program has the effect of a series of unfolding tableaux in which a rich diversity of vegetation frames a grouping of funerary art. There are no long views. Instead, the visitor's attention is focused on the objects at hand.

Because it was intended from the start as an arboretum as well as a cemetery, Spring Grove contains a large variety of trees, shrubs, and flowers, including local, North American, and imported species. Plantings generally are allowed to grow naturally, rather than being shaped into contrived forms. Asymmetry and variety predominate, rather than formality, regularity, and uniformity.

The water features echo the winding roads and informal, naturalistic plantings. The lakes are irregularly shaped and of varying sizes, with no special marginal treatment; lawn, shrubbery, and trees extend to the water's edge. The largest, Geysers Lake, contains a wooded island where Adolph Strauch and members of his family are laid to rest.

The perimeter of the cemetery is marked by a mixture of old and new fences and walls. The cast-iron gates and fence at the main entrance was built in two stages in the 1860s and ca.1880. The remainder of the Spring Grove Avenue side is enclosed with a modern steel picket fence. The Winton Road side has an extensive length of sandstone random-ashlar wall probably dating to some time in the late-nineteenth century. The Crawford Avenue side is partly a brick wall and partly an early-twentieth century reinforced-concrete wall. Other parts of the cemetery perimeter are defined by a high chain-link fence mostly hidden from view by vegetation.

**Monuments, Vaults, and Family Chapels**

Spring Grove Cemetery's monuments offer a virtual catalog of the funerary art of the Victorian period. Though no definitive count exists, it can be safely estimated that the number of monuments from the period of significance is in the tens of thousands. For the most part, the monuments are large, elaborately carved family memorials. Among the more frequent shapes are the obelisk, the broken column (signifying a life too short), urns on pedestals, sarcophaguses, tree stones, and gothic pinnacles. There is a great deal of statuary, with the Angel of the Resurrection and allegorical mourning figures predominating. A large number of monuments include portrait busts or reliefs of the deceased. Many graves of children are marked by sleeping babies or cherubs. Marble and granite are the most common materials, along with fewer instances of limestone and sandstone.

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Some of the monuments memorialize particular groups. The cemetery's Civil War monument, a bronze figure of a sentry created by Randolph Rogers, was erected in 1863 in the center of a special circular section reserved for Union soldiers. Among the hundreds of Civil War soldiers buried at Spring Grove are some forty Union generals, some of whom—for example, Joseph Hooker and William H. Lytle—have large and elaborate individual memorials. Other collective monuments recognize areas of the cemetery devoted to Odd Fellows, Masons, and local fire companies.

Scattered throughout the historic portions of the cemetery are hundreds of family vaults, some set into hillsides and others freestanding. Classical, Gothic, and Baroque architecture furnished precedents for the elaborate detailing of the family vaults, some of which are termed “chapels” because they are large enough to contain a small space for prayer and reflection in addition to accommodations for the remains of the deceased. One of the oldest is the Gothic-detailed miniature church built in 1858 of Connecticut brownstone for Jacob Strader. Measuring 23' x 25' in plan, the Strader Chapel provided entombment for twenty-six individuals. Jacob Burnet's vault presents a rich Baroque facade to the waters of Cedar Lake. Designed by Cincinnati architect Charles Rule and built in 1865, it features complex curved moldings, Corinthian columns, urns, puttae, cartouches, and footscrolls among its carved ornamentation. The Dexter Chapel, completed in 1869 from a design by local architect James Keys Wilson (1828-1894), is a complete Gothic cathedral, with flying buttresses, a tall central spire, and a profusion of crockets, pinnacles, and pointed-arch traceried windows; it is thought to have been inspired by Chichester Cathedral in England and the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. The Dexter Chapel has an exterior of sandstone and a marble interior at a total cost of \$100,000. The John Robinson family mausoleum (1874) is more eclectic, combining a cruciform plan, Gothic arches and a large central dome. Built of blue limestone with marble quoins and other trim, the mausoleum includes large allegorical figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, as well as the Angel of Resurrection atop the dome. By the turn of the century, tastes had returned classicism to favor, epitomized by the Fleischmann mausoleum (1913), a scaled-down replica of the Parthenon built of Vermont granite. Its Tiffany window depicts the Three Fates.

**Historic Cemetery Buildings**

The cemetery's buildings are substantial and finely detailed. The earliest extant cemetery building is the receiving tomb, known today as White Pine Chapel. It was built in 1859 near the center of the cemetery on the site of an earlier receiving tomb. Its function was temporary storage when burial was impractical, and as many as 200 bodies were accommodated at a time. The building was designed by Cincinnati architect Alfred B. Mullett in the Romanesque Revival mode. Gable-roofed, with walls of quarry-faced sandstone, the building's ornamental features include heavy cornice corbels, round-arched windows, an entrance within a series of successively recessed arches, and a short octagonal central steeple (which served as a ventilator).

In the period 1863-67, the cemetery's board undertook a major effort to improve the cemetery's Spring Grove Avenue entrance. An earlier wooden fence and gate was replaced by ornate cast-iron gates mounted on stout, eight-foot-tall piers. Immediately adjacent to the gates is the Gothic-detailed Administration Building, now known as the Historic Office. Designed by James Keys Wilson, the Historic Office has rough-dressed sandstone walls, with contrasting lighter and smoother stone for the foundation and corners, a slate roof, blunt pointed-arch window openings, and a large tower appended to the south elevation. There is an entrance portico at the northwest corner. The tower has an open belfry stage with paired pointed-arch openings, surmounted by a steep hip roof with cast-iron cresting. A much smaller tower is integrated into the stonework of the west gable. The building is still used for administrative offices; although modernized on the interior, it retains its original wood-beamed vaulted ceiling and marble floors.

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Wilson also designed a small companion gatekeeper's lodge on the other side of the gates known today as the Carriage House. Of similar stone construction, the Carriage House has a polychrome slate Mansard roof, an entrance porch with wide Corinthian pilasters, an elaborately corbelled cornice, and a large chimney set upon a corbelled base in the west wall. Its name reflects an early use as a place people could rest while waiting for carriages to return them to the city. Today it is used for office space.

The cemetery returned to the Romanesque Revival Style for the Norman Chapel, constructed a short distance west of the main entrance in 1879-80. Designed by Samuel H. Hannaford, the Norman Chapel has walls of contrasting limestone and sandstone, buttresses, and round-arched window openings. The main entrance is on the west gable end, where massive bronze doors depict Biblical scenes. Appended to this elevation is a large gable-roofed porte-cochere; its gable is embellished with an arcade of interlaced arches with star ornaments in the heads and a rose window. The interior of the Norman Chapel continues the medieval columns and carved moldings found on the exterior, along with wooden beams supporting the roof and marble floors. A cast-iron fence of interlaced arches, with gates for the porte-cochere drive, connects with the main entrance gates.

In 1884, a second entrance was added on Gray Road, at what was then the north end of the developed part of the cemetery. The North Gate Entrance has ornate cast-iron gates that swing from Gothic-detailed stone piers. The North Gate Lodge, a one-story slate-roofed stone building designed by Samuel H. Hannaford, was built in 1895. In the 1880s, a service complex of brick, slate-roofed buildings was built in the corner formed by Gray and Winton Roads to serve the maintenance needs of the cemetery. A large barn with multiple cupolas forms the north side of a courtyard, with two other sides formed by one-story wings linking the barn to two smaller two-story buildings. There is also a two-story stuccoed residence, ca. 1895, associated with the service complex. Nearby, a tall Romanesque Revival stone tower with a crenellated parapet was built in 1888 to house the pump and water tank of a new reservoir system, designed by the engineering firm of Laidlaw, Dunn, and Gordon.

A few additions to the cemetery's building stock were added in the early-twentieth century. A small hip-roofed building, originally built ca. 1910 for visitors' toilets, now serves as the Interment Office. Of sandstone ashlar construction similar to the earlier buildings, it exhibits an Arts and Crafts influence in its slate roof, exposed rafter ends, and stick-braced doorway roofs. In the same period, the cemetery built a number of small hip-roofed buildings with stone porches to serve as rest shelters.

**Modern Facilities at Spring Grove Cemetery**

Spring Grove Cemetery continues its historic function, and as a result the cemetery includes a number of more recent buildings that reflect modern funerary practices. Because they are nearly all located south of the former railroad embankment, the cemetery's modern, noncontributing developments have not compromised the appearance of the historic part of the cemetery.

Memorial Mausoleum and Cedars of Lebanon Chapel, 1963, Malcolm Stirton, James Stadler, and Dean Riddle (Detroit), architects. A central gable-roofed portion includes a tall tower and flat-roofed entrance portico; a triptych of tall round-arched windows occupies the gable end. The face of the tower, divided in three by pilasters, is embellished with low-relief carvings of various flowers and leaves. One-story, flat-roofed wings extend to either side. The interior features oak and mahogany woodwork, forty different kinds of marble, and stained-glass windows by Henry Lee Willet and Jean Barillet.

Garden Mausoleum is a complex of five similar one-story flat-roofed buildings designed and built over the period of 1976 to 1985 by the Milne Company of Portland, Oregon. Exterior walls are limestone blocks with polished granite facing. The complex provides 2,500 spaces in the form of crypts for caskets and niches for

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cremated remains, all of which face the outside. The buildings have projections with stylized gothic arches that open to interior courts that provide additional exterior crypt and niche space.

Administration Center, 1983, Architecton (Cincinnati), architects. When cemetery administration outgrew the space in the original Administration Building, now known as the Historic Office, the cemetery built this 9,000-square-foot one-story building to house offices for administrative, horticultural, accounting, and sales functions. The abstract design features pitched roofs that resemble gable split down the middle, with flat-roofed portions in the corners. A long round-arched acrylic canopy shelters the building's main entrance on the south elevation. Other exterior materials include Indiana limestone walls, bronze-tinted windows, and tile roofing.

Lakeside Mausoleum, 1995. The building consists of a central chapel with a steep slate gable roof flanked by one-story flat-roofed entombment areas. The interior of the chapel features exposed wood beams and roof planking and stained-glass windows. The exterior of the mausoleum has walls of contrasting smooth limestone and rough granite. There is a flat-roofed portico with stylized gothic arches serving as an entrance to the chapel, and similar arches outlined in contrasting stone suggest a nave and side aisles (though on the interior the chapel has an open plan). The mausoleum has recently been extended to the west in a similar architectural style.

The Jon Deitloff Funeral Centre, 1999, J. Stuart Todd (Dallas), architect. Established as a full-service funeral home, with visitation areas, a large chapel, consultation rooms, reception area, and kitchen, the 38,000-square-foot Deitloff Centre occupies five acres at the southwest corner of the cemetery. The exterior walls are a random ashlar of rough-faced Indiana limestone. The two-story center portion has three asymmetrical gables projecting forward from its main roof, with lower wings extending from each end. The building has a large covered entranceway and a covered walkway along the rear elevation. In addition to the gables, allusions to Tudor architecture include tall exterior chimneys with clustered flues and buttressed end walls.

Because they are nearly all located south of the former railroad embankment, the cemetery's modern, noncontributing developments have not compromised the appearance of the historic part of the cemetery.

## Description of Contributing Resources

### Inventory of Selected Buildings, Structures and Objects

For the purposes of this nomination, the cemetery is treated as an historic district that is also a distinctive cultural landscape. The cemetery site itself—with its landscaping, vegetation, topography, views, constructed water features, horticultural plantings, drives and paths, and tombs, monuments, mausolea, and art—is the primary contributing resource. The following is a list of especially important buildings, structures, and objects within the site:

#### Buildings:

**Historic Office (1867, James Keys Wilson):** This eclectic, high-Victorian Gothic structure was conceived as part of an ensemble that included the Carriage House on the west side of the entrance road and entrance gates extending between. Local practitioner James Keys Wilson is the architect of record for the grouping. He is best-known for his contemporary, eclectic design for the Plum Street Temple in Cincinnati (constructed 1864-67; NHL, 1975). The Historic Office was constructed as the cemetery's administration building. It has rusticated, dressed sandstone walls, contrasting lighter and smoother stone for the foundation and corners, a slate roof, blunt pointed-arch window openings, and a large tower appended to the south elevation. There is an

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entrance portico at the northwest corner. The tower has an open belfry with paired pointed-arch openings, surmounted by a steep hip roof with cast-iron cresting. A much smaller tower is integrated into the stonework of the west gable. The building is still used for administrative offices, and although modernized on the interior, it retains its original wood-beamed vaulted ceiling and marble floors.

**Carriage House [Gatekeeper's Lodge] (1867, James Keys Wilson):** The Carriage House was designed and built with the Historic Office and main entrance gates. While having similar, finely detailed stonework and matched north-facing porticos, the cubic mass and Mansard roof of the compact Carriage House is more subdued than the ebullient forms of the Historic Office across the road. Patterned roofing composed of hexagonal-shaped slates in contrasting colors and an elaborate corbelled chimney contribute visual interest to the building. It was once used as a place where people could rest while waiting for carriages to return them to the city. Today it functions as office space.

**Norman Chapel (1879-80, Samuel H. Hannaford):** Samuel H. Hannaford designed the Romanesque Revival or "Norman" chapel located just west of the main entrance. Hannaford had an extremely productive career in Cincinnati during the last four decades of the nineteenth century. He is best known for his collaboration with Edwin Procter on the Cincinnati Music Hall (NHL, 1974), constructed in 1876-78, and along with his sons Harvey and Charles was also the architect for Cincinnati's Richardsonian Romanesque City Hall (1887-93). Hannaford is the architect of record for the Cincinnati Observatory (1873), with S. Hannaford & Sons providing the design for a second building at the facility, the O. M. Mitchel Building, constructed 1904-08. The Observatory and Mitchel buildings were designated National Historic Landmarks in 1997.<sup>1</sup> The Norman Chapel has the appearance of an English parish church with walls of contrasting limestone and sandstone, engaged buttresses, and round-arched window openings. The main entrance is on the west gable end, where massive bronze doors depict biblical scenes. Appended to this elevation is a large gable-roofed porte-cochere; its gable is embellished with an arcade of interlaced arches with star ornaments in the heads and a rose window. The interior is composed of vestibule giving onto a simple nave through a triple-arched opening. In the nave, wood trusses spring from stone colonnettes perched on corbels located between the window openings midway up the walls.

**Service-area barn complex and residence (4) (ca. 1880; ca. 1895):** Around 1880, a complex comprised of three brick barns and sheds, was built in the corner formed by Gray and Winton Roads to serve the maintenance needs of the cemetery. A large barn forms the north side of a courtyard, with two other sides formed by one-story wings linking the barn to two smaller two-story buildings. Except for some simple decorative brick patterning on the barn's walls and three octagonal cupola/vents on its roof, the gable-roofed utilitarian buildings are unadorned. There is also a two-story stuccoed residence, built ca. 1895, associated with the service complex. The complex also includes a building composed of three modern, steel-sided garages linked by a single back wall that is considered non-contributing.

**North Gate Lodge (1895, Samuel H. Hannaford):** A decade after the creation of the North Entrance and construction of its gates, Samuel Hannaford designed a gatehouse for the approach. The gatehouse has a decidedly domestic scale that anticipates, or perhaps even set the trend, for the design of the later Interment Office and Rest Shelters. It is a simple building composed of rusticated, ashlar-cut blocks in irregular courses

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<sup>1</sup> For more on Hannaford, the Music Hall, and the Observatory, see: "Cincinnati Music Hall," National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1974), and "Cincinnati Observatory," National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, DC: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1997).

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and fronted by a porch with round-headed openings. The compact design exhibits Arts and Crafts influences with its slate roof kicked out at the eaves, and exposed rafter ends.

**Interment Office (ca. 1910):** A small, hip-roof building built ca. 1910 for visitors' toilets now serves as the Interment Office. It is a simple building composed of rusticated, ashlar-cut blocks in irregular courses. The compact design exhibits Arts and Crafts influences with its slate roof exposed rafter ends, and stick-braced doorway roofs.

**Rest Shelters (3) (ca. 1920):** Within a decade of the present Interment Office, the cemetery constructed three rest shelters that have a presence not unlike the Craftsmen bungalows and other domestic types rising in American suburbs. They are distinguished by a large wraparound porch defined by stone piers with low stone walls between, and a dominant, all-encompassing hip roof.

**Site:**

Historic cemetery landscape including road and path alignment, vegetation, topography, views, and constructed water features as described in the boundary description, in addition to contributing buildings, structures, and objects.

**Structures:**

**Stone-arched bridge, Cincinnati, Hamilton and Dayton Railroad (1850):** This bridge was part of a compromise agreement for a railroad right-of-way across the cemetery's southern end first proposed by the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad in 1848. The Spring Grove board ultimately agreed to the location only after conditions about train speed and construction along the right-of-way were sorted out in addition to a \$4,000 stock donation to the cemetery. They also had to construct an arched stone bridge to carry the railroad over the entrance road, a gateway that continues to serve as part of the processional from the street to the main grounds of the cemetery. The masonry bridge is simply faced with ashlar and rusticated stone that does not overtly reference any historical style. The bridge's opening is a flattened, elliptical arch boldly set off by large, roughly finished voussoirs. A simple iron balustrade surmounts the bridge's stone wall.

**Receiving Tomb [White Pine Chapel] (Alfred B. Mullett, 1859):** Built in 1859 on the site of an earlier receiving tomb, what is now called the White Pine Chapel was designed by noted architect Alfred B. Mullett early in his career.<sup>2</sup> In 1863, Mullett left Cincinnati to join the staff of his former partner, Isaiah Rogers, who was hired by another Cincinnati, Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, as the Supervising Architect of the Treasury. Mullett himself rose to this position in 1866, first completing the North and final wing of the U.S. Treasury Building (1867-69). This was followed by a fertile career highlighted by such designs as the State, War, and Navy Building (1870-88) (NHL, 1971), and numerous custom houses and post offices across the country. He resigned from the position of Supervising Architect in 1874. The modest Receiving Tomb was designed for use as temporary storage when burial was impractical; as many as 200 bodies could be accommodated at any one time. Gable-roofed, with walls of quarry-faced sandstone, the building's ornamental features include heavy cornice corbels, round-arched windows, an entrance within a series of successively recessed arches, and a short octagonal central steeple (which served as a ventilator).

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<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all information on Alfred B. Mullett is drawn from: Donald J. Lehman, "Mullett, Alfred B.," *Macmillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, vol. 3, ed. Adolf K. Placzek (New York: The Free Press, 1982), 249-252.

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**Main Entrance gates and fencing (James Keys Wilson, 1863-67; ca. 1880):** In the period 1863-67, the cemetery's board undertook a major effort to improve the cemetery's Spring Grove Avenue entrance. An earlier wooden fence and gate were replaced by ornate cast-iron gates mounted on stout, eight-foot-tall piers. These were constructed around the same time as the flanking Historic Office and the Carriage House. When the cemetery constructed the Norman Chapel in 1880, just to the north of the Carriage House, they enclosed the grounds of the structure with a cast-iron fence of interlaced arches and gates opening onto the drive for the chapel. The fence was also connected with the fencing at the main entrance gates. The original entrance gates and fencing united with the later fencing around the Norman Chapel is considered a single contributing structure.

**North Entrance gates (attrib. Samuel H. Hannaford, 1884):** In 1884, a second entrance was added on Gray Road, at what was then the north end of the developed part of the cemetery. The north entrance has ornate cast-iron gates which swing from gothic-detailed stone piers. It is believed that Samuel H. Hannaford was the designer of this gateway.

**Reservoir Tower (attrib. Samuel H. Hannaford, 1888):** Early in his long tenure as cemetery superintendent between 1883 and 1925, William Salway oversaw the creation of a new reservoir system for the cemetery. This system included a stone Romanesque Revival tower with a crenellated parapet that housed a pump and water tank. The engineers for the waterworks project, including the mechanical parts of the tower, were Laidlaw, Dunn, and Gordon. It is believed that Samuel H. Hannaford provided the design for the tower's exterior. The reservoir tower is located to the southeast of the reservoir pond, positioned just inside the North Gate Entrance.

**Strader Chapel (1858).** One of the oldest family burial chapels in the cemetery is the Gothic-detailed structure built of Connecticut brownstone for Jacob Strader. Its footprint measures 23' x 25' and provided space for twenty-six individuals. The structure is comprised of a front-gabled center section with small towers at the corners, crockets along the roofline, and a central, pointed-arch door. Stone walls featuring blind arcades extend from the main section, giving greater visual weight to the entire composition. It is located along the cemetery's eastern border (Winton Road) to the north of the Sylvan and Lotus lakes.

**Burnet Vault (Charles Rule, 1865).** The vault commissioned by Jacob Burnet for his family presents a rich Baroque facade to the waters of Cedar Lake. It features complex curved moldings, Corinthian columns, urns, putti, cartouches, and footscrolls among its carved ornamentation. The Burnet Vault is positioned across the road running along the east side of Cedar Lake, not far from the railroad arch-entrance.

**Selves Chapel (1868):** The Selves family vault is an exquisite Gothic chapel. The compact building composed primarily of ashlar-coursed rusticated stone is much enlivened by pinnacles springing from engaged corner buttresses and the ridge, crockets along the front-facing gable, and an elaborate doorway and door.

**Dexter Chapel (James Keys Wilson, 1869).** Noted local architect James Keys Wilson conceived of the Dexter family chapel just two years after finishing the buildings and gates at the cemetery's main entrance. This superbly detailed chapel is, essentially, a miniature of a Gothic cathedral, complete with flying buttresses, a tall central spire, and a profusion of crockets, pinnacles, and pointed-arch windows with delicate tracery. It simultaneously recalls both Chichester Cathedral in England and the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. The Dexter Chapel has an exterior of sandstone and a marble interior and cost \$100,000. It is located on the north side of Geyser Lake opposite Strauch Island.

**Robinson Chapel (1874).** The John Robinson family mausoleum is an eclectic mixture of Gothic and Classical elements contrasting pointed arches and numerous gables with a central dome and statuary bearing both a

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Classical and traditionally religious presence. Built of blue limestone with marble quoins and other trim, the mausoleum includes large allegorical figures of Faith, Hope, and Charity, as well as the Angel of Resurrection atop the dome.

**Fleischmann Mausoleum (1913).** By the turn of the century, tastes had returned to overtly classical forms. The Fleischmann family chapel is a scaled-down Greek temple in the Doric order with hexastyle porticoes. It is constructed of Vermont granite and contains a stunning Tiffany window depicting the Three Fates. It is located on the southeast side of Geyser Lake opposite Strauch Island.

**Objects–Monuments:**

All of the major mausolea, tombs, and monuments constructed during the period of significance contribute to the historic character of Spring Grove Cemetery. The following are of exceptional artistic or associational merit:

**Civil War Monument, 1864-65.** A statue of a Union guard sculpted by Randolph Rogers located northeast of Geyser Lake.

Senator, Secretary of the Treasury, and Supreme Court Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase, after 1873. A simple, sarcophagus-type monument located across the road to the northwest of Geyser Lake.

General William H. Lytle, ca. 1863: Broken column representing a life cut short, in this case dying at the Battle of Chickamauga. He was an acknowledged local poet. It is located just inside the main entrance to the north of the former railroad bridge.

**Descriptions of Non-contributing Buildings and Structures:**

**Memorial Mausoleum and Cedars of Lebanon Chapel (1963, Malcolm Stirton, James Stadler, and Dean Riddle, architects, Detroit, Michigan).** A central gable-roofed portion includes a tall tower and flat-roofed entrance portico; a triptych of tall round-arched windows occupies the gable end. The face of the tower, divided in three by pilasters, is embellished with low-relief carvings of various flowers and leaves. One-story, flat-roofed wings extend to either side. The interior features oak and mahogany woodwork, forty different kinds of marble, and stained-glass windows by Henry Lee Willet and Jean Barillet.

**Garden Mausoleum (1976-1985, Milne Company, Portland, Oregon).** A complex of five similar one-story flat-roofed buildings designed and built over the period by the Milne Company. Exterior walls are limestone blocks with polished granite facing. The complex provides 2,500 spaces in the form of crypts for caskets and niches for cremated remains, all of which face the outside. The buildings have projections with stylized Gothic arches that open to interior courts that provide additional exterior crypt and niche space.

**Administration Center (1983, Architecton, architects, Cincinnati, Ohio).** When cemetery administration outgrew the space in the original Administration Building, now known as the Historic Office, the cemetery built this 9,000-square-foot one-story building to house offices for administrative, horticultural, accounting, and sales functions. The abstract design features pitched roofs that resemble gable split down the middle, with flat-roofed portions in the corners. A long round-arched acrylic canopy shelters the building's main entrance on the south elevation. Other exterior materials include Indiana limestone walls, bronze-tinted windows, and tile roofing.

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**Lakeside Mausoleum (1995):** The building consists of a central chapel with a steep slate gable roof flanked by one-story flat-roofed entombment areas. The interior of the chapel features exposed wood beams and roof planking and stained-glass windows. The exterior of the mausoleum has walls of contrasting smooth limestone and rough granite. There is a flat-roofed portico with stylized Gothic arches serving as an entrance to the chapel, and similar arches outlined in contrasting stone suggest a nave and side aisles (though on the interior the chapel has an open plan). The mausoleum has recently been extended to the west in a similar architectural style.

**Jon Deitloff Funeral Centre (1999, J. Stuart Todd, architect, Dallas, Texas).** Established as a full-service funeral home, with visitation areas, a large chapel, consultation rooms, reception area, and kitchen, the 38,000-square-foot Deitloff Centre occupies five acres at the southwest corner of the cemetery. The exterior walls are a random ashlar of rough-faced Indiana limestone. The two-story center portion has three asymmetrical gables projecting forward from its main roof, with lower wings extending from each end. The building has a large covered entranceway and a covered walkway along the rear elevation. In addition to the gables, allusions to Tudor architecture include tall exterior chimneys with clustered flues and buttressed end walls.

**Service-area garage.** The service-area complex composed of historic and contributing barns, sheds, and a residence also includes a building composed of three modern, steel-sided garages linked by a single back wall that is considered non-contributing.

**Legacy and Integrity**

The story of Spring Grove Cemetery—its establishment as the country's first rural cemetery beyond the eastern states, the pioneering landscape-lawn plan developed by Adolph Strauch, and the nationwide acceptance of the concept as a norm for cemetery design—would be simply a matter for history books were it not for the cemetery's remarkable faithfulness to its nineteenth-century origins. Because the core of the property retains such a high degree of integrity, Spring Grove Cemetery today is a heritage resource that allows the visitor to step back in time and experience the interplay of artistry and nature that its designers intended.

The buildings, structures, objects, and overall landscape fashioned between 1845 and 1925 is fully readable and continues to be well cared for and preserved. The cemetery's origins in the rural cemetery movement are made clear by the winding road pattern laid out by Howard Daniels in 1846, by the undeveloped woodland area, and by those portions of the cemetery that exhibit the dense proliferation of monuments that led cemetery designers to eventually embrace the landscape-lawn plan. Throughout the portion proposed for National Historic Landmark designation, Strauch's landscape-lawn plan remains the dominant aesthetic and intellectual sensibility. The broad areas of lawn, the irregular placement of monuments and vaults, the peaceful lakes, the plantings that echo the appearance of nature, and the sense of an unfolding series of scenes of beauty—all these key characteristics are as evident today as they were more than a century ago. Both Strauch and Salway promoted high standards for the inception of monuments and vaults as aesthetic additions to the overall landscape.<sup>3</sup> The variety of designs at Spring Grove, the exceptionally rich use of carved symbols, figures, and portraits, and the fine materials used in the memorials and vaults continue to fulfill the promises of the landscape-lawn plan. Similarly, the rustic stone construction and extensive architectural embellishment of the historic buildings signify the cemetery's concern for artistic design, high quality of materials, permanence, and compatibility with the naturalistic setting. Adolph Strauch could have been speaking of Spring Grove Cemetery in the twenty-first century when he wrote:

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<sup>3</sup> Strauch did not approve of the use of vaults, but he and the board recognized the desire for such memorials on the part of wealthy families and accepted them as long as they reflected high artistic standards.

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In the pictorial union of architecture, sculpture, and landscape gardening, we find ample scope for active imagination, by uniting the well-regulated precision of human design with the apparently wild irregularities of divine creation...By an artistic calculation, exercised in the employment of trees of various colors and forms, nature always speaks a new and exciting language...We should always bear in mind that, in every new improvement, we seek to express, not only the limited excellence of what now exists, but the anticipated culture of a day not yet arrived.<sup>4</sup>

Spring Grove Cemetery continues to function both as a final resting place and as an arboretum. There is open public access, without admission charge—bicycling and jogging along the roadways are popular activities—and there are ongoing programs in horticultural education with local colleges and universities. Because the cemetery is still an active place of burials, it includes a number of more recent buildings that reflect modern funerary practices. They are nearly all located south of the former railroad embankment, so the cemetery's modern, noncontributing developments have not compromised the appearance of the historic part of the cemetery. No attempt was made to excise the portion of the cemetery between the former railroad right-of-way and Spring Grove Avenue, even though this area contains nearly all the noncontributing buildings and structures. It was included because of the highly important gates, gatehouse, office, and Norman Chapel, and because historically it was the focus of the cemetery's arboretum function. Spring Grove continues to be active both as an arboretum and as a final resting place. In that context, the modern facilities are less visually disruptive than if they were simply unrelated to the property's historic function. This area also exhibits landscape qualities—mature trees, curving roads, small water features—compatible with the other parts of the property proposed for designation.

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<sup>4</sup> Adolphus Strauch, *Spring Grove Cemetery: Its History and Improvements, with Observations on Ancient and Modern Places of Sepulture* (Cincinnati, R. Clarke, 1869), 7-13.

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide:    Locally:   

Applicable National

Register Criteria:           A    B    C X D   Criteria Considerations    A    B    C    D X E    F    G     
(Exceptions):

NHL Criteria:               4, Exception 5

NHL Theme(s):             II. Creating Social Institutions and Movements  
                                  III. Expressing Cultural Values  
                                      5. Architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

Areas of Significance:     Landscape Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: 1845 - 1925

Significant Dates:         1845, 1854, 1887

Significant Person(s):    N/A

Cultural Affiliation:      N/A

Architect/Builder:         Howard Daniels, initial design  
                                  Adolph Strauch, superintendent (1854-1883)  
                                  William Salway, superintendent (1883-1925)

Historic Contexts:         XVII. Landscape Architecture

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**State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.****Summary**

Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati, Ohio, is nationally significant as the original model for the landscape-lawn concept, the dominant idea in American cemetery design in the second half of the nineteenth century and a major influence in landscape architecture in general.<sup>5</sup> Spring Grove also has national significance as the first example of the Rural Cemetery movement west of the eastern seaboard states. A group of Cincinnati horticulture enthusiasts and civic leaders established Spring Grove in 1845. Located in what was then an area of woods and fields well outside the built-up part of the city, Spring Grove was deliberately modeled on Mount Auburn Cemetery outside Boston (NHL, 2003), Laurel Hill in Philadelphia (NHL, 1998), and other eastern rural cemeteries, and it featured natural topography, winding roads, and a picturesque, wooded setting. Starting in 1854, superintendent Adolph Strauch (1822-1883) began putting into practice the principles that would mark a major transition away from the guiding tenets and resulting landscapes of the rural cemetery movement.

In place of an expectation where a natural setting alone would make a beautiful place of repose for the dead, Strauch proposed that nature be enhanced by deliberate landscape design. Formation of water features, alteration of existing topography, and planting of trees, shrubs, and lawn areas were all brought to bear in fashioning settings that had both variety and balance and recalled nature without looking wild or overgrown. Strauch also articulated a rationale for controlling the number and design of monuments so that the actions of individual families would not compromise the appearance of the cemetery as a whole. The principles that Strauch put into place at Spring Grove Cemetery were widely disseminated through his writings and consulting work on other cemeteries, and his successor at Spring Grove, William Salway, helped to further promote and institutionalize those principles, best known today as the landscape-lawn concept, through the American Association of Cemetery Superintendents. According to the National Historic Landmark Criteria, cemeteries are not ordinarily eligible for designation; however, Exception 5 provides for cemeteries deriving their primary national significance from distinctive designs. As the first, nationally influential archetype of the landscape-lawn plan, Spring Grove Cemetery possesses significance appropriate for consideration under Criterion Exception 5.

Spring Grove's period of significance, 1845-1925, cover its years as one of America's leading cemetery landscapes. The year 1845 marks its inauguration as the first rural cemetery beyond the states of the eastern seaboard; in effect, the rural cemetery movement became national in scope. The terminal date of 1925 marked the end William Salway's service as superintendent. The intervening years saw Adolph Strauch and Salway develop the landscape-lawn concept at Spring Grove, and influence cemeteries throughout the country. What Strauch pioneered, Salway made the norm, in part through his efforts in establishing the American Association of Cemetery Superintendents, which first met at Spring Grove in 1887. By the time of Salway's death in 1925, a new model for American cemeteries had appeared, the memorial park, epitomized by Forest Lawn in Glendale, California (1917).

**Origins of Spring Grove Cemetery and the Rural Cemetery Movement**

Like Mount Auburn, Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery had its origins both in a concern that existing urban cemeteries had become inadequate and in an appreciation for nature on the part of local horticultural enthusiasts. Up to 1845, the city's largest cemetery was the Episcopal-Presbyterian Cemetery in Washington

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<sup>5</sup> "Landscape-lawn plan" is a contemporary term for the concept and continues to be the most common descriptor; "lawn plan" and "lawn-park" are other commonly used terms.

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Park; only five and one-half acres in extent, it and Cincinnati's twenty-two other small burying grounds had reached their capacity by the 1840s. Rapid urban growth and rising real estate values meant that there was little opportunity for Cincinnati's existing cemeteries to expand. Some earlier burying grounds, including the first one laid out in 1788, had even been overtaken by the expanding street grid, with the remains exhumed and re-interred elsewhere. In addition to the city's physical change, there was also growing concern about the origins of disease, one theory of which focused on "miasmas" believed to formulate in cemeteries, particularly those that included vaults. The solution was to establish cemeteries in Cincinnati's undeveloped environs. While some religious congregations procured more extensive grounds on the outskirts in the early 1840s, the perceived problem of crowded, possible unhealthy cemeteries remained unsolved for the burgeoning city.

A growing interest in horticulture also hastened the creation of Spring Grove. In 1843, the Cincinnati Horticultural Society was granted a charter to develop a public cemetery up to 300 acres in size that would double as a garden for horticultural displays and experimentation. Society members, many of whom owned country estates north of the city, wrote to eastern cemeteries asking for maps and organizational details and several toured Mount Auburn, Green-Wood in New York City, and Laurel Hill in Philadelphia in the summer of 1844. A suitable spot was found in Mill Creek Township, an old 166-acre farm for sale by the Garrard family. However, rather than undertaking the project themselves, society members and other interested civic and business leaders sought a charter for a separate organization; on January 21, 1845, the articles of incorporation for Spring Grove Cemetery were approved. The cemetery management would consist of a president and board of directors elected by the holders of lots of at least fifty square feet, costing \$100.00 each. The original proprietors included not only businessmen and professionals, but also families headed by workers in the skilled trades, such as blacksmiths, saddlers, and printers. For those with fewer resources, smaller lots were available, though without voting rights. Lots were sold to the purchasers as private property that could be resold or passed on to heirs in perpetuity.

The board initially hired John Notman, designer of Philadelphia's Laurel Hill Cemetery, to lay out the roads and landscape features of the new cemetery, but they felt Notman's design was too rigid and did not respect the undulating topography of the Garrard farm.<sup>6</sup> Instead, the board turned to local architect Howard Daniels who envisioned a series of interconnected, winding roads giving access to all parts of the cemetery, preserving scenic vistas, and maximizing the availability of good land for burial purposes. Satisfied, the board hired Daniels as the first superintendent and, with surveyor Thomas Earnshaw, he began the construction of roads and footpaths, and laid out lots for prospective purchasers. Daniels's road system, still in place today, provided the structure for Spring Grove's eventual emergence as a cemetery of national renown. At the same time, board members paid to have the landscape improved by clearing out underbrush, removing dead trees, and erecting fences.

Cincinnati responded to the new cemetery's "romantic scenery and forest shade" with great enthusiasm. Even before construction began, more than \$20,000 had been raised from the sale of lots, enough to cover the purchase price of the land and the cost of initial improvements, and lots continued to sell briskly thereafter. Within four years, 200 monuments had been erected at Spring Grove, including some that were relocated from other cemeteries. Cincinnati was already a large city—the population was 115,438 in 1850—with a bustling commercial and industrial economy. It was also a center of culture, with colleges (including a medical school), libraries, two art galleries, and numerous humanitarian institutions. As a result, Cincinnati was a city that could both appreciate and afford the best in funerary art. Obelisks, urns, columns, and statuary in marble and granite

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<sup>6</sup> Blanche M. G. Linden, *Spring Grove: Celebrating 150 Years* (Cincinnati: Spring Grove Cemetery and Arboretum, 1995), 16.

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appeared in abundance, with many families spending several times the cost of the lots for the monuments. Some of the monuments came from eastern cities, but by 1851 Cincinnati itself had seven marble works that could meet the demand for suitable memorials. The local product was said to meet and even surpass eastern monuments in workmanship and artistry, a claim given some credence when Nathaniel Silsbee, of Salem, Massachusetts, bought a monument from Lowry and Rule for erection at Mount Auburn.<sup>7</sup>

A potential threat to the grounds and fledgling institution came in 1848, when the Cincinnati, Hamilton, and Dayton Railroad's right-of-way was laid out through the southern part of the property. The board objected to the projected route, but settled when the railroad agreed to conditions regarding the speed of trains and a prohibition banning anything more than track along the right-of-way. The railroad also donated \$4,000 in stock to the cemetery. But most importantly, the railroad built a handsome stone arch above the main entry road, a landscape feature that continues to serve as part of the processional from the street to the main grounds of the cemetery.

Although the Cincinnati Horticultural Society remained separate from Spring Grove Cemetery, the cemetery's role as an active arboretum was never shunted to the sidelines. In the early years, forty acres of lowland were devoted to a nursery for trees that could later be transplanted elsewhere, and local horticulturists donated many trees and shrubs to improve the grounds. By 1850, some 4,300 plant varieties were grown at the cemetery. The cemetery's first professional landscape gardener, Adolph Strauch, continued cooperative efforts to develop Spring Grove's collection; he introduced species from elsewhere in North America as well as exotics such as the Bohemian olive and Chinese ailanthus, or "Tree of Heaven."<sup>8</sup> By 1867, the area south of the railroad right-of-way was specifically identified as an arboretum on the map published by H. C. Ruggles. Today, the cemetery has some 1,000 labeled trees and shrubs and includes two national champion and twenty state champion trees. The University of Cincinnati and the cemetery cooperate in offering horticultural courses and programming.

By the early 1850s, Spring Grove exhibited both the glories of the rural cemetery concept and, increasingly, the shortcomings. Howard Daniels, who had left his position as superintendent in 1848, had advised that Spring Grove would retain its beauty only "if not overloaded with ornament or...trees and shrubbery wholly inappropriate in appearance and association with the character of the place," but there was no mechanism to ensure this result.<sup>9</sup> Lot owners were free to install whatever monuments, fences, and plantings they chose, and subsequent landscape-design improvements were undertaken by individual board members as their interests and tastes dictated. Spring Grove may well have become cluttered and chaotic had the board not engaged the services of Adolph Strauch, a landscape gardener with the vision and organizational skills to implement it.

**Adolph Strauch, Superintendent, 1855-1883**

When Adolph Strauch arrived in the United States in 1851, he brought with him extensive experience in horticulture and landscape design in both England and continental Europe. Born in the village of Eckersdorf in Silesia, Strauch went to Vienna at the age of sixteen where he worked for six years under the Imperial Hapsburg gardeners. It was in this capacity that he made the acquaintance of Hermann Ludwig Heinrich Fürst, Prince von Pückler-Muskau. Pückler-Muskau was not only a well-connected nobleman, but also a landscape designer of some renown. His work on his ancestral estate was well-known for its informal, natural qualities—in marked

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Cist, *Sketches and Statistics of Cincinnati in 1851* (Cincinnati, 1851), 218-19.

<sup>8</sup> Linden, *Spring Grove: Celebrating 150 Years*, 47-49.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

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contrast to the geometrical classical gardens that then prevailed at the Hapsburg court and elsewhere on the continent. The prince had written a book of landscape principles, *Hints on Landscape Gardening*, an inscribed copy of which became one of Strauch's most valued possessions. At the suggestion of Pückler-Muskau, Strauch took an extended tour of the leading gardens of Europe beginning in 1845; entrée was guaranteed by the prince's letters of recommendation. Traveling to Belgium, the Netherlands, and France, Strauch observed first-hand the work of Louis Van Houtte in Ghent and the pioneering Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris. Interestingly, Strauch was somewhat disappointed in the latter, the ambience of which was already being compromised by the profusion of monuments and incompatible development by private plot owners.

Strauch next traveled to London where he found employ in the Royal Botanic Society's gardens. While in England, Strauch's fluency in English, French, German, Polish, and Czech landed him a position as a guide for distinguished visitors to the Great Exhibition underway at the Crystal Palace. One of these visitors was Robert A. Bowler of Cincinnati, a well-to-do businessman and amateur horticulturist. When Strauch came to America in 1851, he intended to tour the desert Southwest and then pursue a position as a gardener in the Boston area.<sup>10</sup> Along the way, he stopped in Cincinnati where he renewed his acquaintance with Bowler, who persuaded him to stay on and serve as the landscape gardener of Mount Storm, Bowler's estate in nearby Clifton. Strauch's work redoing Mount Storm was quickly followed by commissions to upgrade the grounds at the Clifton estates of other Cincinnati notables, including those of William Neff, one of Spring Grove Cemetery's incorporators, and Robert Buchanan and Henry Probasco, the first two presidents of the cemetery. Strauch's work not only transformed the individual estates but also created paths and drives between the properties that featured dramatic vistas of the surrounding countryside. The result was a unified design for hundreds of acres of contiguous property.

Cincinnati's elite applauded Strauch's aesthetic, but the feeling was not reciprocated in terms of his opinion of Spring Grove Cemetery. Instead of informed design, Strauch found "glitter and parade...gaudiness...capricious strangeness...ennui and disgust."<sup>11</sup> In this case, honesty was rewarded: the cemetery's board created the position of "landscape gardener" for Strauch in 1854, a full-time job paying a respectable \$700 per year. More importantly, Strauch was given full authority to implement his ideas for improving Spring Grove Cemetery.

In the spring of 1855, Adolph Strauch began his work at Spring Grove. A number of new rules were adopted to prevent the disruption of the overall landscape: no fences or hedges around individual lots would be permitted in the future, nor could existing ones be replaced; all planting within the lots was to be undertaken by the superintendent only; a single monument would be permitted for each lot, with flush markers for individual graves; and the superintendent and Board of Directors were to approve the design of all monuments. These actions met with opposition, some of which took on a nativist tone opposed to his supposed "anti-American eccentricities," but Strauch had a majority of the board supporting him, so the work proceeded according to his principles.<sup>12</sup>

Of greater importance than the restrictions Strauch initiated were the positive actions he took to transform the

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<sup>10</sup> Strauch intended to visit the desert Southwest in 1851 to write travel articles for German periodicals. See: Noël Dorsey Vernon, "Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery," *Midwestern Landscape Architecture*, ed. William H. Tishler (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 7-8.

<sup>11</sup> Linden, *Spring Grove: Celebrating 150 Years*, 31.

<sup>12</sup> The dispute is recounted in some detail in Heinrich A. Rattermann, *Spring Grove and Its Creator* (1905), ed. by Don H. Tolzmann (Cincinnati: The Ohio Book Store, 1988).

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passive rural character of Spring Grove Cemetery into a conscious landscape design. Strauch improved the approach to the cemetery, planting trees along the road to create a processional transition from the outside to the beautiful landscaped grounds. Although limited in changing the already-developed sections of the cemetery, Strauch had a free hand to alter eight acres of low-lying swamp land. By filling in portions of the swamp and redirecting the water to a chain of scenic ponds, Strauch used lawn areas like an artist's canvas, on which he then placed trees, such as larches and cypresses, as well as masses of laurel, azalea and other rhododendrons, holly, and magnolia, all carefully placed so as to emphasize the undulations of the earth as well as to frame vistas and enhance views. The ponds were irregular in shape, the plantings primarily North American species, and the roads gently winding, so that the overall perceived effect imitated nature. However, because it was a designed landscape, artistic considerations such as color, the juxtaposition of shapes, light and shadow, and proportion could all be brought to bear. The result was a complete success, not only aesthetically, but also monetarily: many of the lots in the former swamp were pre-sold, and when finished it proved so popular that the somewhat shaky financial position of the cemetery was completely reversed. The half-million dollars raised from the new grounds gave Strauch even more credibility with his board and allowed the cemetery to redo some of the older portions of the cemetery, erect suitable entrance buildings, and extend the arboretum area at the front gates. With the cooperation of lot owners, the cemetery bought back some of the previously sold areas so they too could be improved in accordance with Strauch's principles, and many lot-owners voluntarily removed the fences around their lots. In 1865, the cemetery's president, Robert Buchanan, correctly predicted Spring Grove's renown:

Those parts of Spring Grove improved in the first years of its existence are now being gradually remodelled [*sic*] in conformity with the simplicity of the present style of improvements, at the request of the lot holders themselves, and should the contemplated plans of the Board be properly sustained and carried out with the energy and taste which has been displayed by Mr. Strauch, our superintendent and landscape gardener, the day is not distant when Spring Grove will scarcely find a rival.<sup>13</sup>

During Strauch's tenure, another 200 acres were added to the cemetery's holdings, so that Spring Grove was assured of having adequate land for future development. In addition to burials of the lately deceased, in this period the cemetery also accommodated hundreds of reinterments from other Cincinnati cemeteries every year, reflecting its prestige and popularity among Cincinnati families and vindicating Strauch's ideas.

**National Influence of the Lawn Park Concept**

Strauch's success with Spring Grove led to work on landscaped cemeteries in other cities, to many of which Strauch provided advice and even plans free of charge: Oakwoods Cemetery near Chicago (1864), Forest Lawn in Buffalo (1866), and Woodmere in Detroit (1869). Strauch also advised one-time Olmsted associate Jacob Weidenmann in the design of Cedar Hill in Hartford, Connecticut. Strauch was a lifelong learner and kept up an extensive correspondence with landscape gardeners in this country and abroad. In 1863, the board sent him on a three-month trip to Europe, paying his salary, where he spent the time visiting parks, gardens, zoos, and cemeteries. All of his impressions, along with what he had previously learned from Pückler-Muskau and other teachers and from his own experience with Spring Grove and subsequent projects, allowed Strauch to set down his fundamental principles of design in *Spring Grove Cemetery: Its History and Improvements, with Observations on Ancient and Modern Places of Sepulture* (1869). As it had with cemetery maps in 1867, Spring Grove's board distributed copies of Strauch's book to the principal cemeteries in America and Europe. According to Noël Dorsey Vernon, *Spring Grove Cemetery* was widely cited by other cemetery boards and

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 17, for transcription.

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associations.<sup>14</sup> Strauch also wrote for German periodicals, and contributed articles on “Rural Cemeteries” and “Landscape Gardening” to an edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

In addition to the other cemeteries that Strauch designed or advised on, his influence can be seen in rural cemeteries where new or reworked sections followed his landscape lawn principles. Mount Auburn itself adopted the landscape lawn plan pioneered by Strauch for portions of the cemetery opened in the 1870s, as did Laurel Hill in Philadelphia.<sup>15</sup> Woodlawn Cemetery in New York City, initially conceived as a rural cemetery, decided instead upon the landscape lawn plan in 1868. In 1874 the annual report of Woodlawn stated:

To Mr. Adolph Strauch, a Prussian landscape gardener, and the present accomplished superintendent of Spring Grove Cemetery, Cincinnati, is due the credit of having organized the Landscape-Lawn Plan, which bids fair, before many years, to revolutionize all of our principal cemeteries.<sup>16</sup>

In 1883, the directors of London’s Abner Park Cemetery wrote to Strauch for information on Spring Grove so they could model a new eighty-acre section on “the finest cemetery in the world;” they referred to the landscape-lawn plan the “American System.”<sup>17</sup>

Adolph Strauch, Spring Grove Cemetery, and the landscape-lawn plan became well-known and highly respected among both professionals and the general public interested in landscape design. Articles describing the cemetery and its designer appeared in general magazines such as the *Atlantic Monthly* (1867), *Scribner’s* (1871), and the *Galaxy* (1871).<sup>18</sup> The latter article, by F. B. Perkins, entitled “Sepulture: Its Ideas and Practices,” devoted a page and half to Spring Grove and noted:

it is the only [cemetery] in the United States where sufficient time has passed and sufficient space and work have been bestowed to permit an adequate judgment upon the method. The judgment, however, can be but one.<sup>19</sup>

Spring Grove also received extensive attention from the English horticultural magazine *The Garden* (1876), in which the editor, William Robinson, included two engravings of Spring Grove that he had received from Frederick Law Olmsted.<sup>20</sup> Later, Robinson discussed Spring Grove and reprinted the cemetery’s articles of incorporation in *God’s Acre Beautiful, or the Cemeteries of the Future* (1880).<sup>21</sup> As one might suspect given

<sup>14</sup> Vernon, “Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery,” 16.

<sup>15</sup> Janet L. Heywood, “Mount Auburn Cemetery,” National Historic Landmark Nomination (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2001); Noël Dorsey Vernon, “Strauch, Adolph (1822-1883),” *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, eds. Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin Karson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 387, for Laurel Hill.

<sup>16</sup> Vernon, “Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery,” 16.

<sup>17</sup> Linden, *Spring Grove: Celebrating 150 Years*, 45.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 43, for transcriptions of articles.

<sup>19</sup> As transcribed in Vernon, “Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery,” 16.

<sup>20</sup> William Robinson, “Garden Cemeteries,” *The Garden* 10 (August 1876), as cited in Vernon, “Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery,” 23.

<sup>21</sup> W. Robinson, *God’s Acre Beautiful, or the Cemeteries of the Future* (London and New York, 1880).

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his approach to park design, Olmsted was enthusiastic about Strauch's ideas on cemeteries, writing in the *American Cyclopaedia* (1875), "Cincinnati possesses in Spring Grove the best example in the world, probably, of landscape gardening applied to a burial place."<sup>22</sup> Olmsted is said to have repeatedly remarked that when he needed inspiration he visited Spring Grove.<sup>23</sup>

Even after Adolph Strauch's death from a stroke in 1883, the praise continued. Jacob Weidenmann acknowledged Strauch as the founder of the "modern" cemetery in *Modern Cemeteries: An Essay upon the Improvement and Proper Management of Rural Cemeteries* (1888), the first manual on cemetery management. In 1900, Spring Grove's design was honored with a gold medal at the Paris International Exposition. Ossian Cole Simonds, himself a notable landscape designer, called Spring Grove "the most beautiful cemetery in the world" in 1903, and in his article on Strauch for *The Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*, he stated: "No man in the United States since A. J. Downing's time has done more for the correction and cultivation of public taste in landscape gardening than Adolph Strauch."<sup>24</sup>

There is also a broad and longstanding scholarly consensus that the landscape-lawn concept developed by Adolph Strauch at Spring Grove influenced landscape design throughout the country. Writing in *American Cemetery* (1987), Robert A. Wright stated that Strauch's "reforms transformed Spring Grove into America's first landscape-lawn cemetery, which set a trend for cemetery planning after the Civil War."<sup>25</sup> In his comprehensive study of American cemetery design, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (1991), David C. Sloane identified four major design concepts: the town/city cemetery, the rural cemetery, the lawn-park cemetery, and the memorial park, for which the New Haven Burying Ground (more widely known as the Grove Street Cemetery, NHL, 2000), Mount Auburn, Spring Grove, and Forest Lawn were the respective pioneering paradigms.<sup>26</sup> In the introduction to *Midwestern Landscape Architecture* (2000), editor William H. Tishler described Strauch's "park-like burial landscape [as] a major influence in American cemetery design", and in the same volume Noël Dorsey Vernon called Strauch "arguably the foremost cemetery designer in the United States in the nineteenth century."<sup>27</sup>

**William Salway, Superintendent, 1883-1925**

William Salway (1841-1925), Adolph Strauch's successor as superintendent of Spring Grove Cemetery, was a faithful conservator of Strauch's legacy, and through his efforts Spring Grove continued as a model for cemeteries and other designed landscapes throughout America. During Salway's tenure the developed acreage at Spring Grove doubled, but because Salway continued the principles of landscaping in the natural style, with curving roads and restraint in monument design, there is no discontinuity evident between the parts of the cemetery developed under his watch and those laid out by his predecessor. Like Strauch, Salway was not afraid

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<sup>22</sup> *American Cyclopaedia*, vol. 13 (1875), 108.

<sup>23</sup> Ossian C. Simonds, "Strauch, Adolph," *Standard Cyclopedia of Horticulture*, ed. Liberty H. Bailey (New York: Macmillan & Co., 1914-17), 1598.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Robert A. Wright, "Spring Grove Cemetery," *American Cemetery* (September 1987), 22.

<sup>26</sup> David C. Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 4-5.

<sup>27</sup> William H. Tishler, "Introduction: Shaping America's Heartland," *Midwestern Landscape Architecture*, 3; Vernon, "Adolph Strauch: Cincinnati and the Legacy of Spring Grove Cemetery," 5.

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to undertake substantial re-grading, and in combination with the purchase of parts of the property that had been sold off he was able to open up new areas on the western side. Salway was also responsible for creating Spring Grove's reservoir system.

Salway was a native of Devon, England, and prior to coming to the United States he had studied engineering and had worked with the noted landscape architect Robert Ellis in Bath. In 1867, he accepted a two-year commission to improve an estate in Westchester County, New York, and after completing it, decided to stay on in America. He next took charge of Cedar Hill in Hartford, Connecticut, a rural cemetery that had been laid out by Jacob Weidenmann, one of Adolph Strauch's many admirers. Salway's work at Cedar Hill attracted sufficient national attention that Henry Probasco, president of Spring Grove's board, traveled to Hartford to interview him for the vacancy created by Strauch's death in 1883. After making a reciprocal trip to Cincinnati, Salway accepted Spring Grove's offer.

In an 1895 paper read before the Engineers Club of Cincinnati, Salway articulated his approach to landscape design:

A garden being a picture, the naked soil is the canvas on which the artist embroiders his conceptions. The two sources of color are water and foliage. The essential beauty is in the perspective. Into the compositions of a landscape five elements should enter: land, wood, water, rocks, and buildings. The first four being borrowed from nature, the fifth being the creation of man. Such, consequently is the proportion imposed on the designer of a garden in the employment of his personality in the face of nature.<sup>28</sup>

By choosing a designer with this philosophy, the board of Spring Grove Cemetery had assured that Strauch's creation would be preserved and enhanced.

Salway had substantial gifts as a manager and organizer which he used to consolidate the landscape-lawn concept as the standard of the day. Not long after he moved to Cincinnati, he wrote to other superintendents of large metropolitan cemeteries and inquired of their interest in forming an association for the exchange of ideas. The result was the formation of the Association of American Cemetery Superintendents, which had its first meeting at Spring Grove in October 1887. Through its meetings and publications, the association promoted good management and the park-like ideal that had been articulated by Salway and his predecessor.

At Spring Grove Cemetery, innovator Adolph Strauch departed from the tenets present in a partially realized rural cemetery and, in time, established a new and distinct approach to cemetery design called the landscape-lawn. For nearly seventy-five years, Strauch and his successor William Salway steadfastly adhered to developing, caring for, and promoting the landscape-lawn concept. Their combined efforts not only created an unprecedented built and natural landscape, but also structured an institutional framework placing high value on this landscape that resulted in subsequent decades of careful stewardship. Spring Grove Cemetery is a nationally significant resource because of the novel design ideas embodied and illustrated by the site and its component roads, plantings, buildings, monuments, tombs, and mausolea, as well as its influence on cemetery planning in the United States and its present state of high integrity.

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<sup>28</sup> William H. Tuttle, "William Salway, 1841-1925: A Gentleman from Devon," a paper read before the Cincinnati Literary Club, 14 Feb. 1938, Cincinnati, Ohio, 16. Photocopy available in the Cincinnati Historical Society, Cincinnati, Ohio.

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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. NR # 76001440 (1976)  
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.  
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.  
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #  
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

**Primary Location of Additional Data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office  
 Other State Agency  
 Federal Agency  
 Local Government  
 University  
 Other (Specify Repository): Spring Grove Cemetery, Administrative Offices, 4521 Spring Grove Avenue  
 Cincinnati, OH, 45232; Cincinnati Historical Society Library, 1301 Western Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio  
 45203.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Acreeage of Property:** approx. 345 acres.

The acreage was calculated using the boundary as drawn on the USGS Cincinnati West topographical quadrangle.

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	16	713700	4539390
B	16	714240	4539030
C	16	714210	4537810
D	16	714000	4537740
E	16	713550	4537380
F	16	713240	4538180
G	16	713300	4538340
H	16	713210	4538650
I	16	713450	4538710

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J	16	713460	4538880
K	16	713710	4539280
L	16	713650	4539400

**Verbal Boundary Description:**

The western boundary is Crawford Road and the southern boundary is Spring Grove Avenue. The eastern boundary is defined by Winton Road and Gray Road. The northern boundary follows the internal cemetery road that runs in a southwest-to-northeast direction along the southern edges of Sections 62 and Section 118, then northerly along the eastern edge of Section 188, then northeasterly along the southern edges of Sections 116, 115, and 114 to the North Gate entrance, taking in the unnumbered section that forms the setting for North Gate Lodge, a contributing building. (The National Register Boundary Description describes the boundary as running “to the north gate,” without explicitly stating whether or not the North Gate Lodge is included.)

The boundary is shown on the attached sketch map, entitled: “Spring Grove Cemetery.”

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundary embraces the portion of the cemetery that was actively developed with landscaping and markers during the period of significance. No attempt was made to excise the portion of the cemetery between the former railroad right-of-way and Spring Grove Avenue, even though this area contains nearly all the noncontributing buildings and structures. It was included because of the highly important gates, gatehouse, office, and Norman Chapel, and because historically it was the focus of the cemetery’s arboretum function.

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DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK  
March 29, 2007