The Development of Fairmount

Fairmount’s Little Ivy Chapel was one of the first two structures built in the development of the cemetery in 1890, alongside the Gate Lodge. It was built twenty-six feet wide and sixty-four feet long, and topped off with a ninety foot tall steeple. Both structures were designed by Henry Ten Eyck Wendell in the style of Ecclesiastical Gothic, a historically signature style of architecture for Fairmount. At the time, Mr. Wendell was considered the best architect in the West. The combined cost of these buildings was $25,000 in 1891, $5 million at today’s value.

The grounds of the cemetery itself were designed by revered architect Reinhard Schuetze modeled after Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, MA. Mr. Schuetze was the “father” of Denver’s massive city park system, designing many of the city’s most famous parks; Washington Park, City Park, and even the original landscape around the state capitol.

Today, both buildings are nationally registered historic landmarks. To the right are several major landmarks of Ivy Chapel to look out for and their meanings.

Spires from this style of architecture are meant to help a structure rise above a city of 20th century buildings and make it the focal point/centerpiece of the town.

The divinity of light serves as the inspiration for the large, elongated windows on the sides of the chapel as well as the large, wheel-style rose window over the entrance.

The pointed arch and overall emphasis of the height in this structure suggests an aspirational ascent to Heaven; A majestic façade also creates a powerful impression on incoming worshippers.

The mathematical and geometric nature of the structure is an ode to the perception of an orderly universe ruled by rationality and logic and powered by a higher power.