



Martin A. Benassi, AIA
Architect LLC

Saint Francis of Assisi Chapel Gate of Heaven Cemetery

Hawthorne, NY

Forensic Evaluation

Martin A. Benassi, AIA - Architect LLC was contacted by Culbertson Company of New York to perform a comprehensive forensic study of the Saint Francis of Assisi Chapel. The chapel is the central structure of the circular mausoleum complex at the Gate of Heaven Cemetery.

The complex was designed by Ludwig P. Bone and constructed circa 1966. Four bridges provide access to the chapel over the surrounding moat. The building has a structural steel frame clad with granite panels forming lancet-type windows.



Benoit D. Gilsoul, regarded as one of the foremost authorities in the field of stained glass, designed the Dalle de Verre windows for the Saint Francis of Assisi Chapel. The window panels were produced by the Studio of Jean-Jacques Duval under the direction of the studio foreman and craftsman, Helmut Schardt. The custom window frames were fabricated in New York by J. Sussman Inc.

Moisture migration through the exterior facade resulted in extensive damage to the interior finish. Thermal scans of the lancet windows indicated extremely high temperatures on the face of the glass surface. Because of the high heat, some of the Dalle De Verre glass panels bowed. This caused the glass to fall out and created a safety hazard, which resulted in the Archdiocese of New York closing the chapel to the public.

