



**Above**, the site in Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum where a lookout tower once stood, providing a beacon and fire watch station for the area. **Right**, the recently dedicated Lookout Tower, which has transformed the site.



## Woodland Cemetery's new niches and committal space evoke site's history

An 1899 newspaper article inspired design of Woodland Cemetery and Arboretum's new columbarium and committal space. The project, which overlooks the city of Dayton, evokes a historic structure that once stood on the same site.

In early 2007, Dave FitzSimmons, Woodland's president and CEO, issued a design challenge. He wanted a columbarium developed on the highest, steepest and most prominent site in the cemetery. At the same time the project needed to reflect the historic nature of Woodland, which is on the National Historic Registry, and to be profitable.

During the design process, FitzSimmons shared with the design team from The Tribute Companies an article from an

1899 issue of the Dayton Daily News. Included in the article was a description of "The Lookout," a tower built on the same site as the current project that served as both a beacon and fire watch station for the entire Miami Valley.

With that inspiration, the architectural team, lead by Ben Erdmann, project manager for Tribute Design Systems, Hartland, Wisconsin, designed a structure that replicated the original tower.

The tower, which was built into the hillside, serves as committal space within the Lookout Plaza. A columbarium, consisting of three sections containing 128 inurnment spaces, separates the plaza from the adjacent grave spaces. Stone materials similar to those used on the cemetery's existing mausoleum and administrative building were incorporated into the plan.

A road surrounding the plaza and existing burial section was replaced by a meandering pathway which takes advantage of the site's spectacular views and allows for placement of smaller columbariums, family mausoleums and private estates.

Family estate areas are being individually designed based on client preferences and will be constructed as sales dictate.

During the dedication for the Lookout Columbarium and Plaza, a time capsule, to be opened at the 300th anniversary of Woodland in 2141, was placed behind a plaque in the structure.

Woodland's logo was recently updated to incorporate the tower. □



**Another view of the Lookout Tower.**



**Niche spaces around Lookout Plaza.**



**The new tower, like the original, overlooks the city of Dayton.**



**A sketch of the original Lookout Tower.**