

ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

UC Davis Landscape Architecture Senior Project 2010

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The Atlantic City Boardwalk Holocaust Memorial Design

A senior project presented to the faculty of the program of Landscape Architecture in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelors of Sciences in Landscape Architecture.

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By Kyle Shipley June 11th, 2010 - Allerton

I am entering an international two-stage design competition with the objectives of creating a prominent seaside public pavilion as a memorial to the holocaust on the Atlantic City Boardwalk, New Jersey. The design intent is to create awareness about holocaust, a tragic scar on human history, and also look into other genocidal events in a way to capture a universal audience. It is intended to be designed as a very highly used public space due to the site s seaside location on the Atlantic City Boardwalk. I intend to gain a greater understanding of how memorials can be a means of social expression to the public and to the individual. This paper will indulge in the complecities of memorials and how they can present sensitive, controversial, and critical issues into the public domain.

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I chose this competition due to its powerful content and strong message. I have always had a passion for history and feel it is essential for our future to remember the past. The Holocaust is one of the most important events in human history which must taught the world, and will teach the future about humanity and humility. The death of over ten million people and persecution over millions more must always be remembered to ensure the life and wellbeing of the future world. What better way can we remember such an important event than through a memorial? Memorials are interesting not only because of their content, but because of the array of emotional responses they can inspire. Memorials touch on controversial and provocative subject matter and because of this; they are often under much controversy and discussion, praise and dislike. Further intriguing my interest for memorials due to their relationships with civic spaces, social movements and artistic expressions.

INTRODUCTION

The Atlantic City Boardwalk Holocaust Memorial Organization (ACBHM, Inc.) is sponsoring an international two-stage blind design competition to create a Holocaust memorial on the Atlantic City Boardwalk. Their vision for the memorial is to create awareness in a significant public place about the malicious acts to humanity that were perpetrated during the Holocaust. The memorial must speak to a broad audience on the history and nature of the Holocaust and the impact it makes on our past, present and future (ACBHM, 2010).

The competition is broken into two stages. The first stage requires designers to submit a digital design concept consisting of a plan and perspective view of their design along with a 150 word descriptive commentary. These designs will be judged anonymously by members of the ACBHM judging board. The judges consist of distinguished historians, architects, planners, and artists. They will choose six to ten designs to advance to the second stage of the competition in which the designers chosen must submit a 3-dimensional model of their proposed design, as well as perspectives, text, and any other significant elements to communicate their design. The ACBHM has established a budget between two and four million dollars to make this memorial a reality and create an opportunity to influence millions of people to remember the Holocaust, to remember the fathers, mothers, and children who perished, and remember the need for tolerance and compassion regardless of differences such as race, faith, sexuality to preserve future generations (ACBHM, 2010).

- Alleria

PART I. MEMORIAL RESEARCH

What is a Memorial?

A memorial is something, a structure, established to remind people of a significant person or event (Simpson, 1993). Memorials are a form of socially constructed forms of remembrance of our pasts. Memorials can be preserved in many shapes and forms (Osbourne,2001). The past can be reconstructed through many forms such as archives, graves, monuments, museums, religious gathering spaces, and many other types of remembrance. The past can be remembered by what people of the present visually see and mentally interpret, thus making memorials a central part of not only what they are intended to remember, but also the social context in which they are built.

Two most common types of memorials are Spontaneous and Traditional. Spontaneous memorials are a first reaction to an

event usually of violence or loss of life (Osbourne,2001). These can include objects with significant meaning such as, but not limited to, flowers or candles in remembrance of a loved one. Traditional memorials are formal art or architectural pieces in public spaces to remember an import person, place, or event.

As the Roman Empire, architectural structures were constructed in public spaces to commemorate significant people and events in common civic spaces (Levinson,1998). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,





A Property lies

PART I. MEMORIAL RESEARCH

What is a Memorial?



1.2 - Traditional Memorial

a surge of monuments, known as commemorative statues, were built in order to remember significant social and political figures and events in public spaces (Levinson,1998). Many of these statues are looked upon as the standard of traditional memorials. Common forms of traditional memorials are statues of significant person(s) which are being commemorated. Traditionally, these types of commemorative works are usually very literal to help the public know exactly what to think about the monument and what it represents.

A common traditional memorial is a monument that is related to war. War memorials can be extremely controversial due to the intense

subject matter which they portray. Political and social elements of the time period greatly impact these types of memorials. Roles of victims, perpetrators, governments and ideologies are debated in the creation of war memorials. In order to further understand the impact memorials have on modern society, I have picked three significant memorial sites in which to conduct more extensive case studies. All three of these sites have been praised and ridiculed for their designs. These case studies will help give a stronger understanding of modern memorials and the types of political, architectural, and social problems each design faced.

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PART I. MEMORIAL RESEARCH

Case Studies

Vietnam Veterens Memorial - Washington D.C.

The Vietnam Veterans' Memorial is a war memorial in Washington, D.C. honoring the Americans who fought in the Vietnam War. The memorial was built in 1982 and was designed by the American Landscape Architect Maya Ying Lin. At the time, she was an undergraduate student at Yale University who won a blind design competition for the memorial. The design is a V-shaped 493 feet granite wall which descends 10 feet below grade level and lies between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial. Inscribed on the granite wall are names of more than 58,000 Americans killed or went missing during the Vietnam War (Lopez,2008). Each name is listed chronologically, oppose too alphabetically, which enhances the emotional response to the entire



1.3 - Maya Lin s Competition Entry

Maya Lin's memorial design has been the subject of much praise as well as much controversy. The memorial has been criticized for being too abstract, austere, and minimalistic to fully depict the war's casualties. The memorial was designed only six years after the war had ended, enticing controversy due to public emotion instability. To further dramatize the situation, some people were upset by the fact a Chinese American student was the designer of a memorial that represented a war between us and Asia adding to public emotional controversy over the memorial. Pat Buchanan, a conservative political columnist, accused Lin of being a communist (Lopez,2008). Lin testified in a Congressional hearing defending her design. In response to the controversy,



Case Studies

Vietnam Veterens Memorial - Washington D.C.



1.4 - The VVM Wall

Frederick Hart, who had placed third in the original design competition, was commissioned to create "The Three Soldiers" a bronze statue of American soldiers looking at the wall (Maya, 1995).

Despite some personal issues surrounding the design, for many this memorial was seen as a modern architectural marvel and an incredible war memorial. It is the most visited memorial in Washington D.C. The memorial helps educate the public on the losses in this war, and acts as a closure for Veterans. The Vietnam Veteran's Memorial acts a symbol of remembrance of how art

can play a significant role in how people

view significant events. Maya Lin expresses that there is no wrong way to view the memorial and it should have a personal and individual impact for one's own experience (Maya, 1995). With the minimalistic approach, Lin's design expresses no ideals on American politics, but simply focuses on the effects of war on human life. Maya Lin has won many awards for her Vietnam Veterans Memorial design and the piece has been acknowledged as a pinnacle of modern day memorials.



1.5 - Aerial of Vietnam Vetern s Memorial



Case Studies

Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe - Berlin

In 2001, to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, the German government built a memorial for the Jews who were killed in the extermination camps. The memorial, 'Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe,' was designed by American architect Peter Eisenman who was first proposed the project in the late 1980s. The project was not approved by politicians until the late 1990's, and the final design plans were finally viewed



1.6 - Memorial and Berlin Skyline

by the public in 1999 (Quigley, 2005). The memorial is built on a controversial site south of the Brandenburg Gate, which



1.7 - Memorial Blocks

in 1937 housed the office of a key Nazi propagandas along with the infamous bunker where Hitler ended his life (Quigley,2005). After 1961, it was patrolled as part of no-man's land separating Communist East from democratic West Berlin(Brunberg,2005).

Eisenman's design consists of 2,711 rectangular stones all different shapes and sizes formed in a square grid pattern. The stones are meant to represent the six million Jews that were killed during the Holocaust; they undulate across the



Case Studies

Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe - Berlin



surface of the site in a grid pattern. Like many other war memorial sites, the design of the 'Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe' has educed much controversy.

Many say it is too abstract and does not give a just representation or enough historical information about the Nazi campaign against the Jews (Brunberg,2005). Others are frustrated that the memorial lacks recognition of others who were persecuted by the Nazis such as homosexuals and Roma and Sinti people (Quigley,2005). To compromise, the German government has installed a museum under the memorial with more historical information. Still, controversy over the memorial continues, with some of the Jewish community feel the memorial is too concentrated on the victims and the perpetrators are not depicted in the site. On the other hand, some German nationalists have said it is victimizing German soldiers. Due to the hot topic and location of the memorial it is clear there are going to be people who view the memorial in many different lights.

While some people have their dislikes about the memorial, others say it resembles a cast field of nameless tombstones and captures the horror of the Nazi death camps.



Case Studies

Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe - Berlin

The memorial has a "feel of loss and disorientation that Jews felt during the holocaust." (Brunberg,2005). The controversial themes represented in the memorial are expected to bring graffiti and vandalism to the site which is a well known problem in Berlin. However, the minimalist design along with anti-graffiti coating helps prevent this from occurring. When asked about this problem Peter Eisenman stated he was not worried about it because it is a form of free speech. Like many works of art/architecture, only time will tell how this memorial will be viewed in the future.





Case Studies

The New England Holocaust Memorial - Boston

The New England Holocaust Memorial "was built to foster memory of and reflection on one of the great tragedies of our time, the Holocaust."(Friends of the NEHM,2010). Efforts to generate funds for the project began from Holocaust survivors of Nazi concentration camps who have made new lives in the greater Boston area. Located in downtown Boston, near Faneuil Hall and other significant sites of America's history, the site helps express the importance of society's respect

Haymarket Memorial location

Memorial location

Graph Congress

1.11 - Memorial Context Map

and acknowledgment for human rights. The final design was done by San Francisco architect,



1.10 - New England Holocaust Memorial Towers

Stanley Saitowitz, and was dedicated in October of 1995 (Friends of the NEHM,2010). The memorial features six 54 feet tall glass towers. The towers have smoke rising from the tops of them, and they also illuminate the night sky with lights projecting out of the clear glass surface. On the outside of the glass towers six million numbers are etched into the glass suggesting the numbers which Jews were forced to have tattooed



Case Studies

The New England Holocaust Memorial - Boston



1.12 - New England Holocasut Memoria

as identification codes from the Nazi government during the Holocaust. The six towers are meant to recall the six main death camps, the six million Jews who died, and/or the menorah of memorial candles (Friends of the NEHM,2010).

Like other memorials of this subject matter, the memorial had some significant controversy surrounding it. Some people from the local Jewish community felt that Boston was not an appropriate place for such a memorial, while others were greatly offended by the design, in particular, the number etched into the glass representing the identification numbers. On April 19th, 2001, Leo V. Felton and Erica Chase were arrested, for having Nazi flags hanging in their window along with bomb materials and evidence suggesting a plan to blow up the New England Holocaust Memorial (NEHM,1995).

For the most part the site has gained many good reviews and praises, people look at the memorial site along Boston's Freedom Trail (NEHM,1995). The site offers guided informational tours and educates many visitors of the site about the horrors of the Holocaust, and the vitality of human rights.

PART II. SITE CONTEXT

The site for the memorial is located at a prominent public seaside pavilion on the Atlantic City Boardwalk. The pavilion itself is a 40 feet by 60 feet boardwalk alcove hanging of the Atlantic Ocean shoreline. According to the ACBHM, Inc. the boardwalk attracts approximately 35 million visitors per year and at least 10 million directly pass the pavilion (ACBHM,2010).

The boardwalk is located in Atlantic City, New Jersey,
United States. It has become a famous beach front tourist
attraction know for its casinos, sandy beaches, and shopping
centers. Atlantic City was incorporated on May 1, 1854



2.1 - Memorial Site Context Map

and became a travel destination due to its close proximity to Philadelphia. Throughout the city's history, Atlantic City has had a fluctuating economy. It steadily rose as a leader in tourism during the first half of the twentieth century. The ocean pier was the world's first ocean side amusement pier. However many tourist overtime began to turn to less expensive or more exotic destinations. The boardwalk and surrounding buildings have been rebuilt after large hurricane in 1944 flooded and destroyed the area. The boardwalk has revitalized its tourism in the last few decades with the surge of revitalization after the city

PART II. SITE CONTEXT



2.2 - Majestic Aerial on Atlantic City Boardwalk

counsel approved the legalization of gambling in 1974, thus bring in major casinos and shops along the boardwalk. Today, Atlantic City coins itself with the phrase "always turned on." (ShoreGuides, 2010)

As of 2008, the Atlantic City has a population of 35,770 people with 266,268 people living in the larger Atlantic City metropolitan area. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city consists of 17.4 square miles, of which six miles are under water. Atlantic City has a humid subtropical climate and an annual average of 205 sunshine days. Summers are typically warm and humid averaging highs of 75-81 degrees Fahrenheit and lows of

64-70 degrees Fahrenheit; however the boardwalk gets a cool sea breeze lowering the boardwalks average temperatures. Winters are mild with highs of 41-46 degrees Fahrenheit and lows of 29-34 degrees Fahrenheit. Annual precipitation rate is 38 inches spread fairly evenly throughout the year. (Census Bureau Atlantic City, 2010)

Design Challenges

Creating a Holocaust memorial on this site poses many challenges. The Holocaust is always a sensitive and intense subject. One must be extremely carefully when designing a memorial for one of the most tragic events of human history. An important, but also very complex, aspect of memorials is the use of symbols. A symbol is a physical representation of emotional or psychological feeling or idea (Simpson,1993). There are many symbols associated with the holocaust, religions, genocides, and humanity, all which must take into consideration for my site. While symbols are important elements, they are also extremely controversial and must be used with care and precision. Creating incorrect symbolic meanings in the site can destroy the meaning of the site, on the other hand, correct symbolic gestures can make a powerful statements and be very persuasive and compelling.

Another challenge is the location of the memorial. The Atlantic City Boardwalk is known as a tourist attraction; places to party, gamble, and socialize. To most people illusions to the Holocaust trigger intense emotional responses. As a designer, it becomes a tremendous challenge to not only create a boardwalk tourist plaza but also a memorial powerful enough to display the importance which the Holocaust represents to humanity. Also, the location poses physical challenges as well. The plaza is held up by posts embedded in the sand and therefore must meet specific building codes. One main code is that the space can not be a solid building. Another physical consideration is the sites proximity to the Atlantic Ocean. Materials must be able to withstand the salty seashore air as well has be compliant with be built on a boardwalk over sandy soil.

Finally, the use of written inscriptions on the memorial has many challenges. Using too few words may lack important

Design Challenges

details while to many may become overwhelming to the viewer. Like symbols, words can make a powerful statement but can also create major controversy. Each and every facet of a memorial is important as you are dealing with emotions of each individual visitor. Words are an essential part of most memorials but most be used with tremendous care.

Design Concept

From the beginning of the design process, I immediately had three primary design goals to integrate into my design. One, I wanted my site to have a smooth transition with my memorial site and the boardwalk. The site must present itself as a boardwalk plaza as well as a Holocaust memorial. Second, to educate the public on the horrors of the Holocaust and the role it plays in modern day human rights. Finally, to encourage people to reflect on their own lives, and what personal responsibilities they have to preserve human rights for the future.

My concept began to explore the connection between darkness and light. The darkness represents humankind's mistakes, impurities, and regrets which we can not deny nor forget have been done. The light represents hope for humanity's future. While we cannot change our past, we can reflect what we have collectively done and strive to create a better future. In order to create this journey for the viewer, my design elements draw viewers into the site, make them think, ponder, explore, and question for themselves. There are many elements which are subtle or ambiguous. The experience is intended to be a personal interpretation to the individual. There are many levels of symbolism, art, and thought that the influence overall design. My hope is that the site can work as an interesting boardwalk plaza to some, and to other a revelatory place of remembrance and contemplation.

The circulation in and through the site is a significant design element in itself. The flow is intended to present different levels of engagement to the visitor. The entrance of the site has some seat walls and small planters to work as seating for adjacent shops and bystanders. However, when one passes through the memorial sign at the entrance one becomes increasing engaged.

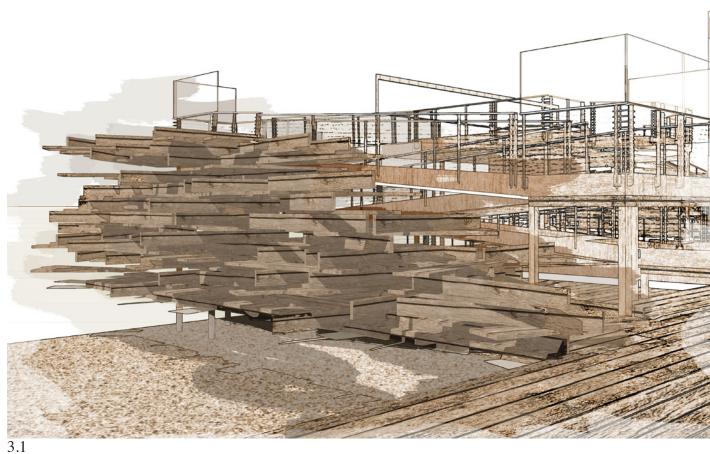
Design Concept

The intention is to draw the boardwalk visitors into the site. Next, engage with the site by interactive and engaging elements. Also, bring you into important aspects of the memorial by utilizing significant materials and views from the Atlantic City Boardwalk area. The circulation will help give the feeling of dark and light as you view our past tragedies and continue to look for hope in the future.



Design Elements

Boardwalk Art Installation



Design Elements

Boardwalk Art Insallation

A boardwalk is a unique architectural landscape. To some it may be interpreted simply as a wooden structure, but to others it has a natural fit with the landscape. The boardwalk creates its own identity through its shear length which produces a vanishing point into the horizon pulling the eye of visitors, enticing them to explore its surface. The Atlantic City Boardwalk is one of the most famous and longest boardwalks in the world. My proposed memorial site consists of a two story pavilion held up by separate structural piers. It is primarily made out of wooden planks coinciding with the existing boardwalk.



3.2 - Boardwalk on Ferry Terminal



3.3 Ferry Terminal Entrance

The site is visible from a great distance on each side from the boardwalk.

Two key elements are intended to help unify the site with the boardwalk and draw visitors towards the memorial site. The first is an artistic wooden installation located on the north and south ends of the pavilion. Two large wooden structures of unevenly stacked planks graze the skyline. I was inspired by the contemporary wood artist such as Takamasa Kuniyasu and Tadashi Kawamata through their wooden art

Design Elements

Boardwalk Art Installation

instillations. Kuniyasu helps evoke my vision with his beautiful vision of repetitive stacking and Kawamata with his utilization of the materials which a site possesses (Fox,1990). I was also inspired by the Yokohama International Port Terminal, Yokohama, Japan by Foreign Office Architects (FOA). This site creates a seamless transition with the Ferry Building and the pier which runs along side as well as over the building serving as an important civic space (FOA,2002). It uses the existing pier and incorporates the material into all aspects of their architecture.

The boardwalk art instillation is crude and immense. The stacking is uneven and abrupt. This represents the chaos inflicted on many by the holocaust. The stacked timber also represents the bodies of the dead unconcernedly thrown into large piles with no respect for the dead. The instillations fall into and around the site intriguing visitors to explore into the pavilion.



Design Elements

The Six Towers





Design Elements

The Six Towers

The second wooden instillation is six large wooden poles emerging out from the wooden decking at the entrance of the site. These represent the six main concentration camps along with the six million Jews who died during the Holocaust. The number sis is a significant theme continued throughout the memorial with the handrails and railings all six feet on center, as well as seat walls and planters being 18 inches high and segments of 6 feet in length. On these wooden poles are 18 feet tall and a have an 18 inch diameter. Running along the surface are tick marks carved into them reflecting on the millions of people persecuted and killed during the Nazi regime. Not only were Jews targeted, but many races, gypsies, and homosexuals were persecuted also. Two-thirds up the posts coils barbed wire which wraps between the posts as if entering a concentration camp. In between the two center post suspends a galvanized steel sign stating, "The Atlantic City Holocaust Memorial." Gazing upward at the posts, the marks etched into the wood become sparse and distant and the barbed wire is broken and coiled back upon itself symbolizing the end of the deaths and persecution. Finally, the tops of the posts are illuminated by bright lights. These lights symbolize hope for the future to not have such tragic casualties. Also, Atlantic City Boardwalk prides itself as "always turned on" and these lights will help act as beacons into the site from the adjacent boardwalk and shops at night.



Design Elements

The Ambiguous Mound





Design Elements

The Ambiguous Mound

The site has a central sculptural piece that helps draw visitors into the site and connect the dark and light elements between the two levels. The bottom floor is relatively bare with a few seat walls and railings. However, in the center of the floor is an enclosed sculptural element of an ambiguous mound of forms which pull up to a basic figure reaching up towards the sky. The



3.6 - Upper Deck looking down into the Ambiguous Mound Sculpture

mound is illuminated by natural light from a hole in the upper deck coupled along with uplighting sounding the base of the statue. To some this mound may symbolize the people lost in the Holocaust from the concentration camps, to others, an unobtainable plead for help. From the dark lower deck, the mound may appear as a distant object that can not be touched. However, once on the upper deck the statue can be viewed from above. From only this view one can see writing inscribed



Design Elements

around the statue. The inscription is a quote from Elie Wiesel, a prominent scholar, humanitarian, activist and holocaust survivor. The quote stats, "Just as despair can come to one only from other human beings, hope, too, can come only by other human beings." My vision is to evoke a personal connection with what has happened with the holocaust with each visitor and spread awareness that while one may not be able to change the past, it is up to everyone individually to become active in human rights in order to ensure a better future. By collectively acting we can combat against violence and apathy.



Design Elements

Framing the Future





Design Elements

Framing the Future

As one enters the top pavilion the second element is a large frame with a view of the Atlantic Ocean over looking the horizon. The wooden frame is inscribed with an Anne Frank quote, stating, "How wonderful it is that nobody needs to waste a single moment before starting to impact the world." Similar to the Ambiguous Mound this may conjure different interpretation for each individual viewer. Some may look back east towards the horizon where the Holocaust took place and where loved ones have suffered and perished. Others may see the horizon as a vision of hope, looking out into the light of the future. This upper pavilion acts as an amazing platform for visitors to view the beauty of the sun rise over the Atlantic Ocean framing a new beginning each an every day.



Design Elements

The Remembrance Timeline





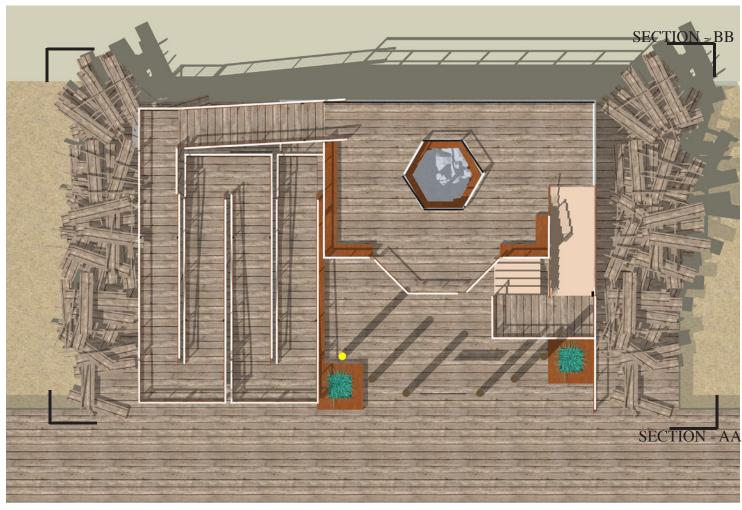
Design Elements

The Remembrance Timeline

After passing through the lower deck, you progress to the upper level. This ramp not only serves as handicap access to the upper deck but also an educational timeline of significant events of the Holocaust. As I have observed through my case studies, there is always controversy surrounding the designer's vision for a memorial and the amount of historical context accessible to the public. While the first elements of the memorial are subjective to the individual visitor, this timeline will give factual historical information to visitors who may not have the background or interest level to examine memorial elements related to the Holocaust. A series of glass signs will hold up the information about significant events chronically ordered from bottom to top of the ramp. My hope for this walk is to help educate the masses about important historical events during the Holocaust. Also, I would like this pathway to serve as a walk of contemplation in the transition between the dark and light spaces of the memorial. In order to enter the upper deck, one must first go under it into the darkness. From here one can use the timeline ramp or stair case which brings you into the light overlooking the Atlantic Ocean and some of Atlantic City Boardwalk's many views.



Plan



4.1 - Plan View with section cross sections



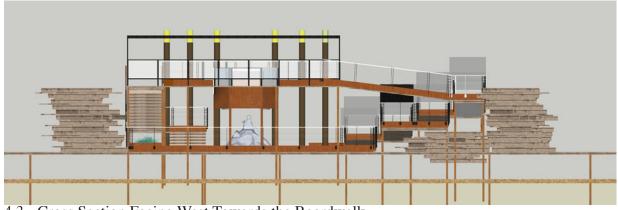
Sections

SECTION - AA



4.2 - Cross Section Facing East Towards the Atlantic Ocean

SECTION - BB

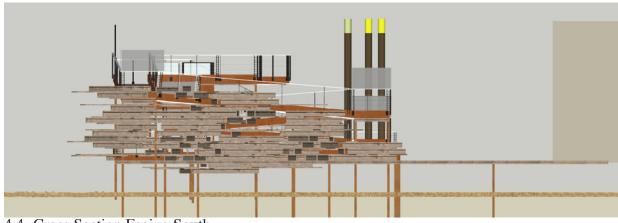


4.3 - Cross Section Facing West Towards the Boardwalk



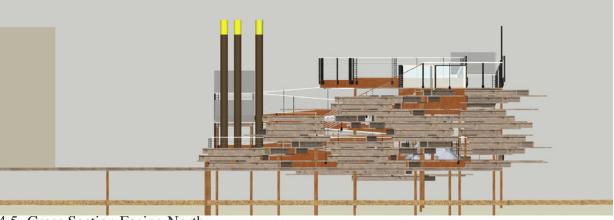
Sections

SECTION - CC



4.4- Cross Section Facing South

SECTION - DD



4.5- Cross Section Facing North



Perspective

Looking south over the Memorial Site and Atlantic City Boardwalk





Perspective Memorial Entrance, Nightscene

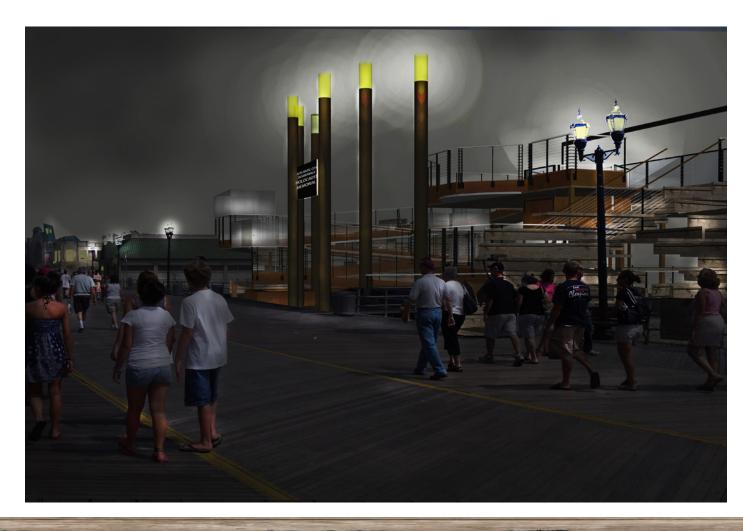
4.7





Perspective Viewing up

4.8



CONCLUSION

For me, this design project has been a journey. It has allowed me to gain a greater understanding of the impact which we as landscape architectures can have on society. Memorials are destinations, works of art, and public spaces. They can create controversy, comfort, and closure. They represent social movements, political statements, and ideologies. Symbols, inscriptions, and designs should not be placed in public spaces lightly. Their impacts can have effects on personal levels as well as societies as a whole. As a designer, I have learned my designs must be articulate and precise. They must have a purpose, as well as reasons behind them.

This project has given me a broader sense of the meaning of design. For me, this project was emotional and powerful. Working with a subject matter which looks into human nature as deep as the Holocaust provokes a lot of emotion. This project has made me more aware of this horrific and tragic event. It has inflicted a sense of personal obligation to be more active in human rights efforts. I feel I have left a part of me in this design. This emotional attachment which I have with my design I will strive to carry with me into my professional career.

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