

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: MORE THAN A MARKER

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2022

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Architecture

In Late August of 1619 “20 and odd” enslaved Africans forcibly arrived at Old Point Comfort, Virginia after a treacherous journey across the Atlantic Ocean. This arrival would mark the beginning of slavery as we know it today. Fast forward to the year 1861, about a month after the start of the civil war, three enslaved men would escape to freedom at Fortress Monroe, formally known as Old Point Comfort. Out of their escape came the Fort Monroe Doctrine, which came to be known as the Contraband Decision. This decision would lead to the freedom of thousands of enslaved African Americans during the civil war. At the same location that the institution of slavery would begin, is the same location that the institution of slavery would begin to end. Now, in the present day, three markers lie at the site of Fort Monroe to tell this story.



Figure: Three markers and their locations at Fort Monroe

One to the First Landing of Africans, one to the three men and their escape, and one to what would become Freedom's Fortress. In response to those three Markers, I'd argue that they are not enough. This story and all of its components were turning points in American history. This story should be told with more than a marker.

We'll never fully know or can even imagine the thoughts and feelings the people who went through this had, but one could wonder how it felt for them to be kidnapped from their homeland, being brought to this place in which they'd never been, being stripped from their family and culture, or just simply going from being surrounded by massive Baobab trees to Oak Trees. To have no idea what would lie ahead for the next 200 plus years. I pose these questions in thinking of what More than a Marker could be. In what ways can architecture communicate stories of great impact that have often been overlooked or condensed? How can it go beyond a marker, bust, or statue, or be used in addition to? How can design evoke emotions and feelings towards those stories? Then, in telling these stories through the architecture how will it be a timeless piece in that it is visited for generations to come?

MORE THAN A MARKER

by

TaLisha Itasha Jenkins

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the
University of Maryland, College Park, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Architecture
2022

Advisory Committee:
Professor Ronit Eisenbach, Chair
Professor David Cronrath
Professor Lindsey May

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Preface

Growing up as a kid in Southampton County, Virginia, like many schools around our country, black history was limited to black history month. In learning about black history during the month of February we generally learned about slavery, civil rights movements and the people who impacted two such as Harriet Tubman, Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Rosa Parks. Although their work was necessary and should be taught in our schools, there is so much more to the local black history of where we live our everyday lives. We walk down streets, go to schools, and live in neighborhoods named after people and events that we do not learn about.

Of the untold black history in the county in which I live includes Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion. I would first hear of Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion after coming across a road sign that for years caused great debate amongst the citizens of the county. The name of this sign was called Blackhead Signpost Road. When I noticed the sign for the first time I was with my father, and I immediately questioned the name of the road. My dad would let me know that an African American had once been decapitated and their head was placed on a post where that road sign was now located. This happened as a result of the rebellion. People wanted to warn the enslaved of what would happen to them if they were to rebel again.



Figure 1: Blackhead Signpost Road (Virginia Pilot)



Figure 2: Nat Turner's Insurrection Historical Marker (Virginia Pilot)

My learning of the history of Nat Turner's Slave Rebellion didn't occur during my formal education until my junior year of high school, where we glazed over a single sentence in a history textbook about the moment. As I had already heard of this before, I was interested and ready to learn more about what happened, being that we lived right where it occurred. What sites were we in the vicinity of and who were the people involved? However, the class continued and that single sentence in

that textbook would be the first- and last-time hearing about the rebellion during my primary education. This moment led to continually questioning what else was being glazed over in our history classes and what other events have happened in our surrounding landscapes.

Stories like these sparked my curiosity as a kid and have continued too today. This story and many like it have led to this project titled More Than a Marker.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis project to all the stories of Black History that have yet to be told.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my chair Professor Ronit Eisenbach, and committee members, Professor David Cronrath and Professor Lindsey May for their support and guidance throughout this project.

Thank you to the Fall 2022 Thesis Cohort for the endless laughs, feedback, and support throughout the Thesis semester.

Last, thank you to my family and friends for the love and support throughout this 3.5-year journey. I couldn't have made it without all of you.

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Chapter 1: Memorials

History

Monuments and memorials can reflect values, important stories, and power, and they serve as reminders that history is not just in books, but all around us.¹ They both serve to commemorate events and honor people and have been around for thousands of years. One of the earliest forms of monuments and memorials include The Pyramid of Djoser. Djoser, also spelled Zoser, was the second king of the 3rd dynasty of ancient Egypt, who undertook the construction of the earliest important stone building in Egypt.² One of the earliest known architects, Imhotep, designed the pyramid by stacking mastabas on top of one another to give it the shape as we know it today.



Figure 3: Pyramid of Djoser (Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

¹ Kaleena Black, History in Our Backyards: Monuments and Memorials

² “Djoser.”

Today we find monuments and memorials at every corner of our landscape. Monuments and memorials to historic events, well renowned individuals and moments of loss. In the United States this can be well found at our nation's capital of Washington D.C, home to over 160 monuments and memorials. Some of the most notable are the Washington Monument, Lincoln's Memorial and the Vietnam War Memorial, all visited by millions every year.

Parallel Histories

Although monuments and memorials have been around for centuries, there has been a lack of whose history is preserved and honored. African American People and People of Color have largely been left out when it comes to memory in our landscapes. Oftentimes these histories are carried by the people themselves from generation to generation. In relation to African Americans in particular, only 2% of the 95,000+ entries on the National Register of Historic Places - "the list of sites deemed worthy of preservation by the federal government" - focus on the experiences of African Americans.³ From the start the National Register of Historic Places has had biases on what determines if a structure gets preserved, excluding many African American Historic Sites. Subsequently, our landscapes largely consist of monuments and memorials that tell a story excluding many who have contributed to this nation's history. There is a parallel history going untold in our landscapes due to these inequities that were put in place many years ago.

³ "The Widespread Failure to Preserve African American History."

Chapter 2: Fort Monroe History

Original Settlers

Before Fort Monroe received any of its many names, settled there 10,000 years before the arrival of the English were indigenous people. The Kecoughtan Indigenous Peoples are known to have been settled at what we now know as Fort Monroe.

After many years of resisting the Powhatan Confederacy, in the year 1597, the Weroance of the Kecoughtan died. Chief Powhatan would install his son Pochins as the new Weroance and his people would spread throughout Tsenacomoco. Tsenacomoco is the name given by the Powhatan to their native region, which includes today's Tidewater region as well as parts of the Eastern Shore.

By 1607, the Kecoughtan village would stand amid a few thousand cleared acres on the east side of the mouth of the Hampton River.⁴ However, the arrival of the first English settlers would occur during this time and the relations between them and

⁴ “Uncovering Traces of Historic Kecoughtan.”

the indigenous people would cause the deterioration of the people. By 1610, Governor Thomas Gates would remove the Powhatan settlers from the Kecoughtan village, bringing the centuries of indigenous peoples' occupation to an end.



Figure 4: Portrait of Chief Black Hawk drawn by Charles Bird King at Fort Monroe in 1833 (Source: Image Collection, Fort Monroe Archives)

Old Point Comfort to Fortress Monroe

In June of 1608, Captain John Smith would begin to explore the Chesapeake Bay and its adjacent rivers. Out of his exploration came his infamous map of Virginia published in 1612. He pronounced this place a “little isle fit for a castle.”⁵ Prior to Fortress Monroe being built there were other fortifications that predated the Fortress as we know it today. The first to be built was Fort Algernourne, settlers built a

⁵ “Fort Monroe.”

wooden structure large enough to hold fifty men and seven mounted cannons.⁶ Fort Algernourne would later come to be known as Point Comfort Fort.

In the year 1819 the Fort as we know it today would get built, partially by the enslaved. It was built as a part of a coastal defense strategy developed by the army following the War of 1812. It would become the largest stone fort ever to be built in the United States and holds that title until this day.



Figure 5: A Color Illustration of Fort Monroe in 1861 (Source: Library of Congress)

During the Civil War, it would become the only federal military installation in the upper south that would remain a part of the Union.

⁶ "Fort Monroe."

Chapter 3: Significant African American History at Fort Monroe

First Landing Site

Early in the Spring of 1619, the Portuguese would capture 350 Africans from the West African Kingdom of Ndongo, today the country of Angola. These Africans would suddenly be stripped from their homes, culture, family and friends. Once the Portuguese captured them, the now enslaved would be forced to travel 200 miles to the Portuguese port of Luanda, where they would then board the San Juan Bautista. The San Juan Bautista would leave Luanda and head for Vera Cruz, Mexico. The enslaved would suffer from inhumane conditions aboard the ship, overcrowding being at the forefront. The San Juan Bautista has been identified as a 115 ton fluyt, a dutch style cargo vessel meant to hold only 123 people. With 350 Africans loaded onto the boat sickness quickly spread throughout, causing the death 143 of the Africans before reaching any destination.

As the voyage continued across the Atlantic the San Juan Bautista would stop in Jamaica, as many slave ships would, to sell enslaved children. Manuel Mendez de Acuna, the San Juan Bautista captain, would sell 24 children as they were more profitable in Jamaica than they would be if sold in Vera Cruz. After selling the children the San Jaun Bautista would again head for Vera Cruz, Mexico. However, on the continued voyage they would encounter two English privateers in the Bay of Campeche, the White Lion and Treasurer. The San Jaun Bautista was under attack and the enslaved would be taken a second time. The White Lion and Treasure would

take approximately 60 of the enslaved from the San Juan Bautista. The 123 remaining enslaved Africans remaining on the San Juan Bautista were transferred by local authorities to the frigate Santa Ana, captained by Roderigo de Escobar, and arrived in Vera Cruz on August 30, 1619.⁷

In August of 1619 the, what is known as the First Landing of Africans occurred on the shores of Old Point Comfort, Virginia, current day Hampton, Virginia. The White Lion would arrive and sell “20 and odd” (likely 29-30) enslaved Africans to Sir George Yeardley, Virginia’s Governor, and Abraham Peirse, the colony’s Cape Merchant in return for food and supplies.⁸ The Treasurer would arrive three to four days after the White Lion, selling two or three of the enslaved. The remaining 25-27 enslaved Africans aboard the Treasurer were taken to Bermuda and traded there.

Of the enslaved Africans sold at Old Point Comfort only a few names are known. From the treasurer only 1 of the 25-27 is known and that is a woman named Angelo. Angelo was living in Jamestown by the year 1624.

⁷ Austin, “Virginia’s First Africans.”

⁸ Austin, “Virginia’s First Africans.”

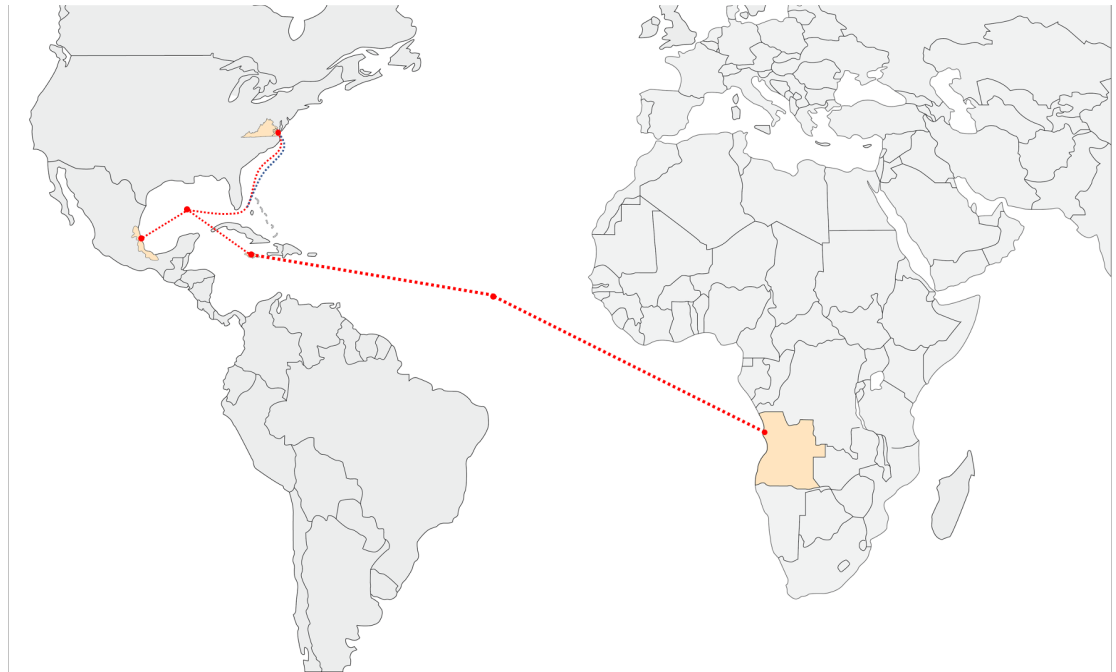


Figure 6: First African Landing Journey Diagram (Source: Author)

Freedom's Fortress

242 long years after the First Landing of enslaved Africans at Old Point Comfort, slavery would begin to come to an end at the same place which was now called Fortress Monroe.

On April 12, 1861, Confederate troops would fire on Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor, marking the beginning of the American Civil War. The American Civil War started for several reasons, however, arguably one of most notable causes for the American Civil War was the institution of slavery. According to the 1860 census, of the 31 million people that were in the United States, 3,952,838 were enslaved.⁹ The institution of slavery had grown tremendously.

⁹ "Slavery, United States - Places in History (Library of Congress)"

With the brave efforts of three enslaved men, that institution would finally begin to crumble. Shepard Mallory, Frank Baker, and James Townsend would escape their enslaver, Colonel Charles K Mallory, on May 23, 1861. The three would escape to Fortress Monroe, a Union stronghold in what would become a Confederate territory. The three arrived with no inclination of what was to come when they reached Fortress Monroe. The following day, rebel Major John B. Cary requested the return of the slaves on the grounds of the Fugitive Slave Clause of the United States Constitution, which required that slaves who escaped to another state were to be returned to their owners, and the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which was intended to enforce the Fugitive Slave Clause.¹⁰ However Union Major General Benjamin Butler stated that the Constitution did not apply to another country, as they had seceded from the Union on the very day the three men escaped. Butler no longer had any Constitutional obligation to return them.

Property, as the Confederate States claimed the enslaved African Americans to be, became a loophole. General Benjamin Butler would not return the three enslaved as they were considered property and were now to him, “Contraband of War”. Butler did not necessarily make this decision because it was morally the right thing to do, but as a war tactic. Butler knew that the enslaved were being forced to aid the Confederacy in the war, having them at Fortress Monroe not only took away their

¹⁰ “Freedom’s Fortress (U.S. National Park Service).” n.d.

free labor, but also gave them information as to what was happening on the opposing side. Subsequently, on May 27, 1861, Butler would sign the (Fort) Monroe Doctrine. This Doctrine decreed that slaves who fled to Union lines were legitimate “contraband of war,” and were not subject to return to their Confederate owners.¹¹ This doctrine has come to be known as the Contraband Decision. Once this decision was made and word spread, just over one month after the three slaves found refuge at Fort Monroe, some nine hundred freedom-seekers - men, women, and children - had arrived at the fort.¹² Space became limited at the fort and many who were arriving to seek freedom began to settle at the “Grand Contraband Camp”. The “Grand Contraband Camp” was set up just northwest of Fortress Monroe, in the recently burned down community of Phoebus. By 1865, the population of the camp grew by the thousands and approximately half a million of the enslaved would seek freedom behind Union lines by the end of the war.

Post Slavery

Freedom to all formerly enslaved African Americans would start to commence after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by the United States 16th president Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863. The first southern reading of this document would be read just a few miles away from Freedom's Fortress, under a grand Oak Tree now called Emancipation Oak. Emancipation Oak, sited in the community of Phoebus, is located on the campus of Hampton University, one of Virginia’s Historically Black Universities. Slavery would be abolished for all once

¹¹ “The (Fort) Monroe Doctrine” 1861

¹² “Freedom’s Fortress (U.S. National Park Service),” n.d.

the 13th amendment was passed on January 31, 1865 and ratified on December 6, 1865. The 13th amendment stated that, ‘Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.’¹³

Freedom for the newly freed African Americans did not come easy. Slave Codes that were in place for them as slaves would transform into black codes for them as newly free Americans. Black codes were restrictive laws designed to limit the freedom of African Americans and ensure their availability as a cheap labor force after slavery was abolished during the Civil War. Under Black codes, many states required Black People to sign yearly labor contracts; if they refused, they risked being arrested, fined and forced back into unpaid labor.¹⁴ True freedom among African Americans has been fought for from the Reconstruction period, through Jim Crow, up into the very present day.

¹³ “US Constitution – Thirteenth Amendment”

¹⁴ <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-codes>

Chapter 4: Precedents

Precedent Selection

Several precedents were looked upon for this project. Precedents were mainly selected based on the feelings and emotions that I wished to convey throughout the project. Some of those feelings and emotions include, but are not limited to, sadness, empathy, anger, shock, and the feeling of being tense. The Architectural features that were present in the precedents that pulled these emotions out of people include form, light, sound, scale, materiality, water, compression/expansion, ascent/descent, solid/void, and touch among others. Use of these simple architectural features have translated into powerful and moving memorials over the years. They're proven to work in that several of these features have been used across many of the memorials over time. Of the many projects used as precedent a few of them stood out among the rest. Those include the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Freedom Walk at Kelly Ingram Park.

National Memorial for Peace and Justice



Figure 7: National Memorial for Peace and Justice Exterior (Source: MASS Design Group)

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice or National Lynching Memorial opened on April 26, 2018 in Montgomery, Alabama. This memorial is the first national memorial dedicated to victims of lynching in the United States.

The memorial came about due to the work and research of Bryan Stevenson and the nonprofit organization he founded called the Equal Justice Initiative. The

Equal Justice Initiative documented more than 4,000 racial terror lynching's across twelve southern states between the Reconstruction period and World War II, in one of the most comprehensive investigations to date.¹⁵ These findings would lead to a memorial space that encourages reflection and change while telling the dark story of the United States past.

The Equal Justice Initiative would pair with MASS (Model of Architecture Serving Society) Design Group to bring such a memorial into existence. MASS believes that architecture has a critical role to play in supporting communities to confront history, shape new narratives, collectively heal and project new possibilities for the future.¹⁶ The two organizations were practically a perfect pair.

This memorial takes you on a journey. It begins with a confrontation by a sculpture by West African artist Kwame Akoto-Bamfo, before leading visitors on a “journey through slavery, through lynching and racial terror, with text, narrative, and monuments to the lynching victims of America.”¹⁷ The memorial features over 800 corten steel monuments, one for each county in the United States where a lynching took place. Engraved on the corten steel monuments are the names of the people who were lynched within that county. What makes this memorial so chilling is how people will experience these monuments. As people matriculate through the memorial the monuments start at eye level, then they begin to rise. There comes a point in the

¹⁵ <https://www.massdesigngroup.org/work/design/national-memorial-peace-and-justice>

¹⁶ <https://www.massdesigngroup.org/index.php/about>

¹⁷ <https://www.archdaily.com/894065/new-photographs-released-of-mass-design-groups-national-memorial-for-peace-and-justice-in-alabama>

journey where people really get to understand the scale of the lynching's with the monuments becoming completely suspended above, evoking the horror of a person being hung from a tree.

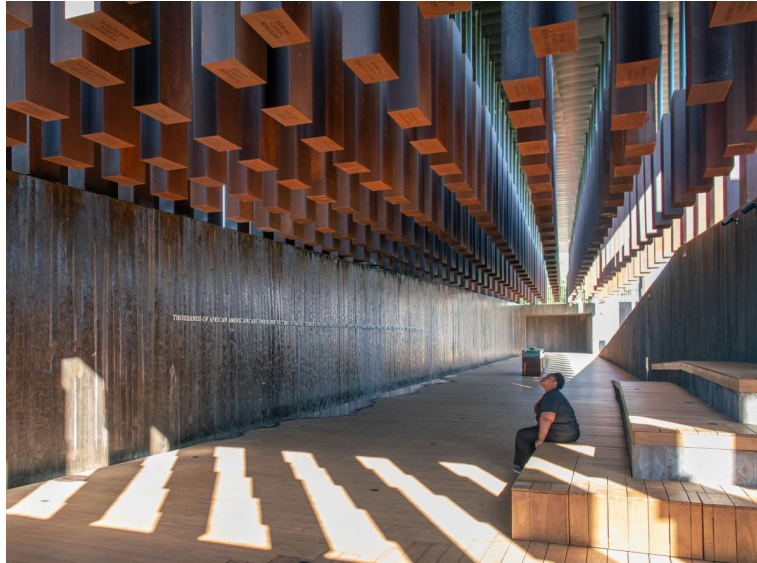


Figure 8: National Memorial for Peace and Justice Interior (Source: MASS Design Group)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was established by an unanimous Act of Congress in 1980. The museum would first open thirteen years later on April 22, 1993. This institution is America's national institution for the documentation, study and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country's memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust.¹⁸ The Museum's primary mission is to advance and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to

¹⁸ "Mission and History - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," accessed April 22, 2022, <https://www.ushmm.org/information/about-the-museum/mission-and-history>

encourage its visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.¹⁹

Groundbreaking for this project occurred on October 16, 1985, on the National Mall. The Museum sits just south of the National Museum of African American History and Culture, across the Washington Mall. Although amongst many Smithsonian institutions, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is an independent entity.

The building was designed by architect James Ingo Freed, of Pei Cobb Freed and Partners. In preparing to design the project Freed visited several sites of historic Holocaust significance to examine their structures and materiality. From these visits Freed set out to design a building that reflects the history that the Museum would soon hold. Out of these visits a museum was built in the form of a neutral shell. “There are no literal references to particular places or occurrences from the historic event,”. “Instead, the architectural form is open-ended so that the Museum becomes a resonator of memory, “stated Freed.²⁰

Like the National Memorial for Peace and Justice this building also takes you on a journey. When arriving in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, one of the first places you can enter into on the first floor is called the Hall of Witness.

¹⁹ “Mission and History - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.”

²⁰ “Art and Architecture - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,”

The Hall of Witness is a three story, sky lit gathering place.²¹ The design features that are placed in the Hall and throughout the building touch on the devastating themes of the Holocaust. The Hall’s main staircase, for instance, narrows unnaturally toward the top, like receding rail tracks heading to a camp. Exposed beams, arched brick entryways, boarded windows, metal railings, steel gates, fences, bridges, barriers, and screens all “impound” the visitor and send disturbing signals of separation.²² There is unpredictability and uncertainty throughout the Hall emulating the emotions felt of victims of the Holocaust as they were taken to the concentration camps.



Figure 9: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Hall of Witness (Source: Encyclopedia Britannica)

²¹ “Hall of Witness - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,”

²² “Hall of Witness - United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.”

After entry through the Hall of Witness, the experience through the museum can begin. The journey through time begins with an elevator ride to the fourth floor and descends in rotations around the building as it traces the rise of Nazism, the war years, and finally, the aftermath of the Holocaust and subsequent efforts to understand it.²³ Just the experience in this museum starts in the Hall of Witness, it will with the Hall of Remembrance. The Hall of Remembrance is a solemn space meant to give people time to reflect on the histories they have absorbed. The message is one of hope for ongoing life as visitors leave the museum, having themselves become witnesses to a never-to-be-repeated past.²⁴

Freedom Walk at Kelly Ingram Park



Figure 10: Kelly Ingram Park “Four Spirits” (Source: Civil Discourse)

²³ Arthur Rosenblatt, *Building Type Basics for Museums* (Wiley), 164-165

²⁴ Rosenblatt, *Building Type Basics for Museums*, 166

Kelly Ingram Park is a public park in Birmingham, Alabama with sculptures depicting the struggles of the civil rights movement. It sits just outside 16th Street Baptist Church, where four young girls lost their lives in a bombing by the Ku Klux Klan in 1963. The Park served as a central location for the movement in Birmingham.

Several sculptures are within the park. Of them there is a sculpture of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. central to the park, who wrote a well known letter in that very city, the “Letter from Birmingham Jail”. There is also a sculpture of Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth who also was an important leader in the movement in Birmingham. The “Foot Soldier” monument designed by Ronald McDowell depicts the infamous photograph of a police officer grabbing a young African American boy while the dog he has lunges towards him. The “Four Spirits” sculpture is dedicated to the four girls who lost their lives in the 16th Street bombing. It features the four girls around a bench. Cynthia Wesley sits on one end of the bench with a Bible in her lap. Carol Denise McNair, the youngest girl killed, releases doves into the air while Addie Mae Collins ties a sash around her dress. The fourth girl, Carole Robertson stands apart from the being, in motion as she beckons the girls to church.²⁵ In addition to these there are several other sculptures dedicated to leaders in the fight for civil rights in Birmingham, Alabama.

The Freedom Walk features three sculptures done by sculptor James Drake. These sculptures capture the experience of children during The March on

²⁵ Thompson, 2019

Birmingham. One of the sculptures includes two children braced against a wall with two water cannons aimed at them. Another includes children who were arrested and jailed for participating in the protest. On one side of the path two children stand framed in metal with the words “I ain’t afraid of your jail” in large letters across the bottom. On the other side of the path another metal frame is fitted with bars. If you stand in the grass in front of the sculpture it appears that the two children are in jail.²⁶ In the last sculpture, there are two walls on either side of the path. Within the walls are dogs that appear to be lunging out towards the walkway, emulating the attack that people faced by dogs during the protest.

²⁶ Thompson, 2019

Chapter 5: Site: Fort Monroe, Virginia

Historical Characteristics



Figure 11: Fort Monroe's Historic Places Diagram (Source: Author)

Fort Monroe, Virginia today is a national monument. It was deactivated as an army post in 2011 and just months later President Barack Obama would sign an executive order to make it as such. As Fort Monroe is a national monument it has a diversity of history in addition to the story of the first landing site and freedoms fortress. It has the historic Chamberlin hotel which is a current-day retirement community with Continental Park adjacent to it with a historic bandstand. There's the Old Point Comfort lighthouse which was completed in 1803. Then there is the Fort itself, and what lives inside the Fort is the Casemate Museum where you learn mostly

about war, artillery, and of many the historic figures that had been there such as Jefferson Davis, Abraham Lincoln, and Edgar Allen Poe to name a few. Outside of the historic aspect of Fort Monroe, according to the Fort Monroe Authority, approximately 160 families live there either in a house or an apartment.

Analysis

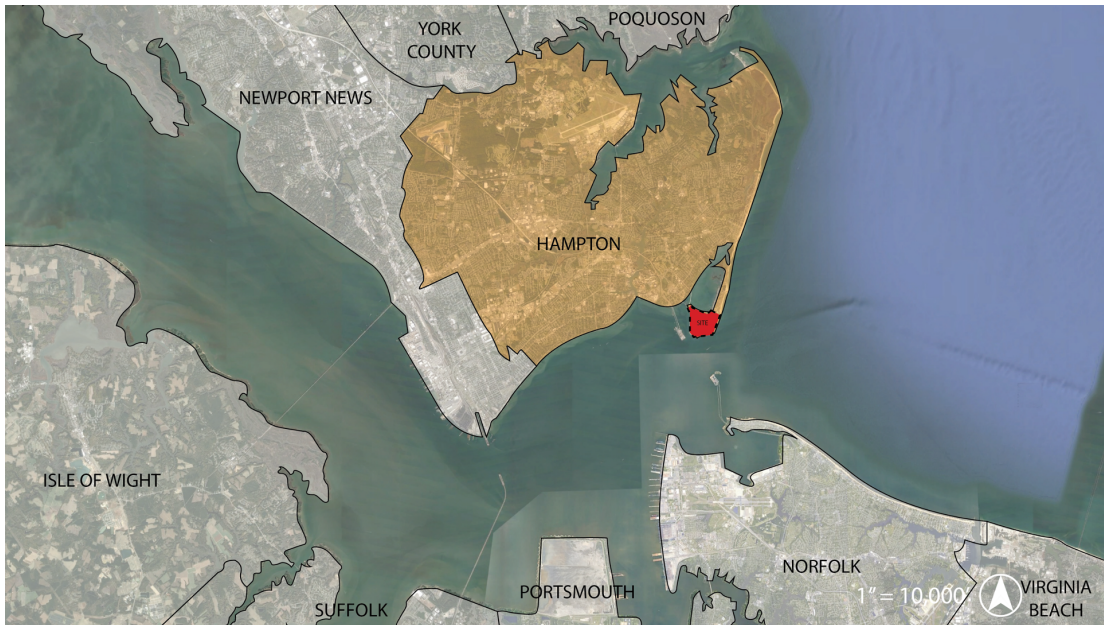


Figure 12: Site Context (Source: Author)



Figure 13: Site Context (Source: Author)



Figure 14: Surrounding Bodies of Water Diagram (Source: Author)



Figure 15: Major Roadways Diagram (Source: Author)

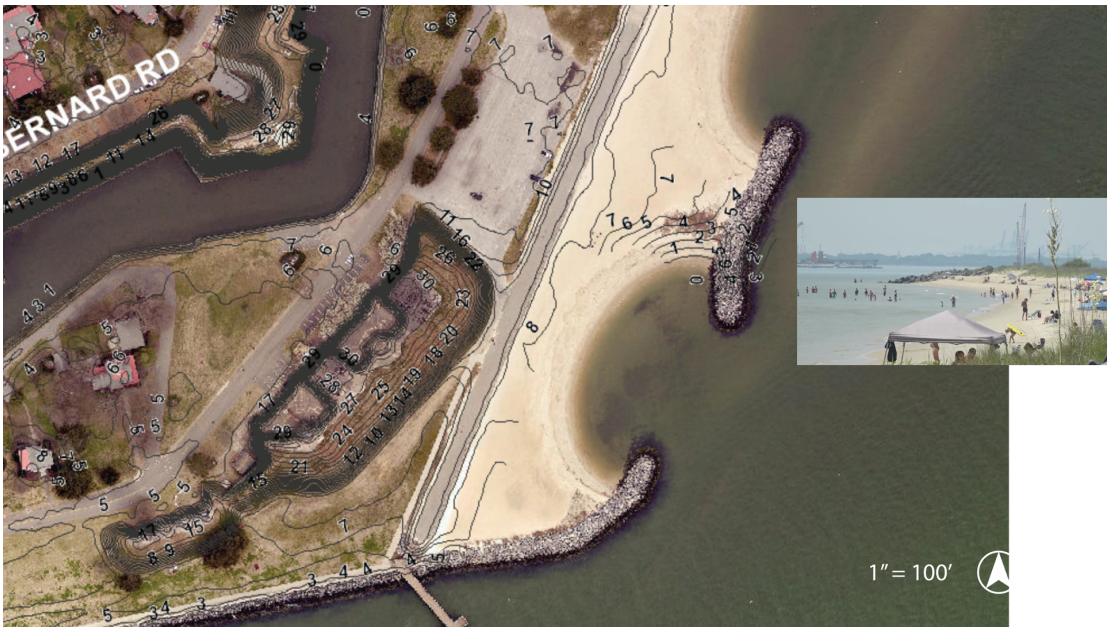


Figure 16: Topographic Map (Source: GIS)

Chapter 6: Program

Program

The memorial will consist of spaces relating to the history of the First Landing Site and Freedom's Fortress. In addition to the memorial itself and the spaces within it, outside of the memorial will be a small building just at the entry. Within the small building will house the restrooms for the attendees, an information desk, as well as office space for the people who will oversee the memorial. Last, also outside of the memorial will be a memorial wall.

Chapter 7: Design Solution

Proposal

The goal in designing a memorial to the history of the First Landing of Africans and to Freedom's Fortress, is for it to be a dynamic space for people to really grasp what occurred in the very environment they stand. To design a memorial where people actively move through the space instead of passively pass it. Not only to design a memorial that people will go to view but a memorial that people will go to experience. A project that goes past what people can see with their eyes, but also can feel in their hearts. The emotions to be evoked throughout the project include sadness, empathy, anger, shock and discomfort. These emotions will be brought out of people by using simple architectural features. The architectural features include ascending and descending, the use of natural light, being open vs compressed, and haptics. In addition, I believe the use of sound can also be used.

Final Design

In selecting the precedents, they were placed in categories of the type of emotions and feelings that the More Than a Marker project should draw out. These feelings and emotions include sadness, empathy, anger, shock, and discomfort. Beneath these categories were the architectural features used to capture those feelings and emotions. Of the many memorials and buildings, some of the architectural features included ascending and descending, the use of natural light, being open

versus being compressed, the use of haptics, and sound. Light studies were done to explore a bit how light could be used.

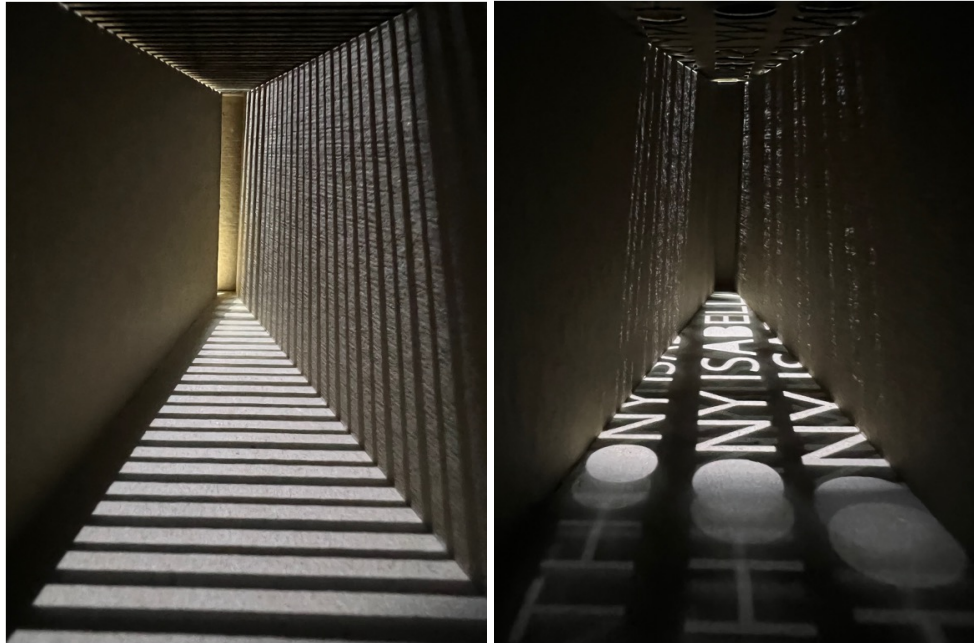


Figure 17: Light Study Models (Source: Author)

When people arrive at Fort Monroe to experience the memorial, they'll park in the parking lot that has been moved a tad further North up Fenwick Road. Once out of their car and traveling down the boardwalk, they'll be met with a small building with restrooms and an information desk about the memorial. Opposite that building is a wall with the name of the Memorial, and some information about what is within it. Prior to walking towards the memorial people will notice a long wall paired with a grove of oak trees. On these walls will be the names of the enslaved of Virginia, with the intent of giving people of African descent the opportunity to possibly begin to make connections to their family history from generations before.



Figure 18: Site Plan (Source: Author)

As people approach the memorial, they will be met with 30 corten steel markers, representing the 28-30 Africans who survived the treacherous journey across the Atlantic Ocean to Virginia. People will notice that they're at the scale of actual people, representing men, women and children. People will continue to see these markers appear throughout the memorial. On the façade of the entry, people will be met with a pattern resembling the traditional Angolan Samakaka pattern, a pattern often worn on an everyday basis in the country but also for different events such as weddings, funerals, etc. Above the entry people will see these large pillars meant to be a reflection of the large Baobab trees found in Angola, the national tree of the country. People will get a closer feel for these pillars once inside.



Figure 19: Perspective showing entry into the memorial (Source: Author)

The memorial consists of five main spaces as it relates to the history of the First Landing Site and Freedom's Fortress. It will first include the initial space of freedom in Angola. Next it will include the spaces of enslavement, broken into three parts, the gangplank, the hold, and then slavery itself. Last, is the space of freedom once again but now in the state of Virginia. As seen in the longitudinal section, the memorial consists of a series of ramps to maneuver people through. Either ascending or at one point descending into each space of the project.

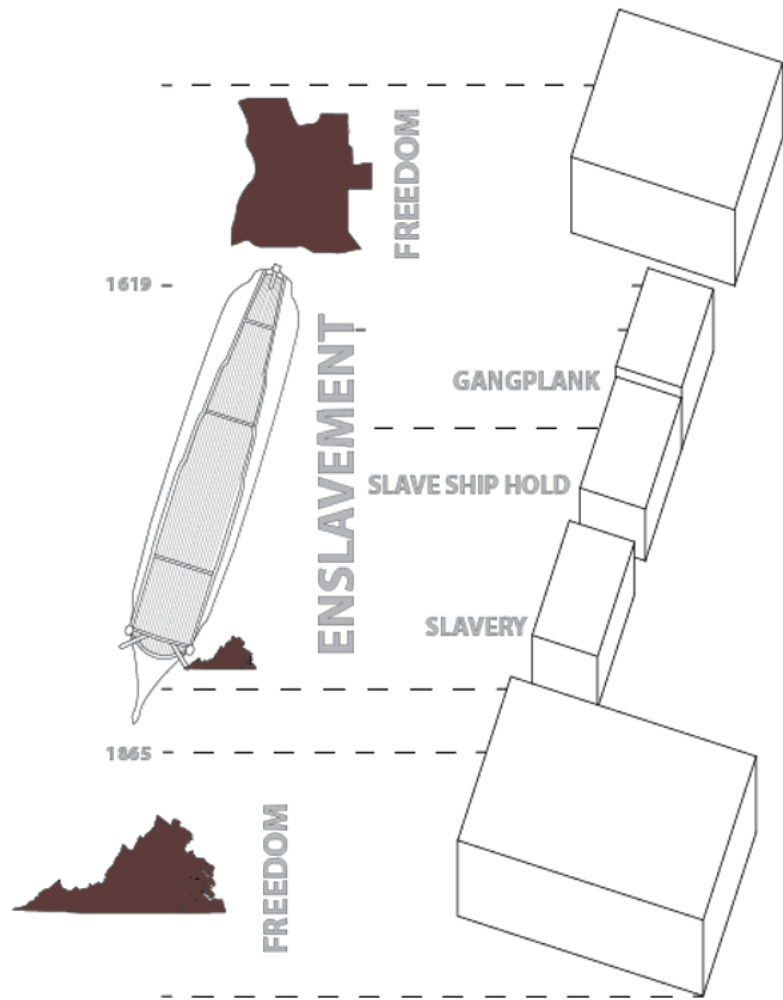


Figure 20: Axonometric drawing showing building breakdown (Source: Author)

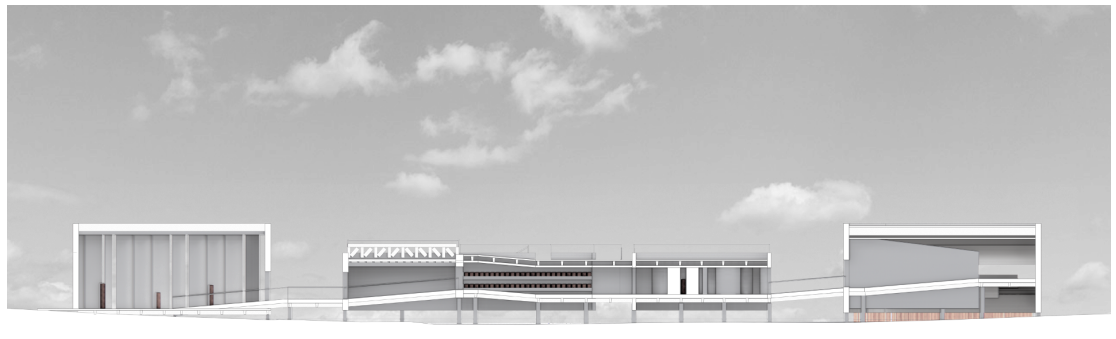


Figure 21: Longitudinal Section (Source: Author)

Once in the first space of freedom in Angola, people will be met with a fairly large and open space that could be used as a space of gathering but also a space of

learning. Again, like at the entry, people will see the Samakaka pattern etched into the concrete walls as well as get a closer view of the scale of the Baobab tree pillars. Engraved into the walls is some of the history of the country of Angola and as people would begin to approach the ramp into next space the history of 1619 will be explained along the fins on the east side of the memorial. This space is not only a space of gathering and learning, but also a space of last, foreshadowing the rest of the story of the Africans in 1619. Instead of having the ramp start at the point where people would exit the space the ramp starts within it, mimicking the gangplank to come. While maneuvering up this ramp on the Baobab pillar are hand prints. Reminding us that people had final moments of seeing and touching loved ones that they'd never see again.



Figure 22: Entry Perspective (Source: Author)

Once out of the initial space of freedom in Angola, people will then travel through the portion of the story where Africans were enslaved. So to begin that journey they were forced onto a boat and to get onto that boat they would have to go up the gangplank.

A gangplank simply is the ramp people would cross over the water to get onto the

boat. While in this space there is only a ramp for people to walk up, while noticing items that would have had to have been left behind within the water that flows beneath. In this space people will transition from a more open space to a more cramped space. As the enslaved were shackled and were made to walk in a row one by one, the ramp of this space was made about 4' wide to only allow two people to walk side by side at most, and to also make it ADA accessible. As people walk up, the ramp to ceiling height will change from 8' to 7'. Last, in this space, brief moments of light will shine through the space and at different parts of the day across peoples faces, as we remember the last moments that the Africans had before entering the bowels of the boat.



Figure 23: Gangplank Perspective (Source: Author)

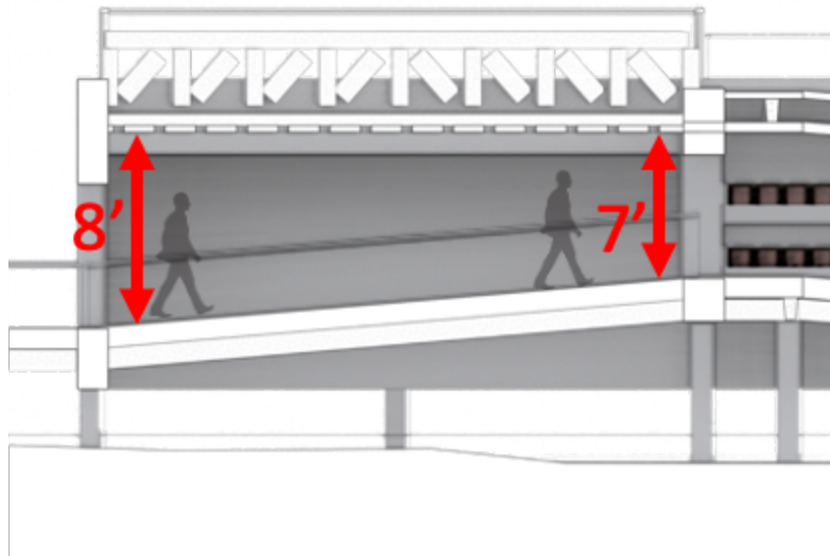


Figure 24: Gangplank Height Change Diagram (Source: Author)

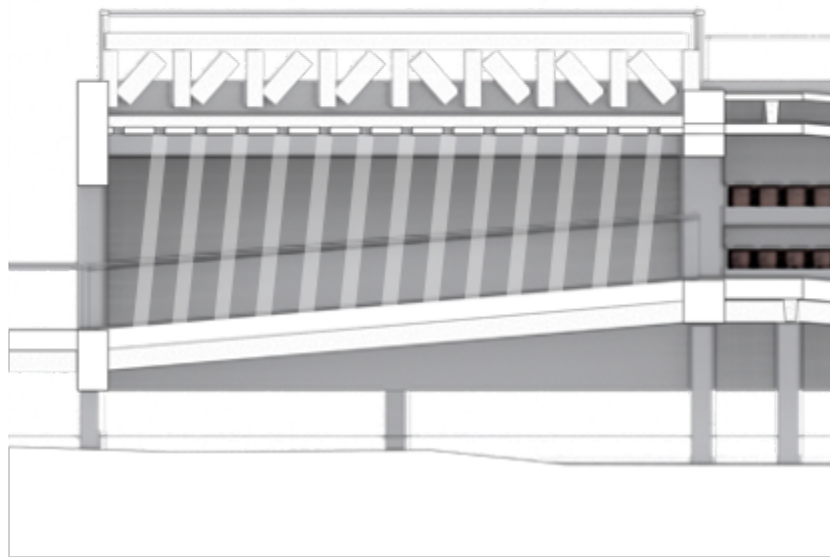


Figure 25: Gangplank Lighting Diagram (Source: Author)

From the gangplank, people will enter the hold where they will now go down into the space. They will be met with those same corten steel markers that were once seen at the entry and within the Angolan freedom space, no longer upright but now laid flat. When walking through, people will notice that there are empty spaces

between markers, those spaces are to represent the many lives lost while on the voyage. The cramped feeling felt at the end of the gangplank is meant to be felt throughout this space with the low 7' ceiling and tight walkway space. In addition to this feeling of discomfort, footsteps will be heard from up above, from the people who are further ahead within the memorial to give that feeling of being in the bowels of the boat.



Figure 26: Hold Perspective (Source: Author)

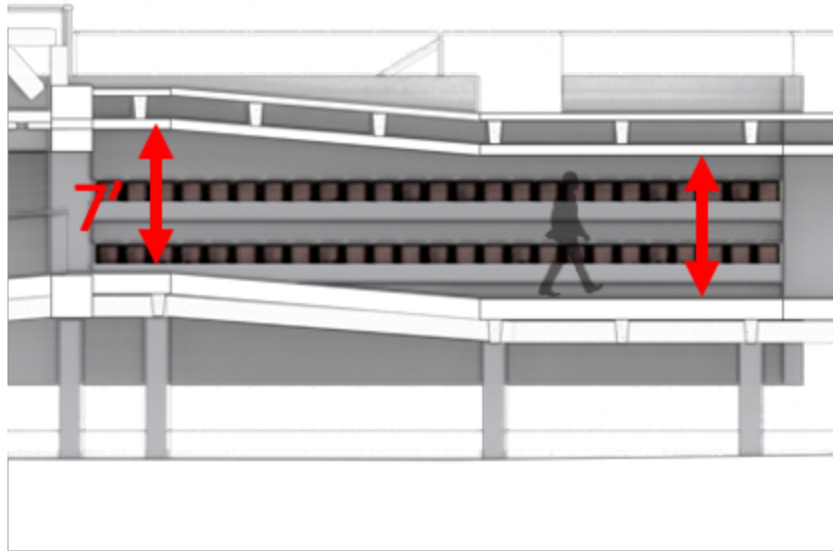


Figure 27: Hold Floor to Ceiling Height Diagram (Source: Author)

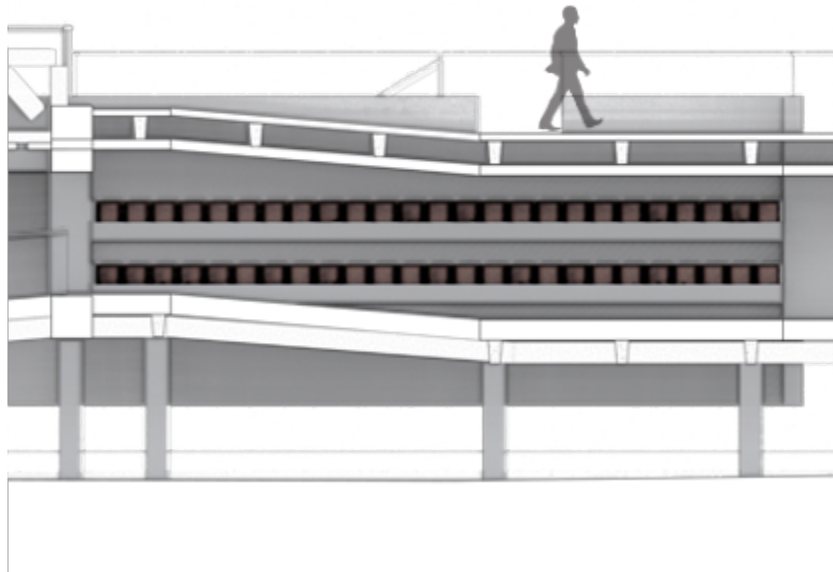


Figure 28: Hold Footsteps Above Diagram (Source: Author)

As people exit the space of the hold they'll briefly go across a bridge and enter into the space of slavery. At the entry people will be met with those large pillars in diameter, similar to those that they would have been met with at the entry. In

addition to the large pillars there will be some that will be significantly smaller in diameter. In this space it is meant for people to reflect back to the place they first entered but notice how it is drastically changed. Unlike the large and open Angolan Freedom space, this space has ceilings that are just above the height of typical door openings. The space between each pillar is 4' maximum not giving the same level of space to move around within it, and as stated before the pillars are significantly smaller in diameter and no longer have the etch that they once did. In addition to the size and spacing of these pillars, the pillars are spaced in a way that you cannot see the opening to the next space of the memorial. All of these choices were made in thinking about the institution of slavery. The feeling of being in an unfamiliar place and not knowing what is around the corner.



Figure 29: Slavery Space Perspective (Source: Author)

After exiting the space of slavery people will then begin to maneuver up the last set of ramps once again to go back into a space of freedom, but now freedom in the State of Virginia. People will go up one ramp that'll be outdoors and then the next

will be back indoors creating a sort of corridor up into the space, which is much wider and open than any of the previous three spaces that they were once in. People will be met with a wall inscribed with the word freedom in this space over and over. They'll notice that the wall is also gradually slanting down, the walls and barriers of slavery coming down. However, once up the ramp and around the corner people are met with a void in the space. Within the void inscribed inside are words describing the reality of what freedom would be. Slave Codes would evolve into black codes, racism, hate segregation, and so on and so forth.



Figure 30: Partial Longitudinal Section (Source: Author)

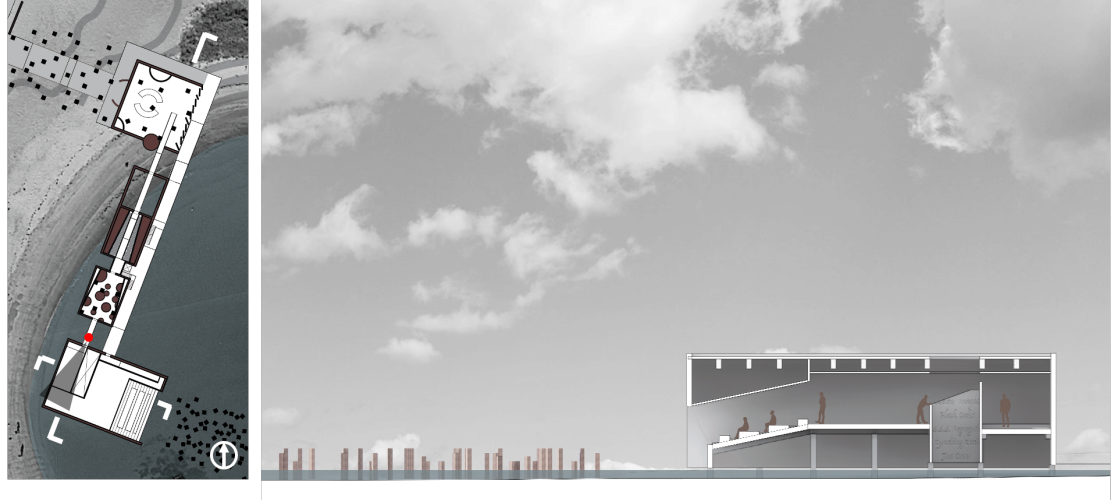


Figure 31: Partial Transverse Section (Source: Author)

Then lastly, within the memorial after people look within the void, a framed view of loss is on the opposite side. 143 Corten Markers to remember those who didn't make it across the water. The ceilings and walls slope downward so that when initially walking into the space people will only have that view down at the water and at those markers. Seating is within this space to give people the opportunity to sit and reflect. As people leave this space they will leave back down a ramp adjacent to that of which they came up, with the opportunity to go up on the roof of the hold and slave spaces, giving a view of both the water and the fort, giving another opportunity to reflect and think back on the history of the Landing of the First Africans as well as the flight to freedom at the very site that they are located.

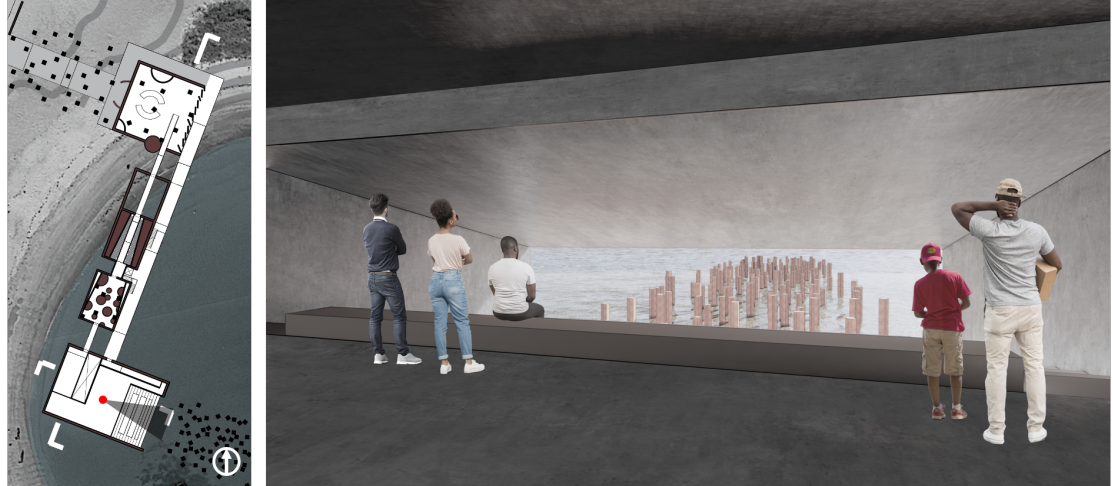


Figure 32: Perspective of the Freedom Space

Conclusion

In conclusion, the ongoing design of the memorial has met all of the goals set forth for the design. The memorial uses simple architectural features to evoke emotion and tell a story, long overdue of being told. The architectural features used throughout the memorial include ascending and descending, the use of natural light, being open vs compressed, haptics, and sound. The use of those features are to bring people a better understanding of what the overall journey into and out of slavery was.

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