

STIGMATIZED SPACE:
NEGATIVE HERITAGE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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For Tom

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Next time around, Dad, the title will be a pun.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iii
List of Figures	v
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Justification + Methodology	3
Chapter 2 Literature Review	
I. History, Heritage, and Negative Heritage	7
II. The Heritage of Atrocity	9
III. Images and the Entitlement to Trauma	14
IV. Timeliness and International Efforts to Acknowledge Underrepresented Heritage	20
V. Timeliness and Efforts to Acknowledge Underrepresented Heritage in the United States	24
V. The Management of Negative Heritage in Architecture	25
VI. The Management of Negative Heritage in Adaptive Reuse Projects	28
Chapter 3 Demolition: the American Absolution Rite	30
Chapter 4 Concretization	43
Chapter 5 Commemoration in Art: Rachel Whiteread's <i>House</i>	53
Chapter 6 Exoneration and Alteration: Mental Illness, Informal Commemoration, and Othering	64
In Limbo: The Personal Tragedy and Its Outcomes	75
Chapter 7 Adaptation: Inhabiting Trauma	80
Chapter 8 The Constructed Ruin	105
Conclusion	133
Bibliography	137
Index	144

List of Figures

FIGURE 2.1: diller scofidio + renfro Viewing platform, Fulton Street, New York, 2001	17
FIGURE 2.2: diller scofidio + renfro Viewing platform, Fulton Street, New York, 2001	19
FIGURE 2.3: diller scofidio + renfro Viewing platform, Fulton Street, New York, 2001	19
FIGURE 3.1: Demolition of the Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Connecticut, 2013	40
FIGURE 3.2: Aerial of the Lanza residence, Newtown, Connecticut, 2014	41
FIGURE 3.3: The Lanza residence, Newtown Connecticut, 2014	42
FIGURE 4.1: Diagram of the Fritzl residence, Amstetten, Austria, 2009	51
FIGURE 4.2: Diagram of the Fritzl residence, Amstetten, Austria, 2009	52
FIGURE 5.1: Rachel Whiteread, <i>Ghost</i> , Gagosian Gallery, London, 1990	59
FIGURE 5.2: View of Rachel Whiteread's <i>House</i> , from Grove Road London, 1993	60
FIGURE 5.3: Rachel Whiteread, <i>House</i> , Grove Road London, 1993	61
FIGURE 5.4: Rachel Whiteread, <i>House</i> , Grove Road London, 1993	62
FIGURE 5.5: Rachel Whiteread, <i>House</i> , Grove Road London, 1993	63
FIGURE 6.1: Bedroom, Suite H-21, Dunster House, Harvard University, 2012	70
FIGURE 6.2: Bathroom, Suite H-21, Dunster House, Harvard University, 2012	71
FIGURE 6.3: Floor plans, Dunster House, Harvard University	72
FIGURE 6.4: Atrium screen, Bobst Library, New York University, 2012	73
FIGURE 6.5: Atrium screen, Bobst Library, New York University, 2012	74
FIGURE 6.6: Exterior, Joan Davis residence, Teaneck, New Jersey, 2015	77
FIGURE 6.7: View of Alpine Drive NW, Teaneck, New Jersey, 2015	78
FIGURE 6.8: View of Alpine Drive NE, Teaneck, New Jersey, 2015	79

FIGURE 7.1: Plans, June 5th Memorial, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015	96
FIGURE 7.2: Renderings, June 5th Memorial, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015	97
FIGURE 7.3: Rendering, June 5th Memorial, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015	98
FIGURE 7.4: Rendering, 22nd and Market Memorial, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015	99
FIGURE 7.5: Rendering, 22nd and Market Memorial, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015	99
FIGURE 7.6: View of 2140 Market Street from 22nd Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015	101
FIGURE 7.7: View of 2140 Market Street from Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 2015	102
FIGURE 7.8: Megan's Place, Hamilton, New Jersey, 1996	103
FIGURE 7.9: Megan's Place, Hamilton, New Jersey, 2014	104
FIGURE 8.1: Plan, the President's House, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	127
FIGURE 8.2: Deviation of President's House from archaeological remnant	128
FIGURE 8.3: Deviation of President's House from archaeological remnant	129
FIGURE 8.4: Ansel Adams, Manzanar, California, 1943	130
FIGURE 8.5: Guard tower, Manzanar, California	131
FIGURE 8.6: Preserved stoneworks, Manzanar, California	131
FIGURE 8.7: Guard tower, Manzanar, California	132

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis acknowledges negative heritage as an essential but understudied thread in preservation discourse. It traces the naissance of the term “negative heritage” and its antecedent terminologies in order to situate the torrent of recent scholarship on the subject within a larger historical narrative and philosophical moment. By tracing the origin of scholarship on the subject, this thesis develops a paradigm of the sorts of events that have been essential to development of negative heritage as a material and theoretical concept and that have had an impact on a diverse enough audience to merit continued interdisciplinary study.

Before tracing when negative heritage developed as a concept, for what reasons, and what movements and tendencies its consideration has come to promote, this thesis diagnoses what precisely negative heritage is; definitions of the term and its antecedents, which have largely been borrowed from anthropological and psychological literature, are evaluated in terms of their clarity and applicability, and rewritten to tailor the concept — now widely disseminated but still poorly defined — to historic preservation discourse.

After essential terminologies are enumerated and defined, this thesis considers the intricacies of interpretation meant to reconcile the interests of victims, visitors, and impacted communities. It evaluates the extent to which architectural intervention, alteration, or renovation can dissociate a place from its traumatic past, and the extent to which such dissociation is desirable or ethical in situations with a diverse array of stakeholders. In particular, this thesis evaluates sites which have been host to violent or tragic events, but which are integral to their communities or highly visible in their contexts, in order to consider the impact of traumatic associations on architecture. Because negative heritage is a term of art in current academic discourse, movements and measures which have led to both domestic and international efforts to acknowledge underrepresented heritage, however controversial, are studied.

Precedents in disparate contexts trace the development of a sociogeographic ethos with regard to stigmatized spaces; tactics that have had little representation in the literature, like

the retroactive, systematic othering of the victim or perpetrator of the violent event in order to maintain the cohesion of context communities, receive particular attention.

To encourage the management of traumatic sites in a manner that accounts for geographic context as well as sociocultural factors, this thesis considers modes of intervention able to foster acceptance, catharsis, and in various modes, preservation.

Justification and Methodology

While literature on trauma, memorials, and memorialization is vast and forms an undercurrent to much of this thesis, the lack of work that highlights the repercussions that the projection of traumatic associations have on *architecture*, rather than on the psyche or on the treatment of archaeological artifacts, guided the focus of this thesis on built heritage as containers of sets of events. This thesis marries a trove of psychological and anthropological literature to historic preservation discourse, and addresses the potential conflict between the compulsion to preserve the historic or obliterate the traumatic. In an attempt to demonstrate the rich, holistic, and nuanced manner in which preservation — often mistaken for a promotion of stasis rather than dynamism — can be undertaken, this thesis highlights factors extrinsic to a building that have serious, and sometimes fatal, repercussions on its architectural lifespan. While a current movement to acknowledge “the Tough Stuff of American Memory”¹ is in progress, little has been written to guide the treatment, management, or stewardship of traumatic sites, with the exception of real estate disclosure legislation. This thesis addresses and remedies precisely that lacuna in negative heritage literature.

The author benefits from direct access to or experience of most of the sites considered within this text. Particular case studies were selected not for the sake of ease or convenience but because of the author’s intention to have these be rich and multifaceted studies interwoven with larger narratives about the deployment of journalistic media; the materials of commemoration and the aspiration to permanence; the sociological tactic of othering; considerations of context; and the formation of a distinct American ethos. Intimate knowledge of the sites under consideration, and of the commemorative processes applied to them, allows for the incorporation of greater detail and subtleties and, in certain instances, for consultation with the individuals entrusted to manage the sites.

Chapter 2 codifies relevant source material on heritage, negative heritage, trauma, and

¹ A phrase borrowed from the title of James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton’s *Slavery and Public History: the Tough Stuff of American Memory*, (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

commemoration in order to locate this text in a precise historical moment and to narrow its focus to the repercussions of trauma on architecture. Chapter 3, Demolition: the American Absolution Rite, first considers the demolition of the Sandy Hook Elementary School and of the residence of Adam Lanza, who fatally shot 20 students and six educators and committed suicide in Sandy Hook Elementary School. The demolitions illustrate the issue of obliteration as pulverization, with successive fragmentations of material integrity; of negative heritage tourism in the form of “scores of people driving up and down the street”; of cost; of the idealization of the tabula rasa; and of the projection of extrinsic, often traumatic associations — attributes not inherent to the site or structure — onto architecture. This thesis posits the formation of a distinct American mode of ritualization in demolition. Demolition in the United States is the culmination of an American ethos, affluence, construction modes, dissociation from “tame death,” and the removal of rites associated with death outside of the home and the urban context. Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion of the legal mechanisms that govern sales of traumatic sites and a judicial apprehension over limiting a Right to Property.

Chapter 4, Concretization, studies the infill of the cellar beneath Josef Fritzl’s estate in Amstetten, Austria, where, for 24 years, Fritzl forcibly imprisoned his daughter and the children she bore in his captivity. Consideration of the circuslike atmosphere brought about by frenetic media coverage of the Fritzl case is essential to understanding the creation of an ever more massive, ever more difficult to obliterate artifact through concretization. Television journalism was essential to denouement of the Fritzl case; coverage of the Fritzl case was, in turn, essential to denouement in other forcible imprisonment and incest cases. As in demolition, financial cost becomes an important consideration.

Chapter 5, Commemoration in Art: Rachel Whiteread’s *House*, introduces issues of the interpretation of traumatic histories in public art, of scales of legibility, and of the inclusion of a temporal dimension in interpretive intervention and provocation. Chapter 5 uses Sigmund Freud’s notion of the Uncanny to introduce Rachel Whiteread’s *House*, a concrete cast of the interior basement, ground floor, and first floor of a Victorian terrace house in East London. As the concrete embodiments of houses and their histories, *House* and the infill of the cellar beneath the

Josef Fritzl estate share certain material, technical alignments, which are considered.

Chapter 6, *Exoneration and Alteration: Mental Illness, Informal Commemoration, and Othering*, posits that othering occurs when maintenance of the architecture and architectural program is of principal concern to the local populace, and results in dismissal of either victim or perpetrator to exonerate the group. Rather than destroy the site and create a rupture in the landscape, the reputation or identification of the victim or perpetrator is questioned. Othering is illustrated in the media portrayal of Sinedu Tadesse, who fatally stabbed Trang Phuong Ho in their shared dormitory before hanging herself. Rather than condemn Harvard University for a lack of adequate mental health services, journalistic media were once again essential to the creation of caricatures of both perpetrator and victim, which enabled the university to forgo commemoration. In other academic contexts, the alteration of sites associated with student suicide has likewise been undertaken without the erection of memorials, in part to absolve the administration of blame — often despite deficient mental health policies or inaccessible psychiatric facilities — and in part to prevent disruption or discomfort to students through the placement of a memorial to another student in their midst. In *Limbo: The Personal Tragedy and Its Outcomes* is a continuation of the narrative of othering and media cartooning, but serves as further emphasis of the manner in which violence can be written as a personal tragedy and dismissed.

Chapter 7, *Adaptation: Inhabiting Trauma*, investigates the politics surrounding the installation of a memorial park on the site of a building collapse in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Though the designers of the memorial envision a rupture which urges awareness, action, and non-complaisance, such a reading is complicated by the design parti and by the heterogeneity of the memorial context. An issue of personal biases introduced to committee decisionmaking is raised in consideration of the lack of memorialization at numerous recent building collapse sites elsewhere in Philadelphia.

Chapter 8, *Reconstruction*, notes that though historic preservation, as a movement, often prioritizes intact material, reconstruction can be undertaken in instances in which material has been lost but would aid in a visitor's understanding of the historic significance of the site. The chapter considers two sites: the President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation,

the commemorative exhibition at 524-30 Market Street in Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Manzanar National Historic Site, in the southern foothills of the Sierra Nevada near Independence, California. The sites are written as foils in terms of their fealty to archaeological remnants and their consideration of holistic, cultural landscape discourse. Both reconstruction sagas involve committee considerations of public input, though with vastly different outcomes.

The inclusion of particular case studies in this thesis is not meant to be proscriptive. This thesis does not present the architectural outcomes of any single case as standards, paradigms, or guidelines. Instead, the spectrum of cases and outcomes, as well as the discussion of variant outcomes in similar contexts, allows for generalizations about tendencies and predispositions toward certain tactics that address trauma to be drawn. Certain narratives under consideration above aid in the prediction of outcomes for a site with negative associations through processes which are elaborated in the conclusion of this text.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

I. History, Heritage, and Negative Heritage

In “Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology,” anthropologist Lynn Meskell contributes the term “negative heritage” to interpretation discourse and reexamines the notion of past mastering that came to fore post-World War II; the author defines negative heritage as “a conflictual site that becomes the repository of negative memory in the collective imaginary,”¹ and past mastering she translates from the German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, an amalgam of *die Vergangenheit*, the past, and *die Bewältigung*, to come to terms with, cope with, or wrestle into submission. While citations of Meskell’s definitions have been numerous and uncritical, this thesis composes a more exact, more illustrative definition without reference to constituent terms — i.e. Meskell’s negative heritage as a “repository of negative memory” — and evaluates whether architecture can contribute to *vergangenheitsbewältigung* at another point.

In *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict*, J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth offer a series of definitions for the term “heritage” in order to distinguish between the past as history and the past as heritage, and to make clear the problem of “heritage” as a term with variant implications to disparate audiences. These definitions, which provide crucial and diverse answers to the question of what heritage is, are summarizable as follows:

- Heritage is a synonym for any relict physical survival from the past, though the term has been extended to apply whether physical structures presently survive or not.
- Heritage is objects, buildings, sites, places, or any non-physical aspect of the past when viewed from the present. Individual heritage is defined by individual memory, while collective memory and national memory define community or national heritage.² This

¹ Lynn Meskell, “Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology,” *Anthropological Quarterly* (The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research) 75, no. 3 (Summer 2002): 558.

² See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); Jan Assman, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

definition encompasses instances in which the repercussions of the past are felt in the present, as in the heritage of slavery.

- Heritage is used not just to refer to objects or artifacts from the past, but extended to all accumulated cultural and artistic productivity whether produced in the past or at present. Thus defined, heritage has been incorporated into the set of activities and preoccupations that can be labeled as “high culture,” and can be extended to include any aspect of national life which contributes to the effective functioning of society or to a favored national image.
- Heritage is any artifact of human productivity, extended to include elements of the natural environment, including heritage landscapes, which survive from the past and are original or typical in some sense.
- Heritage is a commercial activity that gives rise to a “heritage industry” based on selling goods and services with a heritage component, extended from a culturally marketable past to a saleable, culturally distinct present.³

As a result of its implication of the existence of a “positive heritage,” the term negative heritage has been met with alternative terminologies, which include “difficult histories,” “sites of conscience,” and “dark histories,” as well as the related terms “ambiguous,” “ambivalent,” or “dissonant” heritage. For the purpose of this thesis, the term negative heritage will be employed in acknowledgement of its pervasiveness in current discourse, and will be applied to the circumstances that charge or stigmatize the site of a violent, tragic, or traumatic event and are interpreted as a shared loss by a self-identified group or community.

In all of the above definitions, heritage differs from history in the fact of ownership, thus giving rise to the tension inherent to heritage as a concept applicable to materials with disputed ownership: “Heritage is, by the original definition of the word, determined by the legatee; all heritage is someone’s heritage and that someone determines that it exists.”⁴ Although both history and heritage make selective use of the past for current purposes and transform the past through

3 J.E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester, Sussex, England: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 1996), 1-3.

4 Ibid., 6.

interpretation, heritage is possessive, a product of the present purposefully developed in response to current demands and shaped by current requirements: “The present selects an inheritance from an imagined past for current use and decides what should be passed on to an imagined future.”⁵ In heritage, current and future uses are paramount and resources more varied, including much that a historian might consider ahistorical, and interpretation is more obviously and centrally the product consumed. To underscore the fungible aspect of the interpretation component of heritage, history will often be used as an antonym and means of discrediting heritage.⁶

In heritage, interpretation involves the selection, assembly, and integration of chosen resources in an appropriate amalgamation, with the deliberate aim to create of a particular heritage product. While the physical material associated with heritage is not traded, intangible ideas of the fantastic, nostalgic, emotional, pleasurable, and pride-inducing — the experiential aspects of a site or event — are. The heritage product is a response to the specific needs of actual or potential users; the nature of the heritage product is determined, as in all market-driven models, by the requirements of the consumer rather than by the existence of physical resources. There are intrinsic aims, reliant on properties inherent to the artifact itself, and extrinsic aims, reliant on the needs, desires, and demand of the intended audience, in the creation of consumable heritage, all of which assume that heritage is recognizable by consensus and, to some extent, measurable. Extrinsic factors appeal to various purported contemporary benefits conferred on individuals or societies by the conservation and preservation of heritage, with wider economic, social, and political objectives.⁷

II. The Heritage of Atrocity

A further complication in the interpretation of “conflictual sites” is an inherent contradiction to notions of unity that heritage assets, as *collective* inheritance, assert; as a result, traumatic sites resist a more traditional “deployment of the past to promote integration.”⁸ As Matero notes,

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 8.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 56.

“implicit in the word and concept of heritage are the notions of value, birthright, and obligation. Each of these notions establishes a moral imperative in the treatment of this collective human inheritance.”⁹ As this thesis observes, perpetrators or victims of traumatic events can be written as other to their contexts, and the task of interpretation or inhabitation can be met with resistance by context communities. Willingness to acknowledge, confront, or accept the traumatic event is uncertain within the collective that inherits it, as Matero notes:

... Fundamental to culture and cultural relativism is the notion of value — a concept implicit in the meaning of interpretation and, therefore, by extension, of conservation. Cultural relativism asserts that since each culture has its own inherent integrity with unique values and practices, heritage must be contextualized. The role of value in the determination and preservation of cultural property has long been recognized. However, who determines that value — and how it plays out through “appropriate” methods of use, presentation, intervention, and ownership — has become a major issue for heritage today.¹⁰

The authors of “The Remaking of Lake Sakakawea: Locating Cultural Viability in Negative Heritage on the Missouri River” elaborate on Matero’s notion of relativism and posit that traumatic histories can be as paradigmatic of human action, and, as a result, as meritorious of commemorative interpretation, as historian Alois Riegl’s monuments — loci of “keeping single human deeds or events alive in the minds of future generations,” albeit of the tragic rather than triumphant:

Because heritage fosters cultural continuity, one may be tempted to assume that it is always imbued with positive associations. What constitutes heritage is neither static nor predictable. It is the product of continuous negotiation with the tangible and intangible past. The recognition of heritage is not always born out of the accumulation of uplifting experiences and memories of a past that one would like to preserve unchanged for the future. On the contrary, people may be drawn to the consequences of violence, destruction, and death strongly enough to feel the need to memorialize it. ... [Traumatic sites] not only reflect a collective need to memorialize tragedy but also demonstrate that, however painful, tragedy is often complicit in shaping the identities and histories of affected communities.¹¹

While traumatic sites can symbolize an immense loss of landscape, life, and ways-of-life, they nonetheless form a physical and theoretical bond between impacted communities, context,

9 Frank Matero, “Ethics and Policy in Conservation,” *Conservation Perspectives*, Spring 2001: 6.

10 Ibid.

11 Wendi Field Murray, Dr. Maria Nieves Zedeño, Kacy L. Hollenback, Calvin Grinnell, and Elgin Crows Breast, “The Remaking of Lake Sakakawea: Locating Cultural Viability in Negative Heritage on the Missouri River” *American Ethnologist* 38, no. 3 (2011): 474.

and the fabric of the site itself. As noted above, the state of victimhood can be essential to the formation of group self-identity, as Tunbridge and Ashworth observe:

First, it is disproportionately significant to many heritage users. Its memory can so dominate the heritage of individuals or social and political groups, as to have profound effects upon their self-conscious identity to the extent that it may become almost a *sine qua non* of group cohesion in sects, tribes, or states, powerfully motivating their self-image and aspirations, over many centuries. Equally the curiosity of people about the suffering of their own kind appears to be insatiable, and motivated by empathy, excitement and other psychological stimuli of varying moral worth. ... Thus entertainment and education are effectively and often inextricably combined to render atrocity one of the most marketable of heritages and one of the most powerful instruments for the transference of political or social messages.¹²

Like the term heritage, the term atrocity has developed numerous definitions with variant implications to disparate audiences; because of its attractiveness to potential users, the term “atrocious” has been extended in its application to events of the mundane. Imbued with appropriate potency by Tunbridge and Ashworth, atrocity is here applied to “acts of singular cruelty, wickedness or ruthlessness deliberately perpetrated by people against people. Secondly, it means occurrences which are especially shocking or horrifying to others. Both elements need to be present and at a certain intensity or width of occurrence, or both,”¹³ to be considered here. Quantification of degrees of atrocity is impossible in the scope of this thesis and elsewhere: “the questions of how cruel, how shocking and how widespread events have to be to qualify as atrocity are admittedly unanswerable.”¹⁴ The intention of this thesis is neither to chronicle nor catalogue the vast history of deliberate human cruelty, but to examine the deployment of traumatic histories in the development of heritage resources. With a sensitive and emotion-rich topic to evaluate, this thesis focuses on the use of the heritage of atrocity as it is apparent in extant artifacts, buildings, places, and associations, and on the dissonance issues that such uses raise and promote.

As with the term heritage, Tunbridge and Ashworth offer a spectrum of definitions for the term atrocity, from the general to the particular, and from the circumstantial to the systematically perpetrated, to illustrate the above definition and broaden its application from singular acts of

¹² Tunbridge and Ashworth, 94.

¹³ Ibid., 95.

¹⁴ Ibid.

violence perpetrated by individuals on other individuals. An atrocity is an occurrence:

- Arising from the aggravation of natural or accidental disasters by alleged human action or neglect.
- Interpreted as having been perpetrated by an entire category of people on another entire category of people as an automatic concomitant of group membership. This definition encompasses colonialism, racism, and sexism in which all members of one country, race, or gender are *sui generis* victims or perpetrators, even inheriting the status of victim or perpetrator from events that occurred many generations earlier.
- From war or within the context of war, though it is admittedly difficult to determine at which point the horrors inherent to war become atrocity.
- Now perceived to have existed in former judicial systems as a *de jure* mode of persecution.
- Associated with the persecution of racial, ethnic, or social groups.
- Arising from large-scale killing or massacre.
- Placed in the most extreme category of genocide, a term adopted by the United Nations in 1949 following Raphael Lemkin's 1943 definition of "actions committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious group" as a deliberate act of policy and not acts of random violence or incompetence. Genocide aims not just for eradication of a culture, but of a people.¹⁵

To rationalize the roles of the victim, survivor, relative, and visitor in commemoration, Dominick LaCapra, in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, writes of an empathic unsettlement that prompts "being responsive to the traumatic experience of others"¹⁶ with insistence on an empathic resolution that, "resists full identification with, and appropriation of, the experience of the other and would depend both on one's own potential for traumatization ... and on one's recognition that another's loss is not identical to one's own loss."¹⁷ The survivor, to LaCapra, is a "living archive"¹⁸ whose contribution to commemoration an interpreter must solicit in a sympathetic manner, but

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 41.

¹⁷ Ibid., 79.

¹⁸ Ibid., 92.

whose statement holds potential to disrupt emotional and intellectual resolution and to generate a form of heritage dissonance.

Dissonance is implicit in the market segmentation of traumatic resources that are multi-sold, multi-interpreted, and multi-consumed, and in the manufacture of tourism from resources that retain personal, sacral qualities for survivors and kin outside of the intended tourist market. Further, dissonance arises out of the zero sum nature of heritage, which all belongs to someone and not to someone else. The manufacture of heritage disinherits those not embraced within its terms of meaning, as is often explicit in its territorial titling or framing. Heritage forms a paradox in that territoriality holds incredible destructive potential, but remains a condition of pluralist multicultural societies based on inclusiveness.¹⁹ Dissonance created by the interpretation of atrocities is particularly intense and enduring, but also particularly complex for victims, survivors, kin, and observers. Attempts to rationalize the roles of such a diverse set of stakeholders can have unsettling or dangerous political consequences, making the interpretation of atrocity especially difficult, but especially influential.

While the avoidance of dissonance would seem an effective tactic “to evade the opprobrium of perpetration whilst advantageously appropriating the martyrdom of victimization,”²⁰ there are a number of intervening factors in the deployment of a history of atrocity in the manufacture of heritage. Characteristics of the atrocity itself will influence its usability in heritage interpretation:

- The nature of the cruelty perpetrated, favoring the unusual or spectacular over the commonplace; the more memorable and shocking an event, rather than the more effective it is at eradication of its victims, the greater its deployment, invocation, and appropriation as heritage.
- The nature of the victims, namely their innocence, vulnerability, and non-complicity in the violence; victims suspected of complicity with or provocation of their aggressors elicit an utter lack of sympathy. The number of victims has little influence on deployment

19 Brian Graham, G. J. Ashworth, and J. E. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture, and Economy* (London: Hodder Headline Group, 2000). 8.

20 Tunbridge and Ashworth, 103.

as heritage; the nature of the human imagination is such that it resists the extension of empathy beyond small groups.

- The nature of the perpetrators as an unambiguously identifiable, distinguishable group, different from their victims and from the observer for whom the event is interpreted. An effective tactic in the deployment of an event as heritage is the demonization of the perpetrator to prevent identification of the observer with the perpetrator, who is often portrayed as unlike the observer or, ideally, as not normal.
- The high-profile visibility of the original event and its effective promotion, rather than documentation and verification. While modern technologies do extend the range and impact of events, there remains a possibility of “sympathy fatigue” on the part of an audience bombarded with images and news of such events.
- Survival of the record. Perpetrators often attempt eradication of evidence, either as part of a campaign of annihilation or out of fear of retribution.²¹

III. Images and the Entitlement to Trauma

With the high-profile visibility of an event and the extended impact of an event’s exposure as determining factors in the deployability of an event in the manufacture of heritage, consideration of the role of the image in the dispersion of entitlement to trauma is essential. Meskell and her adherents quote Theodor W. Adorno who, in *Prisms*, offers vilification of the stasis that accompanies a certain mode of preservation, albeit of *objets d’art*:

The German word, ‘*museal*’ [‘museumlike’] has unpleasant overtones. It describes objects to which the observer no longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying. They owe their preservation more to historical respect than to the needs of the present. Museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association. Museums are like the family sepulchers of works of art. They testify to the neutralization of culture.²²

To Adorno, deference to “historical respect” inhibits reconciliation of a work with “the

²¹ Ibid., 95.

²² Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1981), 173.

needs of the present”: *museal* qualities set the institution and its contents at a distance from the tense, incongruous strata inherent to existence across time and zeitgeist. Of note to the discussion of strategies in the interpretation of traumatic histories is Adorno’s notion of the museum as mausoleum. At another point, this thesis evaluates whether what Adorno conceives of as the conceptual flaw of the *museal* — its intrinsic sepulchral qualities — can metamorphose into interpretation of a site’s traumatic histories with an intrinsic and unobtrusive element of commemoration.

Adorno’s criticism was echoed in Rem Koolhaas’ *Cronocaos* installation at the Venice Biennale and the New Museum, the thesis of which the New York Times articulated as follows:

A skilled provocateur, [Koolhaas] paints a picture of an army of well-meaning but clueless preservationists who, in their zeal to protect the world’s architectural legacies, end up debasing them by creating tasteful scenery for docile consumers while airbrushing out the most difficult chapters of history. The result, he argues, is a new form of historical amnesia, one that, perversely, only further alienates us from the past.²³

Apprehension over “airbrushing out the most difficult chapters of history” has been met with a torrent of investigation into traumatic histories. Meskell et. al. note an escalation in American attention to traumatic histories in the wake — the literal, mournful vigil in the presence of remains — of the events of September 11, 2001. In “As Public Yearns to See Ground Zero, Survivors Call a Viewing Stand Ghoulish,”²⁴ the question of who owns trauma is met with contrast between treatment of the site by visitors, context communities, relatives of victims, and survivors (See FIGURES 2.1-2.3). While the authors of “The Remaking of Lake Sakakawea: Locating Cultural Viability in Negative Heritage on the Missouri River” note variant treatment of the site with temporal distance from the traumatic event,²⁵ examination of the World Trade Center site revealed variant treatment with personal, psychological, and geographic distance:

While visitors to Lower Manhattan have swarmed to the first of several platforms planned for the perimeter of ground zero, relatives of the dead and missing say they are deeply offended by it. For many, the sense of outrage is worsened by the city’s decision last week to control the big crowds by issuing free tickets at the nearby South Street Seaport.

23 Nicolai Ouroussoff, “An Architect’s Fear that Preservation Distorts.” *New York Times*, May 24, 2011: C1.

24 Dean E. Murphy, “As Public Yearns to See Ground Zero, Survivors Call a Viewing Stand Ghoulish,” *New York Times*, January 2002, 13: A-31.

25 Murray et. al., 474.

Since opening late last month, the 16-foot-high platform has been praised by the tens of thousands of onlookers at ground zero. Many of them are tourists with no other vantage point to see the devastation. By most accounts, the vast majority of the visitors have been respectful, reverent and deeply moved by the experience. It is not uncommon to hear the quiet recitation of prayers from the wooden deck.

But the negative reaction among some of the families of the dead and missing shows how difficult it remains for city officials, now four months after the terror attacks, to balance the conflicting demands and emotions at the 16-acre site. For the relatives, the former World Trade Center remains an open grave, something they regard as intensely private. For the visitors, it is a place of international significance that needs to be seen to be understood.²⁶

Jeannine Gist, the mother of a victim of the Oklahoma City bombing, vocalizes the tension that images, in their distribution to diverse constituents and implication of viewers in their contents, initiate:

Mrs. Gist said one of the things she was most sensitive about in 1995 was the frequently heard claim that the tragedy in Oklahoma City “happened to the entire country.” She has heard the same thing said about the World Trade Center attacks, she said, and though true at one level, she finds it quite false at another.

“I would love to have not lost my daughter,” she said. “The same is true for the people in New York. It did affect all of us, but you can’t put all of us in the same category.”²⁷

Jean Baudrillard, in “The Spirit of Terrorism,” published in *Le Monde* on November 2, 2001 in reaction to the events of September 11, 2001, theorizes the role of the image in the communication of trauma, and in both extending and obfuscating the state of victimhood and the entitlement to trauma:

... The New York events have radicalized the relation of images to reality, in the same way as they have radicalized the global situation. ... Among the other weapons of the system which they have co-opted against it, terrorists have exploited the real time of images, their instantaneous global diffusion. ... The image consumes the event, that is, it absorbs the latter and gives it back as consumer goods. Certainly the image gives to the event an unprecedented impact, but as an image-event.²⁸

26 Murphy, “As Public Yearns to See Ground Zero, Survivors Call a Viewing Stand Ghoulish.”

27 Ibid.

28 Jean Baudrillard, “L’Esprit du Terrorisme,” Trans. Rachel Bloul, *Le Monde*, November 2, 2001. <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/jean-baudrillard/articles/the-spirit-of-terrorism>.



FIGURE 2.1: The diller scofidio + renfro-designed viewing platform, installed at Fulton Street “several weeks after 9/11 to address the public’s desire for a dignified place to view Ground Zero without impinging on the urgent recovery effort. Elevated 13’ above the ground and over three hundred feet in length, the viewing platform provided a 180-degree view of the site.”¹ Some relatives of victims whose remains were present on-site expressed deep offense that the platform was erected, and that tickets were distributed for use of the platform.

Image, diller scofidio + renfro, <http://www.dsny.com/#/projects/viewing-platform>.

FOLLOWING PAGE, **FIGURE 2.2:** Controversy over the architect-designed viewing platform was summarized by the *New York Times* as follows: “For the relatives, the former World Trade Center remains an open grave, something they regard as intensely private. For the visitors, it is a place of international significance that needs to be seen to be understood.”²

Image, diller scofidio + renfro, <http://www.dsny.com/#/projects/viewing-platform>.

29 diller scofidio + renfro, “Viewing Platform,” <http://www.dsny.com/#/projects/viewing-platform>.

30 Murphy, “As Public Yearns to See Ground Zero, Survivors Call a Viewing Stand Ghoulis.”





FIGURE 2.3: Though diller scofidio + renfro employed “metal scaffolding, plywood, and rough decking”³¹ to de-emphasize the fact of the platform as a designed work of architecture, the rhythmic, regular spacing of materials and the careful logic of smooth interior surfaces versus spaced and framed exterior surfaces points to the structure as a designed rather than impromptu work. For this and other reasons, the platform was viewed as “ghoulish” by families of victims.

Image, diller scofidio + renfro, <http://www.dsny.com/#/projects/viewing-platform>.

³¹ diller scofidio + renfro, “Viewing Platform,” <http://www.dsny.com/#/projects/viewing-platform>.

IV. Timeliness and International Efforts to Acknowledge Underrepresented Heritage

The General Assembly of State Parties of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, or UNESCO, has, since 1976, elected 21 State Parties from the 191 that have adhered to the guidelines set forth in the 1972 World Heritage Convention to a four-year term on the World Heritage Committee. The Committee, which deliberates on whether properties merit inscription to the World Heritage List, meets annually to discuss the management of extant World Heritage Sites and accept World Heritage nominations from State Parties. Nominations are evaluated by the International Council on Monuments and Sites, or ICOMOS, and the World Conservation Union, or WCU, which then make their recommendations to the World Heritage Committee.¹

While the existence of a “positive heritage” is an unintended implication of the term “negative heritage,” the language used throughout the 1972 World Heritage Convention intimates that the role of heritage is to unify and celebrate peace through diversity.² The role of dissonance in heritage designation must therefore be addressed in order to better evaluate the World Heritage List as an archive of cultural diversity and as a didactic resource. As anthropologist Trinidad Rico concludes, “In the spirit of promoting a diversity of relationships to the past, the List may fail to reflect the contested nature of heritage, which raises questions of its educational value as an archive, and the World Heritage Convention’s support of alternative memories and multiple interpretations of the past.”³ Although the World Heritage Committee has acknowledged geographic and typological imbalances in nomination to the World Heritage List, it has not addressed the relative lack of heritage sites emblematic of global tragedy rather than triumph.

To rectify the imbalance in designation, the 1994 Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List offered a comparative diagnostic assessment of the contents of the World Heritage List; certain geographic regions and types of heritage were

32 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “The World Heritage Convention,” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, 1992-2014, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/convention>.

33 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage,” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, 1972, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext>.

34 Trinidad Rico, “Negative Heritage: The Place of Conflict in World Heritage,” *Conservation and Management of Architectural Sites*, Vol. 10 No. 4 (November, 2008): 344.

found to be overrepresented: “A global study carried out by ICOMOS from 1987 to 1993 revealed that Europe, historic towns and religious monuments, Christianity, historical periods and ‘elitist’ architecture, in relation to vernacular, were all over-represented on the World Heritage List; whereas, all living cultures, and especially ‘traditional cultures’, were underrepresented,”⁴ in part an outcome of the European provenance of the World Heritage Convention. Further evaluation of the above attributed the imbalance to the structural intricacies of the nomination process and to qualitative disparities in the identification, assessment, and evaluation of properties⁵ — a factor aggravated by language biases and reliance on a particular, Western notion of heritage. Efforts to encourage countries to become State Parties, to prepare tentative lists of historic resources, and to nominate properties from underrepresented regions have intensified in the intervening decades since publication.

Monuments, which commemorate particular strata of intricate and layered realities, are in and of themselves unable to convey causality:

Every World Heritage nomination decontextualizes monuments through the one-model-fits-all process of justification for inscription set out in the Operational Guidelines and the process of defining boundaries and buffer zones; the removal of physical and conceptual contexts makes sites susceptible to political manipulation ... The process of nomination to the List actively discourages contestation through the decontextualization of specific sites, as they are required to fit a predefined language embodied in a set of criteria, and to define geographical boundaries that may isolate them from their spatial, and to some degree cultural, contexts.⁶

Indeed, UNESCO’s geographic classification of the world into Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean has been found to influence the statistical conclusions of global representation on the World Heritage List, and to contribute to the existence of gaps and biases within the List.⁷

Though few sites with traumatic histories have been considered by the World Heritage Committee, those that have continue to generate controversy. Shortly after the World Heritage

35 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List,” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, 1994, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/globalstrategy>.

36 International Council of Monuments and Sites, “The World Heritage List: Filling the Gaps: An Action Plan for the Future,” *ICOMOS*, 2004, <http://whc.unesco.org/document/102409>.

37 Rico, 348.

38 International Council of Monuments and Sites, “The World Heritage List: Filling in the Gaps: An Action Plan for the Future.”

List was established in 1972 and enacted in 1975, the Auschwitz Concentration Camp was inscribed by Poland in 1979, as “witness to the conditions within which the Hitlerian genocide took place ... the largest cemetery in the world.”⁸ Symbolic of “humanity’s cruelty to its fellow human beings in the twentieth century,”⁹ the Auschwitz Concentration Camp was added to the List with the aim to restrict the inscription of other sites associated with atrocity.¹⁰ Perhaps emblematic of a more recent willingness to acknowledge the contested nature of heritage, the title of the site was changed to the Auschwitz-Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp in 2007, implicating the aggressor and arguably shifting from notions of unity, a fact almost unavoidable in the commemoration of victimhood.

In 1996, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial was inscribed on the World Heritage List with justification as “a permanent witness to the terrible disaster that occurred when the atomic bomb was used as a weapon for the first time in the history of mankind ... the only building in existence that can convey directly a physical image of the tragic situation after the bombing.”¹¹ The only structure left standing near the hypocenter in the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial or Genbaku Dome was inscribed on the merit of World Heritage Cultural Heritage Criterion VI, which applies to a site that must “be directly or intangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.”¹²

Though the statement of significance for the Genbaku Dome relies on an international collective memory of the events of August 6, 1945, the dissonance inherent to its histories was reflected in the reservations that the inscription provoked among certain World Heritage Committee parties. The delegation from the United States issued a statement dissociating itself

39 International Council of Monuments and Sites, “Advisory Body Evaluation,” *ICOMOS*, 1979, http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/031.pdf.

40 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration Camp and Extermination Camp (1940–1945),” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, 2007, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/31>.

41 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “*Report of the Rapporteur on the Third Session of the World Heritage Committee (Cairo and Luxor, 22–26 October 1979)*,” *UNESCO*, 1979, <http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/03COM/documents>.

42 International Council of Monuments and Sites, “Advisory Body Evaluation,” *ICOMOS*, 1996, http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/775.pdf.

43 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention,” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, 2005, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/opguide05-en.pdf>.

from the decision to inscribe the Genbaku Dome, stating that “the United States believes the inscription of war sites outside the scope of the Convention”¹³ and urging the Committee to address whether sites of war are appropriate World Heritage. China opposed the nomination because China and other victims of Japanese invasion, aggression, and wartime atrocities sustained the greatest losses of life during the war. The site was inscribed as “a universal monument for all mankind, symbolizing the hope for perpetual peace and the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons on earth”¹⁴ in an active attempt to continue to employ heritage in the name of unity and to shift focus from the contested significance of the place.

Whereas there was unanimous support for inscription of Auschwitz-Birkenau to the World Heritage List, disagreements over the nomination of the Genbaku Dome resulted in the reduction of the World Heritage Cultural Heritage Criterion VI, under which both sites were nominated, in 1996, so that it could only be used in exceptional circumstances.¹⁵ Revision of the criterion reduced the types of property that could be nominated and favored the sorts of traditional sites already overrepresented on the World Heritage List,¹⁶ affecting the inclusion of underrepresented nominations relating to difficult or contested histories.

Reliance on evaluation by the scientific agencies ICOMOS and WCU to ensure that only globally significant sites are inscribed portrays the World Heritage nomination process as democratic, but fails to acknowledge that the World Heritage Committee molds heritage into an idea of heritage that it itself defined in 1972. Sites that have been inscribed despite collective, negative memories associated with them, including South Africa’s Robben Island and Afghanistan’s Cultural Landscape and Archaeological Remains of the Bamiyan Valley, focus their nominations on the uncontested aspects of their significance and on the potential reconciliation-

44 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “WH Committee: Report of the 20th Session, Merida 1996,” *UNESCO World Heritage Centre*, 1996, <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/repco96x.htm>.

45 International Council of Monuments and Sites, “Advisory Body Evaluation,” *ICOMOS*, 1996.

46 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “WH Committee: Report of the 20th Session, Merida 1996.”

47 Sophia Labadi, “A Review of the Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative, and Credible World Heritage List 1994-2004,” *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, Vol. 7 No. 2 (January 2005): 95.

building capacities of the sites.¹⁷

V. Timeliness and Efforts to Acknowledge Underrepresented Heritage in the United States

While UNESCO was investigating the imbalanced nomination to its World Heritage List, a sociopolitical, administrative shift in historiography in the United States had tremendous repercussions on the manufacture of heritage. In *Slavery and Public History: the Tough Stuff of American Memory*, James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton credit acknowledgment of the heritage of slavery with a larger tendency toward acknowledgement of traumatic and difficult histories: “Simply put, American history cannot be understood without slavery. Slavery shaped America’s economy, politics, culture, and fundamental principles. For most of the nation’s history, American society was one of slaveholders and slaves. ... the United States’ largest, most pervasive social problem is founded on the institution of slavery.”¹⁸ That the capital raised by the slave economy has funded the infrastructure upon which rests three centuries of economic success has resulted in a general, if inchoate, understanding that to address race in current discourse is to address a history of slavery and institutionalized racism. An essential factor in the above is the enduring contradiction of a history of slavery in a country predicated on and dedicated to freedom.

A body of new scholarship on traumatic histories, a growth in the number of museums and historic sites dedicated to black history and slavery, and the emergence of a better-educated and increasingly diverse cadre of preservation professionals, site administrators, and legislators came about in the 1990s.¹⁹ In 1989, Congress instructed the Secretary of the Interior to interpret the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields, and later, the Gettysburg National Military Site, “in the larger context of the Civil War and American history, including the causes

48 International Council of Monuments and Sites “Advisory Body Evaluation,” *ICOMOS*, 1999, http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/916.pdf.

International Council of Monuments and Sites “Advisory Body Evaluation,” *ICOMOS*, 2003, http://whc.unesco.org/archive/advisory_body_evaluation/208.pdf.

49 James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, eds., *Slavery and Public History: the Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006) 2.

50 Ibid., 171.

and consequences of the Civil War and including the effects of the war on all the American People, especially on the American South.”²⁰ In 1991, Congress mandated that the National Park Service reverse decades of interpretation at Custer Battlefield National Monument that established the park as a shrine to George Armstrong Custer at the expense of acknowledgement of the Sioux, Arapaho, and Cheyenne who shared the battlefield; in particular, Congress prompted the Secretary of the Interior to rename the site Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument and required more balanced interpretation and construction of a memorial to the Native population. Other legislation passed during the decade included the Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site and the Manzanar National Historic Site in 1992; the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail and the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site in 1996; the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site in 1998; and the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site in 2000, effectively communicating to the National Park Service and to the general public that “useful history includes both the shameful and prideful aspects,” a fact perhaps best encapsulated in a 1994 article by Yale University professor Robin Winks:

Education is best done with examples. These examples must include that which we regret, that which is to be avoided, as well as that for which we strive. No effective system of education can be based on unqualified praise, for all education instructs people of the difference between moral and wanton acts and how to distinguish between the desirable and the undesirable. If this premise is correct, we cannot omit the negative lessons of history.²¹

VI. The Management of Negative Heritage in Architecture

In *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, geographer Kenneth E. Foote offers four strategies applied to sites in the aftermath of a violent or tragic event: sanctification, designation, rectification, and obliteration.

Sanctification occurs when an event is thought to serve as a paradigm of heroism or

⁵¹ Ibid., 172.

⁵² Robin Winks, “Sites of Shame: Disgraceful Episodes of Our Past Should Be Included in the Park System to Present a Complete Picture of Our History,” *National Parks* (March/April 1994), 22-23.

self-sacrifice and compels construction of a memorial or monument.²² The term “monument” is consistent, in Foote’s parlance, with the definition given in historian Alois Riegl’s *The Modern Cult of Monuments*: “a monument, in its oldest and most original sense, is a human creation, erected for a specific purpose of keeping single human deeds or events alive in the minds of future generations.”²³ Per Foote’s classification, the formal dedication of a site in commemoration of a martyr, heroic figure, or victim of violence is requisite for sanctification to occur. Within the mechanism of sanctification, a direct link between landscape and commemoration is drawn; place undergoes a transformation into symbol in order serve subsequent generations, either as *monumentum*, a remembrance with the intent to inspire, or as admonition in accordance with the etymological derivation of *monument* from the Latin *monere*, to warn. An event must be public enough and touch a single, homogeneous, self-identified group in order that the group views the event as a shared loss and engages in sanctification.²⁴

In designation, the landscape itself comes to bear a deliberate indication of its significance, but without having undergone the rite of consecration that is prerequisite for sanctification. Designation occurs in response to events that lack the eternal symbolic significance of a sanctifiable event. As a consequence, place is not the focus of formal or immediate commemoration; “designated places are unveiled rather than commemorated.”²⁵ Designation often follows in the wake of what Foote terms “the unforgettable event,” one which would urge rectification or obliteration were it not highly atypical. In an event that merits designation, loss is neither specific enough to a uniform population nor heroic enough to warrant sanctification.²⁶

Rectification involves a literal or figurative sanitization that facilitates the disassociation of place and event in order to allow the landscape to experience reclamation and reuse. In Foote’s schema, stigma and notoriety are impermanent: “associations with the fatal event eventually weaken, and the site is reintegrated into the activities of everyday life. No sense of honor or dishonor

53 Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1997), 8.

54 Alois Riegl, “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Essence and Its Development” in *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, 56.

55 Foote, 14-15.

56 Ibid., 18.

57 Ibid., 20.

remains attached to the site; it is, so to speak, exonerated of involvement in the tragedy.”²⁷ Places that experience rectification lack both the social significance of the sanctifiable or designatable, as well as the element of shame that encourages obliteration. Rectification follows when a tragic event comes to be seen as accidental and when violence is interpreted as senseless. Such sites “are exonerated of blame and assume a role analogous to that of the innocent bystander,” with the location of an event seen as a product of chance: “most acts of homicide eventually come to be viewed as senseless, or rather, as lacking the deeper meaning that would result in sanctification or even designation. Rectification is the outcome in these situations. Only in situations where the violence induces a great sense of shame is another outcome possible — obliteration.”²⁸

Obliteration follows events that Foote pronounces “shameful.” Obliteration impels active effacement of all evidence of the tragic or violent in order to remove an event from view and a site from use, to scour where rectification cleanses. A significant temporal distance must exist between obliteration of an event from a place and the successive occupation of that place to suit an altogether different function. In obliteration, Foote acknowledges the presence of stigma, what he terms an “indefinite scar,” that is powerful enough, in some cases, to preclude further occupation of that place.²⁹ In a sense, a place that has undergone obliteration is as palpable as one that has undergone sanctification and become a monument; a rupture in an otherwise homogenous landscape, these often vacant, often whisper-prone places draw attention not to human triumph but to human malevolence, with the same dual connotation as the intentional monument: the void recalls, *monumentum*; *monere*, the void warns.

While Foote’s spectrum offers a gradation of human action in the aftermath of loss, the four-part scale is of greater interest to preservationists in that, through mention of the exoneration of place, Foote provides basest introduction to the implication of architecture in the tragic events that buildings host. Within Foote’s scale, though, there exist apparent lacunae in the lack of address of alteration: Foote’s strategies form black or white binaries that either raze stigmatized

58 Ibid., 23.

59 Ibid., 24.

60 Ibid., 26.

sites or retain them intact. Foote fails to anticipate the gray area that is adaptation, intervention, or renovation, tactics which hybridize selection, maintenance, and deletion and which, in this thesis, will earn placement in and evaluation against his spectrum.

VII. The Management of Negative Heritage in Adaptive Reuse Projects

In “Life of a Shell and the Collective Memory of a City,” architect Rafael Luna offers three possible relationships between form and program in an adaptive reuse context: autonomous, wherein the original form becomes an ornamental facade; symbiotic, wherein the original form serves its original function; or parasitic, wherein a new program inhabits and derives benefit from the spatial qualities of the original form.⁶¹ While Luna further elaborates on the above in terms of commemoration — the autonomous erases memories, the symbiotic transmits memories, and the parasitic exploits memories to enhance the value of the new — the subtexts of his terminologies value or devalue, and therefore encourage or discourage, certain strategies without consideration of case or context. The term “parasitic,” for instance, bears a negative connotation and in addition assumes that the “shell,” here the historic form, does not itself benefit from use that returns it to public consciousness or to service.

To underscore the lack of a one-size-fits-all solution to the problem of negative heritage, this thesis introduces further nuance to redefine the scale which, as is, lacks comprehension of the biological phenomena to which it makes reference; parasitism, a condition in which one benefits at a cost to another, is a type of symbiosis — the condition of relatedness, which is indefinite in benefit or loss — rather than, as Luna insists, its alternative. This thesis expands the range of strategies employed to address traumatic histories, to incorporate mutualism, the derivation of mutual benefit from relationship; commensalism, wherein one benefits without impact on the other; amensalism, wherein one is harmed while the other sees zero net effect; parasitism; and the autonomous. Further, the thesis aims to define cost — here, impact of one intervention on another

61 Rafael Luna, “Life of a Shell and the Collective Memory of the City,” *IntAR Interventions and Adaptive Reuse*, Vol. 4 *Difficult Memories: Reconciling Meaning* (April 2013): 30-35.

— in terms of the tangible and intangible aspects of historic resources and their values.

Chapter 3 Demolition: the American Absolution Rite

On March 23, 2015, Manafort Brothers, a construction firm with ties to Newtown, Connecticut, demolished the residence shared by Adam Lanza and his mother at zero cost to the Town of Newtown. Prior to the demolition, the Associated Press noted, “He killed her [in the residence] on Dec. 14, 2012, before heading to Sandy Hook Elementary School where he fatally shot 20 students and six educators and then committed suicide. Manafort’s offer would save about \$30,000 Newtown planned to spend with money from an insurance fund set aside for costs associated with the shootings. The fund was used to demolish the Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2013.”¹ Manafort Brothers “had the house,” an albatross for the Town of Newtown “down within two hours”²:

Officials have said the home’s infamy would make it impossible to sell, and the process would subject neighbors to scores of people driving up and down the street and touring the home, claiming to be prospective buyers. Detectives have removed everything that could have been even remotely related to the crime, including guns, ammunition, computers, journals and other items. Hudson City Savings Bank of New Jersey had everything else in the home removed and burned.

The town’s Legislative Council voted in December to take ownership of the property at no cost from the Hudson City Savings Bank. The Legislative Council then agreed this month with the Board of Selectmen to have the home destroyed. The home is expected to be razed once the weather thaws.

[Newtown First Selectman E. Patricia] Llodra said every step will be taken to keep workers or anyone else from grabbing souvenirs from the rubble. “We will likely approach the work in a fashion similar to demolition of the school,” she said. “In that case, every contractor and vendor of any sort had to sign a separate nondisclosure contract, and oversight of the process ensured that no items or artifacts were taken for personal use.”

Materials from Sandy Hook Elementary School, which was demolished in 2013, were either crushed on site or were closely tracked to another location, where they were destroyed. Some materials like mortar, bricks and concrete were fed into an on-site crusher and reduced to crushed stone that is being used as the foundation for the new school.³

A number of phenomena are in evidence in the above description: an implication that the neighbors have been subject to emotional torment, in part the result of the constant stimuli in the

1 “Firm: We Will Demolish Newtown Shooter’s Home For Free,” *CBS News*, February 18, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/firm-offers-to-demolish-newtown-shooter-adam-lanzas-home-for-free>.

2 Aaron Katersky, “School Shooter Adam Lanza’s Newtown House Is Demolished,” *ABC News*, March 24, 2015 <http://abcnews.go.com/US/school-shooter-adam-lanzas-newtown-house-demolished/story?id=29877154>.

3 John Burgeson, “Lanza Home’s Rubble to Be Handled With Care,” *News Times*, January 30, 2015, <http://www.newstimes.com/local/article/Lanza-home-s-rubble-to-be-handled-with-care-6051782.php>.

form of “scores of people driving up and down the street”; that “neighbors” are distinct in their lack of inquisitiveness from the “scores” of tourists unabashed in their disturbance of the site or its environs; the notion that an item associated with the means or motive of violence — journals and computers are here repositories for Lanza’s psyche — substantiate the thesis that it is not the architecture but its associations that are met with obliteration, with the structure a surrogate for its associations; and the issue of cost, in that the cost to eliminate traumatic associations is seen as an onus on the owner, here the Town of Newtown, in a context rife with tremendous loss.

Demolition of the Lanza residence was one of a series of tactics meant to recast the site as a *tabula rasa*, to “return the land to a natural state” and eliminate its associations with violence:

The town will return to the 2+ acre site on Yogananda Street this spring to grade the land and do whatever plantings are appropriate. The goal is to return the land to a natural state. The lot backs up to open space so the hope is it merges “into the existing open space in a very natural way,” Llodra said.

Manafort Brothers also demolished the house in Cheshire, Connecticut, where Dr. William Petit’s wife and two daughters were killed by home intruders in 2007. “We’ve been treated so well by so many companies but I thought it was so incredible to learn the Manafort company stepped up in Cheshire and now in Newtown,” Llodra said.

Elsewhere in town the new Sandy Hook Elementary is going up. Foundation work started last week. “Each of these events are small steps but the combination of all of them is important to us,” Llodra said.⁴

Lifespan and the American Absolution Rite

The dissociation of histories, as moments in time, from their sites through demolition initiates an intermission, as Foote notes: “A significant temporal distance must exist between obliteration of an event from a place and the successive occupation of that place to suit an altogether different function.”⁵ Associations and histories correlate a structure with the events it hosts, as historian Neil Harris notes in *Building Lives*: “Examining buildings through their life stages and modes of representation encourages us to conceive of them not simply as places but as *sets of events*, affixing a temporal dimension to their existence that is not simply an addition, but fundamental to their nature ... this involves acknowledging building personality without

⁴ Aaron Katersky, “School Shooter Adam Lanza’s Newtown House Is Demolished.”

⁵ Foote, 15.

demanding that it stay permanently the same.”⁶

Introducing lifespan into the valuation of architecture has, as Harris acknowledges, tremendous implications for preservation discourse: “We require new and stronger arguments for the retention or adaptation of certain structures than the simple grounds of their having been around for a long time and our sentimental affection for them. The notion of structural lifetimes may provide part of a more persuasive strategy of evaluation, in considering when euthanasia is appropriate or not and why we need to salvage what no longer is the original personality or anything like it.”⁷ To consider structures as “sets of events” — or, more aptly, as containers of sets of events — is to approach their management and stewardship in a most holistic manner, to acknowledge strata of occupation and interpretation rather than to relegate significance to a particular date or narrow range of dates.

Harris continues, “A second reason to think more about the implications of building rites of passage and life histories is our continuing need to understand objects by attributes that do not inherently belong to them.”⁸ The projection of extrinsic, often traumatic associations — attributes not inherent to the site or structure — onto architecture can have fatal consequences for the material of the site or structure itself. Insentient, architecture can be taken as an inert host to actions enacted within its spaces; demolition, then, implicates architecture in actions that it neither initiates nor perpetuates. The projection of associations with violence onto architecture can terminate its life, to use Harris’ extended metaphor, far earlier than the deterioration of its materials would.

As rhetorical justification for his thesis, Harris asks, “How long should a building live? Does it have, or does the larger community possess, certain rights to its survival? Do certain building types merit longer lives than others? Should life expectancy be linked to size, to cost, to originality, to popularity, to artistic significance, to historical associations?”⁹ Of Harris’ criteria, popularity — in the form of historiographic reception — and historical associations have driven demolition.

6 Emphasis added. Neil Harris, *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages*, (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1999), 164.

7 Ibid., 162.

8 Ibid., 164.

9 Ibid., 117.

Popularity is often dependent on the appearance of a structure, and can be written as reaction to particular characteristics of the built material itself or to their arrangement. Associations, in contrast, come about from the projection of extrinsic evocations onto architecture, and as such, are the sole criterion which holds potential for emotional matters extrinsic to the material of the site to have consequence on the architectural lifespan.

Architecture counters a notion that construction is “necessarily an act against nature,” that to select a site is to “set it apart from nature,”¹⁰ a conception that brought about “gestures of propitiation — ceremonies designed to appease angry gods, encourage good luck, and capture hidden sources of power” in disparate geographic and historic contexts.¹¹ While appeasement ceremonies occur in other contexts, the assimilation of variant traditions in the United States inhibits the formation of a representative absolution rite for American sites of violence, as Foote notes: “Some societies and cultures have rituals that serve to lift stigma, guilt, or blame, ceremonies that symbolically cleanse people and places and allow them to return to full participation in day-to-day life. This is not true of American society; there is no easy way for stigmatized sites to be returned to use.”¹²

Counter to Foote’s insistence on the lack of an absolution rite for sites of violence in the United States, this thesis posits the formation of a distinct American mode of ritualization: demolition. Demolition in the United States, as written below, is the culmination of an American ethos; affluence; construction modes; dissociation from “tame death”; and the removal of rites associated with death outside of the home and the urban context. Demolition in the United States is a counter-rite to absolution ceremonies in that it involves neither invocation nor atonement but absolution of traumatic associations through the erasure of structure, the apparatus onto which associations and histories are projected. As a consequence, concretization, which generates an ever more massive manifestation of a traumatic site as written below, is a tactic unheard of in the United States. At Manzanar, the President’s House, and elsewhere, apprehension over the

10 Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy, and the Ancient World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976), 174.

11 Harris, *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages*, 7.

12 Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, 25.

likelihood of erasure in the absence of relict material was motivation enough for reconstruction. While Foote posits that “apart from mass murder, no single type of event that leads regularly to demolition,”¹³ in the United States, unlike elsewhere, an ever-expanding litany of violence, including forcible imprisonment, rape, and torture, also motivates demolition of the structures in which these are perpetrated.

Construction Technologies, Time, and the American Ethos

In its truncation of the lifespan of a structure, demolition counters the aspiration of architecture toward permanence:

Traditionally most major structures, or at least portions of them, were expected to survive anything but war or natural catastrophes ... even after accidents and disasters, many buildings could be patched and repatched ... Demolition of buildings because they were considered outmoded or undersized was rare, though in certain genres, like theatres, great houses, and wharves, it was far from unprecedented.¹⁴

The historic demolition was the result of insufficient space, inefficient architecture, or reaction to characteristics otherwise intrinsic to the structure or site. While this thesis concerns itself with demolition as a tactic to mitigate trauma, stigma, or shame, the historic demolition was a luxury, a display of wealth and demonstration of the means to dispose of a structure, an expensive investment:

Some observers must find the abbreviation of building lives as much as a tribute to progress as the extension of the human span. Both rest, after all, upon increased wealth, improved science and engineering, and higher expectations about sanitation health, and comfort. In untold numbers of county and municipal histories, outgrowing public facilities has been a source of pride and not shame.¹⁵

War, conquest, and catastrophe have been perpetual threats to built heritage since the earliest construction. In the course of urbanization, innovative construction technologies, emergent social hierarchies, and demographic migration have posed ever greater peril to structures with associations to the past: “Buildings and monuments became vulnerable to victimization as

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Harris, *Building Lives: Constructing Rites and Passages*, 119.

¹⁵ Ibid., 118.

symbols of systems being repudiated.”¹⁶

Nonetheless, reuse and adaptation of structures, rather than demolition, were standard until the Industrial Revolution, when an abundance of technologies meant to expedite construction and abbreviate the investment of time reformulated the conception of the architectural lifespan. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, “the common pattern was for buildings to be adapted to new uses; only since then has it become more usual to demolish and build new ... By the 1930s investors and builders were popularizing the notion that a building should be taken down and replaced as soon as it was perceived to be economically inefficient.”¹⁷ Valuation of property in terms of economic depreciation for assessment and taxation by the Internal Revenue Service has given prevalence to the notion of deterioration in worth of a structure over the course of its operation. Classification of real estate as “wasting assets” in line with vehicles, machinery, and resources like coal, gives the sense that disintegration of buildings, too, is inevitable.¹⁸

To some historians, the greatest threat to architecture was neither conquest nor catastrophe, but urbanization: “Most of all, as a threat to existing structures, there was city planning. The needs and assumptions varied from place to place and time to time, but the inevitable result was the massive destruction of great parts of the built heritage of towns and cities.”¹⁹ Innumerable town-scale catastrophes, Great Fires in New York, Pittsburgh, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, and elsewhere, and the inundation of the public with photographic and journalistic documentation of the above, recast the demolition and destruction of structures as ever more prosaic in the American consciousness.

The American Distance from Tame Death

In its expectation of a dignified and private death, the contemporary American ethos is markedly distant from that of late antiquity and the early Middle Ages:

... when material conditions were unimaginably horrid and death was a common event.

¹⁶ Ibid., 120.

¹⁷ Ibid., 126.

¹⁸ Ibid., 125-126.

¹⁹ Ibid., 120.

War, famine, pestilence, and childbirth made living a perilous endeavor. A span of thirty years often constituted a full life. The decline of the Roman Empire returned urban populations to the familiarity of towns and villages. Roads declined, and people did not travel long distances, usually living in one location for the entirety of their lives. If death was ‘tame,’ it was because people died frequently, in plain view of their townsmen or fellow villagers; in such times, it would have been difficult to die a private death.²⁰

Rather than an archaic preoccupation, apprehension over *mors repentina* — “sudden death” — has been written as in abundant evidence in Civil War correspondence and thereafter in Drew Gilpin Faust’s *This Republic of Suffering*. In *mors repentina*, the apprehension is neither over the unknown nor inevitable qualities of death, but of oneself as “a person unprepared, his will unwritten in this world and his soul in a state of sin that could lead to eternal damnation in the next.”²¹ The notion of *mors repentina* crystallized in literature on the Black Death, a pandemic which “was not only sudden but, as we know now, agonizing and dehumanizing. It often meant that the sufferer was alone and abandoned, and it was death without the attentions of the clergy, without funeral rites and proper burial.”²²

A fascination with death arose in parallel to the relocation of cemeteries from within urban contexts to their peripheries. Apprehension over *mors repentina* was met with concern over hygiene, the communication of disease, and treatment of the corpse. The Rural Cemetery Movement won favor the United States following the establishment of Mount Auburn Cemetery, close to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1831.²³ Meant to serve Boston, Massachusetts, Mount Auburn Cemetery was sited far from the metropolitan core in order to prevent contamination of the urban fabric by the alleged miasma of decomposition²⁴: “The main object of a burial-ground is, of course, the disposal of the remains of the dead in such a manner that their decomposition and return to the earth shall not prove injurious to the living, either by affecting health or by shocking

20 William R. Wood and John B. Williamson, “Historical Changes of the in the Meaning of Death in the Western Tradition,” in Clifton D. Bryant ed., *Handbook of Death and Dying*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2004) 14-24, 18.

21 Frank Snowden, “Mors Repentina: Death Unleashed,” (Video Lecture, HIST-234 Epidemics in Western Society Since 1600, Open Yale Courses, New Haven, Connecticut, January 27, 2010), <http://oyc.yale.edu/transcript/598/hist-234>.

22 Ibid.

23 David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 44.

24 Ibid., 45.

James Stevens Curl, “John Claudius Loudon and the Garden Cemetery Movement,” *Garden History*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Autumn, 1983): 137.

feelings, opinions, or prejudice.”²⁵ Though the aesthetic qualities of the Movement had its basis in both French and English landscape traditions, Rural Cemeteries in the United States were in direct defiance of an American burial tradition, one largely reliant upon the association of church and burial ground. A revision of the burial ritual was further aided by concurrent accounts of the vandalism and abandonment of churchyards; the pollution of resources and inadequacy of sanitation services as a result of industrial development; and a Romantic notion of a picturesque exploitation of nature as instructor of moral and ethical behavior against a profane commercial world.²⁶

The movement of cemeteries from within the urban context to its peripheries brought about a conception of death as extraneous to, and then horrific in, quotidian spaces. As written in medievalist and historian Philippe Ariès’ *The Hour of Our Death*, the expectation of death shifted from “tame,” inevitable, and observable, to “invisible”:

For Philippe Ariès, within the scope of perhaps the past hundred years, death had become wild, forbidden, excluded. Much of Ariès’ work on death from the 18th century onward details the movement away from death as a collective ritual and toward something unmentionable, unspeakable. From the baroque fascination with death in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the later removal of the dead from urban cemeteries in the 19th century, the dying were increasingly disappearing from the world of the living. With both the act and evidence of death removed from public view, it was not long before the dying themselves were repositioned behind the opaque veneer of hospitals, nursing homes, and mortuaries. According to Ariès, by the middle of the 20th century death had become invisible, or worse. In the words of English anthropologist Geoffrey Gorer, it had become pornographic.²⁷

While hyperbolic and metaphorical in this instance, the term “pornographic” communicates a notion of titillation that arises from a sense of the forbidden, hidden, or taboo, apparent in this thesis in discussion of the fascination with violence to the violation of journalistic ethics and decorum that impels “swarms of people,” as those who descended on the Lanza residence on Yogananda Street, to the exploration of traumatic sites.

In *Death, Grief, and Mourning: Individual and Social Realities*, John S. Stephenson traces

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity*, 45, 51, 55.

²⁷ Wood and Williamson, “Historical Changes of the in the Meaning of Death in the Western Tradition,” 22.

the institution of hospital and hospice care and observes that “the relegating of death to institutions has removed death from the home, and hidden it behind institutional walls.”²⁸ Hospitalization, the institutionalization of death, arose within the contexts of devastation in the Civil War, World War I, and World War II, the Great Depression, advancements in medicine and the sciences, and emergent attention to issues of health; thus, the shift in the conception of death from “tame” to “pornographic” came about with relative quickness and in the context of extensive transformation in the American ethos.

The notion of death as extraneous to, or horrific in, quotidian spaces is of tremendous consequence to the American demolition rite in that sites associated with death or violence become *de facto* “traumatic.” In real estate parlance, these are “stigmatized properties”²⁹; non-disclosure of violent histories in the course of real estate sales has been a subject under argumentation in several State Supreme Court fora and remains controversial. While disclosure legislation varies from state to state, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court garnered heavy criticism for its July 21, 2014 verdict that “sellers of properties where horrific events — such as murders — have occurred do not have a legal obligation to tell prospective buyers about those tragedies,”³⁰ as Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice J. Michael Eakin maintained:

“We hold that a murder-suicide does not constitute an actionable material defect ... Regardless of the potential impact a psychological stigma may have on the value of property, we are not ready to accept that such constitutes a material defect. The varieties of traumatizing events that could occur on a property are endless. Efforts to define those that would warrant mandatory disclosure would be a Sisyphean task.”

The justice went on to list an array of scenarios — suicides, stabbings, poisonings, rapes, home invasions, satanic rituals — saying it would be impossible to quantify the psychological impact of different genres of such horrors. He noted as well that not all buyers would regard a tragedy in the same way. There are some, he observed, who might even consider high-profile tragedies as enhancing the provenance, and possibly even the value of a property, especially as time mellows the sharper edges of the event.

Besides, Eakin observed, “the occurrence of a tragic event inside a house does not affect the quality of the real estate, which is what seller disclosure duties are intended to address.”³¹

28 John S. Stephenson, *Death, Grief, and Mourning*, (New York: Free Press 2004), 41.

29 Shana Ecker, “Stigmatized Properties: Would You Live In A Home Where Someone Died Of Unnatural Causes?” *Huffington Post*, March 2, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/27/stigmatized-properties-someone-died_n_2962468.html.

30 Matt Miller, “Home Sellers Don’t Have to Tell Buyers About Murders, Other Tragedies, Pa. Supreme Court Rules in Death House Case,” *Patriot-News*, July 22, 2014, http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2014/07/home_sellers_dont_have_to_tell.html.

31 *Ibid.*

Acknowledgement of “high-profile tragedies as enhancing the provenance, and possibly even the value of a property” substantiates the notion of the “pornographic” qualities of traumatic histories. Despite recognition of “the potential impact a psychological stigma may have on the value of property,” judicial bodies are often apprehensive to inhibit a Right to Property — a Lockean doctrine with vast influence on the initiators of the American Revolution, the signatories of the Declaration of Independence, and the American ethos — in deference to the definition written in *Spann v. City of Dallas* in 1921 and adopted by numerous state legislatures thereafter: “Property in a thing consists not merely in its ownership and possession, but in the unrestricted right of use, enjoyment, and disposal. Anything which destroys any of the elements of property, to that extent, destroys the property itself. The substantial value of property lies in its use. If the right of use be denied, the value of the property is annihilated and ownership is rendered a barren right.”³²

Most states require the seller of a property to complete a disclosure statement, with disparate interpretation as to whether such disclosures are inclusive of traumatic histories:

Virginia says murders and ghost sightings must be disclosed only if they physically affect the property. (If doors open and close by themselves, for example, the owner must disclose it.) In California, sellers must disclose “emotional defects” in a limited way: A death on the property must be reported only if it occurred less than three years prior to the sale; earlier deaths must be disclosed only if the buyer asks. ... In Texas, sellers don’t need to inform buyers of nonviolent deaths that occurred on their property, but violent ones (such as murder and suicide) must be disclosed.³³

32 American Law Reports Annotated, Volume 19, 1390 *Spann v. City of Dallas*, 111 Tex. 350 (Tex. 1921). <https://casetext.com/case/spann-v-city-of-dallas>.

33 Ric Edelman, “Would You Buy a Home with “Emotional Defects”?” *Inside Personal Finance*, April 9, 2014, <http://www.edelmanfinancial.com/education-center/articles/w/would-you-buy-a-home-with-emotional-defects>.



FIGURE 3.1: In the demolition of the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, “every contractor and vendor of any sort had to sign a separate nondisclosure contract, and oversight of the process ensured that no items or artifacts were taken for personal use.”³⁴

Materials “were either crushed on site or were closely tracked to another location, where they were destroyed. Some materials like mortar, bricks and concrete were fed into an on-site crusher and reduced to crushed stone that is being used as the foundation for the new school.”³⁵

Image, Reuters

34 John Burgeson, “Lanza Home’s Rubble to Be Handled With Care,” *News Times*, January 30, 2015, <http://www.newstimes.com/local/article/Lanza-home-s-rubble-to-be-handled-with-care-6051782.php>.

35 Ibid.



FIGURE 3.2: Aerial image of the residence shared by Adam Lanza and his mother prior to its demolition on March 23, 2015. The intention to recast the site as a *tabula rasa*, to “return the land to a natural state” and eliminate its associations with violence, becomes clearer in recognition of the context of both the house and the Sandy Hook Elementary School on vast properties bordered by woods.

Image, Getty Images



FIGURE 3.3: The residence shared by Adam Lanza and his mother prior to its demolition on March 23, 2015. The intention to recast the site as a tabula rasa, to “return the land to a natural state” and eliminate its associations with violence, becomes clearer in recognition of the context of both the house and the Sandy Hook Elementary School on vast properties bordered by woods.

Image, Getty Images

Chapter 4 Concretization

As written above, sites that have undergone obliteration are as conspicuous as ones that have undergone sanctification. Ruptures in otherwise homogenous landscapes, these often vacant, often whisper-prone places draw attention not to human triumph but to human malevolence, with the same dual connotation as the intentional monument: *monumentum*, the void recalls; *monere*, the void warns. Reluctance to obliterate a site with violent associations can be taken as reluctance to direct attention to that site or to the fact of that site's distinction. Because demolition generates an interruption that is conspicuous against a consistent, inhabited context, and non-demolition invites curiosity about the structure as a witness to violence, strategies which neither permit visitation or inhabitation nor call attention to the site through demolition arise.

In April 2008, authorities in Amstetten, Austria, charged Josef Fritzl, an electrical engineer, with thousands of counts of incest and rape of his daughter, Elisabeth; enslavement and coercion; and murder by neglect.¹ Fritzl had held Elisabeth captive in the cellar of his house for twenty-four years, fathering eight children, one of whom, born without sterile equipment or proper medical care, Fritzl allowed to die and subsequently cremated on the property.² The press was quick to paint Fritzl as a “monster” and the cellar a “secret labyrinth,” and “dungeon basement,” with initial inattention to the fact of the cellar as a carefully-constructed instrument of terror. Entrance to the cellar was through a small electronic door, barely 3' high and 2' wide, released by an electronic code entered with a remote control unit, and concealed by a shelf; Fritzl had brought Elisabeth to the basement on the pretense of assistance with installation of the door, which he fit into a frame with her aid before dosing her with ether to render her unconscious. Five basement rooms had to be unlocked to reach the entrance from the house above; a further three doors, of which two were additionally secured by electronic devices, needed to be unlocked to reach the area where the victims were kept. The ceilings of the cellar, which was without windows, were 5'6" at their highest; the close quarters and lack of exposure to daylight left the captives with critical

¹ “Profile: Josef Fritzl,” *BBC News*, March 19, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7371959.stm>.

² Ibid.

developmental illnesses, compromised immune systems, and severe nutrient deficiencies. It was Elisabeth's insistence that one of her children be taken to a hospital that raised suspicion and prompted Fritzl's investigation and arrest. Fritzl's wife claims unawareness of the violence being perpetrated beneath her home as a result of Fritzl's careful manipulation — the man is described as “domineering” by a number of witnesses and systematically lied to his wife and authorities when questioned about Elisabeth's whereabouts — and because Fritzl sited the cellar adjacent to his basement workshop and insulated a portion with foam to mask the movements and protests of his victims.³

The house in Amstetten was built in 1890. Fritzl was granted a permit for an “extension with a basement” in 1978, and began construction of the cellar between 1981 and 1982. In 1983, building inspectors verified that the extension had been built according to dimensions specified by the building permit; Fritzl enlarged the cellar by excavating additional space under cover of exterior walls, and put Elisabeth and her children to work digging soil with bare hands whenever the birth of another child was imminent.⁴ In the cellar, architecture was both witness to, and instrument of violence perpetrated; Fritzl's statement as to his motivation evidences his notion of the cellar as an apparatus implemented in the psychological torment of his victims: “The cellar in my building belonged to me and me alone. It was my kingdom, which only I had access to. Everyone who lived there knew it.”⁵ In a closed session, members of a committee assembled at Amstetten City Hall approved an application for demolition of the estate in 2011, with a provision for the erection of barricades to prevent documentation of the demolition by the media. The decision to demolish the cellar was prompted in part by “the revelation that the house became a ghoulish tourist attraction, with visitors flocking to see the place where the cruel father inflicted rape and imprisonment on his children. Teenagers also gained access to the cellar via an unlocked garage door and had been using it to throw wild parties in the damp, rotten cellar that is filled with mould — and tragically,

3 “Pictured: Inside the Cellar Where Father Locked Daughter for 24 years and Repeatedly Raped Her,” *Daily Mail*, April 30, 2008. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-562377/Pictured-Inside-cellar-father-locked-daughter-24-years-repeatedly-raped-her.html>.

4 “Profile: Josef Fritzl,” *BBC News*.

5 *Ibid*.

where Elisabeth and her children spent years of their lives.”⁶ The quotation from the *Daily Mail*, which featured extensive coverage of the case and illustrations of the “dungeon,” trades in the sort of sensationalism that piqued the curiosity of those impelled to trespass onto the site. In 2013, the man appointed to liquidate Fritzl’s estate responded to the interest of several potential buyers, including builders, with a decision to fill the cellar with concrete and sell the house, in which Fritzl had rented rooms to tenants until his arrest.⁷ Construction — the pouring of concrete, while rendering the cellar uninhabitable, is an additive, generative process — cost €100,000, then equivalent to \$131,800, and required a fortnight of constant work.⁸

Description of the house in Amstetten in the *Guardian* implicates the architecture in the events perpetrated within, and projects associations with its violent histories onto its surface: “If you were asked to pick out which of the houses on Ybbs Strasse was that of an authoritarian sex tyrant, then the bombastic, stained concrete cube built by Fritzl to house his family — and extended underground to imprison Elisabeth and the children she bore him — would probably be top of the list.”⁹ The article describes the frenetic, circuslike atmosphere in Amstetten in the aftermath of Fritzl’s arrest:

A plethora of media trucks clogs the street. An electric fence and an alarm system have been installed to prevent camera teams from creeping into the cellar to film the now rat-infested, damp and almost airless warren of rooms — footage so sought after that some media organisations have allegedly bid up to £1m to secure the rights. One neighbour, whose upstairs windows look into the Fritzl’s garden, has erected barbed wire to prevent camera teams from climbing on to her property for a better view. “I’ve been offered some handsome sums, but I’ve turned them down,” she said, declining to give her name. ...

The mood is akin to that before a political summit, not least because a no-fly zone has been enforced ... Hotels have raised room prices by as much as four times and the city is booked up like it has not been for years. The mayor has reserved one evening to invite journalists to drink the region’s wine with him in this, the 850th anniversary of St Pölten, in an effort at damage limitation and the hope that the city will not just be remembered for a sadistic rapist it happened to put on trial. An official from St Pölten’s tourist office, admitted: “I can imagine more pleasant reasons for a surge in visitor numbers, but the fact

6 Anna Edwards, “Dungeon Basement in Fritzl’s House of Horrors to Be Filled In With Concrete,” *Daily Mail*, August 13, 2011, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2025622/Dungeon-basement-Fritzls-house-horrors-filled-concrete.html>.

7 “Josef Fritzl’s Cellar in Austria Concreted In,” June 20, 2013, *BBC News*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22989884>.

8 Michael Shields, “Neighbors Relieved as Fritzl ‘Dungeon’ Sealed Off,” *Reuters*, June 21 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/21/us-austria-fritzl-idUSBRE95KoF420130621>.

9 Kate Connolly, “Fritzl Trial Puts Spotlight on Austria But Grisly Case Leaves Long Shadow,” *Guardian*, March 13, 2009, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/mar/14/fritzl-austria-case>.

is that thanks to the trial, we have a captive audience.”

Bars have applied for 24 hour licences, having heard that journalists like to drink. One restaurateur even put a ‘Fritzl Schnitzel’ dish on his menu, until a discrete word from the mayor persuaded him to remove it or else face a boycott from the workers of city hall. “I was just trying to make the most of the moment,” said Josef Otzelberger, “but at the end of the day, the men from the town hall are more important to me than Fritzl.”

Even the upstanding local theatre appears to have joined in the excitement, this week premiering the fictive forbear of the Fritzl drama - a stage adaptation of Franz Nabl’s 1917 novel, *The Grave of the Living*, a study in patriarchal authority, about a boy who is locked in the cellar of the family home.¹⁰

Authors on thanatourism attribute the meteoric rise in visitation to and fascination with traumatic sites to journalism, which introduces geographic specificity to death and violence and which utilizes worldwide communication technologies to transmit events live or almost live — at times to the deliberate violation of journalistic ethics.¹¹ A British paparazzo is reported to have “burst into” the kitchen of a safe house where Elisabeth and her children were taken and, without introduction or conversation, having “started taking photographs,” a violation that necessitated relocation of Elisabeth and her children to a more secure location.¹² Television journalism was essential to denouement of the Fritzl case in that, after Elisabeth persuaded Fritzl to hospitalize her daughter, authorities took to television to appeal for the mother to come forward. Elisabeth, able to see the broadcast on a television set in the cellar, was thus equipped to convince Fritzl to release his captives.¹³ The events of the Fritzl Case were dramatized in the 2010 novel *Room*, by Emma Donoghue, and have drawn invocation in subsequent rape, incest, and forcible imprisonment cases. British journalists, for their part, wrote of a “British Fritzl” in 2008 and an “Essex Fritzl” in 2009. Arcedio Alvarez, in Mariquita, Colombia, was written as the “Colombian Fritzl,” whose victim sought action against him after she saw television reportage on Josef Fritzl.¹⁴ An incest and abuse victim in Meaux, France, noted that it was the current of obsessive and frenetic interest in the Fritzl case that prompted her to author *Le Silence des Autres*, an account written in conjunction with the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See AV Seaton, “Guided by the Dark: From Thanatopsis to Thanatourism,” *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, December 1996 DOI: 10.1080/13527259608722178.

¹² Connolly, Fritzl Trial Puts Spotlight on Austria But Grisly Case Leaves Long Shadow.”

¹³ Mark Landler “Austria Stunned by Case of Imprisoned Woman,” *New York Times*, April 29, 2008, A6

¹⁴ “Colombian ‘Fritzl’ Accused of Fathering Eleven Children with His Daughter During a 25-Year Rape Ordeal,” March 29, 2009 Daily Mail, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1165643/Colombian-Fritzl-accused-fathering-ELEVEN-children-daughter-25-year-rape-ordeal.html>.

French journalist Jean-Michel Caradec'h in 2008.¹⁵ Michele Mongelli, the “Italian Fritzl” of Turin, Italy, sought to leverage the fact that his violence was perpetrated in what the press wrote of as “a small apartment in the downtrodden suburb of Falchera, on the outskirts of Turin, Italy” with Mongelli written as victim of desperate circumstances. In 2010, Mongelli’s application to have his sentence-commuted to at-home detention was approved, though subsequently reversed on appeal to the Supreme Court in June 2012. Insistent denial of any wrongdoing, coupled with the unaltered state of the site and the sympathetic depiction of “downtrodden” Falchera by the media, allowed Mongelli to attempt to reclaim the site as a means of maintaining his innocence.

The eventual decision to infill the cellar of the house in Amstetten with concrete is, in Austria, familiar as a tactic undertaken in the highly-publicized case of Natascha Kampusch, a victim of abduction in Vienna. After her abductor’s suicide, Kampusch was sold the title to his residence and vehicle for a nominal fee by a Viennese council as a form of compensation.¹⁶ In 2011, the council mandated that the cellar be infilled with concrete to prevent vandalism and visitation by curious tourists, though Kampusch herself was known to visit the site often. As owner of the residence, Kampusch was obliged to fund the construction required to render the cellar uninhabitable.

Titles to traumatic sites, as well as the financial investments required to obliterate or alter them, often complicate assertive, authoritative regulation of their use. In reference to the site of an abduction that was well broadcast throughout the United States, a local columnist lamented that “the house is owned by [perpetrator] Phillip Garrido’s elderly mother, who suffers from dementia and is in a nursing home. The hitch in the demolition plan: Contra Costa County officials and Garrido’s brother, Ron, who has been named conservator of the property, haven’t worked out a deal on who will cover the \$18,000 demolition tab.”¹⁷ Kampusch, as grantee of the residence in which she was held captive, noted, “I know it’s grotesque — I must now pay for electricity, water

15 “French Victim Steps Forward After Austrian Incest,” *Al Arabiya News*, November 1, 2010, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2008/04/29/49095.html>.

16 Gordon Rayner and Caroline Gammell, “Josef Fritzl: Fears House of Horrors Could Become Ghoulish Tourist attraction,” *Telegraph*, March 25, 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/joseffritzl/5022778/Josef-Fritzl-Fears-house-of-horrors-could-become-ghoulish-tourist-attraction.html?mobile=basic>.

17 Matier & Ross, “Garrido Home Wasn’t Really a Pigsty,” *San Francisco Gate*, September 23, 2009 <http://www.sfgate.com/crime/article/Garrido-home-wasn-t-really-a-pigsty-3286226.php>.

and taxes on a house I never wanted to live in.”¹⁸ Manafort Brothers, a construction firm with ties to Newtown, Connecticut, demolished the residence of Adam Lanza, who fatally shot 20 children and 6 adult staff at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, at zero cost to the Town of Newtown. The donation of Manafort’s services saved Newtown about \$30,000 from an insurance allotment for costs incurred as a result of the shooting, and which funded the demolition of Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2013.¹⁹

Of the comparison between the Austrian cases, and of the sense of implication of neighbors and acquaintances in the violence, one resident of Amstetten noted: “One cannot comprehend the dimension of this. Natascha Kampusch was bad, but this is of a totally different scale.” Another noted, “You’re amazed that something like this could happen in your neighborhood.”²⁰ Multiple Amstetten locals describe quotidian encounters with Fritzl or the children, with a note of surprise at having been unable to detect any aberration.

Unlike in Austria, where the conversion of sites of violence into uninhabitable, but concrete, structures seems sufficient resolution for the collective conscience, violence in the United States is met with a compulsion toward demolition. As Foote notes: “Some societies and cultures have rituals that serve to lift stigma, guilt, or blame, ceremonies that symbolically cleanse people and places and allow them to return to full participation in day-to-day life. This is not true of American society; there is no easy way for stigmatized sites to be returned to use.”²¹ Implicit within Foote’s observation is an undercurrent issue of catharsis; while the compulsion toward obliteration is written, in this thesis, as the culmination of inexpensive construction technologies and an American distance from death, it functions as a means of closure for those in contact with the site, both as insurance against vandalism or violation and as a symbolic gesture toward obliteration of the perpetrator.

On the protective measures inherent to rendering traumatic sites uninhabitable, and the

18 “Austrian Kidnap Victim Buys House of Horrors Where She Spent 8 Years in Dungeon,” *Fox News*, May 15, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/05/15/austrian-kidnap-victim-buys-house-horrors-where-spent-8-years-in-dungeon>.

19 “Firm: We Will Demolish Newtown Shooter’s Home for Free,” *CBS News*, February 18, 2015, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/firm-offers-to-demolish-newtown-shooter-adam-lanzas-home-for-free>.

20 Mark Landler, “Abduction and Incest Case Leaves Austria Aghast,” *New York Times*, April 28, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/28/world/europe/28iht-austria.4.12405547.html?_r=0.

21 Foote, 25.

sense of closure that the gesture affords, Kampusch noted: "I'm glad I am sealing it off, both with concrete and in my mind. It feels like one chapter of my life is ending and a new one beginning." In 2011, the building and housing department of Cleveland, Ohio issued a notice of violations for the property where a convicted serial killer murdered 11 women and sexually assaulted several others between 2007 and 2009. Notices were mailed to titleholders and to parties with potential interest in purchase of the property, while a letter sent to the relatives of victims and survivors referred to demolition as "an important step in helping our community heal and move forward," and further noted that "in order to prevent actions that would be disrespectful to the memory of your loved one, your family and our community, the demolition will be performed in such a way that no piece of the property will remain."²² Similar protective and cathartic impulses guided obliteration of the house of abductor Ariel Castro, also in Cleveland, Ohio, which was demolished as a condition of his plea bargain. The demolition, which was carried out by the aunt of one survivor of Castro's abduction, was attended by another survivor, who handed out balloons to spectators.²³

Whether violence culminates in death and whether the presence of human remains is discovered on site has little impact on the compulsion toward obliteration, though whether the site is set for demolition or another means of rendering it uninhabitable depends on context, culture, and title. As observed by Tunbridge and Ashworth, the nature of the victims, namely their innocence, vulnerability, and non-complicity in the violence elicits collective compassion and compels obliteration; victims suspected of complicity with or provocation of their aggressors elicit an utter lack of sympathy from their communities. The number of victims has little influence on deployment as heritage, as the nature of the human imagination is such that it resists the extension of empathy beyond small groups.

What remains paradoxical about the concretization of traumatic sites is the inevitable creation of a solid form with greater mass than that to which it adheres. Though Kampusch has noted the cathartic potential of infill as a means of closure, there nonetheless results an ever more

22 "Cleveland to Demolish Serial Killer's Home," *CNN*, December 5, 2011, http://www.cnn.com/2011/12/05/us/ohio-murder-house/index.html?hpt=hp_t3.

23 Martin Savidge, Jason Hanna, and Ed Payne, "'Hope for Everyone,' Ex-Captive Says Before Castro House Demolished," *CNN*, August 8, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/08/07/us/ohio-castro-house-demolished>.

difficult to obliterate object partly comprised of the witness to or apparatus of torment — in the Fritzl case, an architecture purpose-built as an instrument of torture and subjugation. The object, too, retains a latent potential for museumification, a process that the insistent pulverization of pieces, and then of pieces of pieces, in the demolition of American sites of violence aims to circumvent.

Under the Fritzl residence

Josef Fritzl built the underground network of rooms over a number of years

The house already had a cellar when Fritzl started building

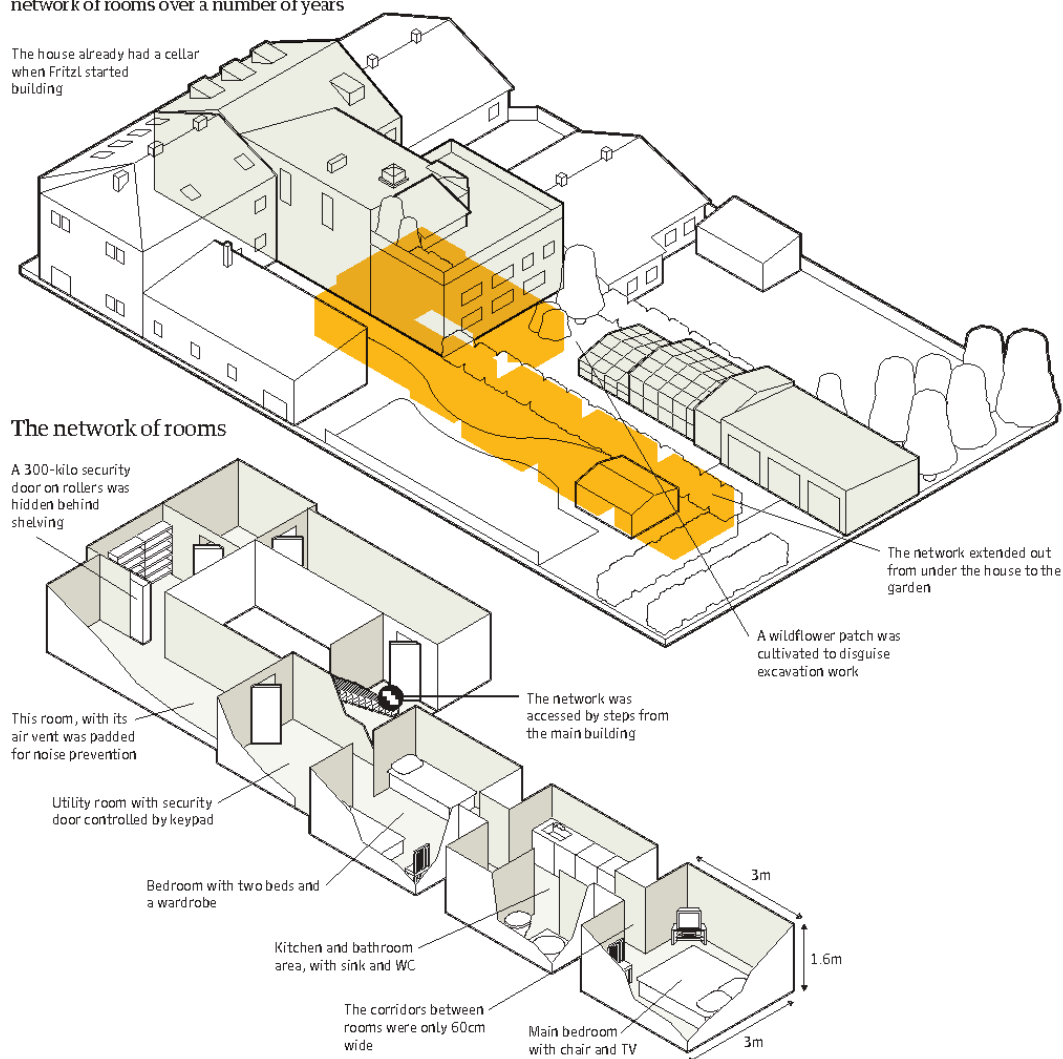


FIGURE 4.1: A diagram of the spatial arrangement of the Fritzl residence, the relative siting of the cellar, and the network of underground rooms. The diagram is included here not only an illustration of architectural context, but because, though similar isometric and axonometric diagrams of the cellar were included in the *Daily Mail* and other publications, most such searchable illustrations were drawn by Internet bloggers unaffiliated with the case or its coverage in journalistic media. The image above was drawn by a contributor to PixShark, a forum for “image galleries with a bite!”

Image, <http://pixshark.com/josef-fritzl-dungeon.htm>

HOW FRITZL KEPT HIS CELLAR SECRET

GRAPHIC: STEFAN BAYLEY, GRAPHIC NEWS
SOURCES: WWW.NOEN.AT, KRONEN ZEITUNG

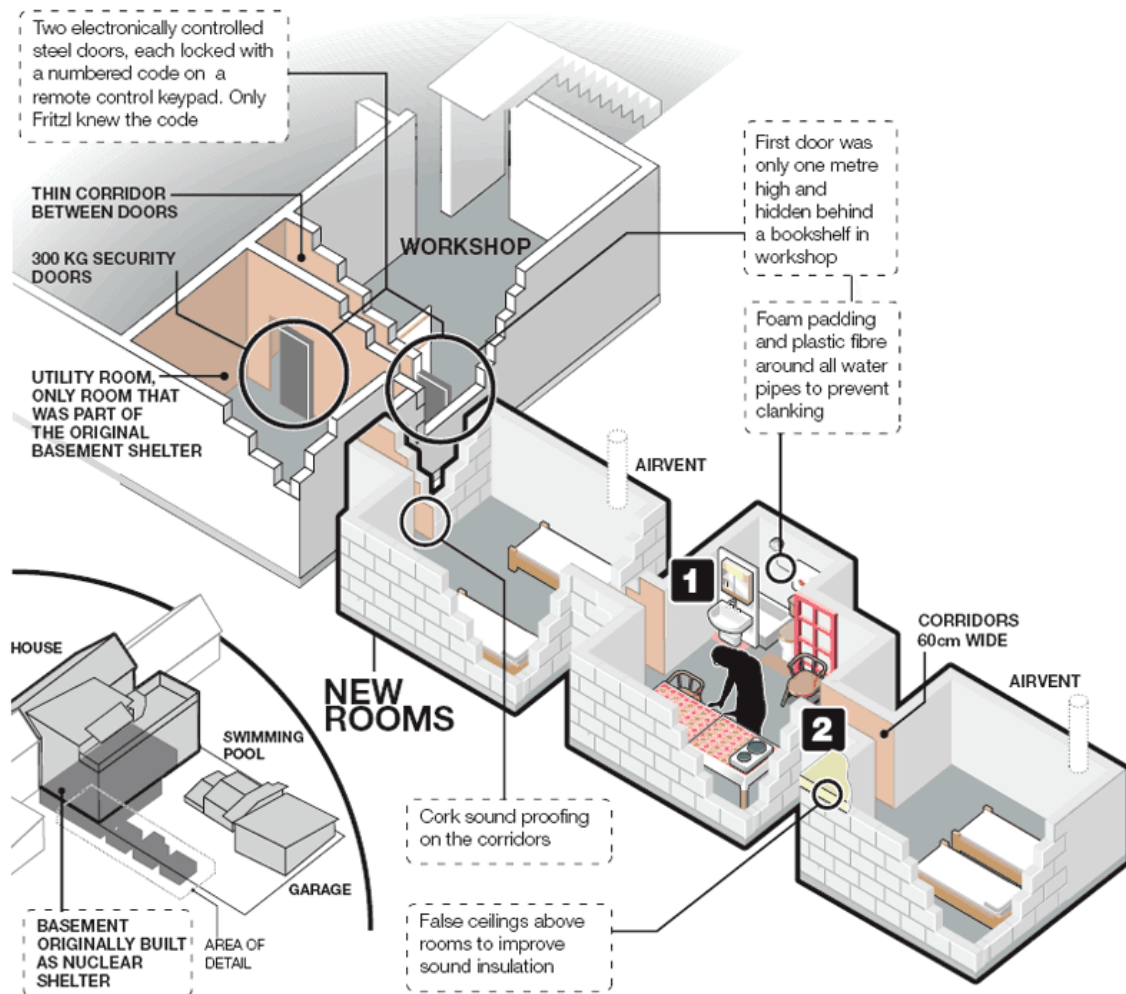


FIGURE 4.2: As above, this image was drawn by an Internet blogger who capitalized on the media fascination with the Fritzl case and modelled the illustration after similar depictions included in mass media reportage.

Image, Reddit.

Chapter 5 Commemoration in Art: Rachel Whiteread's *House*

Traumatic associations transform familiar contexts — often written as having been “typical” or “ordinary” prior to the enactment of violence within — into sites of disturbance or strangeness. Such a phenomenon is in line with Sigmund Freud’s discussion of “the Uncanny” in which the author traces the etymological derivation from the German *heimlich*, “belonging to the house, familiar, friendly,” which, in elaboration, becomes “concealed, kept from sight,” and ultimately, *unheimlich*, “gruesome fear, ghostly,” with an *unheimlich* home translated as a haunted house. “Thus,” concludes Freud, “*heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops towards an ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*.”¹ In the realm of art, the *unheimlich* had perhaps its most literal, material realization in Rachel Whiteread’s *House*, a concrete cast of the interior basement, ground floor, and first floor of a Victorian terrace house² in East London. The terraces at the perimeter of Wrennington Green, the focus of severe bombardment in World War II, were some of the first sites set for demolition under the banner of Thatcher-era regeneration. Of the site, the artist noted, “Thatcher wanted to create a ‘green corridor’ around Canary Wharf,” a post-industrial financial sector, the regeneration of which was enabled by Urban Enterprise Zone legislation in 1982.³ “I had my studio nearby and used to cycle past. I was very conscious of the fact it was all about to change.”⁴

Whiteread describes the genesis of the *House* parti as the logical outgrowth of her Turner Prize-nominated *Ghost*, a plaster cast of the parlor of a Victorian house set for demolition as part of a scheme to broaden Archway Road, London, in 1990. *House* was conceived as a similar work on a more ambitious scale: “I’d finished [*Ghost*] and thought, ‘Ooh, I’d quite like to do a whole house next.’”⁵ The work was commissioned by the nascent London-based arts organization Artangel, along with sponsors Beck’s Beer and Tarmac Structural Repairs, who stipulated that the selected

1 Sigmund Freud, “The ‘Uncanny’” 1919, Penguin 2003.

2 A late nineteenth-century row house type built as cost-effective industrial workforce housing, and thus associated historically with the “working class.” Terrace houses, like rowhouses elsewhere, were built on mutually supportive, shared party walls, and the demolition of portions of a terrace raises issues of both legibility and structural stability.

3 P. Hall, *Urban and Regional Planning*, (London: Routledge, 2002).

4 Digby Warde-Aldam, “Ghost House,” *Apollo Magazine*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/house>.

5 Ibid.

house already be slated for demolition, and that the work be temporary, free-standing, and visible from four sides. In 1991, the search for “terraced houses in North and East London” led Whiteread to condemned houses in Islington and Hackney, and to months of negotiation in an attempt to secure access to a house that might become *House*.⁶

On March 11, 1993, the councilors of Bow Neighbourhood decided, by 5-4 vote, to grant Whiteread a temporary lease on 193 Grove Road, then one of a suite of three remaining terrace houses in the area⁷; when its occupant, Sydney Gale, conceded to his relocation, intricate negotiations began between Whiteread’s brokers and Bow Neighbourhood politicians, with Whiteread, then a resident of Berlin, conversant in scheduled discussions via pay phone. Demolition of the adjacent terrace houses during the course of the negotiations left 193 Grove Road the lone remnant of the terrace development on Grove Road.

Grove Road, in Grove Town section of Bow, East London, was written as “a typical street in its mix of open space and new and old buildings, reshaped by Second War bombing and subsequent piecemeal development.”⁸ In later journalism on *House* and its demolition, the typicality of the structure from which *House* was born was further emphasized: “The house is entirely typical of the neighbourhood, with its bay window and front door perched above street level to provide a capacious basement, and a lean-to at the back leading onto a narrow strip of garden, now part of the surrounding grassed-over public space.”⁹

Whiteread and her assistants began the conversion of 193 Grove Road into a mold suitable for concrete casting in August 1993, with additional stable foundations poured to support the weight of the concrete infill. Internal fixtures and built-in furniture were removed, and the apertures in the walls sealed to prepare a continuous internal surface, a mold to be sprayed with a release agent, a five centimeter finish coat of ash gray concrete, and a final twenty-five centimeter interior structure of concrete reinforced with steel mesh. Whiteread’s assistants exited the cast

6 James Lingwood, ed., (London, Phaidon Press Limited 1995) *House*, 144

7 Ibid.

8 Richard Stone, “London: Rachel Whiteread’s ‘House’” *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 135, No. 1089 (Dec., 1993), pp. 837-838 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/885799>.

9 Ibid.

through a hole in the roof, which was subsequently sealed.¹⁰

The construction of *House* was completed and unveiled on October 25, 1993, with Whiteread deliberately withholding information from the press until the prior morning. On November 23, two simultaneous decisions about the work were announced: jurors at the Tate Gallery in London named Whiteread the recipient of the prestigious and highly publicized Turner Prize for her work on *House*, and the Bow Neighbourhood voted that *House* should be immediately demolished. *House* would indeed be demolished over the course of two hours on January 11, 1994, and its site laid with replacement sod to obliterate its traces on March 10; documentation in photographs during the eighty days it occupied 193 Grove Road have granted *House* an afterlife in the form of mythos and canonization in artistic discourse, as cultural historian Jon Bird notes: “*House* lives on as a focus of story-telling, linking fact and fiction, personal experience with media coverage, an imaginative interweaving of reason and fantasy that replaces the material object with its narrativization in critical discourse and collective memory. It has become a work that marks a moment — creates space — beyond the confines of the art world, spilling over to become an icon of popular reference and symbolic meaning.”¹¹

In its employment of 193 Grove Road as a mold, *House* accelerated the destruction and dismantlement of the house to create an inversion, a positive from what had been vacant space. The casting process revealed the house’s numerous small fire-grates; paint and paper from the interior walls which had adhered to and become embedded in the concrete; and window panes thrust from their glazing bars:

Everywhere, inverted details add disorientation to the utterly familiar outline. The work echoes the potency of demolition sites where fireplaces, wall-paper, brackets and fixtures are momentarily revealed as one house follows another, felled by sledgehammer and ball-and-chain. The cast itself is the colour of the dust that follows demolition and its planned destruction underlines the element of time that is crucial to Whiteread’s conception. *House* is a memorial to memory, an East End family home (latterly ‘an eyesore’) in which the spaces actually lived in constitute the work, rather than the bricks and mortar that sheltered its residents. It does not commemorate public events or individual achievements; for all we know any kind of unsavoury or banal life may have existed here. Some people

10 Digby Warde-Aldam, “Ghost House,” *Apollo Magazine*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/house>.

11 Jon Bird, “Dolce Domum” in James Lingwood, ed., London, Phaidon Press Limited 1995) *House*, 112.

have seen the work as a memorial to the kind of life lived in the area, as a survival from the Blitz, as an embodiment of tenacious hanging on.¹²

As cast work, *House* was legible at multiple scales. A close, meticulous examination of texture revealed the traces of former inhabitation and occupation, with contemporary habits caught in the detail of inverted electrical outlets, wood grains, and window frames; contrast of the scale and gravitas of *House* with that of the structures of Grove Town felt a critique of demolition as an urban tactic, and as one which grants presence to absence by introducing ruptures in otherwise intricate and homogeneous fabric.

Interpretation of the work, too, was dualistic: *House* was taken as a final act of defiance on the part of 193 Grove Road before its sublimation into memory and, at the same time, as a reticent, introverted entombment of living history in concrete. In *House*, Whiteread overcame the Musilian notion that “the remarkable thing about monuments is that one does not notice them. There is nothing in the world so invisible as a monument”¹³; the temporariness of *House*, the lack of fanfare to accompany its unveiling, and its insertion into decidedly familiar and unheroic terrain rendered it visible, controversial, and imbued it with an urgency able to capitalize on ambiguous nature of its intended reception. Even among the Bow Neighbourhood councillors, there was no consensus as to the insistence on demolition; the decisive vote — a tiebreaker — was cast by the council chairman, who was absent from initial negotiations with Whiteread. *House* was polarizing in part as the result of a wealth of interpretations as to what it meant: “Unlike the heroic models of triumphal arches and declamatory statues, it was by no means clear what values it sought to promote. It did not seek to predetermine the ways in which people could respond to it. Rather, like notable predecessors ... *House* was both a closed architectural form and an open memorial; at one and the same time hermetic and implacable, but also able to absorb into its body all those individual thoughts, feelings, and memories projected onto it.”¹⁴ Whiteread notes that *House* “opened up a dialogue. It really did change contemporary art in the UK,”¹⁴ a sentiment

12 Richard Stone, “London: Rachel Whiteread’s ‘House’” *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 135, No. 1089 (Dec., 1993), 837, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/885799>.

13 *Monuments*, Robert Musil 1927. In the original German, “das Auffallendste an Denkmälern ist nämlich, dass man sie nicht bemerkt. Es gibt nichts auf der Welt, was so unsichtbar wäre wie Denkmäler,” 59.

14 Digby Warde-Aldam, “Ghost House,” *Apollo Magazine*, October 25, 2013, <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/house>.

echoed by critic Stephen Brooke:

The controversy over Whiteread's *House* was partly about something familiar and predictable: the limits to the public acceptability of some contemporary art. But, as other recent exhibitions have also demonstrated, it was also about the tensions among history, memory, and their representation in the public sphere. The unusual subject and challenging form of Whiteread's monument to working-class domesticity meant its legitimacy as a memorial could be called into question. It was not about the dead or victims of war. It was not carried off in a recognized monumental style. But even if *House* ultimately fell beneath the bulldozer, the controversy illustrated the sharp and ragged edges of historical self-consciousness in contemporary Britain. Whiteread's desire to explore memory and the past revealed both the limits of representation and the borders of "legitimate" public history. Even with *House* removed from the landscape of East London, Whiteread had succeeded in questioning the nature of memory, memorials, and history in late twentieth century Britain.¹⁵

As the concrete embodiments of houses and their histories, *House* and the infill of the cellar beneath the Josef Fritzl estate share certain technical alignments. Though in the Fritzl case, concretization was meant to prevent inhabitation or contemplation of the space and in *House* concretization was meant to provoke discussion and inspire dialogue, similar processes were undertaken to infill both spaces, including closure of apertures and the removal of interior artifacts. In the Fritzl case, concretization was intended to render the *unheimlich heimlich*, to return the site to productive use as a foundation for future construction or occupation, whereas in *House*, the facilitation of dialogue was intended as a productive use and an end in itself. In both instances, the concretization of domestic space is resonant with Freud's Uncanny and the employment of the house as symbol:

Home is the "mythical point of origin" that represents a crucial component in the constitution of identity.... Whiteread solidified this space of interiority and comfort. In part, this meant exposing it to the scrutiny and questioning of the public other. *House* materialized the fragile symbolic barrier between absence and presence and private and public, between things that should be hidden and things that should be shown. Possibly it disturbed its viewers by removing the things that were intended for display, leaving only the bare familiarity of things that ought to have been hidden but have come to light: the uncanny. What disturbed the meaning in Whiteread's work is "the psychopathology that lies beneath the everyday; the repressed fears, desires, prohibitions that lurk within social routines as the uncanny stalks the familiar, and the inanimate threatens to come alive." Viewers felt distressed because they experienced the invasion of the exposed nakedness

15 Stephen Brooke, "Memory and Modernity," *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (January 2003), pp. 132-139, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/342690?origin=JSTOR-pdf>.

of *House* and realized that this could have been their house and their private space. Yet it has been noted in many accounts that the most disturbing aspect of *House* was its blank, blocked windows. Some of the responses to *House* were reactions to “the literal impossibility of entering into the house itself” and the possibility “that its closed form held unaccounted secrets and horrors.”¹⁶

Concretization of the cellar in *Amstetten* forms an amalgam of interior and exterior, and of mold and cast that inhibits legibility in an attempt to obliterate an association with violence, to render “unaccounted secrets and horrors” inscrutable and inextricable from the material meant to neutralize them. Whiteread, in contrast, generated *House* precisely to make evident the traces of occupation, to provide the public a surface onto which to project contemplation and interpretation.

¹⁶ Uros Cvorc, “The Present Body, the Absent Body, and the Formless” *Art Journal*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (Winter, 2002), 62, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/778151>.



FIGURE 5.1: Rachel Whiteread's Turner Prize-nominated *Ghost*, 1990, was a plaster cast of the interior parlor of a Victorian house. *House*, 1993, was conceived as a similar work on a more ambitious scale.

FOLLOWING PAGE, FIGURE 5.2: View of *House* from Grove Road. Note the technical similarities to *Ghost*, and the presence of such “typical” features as the “bay window and front door perched above street level to provide a capacious basement, and a lean-to at the back leading onto a narrow strip of garden, now part of the surrounding grassed-over public space.”¹

Images, Artangel

¹⁷ Richard Stone, “London: Rachel Whiteread’s ‘House’” *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 135, No. 1089 (Dec., 1993), pp. 837-838, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/885799>.





FIGURE 5.3: View of *House* from land cleared by the demolition of adjacent terrace houses. Note the textural variety produced by the technique of casting, including the embedded joists, walls, and wallpapers of 193 Grove Road.

Image, Artangel



FIGURE 5.4: This image of *House* in context makes clear what certain critics read as its diminution against a landscape of new development, as well as its paradoxical power as a weighty reminder of what had been a housing typology designed with mutual supports and meant to occur in series.

Image, Artangel



FIGURE 5.5: Perhaps the most iconic image of *House* is the photograph above, of *House* set within a grassy expanse of what had been a dense development of Victorian industrial workforce housing. *House* was demolished on January 11, 1994, and its site inset with replacement sod to obliterate its traces on March 10; documentation in photographs during the eighty days it occupied 193 Grove Road have granted *House* an afterlife.

Image, Artangel

Chapter 6 Exoneration and Alteration: Mental Illness, Informal Commemoration, and Othering

Othering occurs when maintenance of the architecture or architectural program is of principal concern to the local populace, and results in dismissal of either the victim or perpetrator to exonerate the group. Rather than destroy the site and create a rupture in the landscape, the reputation or identification of the victim or perpetrator is questioned. In a sense, othering operates as a form of kin selection wherein preservation of a group is important enough to encourage exclusion of members seen to exist on its peripheries. As in biological altruism, behavior meant to facilitate the continuation of the species, here, of self-identified communities, necessitates a strict definition of that group to the exclusion of others.¹

A form of strategic rationalization develops in contexts where either the perpetrator or the victim can be cast as an outsider, even among communities in which the subject was once a constituent. To frame either victim or the perpetrator of a violent event as other is to mitigate the degree to which the event is able to interfere with communal existence through traumatization and shame. The perpetrator or victim is either cast as peripheral — rather than integral — to the communities in which he exists, or as set in a geographic place through what amounts to chance; as an alternative, the subject is cast as an exception, as part of a group that, as if able to predict the event in question, did not embrace the subject as a member and thus began a process of othering long before the event in question. Strategic, retrospective othering is a tactic that hybridizes Foote's strategies of obliteration and rectification for the preservation of the species, here, a somewhat homogeneous, self-identified group. As in rectification, reintegration of a landscape into a use consistent with and sympathetic to its environs is sought; as in obliteration, othering encourages forgetfulness or, at basest level, non-acknowledgment of the emotional or historical weight of a place in order to redirect shame from the local populace. Either the architecture or the landscape undergoes the exoneration consistent with rectification in order to allow the guiltless

¹ Aneil F. Agrawal, "Kin Recognition and the Evolution of Altruism," in *Proceedings: Biological Sciences*, Vol. 268, No. 1471 (May 22, 2001), 1099.

continuation of the affected group.

Exoneration of architecture through othering has occurred in institutions that claim a select or elite populace and firm basis in tradition. In the immediate aftermath of undergraduate Sinedu Tadesse's violent murder of her roommate and classmate Trang Phuong Ho and subsequent suicide in the dormitories of Dunster House at Harvard University on May 28, 1995, the *Harvard Crimson* sought to cast Tadesse not as victim of mental illness, from which she suffered, but as other in her context. The *Crimson*, in quotations from undergraduates, was quick to paint Tadesse as "remote," "a loner," "hard to know," and "the quietest" of her peers in opposition to Ho's cheer, spirit, and devotion to the University in its earliest coverage of the event.² Publications outside of Harvard, like the *New York Daily News*, placed emphasis on Tadesse as "savage," as "enraged," as depraved enough to attack while her victim slept and, in greatest contrast to the sense of camaraderie though to pervade the institution, as friendless.³ With the portrayal of Tadesse as outsider complete, Harvard set about exoneration of the architecture, even as recognition, through her own prose, of Tadesse's fragile mental state and the simultaneous lack of address on the part of University Mental Health Services came to light.⁴ An article in the September 13, 1995 edition of the *Crimson*, written fewer than four months after the event, is of particular significance in the analysis of the exoneration of architecture. The words of one student, that "it's not like we think it's going to happen again. You just don't want to go back into a House where this happened," show an unmistakable focus on the architecture, on place, and on Dunster House as a physical container of its histories and its memories. Another student cast emphasis on place with an absolution of the administration in her insistence on the unpredictable, atypical nature of the event: "... it's just a tragedy that this incident happened. I don't feel that you can blame it on the House." A third student chose to comment on the stigma that pervades Dunster House, with the observation that her affiliation with Dunster House would elicit vigorous reactions from others.⁵ The student population, it seems, had begun the process of rectification in its insistence on the innocence of

2 Manilo A. Goetzl, "2 Dead, 1 Wounded in Dunster Murder-Suicide," *Harvard Crimson*, Sunday May 28, 1995.

3 Mark Mooney, "Bloody Student Slaying, Suicide, Shock Harvard," *New York Daily News*, Monday, May 29, 1995.

4 Melanie Thernstrom, "Diary of a Murder," *New Yorker*, June 3, 1996, 62.

5 Sarah J. Schaffer, "Dunster Murder-Suicide Remembered," *Harvard Crimson*, Wednesday, September 13, 1995.

the House itself and on the presentation of Tadesse's actions as senseless violence rather than the culmination of her isolation within a system that chose to dismiss her.

The violent nature of the event, the insistent neglect of Tadesse and her symptoms, recollections of the spatters of blood and the screams and that reverberated through the halls of Dunster House, though, held potential to generate the sort of shame that would impel the site's obliteration. For its part, the Dunster House administration set about a more active means of dissociation of place and event than did its undergraduate populace. In the immediate aftermath of the event, suite H-21, which united Tadesse and Trang in life and in death, was taken out of use as student space and given as residence to one of several tutors, live-in affiliates whose presence served both to fill the vacant and villainized space and to mitigate complaint over lack of an administrative supervisor on site. Though a temporal distance of almost two decades separates the present from the event, students who claim unawareness of the event report strange reverberations and detect spectral forms in the hallways outside of H-21; impromptu séances and consultations with the occult have been held even in recent months, evidence of the endurance of an infamousness. Still, insistence on the part of the administration that its affiliates neither discuss the event nor their recollections has allowed the student populace to continue to inhabit the House with a minimum of apprehension.⁶

It is of note that Sinedu Tadesse was written as other in order to shift blame from the administration and allow continuation of student inhabitation of Dunster House, but also, with a strategic shift in accountability, in the place of Tadesse's birth and upbringing, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. As in Dunster House, rationalization became a means of exoneration; as observed by biographer and Harvard graduate Melanie Thernstrom, "in Ethiopia, two common explanations are offered for Sinedu's fate. One is the whispered accusation that she was a lesbian, and therefore did the right thing to kill herself and the object of her shame ... The other explanation prevalent in Ethiopia is that Sinedu was possessed by spirits. Unlike lesbianism, for which one is held responsible, possession by spirits is regarded as a kind of casualty of living in the States, because

6 Thernstrom, 63.

in Ethiopia it is perfectly curable. One of Sinedu's Ethiopian relatives explained to me that if Sinedu had stayed in Ethiopia, nothing like this would ever have happened."⁷ The implication of place in Tadesse's actions is prevalent even abroad.

A more final stage in the administrative obliteration of the event is in progress, though, as Dunster House awaits renovation in 2014-2015; the Philadelphia-based firm KieranTimberlake, whose House Renewal projects at Harvard University, Yale University, and elsewhere entail movement of partitions and enlargement of spaces in accordance with House standards and code compliance, will oversee the renovation. Even now, reflections on Tadesse and Trang's relationship often observe that the architecture of Dunster House was liable to exacerbate strain in the relationship: "Trang and Sinedu's suite consisted of two small, dark, low-ceilinged rooms. Like most Dunster House doubles, it had originally been built for one occupant — a setup that quickly becomes unbearable when relationships fracture. Every time Trang wanted to go out she had to walk through Sinedu's room, and every time Sinedu wanted to go to the bathroom she had to walk through Trang's."⁸ The announcement of the KieranTimberlake house renewal project includes mention of a systematic approach to tutor suites, as well as "the elimination of walk-through bedrooms; the creation of single rooms."⁹ The likelihood that the renovation will render the place of violence unrecognizable is certain given the architects' commitment to provide private, single-occupant spaces for students. Reinstatement of the space as a student residence without tangible link to Trang or Tadesse, without cause to wonder whether the same shower stall bore witness to Tadesse's act or the same walls to Trang's violent end offers benefit in a place where disruption in the residential fabric is obvious and suspicious.

Because the renovation of Dunster House was meant to be as little-publicized as possible prior to its completion — Harvard University neither wanted attention brought to its out-of-date facilities nor wanted to discourage potential donors from funding the project — the stigma against Dunster House and H-21 went unacknowledged in discussions between the architects and the

7 Thernstrom, 63.

8 Ibid.

9 "House Renewal Ready for Launch," *Harvard Gazette*, July 2012.

trustees of the University. Harvard University alumnus and KieranTimberlake associate Chris MacNeal acknowledged the firm's awareness of the event, but emphasized that intended alteration was less the product of an attempt to obliterate stigma than a mandate to render the complex as functional as possible within current architectural standards:

Some members of the [KieranTimberlake] design team were aware, from articles on the Internet, of the tragic 1995 murder-suicide that occurred in the House. We have not discussed the matter with the client, and have not made any efforts to acknowledge the event in the renovation.

The exteriors and architecturally-significant interior spaces of Dunster House will be preserved with most of the original construction fabric restored and intact. Residential areas of the house will be extensively changed, however, given the transition from in-suite to shared bathrooms external to suites, and the threading of continuous horizontal circulation to make the original vertical entry arrangement more accessible. An important goal of the renewal is to arrange residential spaces to afford more opportunities for social interaction than the original layout of singles and suites. This thorough reorganization will erase the original configuration of suite H-21, not as a deliberate intention in itself, but as the result of the overall objectives for the renovation.¹⁰

At Yale University, in the 2010-2011 renovation of Eero Saarinen's 1964 Ezra Stiles and Samuel F. B. Morse Colleges, KieranTimberlake undertook a similar approach to threading single-occupant bedrooms around common areas to encourage socialization and eliminate walk-through suites. There, the former arrangement of standalone, unlinked spaces was seen as a product of the Colleges' construction to mediate post-World War II overcrowding brought about by an influx of veterans admitted under the Servicemen's Readjustment Acts and at a time before females were admitted to the university, rather than a potential provocation for socially isolated residents.¹¹

MacNeal further added that "there is a community service scholarship named after the murder victim, but no other official memorial of the event that I am aware of,"¹² though Dunster House's several memorials, to its founders and prominent alumni were carefully measured, documented, and preserved as part of the renovation. Here, though, the presence of a memorial would potentially disrupt the sense of security and comfort for incoming students, who would face constant reminders of an event two decades in the past. Memorialization would face the difficult task of making clear

¹⁰ Chris MacNeal, e-mail message to author, September 23, 2014.

¹¹ Kieschnick, Hannah. "Morse, Modernism, and Fifty Years of Yale," *Yale Herald*, September 24, 2010.

¹² MacNeal, e-mail message to author, September 23, 2014.

what or whom was being memorialized: Sinedu Tadesse, whose mental illness went untreated despite her multiple attempts to have it addressed by the university? How to make clear, then, that a memorial is neither meant to condone the violent act she perpetrated against another, nor to glorify mental illness, nor to implicate the university? Trang Phuong Ho, martyrizing the victim and reifying the portrayal of Tadesse as “savage” and “depraved” despite her status as a Harvard student whose actions would be read by subsequent generations of Harvard students? Neither woman, or both? A plaque which identified the names of the two would forever call attention to the violence perpetrated within Dunster House, even if the space were dramatically physically altered by renovation.

In other academic contexts, the alteration of sites associated with student suicide has likewise been undertaken without the erection of memorials, in part to absolve the administration of blame — often despite deficient mental health policies or inaccessible psychiatric facilities — and in part to prevent disruption or discomfort to students through the placement of a memorial to another student in their midst. In May of 1979, Cornell University approved a plan to add 6.5’ metal bars to the 3’ walls over the Collegetown Bridge following a rash of student suicides from the bridge into the gorges below. In 1994, following another several incidents, the university posted security guards on all of the bridges that cross the gorges and extended the hours of campus counseling lines. Increased address of mental health issues began in 2002 and intensified in 2007. Additional fences were erected following several suicides in 2010, when the university began installing nets, which extend 15’ on five bridges.¹³ Likewise, after two student suicides in the atrium of the Bobst Library at New York University in 2003, the administration installed 8’ high polycarbonate barriers on each floor and along the stairways to prevent further incidents. In 2009, a student scaled the barricades to jump to his death from the library’s tenth floor. In 2012, the university contracted Joel Sanders Architect to design perforated, floor-to-ceiling metal barriers to prevent future suicide attempts.¹⁴

13 Jennifer Epstein, “Does 6 Deaths in 6 Months Make Cornell ‘Suicide School?’” *USA Today*, March 16, 2010, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/2010-03-16-IHE-cornell-suicides-16_ST_N.htm.

14 David W. Dunlap, “A Digitally Inspired Veil, Intended to Save Lives, Appears at N.Y.U. Library,” *New York Times*, August 19, 2012, A16.



FIGURE 6.1: The bathroom-adjacent bedroom in Harvard's Dunster House was the dormitory residence of Trang Phuong Ho, and part of a suite of rooms shared with Sinedu Tadesse. The spatial arrangement was such that "every time Trang wanted to go out she had to walk through Sinedu's room, and every time Sinedu wanted to go to the bathroom she had to walk through Trang's."¹ Sinedu Tadesse fatally stabbed Trang Phuong Ho forty-five times in the bedroom above before hanging herself from a bar in the shower stall. **FOLLOWING PAGE, FIGURE 6.2:** The shower stall where Sinedu Tadesse hanged herself after fatally stabbing her roommate, Trang Phuong Ho. The suite of rooms was taken out of circulation as student space and given as residence to a series of several tutors after treatment of the site as a crime scene was complete.

Both images taken June 25, 2012 by the author.

15 Thernstrom, 63.



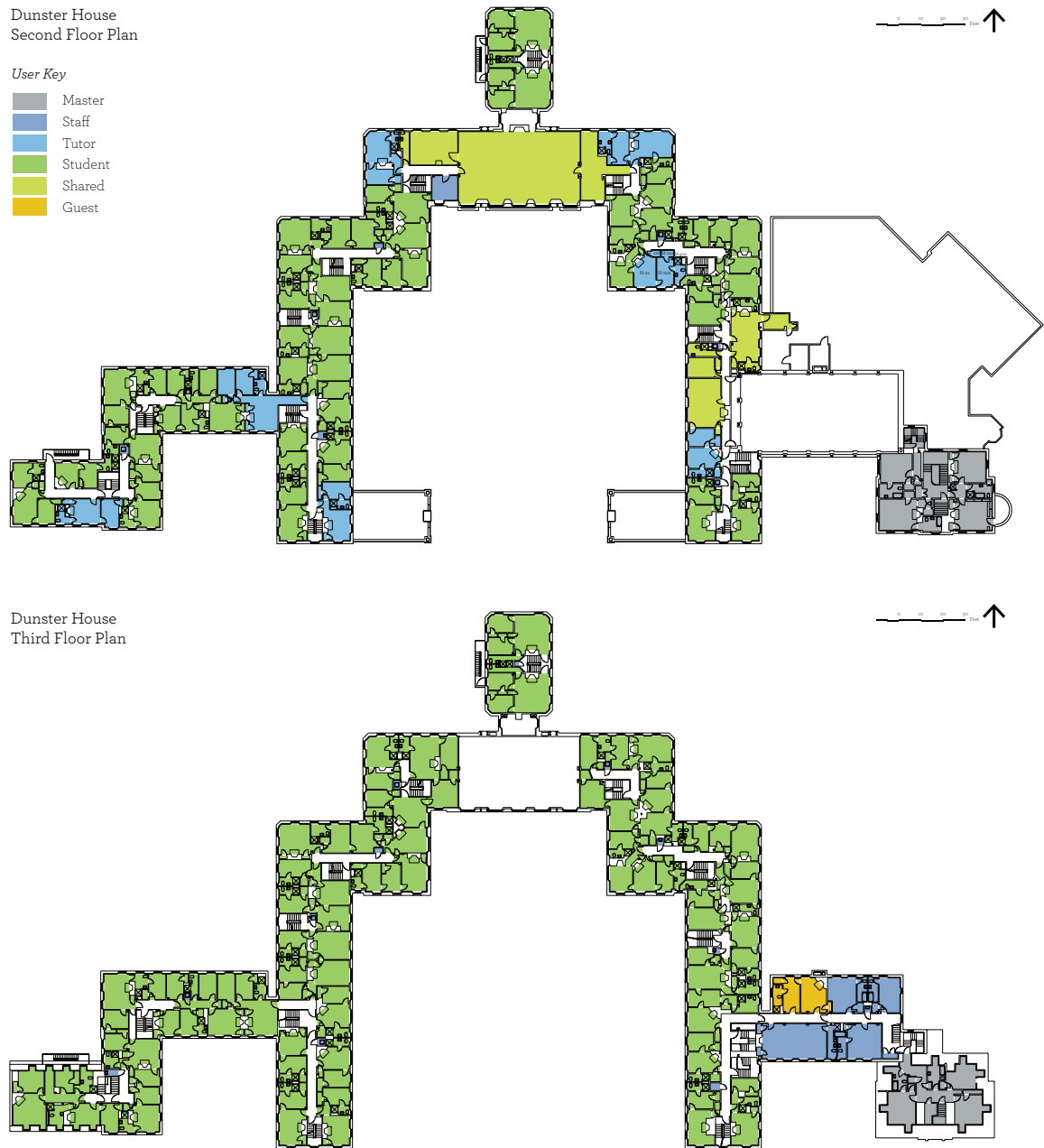
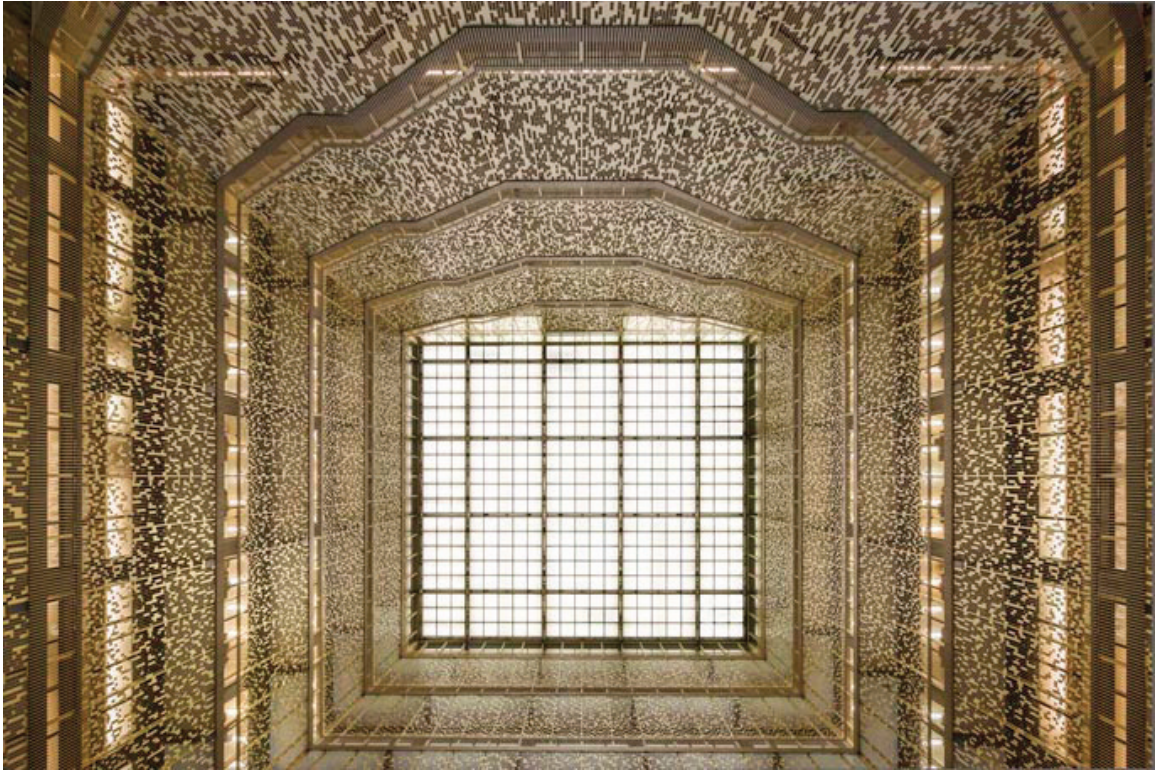


FIGURE 6.3: Current floor plans now list H-21, center right, above, as a tutor suite. On the second floor, which hosts a number of shared and communal spaces, reintroduction of H-21 as a tutor suite was less conspicuous a change than would have been on more strictly residential floors above.

Image, Dunster House Student Blog. Edited by Author.



FIGURES 6.4 AND, FOLLOWING PAGE, FIGURE 6.5: Randomly perforated aluminum scrims designed by Joel Sanders Architect were installed in the Bobst Library Atrium at New York University in 2012 to prevent further student suicides. Joel Sanders Architect was tasked with creating a barrier that called attention to its formal qualities rather than its function — a feat it attempts by appearing, in certain lights, gauzy rather than solid.

Images, Joel Sanders Architect



In Limbo: The Personal Tragedy and Its Outcomes

As in the academic contexts written above, othering becomes a tactic when populations exhibit reluctance to claim trauma in order to mitigate its impact on their social dynamics or on their material continuities. On August 17, 2010, seventy-four-year-old Joan Davis was found dead, having been beaten, burned, and left unidentifiable in her home on a quiet corner of Alpine Drive in Teaneck, New Jersey; an event as violent was then unknown in Teaneck, and the fate of the victim broadcast as far as Manhattan, to which Teaneck is satellite.¹

As with the coverage of violence in Dunster House, reportage set about the immediate task of othering in an attempt to sort Joan Davis from her context. Description of Teaneck as a place where “baby carriages crowd the streets” preceded the statement that “Davis lived alone, did not socialize, and did not appear to have had relatives, though she told some residents that she had family in Connecticut from whom she was estranged.”² The *New York Times* headline dismissed Davis as a “gadfly,” and other publications followed suit.³ While the intent of the *Times*, in its proclamation that “not everyone liked Joan Davis” was to establish a possible motive for the unusual and violent event, the article cast Davis as other in her context: “Ms. Davis was seen as a peculiar character around town, some said. To her neighbors, she was the quiet, elderly lady who lived alone for 20 years, remaining an eccentric outsider in a neighborhood where new families were customarily welcomed.”⁴ One interviewee, a neighbor of Davis’, noted that “as a community, I think we just have a lot of questions.” In a later quotation, the same interviewee made clear that “everyone sort of knew Joan, but we never really knew Joan ... she was not like the rest of us.”⁵ Accounts from Teaneck trade in a subtext evident to those familiar with the sociocultural dynamics of the place: though resident in a neighborhood with a predominant Orthodox Jewish majority and a particularly high concentration of the 6.2 mi² township’s fifteen synagogues, Joan Davis was not Jewish and did not participate in Jewish ritual or custom; still, in winter months,

16 Joseph Ax, “Slain Teaneck Woman Had Stab Wound, Bound Hands,” *Bergen Record*, August 20, 2010.

17 Trymaine Lee, “Government Gadfly in Teaneck, N.J., Is Killed,” *New York Times*, August 20, 2010, A16.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

Davis would often invite children awaiting transport to private, Orthodox Jewish *yeshivot* from her corner of Alpine Drive into her home to shelter them from inclement weather.

Joan Davis' murderer has not been identified. Her house, built in 1937, bears little evidence at first glance that the woman with a "Friends for Peace" banner in her window is no longer in residence; closer examination reveals that the edges of that poster are black with soot, the mark of arson and unknown violence. Neighbors have made attempts to sell their homes, which have experienced a dramatic decrease in property values; the township, it seems, has little intent to auction Joan's house as a result. As in Dunster House, the public has chosen a tactic between rectification, in the lack of more assertive acknowledgement of the place, and obliteration, in the lack of occupation and dismissal of Joan as other. Without the temporal distance of decades, as with the Dunster House event, the ultimate conception of Davis' murder is uncertain.



FIGURE 6.6: The house on Alpine Drive, Teaneck, New Jersey, that was the residence of Joan Davis. The house has remained vacant since Davis' murder on August 17, 2010. The township of Teaneck has performed occasional maintenance on site, including the clearing of a number of hedges formerly tended by Ms. Davis.

Image taken March 22, 2015 by Gary Moses.



FIGURE 6.7: View looking north-northeast at the intersection of Alpine Drive and Minell Place in Teaneck, New Jersey. The proximity of residences in the area contributed to the depiction of the elderly Joan Davis, who seldom left her property, as one who “lived alone, did not socialize, and did not appear to have had relatives” as a foil to the activity and social dynamics of her neighbors. Because of its highly visible location and proximity to several of Teaneck’s major streets, the corner was often used as a transit stop for local elementary schools; in winter months, Davis would often invite children awaiting transport into her home to shelter them from inclement weather.

From across Alpine Drive, the site of Joan Davis’ murder bears little trace that Davis is no longer in residence, save the unintended appearance of the hedges that were carefully maintained during Davis’ life; only on closer inspection are boarded windows and the charred edges of materials evident. Though somewhat distinctive, the turreted entry to the house is typical of corner properties in the Country Club neighborhood of Teaneck. Demolition of the house would raise potential hindrances to the collection of evidence should Davis’ murderer be identified, and would present a more palpable disruption to the residential fabric of the neighborhood context.

Image taken March 22, 2015 by Gary Moses.



FIGURE 6.8: View looking northwest at the intersection of Alpine Drive and Minell Place in Teaneck, New Jersey. Another turreted corner house is visible at the intersection of Alpine Drive and Richard Court, at the center of the image, highlighting the “typical” form of the Davis house. While Davis was later written as one who “kept to herself,” she would often converse with passersby while tending to yard work. Demolition of the house, five hundred feet from Teaneck Road, the township’s primary north-south commercial corridor and junction to major highways that connect to New York City — this is the terminus of Minell Place at the center left of the image — would introduce too palpable a rupture in otherwise homogeneous residential fabric.

Images taken March 22, 2015 by Gary Moses.

Chapter 7 Adaptation: Inhabiting Trauma

On June 5, 2013 at 10:43 am, a four-story structure under demolition at 2138 Market Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania collapsed onto an adjacent Salvation Army Thrift Store at 2140 Market Street, the southeast corner of an active commercial corridor. An “ominous rumble” or “thunderous boom”¹ is said to have been audible, and a tremor felt to radiate from the intersection.² Bystanders began the immediate task of the search for survivors and provision of aid, with rescuers taking to buckets and bare hands to move bricks and rubble until the following morning.³ Six individuals were killed in the collapse; thirteen others were struck by or buried beneath the debris. The final survivor, pulled from the rubble thirteen hours after the collapse, underwent double amputation above the knee.⁴

2138 Market Street, a vacant former Hoagie City, had been in the process of demolition by Griffin Campbell Construction for a number of weeks prior to the collapse. The parcel remains under ownership of development firm STB Investment Corporation and chief executive Richard Basciano. A developer active in Manhattan and Philadelphia, Basciano rose to prominence with a reputation and real estate empire built on the Show World Center, “the Coney island of the Sex Industry” in operation in Times Square from 1975 to 2004. Prior to the sanitization of Times Square and elimination of adult entertainment businesses there, Basciano’s operations earned him the nickname “Porn King of Times Square”⁵ in journalistic media; multiple Basciano-owned adult entertainment stores within a block of the Salvation Army, including the Forum Theater, Book Bin II, and Les Gals had been razed in the months prior to the collapse. The demolition of the Book Bin II, “a little gem on the same block that featured a wonderfully decorative terra

1 Alison Burdo, “Judge: Salvation Army Execs Can’t Plead 5th in Philly Building Collapse Suit,” *NBC10 Philadelphia*, October 16, 2014, <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Salvation-Army-Staff-Plead-5th-in-Building-Collapse-Civil-Suit-279435122.html>.

2 “Crews Search for Survivors Day After Philadelphia Building Collapse,” *Chicago Tribune*, June 6, 2013, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-06-06/news/chi-philadelphia-building-collapse-20130606_1_building-collapse-thrift-store-crews-search.

3 Chris Boyette and Justin Lear, “6 Dead in Philadelphia Building Collapse, 13 Injured,” *CNN*, June 6, 2013, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/06/05/us/pennsylvania-philadelphia-building-collapse>.

4 Queen Muse, “Survivor Who Lost ‘Half Her Body’ Recalls Center City Building Collapse,” *NBC10 Philadelphia*, November 25, 2013, <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Building-Collapse-Survivor-Plekan-Testimony.html>.

5 Steve Cuzzo, “Stripped of His Crown,” *New York Post*, April 29, 2008, <http://nypost.com/2008/04/29/stripped-of-his-crown/>.

cotta façade,”⁶ provoked mild ire from admirers of its ornamentation by the Atlantic Terra Cotta Company, suppliers of terra cotta for the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Flatiron Building and the Woolworth Building in New York, among others.⁷

On June 7, the *Philadelphia Daily News* reported that, despite several formal complaints levied by concerned citizens via Philly311, the City of Philadelphia Contact Center, demolition work at 2138 Market Street went uninspected for twenty-two days prior to collapse. Subsequent reports indicated that Department of Licenses and Inspections inspector Ronald Wagenhoffer had visited the site on May 14 and reported no violations. Though absolved of any wrongdoing in subsequent press, Wagenhoffer would be found with a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the chest on June 12, along with a video statement that “It was my fault. I should have looked at those guys working, and I didn’t.”⁸ Sean Benschop, the crane operator, was charged with six counts of involuntary manslaughter, thirteen counts of reckless endangerment, and one count of risking catastrophe after both marijuana and the painkiller Percocet were detected in his system following the collapse.

Also on June 7, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter assembled a press conference to formally apologize to victims, survivors, and kin. Prior to the collapse, the City of Philadelphia did not require demolition contractors to demonstrate or corroborate their qualifications, thereby “allowing an apparently unqualified contractor with a criminal history and inadequate insurance to use unqualified workers and heavy equipment to tear down a building looming over a busy store without bracing walls or protecting passersby or nearby residents or customers.”⁹ Nutter announced the institution of requirements to guarantee “the same level of city monitoring and contractor expertise at private demolition sites that have been required during demolition at public sites. That would, among other things, prohibit contractors from using heavy machinery to

6 Peter Woodall, “Lost Buildings of 2013–Part I,” *Hidden City Philadelphia*, December 30, 2013, <http://hiddencityphila.org/2013/12/lost-buildings-of-2013-part-i/>.

7 These were constructed in 1933, 1901, 1908-1930, and 1928 respectively. “Atlantic Terra Cotta Company,” University of Texas Archival Resources, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00038/aaa-00038.html>.

8 Michael Walsh, “Philadelphia Building Collapse Inspector Commits Suicide, Blames Self for Tragedy: ‘It Was My fault!’ *New York Daily News*, June 14, 2013, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/phila-bldg-collapse-inspector-commits-suicide-article-1.1372770>.

9 Paul Nussbaum and Bob Warner, “Nutter Apologizes for Deaths, Announces Changes,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 9, 2013, http://articles.philly.com/2013-06-09/news/39836036_1_demolition-site-collapse-city-hall.

demolish buildings adjacent to occupied structures ... And city inspectors will now be required to visit demolition sites every 15 days after the issuance of a permit, and inspectors will be required to respond to all complaints within 48 hours and provide a detailed report of their findings, along with time-stamped photos of the site.”¹⁰

On Sunday, June 16, in an editorial entitled “Aim High with Building Probes,” the *Philadelphia Inquirer* called for greater transparency and accountability in dealings between development interests and the City of Philadelphia, which it accused of gross mismanagement of its aging building stock:

The level of responsibility goes much higher than Sean Benschop, the excavator operator who allegedly tested positive for drugs and has been charged with involuntary manslaughter in the June 5 tragedy, which also left 14 people injured. Responsibility also goes higher than city building inspector Ronald Wagenhoffer, who apparently killed himself Wednesday night, leaving a video message in which, according to mayor’s spokesman Mark McDonald, Wagenhoffer said he was devastated by the tragedy and wished he had done more to prevent it.

For decades, this city has enabled property speculators who neglect old buildings that fall apart, blight neighborhoods, and destroy lives. A review by *Inquirer* reporter Stephan Salisbury of 30 years of newspaper articles found repeat after repeat of stories about old buildings rotting and collapsing.

Typically, someone is killed or injured. City leaders get upset and promise change, but do little until the next junk building kills or maims someone, or becomes such an eyesore that it can no longer be ignored. It’s time for the city to hold property owners responsible for their properties.

It was disheartening to hear a former mayor, Ed Rendell, defend Richard Basciano, who owns the building that fell through the thrift shop. Basciano is among a host of city property owners who have long been criticized for not taking care of buildings that blight their surroundings. Yet Rendell focused on the “spectacular” plans that the past contributor to his political campaigns had for the site of the tragedy.¹¹

On July 14, 2013, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* further published a series of correspondence between the Salvation Army and Basciano’s STB Investment Corporation, most of which had been copied to City Deputy Mayor Alan Greenberger and his chief development aide. Weeks prior to the collapse, STB had sought access to the Salvation Army property to conduct demolition operations safely; when the two parties could not reach an agreement, STB initiated demolition

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ “Aim High With Building Probes,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 17, 2013, http://articles.philly.com/2013-06-17/news/40008247_1_property-owners-city-building-inspector-city-leaders.

nonetheless. On May 22, the property manager at STB had emailed Deputy Mayor Greenberger, who oversaw the Department of Licences and Inspections, and noted that 2138 Market was in a state of partial ruin that created “a situation that poses a threat to life and limb,” and that “this nonsense must end before someone is seriously injured or worse: those are headlines none of us want to see or read.”¹² Soon after the exposé ran in the *Inquirer*, the City of Philadelphia publicized its own internal documentation relating to the collapse.¹³ Consensus was that, as Assistant United States Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health David Michaels noted, “This tragic incident could and should have been prevented.”¹⁴

On November 25, 2013, contractor Griffin T. Campbell was charged with six counts of third-degree murder, six counts of involuntary manslaughter, thirteen counts of reckless endangerment, as well as criminal conspiracy, risking catastrophe and causing catastrophe; investigation had shown that his removal of structural supports, including wooden joists, in the earliest phases of demolition had left walls and floors without adequate support. Richard Basciano had hired Campbell not on the basis of credentials or qualifications, but because Campbell’s \$112,000 bid for the demolition of three storefronts was significantly lower than three bids between \$300,000 and \$350,000 and a fourth bid of \$500,000.¹⁵ Griffin Campbell was to receive a flat fee for the demolition and intended to salvage scrap material from the demolition for resale and additional income.

The United States Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration, or OSHA, levied the maximum \$70,000 fine against the Griffin Campbell Construction for each of three “willful violations”: failure to prepare an engineering study for the demolition project; violation of the requirement that higher stories be removed prior to demolition begins on lower stories; and the removal of lateral bracing, provided by intact portions of floors, to support walls

12 Paul Nussbaum and Bob Warner, “Demolition Continued at Collapse Site Despite Worries About Danger,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 15, 2013.

13 “Disclosure Statement.” City of Philadelphia. July 17, 2013, <http://cityofphiladelphia.github.io/disclosure-docs>.

14 Leni Fortson and Joanna Hawkins, “Osha Regional News Release,” November 14, 2013, https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=25089.

15 Salz Mongeluzzi Barrett & Bendesky, “Seventh Wrongful Death Lawsuit Filed As A Result of Market St. Building Collapse,” SMBB, July 22, 2014, <http://www.smbb.com/media-center/news/seventh-wrongful-death-lawsuit-filed-as-a-result-of-market-st-building-collapse>.

greater than one story in height. The latter breach was deemed so “egregious” by OSHA regulators that the penalty was levied twice, for violations on two occasions. Additional citations brought Campbell’s total fines to \$313,000; S&R Contracting, employer of crane operator Sean Benschop, was fined \$84,000 for one “willful” violation of lateral bracing requirements, and two “serious” violations related to training and failure to protect employees from falls.¹⁶

On December 17, 2013, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published additional correspondence which illustrated Basciano’s impatience with, and subsequent hastening of, the pace of demolition prior to collapse. An April 23 email revealed that STB had solicited advance bids for asphalt for the installation of a parking lot on completion of the demolition. Correspondence dated April 29 indicated that Basciano had visited the site, was “shocked that the buildings were still standing,” and demanded that further headway be made by his contractors. On May 22, the property manager at STB emailed a consultant to oppose further negotiations with the Salvation Army, writing: “Why?...Waste more time? Wait for someone to be killed? You can do what you want but I am NOT backing off with these people and their half-baked charity. Perhaps you have the time and/or desire to ‘deal’ with their idiotic behavior. I don’t and I won’t. I have to look after the interests of the Owners – Richard and his daughters.”¹⁷

On May 31, the property manager notified the project architect that Basciano had visited the site, had been stunned by the lack of active or ongoing work, and would visit the site again that weekend with the expectation of progress. Basciano returned on June 2 and was satisfied that an eighteen-ton motorized excavator had been moved on to the site. Granted immunity by a Grand Jury, the project architect later testified that he had visited the site at 6 pm on June 4 and was alarmed to see the unsupported brick wall looming above the Salvation Army. The architect further testified that he told Griffin Campbell to immediately dismantle the wall: “I was like, ‘Griffin, you can’t leave this wall here. This is just crazy. I mean, you can’t do that.’”¹⁸

Memorialization

16 Bob Warner, “OSHA: Deadly Collapse Was ‘Preventable,’” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 16, 2013, http://articles.philly.com/2013-11-16/news/44117231_1_osh-demolition-project-griffin-campbell.

17 Bob Warner, “Owners Pressed for Faster Demolition Before Fatal Collapse,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, December 17, 2012, http://articles.philly.com/2013-12-17/news/45258661_1_demolition-contractor-richard-basciano-simmonds-jr.

18 Ibid.

An almost immediate effort to memorialize the victims of the collapse was made by the several organizations accused of mismanagement in exposés written by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. While the Nutter administration held internal discussions about the creation of a memorial at 2140 Market Street, those within the Salvation Army's bureaucratic hierarchies led similar internal discussions.

While various news outlets reported that, on March 20, 2014, the Salvation Army donated the 2,445 square foot site to the City of Philadelphia at no cost,¹⁹ an architect associated with the 22nd and Market Memorial Commission insists that the transaction was not a donation, but a "land swap," a formal and contractually-binding real estate exchange between the City of Philadelphia and the Salvation Army that would grant the latter an alternate site from which to conduct its business.²⁰ The lack of public knowledge of such a contract allows both parties appear to publicly, seemingly selflessly, acknowledge the collapse as a tragedy that overrides the lucrative nature of the corner site, to mutual benefit: the Salvation Army is able to continue operations elsewhere while the City of Philadelphia is able to introduce a tenant to an otherwise vacant property, both while maintaining that "donation" of the site was undertaken as a moral statement. Independent of the means by which the parcel was exchanged, conversion of 2140 Market Street to a memorial function overrides the history of the site as corner parcel on busy, largely commercial Market Street and in an area under revitalization since the construction of several markets within a half mile radius and the opening of the Barnes Museum in 2012. Proximity of the site to the Art Museum District, Center City, and Rittenhouse Square has been read by the 22nd and Market Memorial Committee as an opportunity to ensure visibility of the memorial rather than as an outgrowth of the structure's purposeful location within a commercial corridor. The assessed value of the parcel was over \$750,000.²¹

Cost estimation for the creation of a memorial park on the Salvation Army site was

19 Jared Shelly, "Building Collapse Memorial Coming to 22nd and Market," *Philadelphia Business Journal*, March 20, 2014, <http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/news/2014/03/20/building-collapse-memorial-coming-to-22nd-and.html?page=all>.

20 William Bender, "Salvation Army to Donate 22nd & Market Land," *Philadelphia Daily News*, March 21, 2014, http://articles.philly.com/2014-03-21/news/48443035_1_anne-bryan-nancy-winkler-memorial-park.

21 Jennifer Lin, "Bereaved Parents Fought to Make Collapse Site a Memorial," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 2, 2014, http://articles.philly.com/2014-06-02/news/50248171_1_center-city-store-anne-bryan-demolition-work.

\$250,000 and under the direction of the Brandywine Trust, a national corporate development and construction firm. While Gerard H. Sweeney, president and chief executive officer of the Brandywine Trust, noted that \$50,000 in donations had been received as of March 20, 2014, further donation was solicited from the general public via IndieGoGo, a crowdfunding website, from March 20, 2014 to May 19, 2014, with 162 donations, seven of which, in the amount of \$1,000 were earmarked to fund site furnishings and other “major features” of the park.²² Only \$26,279 of the \$125,000 public funding goal was met via IndieGoGo. In explanation for its solicitation of crowd-sourced funding, the campaign included the following text framing the collapse as an event in which all Philadelphians ought to feel complicit: “All those who work and live in Philadelphia have felt the impact of the building collapse. It is fitting, then, that the people of Philadelphia should now have the power to raise money and place a park at the location for everyone to enjoy. Any donation, large or small, will help pave the way to a safer, and more beautiful, Philadelphia.”²³ Nancy Winkler, Philadelphia City Treasurer and mother of victim Anne Bryan, added a further element of universality to her framing of the collapse on the IndieGoGo forum: “We cannot allow such a preventable catastrophe to ever be forgotten or to happen again in our city, or anywhere. ... This memorial park would be a fitting way to acknowledge the loss, to assure that it will never be forgotten and to remind the citizens of Philadelphia of the need for effective governmental oversight of building demolitions to protect public safety. An appropriate park and memorial can provide healing for the many people touched by this horrific, entirely avoidable event.”²⁴ After the IndieGoGo campaign ended, the Philadelphia Horticultural Society, who, according to the project architect, became involved through Winkler’s influence, continued to solicit public donation of funds without a set deadline.²⁵

Winkler has been insistent on the creation of a memorial at the site: “My husband Jay and I believe it is our duty to stand up, to make sure what happened to our daughter and to the others

²² Ceisler Media, “22nd and Market Memorial Garden,” IndieGoGo, March 20, 2014, <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/22nd-and-market-memorial-garden#pledges>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, “Help Us Build A Memorial Park,” <https://www.pennhort.net/memorial>.

on June 5 is not forgotten.”²⁶ Robert J. Mongeluzzi, legal counsel to the Winkler-Bryan family, noted of the memorial effort, that “We commend all those involved — starting with Nancy Winkler and her family — for their unwavering persistence in advocating for a permanent memorial park at the site of the horrific building collapse tragedy.”²⁷

The personal significance of the site to Winkler is apparent in her discussion of its design: “I think it will be a place I’ll be drawn to, I think the preliminary designs are really beautiful.”²⁸ Winkler and her husband, have largely been credited with both urging citywide reformation in demolition practices and in championing the memorial effort:

In the last year, she and her husband have channeled their grief into action. They have pushed for an independent inquiry into the breakdown of safety standards and lax oversight of demolition work. They have pressed City Council for reforms to the city’s Department of Licenses and Inspections. They have galvanized an effort to turn the land at 22nd and Market into a memorial park. And they continue to ask difficult questions, reminding the city that this tragedy was avoidable.²⁹

When the intention of STB Investments Corporation to install a parking lot adjacent to the Salvation Army site came to light, Winkler took to journalistic media to express her disgust: “The idea of people paving over it was demeaning to human life”³⁰:

She could not contain her anger. In August ... Winkler posted an online petition. Should the site of the thrift store become a memorial? she asked. Within a week, she had 1,000 signatures in support. In another month, the number topped 6,000. Comments poured in from around the world. A woman in Japan said a memorial would serve as a reminder that the safety and security of people should be “valued above profits, expediency and poor work practices.” A writer from Merion wrote that this “Third World-style tragedy” on the city’s main east-west thoroughfare was “a disgrace.” The couple broached the idea of a memorial with friends. They were discouraged by the response. Bryan said a common reply was, ‘It would be nice, but it’s not going to happen.’ ... The family pressed on. A committee of volunteers — neighbors, lawyers, and experts in design and urban spaces — was formed to advance the idea. At most, the group hoped to persuade the Salvation Army to allow it to put up something temporary.³¹

²⁶ Ceisler Media, “22nd and Market Memorial Garden.”

²⁷ Dan Stamm, “Memorial to Be Built for Victims of Deadly Center City Collapse,” NBC10 Philadelphia, March 21, 2014, <http://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/Center-City-Building-Collapse-Future-251211831.html>.

²⁸ “Memorial Park Planned at Site of Deadly Phila. Building Collapse,” ABC6 Action News, March 20, 2014, <http://abclocal.go.com/story?section=news/local&id=9473652>.

²⁹ Lin, “Bereaved Parents Fought to Make Collapse Site a Memorial.”

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

While the above quotation is a testament to a mother dogged in her determination to memorialize her daughter, it is also revealing of Winkler's political influence and careful framing of the collapse in universalizing terms that made it difficult for others to dismiss as a personal tragedy. Also evident is the fact that solicitation of digital signatures via the internet, with signatories from "around the world" having little or no contact with the site itself, made it easy to call for memorial without acknowledging its potential out-of-placedness in an active commercial context. While Winkler and other memorial advocates intend "a space that would be contemplative and offer solitude in a very busy intersection"³² and likely welcome the disjunction between memorial and context as a means of challenging others and encouraging non-complaisance, the likelihood remains that the narrow park, distinguished from the street by pavers and granite screens, would be little used by passersby in transit to and from more active and inviting fabric, or else, because of the proximity of heavily-trafficked public transit routes, as a waiting area for the city's bus lines. Though written by Winkler and her supporters as a universal catastrophe, the practical aspects of the memorial remain largely personal to other victims' kin. Maggie Davis, 75, wife of victim and Salvation Army employee Borbor Davis, noted, "I can imagine taking the No. 11 trolley, climbing up the stairs, and going right to the park and just sitting there," she said. "I could bring a cup of tea and just think about my past and how good we were together."³³

Further arguments against the appropriateness of a memorial at the scale of the site can be raised in consideration of a larger memorial landscape:

When Winkler was hired by the city three years ago, she and her husband traded a Narberth zip code for a Center City address. On walks, they like to explore the nooks and crannies of their new neighborhood. They have discovered hidden works of art — many of them memorials to victims of tragedies.

On the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, they came upon a monument to the millions who died in the Holocaust. Just south of City Hall, they noticed a granite marker with three bronze helmets for firefighters killed in the 1991 One Meridian Plaza fire.

Outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art, they found a bronze statue to the victims of the 1915 genocide in Armenia. And soon, when they turn south and head three blocks from their house, they will find a small oasis that will bear witness to the six who lost their lives at 22nd and Market.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

“It’s the right use,” Winkler said.

Tunbridge and Ashworth offer a set of criteria to predict the deployment of traumatic histories as heritage: the nature of the cruelty perpetrated, favoring the unusual or spectacular over the commonplace; the nature of the victims, namely their innocence, vulnerability, and non-complicity in the violence; the nature of the perpetrators as an unambiguously identifiable, distinguishable group, different from their victims and from the observer for whom the event is interpreted; the high-profile visibility of the original event and its effective promotion, and survival of the record.³⁴ While the number of victims has little influence on deployment of traumatic histories as heritage and the nature of the human imagination is such that it resists the extension of empathy beyond small groups, the equivalence granted by Winkler between the appropriateness of memorialization at the Salvation Army site and memorialization of genocide is questionable, if not objectionable. Although Winkler’s intent might have been to locate the memorial within a larger memorial landscape in Philadelphia rather than to grant equivalence to its contents, consideration of the narrative of memorialization without consideration of its sites and relative scales seems a miscalculation. While the various memorials can be written as “passive” in their uninhabitable qualities, proximity to icons like City Hall forms a dialogue, a statement charged with implication, accusation, or insistence, rather than a rupture in an otherwise bustling landscape. The function of a rupture as a void which urges awareness, action, and non-complaisance is contingent on both its acknowledgement by the public as a rupture, which the scale and granite-screened parti of the memorial inhibit, and on acknowledgement that, prior to its existence as a void, the rupture was typical in its context.

The 22nd & Market Memorial Committee envisions:

... A small footprint and a very big mission. It is inspirational space, a fitting way to acknowledge the lives lost from a preventable tragedy, a gesture to remind the citizens of Philadelphia of the need for effective governmental oversight to protect public safety. The design logic of the space is rooted in civic commemoration. The park’s design moves work with the fabric of the city and the memory of the space, and the place. The space is one of public healing through the multiple experiences brought during the day and night and each season. [Project Architect Scott] Aker reiterated that this effort represents good

³⁴ Tunbridge and Ashworth, 95.

park space united with community effort and the design has been created through the eyes and voices of the memorial families.³⁵

Further generalization and universalization of the event being memorialized is evident in the statement of local artist Barbara Fox, whose work is to be integral to the memorial:

Art gives voice to loss, endurance and hope. At the heart of my sculpture, called *Witness*, is the remembrance of six people who lost their lives ... and the many others impacted by this tragedy ... The sculpture had to have both universal and personal appeal. I chose granite for its enduring strength and beauty, glass for an element of transparency. I thought about three solid granite stones with two windows opening in each. The windows are placed at the eye level of a child and the eye level of an adult. A seventh window with no glass provides a universal element to the piece. The inscription above this window reads, “for those who remember because we all have experienced loss.”³⁶

Project Architect Scott Aker undertook the memorial project in part out of a preoccupation with memorialization and trauma. Aker’s 2014 Master of Architecture in Architectural History thesis at the University of Pennsylvania was on “Exposure of Traumatic Memory through the Exploration of Spatial Formations: Architectural Concepts, Representations, and Realizations in Civic and Domestic Spaces” and was informed by coursework on “Collective Violence, Trauma and Representation”; prior to his enrollment at the University of Pennsylvania, Aker was employed by Giuliani & Associates, an architecture firm based in Alexandria, Virginia and involved in government construction work. There, Aker was involved in the design of military and airline hangars, some to accommodate unmanned drones. Aker describes disillusionment on his recognition of the intensely traumatic psychological impact that the operation of drones had on military pilots, and was thus motivated to pursue studies of trauma and catharsis in academia. To brand the memorial effort, Aker digitized victim and Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art student Anne Bryan’s sketch of the Winged Victory of Samothrace as an emblem.³⁷

In public reviews of the memorial scheme, concern has been raised that “some of the memorial tree choices would not be hardy, permanent or tall enough,”³⁸ further indicating an

35 Matt Golas, “Art Commission Gets Market St. Memorial Walk-Through; Approves City Hall and Septa Plans,” PlanPhilly, April 2, 2015, <http://planphilly.com/articles/2015/04/02/art-commission-gets-market-st-memorial-walk-through-approves-city-hall-and-septa-plans>.

36 Ibid.

37 Scott Aker (Project Architect) in discussions with the author, September 12, 2014 and April 9 2015.

38 Golas, “Art Commission Gets Market St. Memorial Walk-Through; Approves City Hall and Septa Plans.”

intention that the site be visible enough to attract the attention of passersby. City of Philadelphia Art Commissioner Moe Brooker highlighted an aspiration of the memorial, as in architecture above, to permanence: “We want it to really last, so in the Year 2115, they will still remember.”³⁹

Building Collapses in Philadelphia

“Remember this time last year?” a March 17, 2015 *Philadelphia Daily News* article began, “Philadelphia was crumbling. At least eight buildings collapsed within a month. It’s happening again.”⁴⁰ The article described the collapses of three structures in Philadelphia on Saturday, March 14, 2015, as well as three collapses in the prior week, some attributable to the deposition of rain and snow on aging roofs or the freezing and thawing of water within the material of masonry construction, and others to mismanagement of demolition operations. In another article, the *News* describes the saga involved in attempting to solicit the number of building collapses per year from the Department of Licenses and Inspections:

These collapses made the news, from national headlines to local blurbs. But they raise larger questions: How many other buildings have collapsed in Philadelphia? Which neighborhoods are most affected? How big is the problem? Is it getting better or worse? L&I apparently doesn’t know.

As a blue-ribbon commission investigates L&I in the wake of last year’s fatal collapse on Market Street, the beleaguered agency said this week that it cannot determine how many buildings have collapsed in recent years because the descriptions of the incidents to which its staffers respond are buried in an unsearchable database.

For three months, the *Daily News* has tried to obtain a list of building collapses going back five years. On Dec. 2, Mayor Nutter’s spokesman, Mark McDonald, told the newspaper to file a formal Right-to-Know request. Five weeks later, a city lawyer denied the request, saying that the records do not exist and that the city is not required to compile or organize records in response to a request.

When the *Daily News* appealed the ruling to the state Office of Open Records in January, the city produced affidavits from a Nutter staffer and an assistant to L&I Commissioner Carlton Williams stating that the city doesn’t maintain a list of building collapses, but that such records could ‘exist under another spelling, another name, or under another classification.’

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ William Bender, “Three Buildings Collapsed on Saturday, Weekly Tally at 6,” *Philadelphia Daily News*, March 17, 2015, http://articles.philly.com/2015-03-17/news/60179448_1_kensington-house-collapses-early-saturday-morning.

On Monday, three months after the Daily News' initial records request, L&I spokeswoman Rebecca Swanson acknowledged that the agency does maintain records of building collapses. But, she said, L&I categorizes unsafe or imminently dangerous properties by violation, not by the cause of the violation, such as a full or partial collapse.

"Our focus is the public-safety risk presented by the particular property, not the underlying cause of what made it a risk," Swanson said. "While there are notes in the system regarding the underlying cause, those are not searchable and not retrievable."⁴¹

Although a number of faults by a number of parties were evident in investigation of the actions and inactions that led to the collapse at 22nd and Market, dozens of collapses with varying degrees of prior inaction on the part of the City of Philadelphia, and with serious or fatal consequences become evident with a cursory search of news articles. Involvement by politically influential City Treasurer Nancy Winkler and siting on an active corner of Center City have made the collapse at 22nd and Market highly visible in journalistic media; a tension between advocates for memorialization, who believe that the visibility of the site will translate to visibility of the memorial, and others against memorialization, who believe that memorialization is a deliberate disregard for context that will render the memorial obscure, continues.

Memorial Parks in Context

As written above, the function of a rupture as a void which urges awareness, action, and non-complaisance is contingent on both its acknowledgement by the public as a rupture and on acknowledgement that, prior to its existence as a void, the rupture was typical in its context. While the 22nd and Market Memorial obscures both points, the introduction of memorial parks in more homogeneous contexts with more intimate communities can more readily be read as a rupture, as in Megan's Place, a memorial park meant to honor the memory of Megan Kanka, who was seven years old when she was murdered:

The Kankas have tried to fix things on a large scale since July 29, 1994, when Megan was lured across the street with the promise of seeing a puppy by the neighbor they didn't know was a twice-convicted sex offender, then raped and strangled. The bay window looked out toward the spot across the street where their daughter's murderer lived — the

⁴¹ William Bender, "Crumbling and Stumbling: L&I Says It Doesn't Know How Many Buildings Have Collapsed in Philly," *Philadelphia Daily News*, March 7, 2014, http://articles.philly.com/2014-03-07/news/47975273_1_building-collapses-open-records-lamp.

house long since bulldozed and replaced by a memorial pocket park still dormant with winter.

The Rotary Club in Hamilton Township, N.J., bought the house across the street from the Kankas' home to tear it down and build a park called Megan's Place with the help of volunteers. ... The crime led the State Legislature to enact a law requiring convicted sex offenders to register with the police, who must notify neighbors of their presence.⁴²

Hamilton, New Jersey, is written in press about the Kankas as a town that "sprawls out from the southeastern border of Trenton, outranking the capital in population and dwarfing it in size, and its civic life tends to echo the intensely partisan political habits of its neighbors."⁴³ In a uniformly residential setting with a relatively homogeneous building typology, the park reads as a rupture and invites commemoration of the person and the movement it memorializes. Involvement of the Hamilton community at large in the creation and maintenance of Megan's Place has been further essential to its cathartic qualities: "That eased the pain a lot," [Richard Kanka, Megan's father] said, about the demolition of the house across the street, which was a Rotary Club project soon after the murder. Soon the children from Megan's school will come, as they do every year, to plant flowers in the park there. 'It's really beautiful over there in the spring.'"⁴⁴ The Rotary Club raised \$150,000, including funding from a New Jersey Green Acres grant, to purchase the home, demolish it, and build and maintain the park.⁴⁵ In both the 22nd and Market Memorial and Megan's Place, park building was used as a means to deploy traumatic histories and project a need for acknowledgment of a larger social issue. Where Megan's Place was entirely an outgrowth of community effort and presents a coherent rupture in otherwise homogeneous fabric, the 22nd and Market Memorial reads largely as the effort of an individual, and loses coherence as a result of its siting in a busier, less cohesive, less homogeneous context.

Other Adaptation Strategies

In "Life of a Shell and the Collective Memory of a City," architect Rafael Luna offers three

⁴² "A Place for Megan," *New York Times*, December 22, 1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/12/22/nyregion/a-place-for-megan.html>.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Kevin Coyne, "For Megan's Dad, a Way to Make an Impact Again," *New York Times*, March 15, 2009, NJ1, E.

⁴⁵ The Rotary Club of Robbinsville Hamilton Sunrise, "History," <http://rthrotary.org/about-us/history>.

possible relationships between form and program in a reuse context: autonomous, wherein the original form becomes an ornamental facade; symbiotic, wherein the original form serves its original function; or parasitic, wherein a new program inhabits and derives benefit from the spatial qualities of the original form. Luna further elaborates on the above in terms of commemoration: the autonomous erases memories, the symbiotic transmits memories, and the parasitic exploits memories to enhance the value of the new.⁴⁶ To these, this thesis adds mutualism, the derivation of mutual benefit from relationship; commensalism, wherein one benefits without impact on the other; amensalism, wherein one is harmed while the other sees zero net effect; parasitism; and the autonomous.

Because studies of the architectural adaptation of charismatic structures are numerous, this thesis concerns itself with the adaptation not of buildings to suit programs other than those they were constructed to house, but the adaptation of associations with tragic or traumatic events to suit memorialization — also a program other than that which the above memorial parks were constructed to house. In the cases cited above, the loss of the building itself does not preclude the extension of associations with the events it contained to the scale of the site, or by extension, to the neighborhood or to the municipality. It is notable that temporal or sociocultural distance of context communities from the traumatic histories of a site allows for greater creativity in the interpretation and commemoration of those histories. In the adaptation of the Charles Street Jail to become the Liberty Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts, the introduction of humor in branding — bars in the hotel are called the Clink, Alibi, Scampo, and Catwalk — was possible, and is widely considered a successful model of adaptive reuse.⁴⁷ At Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, the introduction of larger dialogues on thematically-relevant subject matter, including exhibits on racial biases in contemporary American incarceration, is effective both as a product of historical distance and because of the lack of personal acquaintance of visitors and those once incarcerated

⁴⁶ Luna, "Life of a Shell and the Collective Memory of the City."

⁴⁷ Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide Inc., "Food and Drink," http://www.libertyhotel.com/food_and_drink/alibi_room.html.

in those sites.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Eastern State Penitentiary, “Considering Mass Incarceration: A 2016 Exhibit to Foster Dialogue,” <http://www.easternstate.org/support/considering-mass-incarceration-2016-exhibit-foster-dialogue>.

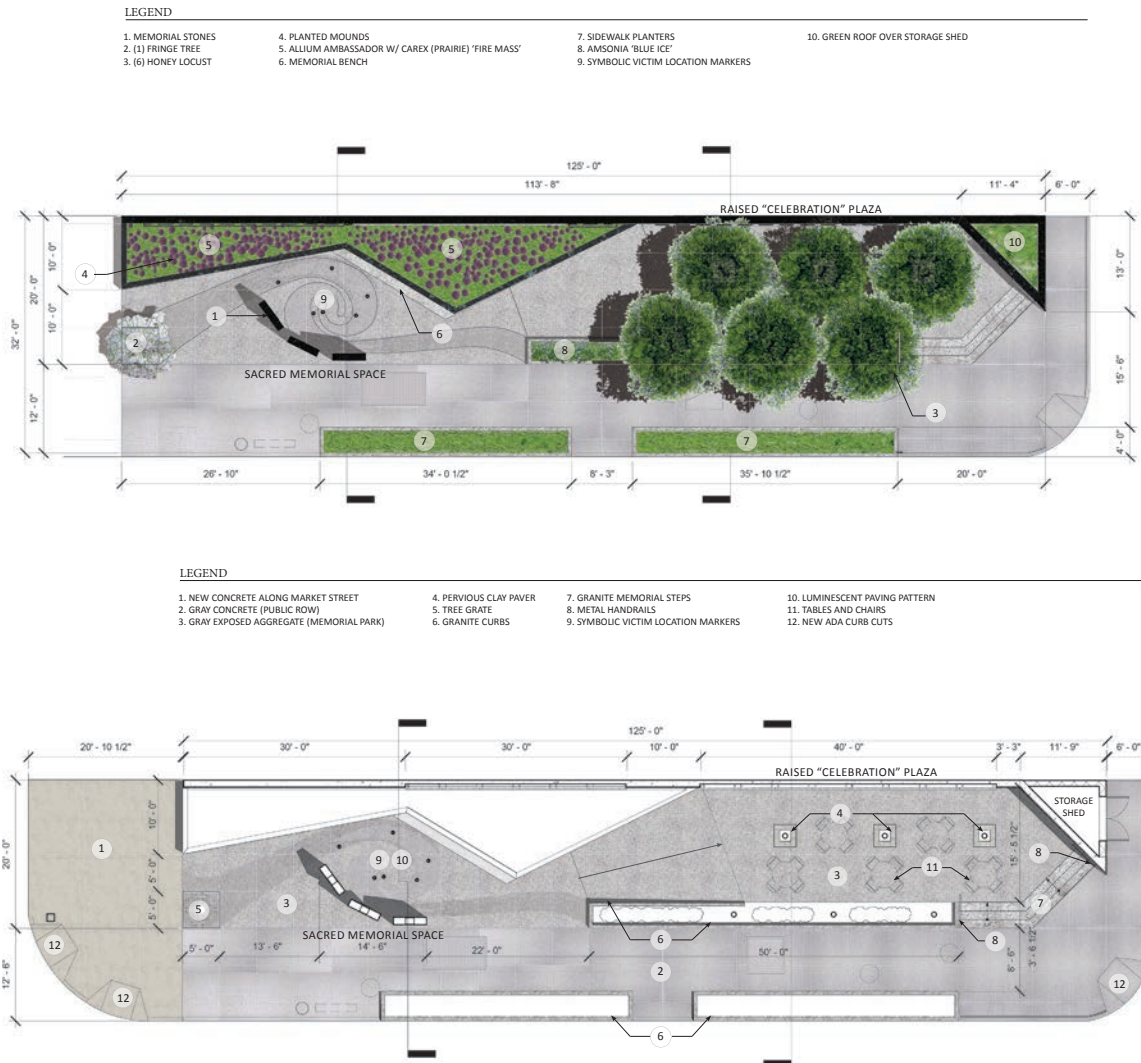


FIGURE 7.1: Renderings looking southeast at the under-construction memorial at 22nd and Market Streets. In presentations given on Wednesday, April 1, 2015, the site was referred to as the June 5th Memorial to set it in the realm of time and memory rather than to refer to the simple fact of its location, as suggested at a public meeting.

Image, Scott Aker, 22nd and Market Memorial Commission

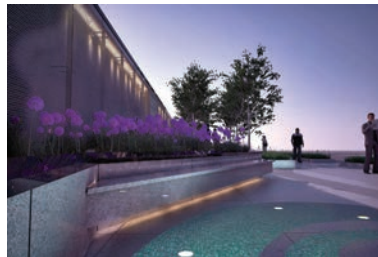


COMPUTER SIMULATION AT DUSK, VIEW AT THE CORNER OF 22ND AND MARKET STREET
The 22nd and Market Memorial - June 5 Memorial Park, PA

SCOTT L. AKER, ARCHITECT
HUSSAM S. KHIRAZ



SACRED MEMORIAL SPACE AT NIGHT



MEMORIAL BENCH



GATHERING PLAZA DURING THE DAY

FIGURE 7.2: Multiple renderings of what has been renamed the June 5th Memorial. At bottom right and center, paving stones mark the locations where victims' bodies were recovered.

Image, Scott Aker, 22nd and Market Memorial Commission



COMPUTER SIMULATION AT DUSK, VIEW FROM THE CORNER OF LUDLOW AND 22ND STREET
The 22nd and Market Memorial - June 5 Memorial Park, PA

SCOTT L. AKER, ARCHITECT
HUSSAM S. KHIRRAZ

FIGURE 7.3: Rendering of the June 5th Memorial from the corner of Ludlow and 22nd Street. While a threshold, in the form of a platform raised above the sidewalk and accessible by two stairs, is visible from this view, concern over the memorial's adjacency to a waiting area for public transportation remains.

Image, Scott Aker, 22nd and Market Memorial Commission



PREVIOUS PAGE, FIGURES 7.4 AND 7.5: Design development renderings alternately depict the memorial as contemplative, solitary space, above, or actively populated to an extent uncharacteristic of that block on Market Street. The Mutter Museum complex, shown at top, behind the memorial park, was used as a staging and triage center for rescue operations immediately following the collapse. Both renderings highlight the sculpture *Witness* by local artist Barbara Fox.

Images, Scott Aker, 22nd and Market Memorial Commission

FOLLOWING PAGE, FIGURE 7.6: A view across Market Street through the initial planting on the 22nd and Market Memorial site. While the northern side of the 2200 block of Market Street is typically high-rise and high-density with ground floor retail, the southern side, which includes the memorial site, is of a more modest scale and largely commercial. Note the digitized version of Anne Bryan's sketch of the Winged Victory of Samothrace, which has been used as a branding image for the memorial.

PAGE 84, FIGURE 7.7: View looking south from Market Street to the memorial site. Note the variety of building types in the middleground and background. The fence surrounding the collapse site has attracted ephemeral memorials since its erection following the clearing of debris from the site. Previous ephemera have included handwritten signs offering opinions in favor of and vehemently against memorial.

Images taken March 24, 2015 by the author.







FIGURE 7.8: The above image, 27 Barbara Lee Drive, Hamilton Township, New Jersey, was shot by photographer Joel Sternfeld and included in his monograph, *On This Site: Landscape in Memoriam* with the caption: “Megan Kanka was raped and strangled in a house that once stood on the site of this park. Jesse Timmendequas, who had been previously convicted of sex crimes involving young girls, told police that on July 29, 1994, he lured the seven-year-old into his home, across the street from the Kanka family residence, by offering to show her a puppy. The Megan Nicole Kanka Foundation, established by Megan’s family, has fought for legislation requiring sex offenders to register with local police who must then inform communities of their presence. The Hamilton Township Rotary Club tore down the house and built this park as a memorial to Megan.”¹

The photograph includes enough context to demonstrate the fact of the park’s unusualness in what is otherwise a uniform development of suburban housing.

59 Joel Sternfeld, *On This Site: Landscape in Memoriam* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1996), 55.



FIGURE 7.9: A memorial plaque in Megan's Place commemorates Megan Kanka. The Kankas' home is visible across Hamilton Drive.

Image, Stephanie Keith, *New York Daily News*

Chapter 8 The Constructed Ruin

Though historic preservation, as a movement, often prioritizes intact material, reconstruction can be undertaken in instances in which material has been lost but would aid in a visitor's understanding of the historic significance of the site. Though reconstruction runs counter to discourse on the aura of the work of art¹ and remains controversial, the Secretary of the Interior permits reconstruction when "documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property."² The Secretary of the Interior further mandates that reconstruction "be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction," take measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships, and be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation. Construction of designs that were never executed historically is not sanctioned according to these standards.³

The fact of reconstruction as a didactic mechanism raises questions about the intentions of *The President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation*, the commemorative exhibition at 524-30 Market Street in Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, site of the Executive Mansion at 190 High Street. Though sizeable, the President's House was erected from 1767 to 1768 on behalf of Mary Lawrence Masters, widow of William L. Masters, to house herself and her two daughters on land she acquired in 1761.⁴ On May 19, 1772, the title was transferred to Mary Masters' daughter in honor of her marriage to Richard Penn, Sr., grandson of William Penn, founder of the Province of Pennsylvania.⁵ In 1775, Richard Penn, Sr., his wife, and in-laws vacated the House and returned to England; in the winter of 1777,

1 See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, Ed. Hannah Arendt, Trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

2 Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating Restoring &Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, (Washington, D.C.: United States Department of the Interior, 1995), 117.

3 Ibid.

4 Martin P. Snyder, *City of Independence: Views of Philadelphia before 1800* (New York, New York, 1975), 63.

William Masters Camac, *Memoirs of the Camacs of County Down* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1913), 236.

5 Philadelphia Deed Book 1-14, (May 19, 1772), 459.

British General Sir William Howe appropriated the House as a residence and headquarters, an act that, along with armed occupation of Philadelphia, signaled capture of the *de facto* colonial capital. Howe's replacement, Major General Sir Henry Clinton, resided in the House for almost a month before withdrawing his force to New York. Following Clinton's evacuation of the House, Philadelphia was reclaimed as the colonial capital, and the House was leased to American general Benedict Arnold within a week of his arrival and declaration of martial law on June 19, 1778. Arnold, who accommodated French ambassador M. Conrad Alexandre Gerard in the House, was resident when he initiated correspondence with the British in May of 1779.⁶ Following Arnold's removal to West Point, the House was leased to French consul John Holker, who had provided ammunition and capital to the Continental Army prior to the French entrance into the War. Holker was in residence when the House ignited on the morning of January 2, 1780. Though accounts of the extent of the damage are divergent, that the upper two floors and garret were consumed is apparent.⁷ In an indeterminate state of devastation, the House was transferred to financier Robert Morris, who held the title beginning in 1781 and had the structure restored to the specifications of the original plan.⁸ Morris entertained George Washington and Lieutenant-General Comte de Rochambeau, commander-in-chief of the French Expeditionary Force, at the House on August 30, 1781, after which Washington and his staff headquartered therein for almost a week.⁹ Washington was a frequent guest at the Morris House, and resided there for four months during the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Following election to the Senate, Robert Morris was instrumental in persuading Congress to locate the interim capital in Philadelphia during construction of the Federal City, now Washington, the District of Columbia, and offered his House to serve the office of the President.¹⁰

In its tenure as the executive mansion, the President's House accommodated more than thirty individuals. Washington maintained a domestic staff of between twenty and twenty-

6 Edward Lawler Jr., "The President's House in Philadelphia: The Rediscovery of a Lost Landmark," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 126, no. 1 (January 2002): 13.

7 Jacob Cox Parsons, ed., *Extracts from the Diary of Jacob Hiltzheimer* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1893), 42.
Henry D. Biddle, ed., *Extracts from the Diary of Elizabeth Drinker* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1889), 123.

8 "Letter of Attorney, Book 1," RD 1408, 271-74, Philadelphia City Archives.

9 Marquis de Chastellux, *Travels in America*, ed. Howard C. Rice Jr. (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1963), 30-31.

10 Lawler, "The President's House in Philadelphia," 22.

four while in Philadelphia, including, at points, between four and nine slaves brought from his residence in Mount Vernon, Virginia.¹¹ While vilification of Washington as slaveholder is rife, several Congressmen and statesmen held slaves in Philadelphia, including elsewhere on High Street, though the total had fallen from 1,375 in 1770 to fewer than 400 in 1783.¹² Although an Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery had been enacted in 1780 and stipulated that slaves held in Philadelphia from out-of-state in excess of six months would be declared free, the act exempted the assets of Congressmen, then the sole position in the federal government and accommodated in Philadelphia; Washington, following advice from Attorney General Edmund Randolph, who had failed to understand the statute and lost his slaves to manumission, arranged rotation of his slaves out-of-state in direct violation of a 1788 amendment which prohibited the practice. At least one of Washington's slaves, Hercules, was held in-state longer than the statute of limitation allowed and was nevertheless retained in bondage. In March of 1797, Hercules would escape from the President's House; Ona Marie "Oney" Judge, another of the nine held on-site, had escaped from the House in May or June of 1796. While resident in the President's House, Washington authorized the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, a legal mechanism to encourage the pursuit and capture of criminalized escaped slaves. Though vilified for his promotion of the "peculiar institution," Washington would have been unable to manumit the 153 slaves under legal ownership of Martha Washington's dower, including seven held at the President's House.¹³

Washington directed the enlargement and renovation of the House to suit his will, including construction of a two-story bow window often cited as inspiration for the oval chambers of the White House, and servant hall between the bath house and stable pasture, accessible from the House via piazza.¹⁴ Described as "another kitchen" in insurance policies, the servant hall, as a labor and dining space rather than an accommodation, was incongruent with a more prevalent notion of slave quarters. An addition to the smoke house served as quarter to three

¹¹ Ibid., 27.

¹² Tobias Lear, "General Correspondence, 1741-1799," *George Washington Papers*, Library of Congress, ser. 3 (April 24, 1791). Anna Coxe Twogood, "Historic Resource Study: Independence Mall, the 18th Century Development, Block One, Chestnut to Market, Fifth to Sixth Streets," (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Independence National Historical Park, August 2001): 62.

¹³ Clarence Lusane, *Black History of the White House* (San Francisco, California: Open Lights Books, 2011), 42.

¹⁴ George Washington, *Letters and Recollections of George Washington: Being Letters to Tobias Lear* (Rochester, New York: Doubleday, Page, and Company, 1905), 3-4, 6.

enslaved stable hands; a room on the third floor accommodated three other slaves.¹⁵

As an experimental executive mansion, the President's House was instrumental in establishing the ritual associated with executive office in the United States. Following enactment of the Residence Act of 1790 and prior to inauguration of the Federal City it authorized, most of the transactions of the Executive Branch were directed from or within the House. At the House, Washington held levees in which he was to be visited by the public, though the interaction was mediated by his Secretary or another acquaintance.¹⁶ Formal ceremonies involving the President were held at the House; a reciprocal formal visitation by the Senate and House of Representatives was held in gratitude for Washington's inauguration of Congress Hall, a practice that Thomas Jefferson later terminated. Formal ceremonies between international delegations were performed in the House as well, and a number of dignitaries were accommodated therein, including the son of the Marquis de Lafayette.¹⁷ Last, festivities with several hundred visitors were held in the House on New Year's Day and in celebration of Washington's birth.¹⁸

In March 1795, the President's House was sold for \$37,000 to merchant Andrew Kennedy, who continued to rent the House to the City of Philadelphia for use as the executive mansion. Suspicion of a contamination of the climate or water in the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793, during which Washington relocated to Germantown, dashed the persistent local hope that Philadelphia would be reconsidered capital of the United States; removal was further cemented in President John Adams' refusal to inhabit a Presidential Mansion constructed on Ninth Street at a cost of \$100,000, though the City of Philadelphia doubled the annual rent on the President's House to £1,000 in an attempt to persuade him otherwise. To control cost, Adams, who did not hold slaves, maintained fewer personnel than did Washington and reduced the scale of entertainment held in the House prior to his departure to the Federal City on November 1, 1800.¹⁹

Following Adam's departure, the President's House was leased to John Francis, proprietor

15 Lawler, "The President's House in Philadelphia," 46.

16 William Sullivan, *Familiar Letters on Public Characters and Public Events* (Boston, Massachusetts, 1834), 89-90.

17 Lawler, "The President's House in Philadelphia," 35.

18 Robert C. Smith, "A Portuguese Naturalist in Philadelphia, 1799," *Philadelphia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 78 (1954): 81-82.

19 Lawler, "The President's House in Philadelphia," 52.

of a boarding house patronized by John Adams and Thomas Jefferson during their roles as vice president. Though the President's House was renamed Francis' Union Hotel, a bankrupt Francis relinquished the lease in 1803. Once surrounded by the estates of the elite, the President's House was increasingly out-of-place in the burgeoning commercial core of Philadelphia; as surrounding fabric was demolished to allow construction of retail space, the stalls for which High Street was later renamed Market Street were extended in 1810, running parallel to the front of the House. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the façade was stripped of much of its ornament and the first floor subdivided into retail space. The upper stories were converted into a boarding house.²⁰

Owner Anthony Kennedy died in 1828, and in April 1832, his heirs sold the title of the House to Irish-born merchant Nathaniel Burt. Burt had the House razed, and directed the construction of three four-story houses with the same frontage for use as retail space. The exterior side walls of the House survived demolition as party walls with 526-30 Market Street, then 190 High Street, to the east, and 532-34 Market Street, then 192 High Street, to the west; the exterior foundation walls were left intact as well, except to the south, and were incorporated into the foundation of the constructed retail space.²¹ The cellar was expanded following excavation into the former piazza and kitchen. Prior to 1850, the adjoining 526-30 Market Street was demolished, including the shared wall. Street numbers were consolidated in 1854, and the transformation from High Street to Market Street led to further confusion as to the whereabouts of the remnants of the President's House.²²

Beginning in 1915, proposals to establish an appropriate context for Independence Hall through demolition of congested commercial fabric were earning serious consideration. In the summer of 1936, at the height of the Great Depression, historian Charles Abell Murphy began a campaign to hire out-of-work architects and artisans under the Works Progress Administration in the construction of scale models of the American Executive Mansions, including the President's

20 Cornelius William Stafford, *Philadelphia Directory for 1801* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1801), 15.

21 Mary Selden Kennedy, *Seldens of Virginia and Allied Families* (New York, New York, 1911), 1: 392.

22 Lawler, "The President's House in Philadelphia," 64.

House, for education and uplift. A shrewd activist, Murphy blanketed himself in the American flag and spoke to the press of patriotism; the scheme, then known as the Philadelphia Federal Historical Buildings Models Project, was granted approval. Architect David Howell Morgan, a former director of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission and associate in the firm of Cope and Stewardson, was elected to manage the Project on the merit of both artistic skill and political connection. The Philadelphia Federal Historical Buildings Models Project unveiled an inaccurate scale replica of the President's House in June of 1939. Despite endorsement of the Philadelphia chapter of the Institute of American Architects, Morgan's successor, the artful Charles Abell Murphy, was unable to secure funding or a reliable sponsor of full-sized re-creation of the President's House; though Murphy enlisted in the Independence Hall Association, which organized the eventual Independence National Historical Park, the campaign to re-create the House ended with his death in 1943.²³

Although the lowest floor of the original western wall of the House survived the demolition of 532-34 Market Street in 1941, all remnants of the superstructure of the President's House were demolished in October and November 1951 in the creation of Independence Mall. Though the Philadelphia chapter of the American Institute of Architects had urged that an archeological record of the President's House site be drawn, and, in 1952, encouraged full-sized outline of the original structure, commemoration was limited to a bronze plaque installed outside of the restroom erected on the site of the House in 1954. Maintenance and operation of the site was transferred to Independence National Historical Park in 1974 and the site leased to the National Park Service, though maintained under State ownership. No archaeological record was taken prior to expansion of the restroom in 1984.²⁴

The President's House faded from collective consciousness until amateur historian Edward Lawler Jr. published an article in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* in January of 2002, as construction of a Liberty Bell Center tangent to the historical location of the President's House was under consideration. Prior to the publication of the article, argument for

²³ Ibid., 70-77.

²⁴ Ibid., 78-81.

the significance of the President's House had focused on association with the Founding Fathers and establishment of the executive office; patriotic associative value is evident in a statement delivered to Congress in December 1947 by architectural historian Charles E. Peterson in an attempt to discourage the disintegration of archaeological remnants that would come with construction of Independence National Historical Park: "The site of the Presidential Mansion is hardly surpassed in importance by any other historical site in America. The eminent personages who lived here and the decisions affecting the future of the nation that were made here have caused a growing interest in the Presidential Mansion and the ground upon which it once stood. It is a distinguished historical site."²⁵

Even Edward Lawler Jr. had not anticipated that the single paragraph and footnote he devoted to the discussion of the presence of slaves in the President's House would be appropriated as the basis of a movement; indeed, in an article published in 1996, Lawler argued for reconstruction of the President's House on the merit of association: "Would the reconstruction of the President's House significantly enrich the experience of visitors in the same way that the reconstruction of the Graff House, where Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and the reconstruction at Franklin Court, where Franklin toiled in his workshop, do? I strongly believe that it would."²⁶

Nonetheless it was the following statement in Lawler's "The President's House in Philadelphia" which generated a torrent of activism: "An extraordinary juxtaposition will be in place when the [Liberty Bell Center] is completed, one which seems to have occurred by accident. The Liberty Bell is universally recognized as a representation of American freedom, but the bell once had a very specific symbolic meaning. Until the mid-nineteenth century it was a relatively obscure object, simply called the "State House Bell." It did not become famous or gain the name "Liberty Bell" until the 1840s, after it was adopted as the emblem of the abolitionist movement, and the bell's inscription, "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the Land unto all the Inhabitants thereof," as the movement's watchword. The Liberty Bell became then the

25 Edward Lawler Jr., "The President's House Revisited," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 129, no. 4 (October 2005): 372.

26 Edward Lawler Jr., "Letter: Washington Slept Here, and That House Ought to be Rebuilt," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (October 13, 1996).

powerful rallying symbol of the struggle to end slavery in America. This meaning will echo as one approaches the new building on Independence Mall. The last thing that a visitor will walk across or pass before entering the Liberty Bell Center will be the slave quarters that George Washington added to the President's House."²⁷

Citing Lawler, the Philadelphia Inquirer published an article entitled "Echoes of Slavery at Liberty Bell Site on March 24, 2002;"²⁸ in response, the General Assembly of Pennsylvania passed House Resolution No. 490 on March 26, 2002, "urging the National Park Service to erect a commemorative plaque in recognition of the history of the slave quarters located on the site of the planned Liberty Bell Pavilion."²⁹ The principal statement of significance given in the resolution is that of association of the President's House with George Washington and John Adams; subsequent statements mention slave quarters and the symbolic nature of the Liberty Bell. The final resolution, though, locates the predominant significance of the site in the presence of the slave quarters: "It is important to maintain a permanent acknowledgment of the rich history of the affected area, especially the history associated with the slave quarters."³⁰

In late November 2000, archaeologists from John Milner Associates discovered the stone depression of Robert Morris's ice house at the southwest corner of the President's House site. On December 7, 2000, Edward Lawler Jr., unaware of the archaeological find, presented his research on the President's House to the Philadelphia chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. John Milner Associates and Edward Lawler Jr., began collaboration thereafter, and confirmed that the location of the smoke house extension, quarter to three slaves, would have fallen five feet from the entrance to the Liberty Bell Center. Lawler contacted the National Park Service, but was not acknowledged until months later, when his investigation was dismissed. In a conference with historians and communal organizers on May 13, 2002, delegates of Independence National Historical Park distributed a document entitled "Background and Preliminary Planning for Interpreting the Site at 190 High Street;" the document, submitted to the Pew Charitable Trust

27 Lawler, "The President's House in Philadelphia," 93.

28 Stephan Salisbury and Inga Saffron, "Echoes of Slavery at Liberty Bell Site," Philadelphia Inquirer, (March 24, 2002).

29 General Assembly of Pennsylvania, House Resolution No. 490, (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, March 26, 2002), 1.

30 Ibid., 2.

thereafter, included a denial that enslaved Africans might have been accommodated in the space fronting the Liberty Bell Center, and though the publication was extensive, mention of the smoke house was excluded.³¹

According to Edward Lawler, Jr., that the obligation of Independence National Historical Park to interpret the slave presence in the President's House "was essentially ignored for more than twenty-five years may be attributable to the jungle of misinformation about the house, to embarrassment over the public toilet built on its site, to research and interpretation having been focused on existing buildings, to underfunding and understaffing, to apparent public apathy, and a whole host of other excuses. But ... there seems to be little doubt that the issues of slavery and race played a part in Independence National Historical Park's resistance to fully interpret the site."³² A spokesman for Independence National Historical Park defended the decision to decline interpretation of a slave quarters at the President's House in an October 31, 2002 article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

"The building had no 'slave quarters,'" according to the Park Service, because no part of it was used exclusively by slaves. ... Phil Sheridan, spokesman for Independence National Historical Park, said that "primary documents call it the servants' hall." There are no historical records "that said it was a slave quarters" ... "There's no question slaves existed on the site," Sheridan said. "But we're standing with what Washington called it, and we are standing with the fact that no one knows if slaves slept there or if slaves didn't sleep there."³³

With the stated intent to convince the National Park Service to acknowledge the presence of slave quarters, black activists in Philadelphia formed the Avenging the Ancestors Coalition and Generations Unlimited; hundreds of Coalition affiliates held a demonstration outside the Liberty Bell on July 3, 2002, declaring the President's House a "house of horrors," a generator of racist thought and insistent violation. In 2003, a cadre of academics formed the Ad Hoc Historians, which began a campaign of petition and protest.³⁴

31 Lawler, "The President's House Revisited," 404-405.

32 Ibid., 402.

33 Stephan Salisbury, "Proposed Wording on Slave Quarters Draws Fire," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (October 31, 2002).

34 J. F. Pirro, "Slow Build," *Main Line Today*, (October 6, 2010).

In 2002, the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations included a stipulation in the financial account of the Department of the Interior that the National Park Service conduct a more thorough investigation on the matter of the President's House. In compliance with the directive, the National Park Service initiated an interpretive design selection process in October of 2002. Under the direction of Independence National Historical Park and abiding by the argument advanced in the *Inquirer*, the Olin Partnership and Vincent Ciulla Design identified five interpretive themes, including the system and method of slavery; African-American Philadelphia; and the move to freedom. Despite inclusion of a memorial and examination of the institution of slavery in Philadelphia, placement of a physical barrier between interpretation of the above and discussion of the George Washington and John Adams held the potential to undermine the notion of freedom and bondage as complex and inextricable. The design was unveiled before an audience at the African American Museum of Philadelphia on January 15, 2003. Vilification of both the design and of the National Park Service was immediate; in addition to the deletion of the smoke house and extension, that design selection had been undertaken without communal participation or input meant public denunciation, though the proposition was submitted to the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations thereafter.

Against the inclusion of a slave quarters, Independence National Historical Park delivered an address at Cliveden in Germantown, Pennsylvania, in which a delegate historian argued that evidence that the construction of the servant quarter mentioned in Washington's correspondence had been actualized did not exist. In acknowledgment of the vilification and protest, the perpetual activism of Edward Lawler, Jr., the Avenging the Ancestors Coalition, and others, and suggestion by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations to revise the design to include a slave quarters, Independence National Historical Park later abandoned the denial and proposed that the President's House serve an educational and commemorative function. In an October 30, 2004 forum at the Independence Visitor Center, Independence National Historical Park publicly acknowledged the presence of slave quarters and, in December, committed to delimiting and labeling the area. At the opening of the

Liberty Bell Center on October 9, 2003 Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street pledged \$1.5 million in support of the commemoration; on September 6, 2005, Congress announced a federal grant of \$3.6 million to fund construction.³⁵

In an attempt at a more inclusive interpretation of Independence National Historical Park, the National Park Service conducted a Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedure to cull information from inhabitants of Philadelphia in 2002. Respondents indicated that Independence National Historical Park lacked representation of black culture, and attributed lack of alliance to a collective unawareness of local history and to focused interpretation on the political and national. Following the Procedure, a broader investigation to determine the constituencies with traditional associations with Independence National Historical Park was undertaken, along with an interview of Park visitors. According to the investigation, black residents of the area and black visitors felt a lack of personal relevance in the Independence National Historical Park, and desired more inclusive interpretation. In response to the National Park Service's Underground Railroad Initiative, Independence National Historical Park amended its National Register nomination to highlight sites associated with enslavement and the abolitionism. The Park was then inducted into the Underground Railroad Network and began offering itineraries with focus on the topic of enslavement and freedom.³⁶

Following a shift in approach, Independence National Historical Park encouraged communal input. A forum was held on October 30, 2004, to identify the cultural values of identity, memory, agency, dignity, and truth; delegates of the National Park Service and the Ad-Hoc Historians met to discuss a course of action on September 6, 2005, and the City of Philadelphia and Independence National Historical Park established a President's House Oversight Committee on September 14.³⁷ A President's House Design Competition Request for Qualification was issued, encouraging careful consideration of the Olin Partnership design and requiring demarcation of the building footprint, emphasis on the slave quarters, and address of

³⁵ Lawler, "The President's House Revisited," 372, 402-409.

³⁶ Doris Devine Fanelli, "History, Commemoration, and an Interdisciplinary Approach to Interpreting the President's House Site," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 129, no. 4 (October, 2005): 446.

³⁷ Independence Hall Association, "The President's House in Philadelphia: Legislation and Design to Completion (2002-2010)."

six thematic elements, including the five identified in the Olin Partnership design and “history lost and found”³⁸ a number of fora were held in 2005 and 2006 and internet and telephone hotlines for public comment were established. Following the above, the Mayor of Philadelphia authorized archaeological exploration of the unexcavated area of the President’s House. On March 28, 2006, six semi-finalist design proposals were announced, demonstrating varied degrees of reconstruction and abstraction of the House from the spare delineation of the floor plan to media-rich engagement with partial internal walls.³⁹ On February 27, 2007, the design by minority-owned Kelly/Maiello Architects and Planners was announced, including fragments of incomplete wall structures “in order to establish a powerful, historically accurate sense of place” and introduce interactive digital media.⁴⁰

Excavation of the President’s House began on March 15, 2007; over the course of several months, foundations of the House, the servant hall, the piazza, and the bow window were uncovered before some 300,000 witnesses.⁴¹ In acknowledgment of the archaeological remnant, Kelly/Maiello Architects and Planners unveiled a revision of the design on December 14, 2007, prompting the City of Philadelphia to increase funding to \$3.5 million.⁴² A revised \$10.5 million budget was announced, including \$8.5 million for construction and \$2 million in endowment, with an additional \$3.5 million contribution from the Delaware River Port Authority.

Construction of the President’s House in its current iteration was begun on August 6, 2009, with interpretation under the direction of the American History Workshop; on December 25, 2009, the task of interpretation was transferred to Eisterhold Associates, Inc., an interpretive services firm based in Kansas City, Missouri and led by historian Gary Nash, following charges of an inadequate commemoration by activists including the Avenging the Ancestors Coalition.⁴³ A collaboration among the City of Philadelphia, Independence National Historical Park, the

38 City of Philadelphia and Independence National Historical Park, “Request for Qualifications, The President’s House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation.”

39 Doug Heller, “President’s House Design Competition Gallery.”

40 City of Philadelphia and Independence National Historical Park, “Finalist Team for President’s House Selected,” Press Release, (February 27, 2007).

41 Stephan Salisbury, “President’s House Construction Set to Begin,” *Philadelphia Inquirer* (July 31, 2009).

42 Edward Lawler Jr., “A Brief History of the President’s House in Philadelphia,” (May 2010).

43 Carolyn Davis, “Opening of President’s House Pushed Back,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (December 25, 2009).

Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing Corporation, and the Philadelphia Convention and Visitors Bureau Multicultural Affairs Congress, the commemoration, now called *President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation*, was inaugurated on December 15, 2010. A statement by Independence National Historical Park Division of Cultural Resources Management executive Doris Devine Fanelli addressed a concession to the associative over the concrete: "The President's House site offers the challenge of reconciling traditional beliefs and historical interpretation. While historians know that a place approximating the popular notion of "slave quarters" didn't exist at 190 High Street, this knowledge won't dissuade visitors from bringing expectations and an emotional need to find such a location."⁴⁴

The final design has been written as ineffective on several counts. Critics of *President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation* object to interpretation that overlooks the development of the executive office and the historical significance of Robert Morris, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the United States Constitution: "Which person exemplifies the ideas and ideals that led to the American Revolution and the founding and growth of the United States?" wrote one commentator to the President's House Civic Engagement Forum, "a man who groomed a horse [or] the men who signed the United States Constitution?"⁴⁵ Denunciation of the President's House as an unbalanced interpretation, has been met with defense of the President's House as a metaphor for all human bondage and, as a result, as a contact zone, a term introduced by scholar Mary Louise Pratt to describe "the space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish on-going relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict."⁴⁶ As a result of the high visitation of Independence National Historical Park, it was noted, the educational potential of the President's House is vast; effective public commemoration has the potential to elicit reaction and participation of the audience. A

⁴⁴ Fanelli, "History," 446.

⁴⁵ Doris Devine Fanelli, "President's House Civic Engagement Forum: Report," (October 30, 2004).

⁴⁶ Fanelli, "History," 455.

symbolic function exists in the intended projection of visitors' personal ancestral experiences on the commemoration; a more inclusive interpretation of the President's House was declined in favor of a monument able to "provide visitors with the raw material ... to construct a sense of identity, meaning, attachment, and stability."⁴⁷

The National Park Service has been further criticized for inadequate consideration of the archaeological fragment. Following excavation, the President's House Advisory Council selected among a set of amendments to the chosen proposal, settling on the inclusion of a vitrine that grants a partial view of the foundation and relegating the archeological remnant to the status of afterthought. Construction of the vitrine was considered cost-effective at \$6.9 million; full enclosure of the archaeological remnant was estimated at a cost of \$11 million; full overhaul of the design would have been cost-prohibitive. In response to the charge that the excavation of an actual ruin rendered the constructed ruin redundant, principal architect Emmanuel Kelly maintained that the amended design provided an "appropriate balance" that would allow access to the ruin alongside "the stories of the people that the ruins alone cannot tell."⁴⁸

Even the archaeological remnant, a potential locus of contemplation, has been departed from in the exhibit. Dimensions of the exhibit superstructure have been decreased from the known, measured dimensions, giving the internal space an imprecise alignment with the foundation below. Recognizing the importance of archaeology as a potential container of memory, scholar Michael J. Lewis scoffed, "it turns out there's actually something worse than a facsimile of a vanished building: a facsimile of an excavation."⁴⁹ In counter to charges of the commemoration as inauthentic, anthropologists Eric Gable and Richard Handler argue for recognition of authenticity as a verisimilitude, as a manifestation of the invented nature culture, and as a benign and beneficial mechanism as a result: "It is benign, too, because it allows natives to play with an invented past and revivify certain enduring ideals relevant to their present and future."

⁴⁷ Eric Gable and Richard Handler, "After Authenticity at an American Heritage Site," *American Anthropologist*, New Series, vol. 98, no. 3 (September 1996), 574.

⁴⁸ Kellie Patrick Gates, "Making of the President's House," *PlanPhilly* (February 23, 2009).

⁴⁹ Michael J. Lewis, "Trashing the President's House: How a Great American Discovery was Turned into a Disgrace," *Commentary*, (April 2011), 62.

The constructed ruin, is, to Gable and Handler, interpretable as a positive in “not protecting an airbrushed past.”⁵⁰

Though the fragmented character of the President’s House was intended to allow unrestricted access without the surveillance personnel and equipment that an enclosed structure would require, the exhibit reads as “an architect-concocted neo-ruin,”⁵¹ granting neither the satisfaction of a resolved structure nor a sense of invitation. In addition, the technological and media-based element of the design, in part a concession to the digital age and in part to encourage appreciation by “everyone -- young, old, sighted or blind, deaf or hearing,”⁵² create a cacophonous, unfocused experience.

Criticism that paints the National Park Service as having conceded to commemoration as a protective against accusations of racial discrimination is in dialogue with discourse on racial paranoia and the spectrum of political correctness; a charge of obsequiousness on the part of the National Park Service is evident in a November 28, 2009 comment to the Philadelphia Inquirer:

Some “activist organizations” now seek to hijack the memorial to serve their agenda to generally memorialize slavery in Philadelphia. Their tactics are pressuring the design of the President’s House Memorial to be less historically accurate and more contentious than this national project should be, and I find it particularly galling that the mayor’s office and the National Park Service are being complicit in such political correctness.⁵³

Though often invoked in discussion of the President’s House, the term “political correctness” is dualistic in connotation; it is at once dismissive, indicative of a form of social censorship that encourages exaggerated, overcautious language while promoting hypersensitivity among minorities; and at once indicative of an unspoken code of decorum that facilitates conversation across lines of acknowledged social difference. As a destructive, political correctness suppresses honest debate and interaction; generates an essential foundation of racial distrust in cross-racial discussion; provokes suspicion of insincere motivation; and initiates a search for coded language and innuendo. A number of articles on the exhibit are

50 Eric Gable and Richard Handler, “After Authenticity,” 574.

51 Peter Hannaford, “The President’s House Wreck,” *American Spectator* (July 19, 2011)

52 Gates, “Making of the President’s House.”

53 Brad Bender, “Letter: Slaves Not the Only Story at the President’s House” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (November 28, 2009).

written in language that borders on the absurd and convolutes argument; in a publication of *the Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, historian Steven Conn substituted the phrase “enslaved people of African descent” or, at most direct, “enslaved servants,” for the now-offensive term “slave.”⁵⁴

In *Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness*, anthropologist John L. Jackson, Jr. defines the phenomenon of racial paranoia as “a distrustful conjecture about purposeful race-based maliciousness and the benign neglect of racial indifference,”⁵⁵ a consequence of coded language and a factor in the distrust of Independence National Historical Park. According to Jackson, the rhetoric of victimhood within black historical discourse seldom addresses chattel slavery, perhaps in avoidance of humiliation or emasculation. The result is a production of pluralistic ignorance, a phenomenon in which an attitude or value is not supported by a group, here, the National Park Service, but is overestimated by the public;⁵⁶ in the President’s House a monument to discord rather than effective commemoration results:

To achieve their goal, activists had to get others to ignore what Morris helped achieve: development of the Executive Branch of government, establishment of the rule of law, the transition from a near-feudal economic model to a more modern economy, and other topics that touch the lives of all Americans. To do this, they relied on Americans’ ignorance of history, loudly proclaiming that they were shocked, shocked to learn that a Southern planter had slaves, and in his house no less! ... In that spirit, those driving this memorial are purveyors of partisan history, using the best tools at their disposal: white guilt, demagoguery, and, on occasion, intimidation.⁵⁷

According to critic Edward Rothstein of the *New York Times*, the President’s House “is not really a reinterpretation of history; it overturns the idea of history, making it subservient to the claims of contemporary identity politics.”⁵⁸ Though the didactic elements in the exhibit include mention of Robert Morris, John Adams, and Martha Washington, most discuss the slave presence in the President’s House, in Philadelphia, and elsewhere, or else the character of

54 Steven Conn, “Our House? The President’s House at Independence National Historical Park,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 135, no. 2 (April 2011): 191-197.

55 John L. Jackson Jr., *Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness: The New Reality of Race in America*, (New York, New York: Basic Civitas, 2008), 49.

56 Leaf Van Boven, “Pluralistic Ignorance and Political Correctness: The Case of Affirmative Action,” *Political Psychology*, vol.21, no. 2 (2000): 267.

57 Robert M. Morris, “Commentary: Historical Record was Cherry-Picked for a PC Moment,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, (March 13, 2007).

58 Edward Rothstein, “To Each His Own Museum, as Identity Goes on Display,” *New York Times*, (December 29, 2010): C1.

Washington's slaves. Rothstein and other authors fault Independence National Historical Park for consultation with historian Gary Nash, dismissed as "a member of the Revisionist School of American History."⁵⁹

Certain critics, though supportive of a commemoration of the slave experience, question the siting of a memorial in Independence National Historical Park, believing the President's House a distraction of the thematic focus. As noted in the *New York Times* article of December 14, 2010:

A few yards away, the Liberty Bell Center discusses abolition and slavery; the park's visitor center has an exhibition about the Underground Railroad; the nearby African American History Museum has a powerful audio and video history of blacks in Philadelphia. Accounts of slavery are even found at Mount Vernon. A memorial to the practice of slavery is mounted here, inscribed with the names of African tribes from which slaves derived, but it has no particular relationship to Philadelphia or this site. The need for some such memorial is keen, but here it seems thumped down as an intrusion.⁶⁰

In "Interpreting the Dimensions of Daily Life for the Slaves Living at the President's House and at Mount Vernon," author Dennis J. Pogue noted that "in an urban environment like Philadelphia, the slaves working at the President's House would have even greater opportunities to interact with both fellow slaves and freedmen during the course of their duties."⁶¹ The popular notion of a slave quarters as a decrepit locus of insistent violence and violation is inconsistent with the accommodation at the President's House. The enslaved Hercules was granted the privilege of a supplemental income from the sale of leftovers from the Presidential Kitchen, earning "from one to two hundred dollars a year" in profit; though the velvet, linens, and silks he wore were purchased with his income and not provided for him, that he was able to maintain an expensive taste is incongruous with an idea of enforced squalor. A lesser degree of restricted passage was maintained than on a plantation, and Hercules accorded the status of a social icon:

Thus arrayed, the chief cook invariably passed out at the front door, the porter making a low bow, which was promptly returned. Joining his brother-loungers of the pave, he proceeded up Market street, attracting considerable attention, that street being, in the

59 Peter Hannaford, "The President's House Wreck," *American Spectator*, (April 19, 2011): 32.

60 Edward Rothstein, "The President's House in Philadelphia: Reopening a House That's Still Divided," *New York Times*, (December 14, 2010), C1.

61 Dennis J. Pogue, "Interpreting the Dimensions of Daily Life for the Slaves Living at the President's House and at Mount Vernon," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 129, no. 4 (Oct., 2005), 440.

old times, the resort where fashionables “did most congregate.” Many were not a little surprised to behold so extraordinary a personage, while others who knew him would make a formal and respectful bow, that they might receive in return the salute of one of the most polished gentlemen and the veriest dandy of nearly sixty years ago.⁶²

According to Clarence Lusane, author of *The Black History of the White House*, twelve of the forty-four Presidents of the United States of America held slaves, eight while in office, six while resident in an executive mansion, be it in New York, Philadelphia, or the District of Columbia. That construction of the White House was, in part, a result of slave labor, and that slave auction was held at the adjacent Lafayette Square seem, to some, impetus enough for a monument at the White House.⁶³ A letter to the *Philadelphia Inquirer* suggested that, even in Philadelphia, “the hallowed ground for such a project would seem to be Penn’s Landing, where the slave trade thrived. Such a memorial would be a key addition to any waterfront development, allowing the city to connect its established historical district to yet another piece of its deep history.”⁶⁴

Manzanar National Historic Site

An alternative reconstruction tactic was undertaken at Manzanar National Historic Site, in the southern foothills of the Sierra Nevada near Independence, California. A National Historic Landmark since February 1985 and National Historic Site since March 1992, Manzanar National Historic Site is meant “to provide for the protection and interpretation of the historical, cultural, and natural resources associated with the relocation of Japanese Americans during World War II,”⁶⁵ in particular, for the interpretation of the forcible internment of between 110,000 and 120,000 Japanese Americans, 10,046 at Manzanar Relocation Center. In “The National Park Service: Groveling Sycophant or Social Conscience,” superintendent of the Manzanar National Historic Site, Frank Hays, writes of the complications inherent to interpretation of a scenic but traumatic site:

62 George Washington Parke Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington*, ed. Benson J. Lossing (New York, 1860), 423. C

63 Clarence Lusane, *The Black History of the White House*, (Los Angeles, California: City Lights Publishers, 2011), 18.

64 Bender, “Letter.”

65 102d Congress, “Public Law 102-248, An Act To Establish the Manzanar National Historic Site in the State of California, and For Other Purposes,” March 3, 1992, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-106/pdf/STATUTE-106-Pg40.pdf>

The first challenge at Manzanar is to provide an adequate context within which the public can be engaged in a discussion of social issues related to the internment of Japanese Americans. The Manzanar National Historic Site is characterized by an abundance of sagebrush and dust; only a few remnants of the camp are visible. Without physical reminders, it is difficult to explain to visitors that this was indeed an internment camp. When visitors arrive at Manzanar today, they can be so inspired by the location's beauty that they miss the important story told there. Manzanar is located in one of the primary recreation areas for millions of Southern Californians. The site is surrounded by recreational opportunities — fishing in countless alpine lakes and streams, hiking in the Sierra Nevada mountains, and climbing Mt. Whitney, the highest peak in the continental United States. In fact, some visitors have mentioned that given its location near such beautiful mountains, the camp experience couldn't have been so bad. For these visitors, the camp seems more like a summer camp in the mountains than an important site in the national history of the struggle for civil rights.⁶⁶

In August 1996, in the Manzanar Historic Site General Management Plan, the National Park Service advocated “conversion of the historic camp auditorium to an interpretive center” and insisted that “reconstruction of a limited number of representative structures would provide additional interpretive features to guide interpretation of the site”:⁶⁷

As further discussed and outlined below, the site would be managed as a cultural landscape relating to the internment camp era. To achieve this, the existing features remaining from the camp period such as the road system, structural remains, and landscape planting would be preserved. To the extent that reconstruction occurs on the site, it would be limited to camp-era structures which can be accurately reconstructed based on historic data. No structures from earlier eras would be placed or reconstructed on the site, and any modern structures required would be located and designed to be compatible with the character of the cultural landscape.

The three intact buildings on the site, the auditorium and rock sentry posts, would be preserved through regular scheduled maintenance after initial historic preservation and eventual restoration work projects are completed. Historic Structure Reports would be prepared to guide these activities.

As discussed further below, the auditorium would be adaptively used as an interpretive center. This in general terms would entail the restoration of the exterior of the structure to its camp era appearance, including replacement of the missing south wing, and the restoration of the interior to the greatest extent practicable. Sensitive and non-destructive adaptive use would be made of the original portions of the interior for visitor service and administrative functions. An adaptive use study of the structure would be completed to plan for the careful integration of preservation, restoration, and adaptation for

66 Frank Hays, “The National Park Service: Groveling Sycophant or Social Conscience: Telling the Story of Mountains, Valley, and Barbed Wire at Manzanar National Historic Site,” *Public Historian*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Fall 2003), pp. 73-80, 75-76.

67 National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Manzanar Historic Site, Inyo County, California,” August 1996, <http://www.nps.gov/manz/learn/management/general-management-plan.htm>

contemporary uses.⁶⁸

While in discussions held prior to the inauguration of the National Historic Site the National Park Service had expressed little intention to reconstruct the artifacts of internment, consultation with Japanese American societies and solicitation of testimonies from internees encouraged partial or “extensive” reconstruction.⁶⁹ Nonetheless, backlash against proposed reconstruction was immediate and vehement; threats against reconstructed structures were made, with one man, the son of a World War II veteran, journeying to Manzanar to urinate on its already-vandalized plaque as an expression of his indignation⁷⁰: “Nikkei groups protested that this partial restoration would represent an unacceptable historical inaccuracy, a miniaturization of the camp’s most threatening representations of the [War Relocation Authority]’s control of their lives and the deadly force at its disposal. They argued that if reconstruction were a goal, all eight towers should be resurrected. Meanwhile others, particularly veterans groups, criticized the construction of even one tower, for it would inaccurately represent the conditions of the camps and the lives of its former Japanese American ‘guests.’”⁷¹

Noting that “extensive reconstruction of camp structures was suggested during scoping but was rejected because of adverse visual impact, high costs, and conflicts with established [National Park Service] policy on historic structures,”⁷² the General Management Plan meant to balance a critical mass of reconstruction with the intention to communicate the internment experience, and insisted on the construction of one barrack and one watchtower. Eight watchtowers with searchlights and machine guns pointed inward to the internees were positioned around the perimeter of the camp in its operations during the internment era, and were essential to the argument made by some internees that Manzanar should be framed as a “concentration camp”:

One or more barracks would be placed in a demonstration block as further discussed below under interpretation. The barracks would either be original structures relocated

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Robert T. Hayashi, “Transfigured Patterns: Contesting Memories at the Manzanar National Historic Site,” *The Public Historian*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (Fall 2003), pp. 51-71, 70.

71 Ibid.

72 National Park Service, “General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, Manzanar Historic Site, Inyo County, California.”

to the site, or reconstructions based on the original construction drawings. Support structures such as a latrine, mess hall, and laundry building might also be added.

A single watchtower would be reconstructed based on original construction drawings (or other data as available), and placed at the historic location for such a structure at the midpoint of the camp's south boundary, or at another historic watchtower site on the camp perimeter easily seen by visitors.⁷³

In acknowledgment of a bias against reconstruction, the General Management Plan noted that “the scoping process revealed significant public interest in reconstruction of barracks and watchtowers on the site. [National Park Service] policy on reconstruction (or relocation of historic structures) is generally restrictive, requiring a demonstration that reconstruction (or relocation) is essential for public understanding, that sufficient data exist for accurate replication, and that archeological resources on the site would not be adversely affected.”⁷⁴ The National Park Service Management Policies state that:

No matter how well conceived or executed, reconstructions are contemporary interpretations of the past rather than authentic survivals from it. The National Park Service will not reconstruct an obliterated cultural landscape unless there is no alternative that would accomplish the park's interpretive mission; sufficient data exist to enable its accurate reconstruction, based on the duplication of historic features substantiated by documentary or physical evidence, rather than on conjectural designs or features from other landscapes; reconstruction will occur in the original location; the disturbance or loss of significant archeological resources is minimized and mitigated by data recovery; and reconstruction is approved by the Director.

A landscape will not be reconstructed to appear damaged or ruined. General representations of typical landscapes will not be attempted.⁷⁵

In its intended management of the site as a “cultural landscape relating to the internment camp era,” the National Park Service's Manzanar Historic Resource Survey states: “perhaps, the most evocative features of the site are the extensive remains of landscaping work — stone walkways, planting beds, walls, rock gardens, and modified landforms — constructed by the evacuees in an effort to beautify and make more comfortable the harsh desert environment.”⁷⁶ Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston write of such stoneworks in *Farewell to Manzanar*

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ United States Department of the Interior, “General Management Policies 2006,” <http://www.nps.gov/policy/mp/policies.html>

⁷⁶ Harlan D. Unrau, “The Evacuation and Relocation of Persons of Japanese Ancestry During World War II: A Historical Study of the Manzanar War Relocation Center: Historic Resource Study Special History Study,” United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996, http://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/manz/hrs0a.htm.

as “so characteristically Japanese, the way lives were made more tolerable by gathering loose desert stones and forming with them something enduringly human. These rock gardens had outlived the barracks and the towers and would surely outlive the asphalt road and rusted pipes and shattered slabs of concrete.”⁷⁷ In contrast, stoneworks at Manzanar were written in the *Los Angeles Times* as “more like a vacant lot than a hallowed memorial. The site is littered with beer bottles and graffiti. There are no visitors’ centers, no rangers on duty, no guided tours or displays. Cattle graze the area, trampling archaeological sites, while tourists who pull off the highway leave confused and disappointed.”⁷⁸ The statement in the *Los Angeles Times* is substantiation for Paul Groth’s notion that “Americans are like fish that can’t see water. Although human life requires the constant support of complex surroundings, most people in the United States do not consciously notice their everyday environments.”⁷⁹ Implementation of reconstruction as a didactic mechanism at Manzanar was undertaken in part as a result of sentiments like that of the *Los Angeles Times*, which indicated that archaeological remnants were a difficult-to-understand means of communicating significance to some users.

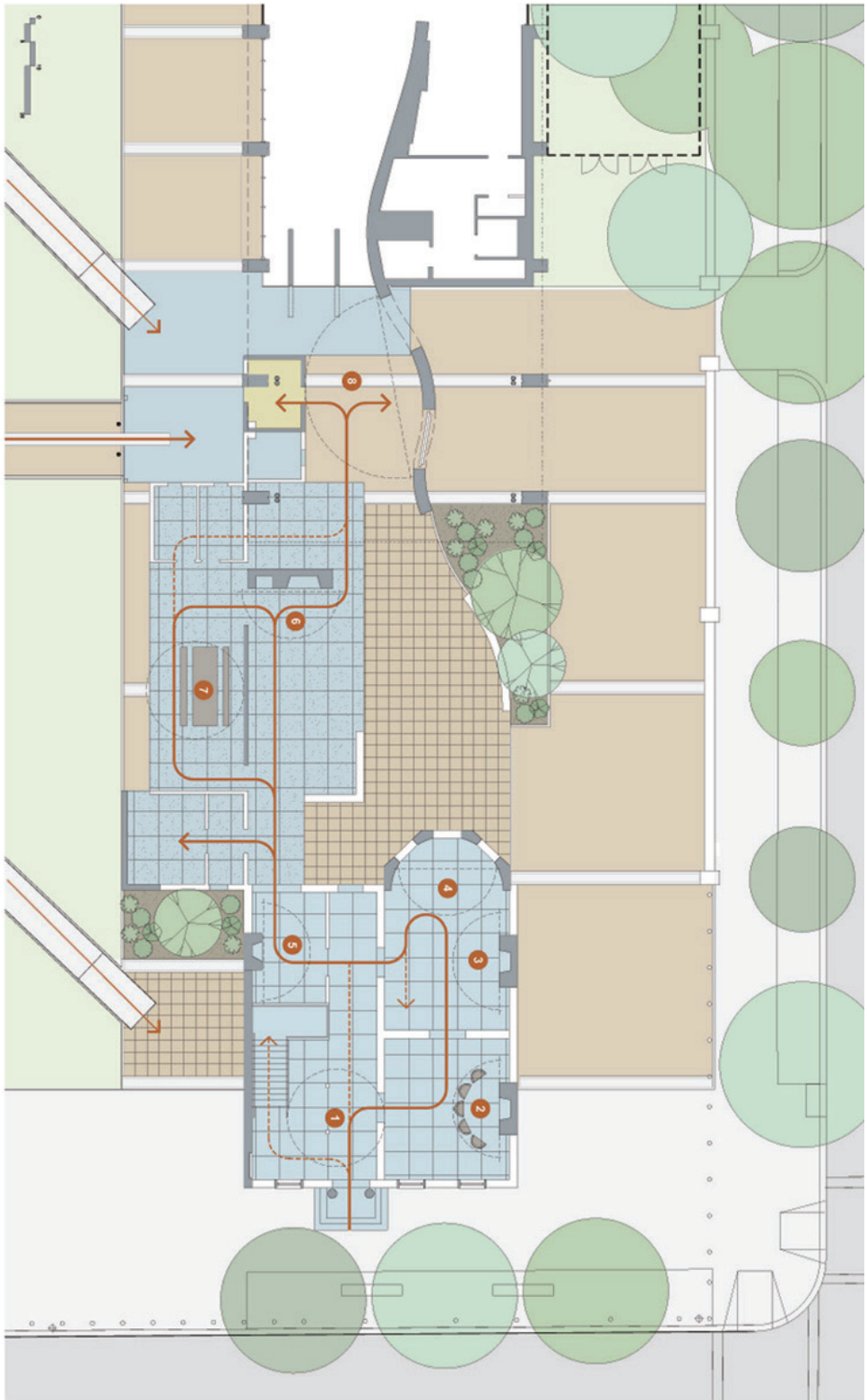
The National Park Service is in the process of reconstructing one of the thirty-six residential blocks at Manzanar as a demonstration block. One barrack will be built to look as it would have when Japanese Americans first arrived at Manzanar in 1942, and another to represent the quotidian experience of barracks life in 1945. A restored World War II mess hall, moved to the site from Bishop Airport in 2002, was opened to visitors in late 2010.⁸⁰

77 Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston, *Farewell to Manzanar: A True Story of Japanese American Experience During and After the World War II Internment*, (New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), 172.

78 T. Shiokari, “Letter to National Park Service, Manzanar National Historic Site” (30 March 1996). Published in Manzanar National Historic Site, General Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement, August 1996. United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Pacific West Regional Office, August 1996.

79 Paul Groth, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study” in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, edited by Groth, Paul Erling and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 1.

80 National Park Service, “Mess Hall Move,” <http://www.nps.gov/manz/learn/management/mess-hall-move.htm>.



**1 Visitor Experience 1:
Entrance Hallway**

The cast of characters in the President's House. Symbols of behavior and decorum in a rapidly changing world.

**2 Visitor Experience 2:
Family Dining Room**

The Escape of Chief Justice from the Philadelphia household.
How the Adams Family thought about freedom and slavery.

**3 Visitor Experience 3:
State Dining Room at the Hearth**

Creating an American foreign policy – attitudes and actions – and the war in Saint Domingue (Haiti).

4 Visitor Experience 4: State Dining Room, Bay Window

What role for the federal government in these United States?
Crisis management: the Whiskey Rebellion, the Alien & Sedition acts, immigration and naturalization. Entertaining dignitaries, American style.

**5 Visitor Experience 5:
Steward's Room**

The President's household as an economic and social enterprise.
The household and the burgeoning city of Philadelphia.
Coming to terms with freedom: Black Philadelphia in the 1790s.

**6 Visitor Experience 6:
The Kitchen**

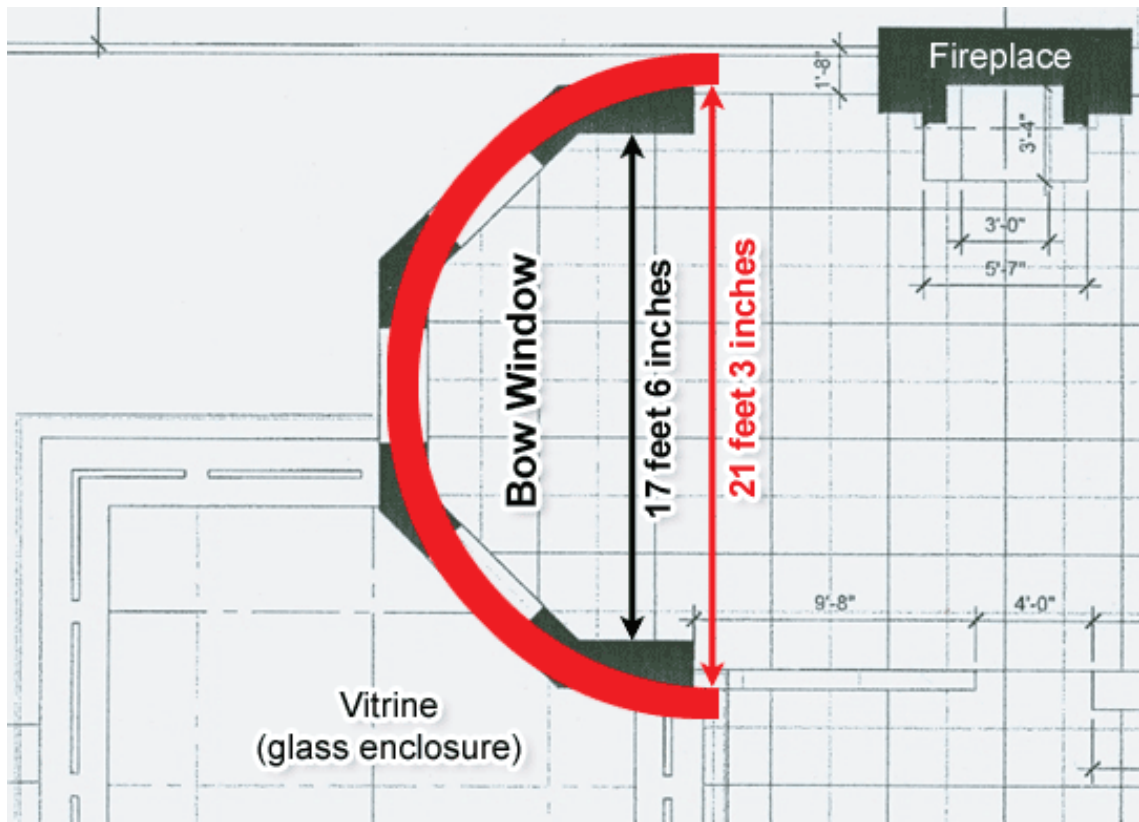
The saga of Hercules, the Blacksmith, and fugitive entrepreneurs and fugitive.

**7 Visitor Experience 7:
Servants Dining Hall**

Aspiring and plotting lines of freedom in a time of slavery.

**8 Visitor Experience 8:
Slave's Quarters and Theater**

How can we explore our role in the history of slavery over freedom?



PREVIOUS PAGE, FIGURE 8.1: Plan of the President's House by Kelly/Maiello Architects and Planners. The plan is annotated with a series of narratives under interpretation at various points of the exhibition. The plan cut belies the fact President's House as a constructed ruin as its height and lack of closure are not evident. The seeming coherence of the plan further belies the dissonance of multiple multimedia installations operating in parallel on the site and potentially clouding the coherence of any narrative stream.

FIGURE 8.2: From "Issues with the Physical Design of the President's House Commemoration Project," a rough digital sketch showing the deviation of the President's House exhibit from archaeological remnants. The caption reads: "The black shows the current design's bay window, with a semi-octagonal interior and exterior. The red shows the correct size and shape of the Bow Window, based on 2007 archaeology."⁸¹

81 "Issues with the Physical Design of the President's House Commemoration Project," USHistory, <http://www.ushistory.org/presidentshouse/plans/designissues.htm>.

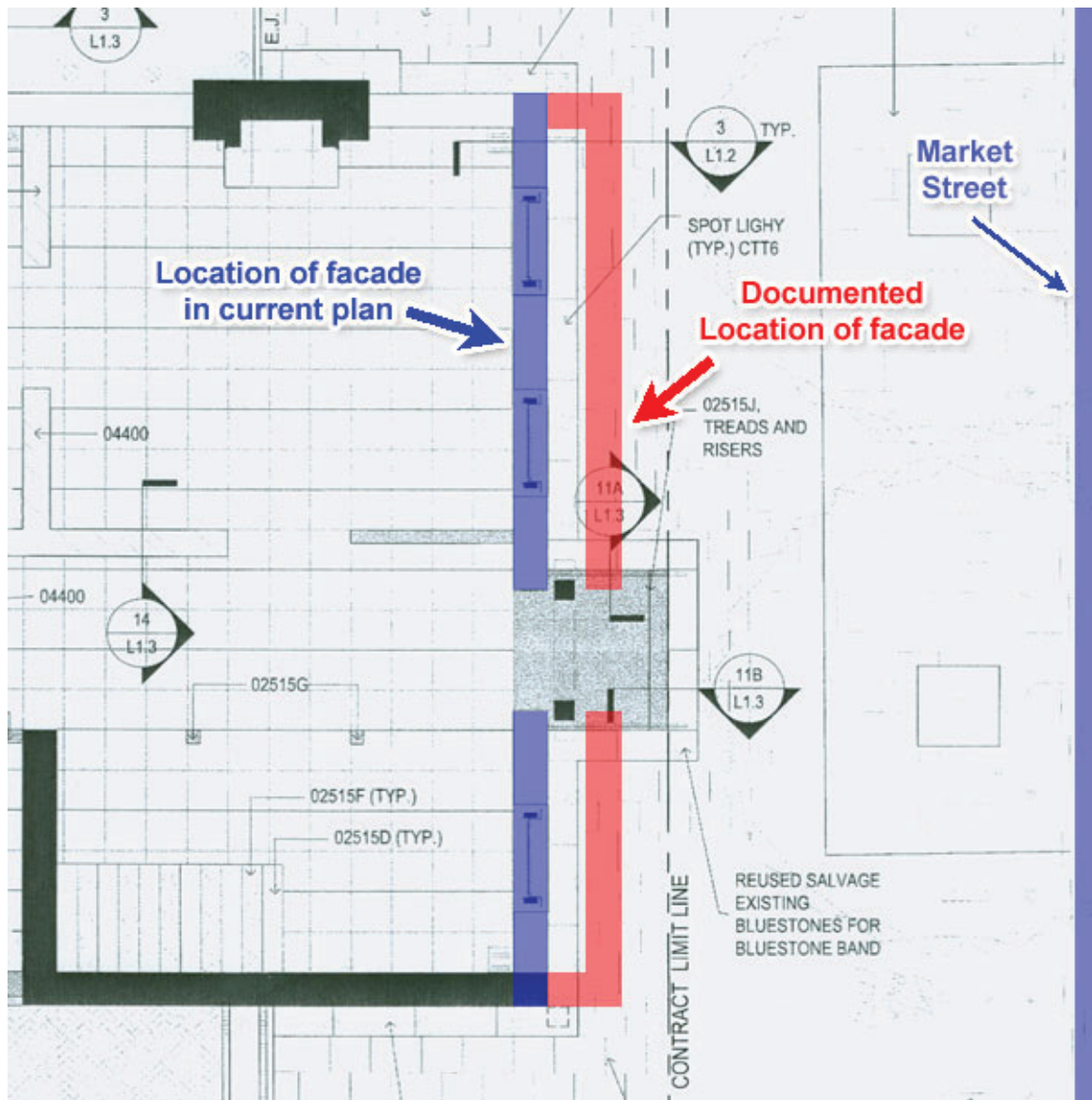


FIGURE 8.3: From “Issues with the Physical Design of the President’s House Commemoration Project,” “The documented location for the Market Street facade is shown in red. The facade from the current plan is shown in blue. Moving the facade means that the Main House’s interior rooms cannot be shown in their documented dimensions.”¹

¹ Ibid.



FIGURE 8.4: Photographer Ansel Adams shot the above image, which he labeled “Manzanar from guard tower, summer heat, view SW, Manzanar Relocation Center,” in 1943. Most of the more than two hundred photographs Adams shot at Manzanar are portraits of internees, though views of daily life, agricultural scenes, and sports and leisure activities also figure. A selection of these were published in Adams’ 1944 monograph, *Born Free and Equal*.

When Adams donated the collection of his prints and negatives to the Library of Congress in 1965, he wrote, “The purpose of my work was to show how these people, suffering under a great injustice, and loss of property, businesses and professions, had overcome the sense of defeat and despair [sic] by building for themselves a vital community in an arid (but magnificent) environment ... All in all, I think this Manzanar Collection is an important historical document, and I trust it can be put to good use.”

The above image shows the thirty-six residential blocks, each of ten to fourteen barracks; an additional thirty-four blocks served as staff housing, camp administration offices, two warehouses, a garage, a camp hospital, and twenty-four firebreaks.

Residential barracks 1 and 8 in block 14 have been reconstructed by the National Park Service.

Image source, <http://www.loc.gov/item/2002695968/>



ABOVE, FIGURE 8.5, AND FOLLOWING PAGE, FIGURE 8.7: The scenic Sierra Nevada complicate communication of internment era abuses: “... some visitors have mentioned that given its location near such beautiful mountains, the camp experience couldn’t have been so bad. For these visitors, the camp seems more like a summer camp in the mountains than an important site in the national history of the struggle for civil rights.”

BELOW, FIGURE 8.6: Stoneworks preserved as cultural landscape features in National Park Service interpretation.



Chapter 9 Conclusion

The association of a structure with the violent histories it hosts is an outgrowth *genius loci*, the “spirit of the place.” The notion of *genius loci* is often evident in descriptions of the role that architecture plays in the events perpetrated within it. The location, scale, and context of commemoration must be considered to question the default projection of traumatic histories onto the whole of a site or structure. This thesis neither dismisses trauma nor the projection of trauma, as stigma, onto architecture. Instead, it advocates the management of a traumatic site as a location — an area, a room, a structure, a complex, a lot, an expanse, or an agglomeration of the above — in a larger context. Although “Americans are like fish that can’t see water ... most people in the United States do not consciously notice their everyday environments,”¹ the implementation of interpretive tactics that consider cultural landscape remnants and archaeological fragments as texts is endorsed as a means of enhancing the cachet of just such relics.

Preservation, at its basest definition, is often written as a movement to retain material intact; traumatic associations and histories, in contrast, often impel demolition to obliterate associations. In the management of stigmatized spaces, the tendency to obliterate traumatic sites — whether materially or psychologically — must be rationalized with the effort to frame architecture as a container of sets of events, a multifaceted collection of histories in context.

This thesis does not present the architectural outcomes of any single case as standards, paradigms, or guidelines. Instead, the spectrum of cases and outcomes, as well as the discussion of variant outcomes in similar contexts, allows for generalizations about tendencies and predispositions toward certain tactics that address trauma to be drawn. Certain narratives under consideration above aid in the prediction of outcomes for a site with negative associations through processes noted below.

Demolition in the United States is the culmination of an American ethos; affluence; construction modes; dissociation from “tame death”; and the removal of rites associated with death

¹ Paul Groth, “Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study” in *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, ed. Paul Erling Groth, and Todd W. Bressi (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 1.

outside of the home and the urban context. Demolition is likelier when the value of a site as a social, cultural, or otherwise civic space is not of principal importance to its context communities; indeed, context communities often urge demolition to distance themselves from a perpetrator — often one with prior involvement in their activities, practices, or rituals — in their midst. Association of a structure with prevailing histories or prominent citizens further inhibits a tendency toward demolition. Demolition in the United States is a counter-rite to absolution ceremonies in that it involves neither invocation nor atonement but absolution of traumatic associations through the erasure of structure, the apparatus onto which associations and histories are cast. Demolition is often intended as a means of granting closure to the kin of victims and survivors through the elimination of what was, for a time, an uneditable crime scene, indicating that perpetrators and, where possible, victims have been identified and their fates resolved. The existence of certain sites “in limbo,” that is, with uncertain lifespans and an apparent lack of address of their management, is, in part, a testament to the unresolved nature of investigation and prosecution related to events hosted on that site. The means of distancing context communities from perpetrators is often via othering, both in journalistic media and in official histories written by larger administrative bodies, including universities, local governments, and federal governments.

Rather than a tactic wed to demolition, othering is most typically employed as a means of exonerating context communities from complicity in violence as a means of retaining architecture that would present too palpable a rupture if lost or demolished. Sites that have undergone obliteration are as conspicuous as ones that have undergone sanctification. Ruptures in otherwise homogenous landscapes, these often vacant, often whisper-prone places draw attention not to human triumph but to human malevolence, with the same dual connotation as the intentional monument: *monumentum*, the void recalls; *monere*, the void warns. Reluctance to obliterate a site with violent associations can be taken as reluctance to direct attention to that site or to the fact of that site’s distinction. Because demolition generates an interruption that is conspicuous against a consistent, inhabited context, and non-demolition invites curiosity about the structure as a witness to violence, strategies which neither permit visitation or inhabitation nor call attention to the site through demolition arise.

In the United States, the absolution of sites from traumatic associations is accomplished through the erasure of structure, the apparatus onto which associations and histories are cast; as a consequence, concretization, the generation of an ever more massive manifestation of a traumatic site is a tactic unheard of in the United States. At Manzanar, the President's House, and elsewhere, apprehension over the likelihood of erasure in the absence of relict material was motivation enough for reconstruction. In the United States, unlike elsewhere, an ever-expanding litany of violence, including forcible imprisonment, rape, and torture, motivates demolition of the structures in which these are perpetrated. Outside of the United States, the financial worth of a site bears greater weight in considerations of its reuse rather than its demolition; concrete infill generates a foundation for future development, whereas, in the United States, charges of dishonoring the memory of the dead or victimized are more readily levied to prevent successive occupation of a site by uses — typically profit-driven or otherwise commercial — deemed unfit for memorialization.

Reconstruction of a traumatic site is urged by context communities when communication of a larger sociocultural message is of prime importance and traces on-site have been obliterated, either by accident or on purpose. The National Park Service permits reconstruction when no other means of communicating significance is thought to be available; when reconstruction announces itself as such; when sufficient data allow for a faithful reconstruction to be undertaken; when disturbance to archaeological remnants is minimal; and when erected on the site of the original.

Temporal or sociocultural distance of context communities from the traumatic histories of a site allows for greater creativity in the interpretation and commemoration of those histories. In the adaptation of prisons, the introduction of humor in branding, as well as the introduction of larger dialogues on thematically-relevant subject matter is effective both as a product of historical distance and because of the lack of personal acquaintance of visitors and those once incarcerated in those sites.

The financial cost associated with the obliteration of the traumatic associations projected on a site is often seen as an onus on the owner, who is often unaffiliated with or unrelated to the perpetrator. As a result, alternate means of funding for both commemoration and for

demolition are often solicited from context communities. The lucrative qualities of a site are also a fundamental predictor of what tendencies its negative associations will promote. In tight-knit community settings, such as universities, the need to preserve reputation, prevent stigmatization, inhibit a constant awareness of prior violence, and maintain a sense of security lessens the tendency toward demolition. In homogeneous residential contexts, negative associations will impel institution of a rupture if the victim is embraced as a member of the context community and the commemoration thought to communicate a statement on a larger sociocultural issue, as in Megan's Place in Hamilton, New Jersey. Alternatively, if the site is highly visible and the victim written as other by the context community, a lack of effective or immediate decisionmaking about the lifespan of the site arises.

Committee-designed memorials are often overwhelmed by the personal interests of committee members; while the input of survivors and kin ought to be solicited and considered in the design of any commemoration of a violent or traumatic event, such input ought also to be weighed against the input of context communities without personal losses in the event being commemorated. While there is no formula to ensure that the "right" relative proportions of input are taken into account, and while this thesis posits that such "right" relative proportions are nonexistent, the importance of having a public, community memorial seem the work of a unified community rather than an impacted individual or individuals, is paramount to the effectiveness of such a memorial as a means of communication. The function of a memorial as a rupture — a void which urges awareness, action, and non-complaisance — is contingent on both its acknowledgement by the public as a rupture, enhanced by scale, access, and aperture, and on acknowledgement that, prior to its existence as a void, the rupture was typical in its context

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Index

#

2140 Market Street 74-92

A

Adorno, Theodor W. 16

Amstetten, Austria. See Joseph Fritzl Estate

Ariès, Philippe 37

Atrocity

Definition 13

Deployment as Heritage 15

Auschwitz-Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp 23-25

Auschwitz Concentration Camp. See Auschwitz-Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp

B

Baudrillard, Jean 18

Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site 26

C

Castro, Ariel 48

Concretization 43-50

Cornell University 65

Custer Battlefield National Monument. See Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument

D

Demolition 31-41, 117

Designation 27

diller scofidio + renfro 19-21

Disclosure Legislation 38-39

Dunster House 61-68

E

Edward Lawler Jr. 97-100

Empathic Unsettlement 15

F

Foote, Kenneth E. 26-28, 32, 34, 47, 61

Freud, Sigmund 51

G

Genbaku Dome. See Hiroshima Peace Memorial

Genius Loci 119

Gettysburg National Military Site 26

H

Harris, Neil 32–35
Harvard University. See Dunster House
Heritage
 Definition 10
Hiroshima Peace Memorial 24–25
House. See Whiteread, Rachel

I

Independence National Historical Park. See President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a
 New Nation, The

J

Josef Fritzl Estate 43–50

K

Kampusch, Natascha 46–47, 47, 48
Kanka, Megan 83, 119
Kelly/Maiello Architects and Planners 102
KieranTimberlake 63–64
Koolhaas, Rem
 Cronocaos 17

L

Lanza Estate 31–32, 47
Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument 26
Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site 26
Luna, Rafael 28, 84

M

Manzanar National Historic Site 26, 107–108, 114–116, 118
Media 45–49, 61–62, 69
Megan's Place. See Kanka, Megan
Meskell, Lynn 10, 16, 17
Monument
 Definition 27
 Etymology 43
Mors Repentina 36
Mount Auburn Cemetery 36–37

N

National Park Service 26, 97, 100–101, 103–104, 118
Negative Heritage 6
 Definition 10
 Redefinition 11
Newtown, Connecticut. See Sandy Hook Elementary School
New York University 65

O

Obliteration 28, 118
Othering 61-65, 69-70, 117-118

P

Political Correctness 104-105
President's House: Freedom and Slavery in the Making of a New Nation, The 93-106, 118

R

Reconstruction 118
Rectification 27
Riegl, Alois 13
Rural Cemetery Movement 36-37

S

Sanctification 27
Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site 26
Sandy Hook Elementary School 31, 40-42, 47
Secretary of the Interior 93
Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail 26
September 11, 2001 17
Slavery 25-26

T

Teaneck, New Jersey 69-73
Tunbridge, J.E., and Ashworth, G.J. 10, 13, 48

U

Uncanny 51
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 22

W

Washita Battlefield National Historic Site 26
Whiteread, Rachel 51-57

Y

Yale University 64