

Emotional Geographies:
Curating a Relationship Between Grief
Architecture and the Niagara Escarpment

by

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This thesis is dedicated to my family and community, who became one during the loss of someone so special.

In loving memory of Isaac Riehl.
1998-2012

ABSTRACT

Through the creation and development of one's personal story, an individual pursues their beliefs and passions. The life of an individual is intrinsically shaped by the experiences defined by one's place, relationships, and surrounding culture. However, the inherent duality of life and loss is often suppressed in the normalization of the pursuit of notions of happiness.¹ Specifically, this can be experienced upon the loss of a loved one, as one enters a state of grief: a psychological response to bereavement. This can lead to a state of melancholy which is a psychological experience caused by a subjective reaction to the emotional, physical, and cultural processes of bereavement. During grief, the well-being of an individual can deteriorate affecting the body, mind, and spirit. Often, a person in a state of mourning avoids social interaction due to pressing negative thoughts and emotions. Society can foster such unhealthy coping methods by encouraging private or psychological remedies that neglect regional, social, and cultural contexts.² Arguably, dealing with negative emotions in isolation is not a sustainable experience, nor does it support the well-being of an individual. Exploring and understanding why and how people think, and respond to these situations in life has become a growing concern in organized psychology, resulting in an increased dependency on psychiatry.³ Humans are curious and we seem determined to understand ourselves as a species. From this, human experiences and conditions have been scrutinized and the emergence of grief as a topic worthy of psychological study solidified, popularizing the understanding that normal occurrences and situations are part of medicalized psychiatry. The occurrence of grief has transitioned from a natural phenomena to a constructed theory, becoming a pathology to be monitored, managed, and treated by mental health professionals.⁴

KEY WORDS

Grief, Bereavement, Mourning, Loss, Landscape, Niagara Escarpment, Architecture, Empathy, Experience, Senses, Perception, Psychology, Pedagogy, Community, Healing, Hope

Over time, psychologists have attempted to define grief, arguing that grief is a transitory melancholy that affects everyone at some point in their life and that this experience interferes with day to day life, disrupting the ideal.⁵ The categorization of grief has led to the development of active processes that involve intense struggles to give up the emotional attachment to the loss, requiring time and energy on the part of the mourner in an attempt to prevent prolonged social or medical alterations for an individual. As a result, psychologists seek to define the mourning process as they believe that bereavement contravenes the obligatory pursuit of happiness. It is apparent that grief theory has become decontextualized from experiencing one's own emotions and has been completely psychologized.

Having a place to explore the innate emotions of life is thus imperative to sustain the well-being of society. Supporting those disorientated by bereavement requires a shift away from the psychological realm, allowing grief to become an sensorial and experiential process for people to actively navigate together. This thesis proposes a means through which mourners are able to process their grief through a public built form.

An interpretive experience can offer a means to explore an individual's grief by framing it in relation to the vulnerability of the landscape. The Niagara Escarpment is an underlying condition of the human experience that transcends time, boundaries, and culture, forming the construct of human life. However, due to the impact of the human species, this sacred entity is becoming endangered, causing society to collectively grieve its loss. The atmospheres embedded within the Niagara Escarpment can therefore act as a more comprehensive way to engage grieving individuals, aligning with the vivid emotions present in bereavement. Manifesting the thesis' response in relation to the site's atmospheres enables mourners to project, relate, empathize with, and be inspired by the landscape. Perceptions of vulnerability, remembrance, resiliency, and hope embedded within the site embody the emotions of bereavement to establish a therapeutic environment for people to navigate their own narrative. As a result, architecture can be recognized as a pedagogical means to curate grief as a living experience.

Endnotes

- 1 Leeat Granek, "Grief as Pathology: The Evolution of Grief Theory in Psychology From Freud to the Present", *History of Psychology* 13, no. 1 (2010), 46–73.
- 2 Avril Maddrell, "Mapping Grief. A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Spatial Dimensions of Bereavement, Mourning and Remembrance." (Taylor & Francis Online, October 16, 2015), 166-188.
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- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.

THESIS QUESTION

How can architecture with it's unique capacity to coordinate spatial and material experiences, attend to bereavement and redefine new geographies of mourning?

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PART 1

Why is grief and the outlook of emotionally vulnerable individuals so peculiar in contemporary society?

INTRODUCTION

The inherent duality of life and loss is continuously being suppressed.¹ Specifically, this is experienced during the demise of a loved one, as one enters a state of grief. A term defined by Leeat Granek as: a natural psychological response to loss.² As one enters the mourning process, an individual becomes melancholic caused by a subjective reaction to the emotional, physical, and cultural processes of bereavement.³ Society often supports unhealthy coping methods through the promotion of private, and/or psychological, remedies that neglect the regional, social, and cultural contexts of an individual.⁴

Why Grief?

The properties that constitute the varying dynamics of grief engulf a series of intangible reactions to the inherent aspect of life. Mourning is an encompassing sensation that causes mental, physical, and spiritual impairment. Notions of feeling lost, broken, and heavy hearted deter the health of an individual. Physical ramifications such as the loss of energy, sleep, mental capacity, and one's personality can inhibit the ability for mourners to cope with foreign emotional conditions. As a result, mourners attempt to navigate, suppress, or overcome these emotions through subjective coping techniques.

However, grief does not support the prosperous vision of contemporary society, causing grief to become an ailment, or hinderance to success. This causes a mourner to attempt to cure their emotional self before returning to their established life. Yet, unhealthy coping techniques that do not support the entirety of an individual's composition can result in mourners struggling to come to terms with their loss. This struggle then influences the surrounding social and emotional cultures of an

individual, affecting the ecology of a place.

This thesis argues that, dealing with negative emotions in isolation is not sustainable or healthy and does not support the well-being of society. As a response, the thesis places an importance on social and emotional vitality by proposing the creation of empathetic environments that support people experiencing the immense loss felt during bereavement.

The atmospheric presence embedded within nature curates notions of space and place. Built forms are investigated as a response to what defines contemporary grief space. The beneficial relations between an individual and the landscape are expressed to emphasize the therapeutic environments that are vital to manage the conditions of daily life.

Endnotes

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- 4 Ibid.

THE CONSTRUCTED PHENOMENA

Perhaps current negative attitudes towards grief are a result of the mourning process being a hinderance to the utopian pursuit of happiness that contemporary society desires.¹ Yet, embracing one's so-called negative emotions is essential to one's well-being. Typically, psychology has been relied on to explore and understand why and how people respond to loss.² Through research, human experiences and conditions have been scrutinized, resulting in theories that attempt to describe our actions and responses.³ Specifically, the Western ideology of grief has become a theory unto itself. Constituting this theory is a convoluted structure of approaches that seek to give order to the indecipherable.

Theorizing human grief began in the 19th century when mourning was considered a condition of the human spirit or soul and in of itself, not a mental illness.⁴ However, the emergence of grief as a topic for psychological study solidified when Sigmund Freud released his paper *Mourning and Melancholia* in 1917, popularizing the understanding that normal occurrences and situations could be included in the psychological realm.⁵ From the time of his writing, theorists and psychologists alike have reinterpreted Freud's grief model, formulating the contemporary outlook and practice of counselling to remediate the affects of grief.⁶ This has caused grief to be understood solely as a state of the mind, rather than a physical experience.⁷ One of the most common beliefs is that one must mentally overcome grief in order to come to terms with living life without the deceased.⁸ However, the psychological concept of grief and the physical act of grieving as a reaction to the loss of a loved one are inseparable.⁹ As a result, the innate occurrence of grief has transitioned from a natural phenomena, an intrinsic phenomena constituting grief as part of the understanding of

life, to a constructed phenomena, a pathology to be monitored, managed, and treated by mental health professionals.¹⁰

Depicting Grief

Over time, psychologists have attempted to define grief, arguing that grief is a transitory melancholy that affects everyone at some point in their life.¹¹ Professionals state that people need to recover from their state of intense emotionality before returning to normal functioning as quickly as possible, as grief is ultimately an interference with one's sense of happiness.¹² In other words, grief is no longer seen as a natural response, but rather an illness. Such an outlook is supported by theorists such as Erich Lindemann.¹³ For example, the recovery process is most commonly depicted as a series of emotions that one must overcome in order to leave behind the deceased and be able to formulate new attachments that will better sustain one's quality of life.¹⁴ Yet, grief is perhaps also recognized by its intangibility.¹⁵

As explained by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross in her book *On Death and Dying*, the most common depiction of grief theory divides the mourning process into a series of stages that one should identify with.¹⁶ (Figure 01) The Kubler-Ross grief model represents a wave-like, linear path that a mourner will travel, eventually reaching acceptance or, a return to normal life. Subsequently, theorists have continuously built-upon and redefined Kubler-Ross' stage theory.

Stages of Grief



Denial

The first reaction is denial, where the individual believes the outcome of loss is somehow mistaken, or attempts to believe in a false, more preferable reality.

Anger

The individual recognizes that denial cannot continue causing them to become frustrated and express their emotions in volatile ways, often effecting their immediate relations.

Bargaining

The third stage involves the hope that the individual can avoid the cause or effects of grief. Typically, internal or external negotiations are made for the desired result. An individual during this stage is also prepared to make significant compromises to mediate their experience.

Depression

During the fourth stage, the individual becomes hopeless when their desires are not obtained and the weight of the loss fully sets in. In this state, the individual may become silent, melancholic, and refuse social interactions.

Acceptance

The final stage results in the individual embracing the loss or inevitable future. Their emotions return to a stable condition and precede with their life, developing a sense of understanding for their situation.¹⁷

There is, however, no consensus or definitive evidence demonstrating that there are stages of bereavement.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the belief in stages of bereavement aligned with Modernist thought and its emphasis on rationality, reason, functionality, efficiency, and a belief in continuous progress. As such, the understanding of grief as a series of mental stages of progress towards happiness continues to define contemporary Western mourning.¹⁹ The categorization of grief has led to limited processes that involve intense struggles to give up emotional attachment to the loss. This practice requires time and energy on the part of the mourner in their attempt to prevent prolonged social alterations, or medical intervention.²⁰ Grief theory has become decontextualized from the experience and has been psychologized completely in order to obtain the unobtainable cure.²¹ The right to the pursuit of happiness has become a cultural obligation and mourning contravenes this ethic.²²

Indeed, even Freud initially warned that grief should not be considered a disorder and that intervening with a mourner could cause psychological damage.²³ Today, many agree that Western practices of psychologizing grief are problematic. For example there is no protocol to distinguish the normal from the pathological.²⁴ The psychoanalysis of grief continues to fail to define what healthy mourning looks like, creating confusion within the discipline and, thereby, for the mourner.²⁵

Figure 01

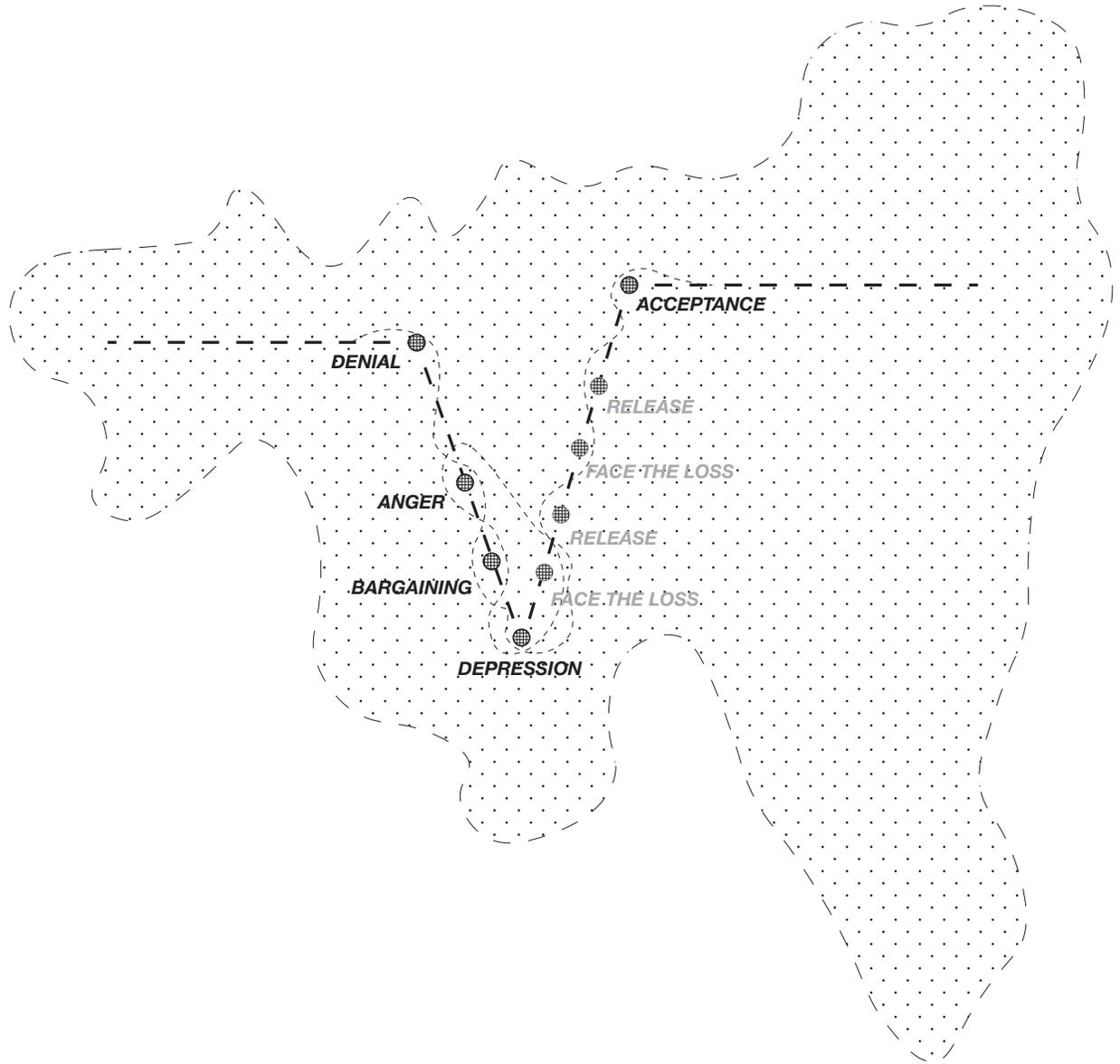
A typical depiction of the grief process by theorists and psychologists is the Kubler-Ross Stage Model. The process represents a series of emotions that a mourner will experience before overcoming their grief.

Emotions cannot be contained nor quantified by a linear path. More appropriately, the experience of grief is better represented by a dynamic shape, emulating a topographic landscape. Therefore, to console a mourner by reaffirming a series of typical emotional or psychological states is insufficient. While each mourner may endure many similar emotions, these experiences are rooted in the intangible and cannot be depicted as an assumed linear path. During a time of emotional vulnerability and disorientation, mourners, I propose, should be exposed to environments that sustain their own unique experience of emotion. The emotional relation between an environment and its user challenges standardized grief theory, rejecting Descartes' outlook of mind-body dualism.²⁶ Descartes describes how mental phenomena, such as grief, are non-physical as the mind and body are distinct and separable.²⁷ Yet, human instinct is determined to form relationships with others, and their physical environments.²⁸ Therefore, it must be understood that phenomenological experiences are intrinsic to human nature and in fact are determined by the concurrence of the body and mind.²⁹ Without engaging one's senses, specifically haptic, emotion is left out of experience as humans are physical and spatial beings.³⁰ A key human aim is to build relationships with others and their physical environments.³¹ During a time of emotional vulnerability and disorientation, mourners should be exposed to environments that sustain their relation to their cultural, social, and physical senses of self.

Figure 02

A more accurate depiction of the experience of grief is a topographic model, representing the complexity of the emotions felt. Overlaying the model on the standardized depiction draws a comparison between the seemingly linear path, to the unexpected reality of bereavement.

If grief theory cannot fully account for the health of mourners, then the grief process must be reimagined as a geomorphic condition that is traversed by each mourner. A landscape in which one is unexpectedly engaged.



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- 8 Leeat Granek, "Grief as Pathology: The Evolution of Grief Theory in Psychology From Freud to the Present", *History of Psychology* 13, no. 1 (2010), 46–73.
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SENSE OF PLACE

The Body

Spatial and material experiences are crucial support for socio-cultural emotions of a mourning individual.¹ The human body is a medium of communication with a direct relationship to spatial arrangements and boundaries. To understand oneself in relation to their surroundings one's body, mind, and emotions are simultaneously engaged. An individual's perception expands and contracts based on their emotions, state of mind, sense of self, social relations, and cultural predispositions.² These perceptions are defined as "bodyscapes" by Setha Low, as one's relationship to the landscape and other people provides memory, morality, and emotion for nurturance and existence.³

A mourner's emotions and memories are influenced by external, material environments.⁴ Therefore, emotion can be curated through movement and material culture.⁵ Using this psychological understanding of design, social spaces can be formed as transitional objects between the inner and outer realities of life, relating one's true self, emotions, and cognition to a sense of place.⁶

The Place

An individual's relation to architecture orients their experience, and understanding of themselves. Architecture demarcates a site as a place, creating meaning through perception of one's surroundings.⁷ The sense of perception as an action integrates visual, corporeal, and vestibular effects into one's own understanding of themselves. However, experience is subjective causing architecture to not only express emotion, but to reflect

one's personal perception back onto themselves. This mirror-like condition reveals architecture as a type of second skin that is parallel to one's emotions. In other words, architecture is the material and emotional expression of the human spirit. People empathetically relate to architecture by simulating the movements, intentions, and values of the design while engaging with the atmospheric qualities, details, and material presence. Empathetic architecture is also able to enhance one's mind, body, and culture through rituals and gestures that influence the perceptual, social, and cultural dimensions of a space and place.⁸ For this reason, introducing dignifying environments for people to develop, experience, grow, and express themselves in will enhance the quality of the built environment.⁹

The common act of self-isolation during bereavement is proof of the inadequate infrastructure available for emotional exploration. Without adequate places to express, navigate, or identify daunting feelings, existing spaces become inappropriately used by people imposing emotional trauma on unsuitable built environments. This is in part due to a shift in the modes of communication deployed by designers. Meaning in architecture depends on its ability to symbolize human presence through the spatial experience of the work, rather than relying alone on the visual presence and forms that the profession is focused on.¹⁰ The phenomena of a place is manifested in tectonics, as a sense of detail explains an environment and depicts its character. The phenomenology of architecture is thus looking at design from within the consciousness of experiencing it. It is meaningless to imagine an occurrence or memory without reference to a locality, indicating the qualities of a place are evidently an integral part of emotional exploration and existence.

The following case studies examine the ways architecture has been designed to engage with emotional experiences of trauma, mourning and loss, and the experience of the body in place.

Figure 03

A reflection pond at the Windhover Contemplation Centre creates a tranquil experience, suggesting for a visitor to reflect on their own well-being.

Figure 04

The seamless connection to nature within the Centre provides a comforting atmosphere to focus on oneself, mitigating distractions of everyday life.

Figure 05

Artist Nathan Oliveira's meditative Windhover series served as a catalyst for the program of the Centre.



Windhover Contemplation Centre

Aidlin Darling Design
Stanford, United States



The *Windhover Contemplation Centre* promotes and inspires personal renewal as a refuge through the connection of culture, landscape, and architecture at Stanford University's campus. The project promotes and inspires personal renewal through natural materials of rammed earth walls, wood surfaces and water. The materials heighten the visitor's sensory experience acoustically, tactilely, and visually while the subtle forms allows the building to aid a user's journey of contemplation, allowing the focus to be on oneself and nature beyond. A series of transitions and progressions assist user's to navigate their own emotions while reflecting on their surroundings. However, the design struggles to engage the user, as the contemplative-type space asks and requires the user to start the conversation between themselves and the space.¹¹





National Memorial for Peace and Justice

MASS Design Group
Montgomery, Alabama, United States

The *National Memorial for Peace and Justice* is a memorial and reminder to the many victims of lynching. The monument by Equal Justice Initiative and MASS Design Group stands as the centerpiece of the memorial, housing a group of 800 pillars that, from a distance, appear to be holding up the roof. Upon one's journey within, the columns are revealed to be suspended from above, rather than supported from below to embody the memorial's purpose. The sense of discovery of the monument represents architecture's ability to stimulate actions and responses from its users. Furthermore, the materiality of the design embodies emotion, depicted in the Corten steel slabs, or "columns", that will rust and *bleed* onto the ground or *cry* alongside the mourners. The design thus proves how architecture defines how an individual perceives and reacts to their environment, by perceiving thoughtful and influential spaces.¹²

Figure 06
When approaching the memorial, the structure appears as a roof supported by 800 pillars.

Figure 07
Upon entering, the columns are revealed to be hanging from the ceiling, representing the lives lost to lynching.





An Occupation of Loss

OMA

New York, New York, United States



The installation that was curated by Taryn Simon and designed in collaboration with the architect Shohei Shigematsu at the Office of Metropolitan Architecture explores grieving rituals from around the world by orchestrating professional mourners from fifteen countries to sit in a half circle of eleven concrete towers. The design of the towers recycles concrete drainage pipes to provide intimate spaces for mourners to inhabit. The form of the structure amplifies the performance, creating a dialogue between mourning rituals and cultures, broadening the definition of mourning beyond the cultural uniqueness of traditions that predate the standardized funerary practices of the world's major organized religions. Visitors during the day are encouraged to sit inside the silos and fill them with their own sounds, allowing oneself to project one's own form of grief onto the architecture, while one's emotions are expressed to others through the instrument-like form.¹³

Figure 08

The installation stands as a series of towering columns from afar.

Figure 09

Upon investigation, the experience becomes much more intimate, between the visitor, the griever and the architecture.



Therme Vals

Peter Zumthor
Vals, Switzerland

Therme Vals is a natural spa by Peter Zumthor that creates a complete sensory experience. The building becomes an extension of the mountain, bridging the gap between nature and human. Zumthor designed the building to trigger sensory reactions and experiences, fully engaging all aspects of the user. The architecture is informed by the way it surrounds the human body with physical presence as a way to experience emotion. To develop an architecture of the senses, the design is comprised of local stone for its inherent sense of place. The therapeutic baths incorporate concepts of darkness and light, reflection, temperature, acoustics, scents, and textures to heighten the experience. The design does not to compete with the body, but rather gives it space in which it can exist. This freeing sense of environment creates a highly sensuous and restorative experience. The meandering layout is a peaceful and pulsating rhythm of space that creates a sense of discovery.¹⁴

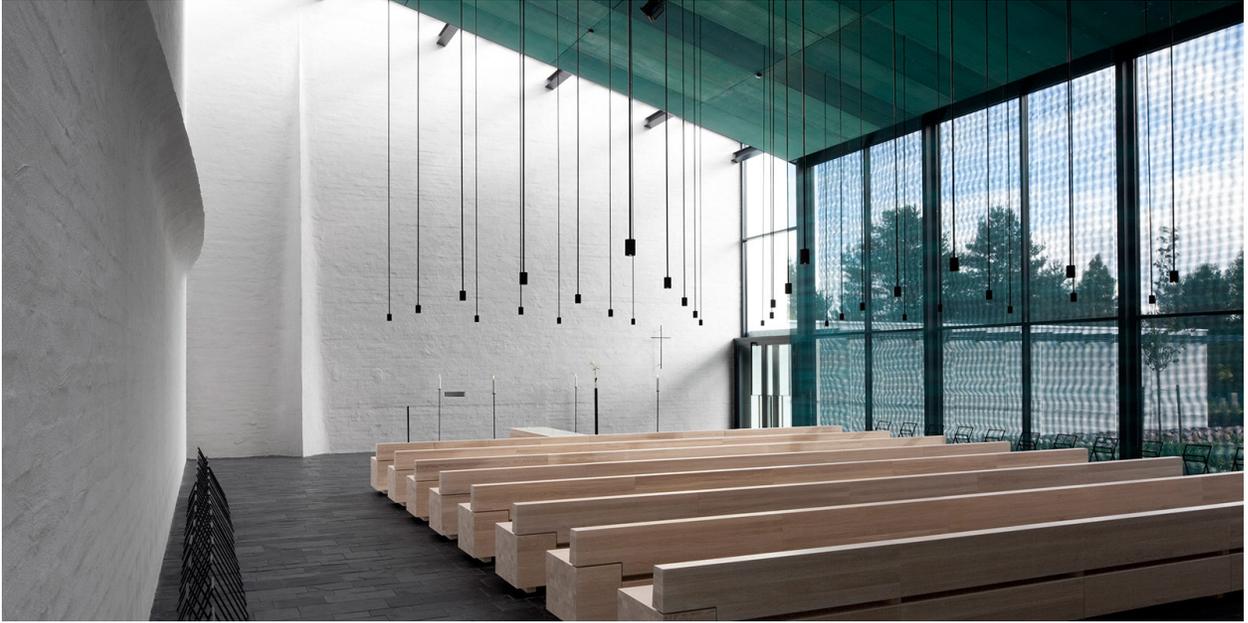
Figure 10

The mystic atmosphere created by the sensual experience of the bath.

Figure 11

The use of local materials grounds the design as a reinterpretation of the local atmosphere. The use and absence of light throughout the design helps guide the user through a sense of wonder and perception.





Polku - Chapel of St. Lawrence

Avanto Architects
Vantaa, Finland



Polku (Path) by Avanto Architects is a funeral chapel that was designed to direct and aid one alongside their journey of grief. The buildings use of natural materials and its awareness of how they react with light seem to mourn alongside the grievors within. The building acts as a route through a series of sacral spaces, punctuated by intermediate rooms that allow for one to express their grief and emotion before continuing on. The scale of the church was also carefully considered to aid the experience by providing three chapels of varying size, allowing the building to adapt to the scale of the function within. The identity of place is echoed in the craft of the design that utilizes local materials, forms, and construction techniques. The contrasting materials and light within provide a strong sense of atmosphere that reflects the raw emotion of time and place.¹⁵

Figure 12

The primary space in the chapel creates a dynamic atmosphere for mourners when light interacts with the different vernacular materials.

Figure 13

Designing with light is seen throughout the design, such as when the passing of time is witnessed of light dancing across the exterior reflecting pond.



Mourning House

Pascal Arquitectos
Mexico City, Mexico

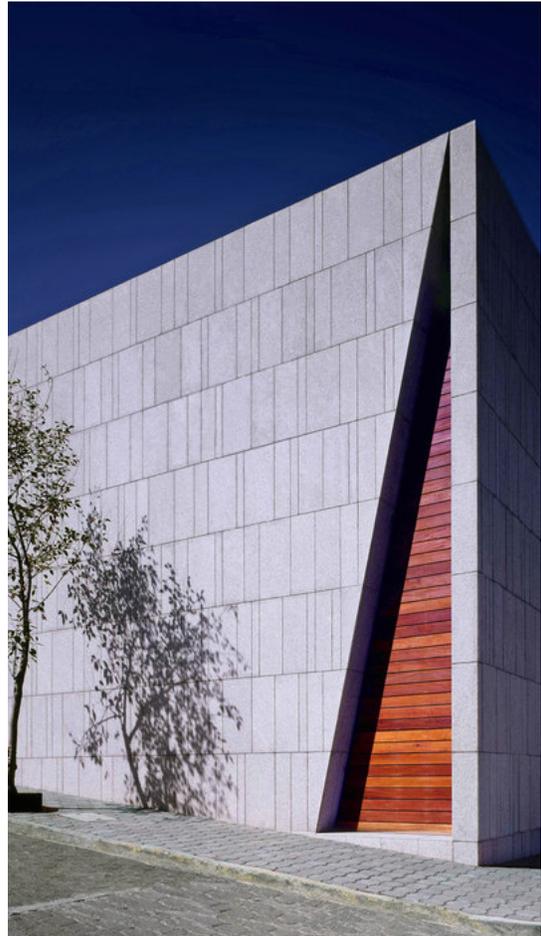
Pascal Arquitectos designed the *Mourning House* as a peaceful, introverted space to live and meditate in. The design appears as an opaque, monolithic mass of irregular blocks, only interrupted by the 30' tall wooden door that leads to a darkened entry foyer. The same granite cladding continues through the interior to provide a neutral atmosphere. The core of the building is a large meditation room that incorporates a surrounding wooden bench. Adjacent to the meditation room is a courtyard that acts as the source of light in an otherwise windowless space and acts as an additional outdoor contemplation area. The simplicity of the design desired to inform a sense of clarity and atmosphere for the mourner, but the void-like structure instead creates a lifeless atmosphere. The design relies too heavily on a mourner to bring life to the space, resulting in a space that reveals what harm an unsuccessful building can do to a vulnerable individual.¹⁶

Figure 14

The interior of the space, though simply designed to aid ones concentration and meditation, becomes a lifeless space making it difficult to relate to.

Figure 15

The exterior of the building appears as a monolithic mass. However, the lack of character could possibly deter a user or negatively affect the user's experience.





Funeral Home and Garden in Pinoso

Cor Asociados Arquitectos
Pinoso, Alicante, Spain



The funeral home was designed to become a memorable place where sensitive emotions are controlled. Located in a small town consisting of immigrants from different cultures and traditions, the layout the building generates a landscape buffer that establishes itself as the “center” of the public domain. Formally, the building is broken through a series of interconnected beams and cantilevers that free the limits and joints of any structural elements. The interior is inversely subtle when compared to the exterior, further soothing users through its calming simplicity. The spaces transition from most public to private, each having a direct relationship with the exterior through one of the five courtyards, which creates different views and feelings in each room. Further designing through parameters like sound, temperature, light, humidity, privacy, and the relationship with nature took great importance to develop comforting atmospheres for the vulnerable building users.¹⁷

Figure 16

The design of the interior is visually free from an architectural presence to provide a strong relation to the exterior landscape.

Figure 17

The design of the funeral home is a series of interconnected spaces that follow the topography, forming a series of inner courtyards and private spaces.



Ani Nii Shobo

Sandra Iturriaga, Samuel Bravo
Pucallpa, Peru

Ani Nii Shobo, a big house of the jungle in the Shipibo language, is a healing centre that shares traditional ways of knowing and healing with visitors. The project aims to work with shamanism by using local food, medicines, and a sense of community to develop contact with ancient wisdom. The complex incorporates a series of visitor cabins, a volunteer house, a house of ceremonies (longhouse), and the central *Ani Nii Shobo*: a collective dining room. The vernacular forms and programs act as a place to heal oneself simultaneously with the Earth. Upon arrival, visitors of the centre assist in acts of service, replanting the surrounding forest alongside healers, forming a sense of remedy. The design was originally placed in an area with no trees with the intent for mourners to restore the surrounding forest, allowing man and nature to grow in unison. Therefore, the design is less about its aesthetic qualities, but about the program, people, and atmosphere it supports.¹⁸

Figure 18

The scale of the complex within the landscape portrays the respect and importance of the environment within the healing experience.

Figure 19

Simple forms and honest materials develop spaces that highlight the experience of community and the exterior landscape.





Maggie's Oxford

Wilkinson Eyre Architects
Oxford, England



Maggie's Centre Oxford is an uplifting place that offers practical, social, and emotional help to anyone affected by cancer. The building that floats amongst the trees was intended to create a space that felt warm and friendly for people in need. A strong relationship between the internal spaces and the natural surroundings offers views and light from every room, creating a sympathetic and caring retreat. The raised design treads lightly on the sloped landscape beneath, while its twisted form fits among the trees. As a result, internal spaces are full of movement that allow visitors to escape visually into the landscape for natural support and consolation. The design is composed of three wings emanating from a central communal kitchen and dining space, a core to all *Maggie's Centres*, providing a welcoming, thoughtful space that includes intimate areas for emotional support, relaxation, and communal spaces that enhance one's well-being and sense of community.¹⁹

Figure 20

The Centre floats among the trees to respect the landscape below and to provide opportunities for mourner's to heal within the atmosphere of the forest.

Figure 21

The welcoming interior provides spaces to eat, relax, and converse among the landscape.



Crematorium Siesegem

KAA Architecten
Aalst, Belgium

The modernist *Crematorium Siesegem* is focused on supporting the complicated act of mourning. The grand and solemn building encourages contemplation among its visitors, allowing the emotions of processing death to become central to the design. The simple design is defined by soaring ceilings and its brute exterior, allowing the mass and materiality to establish a raw atmosphere as a reflection of the surrounding environment. The double-height ceilings allow for the space to feel airy, yet sombre while serving to guide the visitor's experience. The humanity of its visitors is supported by the two ceremony halls. The restrained material and colour choices allow the architecture to recede into the background, providing a space in which families can gather to eat, connect and celebrate the departed, connecting people to one another and the landscape. These connections offer a counterweight to the intensity experienced by the bereaved.²⁰

Figure 22

The soaring scale of the building curate the mass and materiality to establish a raw atmosphere as a reflection of the surrounding environment.

Figure 23

The brute material palette enables contemplation while integrating within the surrounding landscape.



Interacting with a space engages one's behavioural, incorporeal, and psychological processes. Behavioural processes encompass one's physical engagement to their surroundings. Incorporeal processes encompass the non-physical, or intangible understandings of an experience that engage one's soul or spirit. Psychological processes encompasses the mental and emotional processes of an individual.²¹ All three processes combined constitute how an individual relates to an experience and place. A case study analysis was created to illustrate how current built spaces in society compare in how they engage the totality of a grieving individual. The resulting amorphous form represents the dynamic and permeable relations between an individual and their surroundings. The mapping analysis makes it apparent that current built forms do not fully sustain emotional experiences by not engaging all three emotional processes. (Figure 24)

The selected case studies differed in location, program, scale and form to determine existing themes that translate to successful grief architecture, but reveal that there are no recurring architectural typologies to support the entirety of a grieving individual. This is seen in the contrasting engagement of spaces. The standard counselling office is not designed to engage the behaviour or incorporeal processes of an individual, but rather, counselling environments are primarily designed to engage psychological processes. On the other hand, spaces such as bath-houses, healing lodges, chapels, and memorials are contemplative and often physically engaging through notions of sequence and form. These types of spaces, though not specific for grief, encompass both behavioural and incorporeal processes which are vital attributes and atmospheres that are not present in the likes of counselling offices, the so-called standard grief environment.

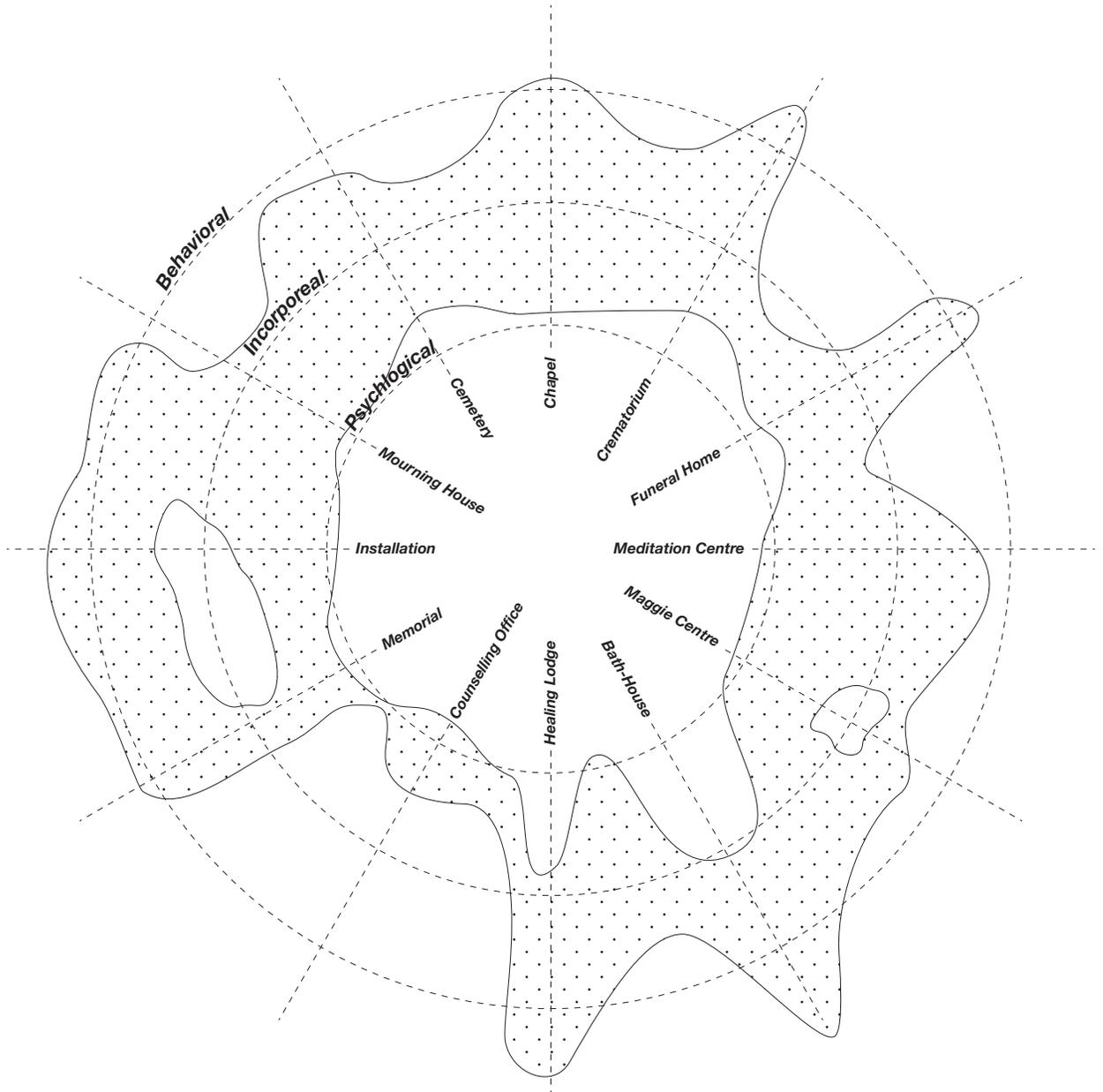
Emotional atmospheres developed through a concentrated exploration of materiality, as seen in *Therme Vals*, *Mourning House*, *Chapel of St. Lawrence*, or *Crematorium Siesegem*, exemplify the emotive power of dynamic environments. The expression of material exploration stimulates all of one's senses resulting in an environment that engages one's psychological and behavioural processes. Incorporeal experiences are then curated through the simultaneous engagement of one's body and mind. However, not all of the spaces convey their intended therapeutic qualities as the lack of programmatic or material engagement in the *Mourning House* hinders the intended atmosphere. Alternatively, strong connections to the surrounding landscape capture natural emotive qualities. This is reiterated by each case study establishing a strong sense of place except for the *Mourning House*, which intended to distance the internal environment from the outside landscape.

Another fundamental quality of the analysis revealed spaces that involved the user by requiring them to actively move and engage with the space developed interpretable and dynamic experiences. The transitions through varying environments in *Therme Vals* and the focus on therapeutic actions within *Anni Nii Nobo* provided users unique experiences when compared to the static programs of the *Windhover Contemplation Centre* or *Mourning House*. These static designs seem to limit how an individual navigates their own grief by separating the emotions of one's mind from their spatial consciousness.

Figure 24

Comparing the Physical, Incorporeal, and Behavioural properties of existing grief architecture reveals gaps in the constructs of an individual that are not being properly supported. This concludes that no current grief typology successfully supports the totality of a mourning individual.

The final underlying quality of the successful projects was a strong social presence that established a sense of community for individuals in vulnerable mental states. Either communal experiences as in the *Chapel of St. Lawrence*, *Crematorium*



Siesegem, and *Funeral Home and Garden in Pinoso*, or independent experiences in public environments like the *National Memorial for Peace and Justice*, *An Occupation of Loss* and *Maggie Centre* establish communal atmospheres for people to relate in times of need.

Each study revealed successful and non-successful attributes on how to sustain therapeutic environments for grieving individuals. Despite emotional moments within the built environment, architecture broadly fails to engage the diverse needs of mourning individuals, especially the physicality of the grief process. No current built form successfully supports the mental, physical, and emotional processes of a grieving individual, but rather only addresses a portion of what a vulnerable individual requires. Accordingly, the body is a medium of communication with a direct relationship to spatial arrangements and social structures.²² The architectural notions of atmospheres, sensory modalities, and therapeutic environments inform a design response to redefine how people navigate the landscape of bereavement, better sustaining the inherent qualities of life.²³ Architectural notions of material presence, landscape, and programmatic sequences prove successful methods to engage the behavioural processes of vulnerable people, while unique design details are able to provide atmospheric spaces for mourners to engage, reflect, and explore the psychological and incorporeal processes of bereavement.

Endnotes

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SENSE OF SELF

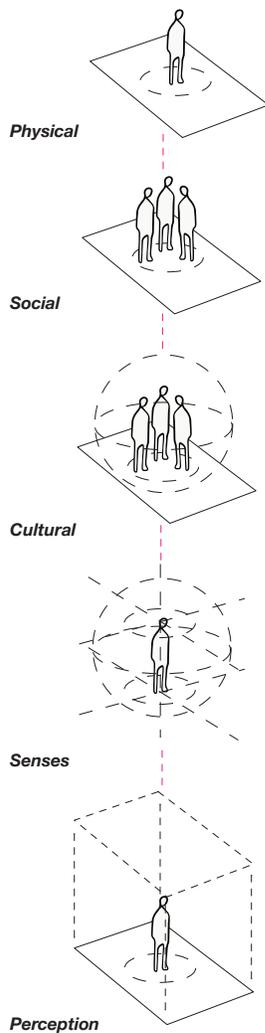
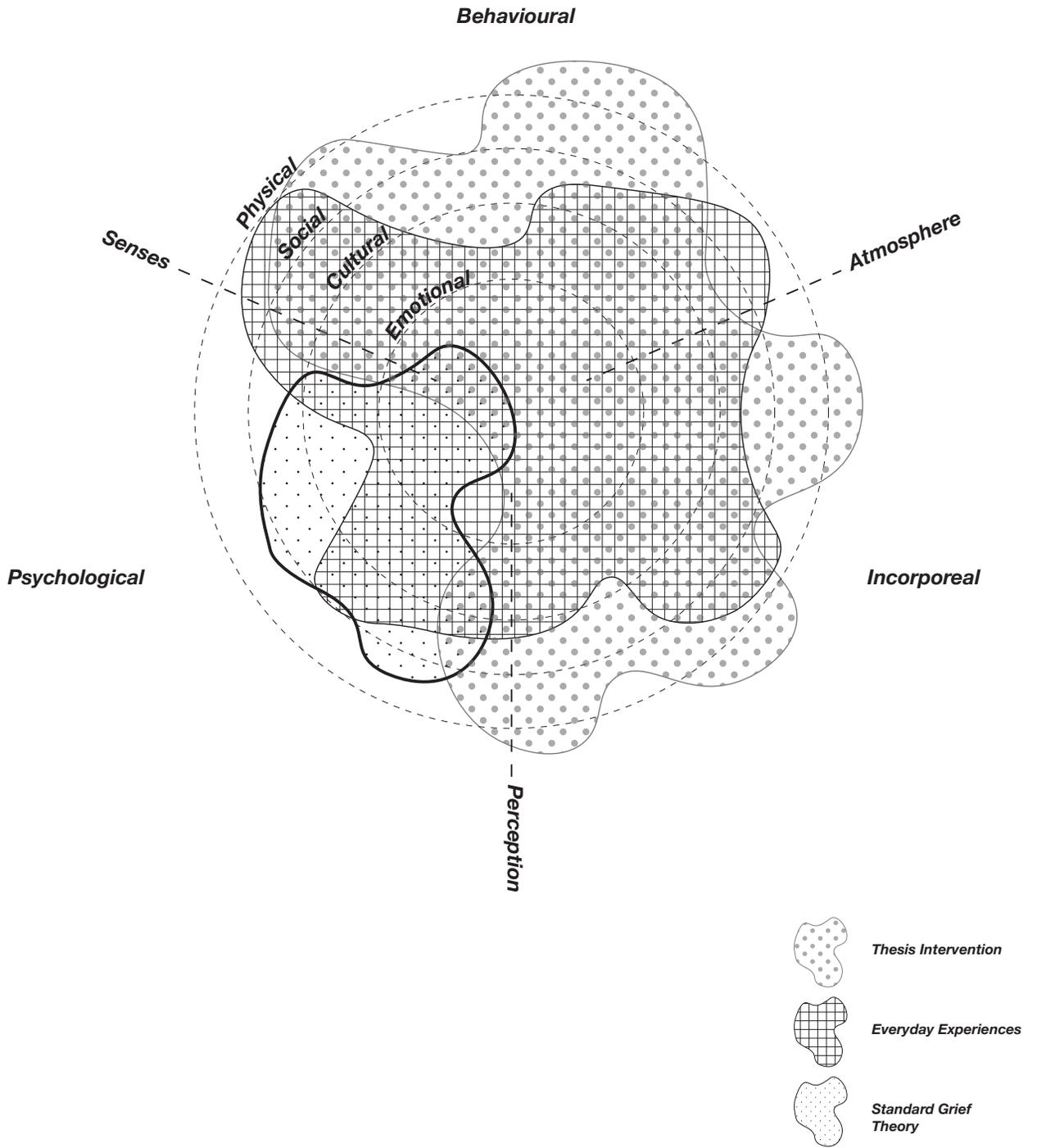


Figure 25
A series of diagram's depicting the implications of an individual during the grieving process.

Figure 26
A map of the theoretical construct of "self". The typical grief theory is primarily a psychological concept while everyday life consists of behavioural and incorporeal implications. Thus, the thesis will provide an immersive experience in which grief theory cannot.

Understanding the properties of an individual's composition is therefore vital in order to develop emotional-affective and therapeutic environments. Architecture encompasses the daily lives and functions of society, intrinsically forming an individual's identity based on their relationship to their physical, social, and cultural settings.¹ These relationships are registered through the body's primary senses, formulating the perception between the body and each type of spatial setting.² The ontology of the human body refers to the relationship between a subject and an object, and is dependent on local knowledge, circumstances, social relations, and cultural principles/practices.³ It is this ontological relationship that manifests into one's sense of awareness. However, these common relations fail to do justice to the complexities of an individual, as humans are emotional entities. It is this intangible emotional self that is often disregarded in society. Therefore, a sense of place must be redefined through a series of relations between the physical, social, cultural, and emotional senses that constitute oneself. It is these individual relations that then begin to establish the psychological, behavioural, and incorporeal understandings of grief.

To better understand the relationships between a mourner and grief, a cognitive map was created to depict how the ontology of an individual engages the emotions of everyday life. (Figure 26) The behavioural, psychological and incorporeal processes of a therapeutic space are engaged through one's senses, perception and atmospheric awareness. Specifically, one's senses engage the relation between psychological and behavioural processes. Atmospheric awareness engages the relation between the behavioural and incorporeal processes, while one's perception engages the incorporeal and psychological process of oneself.



These engagements though, are also dependent on the unique physical, social, cultural, and emotional constructs of a mourner. Therefore, these constructs of a mourner are divided by one's senses, perception and atmospheric awareness to distinguish the primary psychological, behavioural, and incorporeal relations of oneself.

Grief theory primarily focuses on the social, cultural, and emotional aspects of the psychological conditions of grief, excluding the physical and incorporeal processes of bereavement. Though, the experience of everyday life consists of a series of dynamic relations and process that engage the totality of oneself depending on one's state of mind, activities, and surroundings. This is depicted through the amorphous forms of the map that signify the indefinite relations and experiences of an individual. However, the behavioural and incorporeal processes of oneself are not supported by contemporary grief practices causing grief to often become a subconscious state. The built environment has therefore become disconnected from its users as a venue for bereavement. As an effect, society is in need of new ways to reconnect with their emotional selves. While design cannot insist a user to experience grief in a specific way, this thesis proposes how design can initiate a conversation between an individual and their sense of self in relation to their surrounding contexts. Through this relationship, users can experience environments that inspire new avenues to their emotional selves, developing connections between the behavioural, psychological, and incorporeal processes of bereavement.

Importantly then, transitional objects can be formulated between the inner and outer realities of life, relating emotions

and cognition to a sense of place, by defining an experience where intertwined corporeal and psychological processes occur.^{4 5} Architecture can thus be understood and designed as the material support for the grief process.⁶ A place where one can connect, reflect, and engage themselves in order to better understand their own emotions.⁷ Bereavement is a cognitive, incorporeal, and physical process that entails immersive, spatial, and material experiences that are irregular, thereby asking individuals to experience themselves and places in new ways.

Emotional geographies depict the emotional and ontological flux that one experiences during the mourning process.⁸ These geographies are framed by a series of significant spaces and practices in relation to one's emotions.⁹ Thus, therapeutic environments are not just about what they are, but more importantly, where they are. The relation between an individual and the natural landscape is the coexistence of many possible meanings.¹⁰ The perceptible and imperceptible qualities of the natural landscape can be understood to embody the spaces and spatial relations of one's inner emotional geography. Architecture in its capacity to take nature and reimagine it in a new way can mediate and can enhance this experience.

Endnotes

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PART 2

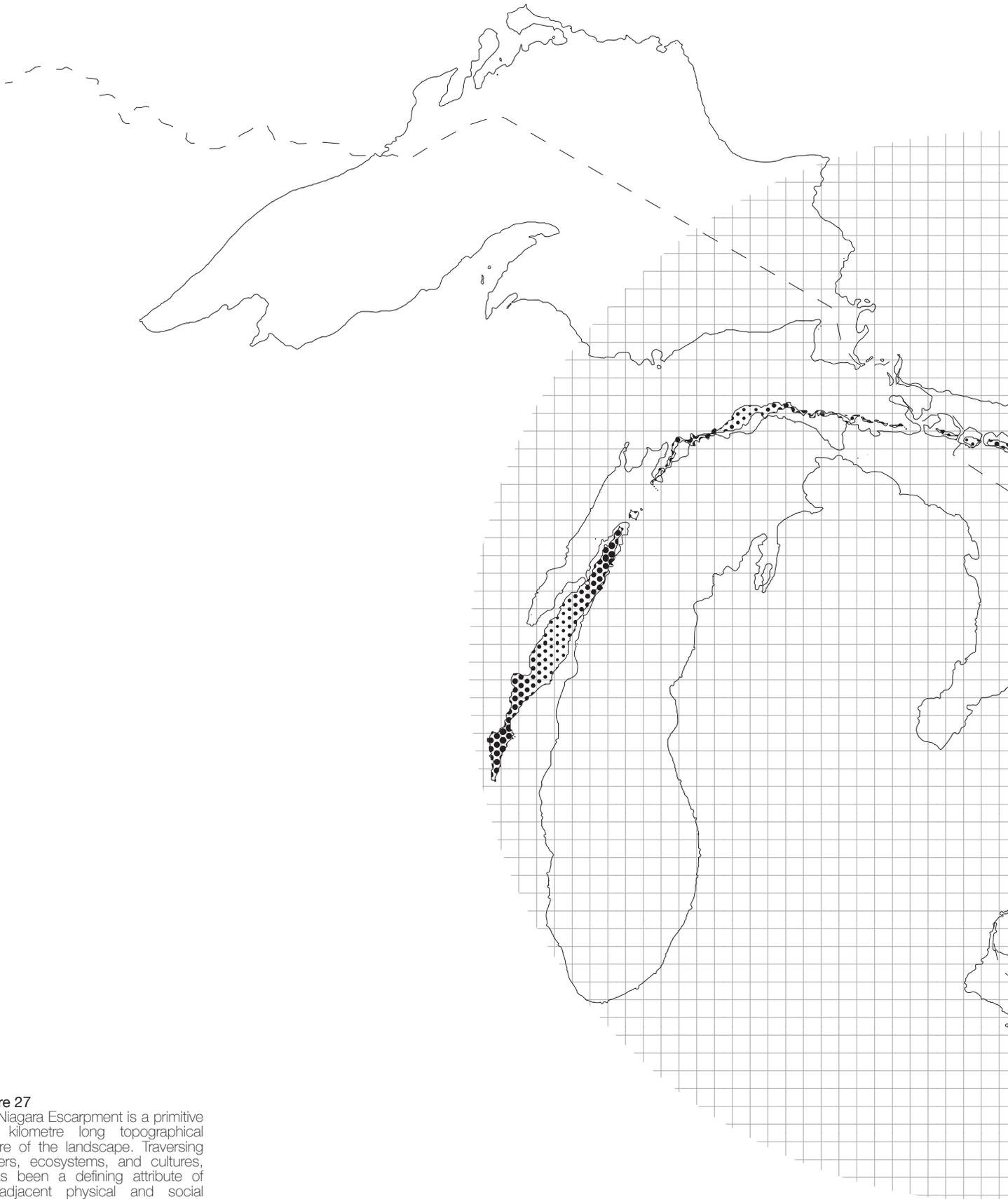


Figure 27
The Niagara Escarpment is a primitive 800 kilometre long topographical feature of the landscape. Traversing borders, ecosystems, and cultures, it has been a defining attribute of its adjacent physical and social landscapes.

Existing Conditions



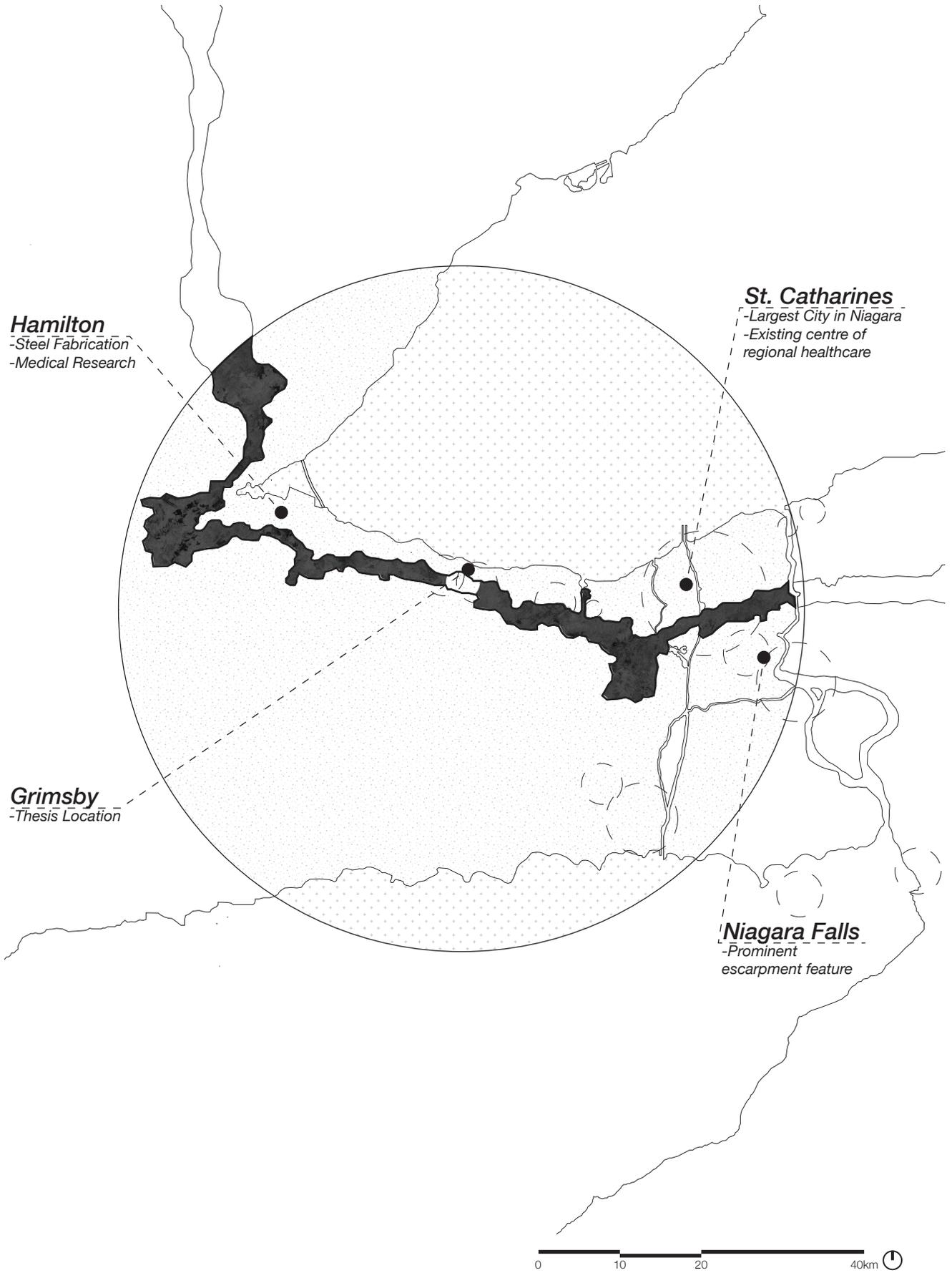
EXISTING CONDITIONS

Physical

The Niagara Escarpment, can be seen as a physical embodiment of the intense interruption that grief brings to one's life. The 800 kilometre long cliff face is a product of the unequal erosion of 450 million year old layers of differing sedimentary rock, formed from deposits that were washed into the Michigan basin of an ancient shallow sea.¹ The escarpment now traverses the borders between New York, Ontario, Michigan and Wisconsin, defining it's surrounding regions and contexts.² The specific landscape has historically served as a means of way-finding, protection, travel, a source of power, agriculture, and recreation for more than 10,000 years.³ However, the emotive qualities of the landscape are increasingly becoming overlooked within contemporary society. In this thesis, the physical qualities of the site are explored for the emotional conditions that it embodies, as a result of this natural change in topography emulating the obtrusive reality of the grief process. Upon entering bereavement, one is brought to the edge. The edge of their sanity, of their reality, and of their understandings of the world that they have grown to understand. The site then provides what grief theory does not, which is an atmosphere that embodies, reflects, and inhabits the emotions felt during bereavement. The powerful characteristics of the natural landscape enable opportunities for individuals to figuratively navigate the landscape of grief. In particular, the dynamics of Beamer Memorial Park in Grimsby, Ontario encompass sensory-rich environments created by the escarpment landscape. Overlooking the Town of Grimsby, the historical setting was once the site of a sawmill powered by water from the creek and the homestead of early Grimsby settlers, John and Anna Beamer.⁴ Currently, the site is a

Figure 28
Context Plan of the Niagara Region reveals the division by the Escarpment, becoming a central condition to everyday life.

Existing Conditions

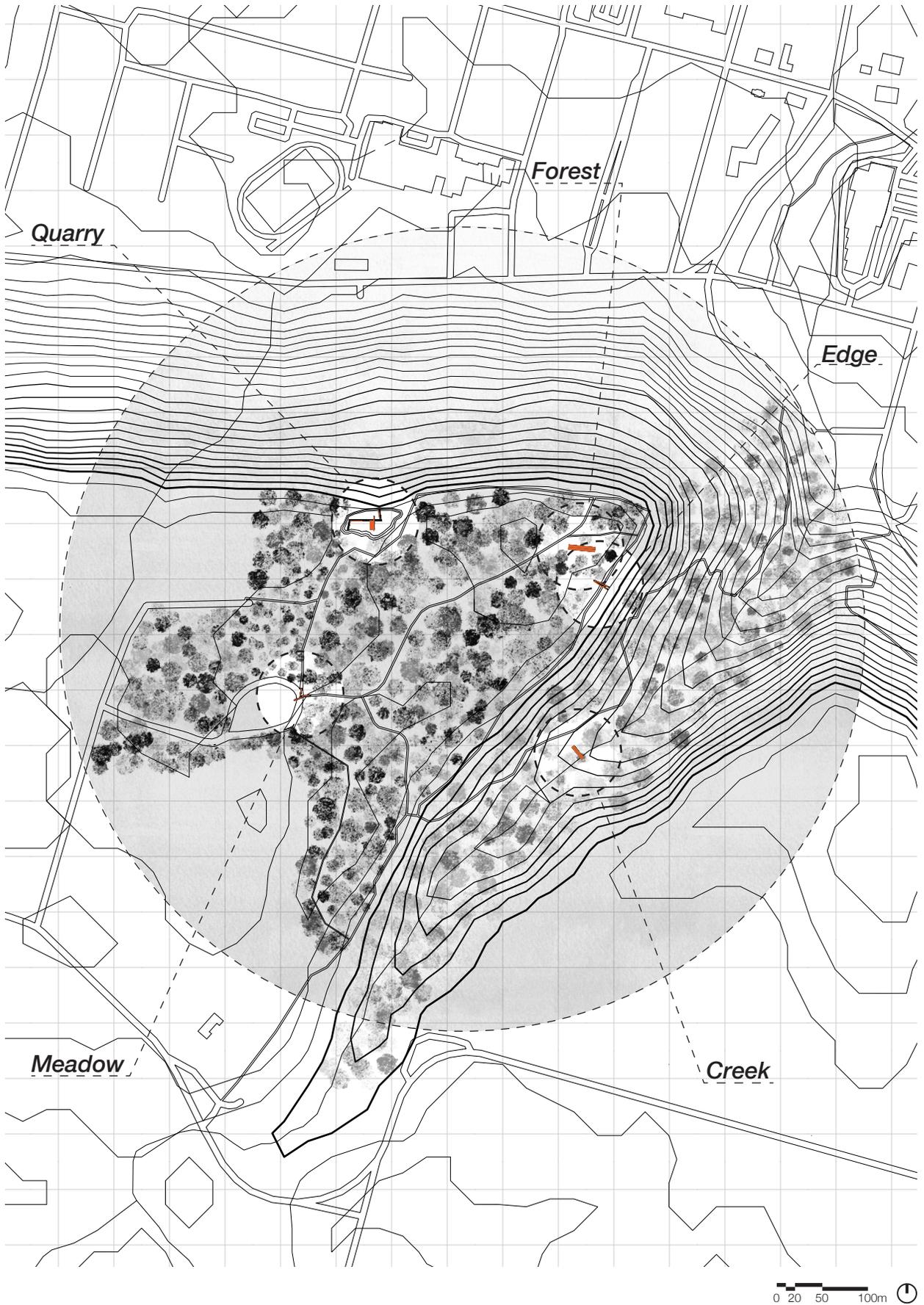


portion of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve and is comprised of five primary conditions that constitute the overall experience visitors engage with: the meadow, the creek, the edge, the forest and the quarry.

A visitor enters the site through a forest that acts as a natural buffer from the urban environment. Thus, one is immediately engaged with the atmospheric presence of the site. The initial path through the forest leads one to discover the circular meadow that has been carved out of the woodland. The sudden change in environment engages one's sense of awareness and requires one to select a route across the exposed terrain. A series of paths are located on the adjacent side of the meadow that lead back into the forest, leading visitors to key features of the site. The first path leads to an abandoned 19th century limestone quarry along the escarpments edge. Initially appearing as a desolate 3 metre deep, 15 metre by 80 metre pit, the space becomes a resilient ecosystem that has adapted to the sites new soil conditions upon entering the site. A narrow crevice along the face of the quarry from the extraction process then reveals a panoramic view of the Town of Grimsby and adjacent Lake Ontario. The second path brings one to the pinnacle of the escarpments edge condition, overlooking the Niagara Region and the 40 Mile Creek Valley. The third path directs a visitor towards a set of steps that traverse the escarpment to the valley below. Here they would encounter the unique forest environment that is interspersed with boulders that signify the glacial history of the site. The path meanders parallel to the 40 Mile Creek that flows through the valley into Lake Ontario. A visitor can continue to follow the path through the valley towards Grimsby, or venture back towards the escarpment.

Figure 29
The Site Plan depicts how one is able to traverse the site along a series of path's while experiencing various emotional conditions.

Existing Conditions



Emotional

Navigating the conditions of the site revolves around a sense of discovery and assessment. Through these experiences, a visitor is required to carefully engage each of their senses to manoeuvre and process their relation to the physical terrain. Simultaneously, the act of discovering and orientating themselves in the natural environment activates their cognitive engagement to a sense of place. Depending on an individual's state of mind, emotion, and cultural predispositions, their perceptions of the site change providing the opportunity of polyvalent atmospheres.⁵ Unique interpretations of the site reflect whichever state of mind the user is in. In a state of grief, the visitor could perceive the natural existing atmospheres of the site in a way that contextualize loss in the natural environment. Therefore, the compelling conditions of the escarpment create opportunities for individual sense-making through one's own relation of the natural environment. Having a place to reassess and physically engage with emotions is imperative to sustain the well-being of society. Supporting those disorientated by bereavement and trauma requires a shift in understandings of grief away from the psychological realm, allowing it to become a process through which people can actively navigate and connect to. This thesis thus proposes ways in which mourners are able to translate their grief through built form.

The role of architecture is to curate heightened experiences of the landscape by emphasizing the figurative and metaphorical emotions that are embedded in the site. It is this experiential relationship that establishes relational spaces, emotional-affective geographies, and therapeutic environments.

Figure 30
Looking down the Escarpment from
Beamer Memorial Park.

Existing Conditions



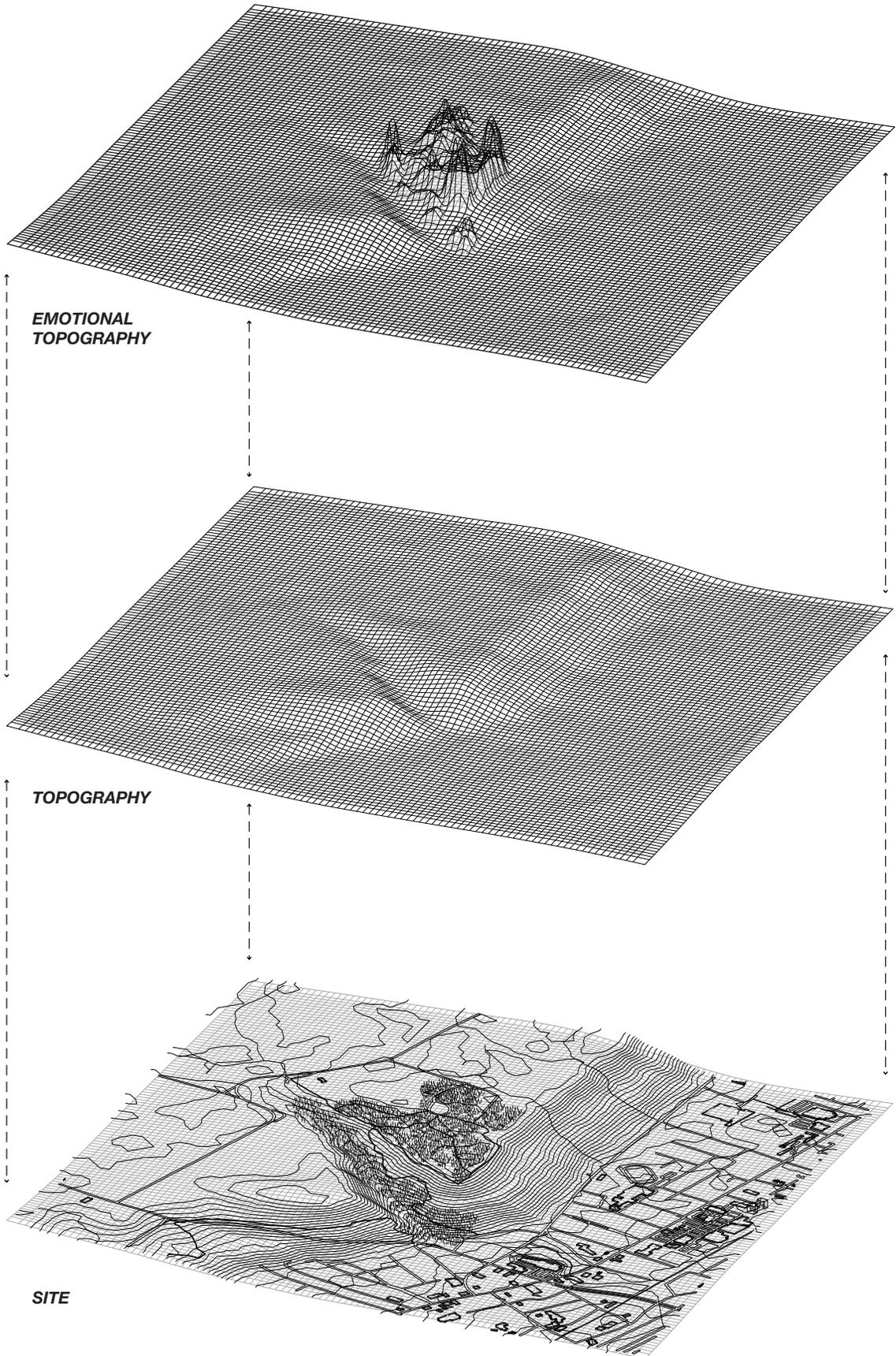
Architecture becomes a medium to manifest relationships between the individual, the collective, and the psychological constructs of place. A focus on empathetic architecture will develop a typology that will fill the emotional void that is present in the built environment. The designs will encompass sensory modalities that create meaningful experiences, promoting positive effects and behaviours during emotional vulnerability.

An interpretive experience can be created as a solution that frames an individual's grief through their experience of the vulnerability of the natural landscape. The environment defines and encompasses an individual's sense of life as it serves as a means of protection, food, recreation, and beauty. However, the emotive qualities of the landscape are increasingly becoming overlooked within contemporary society as land is now seen as a commodity. Due to human impact, this sacred entity is becoming endangered, causing society to grieve its loss as a homogenous response.⁶ This collective sense of grief can therefore act as a comprehensible way to engage grieving individuals that aligns to the vivid emotional atmospheres present in bereavement.

Relating the navigation of grief to a physical sense of place enables reciprocal support between the vulnerability of mourners and the landscape. The act of mourners navigating the site in a state of grief enhances the meaning of the landscape with a sense of newfound purpose, consequently ensuring the importance of the site is cared for and protected.

Figure 31
The topography of the site in relation to its context was reimagined to reflect the emotional topography experienced in the landscape.

Existing Conditions



Endnotes

- 1 Niagara Escarpment Commission, "Geology", Ontario's Niagara Escarpment - Geology, retrieved June 28, 2020, <https://www.escarpment.org/NiagaraEscarpment/Environment/Geology>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 "About The Escarpment." Niagara Escarpment Foundation. Retrieved June 29, 2020. <https://nefoundation.ca/about-the-escarpment/>.
- 4 Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, "Beamer Memorial." Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, retrieved June 28, 2020, <https://npca.ca/parks/beamer-memorial>.
- 5 Setha Low, "Embodied Space" in *Spatializing Culture: the Ethnography of Space and Place*, (London: Routledge, 2017), 94-118.
- 6 Ashlee Cunsolo and Karen Landman, *Mourning Nature: Hope at the Heart of Ecological Loss and Grief*, (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 170.

PART 3

METHODOLOGY

Emotion

Illustrating and documenting the experience of the site was imperative to develop an integrated architectural response. A series of sketches depict the physical and atmospheric conditions encountered during multiple site explorations. A site parti portrays the relationship between each heightened moment in relation to the journey taken. The process of sketching captured the unquantifiable physical and emotional notions of the site, expressing the scale of each experience of the site in relation to oneself.

Supplementary expressive drawings were then developed to interpret the intangible presence of the landscape that defined the psychological and incorporeal experiences of the journey. Each drawing uses notions of light, shadow, sound, movement, and scale to depict the heightened moments of the five primary site conditions. The development of the artistic expressions initiated an interpretive emotional drawing style that engages a response from the viewer, furthering the emotional responses to the thesis.

Ritual

To initiate a dialogue between a mourner and the landscape the exploration of a lantern was pursued as an intimate way to engage an individual's journey across the Niagara Escarpment. It is this experience upon which the thesis is framed, assisting a mourner through the psycho-geographies of grief by navigating the raw atmospheres present in the natural environment. Architecture's role is thus not to create emotional atmospheres,

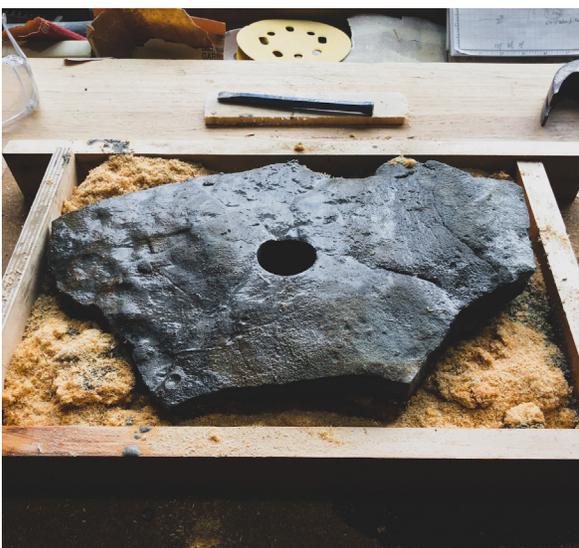
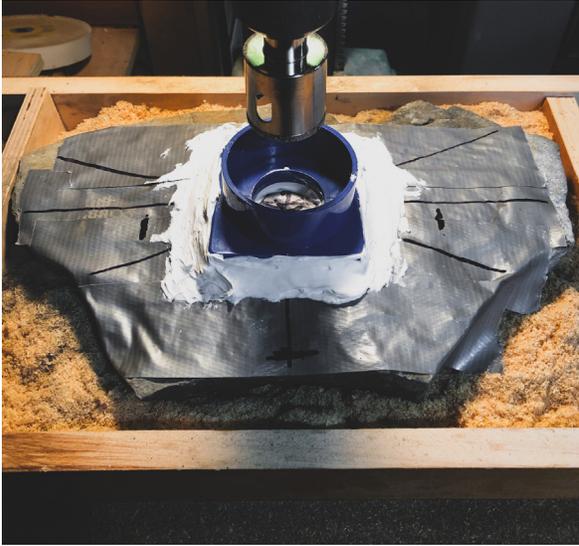
but to accentuate the natural terrain and emotional atmospheres present in the surrounding landscape. The notion of a ritual became a way to engage a visitor's experience of the site. Performing a grief ritual is a common cultural practice that provides mourners opportunities to concentrate their emotional and cognitive processes. Typical rituals are composed of repeated actions or sequences in order to develop a recurring sensation. However, the task for this thesis was to establish a site specific ritual that would be defined by each users experience. Accordingly, the design of a lantern assists mourners to individually engage with the physical environment. The ritual constitutes the use of the lantern through the acts of lighting, carrying and protecting the artifact. The lantern manifests the notion of navigating emotional geographies through the concepts of time, vulnerability, and ceremony.

The design of the lantern began with understanding the presence of the landscape at the human scale. The parti originated as the act of carrying the spirit of a loved one that was supported by the essence of the landscape. The fundamental quality of the site is the varying scales of stone that comprise the escarpment topography. Accordingly, the base of the lantern is comprised of shale from the quarry within the site. One lights a small candle that then accompanies their physical and emotional journeys. The construction of the lantern consists of local wood and stone to express the physical relationships that can begin to manifest into architectural responses. One's interaction with the artifact becomes symbolic of protecting the vulnerability of the environment and one's own emotions by carrying a thin segment of the escarpments shale, not by a handle above, but from below. The act of cupping one's hands below the artifact represents the intimate relation between the

subject and object. To comfortably carry the fragment of the site, a convex wooden handle is crafted from native Balsam Fir and carefully inserted into the shale. The inverted dome-like handle provides an inviting embrace, while requiring cautious concentration during the voyage to maintain steadiness. When the lantern is not in use the handle results in the object being unbalanced to reflect the artifacts reliance on its user and the unstable emotions of grief. A candle is placed on top of the lantern to demarcate a more visual passing of time through the melting of the wax. The melted wax would then flow across the natural contours of the stone to demarcate the navigation of a new environment. The soft light from the candle represents the emotional vulnerability of the user while also providing a source of comfort and direction. The design symbolizes the weight of grief on one's life through the weight of the stone while the lack of covering depicts the close relationship between the bearer and natural elements through the exposed flame.

The Remembrance Lantern culminates the sacred act of a grieving individual supporting the remembrance of their loved one. The use of the lantern thus becomes ritualistic and a signifier of mourning to other members of the public. The artifact entails the social act of grieving that is currently unaccounted for in contemporary society. The ritual of lighting and carrying one's lantern manifests one's inner emotional journey while enabling their experience to indicate a message to other members of the community. It is this transformative ritual that connects the emotions of seemingly separate journeys of grief between one another and the site as a whole.

Figure 32
Exploring the characteristics and relationships between the materials of the site produced the qualities of the *Remembrance Lantern*.



Material Presence

Translating the significance of the artifact into an architectural response produces a substantial expression of mourning. The composition of the lantern demonstrates how material presence is able to embody the emotions of the site in relation to the mourner. The tactile relationship between the artifact and the site engages one's senses in relation to the expression of the landscape. Successful attributes from the artifact will then be manifested into the final designs that accentuate the inherent properties of each material while physically expressing the existing geographic atmospheres.

The presence of stone establishes the dynamic atmospheres of the escarpment. Yet, the theme of brokenness continuously resonates throughout the site. Despite the escarpment being a powerful entity, the glacial history of the site has left fragments of rock dispersed throughout the landscape. Impacts of modern extraction have then emphasized this idea of vulnerability through the quarry. Therefore, the brokenness of grief can be manifested through the fragmentation of the escarpment while the heaviness of the stone can be interpreted as the weight of grief on one's life. Similarly, the properties of broken stone can be used as a building technique that initiates a dialogue between the mourner and the environment. These notions enabled the design process to explore ways in which the placement of the rock could result in different construction details. For instance, stacking flat stone creates walls and surfaces that represent the strength of the material, whereas loose broken rocks represent the weight of the element and are able to secure the interventions into the ground.

Figure 33
The *Remembrance Lantern* cumulates the relations between a mourner, the site, and their emotion through a tactile engagement and ritual.



Another defining quality of the escarpment is the forest. Wood is an abundant material within the site that can be finely detailed to produce surfaces, connections, and construction techniques that create an inviting relationship to a mourner in contrast to the rough stone. These qualities result in surfaces for mourners to interact with that would wear over time, demarcating a sense of use and presence within the site.

Steel elements exist in current site infrastructure and provide a way in which interventions can materialize the intangibility of emotion. Weathered steel fragments can also be found scattered across the topography that have been left from the history of mining and milling. The dynamic properties of raw steel illustrate emotional qualities through the weathering of the surfaces over time. Therefore, introducing local steel, produced in the adjacent city of Hamilton, enables the architecture to sustain a mystic quality that transcends time and place. The unconventional properties of steel allow each mourner to interpret the material differently to initiate dynamic responses and relationships to the material.

Integrating each intervention into the landscape is vital to develop emotional spaces. The purpose of the architecture is not to develop new emotional environments, but rather, is to provide sensorial experiences where mourners are able to develop new relationships to the existing emotions embedded within the landscape. The relationships between the stone and wood of the site in contrast to weathered steel are explored to develop architectural responses that produce moments for mourners to engage with the environment. It is in these moments, while experiencing the raw atmosphere of the site, that a mourner is able to connect to the natural conditions

and project their own emotional, psychological, behavioural, and incorporeal processes. Subtle architecture is designed to not overpower or distract a mourner from the landscape, but rather, allows for the surrounding materiality and presence of the site to become the primary focus of the experience. Steel sheets became a primary design vocabulary to provide a sense of precariousness and curiosity upon their discovery in a natural setting. As the steel is not inherent to the site, the peculiar nature of the object in contrast to the organic site creates experiences in which mourners are able to develop their own understandings. Once within the spaces defined by the steel, the presence of the material in relation to light, air and water develop atmospheric environments that are distinct to each individual's sense of place. The stone of the site is used to support the steel in different ways while creating a sense of scale for the mourner. Lastly, wood is used to create inviting surfaces with which the mourners will continually interact, developing a sense of comfort and human presence in the landscape.

To organize these intentions, an iterative process was undertaken to define the relations between the mourner, the intervention and the site. As a result, a dynamic and explorative process emerged that conveys the intangible qualities that the thesis sought. Each site was documented through a series of photographs and sketches that illustrate the emotions felt and explored initial architectural responses.



Figure 34
A portrayal of the atmospheric condition of the Meadow at the site.



Figure 35
Approaching the Meadow at the site.



Figure 36
A portrayal of the atmospheric condition of the Creek at the site.



Figure 37
The turbulent waters of the Creek become a metaphor for the state of bereavement on one's life.



Figure 38
A portrayal of the atmospheric condition of the Edge of the escarpment.



Figure 39
The Edge of the escarpment.



Figure 40
A portrayal of the atmospheric condition of the Forest at the site.



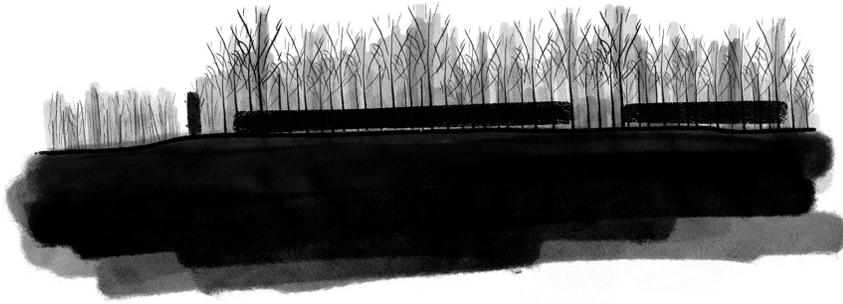
Figure 41
Experiencing the Forest along one of the paths.



Figure 42
A portrayal of the atmospheric condition of the Quarry at the site.



Figure 43
A scar within the Escarpment is visible from the historic Quarry at the site.



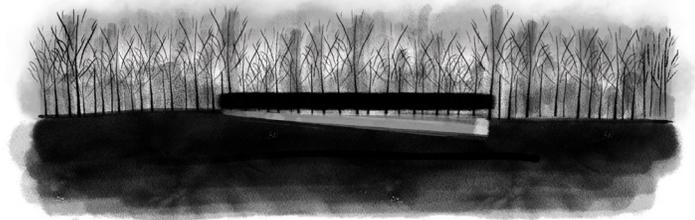
MEADOW



CREEK



EDGE



FOREST



QUARRY

Figure 44
A progression of parti drawings represent the Essence, Context, and Atmosphere of the different site conditions.

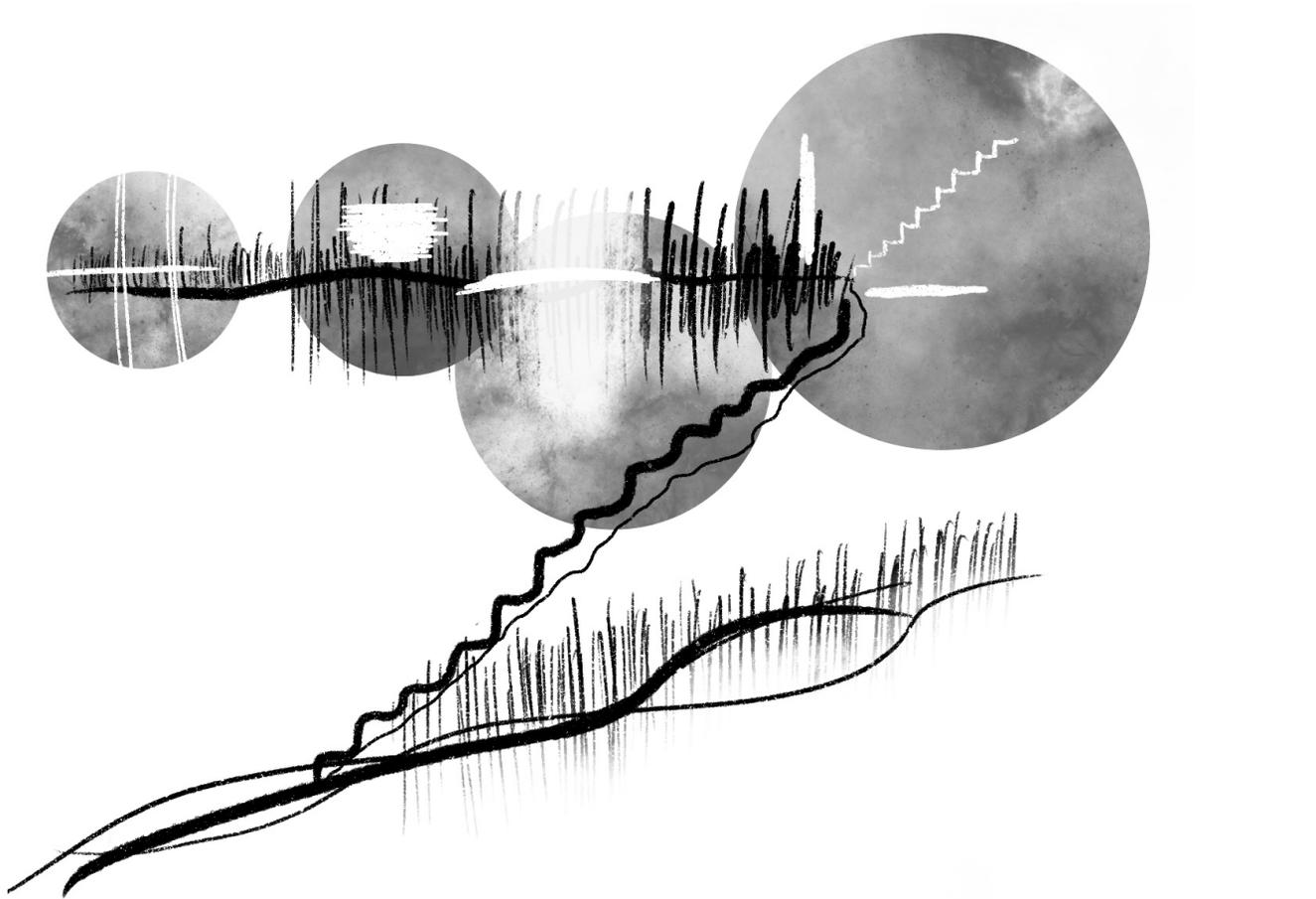


Figure 45
A parti drawing began to explore how architectural interventions can manifest the current conditions in relation to the journey of the site.

CONSTRUCTING PLACE

The conditions that constitute Beamer Memorial Park can be understood to embody emotional metaphors for mourners to project their own narratives onto. Architecture becomes the material presence of the escarpment's atmospheres, providing a tactile and spatial relation between the subject, their inner emotions, and the essence of the site. Journeying between the varying conditions present in the site articulates the concept of time and provides opportunities for a unique narrative for each mourner.

Implementing this project becomes twofold. Firstly, creating a respectful intervention allows for the escarpment to be preserved in its current condition, protecting the landscape from urbanization. Secondly, celebrating the significance of the site formulates an architecture that is focused on the importance of place, initiating a dialogue between the subject and the object. This will create an empathetic relationship between an individual and their surrounding environment that will assist in conveying the intangible inner emotions within oneself. Furthermore, the park setting begins to normalize the notion of collective vulnerability, allowing grief to no longer be an individualistic, pathological condition, but rather a communal experience that each person is able to perceive and interpret.

Developing a series of constructed experiences will create new opportunities where people can relate to the characteristics of the landscape. The thesis composes ways to manifest and express grief, in opposition to suggesting an answer or cure to mourning. The role of architecture is not to facilitate the grief process, nor a universal solution, but is to provide experiential moments that enable people to suitably navigate the intangible conditions of life. These experiences can then formulate a contemporary

ritual by grieving for, with and within the landscape itself. The architectural interventions allow for an individual's own grief to be acknowledged and navigated through their thoughts, action and perspective of the landscape. Grief is a dynamic emotion meaning the design of such a space must be interpretable, yet familiar and engaging. The proposed architecture articulates the primary conditions of the site by formulating nodes along the existing paths, empowering mourners to freely navigate the atmospheres created by the physical terrain, and therefore, formulating narratives that embody journeys across one's own inner landscape of grief.

The site is accessible from above or below the escarpment. A footpath extends from a neighbourhood into the valley forest at the base of the escarpment, whereas, a small parking area is located on top of the escarpment, on the west side of the site. It is from here that one would enter the threshold of the forest into the site.

Meadow

Setting

The first change in landscape a mourner discovers is a circular meadow that has been carved out of the dense forest. A set of steel walls emerge from the adjacent tree line to encourage a sense of direction across the clearing. The horizontality of the walls contrast the verticality of the forest, articulating a sense of space. The walls are organized to demarcate the multiple paths one is able to take and to facilitate a central meeting point between mourners navigating the site, which contrasts the current private experiences of entering and exiting the park. Hence, the walls guide visitors toward one another to establish a sense of community and connection between mourners. This was intentional as grief should not be experienced alone.

Atmosphere

The simple gesture of implementing sheets of steel in the meadow serves to evade an initial overwhelming architectural experience for a vulnerable individual. At first, these objects may seem out of place, however they serve to introduce the relationship between a mourner and built form, while also serving as a precursor for the subsequent experiences within the site. The human scale and materiality of the weathered steel forms contrast the surrounding forest to initiate a sense of curiosity. This sensation distinguishes a new mindset for the visitors to engage the site and subsequent interventions.

Construction

The weathered steel emerges from thin cuts in the earth. Moving

Figure 46
Upon entering the Meadow a series of walls emerge in the distance.



closer to the walls reveals a series of cutouts that are remnants from the installation process. The components of the walls are manufactured in the adjacent city of Hamilton as 8 foot by 9 foot steel panels that are then transported to the site by truck. The panels are then lifted into place by helicopter or crane, utilizing the cutouts in each sheet to serve as anchoring points. A footing is poured within the channel that incorporates a steel bracket to fasten the walls to. The walls are then welded together and secured in place with broken rock from the site. The cutouts from the completed installation process are visible at eye level and becoming portals that frame the surrounding landscape. Therefore, the walls within the meadow are metaphors for that scars are able to portray beauty and the stone expresses that there is still functionality in brokenness.

Figure 47
Plan of the Meadow depicts how the placement of the walls facilitate movement and a central communal point.

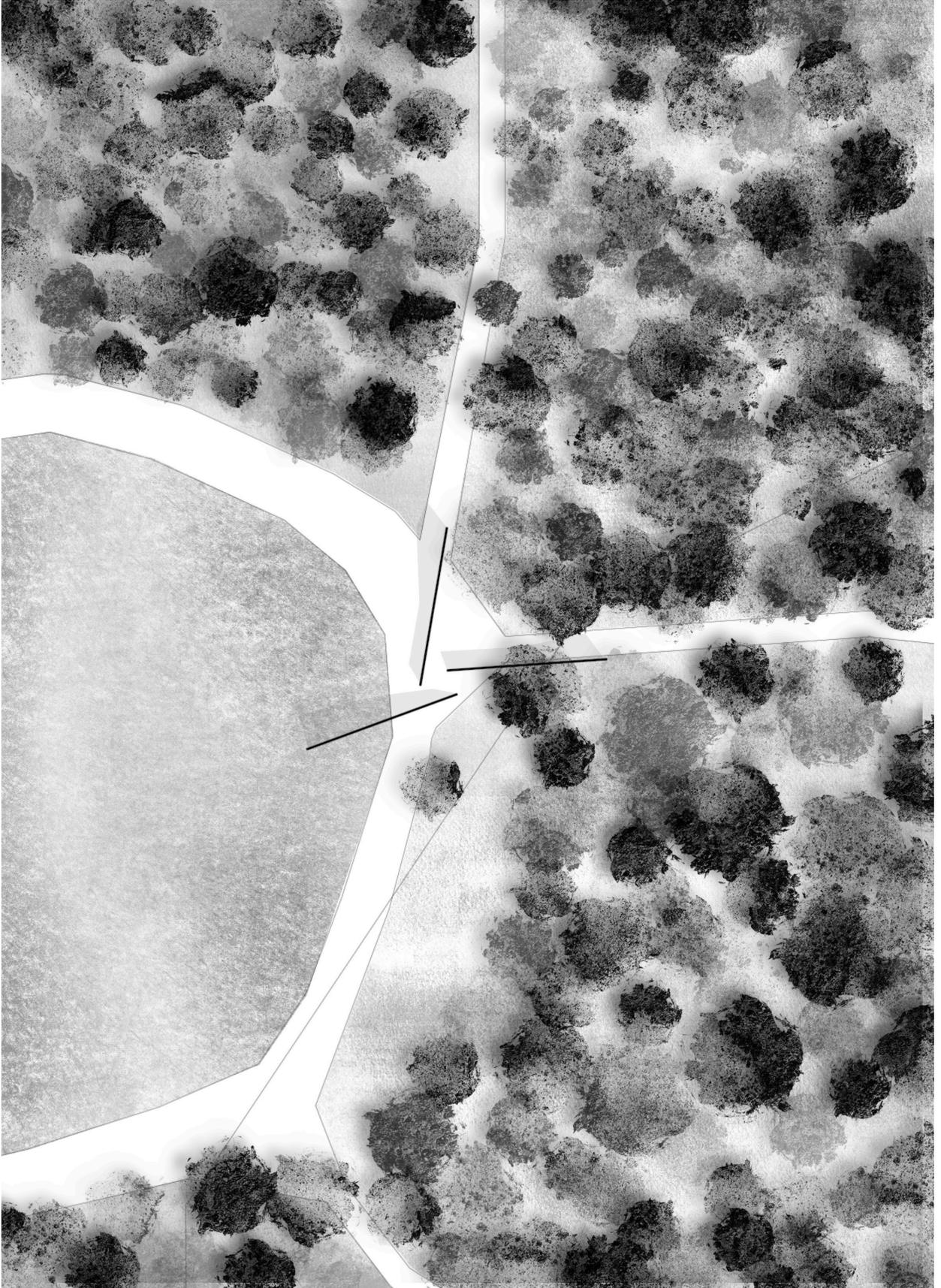




Figure 48
Interior atmosphere within the Meadow intervention.

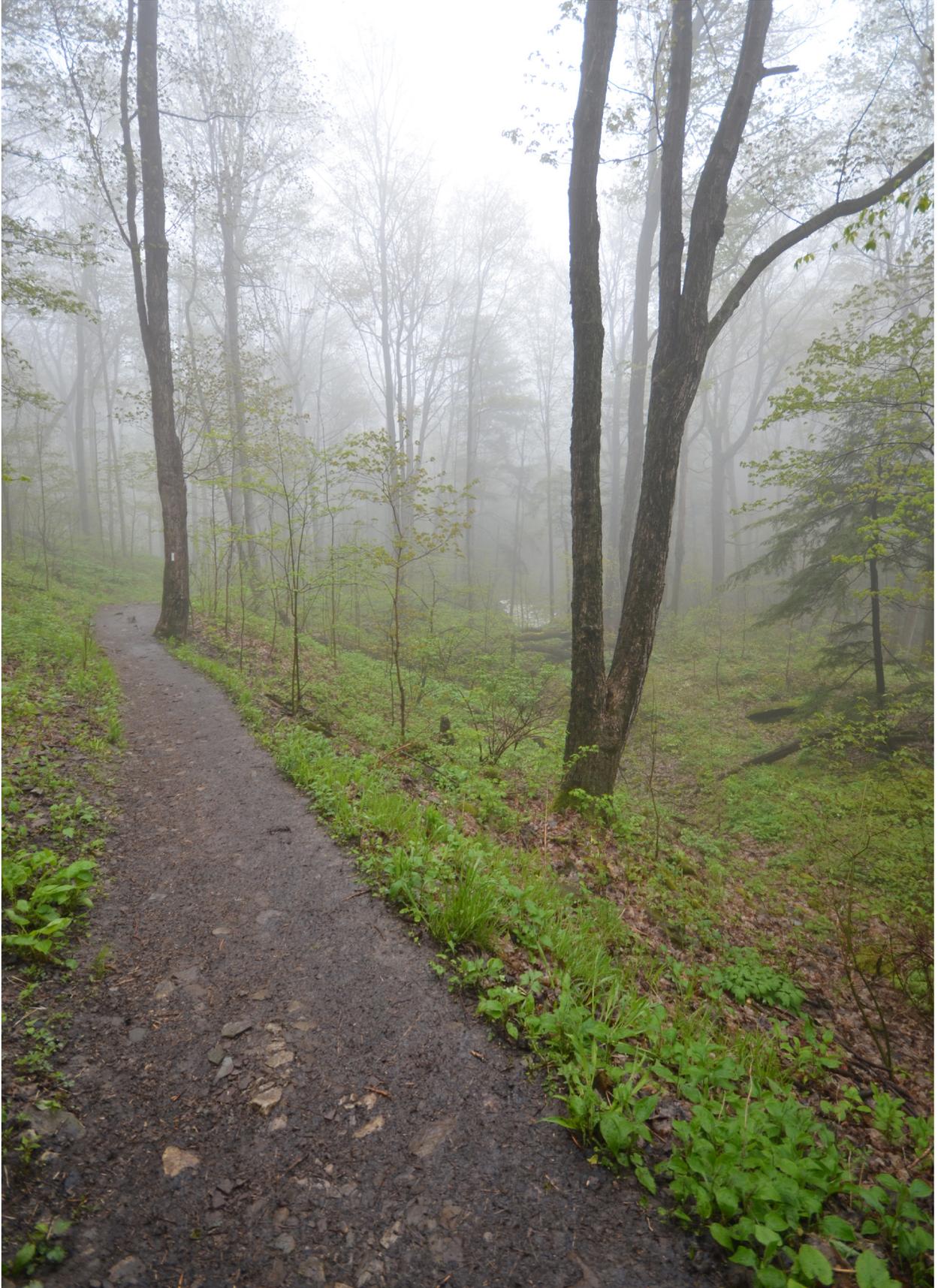


Figure 49
A section of the Meadow intervention portrays the construction detail of how the walls are inserted into the earth and supported by the stone.

0 0.5 1 2m

Continuing into the forest one pathway leads a mourner to a series of wooden steps that traverse the escarpment to the valley below. At the base of the stairs, a mourner will discover the calm, upper portion of the 40 Mile Creek. Continuing along the path, two low lying walls appear on a distant hill.

Figure 50
Traversing the path within the valley of
the 40 Mile Creek.



Creek

Setting

Upon venturing closer, it becomes apparent that the intervention constitutes a passage. Two walls extend towards the creek, protruding from the earth where the topography quickly drops towards the waters edge. The intervention is defined by a wooden path that causes one to step off of the forest floor onto the wooden ties that emulate the elevations of the surrounding topography while providing places to rest and absorb new perspectives of the structure and landscape. A sense of scale is portrayed through the length of the structure extending towards the creek and by the height of the walkway relative to the broken stone at the base of the incision of the intervention. As a mourner ventures down the stairs the path narrows from a communal experience to a personal experience due to the angled walls of the structure, causing notions of compression and vulnerability. As the walls rise above an individual, one's focus transitions to the light and sound from the water, cumulating where the path cantilevers above the surface of the creek. It is at this moment where the varying dynamics of the creek are most present.

Atmosphere

Vulnerable notions are initially introduced to individuals by removing the earth within the structure. A mourner therefore decides to trust the structure when departing from the forest floor. As previously mentioned, the walls of the intervention are angled, causing the width of the walkway to narrow as one approaches the creek. The intervention is specifically positioned to inhabit a turbulent portion of the creek where the valley

Figure 51
Continuing along the path, two low lying walls appear on a distant hill.

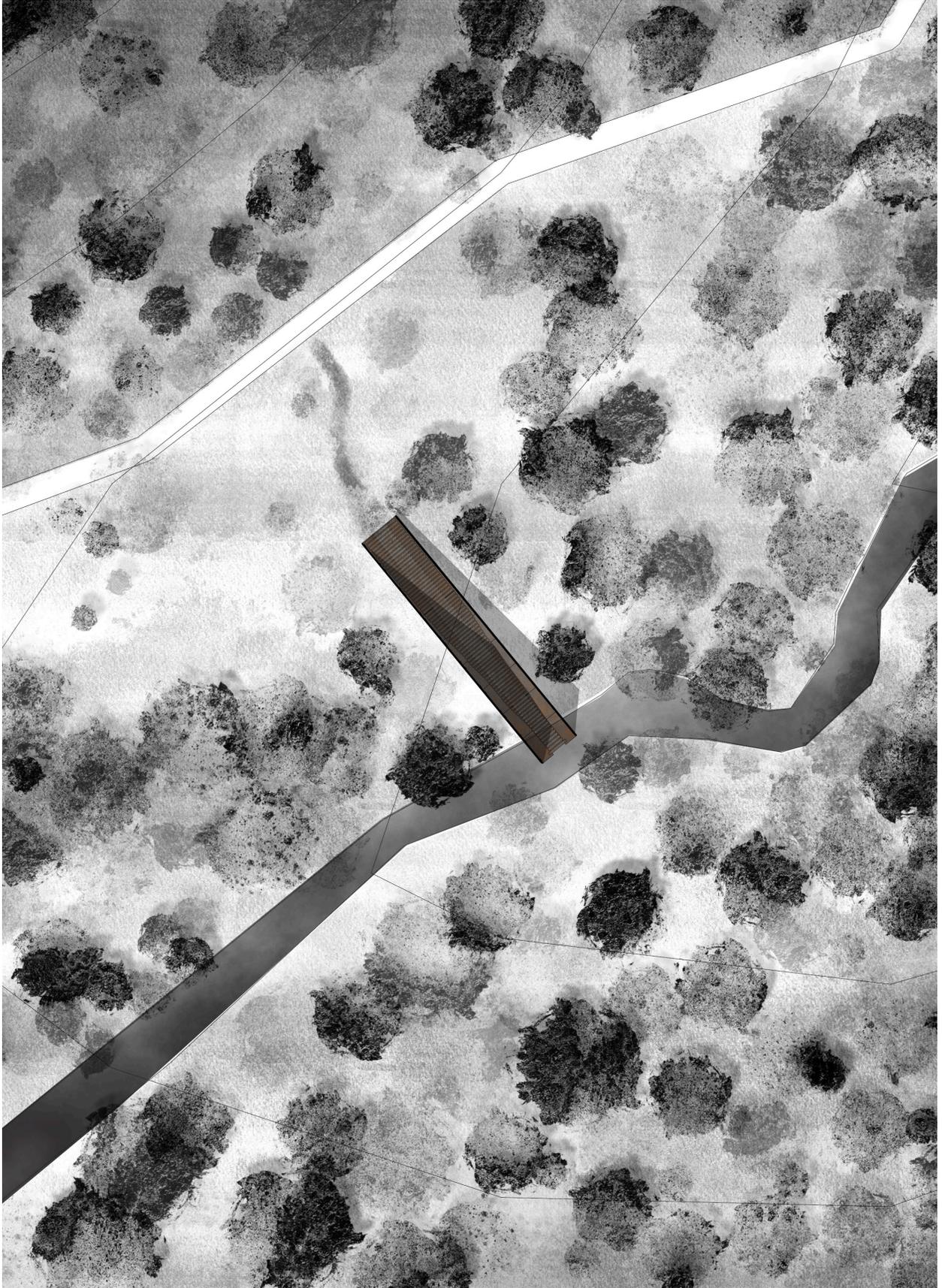


narrows and the water flows over and between large boulders. This close proximity to the intense force of the creek further fosters a sense of vulnerability that embodies the emotional state of bereavement. The presence of the creek splashes through the floor of the structure, providing access to an otherwise unsafe relationship to the mighty creek. Additionally, water moving through the landscape gathers between the walls of the structure and through the stone base to pour into the creek below the cantilevered path, curating the atmospheric presence of water.

Construction

The construction of the intervention is an adaptation of the meadow's process. A 70 foot long, 20 foot deep incision is made into the embankment of the creek that contains a concrete footing. Two angled brackets attached to the footing to guide 20 foot tall steel panels to their designed angles. The steel is then fastened, welded together and supported by broken stone from the river bed that is backfilled on both sides of the walls. The bed of stone between the walls signifies the brokenness that the landscape also shares. Wooden ties spanning between the walls provide structural integrity by sliding into pre-cut holes and using a slip joint to lock the walls in place. These ties amalgamate into the walkway that enables mourners to traverse the intervention. The codependence of the materials convey a sense of sturdiness adjacent to the dynamic water. However, exposure to the elements conveys the abrasive relationship between the landscape and architecture to emphasize the atmosphere of the site. The steel walls of the structure oxidize over time, illustrating the emotional presence of the creek, whereas the wood platform wears over time through its use

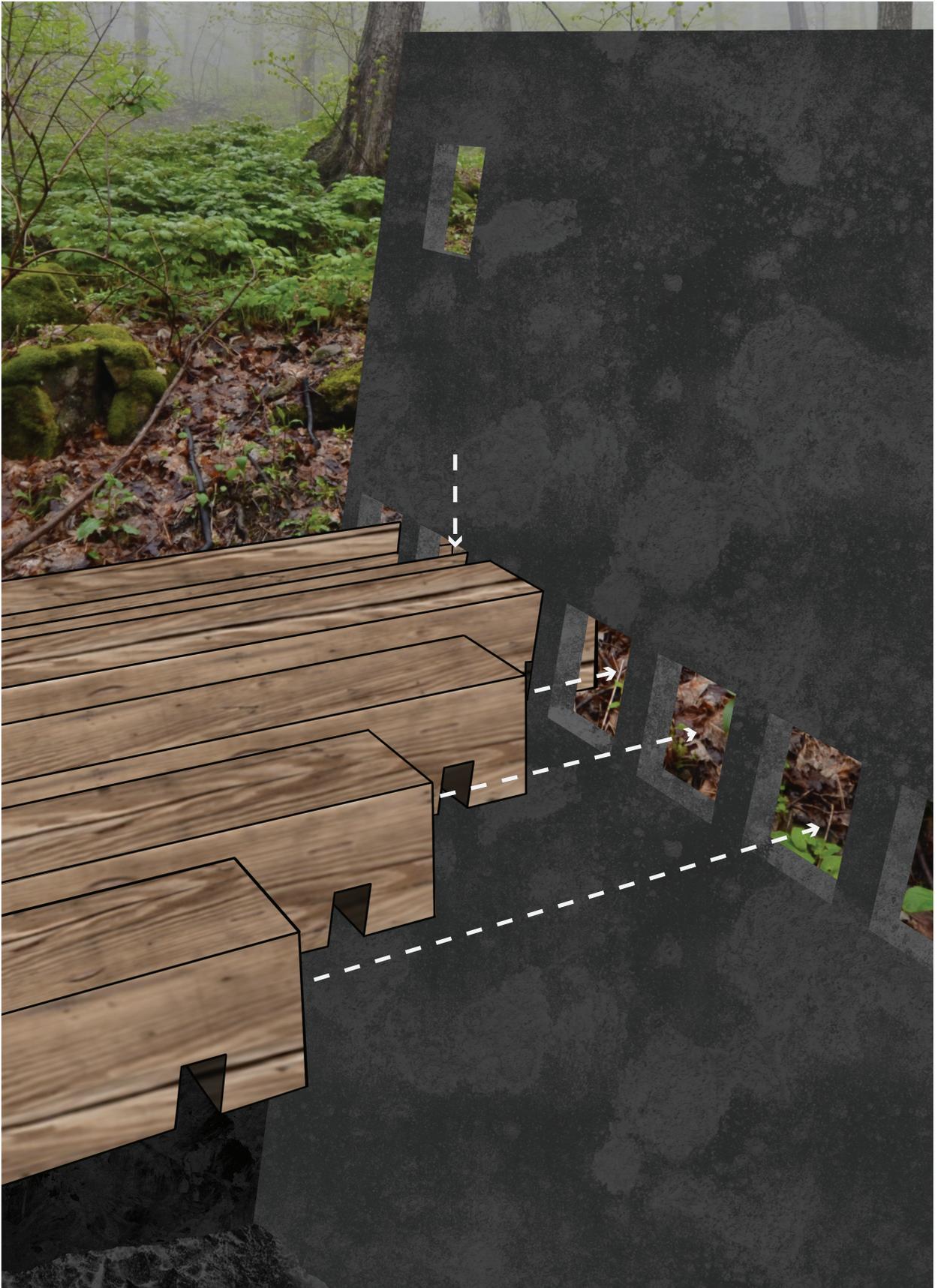
Figure 52
The plan of the Creek illustrates the journey one is invited to take towards the water.



and reaction to the elements.

The typology of the intervention can be understood as a bridge, however, a bridge to nowhere. Bridges typically provide access between two points and a means to an end. Yet, this bridge only ends in contemplation. It cumulates with one's relationship to the water, rather than a path to the other side. The intervention also challenges other regional industrial metaphors such as a railroad and how tracks have a set path and route to follow. Yet, there is no set path to bereavement. Therefore, this intervention rather proposes one to focus on nature and themselves in relation to their surroundings. These structural metaphors serve to challenge the standard stage theory of the grief process. The intervention is a stop in a path compared to the linear continuation of the Kubler-Ross model. As there is no definitive conclusion to grief, there is no true end of the journey through the site. This moment at the creek highlights this continuation as a mourner has to return to the path to continue their journey despite no definite conclusion or guarantee of what lies ahead.

Figure 53
Assembly of the Creek intervention.



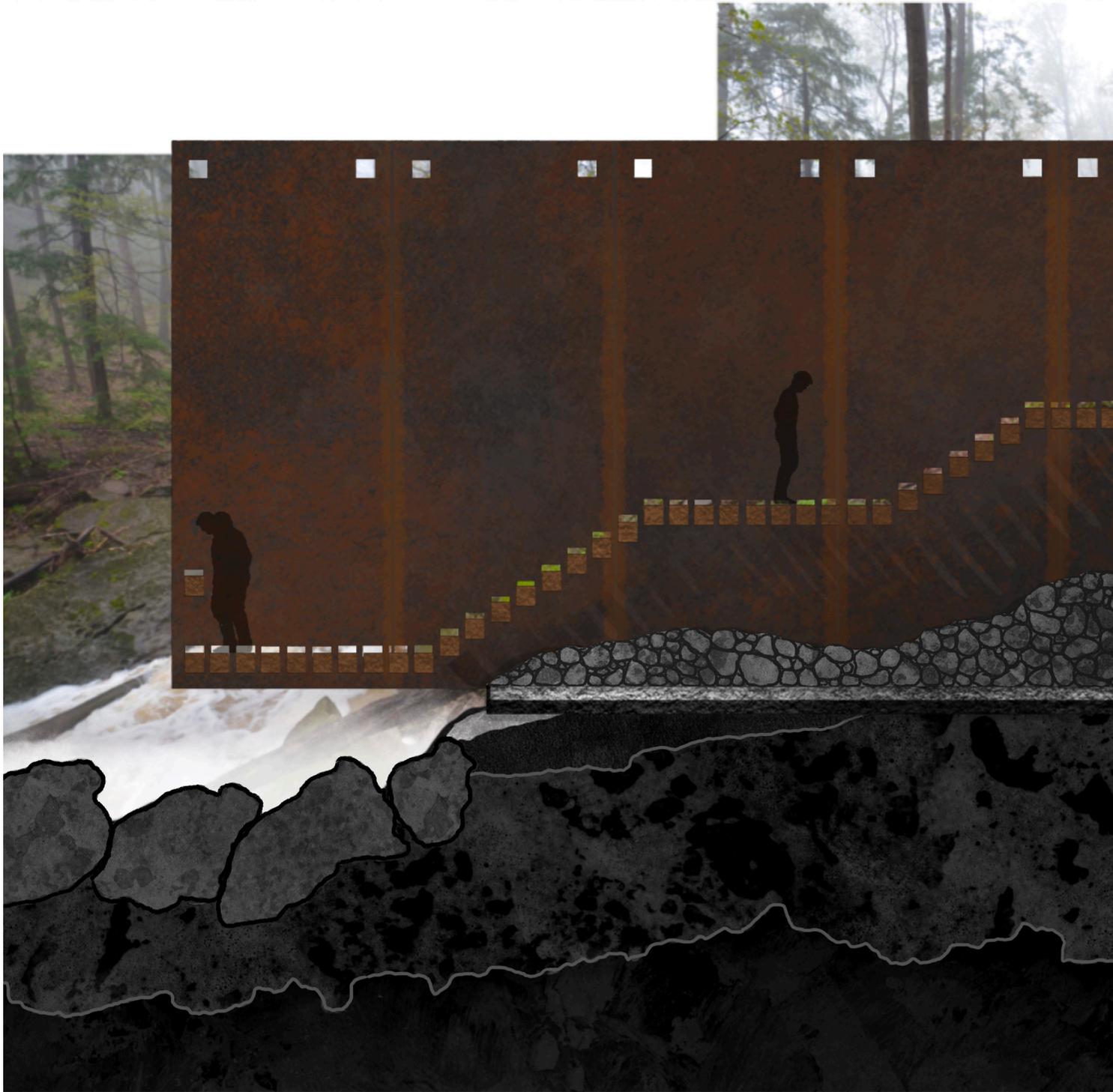
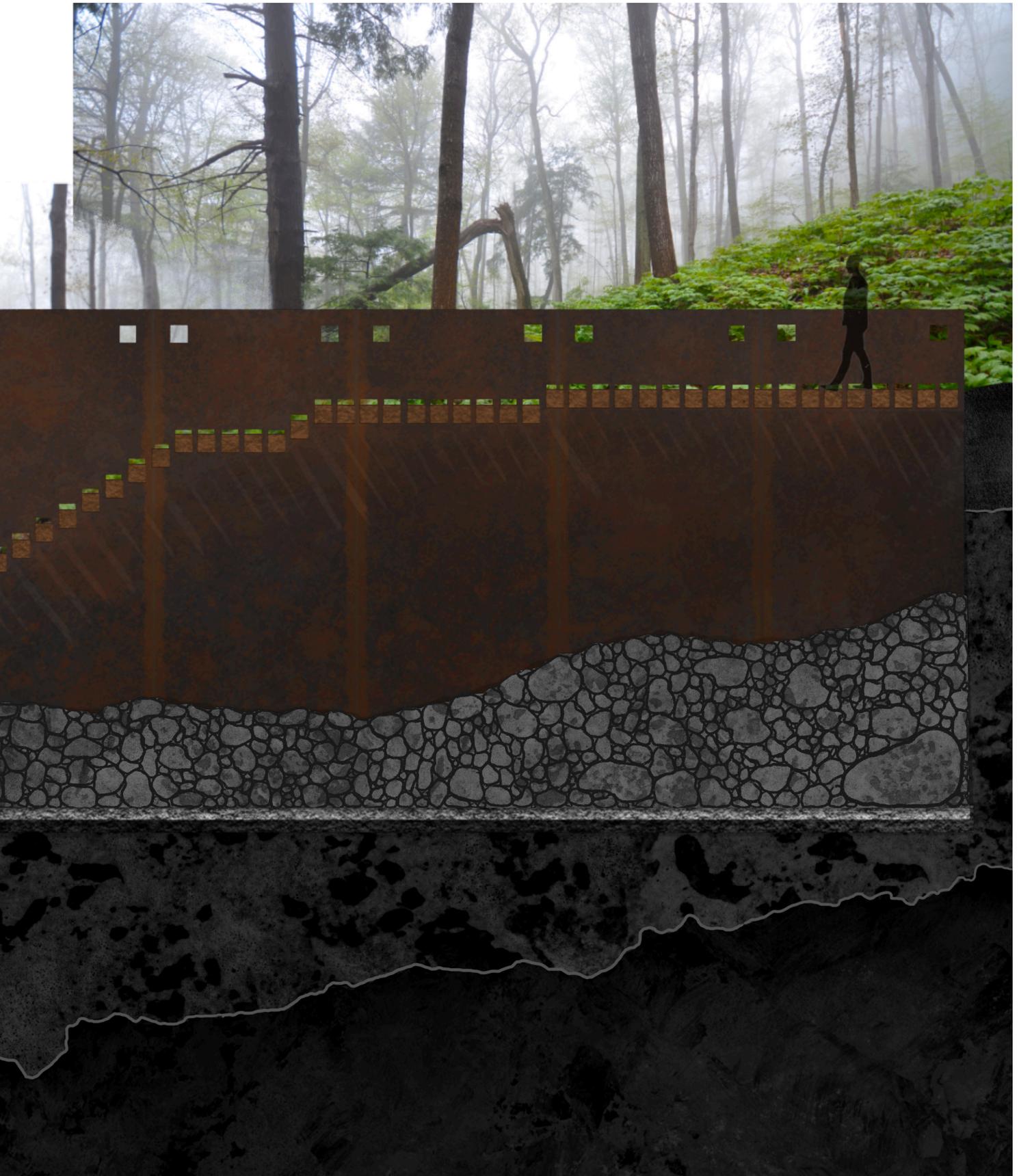


Figure 54
A section through the intervention illustrates the experience and scale of the path from the forest towards the creek.



0 1 2 4m

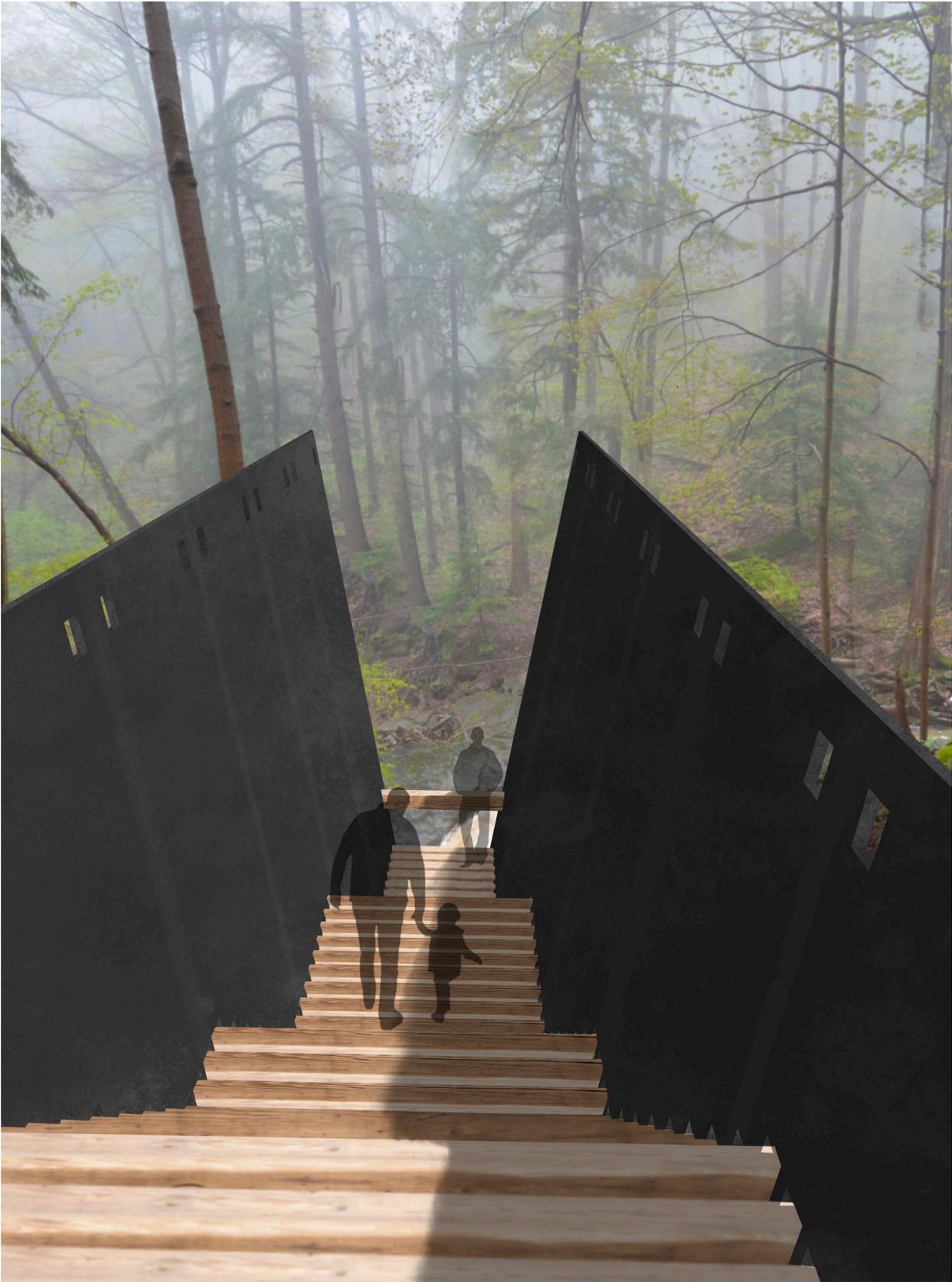


Figure 55
Entering the Creek intervention after it's completion portrays the initial appearance of the structure and materials.

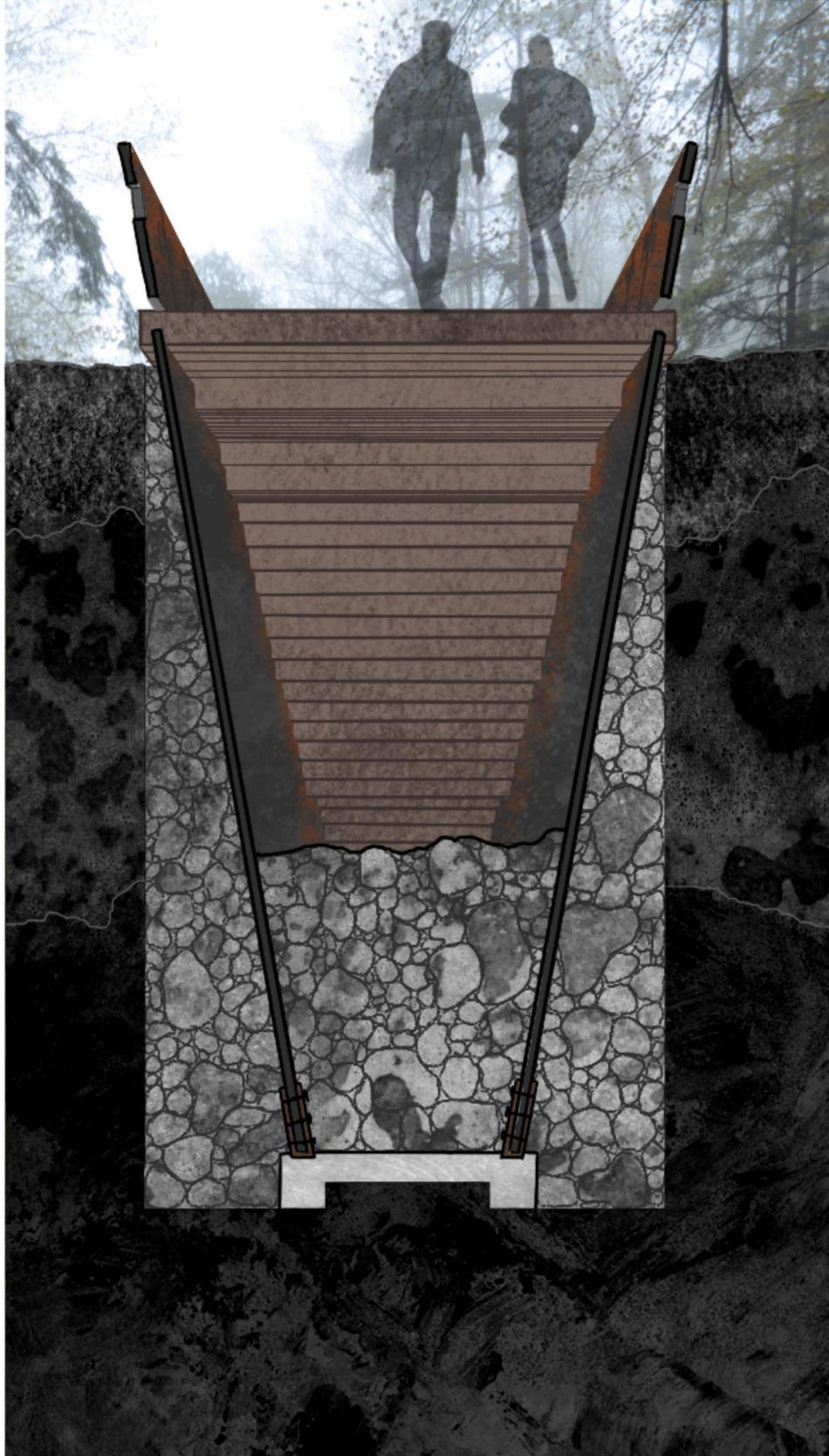


Figure 56
A section of the Creek intervention portrays the scale of the mourner in relation to the entrance of the structure.

0 0.5 1 2m



Figure 57
Journeying towards the creek after the structure has been established for some time signifies the emotion that the materials embody.



Figure 58
A section of the Creek intervention portrays the scale of the mourner in relation to the surrounding landscape.

0 0.5 1 2m



Figure 59
A mourner arrives at an atmosphere within the walls, above the creek, where the aging of the materials react to the site and one's emotions.



Figure 60
A section of the Creek intervention portrays the scale of the mourner in relation to the cantilevered path above the creek.

0 0.5 1 2m

Traversing back up the stairs to the top of the escarpment provokes mourners to follow a new path along the brim of the escarpment. The path is unprotected from the escarpment's edge with only a few trees protecting a mourner from the valley below. Clearings within the vegetation offer moments of panoramic vistas to the adjacent valley and city beyond, but require visitors to be aware of their relation to the mighty cliff face, causing one to maintain a safe distance away from the essence of the site.

Figure 61
The path leads to the stairway that traverses the escarpment's cliff face.



Edge

Setting

Further down the path one encounters a wall that emerges from the forest and suspends off of the escarpments edge. The obstruction of the path causes one to slow down and become aware of their surroundings.

Atmosphere

The intervention heightens the experience of the edge by inviting one to explore their own boundaries. The walls facilitate the accessibility of an otherwise dangerous condition of the landscape, requiring mourners to embrace the courage to face their fears. Mourners will be drawn towards the edge where the walls rise to frame the view and atmosphere of the edge condition. As the structure extends past and seems to fall off the edge, the intervention embodies a feeling that is intrinsic to one's relationship to the landscape, and the condition of grief. A groove filled with stone is the only separation between a mourner and the descent, signifying that one is able to relate to the emotions of the edge, but avoid its danger. The cut in the ground also reveals how water moves through the rock of the escarpment, depicting how water and ice continue to form the escarpment. This pool of water also symbolizes the boundary of water at the creek, yet here, the water is calm, offering the opportunity for physical and emotional reflection.

Construction

The walls at the edge share a similar construction process with the meadow, but do not require footings due to the exposed

Figure 62
A wall blocks the path along the escarpments edge, causing one to become aware of their surroundings.



bedrock. Deep, narrow channels are carved into the stone where the walls will then be welded together and set in place. The design appears to be clinging to the escarpment for support, emphasizing the ground as the fundamental quality of the space. The ends of the walls descending into the forest floor are buried with broken stone from the forest to provide additional support. Two of the walls contain folds that facilitate the movement through the intervention while providing structural rigidity. The portions of the walls that extend past the edge are exposed to the elements. Over time, the weathered steel walls will begin to bleed, demarcating their presence and emotion on the cliff face.

Figure 63

The plan of the Edge intervention reveals the altered path for a user to take and the scale of the object in relation to its surroundings.



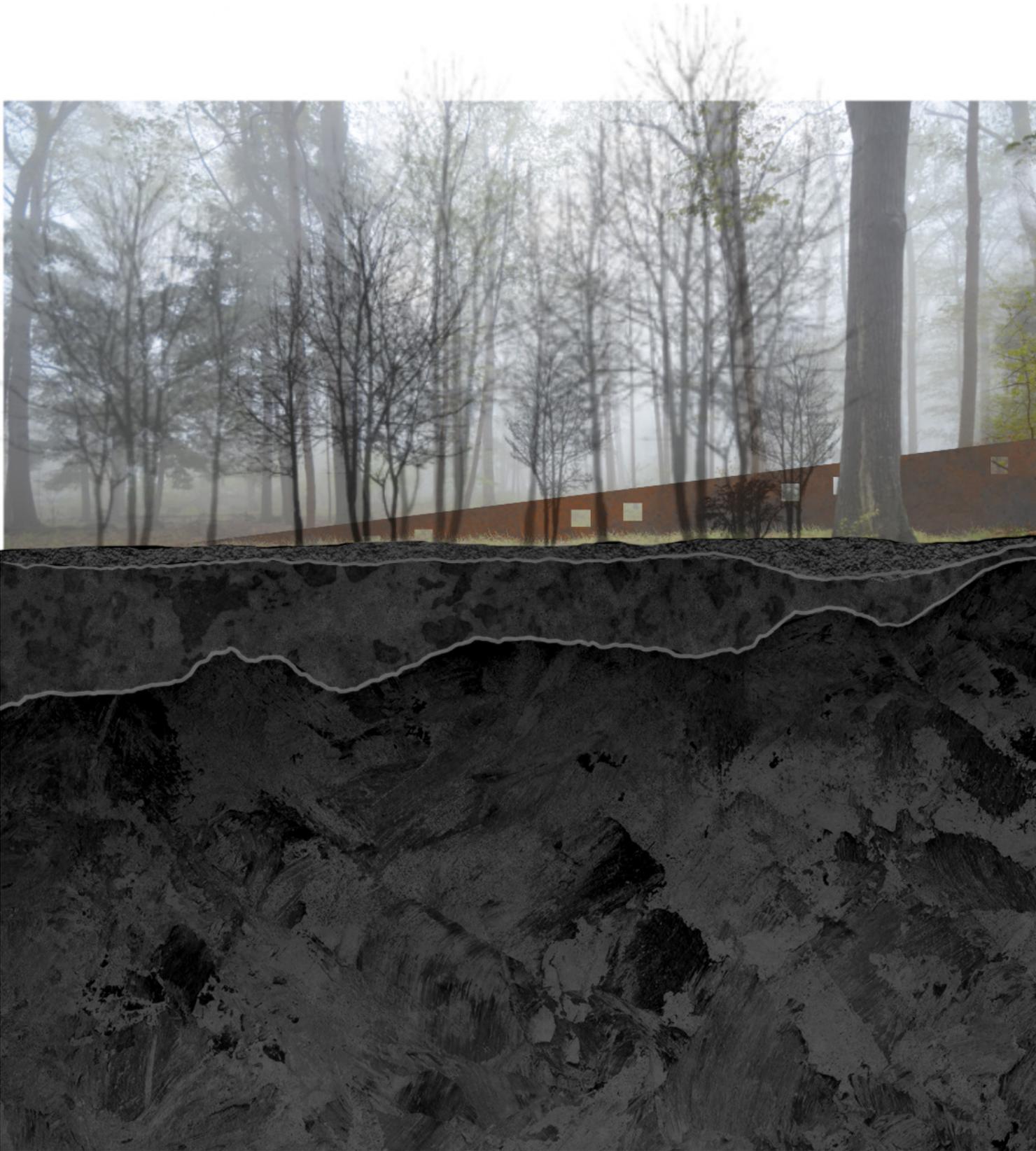
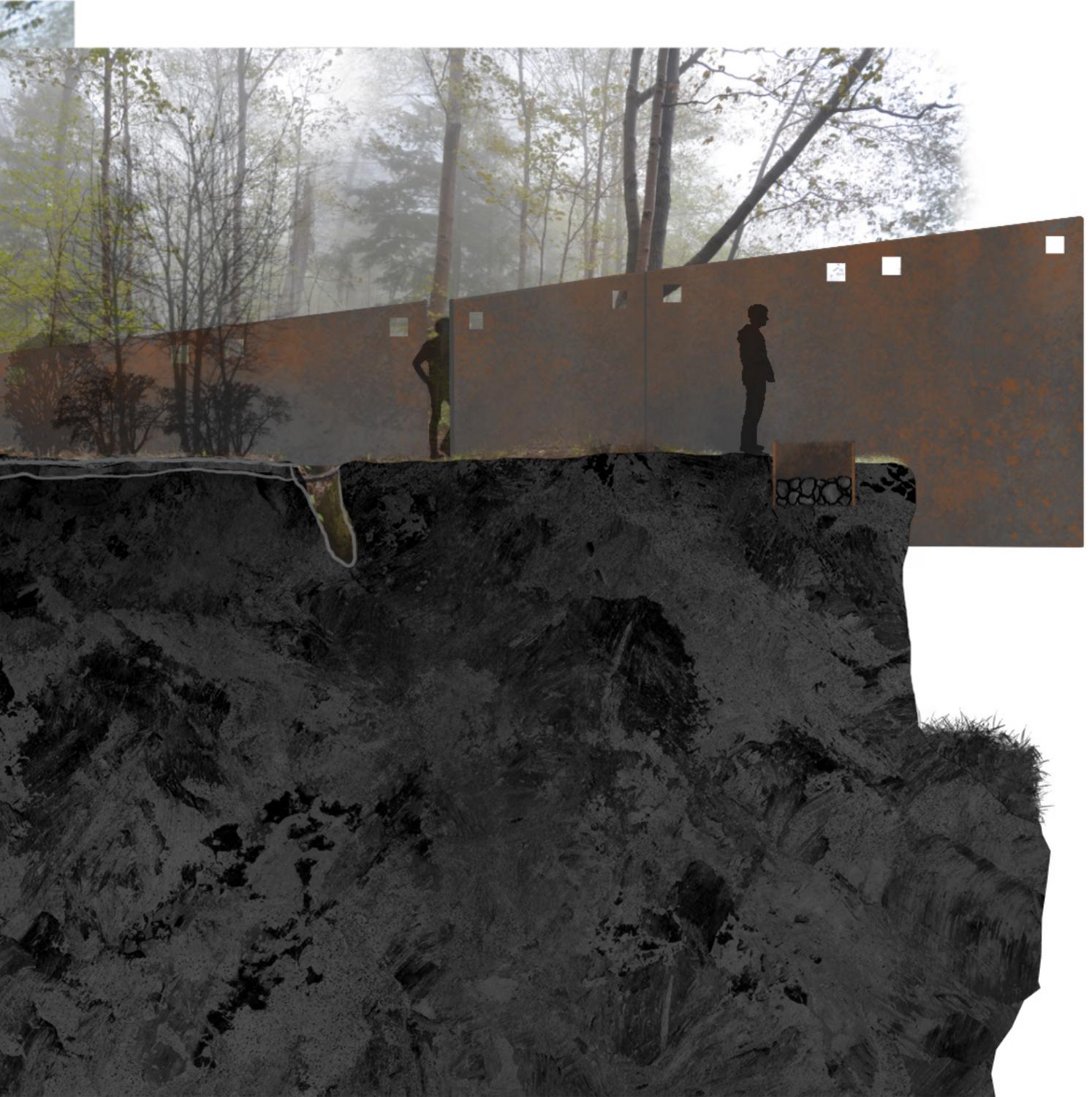


Figure 64
A section of the Edge intervention portrays the scale of the mourner in relation to the structure and the mighty escarpment.



0 0.5 1 2m



Figure 65
The interior atmosphere within the walls at the edge of the escarpment creates a moment of precarious contemplation.



Figure 66
A section of the Edge reveals a similar construction detailing to the Meadow intervention, but between the walls and bedrock.

0 0.5 1m

A mourner will then venture back into the protection of the forest.

Figure 67
The path then leads back into the forest.



Forest

Setting

The long directionality of two pitched walls rising from the forest floor contrast the verticality of the forest, demarcating their presence. During the day, the sun shimmers across the monumental steel structure. At night, a faint flicker of light indicates the presence of the space within. Within the intervention is a 120 foot long descending path that ends at a dim place of remembrance beneath the forest floor.

Atmosphere

The narrow gap between the pitched walls provides a source of light to illuminate the path that descends to a space protected by the surrounding landscape. At the bottom of the ramp the path folds up into a wall of remembrance lanterns. Surrounding the path is a bed of broken stone left from the excavation of the space, emulating the brokenness one is consumed with when remembering a loved one. The walls precariously rise, transitioning into the roof that defines the cavern like space.

The demarcation of time is curated through the duration of the path in addition to the movement of light and shadow within the structure. The materials exposed to the elements also demarcate time through the reactions to the elements and use. One is able to light a lantern in memory of their love one. The light of the lanterns signify the presence of memory to other mourners while the melting of the wax represents time on an intimate scale.

When leaving the space, a mourner is able to leave their lantern

Figure 68
Two pitched walls emerge from the earth to create a sense of place.



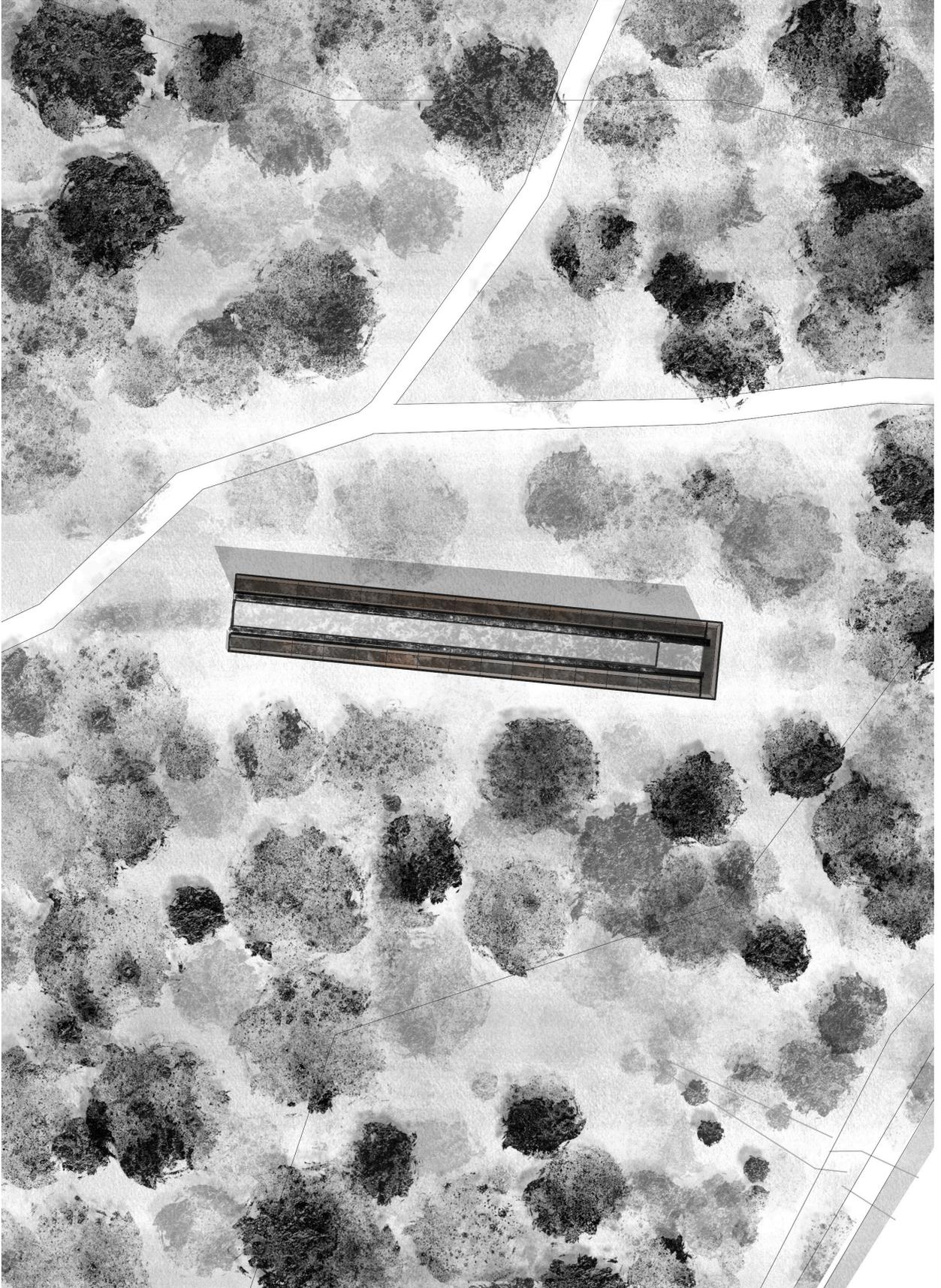
lit within the wall, or is able to carry their lantern with them through the site to navigate the landscape accompanied by the memory of a loved one.

Construction

The design of the intervention recounts the construction process while embodying notions of remembrance. The 130 foot long, 8 foot deep incision is cut into an existing clearing within the forest. Angled steel panels are inserted and welded into place, forming two exterior troughs and the defined interior volume. The structure is supported by filling the exterior troughs with the excavated stone, acting as a counterweight. The reliance on the broken pieces of the site recalls the impact of the construction process while signifying a viable use for the fragmentation of the site. This intent is to inspire mourners to find purpose in the feelings of brokenness in their own lives. The weight of the stone also manifests in the weight of grief on one's spirit. The path down into the space is comprised of a dry stone stacking technique, also used to construct the remembrance wall.

Figure 69

The plan of the Forest Intervention highlights the horizontality and length of the journey in relation to the surrounding forest.



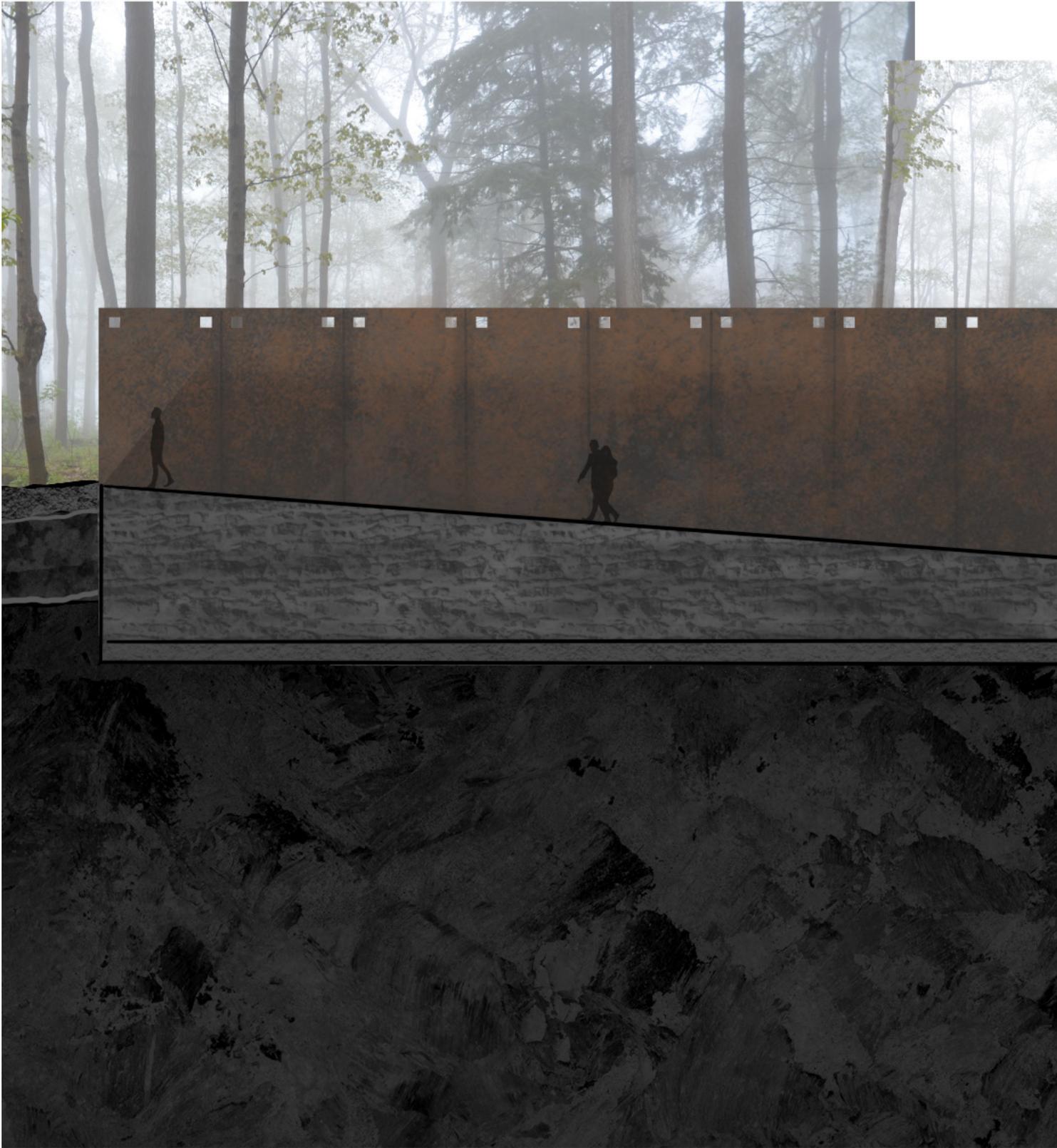
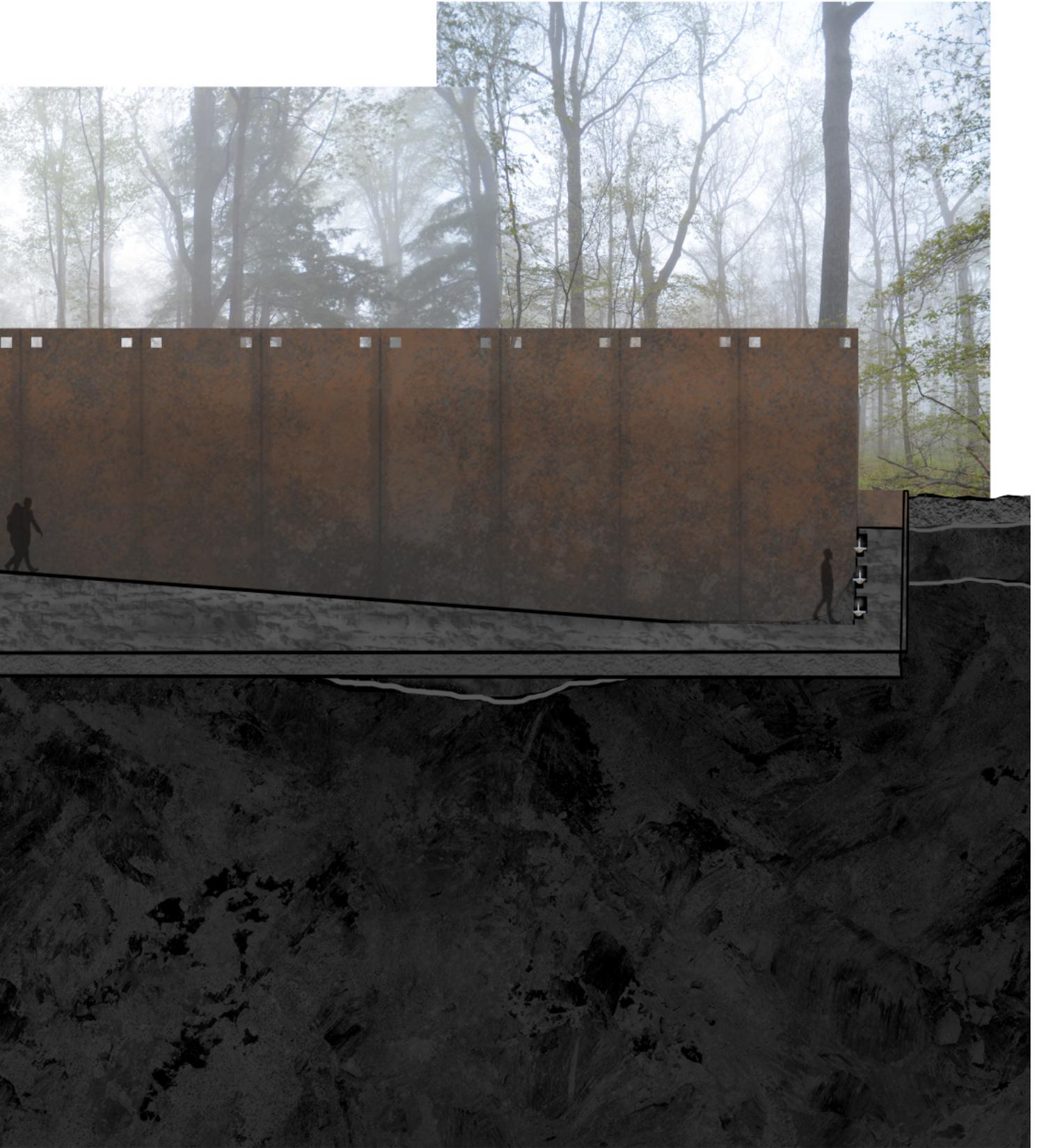


Figure 70
A section of the Forest intervention reveals the scale of the landscape in relation to the path that brings one down to a place of remembrance.



0 1 2 4m



Figure 71
The submerged place of remembrance within the landscape creates an intimate atmosphere between a mourner and their loved one.



Figure 72
A section of the Forest intervention depicts the structures dependence on the brokenness of the site.

0 0.5 1 2m

Quarry

Setting

Continuing through the forest or taking the path along the escarpment's northern edge brings a mourner to the quarry. The site appears as a scar within the lush landscape and the destruction to the escarpment causes a mourner to empathize with emotions of loss. The brim of the quarry leads one to discover a path that enters the sunken environment. The path is elevated to protect users from the mud and water that regularly accumulates within the boundary of the quarry. The elevated walkway also signifies a heightened elevation as an homage to the original ground line. The walkway reveals a series of industrial ruins seemingly abandoned alongside the excavation. A steel wall curates a division within the landscape, framing one's spatial awareness and a sense of scale. The path then tapers down towards the base of the quarry where a mourner will perceive a symbolic relic from the mining process.

Atmosphere

Navigating through the quarry enables a mourner to observe the new ecosystem adapting and evolving within the excavated landscape. The unique ecology of birch trees and other foreign species that are thriving offers mourners a sense of hope through the regrowth and resiliency of the natural environment. The building within the quarry seemingly materializes as a repurposed relic from the mining process. Stacked stone walls are set in between a set of steel walls to define a sunken area. Once within the sunken space a window set at ground level facilitates mourners to intimately witness the growth of the quarry. A skylight guides an individual down below the ground.

Figure 73
Traversing through the forest leads one to discover the quarry, a scar within the pristine escarpment.



Here, a ledge lit by a window provides opportunities to leave a token of remembrance or space for a guest book for communal gatherings. Adjacent to the ledge is a second lantern wall. The sunken room adjacent to the lantern wall has an undefined program to support individual or communal uses. Steel benches are formed by folding the steel entrance platform into the lower level and a series of wooden stools accommodate different arrangements and functions. The stools, comprised of wood 8" x 8" members bound with metal strapping amalgamate into pews, benches, tables or various seating arrangements to support diverse needs. An enclosed space within the site was important to house functions that coincide with grief such as funerals, celebrations, or memorial services. The building also substantiates opportunities for rituals to be formed, such as the homage of carrying a lantern from the forest intervention to the lantern wall within the quarry. The space also provides a protected place to rest, contemplate, converse with another mourner or observe the process of regrowth, all of which provide a sense of hope. Exiting the building, one continues along the dry stacked stone path through a threshold into a pine forest that has flourished within the quarry, further depicting the resiliency of the natural environment. The path then makes a final turn towards light emanating from a mining crevice formed in the edge of the escarpment. The pathway ends at a pile of boulders left from the excavation, but appears to extend into the horizon towards the Town of Grimsby and Lake Ontario, inspiring mourners to continue their grief journeys within the context of everyday life.

Figure 74

A symbolic relic appears when one traverses the stacked stone pathway through the quarry.

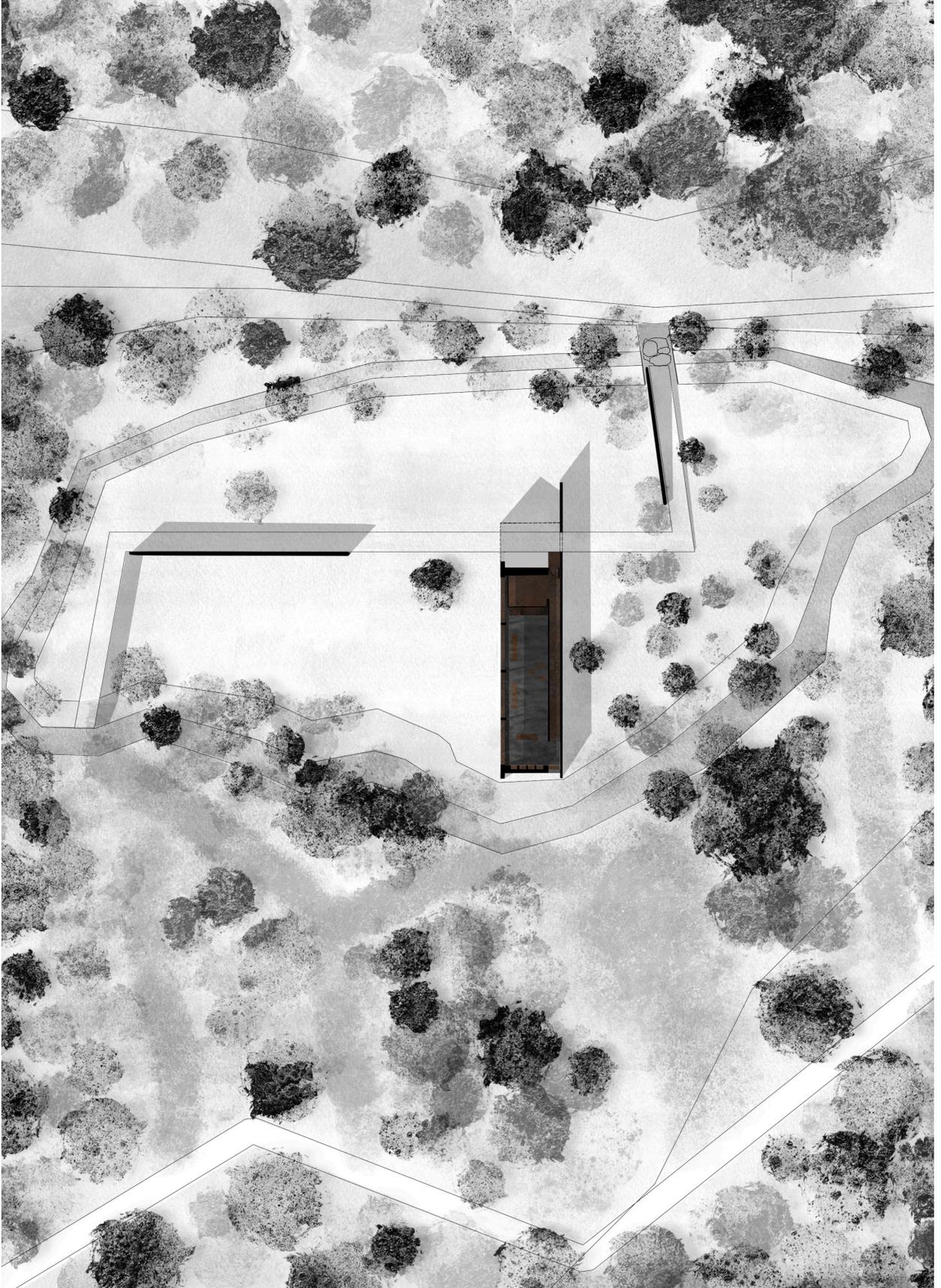


Construction

The path through the quarry is constructed from a dry-stacked stone technique using the angular shale from the quarry, minimizing the impact on the site. The height of the path initially begins 2 feet off of the quarry floor, delineating a buffer between a user and the landscape. Over time, the walkway descends to only 6 inches from the quarry to offer a close relationship between the vegetation and a mourner. The path will eventually become consumed by the growth of the quarry vegetation, maintaining one's focus on the natural landscape. The walls that demarcate the journey through the quarry are constructed similarly to the meadow, using shallow footings and backfilled stone. The building within the quarry is the most substantial space within the site. The footprint of the building is excavated and a concrete base is poured. A steel structure encloses the length of the building that facilitates two self-supporting stacked stone walls to enclose the intervention. The raw atmosphere of the design embodies the dialogue between the impacts of human presence on the natural conditions of the site.

Figure 75

The plan of the quarry depicts the sequence of spaces along the path to create dynamic atmospheres.



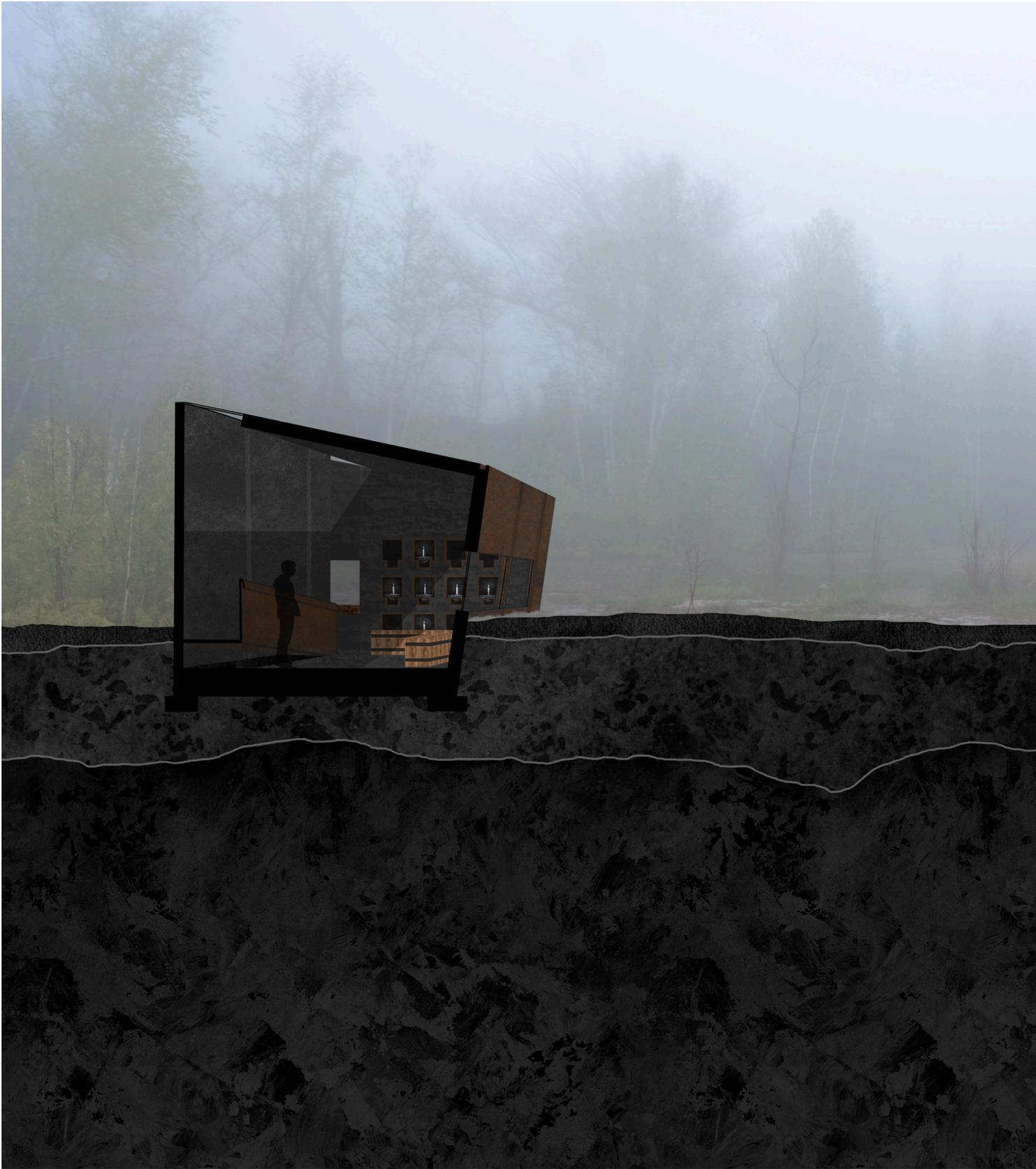


Figure 76

A section of the quarry illustrates the varying perceptions a mourner has of the quarry's growth, from the raised pathway to the sunken room.



0 0.5 1 2m



Figure 77
Another section of the quarry illustrates the dynamic functions of the room in relation to the surrounding landscape.



0 0.5 1 2m

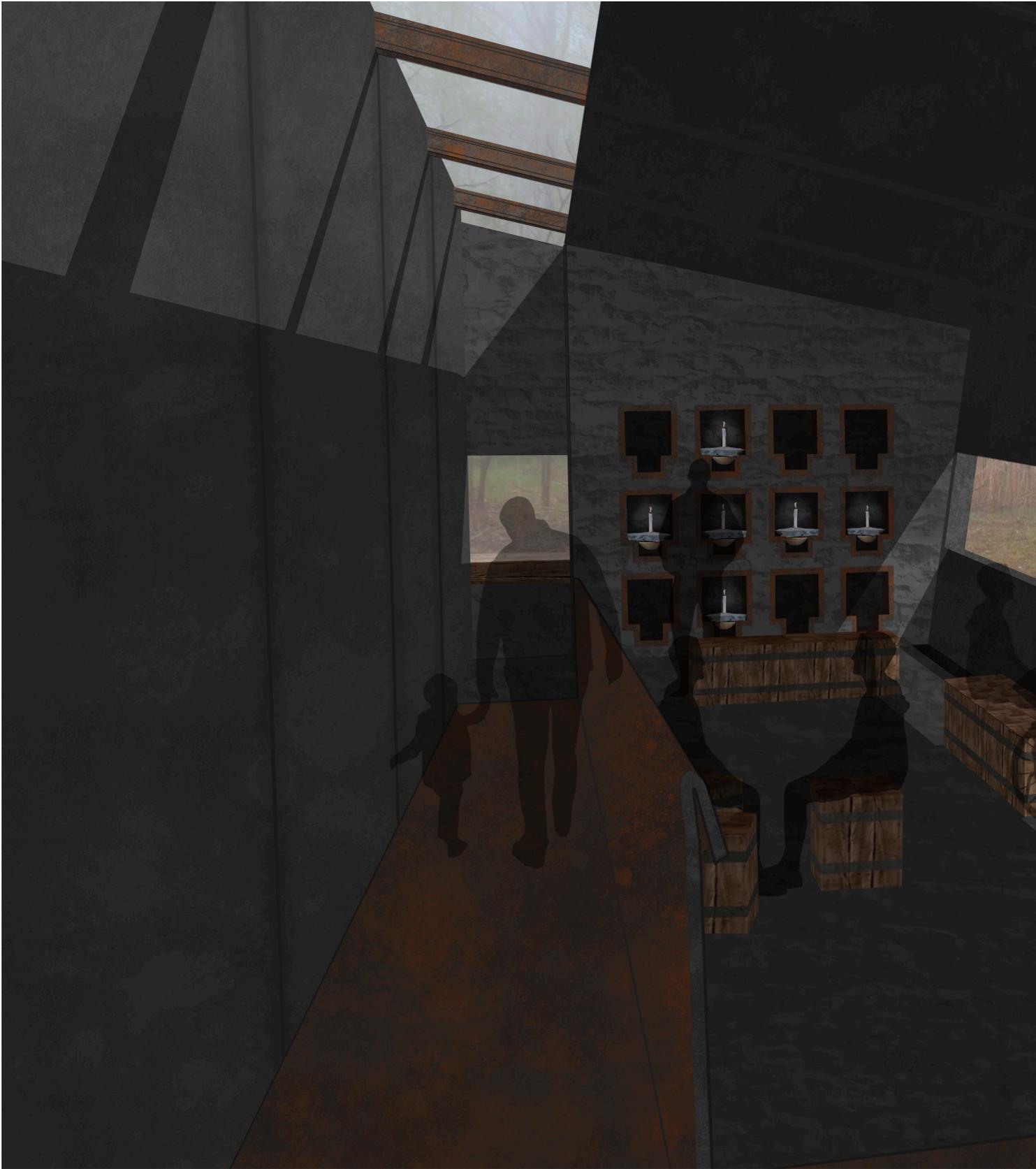
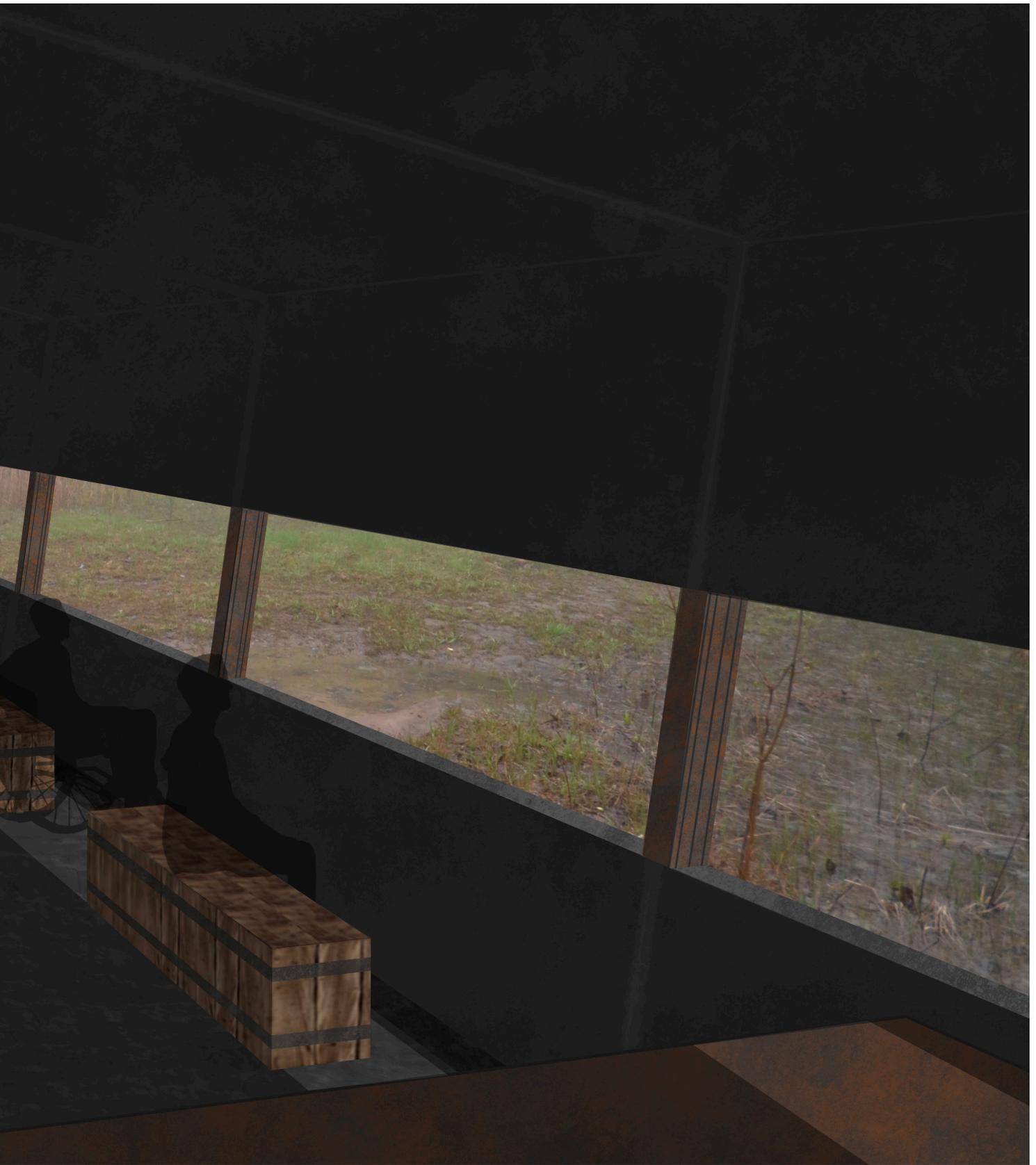


Figure 78
The interior of the symbolic relic supports an undefined program to enable various individual or communal functions.





Departing the quarry leads a mourner back to the threshold within the meadow. Passing a mourner entering the park empowers one to share their newfound mindset from their emotional journey experienced within the interventions. The qualities of the site provide opportunities for many possible journeys through the landscape. The undefined sequence of the site empowers mourners to explore the landscape through their own perceptions of the site. It is this individual dialogue between natural and constructed space that constitutes the basis of the thesis.

Figure 79

The end of the path and one's journey concludes within the crevice overlooking the community below, inspiring a sense of hope.

PART 4

ARCHITECTURE AS PEDAGOGY

Experience of Place

It is imperative that mourner's liberate themselves from conventional ways of perceiving, thinking, and experiencing emotion. The importance of the physical and emotional choreographies embedded within the landscape are essential forces that must be acknowledged during the emotional conditions of bereavement. By recognizing that a body in relation to a space and place is understood as the physical expression of the grief process, then respectively, architectural spaces influence, and curate an individual's navigation of their own inner self. Architects therefore have the capacity (and even responsibility) to design experiences that sustain opportunities for mourners to naturally explore their emotional selves through sensorial relationships to their surroundings, as grief is not solely a psychological process, but is affected by time and space.¹ The properties of architecture establish sensorial journeys through these conditions to sustain experiences, discoveries, and new perspectives of the physical landscape and one's inner emotional conditions of bereavement.

Place of Learning

The landscape can no longer be seen as a commodity of contemporary culture, but respected as a place of learning. The beneficial qualities of the natural landscape can establish therapeutic environments that engage and support grieving individuals. Respectively, designing grief architecture cannot be based on a program, but must be developed with the recognition that forms, spatial sequences, materials, and

tectonics develop atmospheres and environments that provoke one to think and imagine in new ways.² A sensorial experience of emotion along the Niagara Escarpment provides the crucial moments necessary to navigate bereavement.

Expressing the qualities of the escarpment informs a design response that pertains to a process that avoids conventional aesthetics, but rather, develops purposeful designs through the images transmitted by the forms, experiences, and emotional force that the materials carry.³ The proposed architecture is not dependent on establishing a remedial environment, but rather, becomes an extension of the restorative presence of the existing landscape that portrays many possible meanings. The experience of each intervention organizes opportunities that intrigue and provoke one to navigate the conditions of grief in relation to the qualities of the landscape that empathize with the emotions felt during loss. An individual's journey through the site becomes a rhythm of multiple perspectives that is established by each mourner's state of mind and perspective of their surroundings. Curating relationships between mourners and these environmental conditions using built forms develop relations that engage the inner and outer constructs of an individual, providing dynamic opportunities of an embodied space in place.⁴

Accordingly, integrating grief architecture within the natural landscape establishes pedagogical experiences, interactions, and perspectives that enable mourners to learn from their body relative to space.⁵ Recognizing architecture as pedagogy is imperative to support the needs of mourning individuals as grief is a lived experience. The sites chosen along the Niagara Escarpment provide the basis for the pedagogical relationships

Figure 80

A series of maps illustrate the accessibility of the thesis narrative and possible routes for personal rituals.

that are absent from contemporary grief practice. The resilient character of the landscape teaches, inspires, and embodies incomparable atmospheres that are essential to inspire mourners. The experience of the site is then curated through the movement and perspective of built forms to initiate meaningful experiences, and promote emotional well-being.

Field of Emergence

The emotional, social, physical, and cultural extensions of bereavement pertain to the idea of oneself in relation to their physical, psychological, and incorporeal surroundings. The site therefore becomes a field of emergence, or transitional space, being a relation that takes shape when one's body and mind pass through time, space, and events, and do so with undetermined directions and outcomes.⁶ This field enables oneself to emerge with physical, social, cultural, and emotional positions that assist the navigation of grief.

The thesis addresses an individual's relation to the field of emergence through the act of a pilgrimage between each intervention. The personal, yet public, journey between each built form engages the unique personal and communal characteristics of grief. Manifesting the experiences of grief within a public field distinguishes mourning as a cultural expression that affects the public as a whole, substantiating grief as a social action. Experiencing the site becomes a holistic experience between mourners that are sharing subjective interpretations of a shared realm of relationality.⁷ Navigating the field of emergence leads one to the understanding that change in life can be understood as something other than opposition. The journey through a transitional space is not a discrete spot

between past and future, but in the immanent relation that is change itself, simultaneous with one's physical, social, cultural, and emotional surroundings.⁸

Therefore, grief architecture cannot be understood without integration to a place. Architecture as pedagogy can then be viewed as a means that challenges, supports, and encourages mourner's to learn and grow during bereavement. The unique process of an individual continually exploring the concepts of time, space, and atmosphere within the boundless relation of architecture and landscape fosters new social, cultural, and emotional constructs.⁹ Qualities from the site inspire a mourner's spatial awareness to embody grief as a lived experience throughout one's life.

The Experience

Mapping the relationships between each intervention and an individual illustrates the potential impressions between a mourner and constructed space. Amorphous forms signify the dynamic and subjective relationships between a mourner, time and the landscape.

Meadow

The introductory experience within the meadow is designed to focus one's attention to their spatial awareness. As a result, the relationship between a mourner and the walls within the meadow is primarily a physical and social process of behaviour that begins to engage one's psychological and incorporeal processes. This experience initiates the reasonings and understandings of their physical, social, cultural, and emotional surroundings.

Creek

Experiencing the creek requires an individual to be attentive to their surroundings, engaging the entirety of one's spatial awareness and behavioural processes. The vulnerable emotions stimulated by the intervention consumes one's consciousness, transitioning the relationship to the creek away from a psychological process towards an incorporeal process that engages one's inner soul.

Edge

The public perception of the escarpment results in the edge intervention encouraging an engaging experience between one's psychological, behavioural, and incorporeal processes. The emotion of place is substantiated by the physical, social, and cultural notions of the danger and scale of the escarpment. While one has to cognitively relate to the physical qualities of place, the incorporeal understandings of the risk and emotional presence of the cliff engage one's incorporeal spirit.

Forest

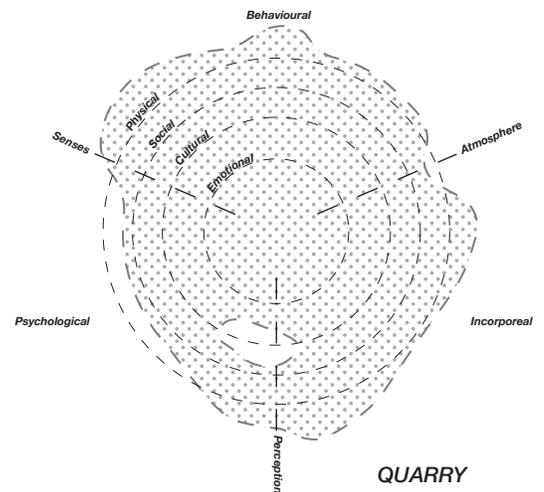
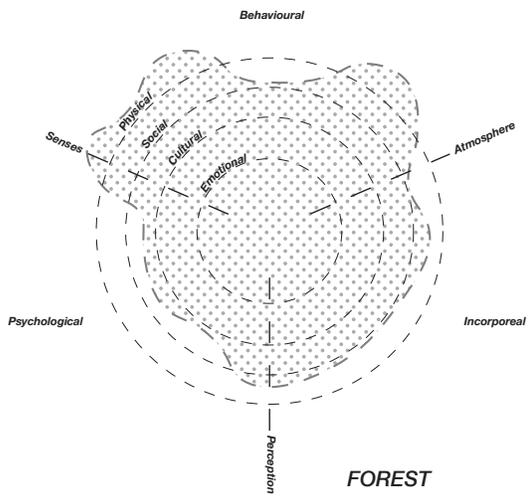
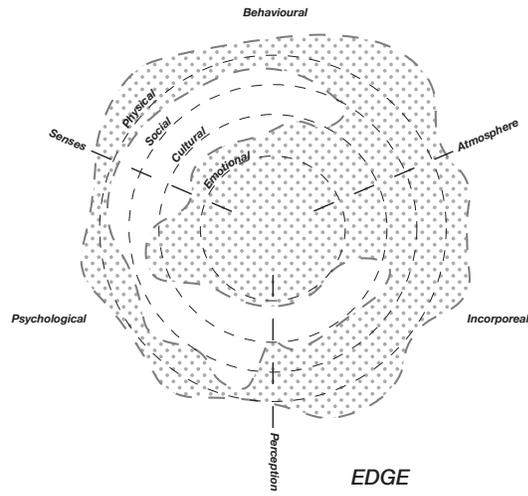
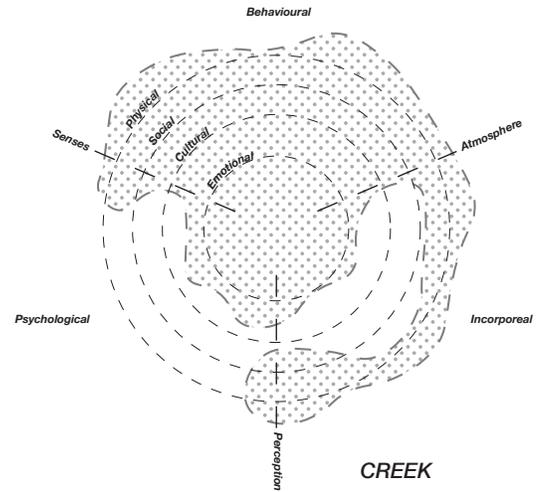
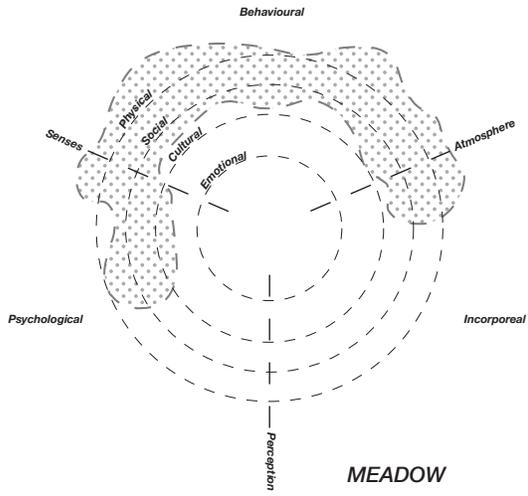
The accessible characteristics of the forest intervention suggest that one focus less on the physical engagement of the place, and rather engage the psychological and incorporeal qualities of entering the earth between precarious steel walls. The sensation of brokenness consumes one's emotional and cultural understandings of themselves while the engagement with the remembrance lantern signifies social acts of grievance.

Quarry

The final intervention discovered within the quarry encompasses an experience that engages the entirety of a grieving individual. The social act of grieving is represented through the pilgrimage

Figure 81
Mapping the emotional constructs of each intervention signifies the impact the site experience has on a mourner.

Architecture as Pedagogy

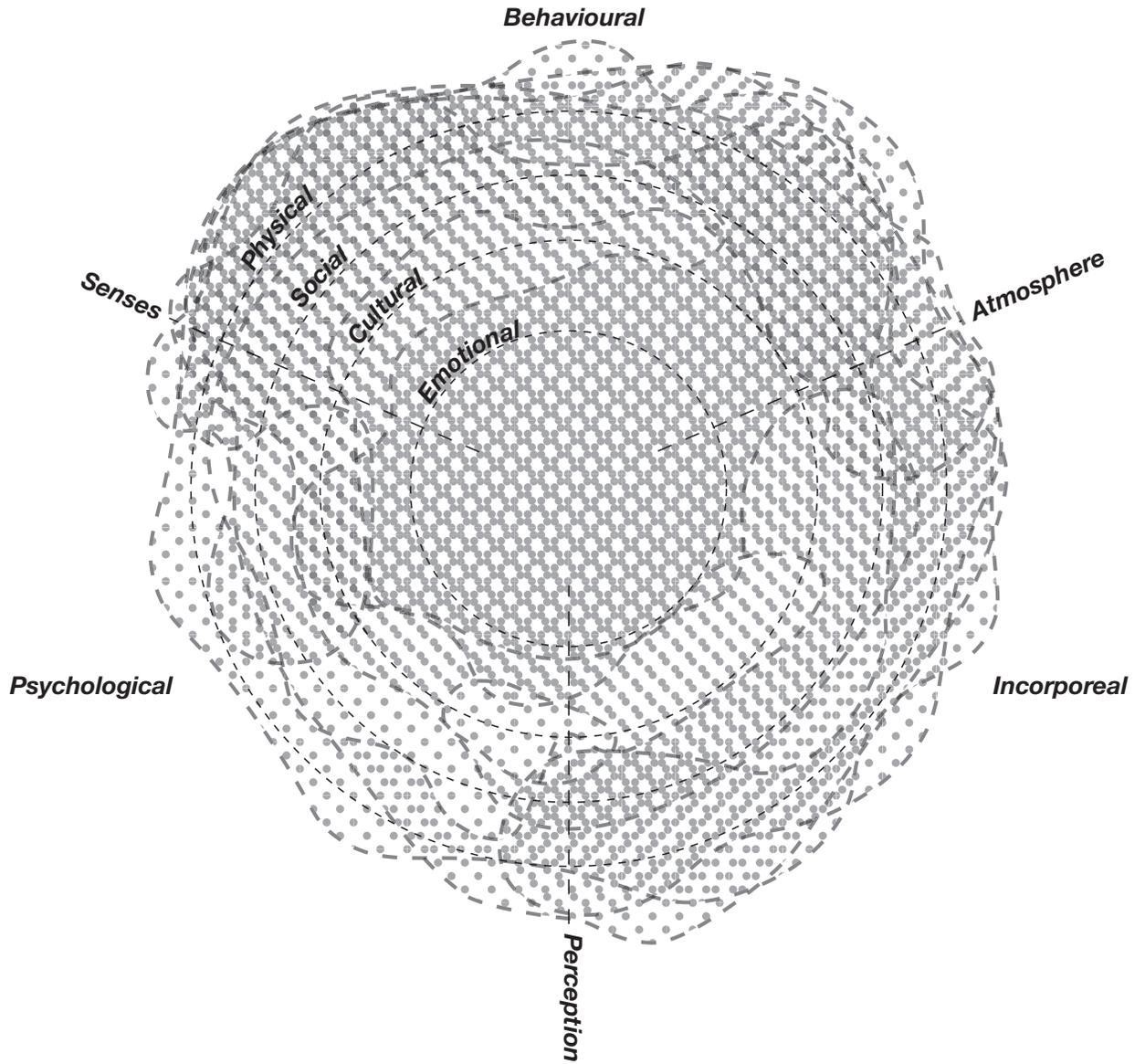


of carrying the lantern from the intimate space within the forest to the communal space of the building within the quarry. Having a space to rest, contemplate, or engage with fellow mourner's engages the psychological and behavioural processes of bereavement. The acts of witnessing the resiliency of the quarry and the completion of the pilgrimage to the path of hope within the crevice inspires the incorporeal spirit of an individual to continue their grief journey beyond of the site along the escarpment.

Site

When the experience of the site as a whole is overlaid, it becomes apparent that the acts of grieving with distinct relationships to the landscape alongside fellow mourners engages the totality of an individual. The most concentrated relationships for a mourner are within the behavioural and emotional realms. In this way, the thesis successfully used the attributes of the built environment to engage the processes of grief that are currently unsupported within contemporary society.

Figure 82
Mapping the emotional constructs of the site reveal the encompassing relationships between an individual, architecture, and the landscape.



Endnotes

- 1 Jane Rendell, *The Architecture of Psychoanalysis: Spaces of Transition*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017).
- 2 Elizabeth Ellsworth, *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy*, (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2005), 5.
- 3 Christian Norberg-Schulz, "The Geometry of Feeling" in *Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1865-1995*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 447-453.
- 4 Christian Norberg-Schulz, "On Reading Heidegger" in *Theorizing A New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1865-1995*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 440-446.
- 5 Elizabeth Ellsworth, *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy*, (New York: RoutledgeFalmer, 2005), 18.
- 6 *Ibid.*, 33.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 8 *Ibid.*
- 9 *Ibid.*, 33.

CONCLUSION

The built environment defines the geography of everyday life and influences how people experientially connect with their environments and themselves.¹ By forming architectural atmospheres and sensorial environments, a therapeutic architectural typology was developed that redefines how people navigate the emotional landscape of bereavement. A sense of community is foundational to the design response as no one should have to feel alone when navigating such pain. Therefore, the cultural expression of grief establishes the site as a place of community that relates to a mourner throughout the emotional conditions of life. The shared emotional and physical pilgrimages across the Niagara Escarpment provide new relationships with others and their surroundings that engage the embodied memories and experiences of our world. The inner language of a building only becomes a reality once the spatial and material properties of architecture are experienced. Manifesting the thesis' response in relation to the site's atmospheres enables mourners to project, relate, empathize with, and be inspired by the landscape. Perceptions of vulnerability, remembrance, resiliency, and hope embedded within the site embody the emotions of bereavement to establish a therapeutic environment for people to navigate their own narrative.

Empathetic architectural typologies are vital to sustain the inherent qualities of life and reformulate the basis of meaningful environments. This thesis does not seek to define grief architecture, but initiates a conversation of how emotional environments can communicate the restorative presence of the natural landscape, as it is vital to ensure sustainable spaces are available for people to express, navigate and manage the inherent emotions of human life. One may never fully understand

the reasoning or meanings behind grief, but coping with grief is much more about how to experience these new emotions, than obtaining answers to intangible questions.

May your own journey be fulfilled through the strength of remembrance, defining a story of reverent joy and perseverance.

Endnotes

- 1 Harry Francis Mallgrave, "Feeling-For-Form...Feeling-For-Space" in *From Object to Experience: The New Culture of Architectural Design*, (London, UK: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018), 99-116.

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