

Date

2007

Client

Omagh Borough Council

Status

Competition Entry

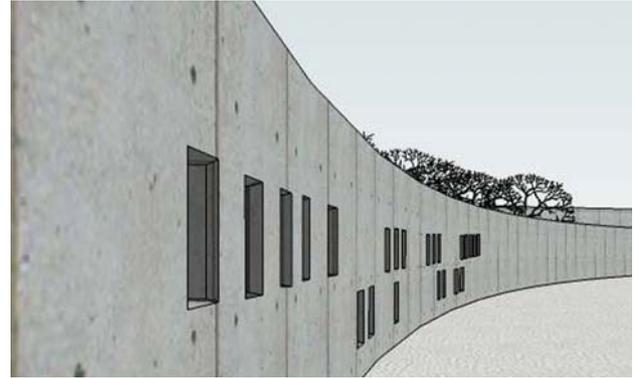
Awards

Description

“And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow” **WB Yeats** (Lake Isle of Inishfree)

Our approach is to create a simple relationship between an object and a place, a totem that will recognise the locus of horror and the court that will recognise a place for peace.

Though there is a linear chronology to the events and these all lead back to Market Street we are left with a more enduring legacy that was witnessed in the weeks after the event, with the uninvited outpouring of sympathy from all over the world through the symbolic giving of flowers.



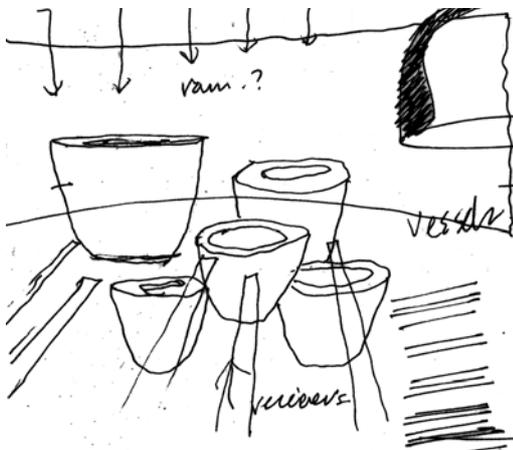
The Court

Our initial thoughts for this work were formed from two quotations, from Yeats (above) and Shakespeare’s Portia in the Merchant of Venice

“The quality of mercy is not strained; It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed- It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.”

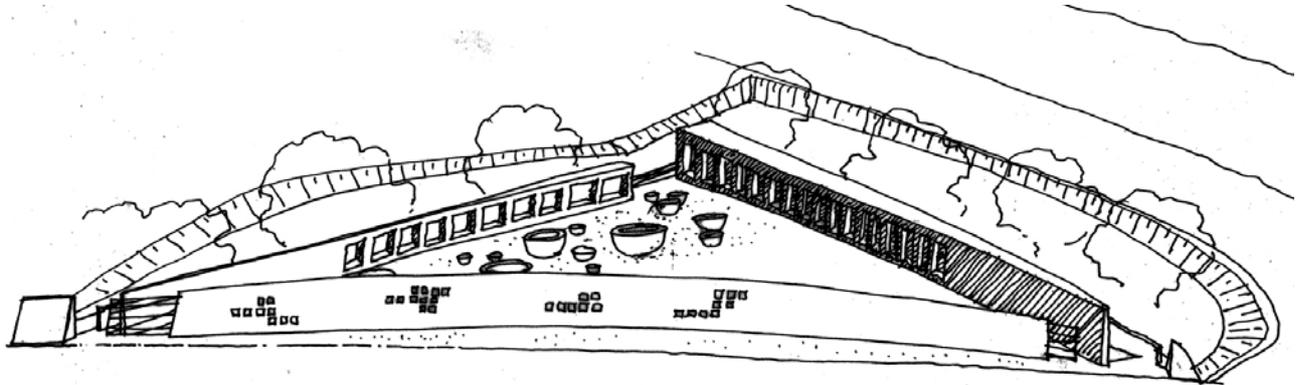
William Shakespeare (The Merchant of Venice)

Our intention is to remember those lost through the constant, persistent, powerful sound and action of water. This “dropping peace” would be small in scale necessitating its protection from external noises.



It is proposed that a triangular courtyard would be established to provide for that sense of peace necessary for going forward. It must be a place of quiet a place of reflection and a place of being. It is the antithesis of the site of horror which can never be occupied.

The new space that forms the “memorial” garden is dominated by 2 seating walls separating out part of the existing landscape for unencumbered “public use” along the river, a secular area outside the sacred inner space. The third wall is curved to facilitate an urban space for the presentation of flower bouquets either annually on the anniversary or as families feel appropriate.



The court is a place apart emphasised by the change to slow materials, gravel and sand. The sliding gates allow for the sequential closing off of the park and the court. In this court it is proposed to use the vessels (one for each of the victims) and flowering trees (one for each family/friendship group).

The court is entered at the “pinch points” at the apexes of the triangle. There is a designated route, operating along an anticlockwise rotation. One is greeted by flowering or berry laden trees. Our thoughts at present are between a type of crab apple or a yew. Obviously these choices are dependent on the development of an appropriate maintenance strategy which at present would favour the darker more sombre Yew. Passing by the 20 (representing the groups) trees you are led to an open court which is occupied by semi sunken stone vessels. In our 3rd iteration the water is held within the carved stone vessels and together they form the chorus that can be heard throughout the court. Each vessel represents one of the 32 victims, their size commensurate with the age of each person being memorialised.