

Date

2012

Client

Government of Ireland (Office of Public Works)

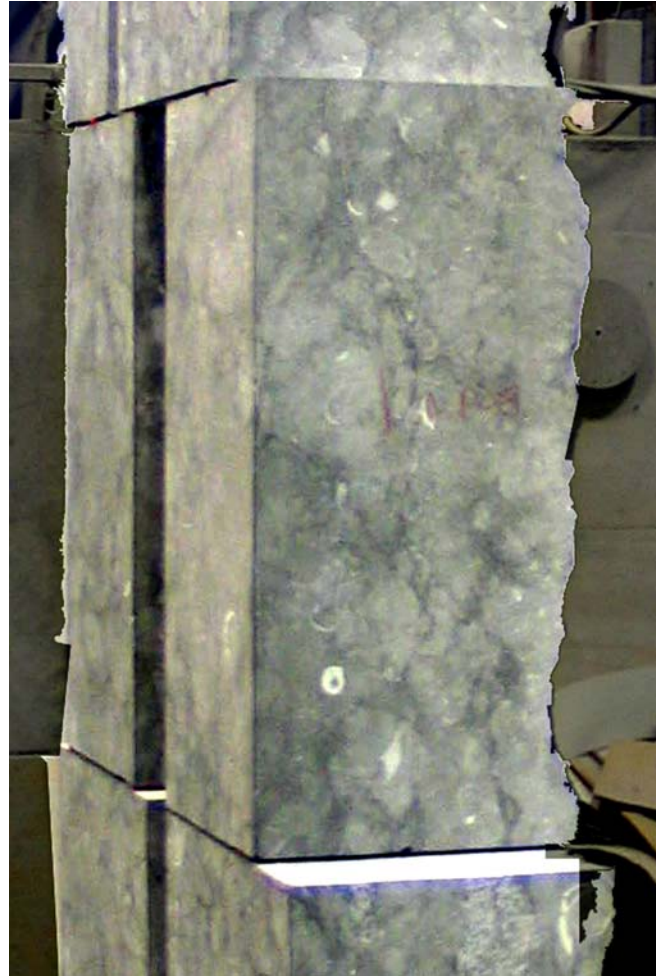
Status

Competition Entry - Finalist

Awards

Description

Deciding to memorialise the victim, the forgotten, the secreted and overlooked is a brave act. To do so in the clear light of day threatens to draw down the disgust of the people having the potential to be treated as either heroic monument or gravestone. In stoic silence the work draws the visitor into a conversation with the painful events without hyperbole or theatrics. The placement of the memorial in the Phoenix Park is a provocative act. It is necessary to place it under the watchful gaze of the President. It is a location well loved by everyone and easily accessed compared to the alternative. Placed off the main avenue It is next to the grove that celebrates “Tidy Town” community winners. It is a place of and for the people.



Constructed from the material of institutions, limestone, the memorial wall arcs over 90 metres from the commemoration grove. Defining a clearing marked in the grassland of the Phoenix Park it sits opposite Áras an Uachtaráin, under the watch of the President. Here, accessible to the nation, it leaves an indelible mark in the mind of the visitor. Between the stone arc and the nearby path is a glass wall which carries the state's apology. The wall is broken, letting through light and air. It is the antithesis of the institutional wall. The curve centres the space beyond providing a sounding space for families and other visitors. From the path people can be seen in the great space beyond. To the fore the glass wall provides a screen for the light that streams through the openings during the day.



The wall is necessarily massive. Though capable of being an inertia wall the individual blocks are dowelled together to form a continuous framework. No opening at the lower level is greater than 100mm. The “rear” and sides of the stones have a sawn finish revealing the fossils buried in the stone. Though unpolished the stone reveals this secret when wet.

The stone comes from a 900mm bed from a quarry in Old Leighlin. The top and bottom of the bed is untreated exposing the undulating topography of its past. Split in two the two alternate beds become the “front façade” of the great circular space.

