

Approach

Our memorialization design process utilizes multiple mediums of expression to create interactive public spaces. These spaces occupy the intersection between art, architecture and landscape. Our goal is to weave these elements together to visually communicate a powerful historic narrative and space of reflection.

We believe our multi-disciplinary team is uniquely qualified and has significant experience with projects of this magnitude and significance. We are passionate about what we do and it is our mission in life to create public spaces that communicate history in a transformative manner. We believe our approach will exhibit the proper sensitivity to the complexity and historical importance of the Ed Johnson Memorial Project

Research, site analysis and community engagement are critical parts of our process in establishing a memorialization concept that is sensitive to the historic, cultural, environmental and political context. The first and most crucial step of initiating the process for the design of the Ed Johnson Memorial Project is to work with the client and community stakeholders to establish primary goals and objectives we feel are critical to a successful memorialization design process.

The following are some criteria we believe are critical to the successful completion of the Ed Johnson Memorial Project and will be emphasized throughout the process.

EDUCATION

We believe the Ed Johnson Memorial Project must communicate and educate.

The memorial must communicate history for generations to come. As one engages the monument both visually and physically, one must become enlightened to the historic significance of this tragic event. The memorial must be a medium of communication and education for people of all ages, genders, religions, nationalities and ethnicities. The memorial must also be able to flexibly accommodate groups of people congregating communally within and around it in celebration and reflection. This is especially critical for young children that will visit during school trips. The memorial must also provide an intimate scale space to pass through for personal reflection and contemplation at the scale of the individual.

URBAN PRESENCE

We believe the Ed Johnson Memorial Project must have a significant and powerful urban presence.

The site occupies the intersection of multiple points of access and infrastructure and as such should operate on multiple levels. There is an opportunity for the memorial to act as a primary urban focal point facing Walnut Plaza. It should be a beacon, prominently displayed and be seen from a distance and stand out to compete visually and formally with the complex fabric of its surroundings. It may also function as a gateway connecting Walnut Plaza to Tennessee River Walk. The memorial site also occupies a green space that can serve as an “oasis” from the surrounding urban context therefore landscaping shall be a critical part of our process.

CULTURE

We believe the Ed Johnson Memorial Project must be culturally healing.

The memorial should provide an opportunity for people of different backgrounds to come together in acknowledgement of a historic tragedy and a common history and at the same time to transcend that history. In that way healing can take place and cultural boundaries can be transcended. The desire is not to dwell on the pain of the past but to learn from it so that we may inspire and transform future generations.

INTERACTIVE

We believe the Ed Johnson Memorial Project must be interactive and participatory.

Through the implementation of multiple mediums of expression such as landscaping, lighting, sculpture, text, maps, etc. the memorial can amplify sensory engagement. Visitors can become active participants through physical action and interaction. One should be able to see, touch, feel and even listen as part of the experience with the monument. The monument must be interactive and encourage some form of physical engagement especially with young people. It is a living breathing place.

Rodney Leon