CIRCLE OF REMEMBRANCE FOR THE ENSLAVED

OLIVIA BOON UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE SENIOR CAPSTONE

THE JOHN DICKINSON PLANTATION

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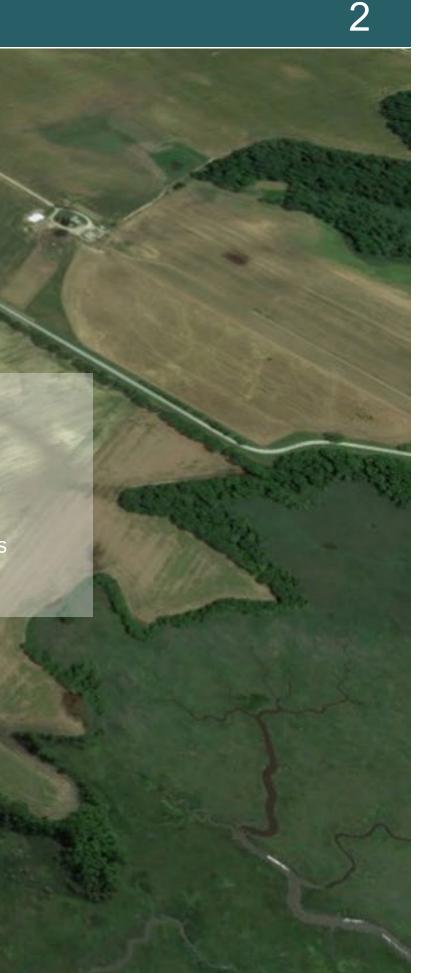
Site Analysis

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INTRODUCTION

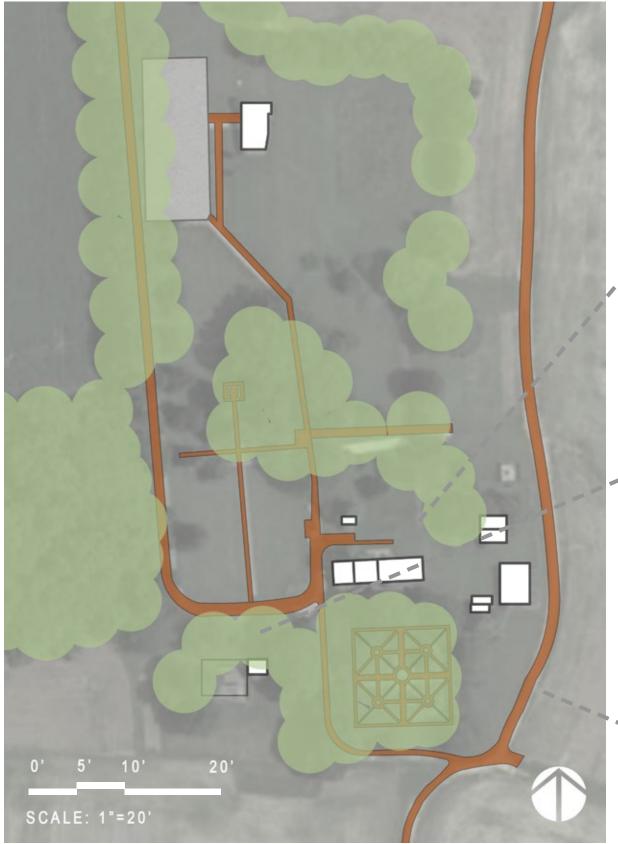
As a Senior Capstone project, I had the honor of designing an area of reflection for the John Dickinson Plantation. The plantation was the home of John Dickinson, who promoted freedom and liberty during the American Revolution, yet simultaneously enslaved human beings. The purpose of the project is to encourage thinking and healing regarding its complicated history.



Olivia Boon | LARC467

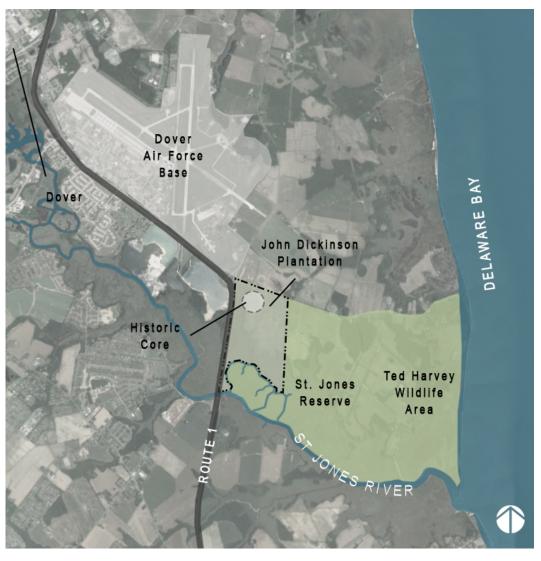
SITE ANALYSIS - LOCATION

John Dickinson Plantation, 340 Kitts Hummock Rd, Dover, DE 19901









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Map 2- Site location map

LOCATION

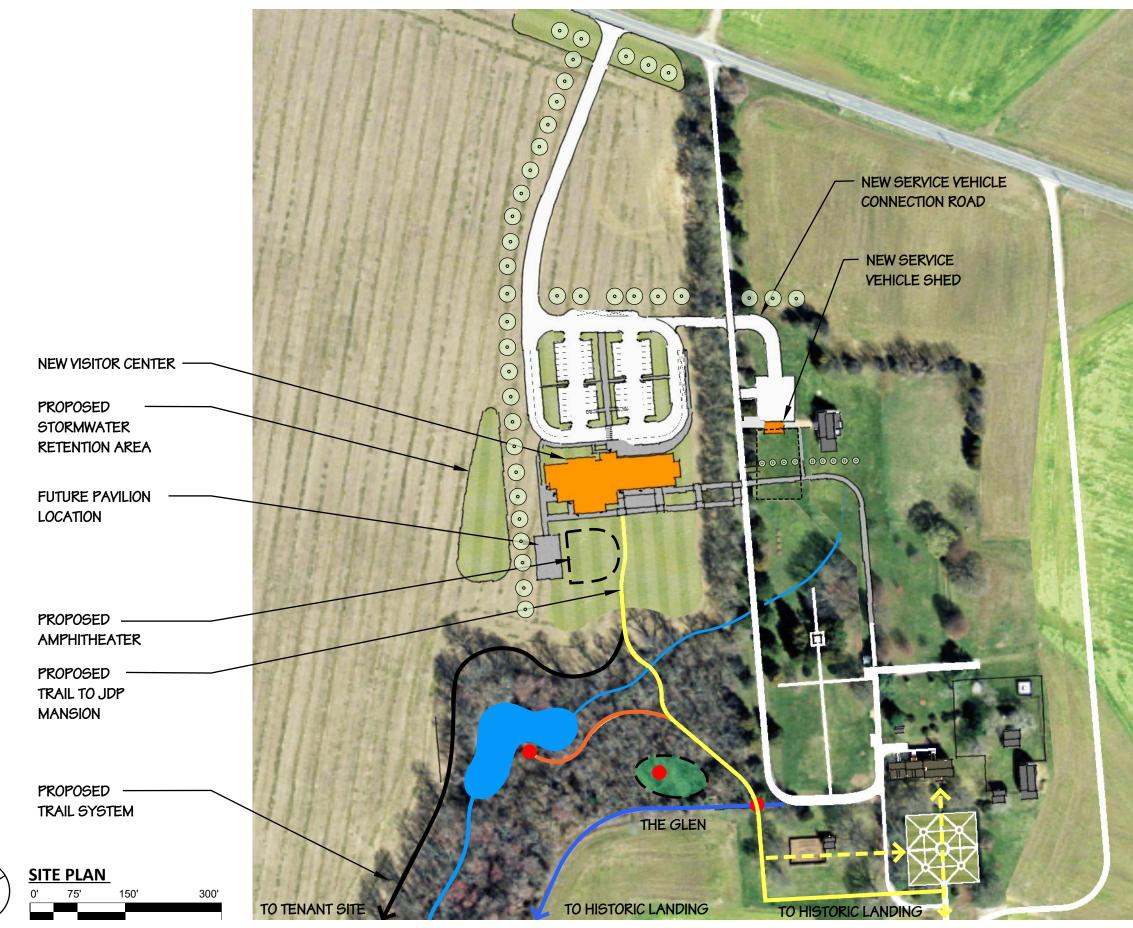
The John Dickinson Plantation is located between the capitol city of Dover and the Delaware Bay. The plantation is situated near the historically significant St. Jones River. While the sprawling Dover Air Force Base and Route 1 generate vehicular and air traffic, the state-owned St. Jones Reserve and Ted Harvey Wildlife Area will remain untouched by development.

A HISTORIC SITE

The John Dickinson Plantation is a historic site and museum where visitors can learn about founding father John Dickinson and life on an 18th century plantation. The staff are dedicated to telling the full story of the plantation's inhabitants, from the plantation owners to the tenant farmers to the enslaved people that made the system work. Olivia Boon | LARC467

Agricultural field

SITE ANALYSIS - MASTER PLAN



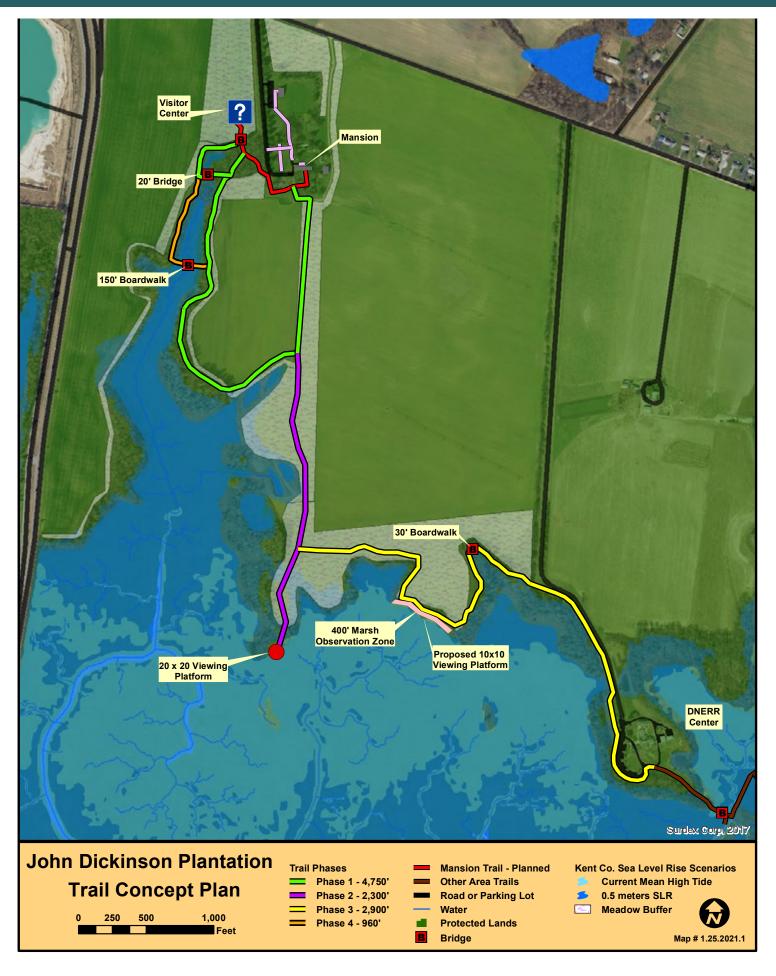
Map 3- Bernardon proposed plan



VISITOR'S CENTER

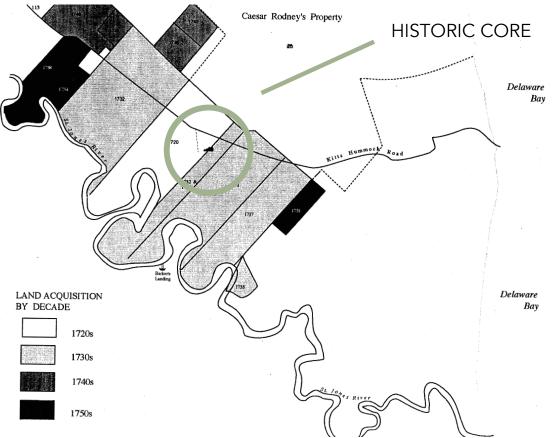
The John Dickinson Plantation intends to open a new visitor's center. The visitor's center was part of a master plan designed by Bernardon, an architecture firm. This plan is part of a larger design, including new trails that connect the JDP to the St. Jones Reserve.

SITE ANALYSIS - TRAIL PLAN





SITE ANALYSIS - HISTORY



Map 5- Land acquisition from the 1720's through the 1750's

THE PLANTER LANDSCAPE

Revolutionary figure John Dickinson was raised on the plantation and managed the property from Philadelphia and Wilmington as an adult. Tenant farmers occupied the property and cultivated the agricultural fields. They utilized the St. Jones River for transportation and the shipping of goods, as well as roads. People in this area were known as "Philawereans" because of the essential role Philadelphia played in their economic, political, and social lives. It is important to note how this expansive and connected planter's landscape differs from the experience of the enslaved people.

THE SLAVE LANDSCAPE

The operation of the John Dickinson Plantation is largely accedited to the enslaved people who were forced to labor there. There is little documentation of the firsthand experience of slaves due to historical erasure. Enslaved history has also been visually erased, as the single slave dwelling is a reconstruction, misrepresenting what would have been numerous buildings. It is known that there was a significant free Black population in the St. Jones area. The recent discovery of a burial ground for the enslaved presents an opportunity to better represent the enslaved people in the landscape.



Figure 1- The reconstructed grainery (left) and feedbarn (right)



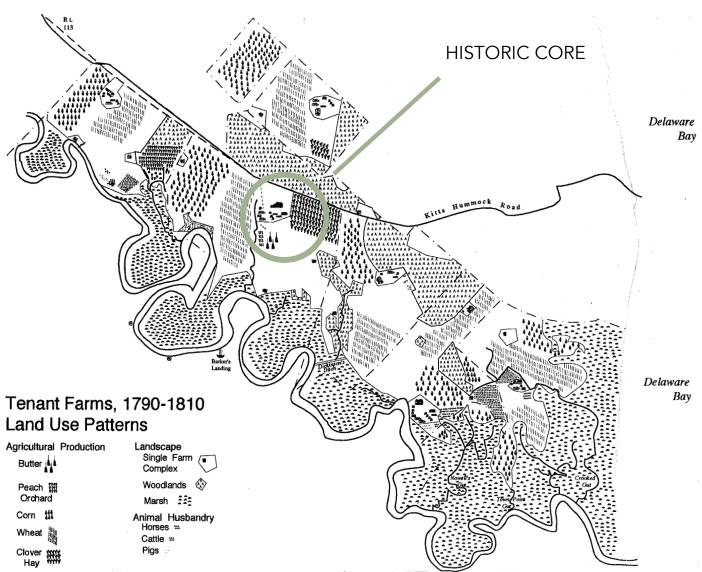
Figure 2- The mansion front and courtyard

THE PROPERTY

The John Dickinson property was 5,000 acres at its peak. Currently, the plantation is 450 acres. Much of the land was lost after John Dickinson's death. Agricultural products cultivated on the land include peaches, corn, wheat, clover, hay, and livestock. These products were exported via the St. Jones to Philadelphia.

THE HOUSE

The house itself is of early Georgian style, and the courtyard is a Colonial Revival addition from the 1950's. The house was rebuilt after a fire in 1804. The house was built facing the river, not the road, as this was the primary mode of travel at the time.



Agricultural Production	Landscape Single Farm Complex
Peach 🏢 Orchard	Woodlands 🐼
Corn ## Wheat Clover ### Hay ####	Animal Husbandry Horses ::: Cattle ::: Pigs ::

Map 6- Land use patterns from 1790-1810

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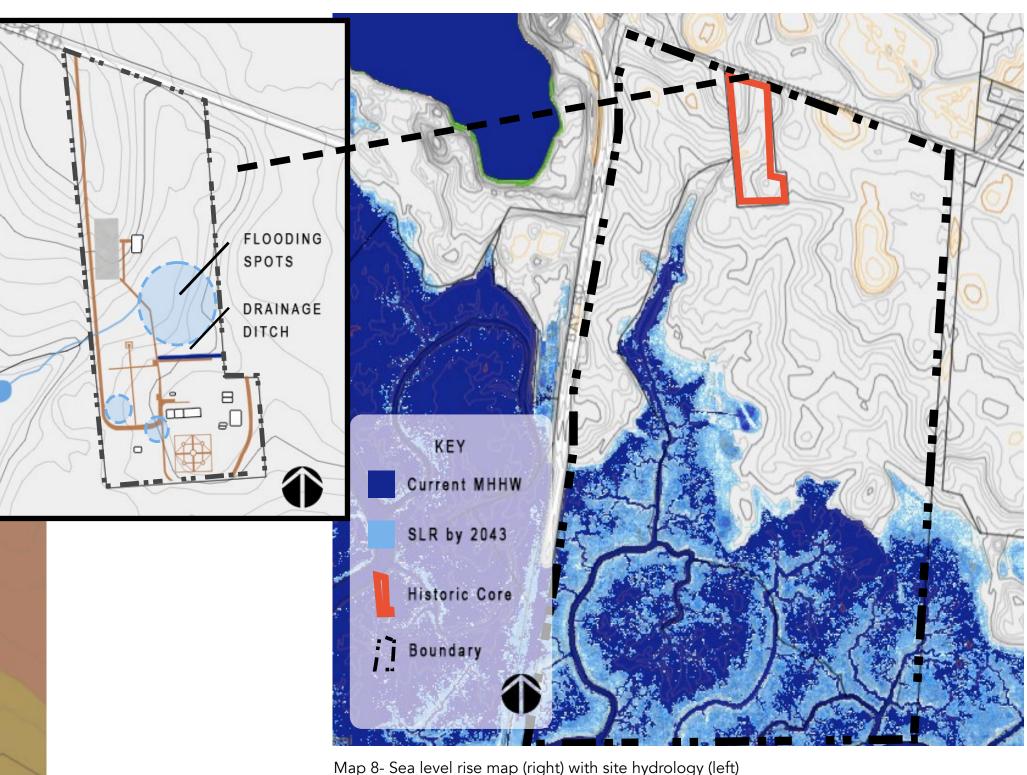
SITE ANALYSIS - SOIL AND HYDROLOGY

SOIL

- Greenwhich loam- 0-2 percent slope, well-drained
- Nassawango silt loam- 0-2 percent slope, well-drained
- Mattapex silt loam- 0-2 percent slope, well-drained
- Mattapeake silt loam- 0-2, 2-5 percent slope, well-drained

The John Dickinson Plantation is located within a floodplain, so soils drain water well and are incredibly fertile.





HYDROLOGY

Due to relatively flat and low-lying topography, there is some pooling of water on the site. A man-made pond is situated near the historic core, which drains into an adjacent agricultural field. Sea level rise may cause the river's level to increase, posing a challenge for the preservation of the historic core.

Map 7- Soil type map

SITE ANALYSIS - MATERIALS AND VEGETATION

MATERIALS

The materials within the historic core are reminiscent of Colonial Revivalism, painting the picture of a colonial plantation that is not quite accurate. The materials have a relatively natural and earthy color palette.



Basketweave brick path



Asphalt and gravel driveway



Painted wood exterior of the house



Reddish concrete path Figure 3- Materials on site



Unfinished wood exterior of the outbuilding



Unfinished wood exterior of the outbuilding





Juniperus virginiana

llex opaca





Magnolia grandiflora

Asimina triloba

Figure 4- Planted vegetation within historic core

VEGETATION

The plantation is located within the Middle Atlantic Coastal Plain Ecoregion, which is known for ecological diversity. The native vegetation on the site is most likely within the Mesic Coastal Plain Oak Forest plant community. The planted vegetation within the historic core consists of native trees. Juniper trees, symbolic of graveyards, surround the grave of Samuel Dickinson. A hedgerow separates the road from the western field, but otherwise there are no free-growing shrubs or trees.

8



Lagerstroemia indica



Prunus persica

RESEARCH - PRECEDENT STUDY

THE WHITNEY PLANTATION MUSEUM

The next step in the design process was to examine other interpretations of African American and enslaved landscapes. The Whitney Plantation Museum is the only museum in Louisiana centered on the lives of the enslaved people. Visitors learn about the history of slavery on a southern sugarcane plantation through memorials and historic buildings. The Big House is treated as secondary to the tour experience, taking visitors first through the plantation grounds and sobering memorials. Throughout the grounds, there is a central motif of enslaved children, informed by the Federal Writers' Project. These narratives are reflected in poignant dedications like the Allees Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, a grass allee flanked by granite walls engraved with the names of enslaved people.

DESIGN APPLICATION

The Whitney Plantation realistically tells the story of slavery by preserving historic features like the mansion and the slaves' quarters. At the same time, the memorials and statues are distinctly modern, showing that historic sites do not have to be strictly authentic. The use of modern materials and forms communicate hope for a better future. This message can be applied at the John Dickinson Plantation, where visitors will need to reflect on the complicated past.

PUBLIC REACTIONS

The museum's honest presentation of slavery has garnered visceral public reactions, both negative and positive. The second comment below is a Yelp review that went viral, soliciting responses in support of the Whitney's mission to educate people on the realities of living in slavery. The sensitivity surrounding the discussion of slavery serves as a reminder that the system's legacy is still felt in the United States.

> "Would not recommend. Tour was all about how hard it was for the slaves and how hard done by they were. They forget how hard it was for most poor people in those days anywhere in the world. Go somewhere different if you want to experience a plantation tour."

"My husband and I were extremely disappointed in this tour. We didn't come to hear a lecture on how the white people treated slaves, we came to get this history of a southern plantation and get a tour of the house and grounds. The tour guide was so radical about slave treatment we felt we were being lectured and bashed about the slavery."

"Forget your discomfort, or mine, or anyone else's. History is history. It happened, and it MUST be learned so we can move forward to not only understand that the implications of what happened are still happening right now, but also to try and be better."



Figure 5- The slaves' quarters







Figure 6- The children in the Antioch Baptist Church



Figure 7- The Allees Gwendolyn Midlo Hall

RESEARCH - RESEARCH BRIEF

"The City of the Dead: The Place of Cultural Identity and Environmental Sustainability in the African-American Cemetery" by Diane Jones

MOUNT AUBURN CULTURAL OVERLAYS

The design of Mount Auburn is not significant because of landscape architecture, but because of the cultural overlays that have shaped the landscape over time.

- The African-American landscape experience defines Mount Auburn
- This is associated with randomized forms, a forced connection to the land, and spiritual beliefs rooted in protecting nature
- Appearance of the cemetery is overgrown and random, with personal items left on graves
- Sign of ritual and not disturbing nature, rather than Euro-American concepts of tidiness
- Serves multiple functions within the African-American communityreflection, family gatherings, worship, and respite

BURIAL PRACTICES

The Mount Auburn Cemetery was founded in Baltimore in 1882 as the "The City of the Dead for Colored People." It is now the last remaining African-American burial site in the city.

In order to inform the design John Dickinson Plantation Area of Reflection, I examined African-American burial practices at the Mount Auburn Cemetery. It is important to incorporate references to African-American burial practices in a space where those practices were repressed.

DESIGN APPLICATION

- Grave marking, an ongoing ritual that includes using everyday items like plants, dolls, wooden boards, photos, and fabric to mark graves is common at African-American burial sites. Grave markings at JDP could be used to honor the slaves who were named in the manumission
- The free-flowing and undesigned nature of Mount Auburn is a reflection of the rituals and customs that take place there. A space for freedom of expression or to leave objects behind could aid people in reflection at JDP
- The untamed nature at Mount Auburn is a respectful nod to leaving mother nature to do her work. Naturalistic plantings at JDP could generate this same feeling of being connected to the earth.



Figure 8- Grave layout



Figure 9- Nature reclaiming the cemetery





Figure 10- Grave marking at the Holsey plot

RESEARCH - RESEARCH BRIEF

"Agents of memorialization: Gunter Demnig's Stolpersteine and the individual (re-)creation of a Holocaust landscape in Berlin" by Matthew Cooke and Micheline van Riemsdijk

MEMORIALIZATION

In order to inform the design John Dickinson Plantation Area of Reflection, I looked at how Holocaust victims were memorialized by the Stolpersteine, or "stumbling stones" project. German artist Gunter Demnig uses small stumbling stones to commemorate individual Holocaust victims at their former homes and businesses with plaques in the ground.

INDIVIDUAL AGENTS OF MEMORIALIZATION

The Stolpersteine project is recognized for "individual agents of memorialization," which uses the involvement of impacted descendents to fund, create, and install memorials dedicated to individual victims. Typically, government sponsored memorials are large statues that commemorate the group of victims, rather than individuals, losing parts of the narrative in the process.

DESIGN APPLICATION

As I move forward with the Area for Reflection design, I will use individual agents of memorialization like the Stolpersteine.

- The concept of reclaiming individual names felt like a powerful tool of memorialization. I want to incorporate agents of memorialization by memorializing the available names of those who were enslaved at JDP.
- Reclaiming space is another powerful tool of memorializing victims. By dedicating a larger portion of the property to the enslaved, their narrative can be given the proper attention as the individuals most impacted by the plantation system, and the largest group of individuals within it
- While the stones are respectfully acknowledging the past, they also bring closure to those in the present. Bringing the descendants into the stone installations and giving them space to grieve or perform rituals offers opportunity for healing. This also could be applied to the descendants of JDP figures.





Figure 12- Stolperstein, translation: "Here Lived Felix Mechelsohn Born 1888 Deported 1939 [unknown]"



Figure 11- Demnig holding Stolpersteine

RESEARCH - CASE STUDY

290 Broadway, New York, New York 10007

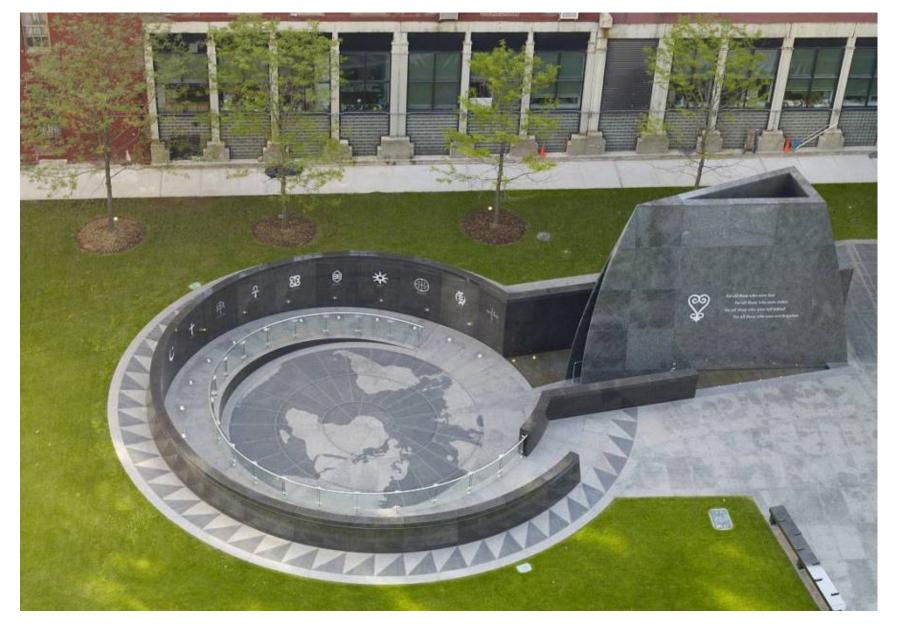


Figure 13- An aerial view of the monument

DESIGN APPLICATION

- The African Burial Ground Memorial uses topography to separate the visitors from the city around them, creating a sacred space. By employing this same sense of separation at JDP, the Area of Reflection can be a more sacred experience.
- The memorial is designed to accomodate both groups and individuals. This use of scale could be utilized at the JDP to accomodate the different user groups for different activities.
- The African Burial Ground Memorial has a map of the extent of the burial grounds on the wall of the chamber. It is important for JDP visitors also to understand the scale of the space they are in to grasp the site's story. A map of the Dickinson boundaries or other relavant spaces could provide this context.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEMORIALIZATION

This case study examines how both African-American culture and memorialization were used to commemorate the burial site at the African Burial Ground Memorial. The methods used at the African Burial Ground Memorial could be utilized to honor the enslaved individuals buried at the John Dickinson Plantation.

In 1991, a buried gravesite of over 15,000 free and enslaved Black people was discovered in New York City. In the 1790's, the entire cemetery had been covered with 20 feet of dirt due to the nearby leveling of hills, burying a piece of history and Black culture.

THE AFRICAN BURIAL GROUND DESIGN

Rodney Leon and AAARIS Architects memorial design was chosen in 2004. "Seven Elements" informed by spiritual and cultural African practices and beliefs memorialize the free and enslaved Black people of New York. Key design elements include:

- of contemplation.



Figure 14- Entrance to the Ancestral Chamber at night



• The Ancestral Chamber- A granite structure that rises the height that one would have to dig to reach the original burial ground. The form is inspired by traditional and monumental African archetypes, and represents a ship vessel to take the user to a place

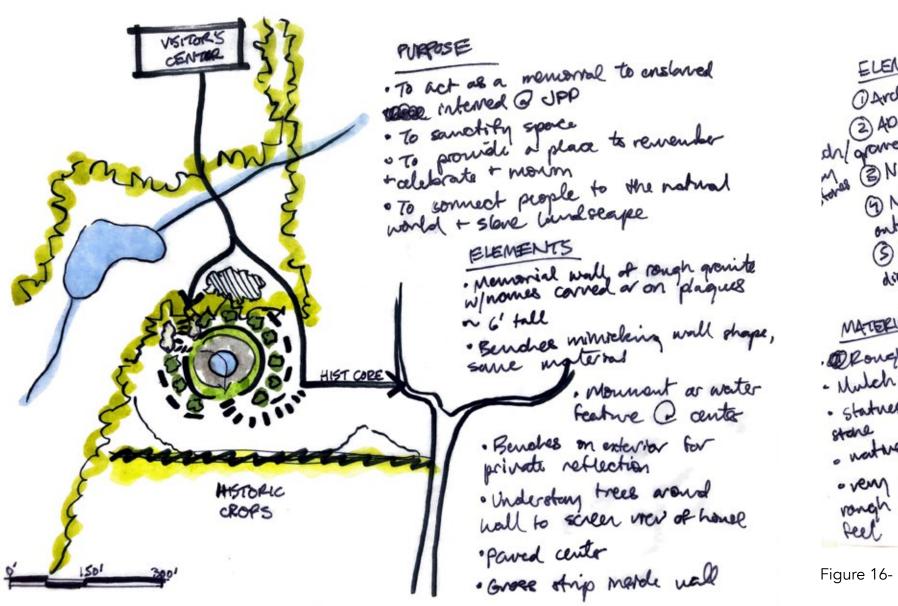
• The Circle of the Diaspora- Signs, symbols, and images are carved into a granite wall and represent cultures from Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

• The Ancestral Libation Court- Within the walls of the Circle of the Diaspora is the Ancestral Libation Court, a circular gathering space. "Libation" is an act that works as an offering and links past, present, and future generations. A map of Africa is carved on the floor, showing paterns of migration of Black people to America.

DESIGN PROCESS - CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAMS

INITIAL DESIGN

Following site analysis, research, and site visits, I diagrammed two areas of reflection: A Circle of Remembrance and a Path of Transition. These initial concepts are grounded in the idea that the slave landscape is largely invisible, besides the lone reconstructed slave dwelling at JDP. By using new forms and African diaspora symbolism, the enslaved experience could be rendered visible to all.



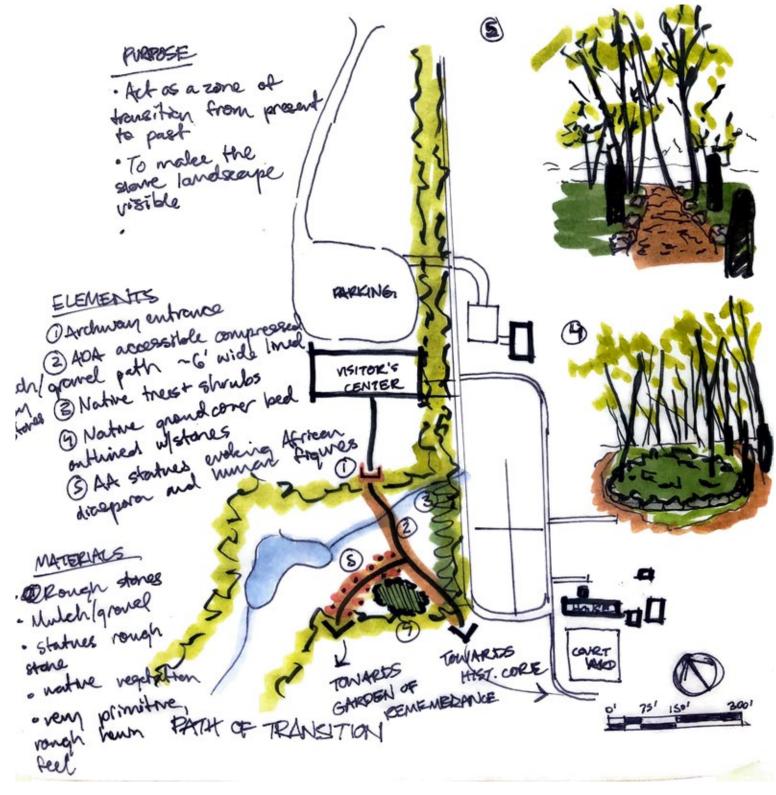
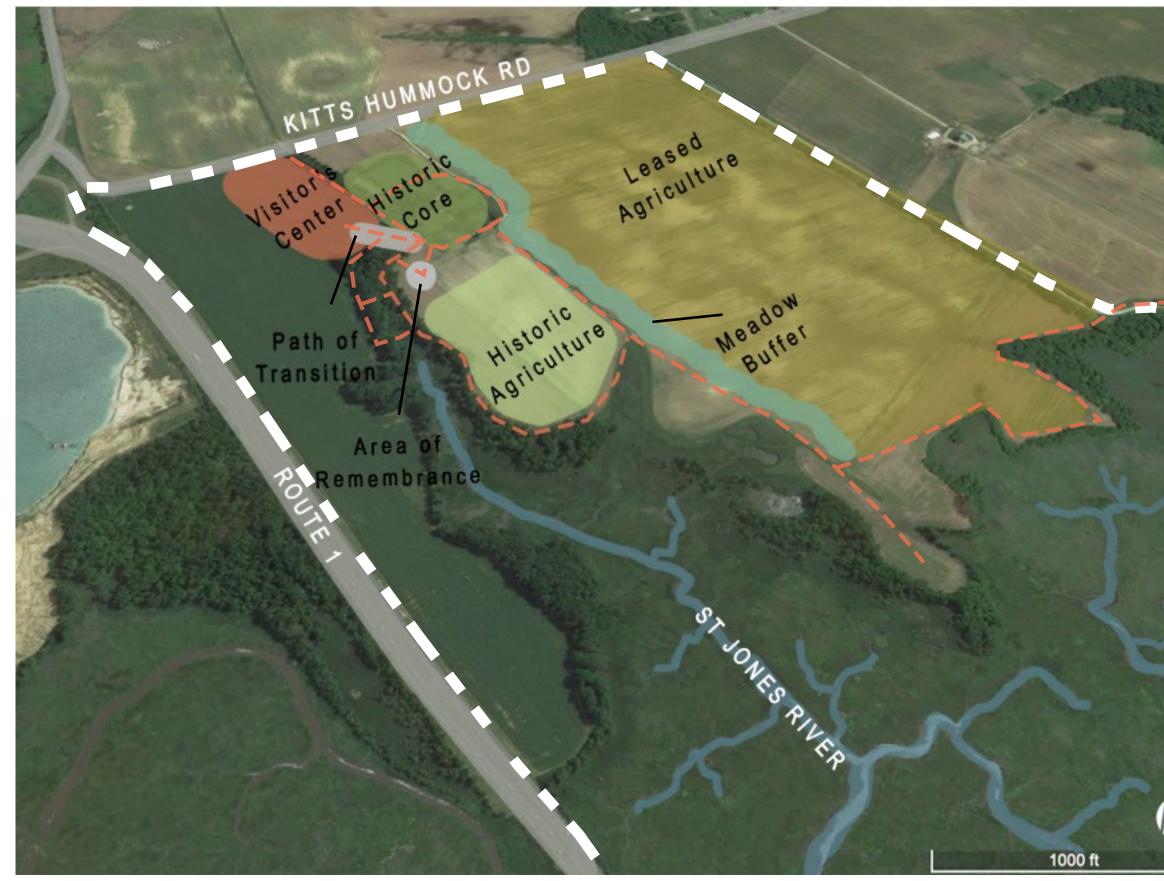


Figure 16- Path of Transition conceptual diagram

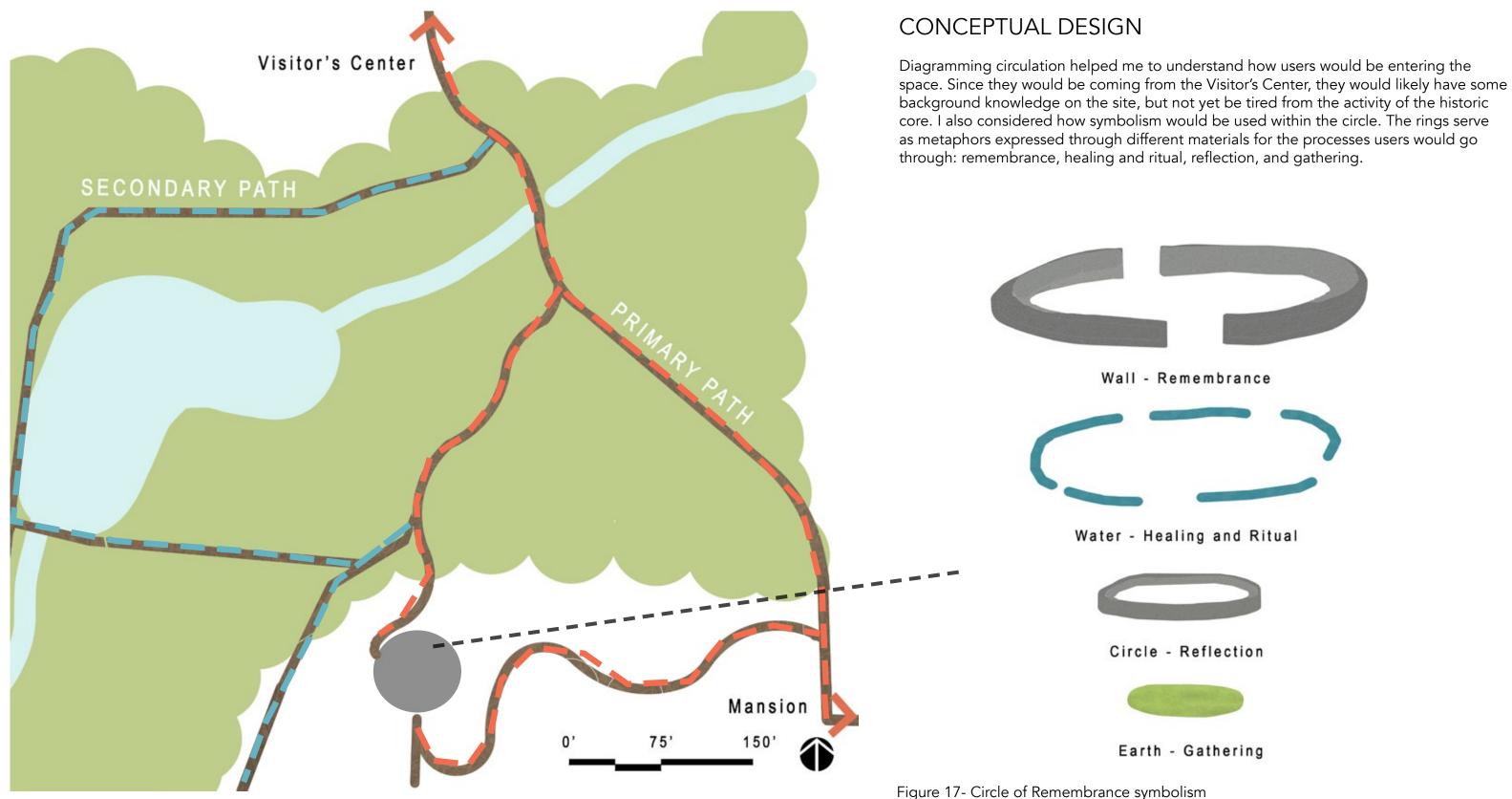


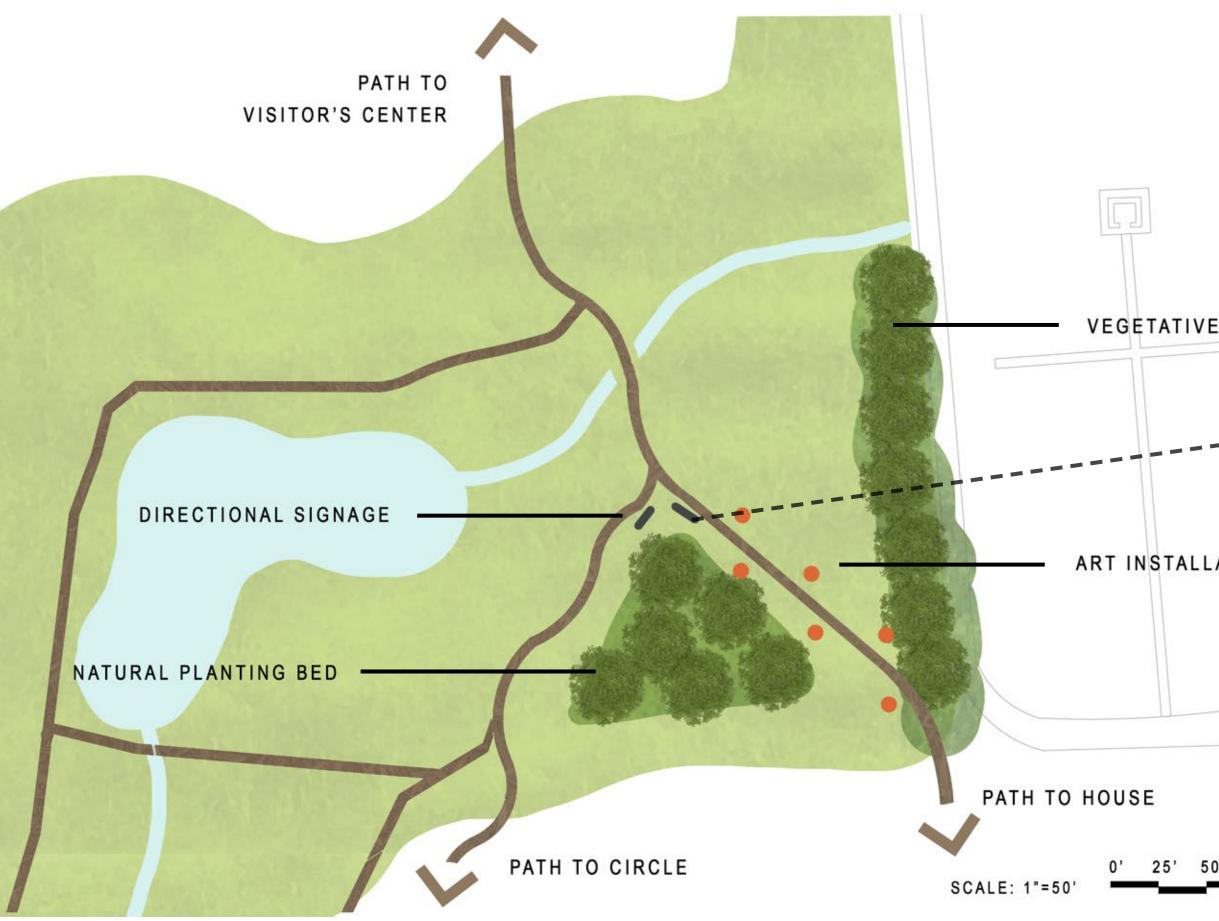




CONCEPT MAP

The areas are located in a grove that creates separation from the slaver's landscape (the historic core). These areas fit within the trail concept plan. Visitors would be compelled to walk through the trail and area of reflection to access the mansion. This location is also accessible and protected by the treeline.





16



Figure 18- Path of transition plan

ART INSTALLATIONS

CONCEPTUAL DESIGN

The purpose of the Area of Transition is to prepare visitors to step into the past. Through art installations representing African diaspora by an artist with African-American heritage, users could begin to realize the slave landscape. The vegetative screen protects the area from the view of the mansion. The left path ultimately leads to the Circle of Reflection, giving users a choice of the enslaved experience or the enslavers.



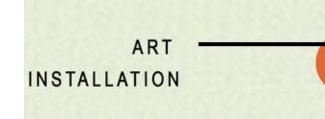
THE CIRCLE OF REMEMBRANCE

The Circle of Remembrance encourages visitors to remember, reflect, heal, and gather in honor of the enslaved individuals at the John Dickinson Plantation. The materials of earth, stone, and water are represented in the rings, grounding the design. Users would have a view of an art installation in the distance, transforming the field into a new landscape. This iteration of the Circle is unsuccessful because the circle form is unrelated to the history or context of JDP. Another issue with the design is that the Circle is not connected in away to the enslaved burial grounds discovered on site.

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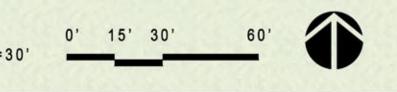
WALL

BENCH

A'

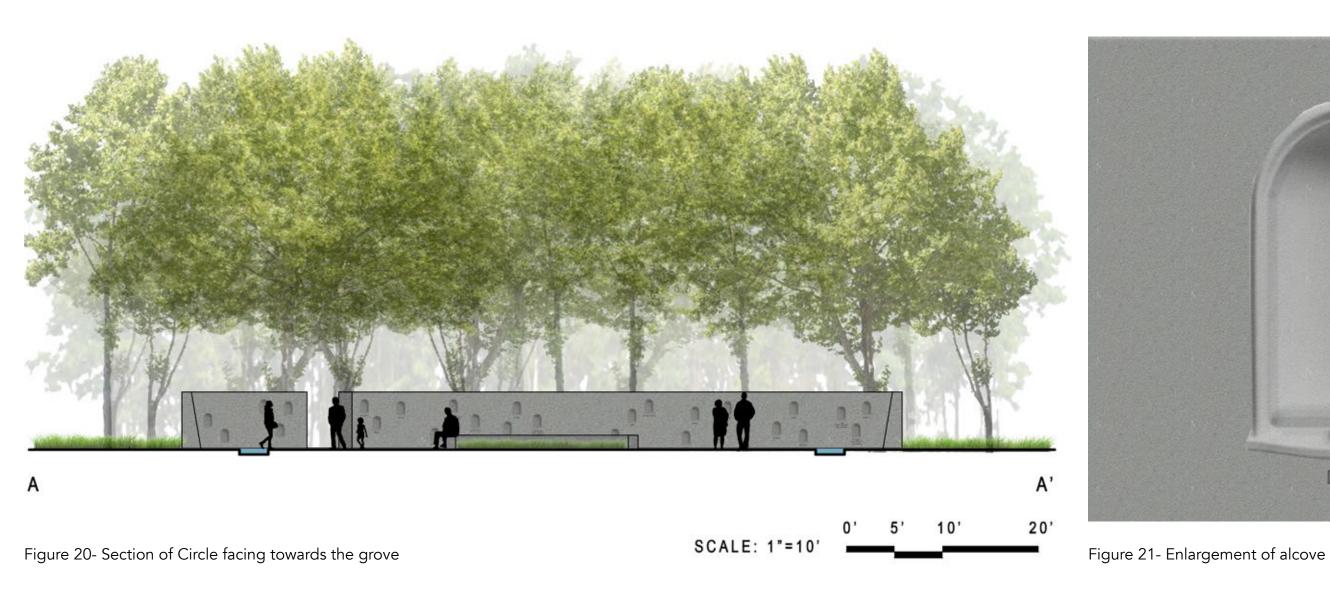


VEGETATIVE SCREEN



THE ALCOVES

While the alcoves successfully serve to memorialize the enslaved individuals at the plantation and give a space for people to leave grave markers, their form did not have a strong enough context.







DESIGN PROCESS - FINAL LOCATION

CIRCLE OF REMEMBRANCE

FINAL LOCATION

To streamline the design of the area of reflection, I eliminated the path of transition and refined the Circle of Remembrance. The location within the grove is the same, but the circulation shifted so that users have no choice but to enter the Circle, or the slave landscape.



Figure 22- View from the circle towards the mansion

COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURE

200

KITTS HUMMOCK ROAD

HISTORIC CORE

 \wedge

BURIAL GROUND

VISITOR'S CENTER

HISTORIC AGRICULTURE



Map 11- Conceptual map

ROUTE

Figure 23- View from the circle towards the fields



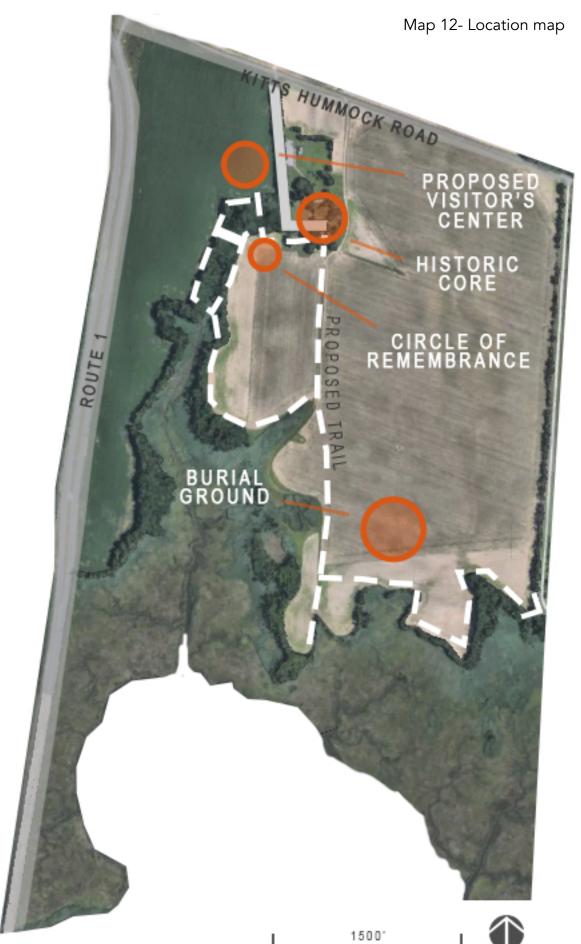
DESIGN PROCESS - FINAL MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Mission

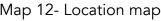
To designate a space for people to reflect, gather, and memorialize the people enslaved at the John Dickinson Plantation.

Goals and Objectives

1	Memorialize the enslaved people through: Naming individuals
2	Encourage reflection on slavery through: Safe space to sit
3	Highlight the JDP Burial Ground through: Orienting the site towards it Lowered topography
4	Acknowledge the system of slavery through: Symbolic form
5	Encourage healing and ritual through: Space to gather
6	Connect to the St Jones River through: Riverine materials and forms
7	Separate the space from the historic core through: Topography Vegetative screening
8	Ensure accessibility for all users through: Proximity to the historic core Accessible pathways







DESIGN PROCESS - FINAL PARTI

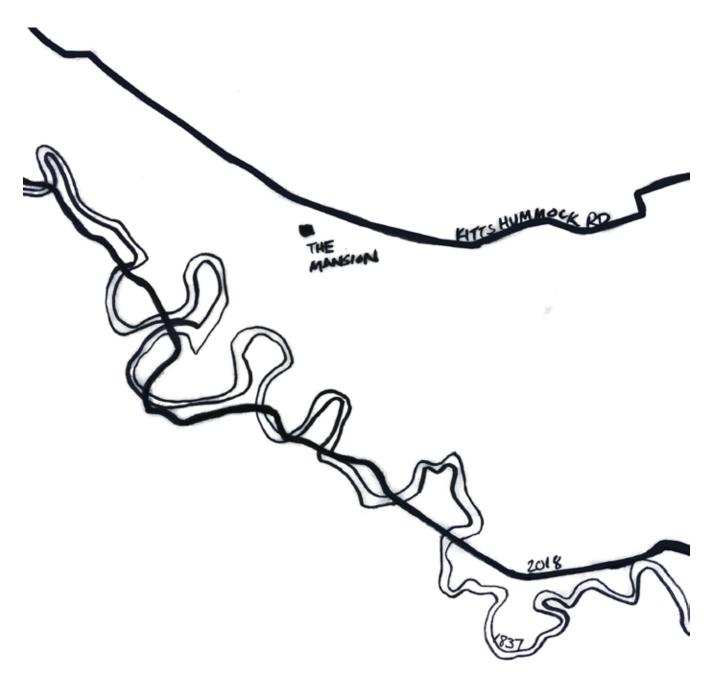


Figure 24- St. Jones River diagram

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Figure 25- Broken river parti

BROKEN RIVER, BROKEN CIRCLE PARTI

This parti grounds the metaphor of the Circle of Remembrance redesign. The broken river serves as a symbol for both the system of slavery and the St. Jones River. The lives of enslaved people were broken up and forcibly altered by slave owners, much like the physical alterations to the river through damming and levees. Yet, the water still flows on and the river is resilient, a metaphor for the struggle of those enslaved at the John Dickinson Plantation.

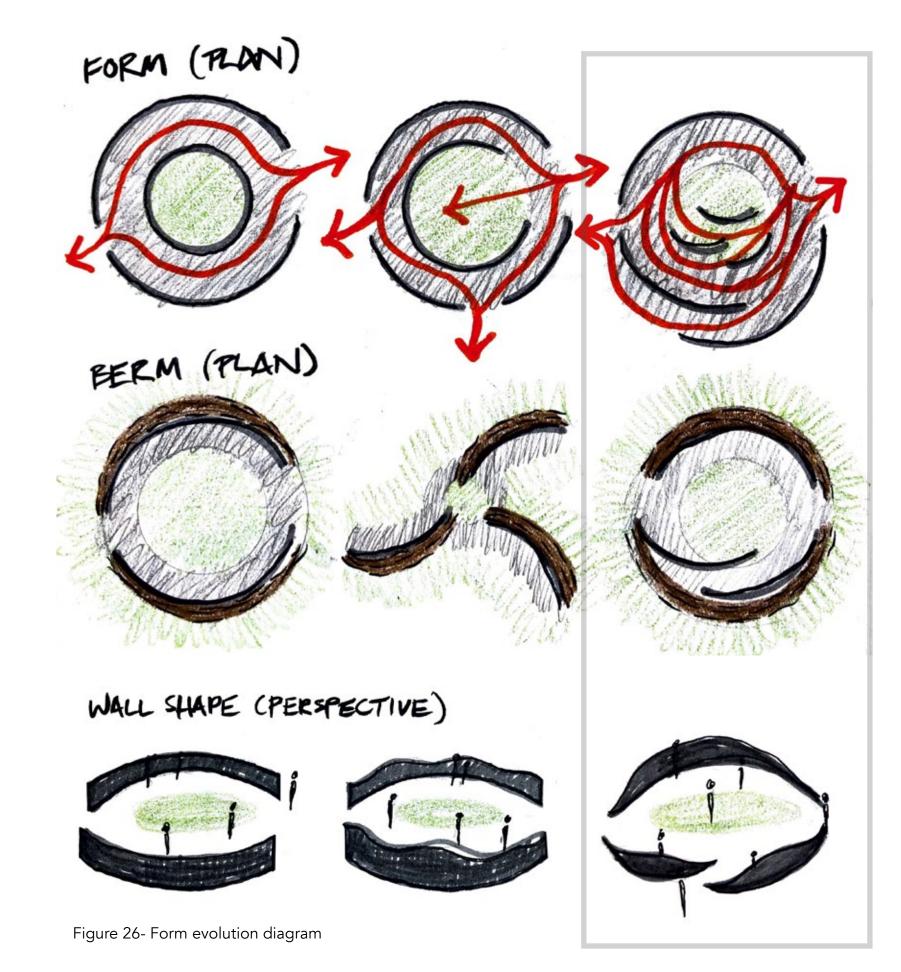




DESIGN PROCESS - FORM EVOLUTION

REEVALUATING FORM

With a new mission and parti, I redesigned the form of the circle. I broke down the circle form into a broken river, and used a berm element to reference the burial grounds. This diagram shows the evolution of different aspects of the design. The final iteration is inspired by the last column of forms.





FINAL DESIGN - MASTER PLAN





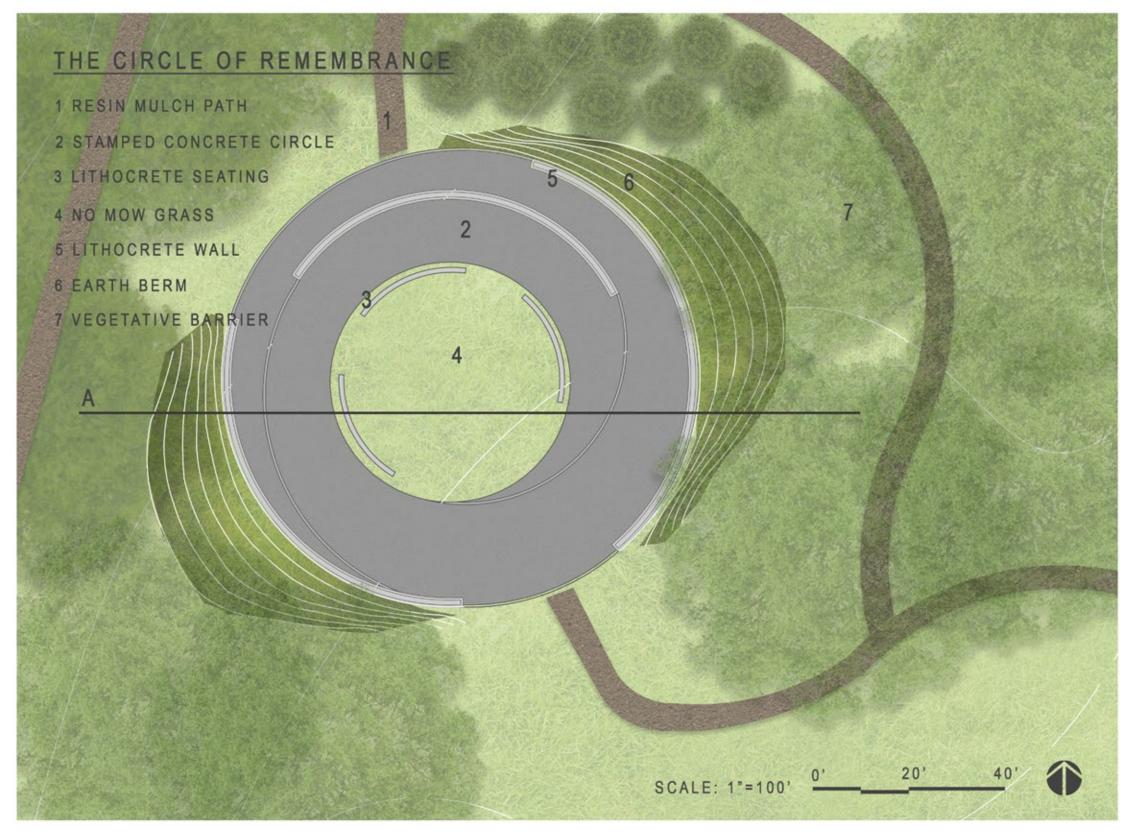


Figure 28- Circle of remembrance enlargement plan

MASTER PLAN

The final iteration of the Circle of Rememberance encapsulates the form of the broken river, while still remaining a modern and innovative design. Pathways flows around the Circle and reconnect into the trail system, keeping the site connected and accessible through ADA approved materials. The earth berms are a unique design feature, and help to blend the Circle into the landscape while referencing the burial grounds subterranean context. The grass circle provides space to gather, and benches provide space to reflect. The walls commemorate the enslaved individuals, encouraging remembrance.

THE WALL

The undulation of the wall mimics a riverine form, blending into the landscape and reconnecting back into itself. Visitors can weave in and out of these forms for a more personalized or group experience of rememberance. Trees shield the Circle, and make the space feel safe and intimate. The walls peak at 6' to prevent people from feeling overwhelmed. The berms connect to the outer walls, and merge back into the earth, completing the elevation as a cohesive and dynamic form.



Figure 29- Circle of remembrance section elevation



MATERIALITY

I proposed lithocrete concrete as the material for the wall because it has a stratified and naturalistic appearance, like a riverbed or excavated site. Rocks can be embedded in the material, connecting back to the riverine theme. The cracks are an opportunity to mark the enslaved, by carving and staining the cracks and names above them. Concrete can be cast into shapes, like the dynamic form shown for the wall, and is widely accessible. The effect is both modern and natural.



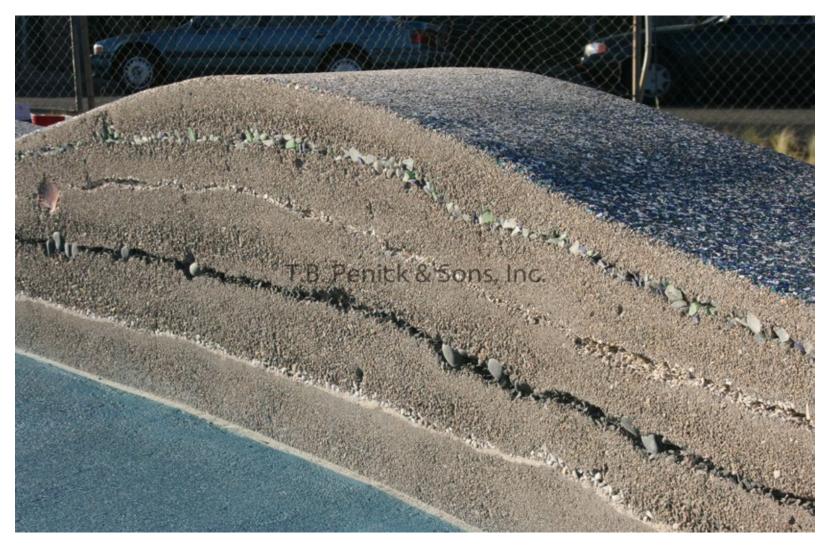


Figure 31- Lithocrete wall

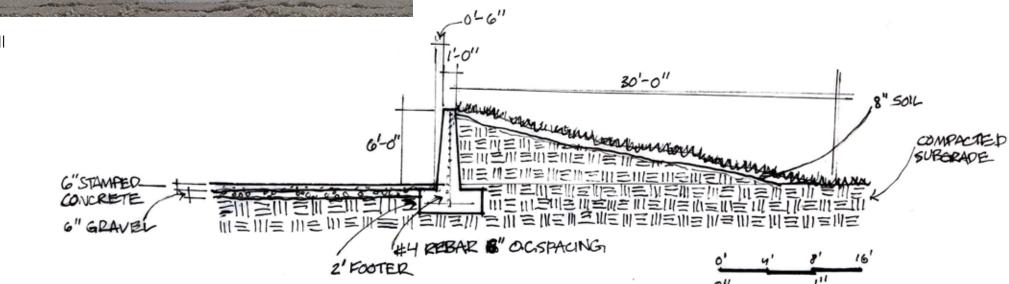


Figure 32- Names carved into wall







Map 1-Boon, O. (2021, March 9). The current historic core.

Map 2-Boon, O. (2021, March 9). Site location map.

Map 3-Bernarndon, John Dickinson Plantation Visitor Center. (2020, June 11).

Map 4-

Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control, John Dickinson Plantation Trail Concept Plan. (2021, January 25).

Map 5-

Siders, R. "Land Acquisition by Decade" (1994). The Changing Landscape of the St. Jones Neck Under the Influence of the Dickinson Farnily, 1680-1850: An Exhibit Script. Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy University of Delaware Newark, Delaware.

Мар 6-

Siders, R. "Land Acquisition by Decade" (1994). The Changing Landscape of the St. Jones Neck Under the Influence of the Dickinson Farnily, 1680-1850: An Exhibit Script. Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy University of Delaware Newark, Delaware.

Map 6-

Siders, R. "Tenant Farms, 1790-1810 Land Use Patterns" (1994). The Changing Landscape of the St. Jones Neck Under the Influence of the Dickinson Farnily, 1680-1850: An Exhibit Script. Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy University of Delaware Newark, Delaware.

Map 7-

Esri. Soil Map "John Dickinson Plantation". Scale Not Given. March 16, 2021. https://arcg.is/nuq9u

Map 8-

Esri. Sea Level Rise Map "John Dickinson Plantation". Scale Not Given. March 16, 2021. https://arcg.is/nuq9u

Map 9-Boon, O. (2021). Conceptual map.

Map 10-Boon, O. (2021). Circulation diagram.

Map 11-Boon, O. (2021). Conceptual map.

Map 12-Boon, O. (2021). Location map.



Figure 1-

Boon, O. (2020, February 23). The reconstructed grainery and feedbarn.

Figure 2-

John Dickinson Plantation Facebook. (2018, October 3). Retrieved March 15, 2021, from https://www.facebook.com/JohnDickinsonPlantation/photos/10156321238290873

Figure 3-

Boon, O. (2020, February 23). Materials on site.

Figure 4-

American Holly (ilex OPACA) At Meadows FARMS Nurseries. (2018, May 11). Retrieved March 15, 2021, from https://plants.meadowsfarms.com/12170013/Plant/215/American_Holly/ Japanese Cedar Bryn Mawr. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.brynmawr.edu/campus/trees/japanese-cedar

Lsuagcenter. (2016, January 12). Pawpaw fruit Tree Asimina triloba. Retrieved March 15, 2021, from https://www.lsuagcenter.com/portals/our_offices/parishes/east%20baton%20rouge/features/lawn_garden/pawpawfruittreeasiminatriloba

North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox Lagerstroemia indica. (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2021, from https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/lagerstroemia-indica/ North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox Magnolia grandiflora. (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2021, from https://plants.ces.ncsu.edu/plants/magnolia-grandiflora/ Prunus Persica (Peach). (n.d.). Retrieved March 15, 2021, from https://www.gardenia.net/plant-variety/prunus-persica

Figure 5-

The slaves' quarters, http://pelicanbomb.com/art-review/2016/memorializing-slavery-on-louisianas-river-road-the-whitney-plantation

Figure 6-

The children at the Antioch Baptist Church, https://www.whitneyplantation.org/

Figure 7-

The Allees Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, https://www.whitneyplantation.org/

Mount Auburn Cemetery https://tclf.org/landscapes/mount-auburn-cemetery-md

Jones, D. (2011). The City of the Dead: The Place of Cultural Identity and Environmental Sustainability in the African-American Cemetery. Landscape Journal, 30(2).

Figure 8-

Grave layout. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Auburn_Cemetery_(Baltimore,_Maryland)#/media/File:Mount_Auburn_Cemetery_Baltimore,_Maryland_Dec_11.JPG https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Auburn_Cemetery_ (Baltimore, Maryland)#/media/File:Mount Auburn Cemetery Baltimore, Maryland Dec 11.JPG

Figure 9-

Nature reclaiming the cemetery. https://www.westportcedc.org/mount-auburn-cemetery

Figure 10-

Grave marking. Jones, D. (2011). The City of the Dead: The Place of Cultural Identity and Environmental Sustainability in the African-American Cemetery. Landscape Journal, 30(2).



Stumbling Stones

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Figure 11-Demnig holding Stolpersteine. https://www.dw.com/en/germany-75000th-stolperstein-for-holocaust-victims-laid/a-51827506

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Figure 13-An aerial view of the monument. https://allthatsinteresting.com/african-burial-ground

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