COLLECTING THE FRAGMENTS OF MEMORY

ARCHITECTURE AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

CASTELGRANDE | CHURCH OF ST. ANNE | KOLDINGHUS | THE RIVESALTES MEMORIAL

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"memories provide a version of the past that helps us navigate the present and is critical to individual identity"[1]

INTRODUCTION

The architecture of a place serves as the physical manifestation of that culture's values, but it might also act as a mediator between the history of a place and the memories of individuals in the present. The word *memory* has been defined scientifically as a static process of storage and retrieval contained within the brain. Memories are more than that though - they are something that define a person's identity and provide them with a framework through which they see the world. The same can be said for *collective memory*, which is the result of a social process in which large groups of people form memories about their past. These groups form a sense of cultural identity around the way they remember these events, which leads to a multiplicity of different memories surrounding history. While memory is a critical component of both individual and cultural identity, even the most vivid memories fade over time.

Though forgetting can be a valuable process on an individual level, as it gives people the ability to discard useless information or purge traumatic events, there are inherent dangers involved in the process of allowing collective memories to fade. The events that forge these memories often send shockwaves through the world. Some of the most significant ones, like the fall of the Berlin Wall or 9/11, are taught to new generations. Though these pieces of history are passed down from one generation to the next, the people who did not experience the events firsthand are still somewhat disconnected from them. While they lack any memory of the events themselves, they are still capable of feeling the effects of those memories long afterwards. The potential solution to this epidemic of forgetting lies within architecture. The architecture built or preserved upon a site could have the ability to act as a container for its history, without necessarily being a memorial or monument. These interventions offer people the opportunity to form firsthand experiences in locations with significant historical ties in order to foster a greater understanding and respect for the past. The experience of architecture can also provide new perspectives on historical events to people that have differing cultural identities than themselves.

To better explore these theories, the four sites chosen have been categorized by their methodology of architectural response, either addition, transformation, or preservation. Some architects, like Aurelio Galfetti and Rudolf Schwarz, chose to transform a historical site into something new. Rudy Ricciotti chose not to alter the existing historical structures, but simply to add another one to the site. Johannes and Inger Exner held fast to their beliefs about the gravity involved in the process of preservation and did not alter the ruin, but gave it new life. They stated that, "If the life [of the building] has been historically eventful, it is a serious matter to remove or obliterate the impressions the building has received in order to restore it to its appearance at birth or to stop the historical process in any way."[2] This position suggests that the way in which a thing or place has been preserved creates the condition where we, as individuals, interact with it in the present day. In a way, the architect's methodology that is used to perpetuate the legacy of the site becomes another layer of its history.

Originally, this proposal asked a series of heavy questions regarding the relationships between individual memory, collective memory, and architecture that seemed only to be answerable through the documentation and experience of specific sites hypothesized to be containers of memory. In the context of this research, "container of memory" refers to a site that preserves the historical narratives and memories related to that

1 Thomas J. Anastasio, *Individual and Collective Memory Consolidation: Analogous Processes On Different Levels* (Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press 2012)

2 Johannes Exner, *Koldinghus: the conversion of an old royal Danish castle* (Monumentum, December 1984), 286.

place. Throughout the process of contending with these questions, it became obvious that not every question I sought to answer could be answered empirically. These initial questions I posed were tempered by distance - I had predetermined notions of what I would see and learn, which resulted in the formation of certain critiques towards these architectural responses. Though these critiques were a result of the discrepancy between the artificial landscapes in my imagination and the reality of the sites I discovered when I arrived, they also stemmed from my own sense of collective memory differing from the culture in which each of these sites operate.

The original intention was to compare the sites through the same lens with similar metrics, but they are so vastly different that a critique of this manner struggles to capture all of the nuances involved within them - each site yields a unique dialogue. These sites share a common thread in their long, complex histories, which define not only their role in the past, but the necessity for their preservation in the future, as each plays an integral role in the place it is located. With that in mind, some of the initial questions raised at the beginning of this process are still applicable.

What factors contribute to these places acting as sites of memory - the sites themselves, the events that transpired there, or the architecture built upon them? Or is it something more intangible, like an individual's relationship to the history or event of the place? Could different architectural responses prove more appropriate or effective in reconciling the past with the present? The inseparability of these architectural interventions from their contexts facilitated a comprehensive approach that weaves together objective historical research and a narrative of my personal experiences as I engaged with the sites. Ultimately, this is an exploration about the relationships between architecture, the memory of the past, and the memory of the present.

CASTELGRANDE

Transformation
Aurelio Galfetti | 1991
Bellinzona, Switzerland

"castelgrande and its hill will have such presence, thanks to the clarity of expression and the critical intelligence at work in the different aspects of the project's deliberation, that it will inevitably become the new centre of a historic town"[3]

HISTORY

Since the Neolithic Period, the hill upon which Castelgrande sits has been inhabited. This hill is the only piece of the valley that was not swept away when the glaciers melted, making it one of the oldest surviving sites in Bellinzona. The fortified complex that remains today dates back to the late medieval period, from between the 13th and 15th Century. Castelgrande is the largest of three castles (Castelgrande, Montebello, and Sasso Corbaro) that once controlled a key point of the Alpine Passage and made it a location of strategic importance to both the Milanese and the Swiss.

During the 15th Century, the series of castles was controlled by the Milanese, who constructed the murata (the walls on the western side of Castelgrande) and the city walls. Under their jurisdiction, the fortified complex was at its largest and most secure. Though the Milanese and Swiss fought several large battles during the 15th Century, the Swiss could not take control of the castles.

When King Louis XII of France seized both Milan and Bellinzona in 1499, the French army occupied

3 Aurelio Galfetti, Mario Botta, and Mirko Zardini, *Aurelio Galfetti* (Barcelona: G. Gili, 1989), 8.

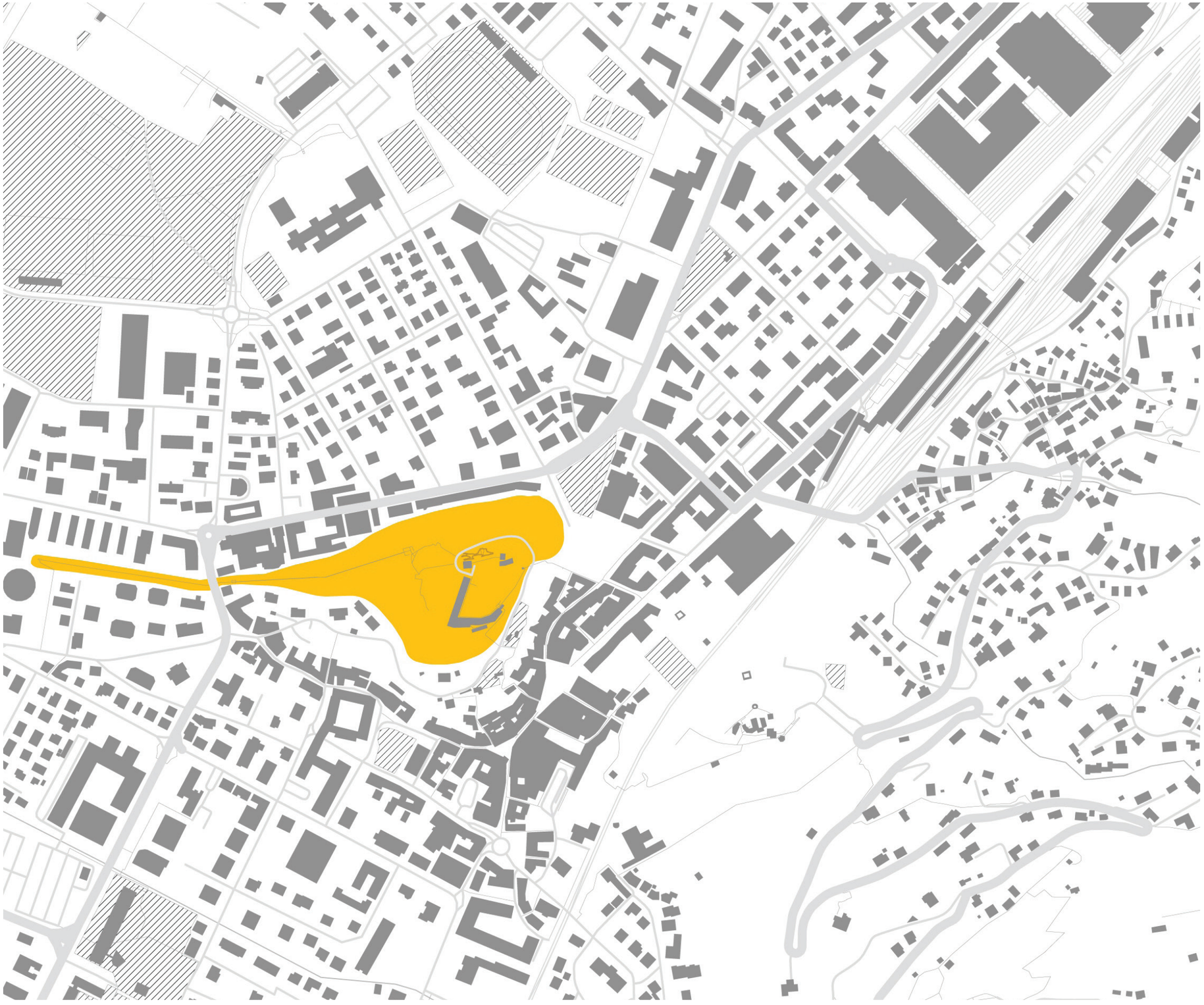
the fortified complex. In 1500, the citizens of Bellinzona, who were unhappy with this occupation, turned to the Swiss for aid. In return for their assistance in removing the French army, the Swiss took over the city and its castles. This historical event is known as the “Act of Allegiance.” Ever since, Bellinzona and the Ticino Canton have been governed by the Swiss. Once the Swiss were defeated by the French at the Battle of Marignano in 1515, the Swiss Confederation agreed to a policy of armed neutrality, which meant that the ramparts of Castelgrande and the rest of the complex no longer had any defensive function.

The three castles maintained a relationship with the medieval town below for some time, but gradually lost all importance and became mere ruins by the middle of the 20th Century. In 1980, Mario Della Valle, an architect from the area, believed their value was integral to the history of the city, and donated a large sum of money on the condition that Castelgrande, Montebello, and Sasso Corbaro would be restored. The restoration work was carried out by Aurelio Galfetti from the 1980s to the 1990s, which led to their recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000. Today, the complex is the only example of a defensive structure still visible in Europe with castles and a defensive wall.

Previous Page: *Torre Bianca from Torre Nera*
Upper Left: *On Top of the Murata*
Lower Left: *View of Castelgrande from the Murata*

CONTEXT

Castelgrande is prominently located within the historic center of Bellinzona, where it dominates the landscape from most sides. The historic center and surrounding areas contain restaurants, small shops, convenience stores, and churches. People occupy the sidewalks and activities occur along the streets and in the squares. The area immediately to the north of Castelgrande is significantly more industrial and is devoid of life. There are no activities that occur along the streets and many of the buildings are crumbling or falling into disrepair, while others are under construction. Castelgrande's defensive walls extend out into this side of town. Amongst all of the chaos and construction, it was not possible to reach the spot where they end. Unlike in the historic center, where the castle is a seamless piece of the landscape, the juxtaposition between the medieval and the modern here couldn't be more clear. On this side, where Castelgrande appears less prominently in the skyline and is less of a focal point in the rapidly modernizing landscape, it is apparent why there was such a quick rush to preserve the fortress. In a city paved in stone and sunlight, the preserved fortress was an opportunity not only to save its history, but to create a park in the sky for all of its residents.



A LEGACY TRANSFORMED

Aurelio Galfetti stated that "preserve = transform" was the driving idea behind the lengthy restoration process of Castelgrande.[4] The goal was to increase the usefulness of the site for the city and its people, while not "looking upon it [the site] as untouchable and sacred."[5] Though admirable, this approach raised the question of how such a drastic transformation of the site would change the relationships that had previously existed, as well as how it would impact the ability to interact with such an important historic site. Aurelio Galfetti expanded the scope of the restoration project from the bounds of the site to the hill it sat upon, creating a new entry within the hill and clearing the overgrown vegetation from the rock face. Since Castelgrande had fallen into disrepair by the mid-twentieth century, any connections between the site and city had largely crumbled by that point. This expansion of scope has become an integral piece of the project, as the elements included in it have allowed for the reestablishment of the relationship that once existed between the site and city.

Before the restoration, Castelgrande had few points of access, one of the main ones being a set of stairs all the way up from the city below. Upon arrival in Bellinzona, one of the first things I was warned *not to d*o was climb the stairs to any of the castles. The number of stairs, combined with the blistering summer heat, makes the journey to the castles somewhat treacherous. However, despite the warnings, I did venture up the stairs to both Castelgrande and Montebello - once. While Castelgrande is located at the lowest elevation of the three castles (in relation to the city), it still required more steps than I could count to summit the hill. These steps were constructed from large stones and were generally uneven in terms of rise and run, making it a tough climb. When these steps were the only access points to Castelgrande, it would have rendered the site disconnected from the city below and inaccessible to its inhabitants. As a result, the excavation of the hill for the insertion of a new, accessible entry created the relationship between Castelgrande and the inhabitants of Bellinzona that exists today. While it could be argued that this entry is nothing more than an elevator, that argument underestimates its importance. Not only does it make the castle more accessible, but it also provides a direct connection from the site to the Piazza del Sole, which is

4 Unknown, "Castelgrande Castle Renovation by Aurelio Galfetti," *ArchEyes*, 7 March 2022, https://archeyes.com/castelgrande-castle-renovation-aurelio-galfetti/

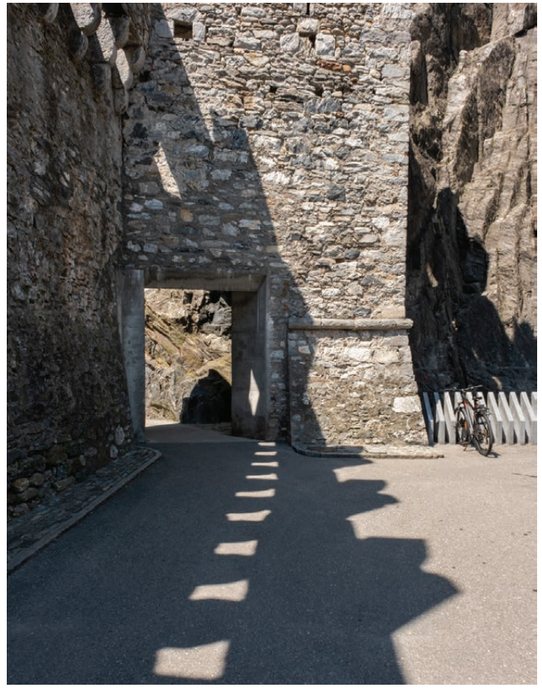
5 Luca Gazzaniga, "Restoring a rocky hill: the Castelgrande in Bellinzona, by Aurelio Galfetti," *Domus no. 750,* 1993, https://www.domusweb.it/en/from-the-archive/2023/07/19/restauration-of-castelgrande-in-bellinzona-by-aurelio-galfetti.html

the largest open space in the historic center of Bellinzona. The connection between Castelgrande and the Piazza del Sole also serves to provide an iconic entry experience for people to ascend the hill. The experience the entry provides is not only for visitors, as locals often utilize it to visit the restaurant or to participate in different local events, such as an open air cinema put on in the late summer.

Castelgrande's remaining fortifications are the most visible and important part of the site, as they reveal the scale and scope of the historical fortress. These fortifications also provide a glimpse of how the castle wrapped its arms around the city below during the medieval period. The preservation and continued maintenance of these fortifications and the grounds allows both locals and tourists alike to explore the site or bask in the sun on the hill overlooking the city. There is no shortage of things to see, as people can climb both towers, wander the lawns, or venture down the defensive walls. On the interior, the wings of the castle that remain today have been heavily modified in the transformation of the site. The function of the wings was completely transformed into a museum and restaurant. However, the museum interior, as well as its contents, seems to be completely at odds with the site. The museum is comprised of two different wings – one for the permanent exhibition and one for the temporary exhibition. While the wing that hosts the permanent exhibition holds some clues as to the appearance of the original building, the wing that hosts the temporary exhibition is completely unrecognizable as a historic structure. While there were always some people exploring the grounds, there were never any people in the museum. It is entirely plausible that some people might not even realize there is a museum on site, as its entry is not terribly visible, and the entire complex is largely unsigned.

Though Galfetti could have chosen to leave Castelgrande covered in decades of overgrowth, he instead chose to "excavate it" by cleaning the surface of the hill, bringing it to the forefront, and inserting the entry within it. The entry sequence from the vast, empty space of the piazza to the fortress atop a rocky hill is one marked in discovery. The entry is found tucked away in a corner by visitors, who then walk through an opening in the wall and then venture into the earth before ascending the hill via the elevator to reach Castelgrande.

Previous Page: *Entrance into the Hill*
Right: *Chiesa Collegiata through the Cross*
Lower Left: *Blinding Light*
Lower Right: *Torre Bianca from Below*



EXPERIENCE

When I first arrived in the Piazza del Sole, I was met with a view of Castelgrande. From this corner of the square, the gateway to the entry was obscured by the four sculptural volumes that marked the exits from the parking garage underneath the piazza. Since the entire square was empty, I walked around its edges to reach the entry at the base of the hill. I passed through the gateway from the piazza only to be confronted by a wall of rock with an incredibly tall, narrow slice cut into it, which concealed the depth of the space within. Once I entered into the hill through this narrow slice, my eyes slowly adjusted to the reduced light level. From within, the shape and materiality of the space were more clear. The ceiling was high at the entry, but became significantly lower as the space cut deeper into the hill. The interior was entirely made of a dark concrete, which had subtle lines that marked the walls - memories of the formwork. The farther I ventured into the depths of the hill, the more it felt like I was not supposed to be there. I, as a visitor, seemed as foreign to the intervention as it felt to the rocky hillside. When I made it to the end of the hall, the space opened up into a large dome shape, with two elevators directly across from me and a concrete bench lining its perimeter.

The interior of the dome was incredibly dark and damp, and as I sat down on the bench, it felt foreboding to wait there. The heaviness of the concrete enveloping me was simultaneously comforting and terrifying. Since I was alone, the room felt like a refuge completely isolated from the world, but also like the weight of the earth could collapse on top of me at any moment. After a while, I stood up and turned to face the direction I entered from. The dark tunnel I had walked through clearly framed the piazza outside, which was illuminated by the sunlight. I wanted to capture this specific moment, so I pulled out my camera, only to find that this could become an illusion through its lens. As I looked through the viewfinder and opened the aperture further to let more light in, the lens created an entirely new perspective where the intense brightness of the light blew out everything at the end of the tunnel. Just like it was impossible to see clearly into the darkness of the slice from the outside, it became impossible to see out into the brightness of the outside for within. While this was most likely an experience most people do not have, it helped me to perceive the space in a new light before I turned around once more and ascended to the top of the hill via the elevator.

I had no idea what to expect when I reached the top of the hill, but found myself surrounded

Previous Page: *Entrance into the Hill*
Right: *Chiesa Collegiata through the Cross*
Lower Left: *Blinding Light from Inside the Dome*
Lower Right: *Torre Bianca from Below*

by walls and faced with a rocky incline up to the castle grounds. As I walked up the incline, I noticed various gaps in the tall wall on my left. Each time I reached one, I would peer through, hoping to see something interesting. Eventually, I reached one that had a cross-like shape, and when I looked through it, the gap in the stones perfectly framed the Chiesa Collegiata dei SS. Pietro e Stefano in the city below. Once I reached the top of the ramp, I was at a point where there was no longer a clear entry sequence, but a large complex that could be explored in any fashion. There were a few guided tours exploring the grounds that largely consisted of older people, most of which were either Italian or German speaking. I headed straight for the White Tower, and wandered around its base for a few minutes before realizing I had to partially climb up the Black Tower and across the top of the wall between them in order to reach it. The White Tower was 27 meters tall, and once I climbed all the way to the belvedere, I was met with a 360 degree view of the entire city. I stood up there for almost half an hour, just taking in the view, before I headed back down.

At the bottom of the Black Tower, I went through the gates between it and the former arsenal, that now houses a restaurant, in order to reach the west bailey. When I passed through the gates, I saw a singular tree, a grassy expanse, and pieces of the old fortifications that had stairs leading up them. The fortifications were covered in grass and wildflowers, which created a lovely space where I saw people on walks with their pets. (One of my first thoughts in this space was that the grounds resembled a giant playground for the city, as I had not seen any real green space in the historic center below. At first, this large green space seemed wasted, but at the end of the week I learned that the city does utilize the space for things like their open-air cinema, and I was glad to see that such a place was valuable for bringing people together.) The west bailey also housed the entrance to the murata, the defensive wall that extends from the west side of the castle. I walked on top of the murata first, which was covered in grass and followed the slope of the hill

down to the city below. This was no short wall, and it took quite some time to make it to the base, but the further down I went, the more beautiful the views of Castelgrande were. When I finally turned around to head back up to the castle, I decided to go underneath the murata, which was an unnerving experience. Underneath the murata was a dimly lit, rocky dirt path covered in spiderwebs. While it was neat to see where soldiers would have defended the fortress from, it felt like somewhere I was not supposed to be even though other people were exploring the tunnel too.

It was clear to me at this point that this site and this structure were the oldest things in the city, but it was unclear what its significance truly was. It felt grand, it felt important…but why? I decided to head to the museum in hopes that I would be able to find out. The museum entry was tucked in the corner where the south wing of the structure and the former arsenal meet. Without the sign outside of the door that read "museum," it could have easily been missed altogether. The room that I entered into was the space depicted in the only published interior photographs of the site I could find prior to visiting, a bright space with numerous windows, a curving ceiling, and a welcome desk. Though I was originally very excited to visit the museum, as I hoped it would help me to understand the historical significance of the fortress and its relationship to the city more, I quickly learned that the museum is much more functional than deeply experiential. There was purpose but no meaning. Unfortunately, of all the exhibits, there was only one aspect of the museum that directly related to the history of Castelgrande, which was a small, dark room in the back where a historical film played. While this was my favorite part of the museum, and it provided me with new information regarding the history and context of the site, it didn't feel like enough. I can't help but think that there would have been some benefit to a museum that recalled more of the history of the site itself.

The other exhibits, of which there were three, did not relate to Castelgrande at all. There were two permanent exhibits, as well as one temporary exhibit. The permanent exhibit on the lower level (the historical and archaeological section) held a handful archaeological artifacts from the site and a collection of 16th century coins. The space was filled to the brim with natural light, as sunlight poured in through all of the windows to illuminate the interior. The permanent exhibit on the upper level (the historical and artistic section) held a collection of tempera on paper drawings, which were originally part of an extravagant residence in the center of Bellinzona. They were relocated to the museum in order for preservation when that residence was destroyed in 1970. Due to the nature of the exhibit, which demands the absence of natural light, the space was incredibly dark, with shade-covered

windows that prevented sunlight from entering. The temporary exhibit only occupied one level, as it was located over the restaurant. In that space, there was almost a complete erasure of the original building that disconnected it from the site. The lighting was largely artificial in nature, and the few windows in the space were uniformly punched into the walls. The typology of the "punched window" is something that all three exhibits shared on the walls that faced the south bailey. These were not original windows, but ones added in the transformation. While each of the exhibits held artifacts that were interesting to look at, the interior felt like nothing more than a place to hold things that lacked any deeper meaning or complex architectural thoughts.

Later that evening, the site was almost entirely deserted. There were no longer any large groups, just a handful of people on their own. I decided to head over to the west bailey, hoping to find some shade along the walls of the outer wards. Luckily, the area on the "interior" side of the wall (facing the bailey and the castle) was in shade, so I climbed the stairs up to the top of the wall and sat down to rest. It was unearthly silent. Not a sound reached my ears except for that of the wind rustling through the leaves of the lone tree and that of the birds humming. It felt like nothing could touch me while I was up there – it was just me and the view of not only the castle, but also the entire city.

Previous Page: *Inside the Museum's Permanent Exhibition*
Below (Left and Right): *Rectaingular Windows in Arched Openings*

SYNTHESIS

Initially, it felt as though Aurelio Galfetti's slogan of "preserve = transform" resulted in an intervention that impeded the ability of the visitor to experience the true significance of the site, as the apparent lack of narrative made the memory of the place feel almost insignificant.[6] I had assumed that I would discover more of a narrative on the site, so when that was not the case, I questioned Castelgrande's importance. Though I had prior knowledge of the site when I visited, I recognized that this might not be the case for everyone. When I visited the museum and failed to see any people in it, I realized that not everyone who visits the site would even see the only material explaining its history - the short film. While memories can certainly still be formed as a result of the experience, there is the real possibility that others who visit Castelgrande may not glean the deeper historical significance that it has in Bellinzona's history. Thus, the immediate result of my visit was a series of critiques, all born from the rift between the expectations I had placed upon the site beforehand and the reality that I found when I arrived. I thought that the piazza below was a waste of space, the grounds lacked shade and places to sit, the lack of signage made it unclear what was open to the public, and the interior transformation failed to contribute anything of importance to the site. However, these critiques felt unfair, for the experiences I had on the site were much more complex than I could have hypothesized. I placed so much value on the site perpetuating its own narrative that I failed to see something arguably even more important. While the architecture of the fortress is the narrative of the site, speaking for itself and holding pieces of the history of the city that surrounds it inside, the entry is the most significant part of the site's transformation. The insertion of the entry into the hillside is what creates the bridge between the past and the present. Though there is no literal narrative concealed within its depths, the architect has constructed an evocative sequential and spatial experience that will cement Castelgrande in the minds of its visitors forever.

6 "Castelgrande Castle Renovation by Aurelio Galfetti," *ArchEyes*, 7 March 2022, https://archeyes.com/castelgrande-castle-renovation-aurelio-galfetti/

CHURCH OF ST. ANNE

Preservation + Transformation
Rudolf Schwarz | 1956
Düren, Germany

"it is the core of Düren's history"[7]

HISTORY

Since the first mention of Düren in 747, the development of the city and the Church of St. Anne have been inextricably linked. Over the past 1300 years, the site upon which the modern-day church sits has been home to six different buildings. The excavations carried out on its site from 1951-1952 revealed the location and orientation of the foundations of these after the Gothic Church of St. Anne was destroyed in 1944.

The First Court Chapel, a small building with a singular hall, was located on the site when Düren was nothing more than a small series of farms. The site was not in the center of the city, but in an extensive cemetery on the largest property in Düren, which belonged to the Frankish ruler King Pippin III. When King Charlemagne succeeded him, the First Court Chapel was replaced with the Carolingian Palatinate Chapel - another small building, but one with three naves. This chapel was imperial property and was most likely destroyed in the Norman Raid of 881. The building constructed after it acted as a defensive structure, its massive walls and tower providing the people with protection from danger. At this time, records reference the building on the site as a church and not as a chapel.

7 Dr. Ulrich Flatten and Brian-Scott Kempa, BA., *1,300 Years of St. Anne's Church* (Düren: Church of St. Anne, 2023), Permanent Exhibit.

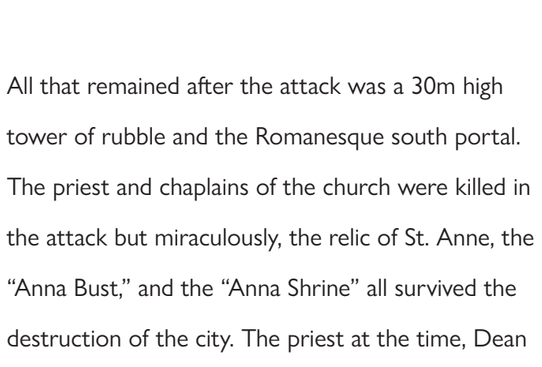
Düren continued to grow in the 13th century and eventually needed a larger church. The church that was constructed had three aisles (more like a typical cathedral plan) and was largely unadorned, a characteristic of the late Romanesque style. Though Düren had grown significantly over the centuries, that paled in comparison to the growth it experienced after the arrival of the relic of St. Anne in 1501, which brought massive numbers of pilgrims to the city. When Pope Julius II decided that the relic of St. Anne should remain in Düren permanently, the church was expanded in order to accommodate the pilgrims. When the city became a world-famous pilgrimage site, the tower of the previous church was demolished, the church was doubled in size, and a new, taller bell tower was constructed.

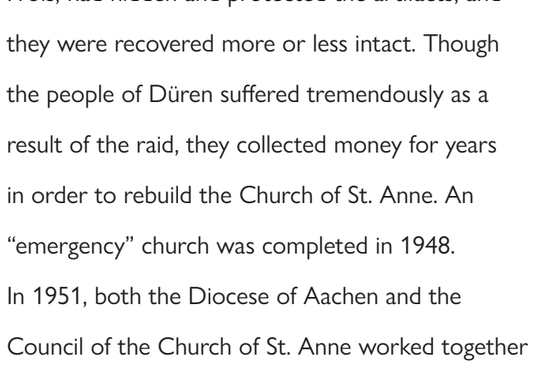
While much of Düren's growth can be attributed to the arrival of the relic of St. Anne, it had become one of the wealthiest cities in Germany by 1900 as a result of the industrial production of paper, cloth, and carpet. The population soared to over 40,000 people. The Hoesch Family donated a new museum (the Leopold-Hoesch Museum) and theater to the city. As a result of the Second World War, this growth came to an abrupt halt when a British Air Strike killed several thousand people and razed most of the city center to the ground.

Previous Page: *The Bell Tower from the South Entrance*
Upper Left: *View of the Anna Church Choir Side*
(Source: Annakirche Foundation in Düren)
Lower Left: *View of the Anna Church*
(Source: Annakirche Foundation in Düren)

“in just 21 minutes, Düren became the most destroyed city in the world”

Right: *South Portal with Rubble*
(Source: Annakirche Foundation in Düren)
Lower Left: *View Over Part of the Excavation Field*
(Source: City and District Archive Düren)
Lower Right: *Düren Before and After*
(Source: National Archives and Records Administration)





All that remained after the attack was a 30m high tower of rubble and the Romanesque south portal. The priest and chaplains of the church were killed in the attack but miraculously, the relic of St. Anne, the “Anna Bust,” and the “Anna Shrine” all survived the destruction of the city. The priest at the time, Dean Fröls, had hidden and protected the artifacts, and they were recovered more or less intact. Though the people of Düren suffered tremendously as a result of the raid, they collected money for years in order to rebuild the Church of St. Anne. An “emergency” church was completed in 1948.

In 1951, both the Diocese of Aachen and the Council of the Church of St. Anne worked together on an invited competition to rebuild the church. Together, they decided on the requirements for the new church and the participants in the competition. Ultimately, they chose to invite Karl Band, Döminikus Böhm, and Rudolf Schwarz to the competition.

The requirements for the new church were extensive, but some of the most important had to do with the preservation of anything that remained from before the bombing. These requirements included special consideration about the placement of the Anna Shrine, some incorporation of the existing stone material, the preservation of the Romanesque entry portal, and the retention of the previous church’s orientation.

Rudolf Schwarz, an architect who played an integral role in the reconceptualization of the church in postwar Germany, won the competition. He proposed a radically new typology for the Church of St. Anne, which resulted in some concerns from the people of Düren. After two years of construction, the new church was consecrated on July 7, 1956. However, due to a lack of funds, the sacristy and bell tower had not yet been built. In 1960, the sacristy was completed according to the original design. But the bell tower had to be redesigned, a project undertaken by his wife, Maria Schwarz, after his passing. In 1961, the bell tower was completed.

CONTEXT

The Church of St. Anne is located in Düren, Germany, a small town located about half an hour west of Cologne. Much of the town, including the areas immediately surrounding the Church of St. Anne, is built in the nondescript manner that is typical of post-war cities. Of them, the only ones that stand out as impressive feats of post-war architecture are the Town Hall, designed by architect Denis Boniver, and the site I came to visit, the Church of St. Anne. Other typologies of buildings include a large shopping center on the main street near the exit of the train station, grocery stores on every corner, and different quick service restaurants. Most of the town today lacks any sense of historic value, the only exceptions being the Leopold-Hoesch Museum and a street near it, Holzstraße, since both remain from before the war. Both of these were examples of beautiful pre-war architecture, and though I admired their beauty, I felt a sense of grief for what this town used to be.

AN AIR OF REVERENCE

Rudolf Schwarz's careful attention to the balance of three distinct elements: the preservation of ruins, a house for the relics, and the functional necessities of a sacred space, creates a particularly evocative space that responds to its time, the postwar period typically marked by the idea of finding a new identity within architecture. This balance results in an environment of extreme reverence, one that makes this small church rival even the largest of cathedrals in terms of both its architecture and its atmosphere, and makes it a church appropriate for its site.

Schwarz recognized that it was not practical, and maybe not even possible, to rebuild the Church of St. Anne as it was before the bombing, so he proposed a new approach to the church that both contended with historical events and responded to the cultural context of the time. The church Schwarz presented lacked the typical hallmarks of cathedrals and was built entirely from the rubble the archdiocese had stockpiled. Since there was no way to premeditate the way in which all of the stones could be placed in order to construct the walls, all of this work had to be done on site, and was much more challenging that anticipated. When one enters the church, the arrangement of stone is a marvel to behold on the interior. It is evident that these walls are made of something much older than themselves, even without prior knowledge of the building or place. The stones are all different colors of varied shape and size. Their faces are rough, scuffed, scratched, and even inscribed with symbols in places. Together, they create a patchwork quilt of history that is evocative of a certain sense of memory - they feel like they hold a story.

While the reuse of the rubble might be the single largest move that evokes a sense of curiosity about the history of this church, there are numerous minutiae decisions that contribute to this all-encompassing atmosphere of reverence and affect the ways in which people behave inside of this space. The materiality is one of these, as each material choice only serves to highlight the ruined stone encompassing it. The floors are a patchwork of dark stone and several types of wood, both a dark color. The majority of the floor surface is stone, which covers the aisles and the pilgrim's hall, while the different types of wood under the rows of pews. The pews are made of solid wood, which is of a lighter stain than the floor below it, with thin brown cushions upon the seats. The kneelers are covered in a leather of a similar tone. There are two aisles of pews in both the main sanctuary and the smaller wing of the chapel, though historical images show the smaller wing as having only one long pew across

its width. Scattered among these new elements are important salvaged pieces: the Romanesque entry portal, the column capital that the tabernacle sits upon, and the Anna Shrine. These elements stand out among the darkness and simplicity of the new material choices, which emphasize their existence. The most emphasis is placed on the Anna Shrine, as it is highlighted not only through materiality, but also by the space it resides in and the lighting surrounding it. The Anna Shrine is located nearest the south entry and is placed directly underneath one of the domed skylights, a prominently visible place from both entries. Both the Anna Shrine and the baptismal font sit directly underneath these domes, making them the only things illuminated in the pilgrim's hall. Between the font and altar lie a series of pews that progressively get longer as they approach the shrine, mimicking the way in which the exterior wall on the right angles outwards the deeper the space goes. This creates a passage that remains the same width between the pews and the wall from the entry to the shrine, where people can quietly walk along the edge of the space. While I was there, I observed the actions of people and the ways in which they respected the church. Though everyone I witnessed was reverent, one woman with a young boy comes to the forefront of my mind when I think about the people there. The pair entered in through the door by the bell tower, then knelt down in prayer in one of the pews near the back of the hall for a while. Only then did they rise and walk along the edge of the Pilgrim's Hall towards the image of St. Anne along the wall. The woman got very close to the image, even stepping behind the "altar" of candles so that her face almost touched St. Anne's. Afterwards, she walked over to the Anna Shrine, placed her mouth upon it and kissed it. Once she had done so, she approached me but did not speak any English. She pulled her phone out of her pocket and motioned as if she would like me to take her picture. I took pictures of her with her son in front of both the image of St. Anne and the Anna Shrine, and it was a beautiful encounter to see someone so overwhelmed with joy by this place and its contents.

Previous Page: *Inside the Main Sanctuary*
Upper Left: *The Romanesque Entry Portal*
Upper Right: *The Tabernacle*
Right: *"A Mother's Embrace" Exhibit*

EXPERIENCE

I arrived in Düren late at night and caught a glimpse of the Church of St. Anne on my way to get groceries, as the bell tower was visible in the distance. However, my first experience inside the church was at mass the next morning. I wanted to completely remove myself from the shoes of an architecture student the first time I went inside, armed with nothing but my five senses. Instead, I placed myself in the shoes of a churchgoer and was in complete awe. Though I have visited numerous small churches and large cathedrals across Europe, I have never been to a mass with such high attendance. The entire church was packed – including both wings of the sanctuary and the pilgrim's hall. Barely a seat remained. The back of the church was filled with an orchestra. The moment I saw that, I knew that I was in for a moving experience. Of the things you can say that architecture and religion might have in common, one is that they seem to supersede language. Architecture speaks in a way. Liturgy speaks in a way. Yet, neither need intelligible words to do so. Though I did not speak the language, I "understood" the words. But one of the most moving aspects of the experience was the music. The choir sang in Latin, something I could understand. The acoustics of this church far surpassed those of any cathedral I have set foot in. And having been to mass in the Duomo of Milan the week before, this experience surpassed that one 1000 times over. This experience in a small, humble, rural town in western Germany.

The following day, I decided to go back to the church bright and early. As I approached the church from the north, I could see the bell tower from quite a distance, even though it is no longer the tallest point in the city after being rebuilt. I passed the Town Hall on my way to the church before I arrived in the "Annaplatz," a small square around encompassing the Church of St. Anne. While this square was packed with cars the previous day, it was completely empty now. The perimeter of the square was lined with restaurants and outdoor patios for dining. The church's box-like form was windowless on three of the sides, while the windows on the fourth side were located above the first story, leaving no way to see the interior from the square outside. Though impossible to see inside, the upper portions of the operable windows were open, so I could hear the organist practicing from the square, which created somewhat of a connection between the church and myself.

Upon entering through the door near the base of the bell tower, I was immediately met with

Previous Page: *A Crucifix in the Entry*
Right: *Light in the Darkness*
Lower Left: *The Pilgrim's Hall*
Lower Right: *Prayers to St. Anne*

all-encompassing darkness. The space I arrived in felt small and intimate within the overall larger volume of the church - a low, dark zone of space called "the Pilgrim's Hall." Beyond it, I could see the brightness of the sanctuary, but I was captivated by the darkness. Only glimmers of light entered the space. The sources of the light were a set of five domed skylights comprised of small, round circles of glass and numerous burning candles. The Anna Shrine is located directly underneath one of the domed skylights, illuminated by the soft glow. There are a few small pews in front of it, so I decided to sit down there to take in the space. As I sat there, I witnessed a lot of activity. Most of the people I saw appeared to be locals, as they walked in and headed straight over to the relics, put some coins in the offering box, grabbed a candle (or a few) from the stack, lit them, and then prayed for a moment before leaving. Occasionally a visitor came in to snap a few pictures, but interestingly enough, most everyone sat down for a moment, maybe to pray, before they got up and left.

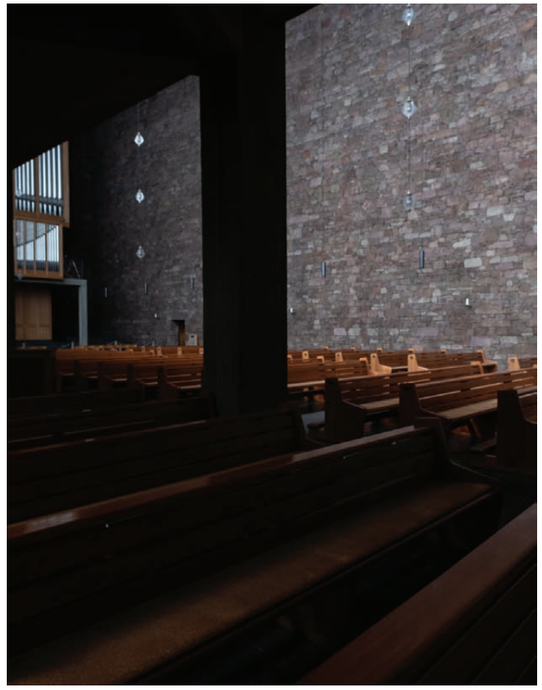
Something I found interesting is that regardless of the visitor, every person who entered seemed to have a tremendous deal of respect for the place. While it might seem obvious that there is something inherently reverent and ritualistic about a Catholic Church, the mass is not the only ritual that takes place here. On Sundays, a collective group of people come together to celebrate that ritual here together. However, on the other days of the week, a much smaller, more individual ritual occurs. At all hours of the day, people come in through the south entrance, defined by the Romanesque entry portal, and they sit down. After a few moments, they get up. They walk to the wall on the right side of the Anna Shrine. They drop some coins in the offering bin, grab a candle, and light it. Then, after the wick of the candle is lit, they hold the bottom end of it over another candle until it softens slightly before sticking it to the low "altars" of a sort.

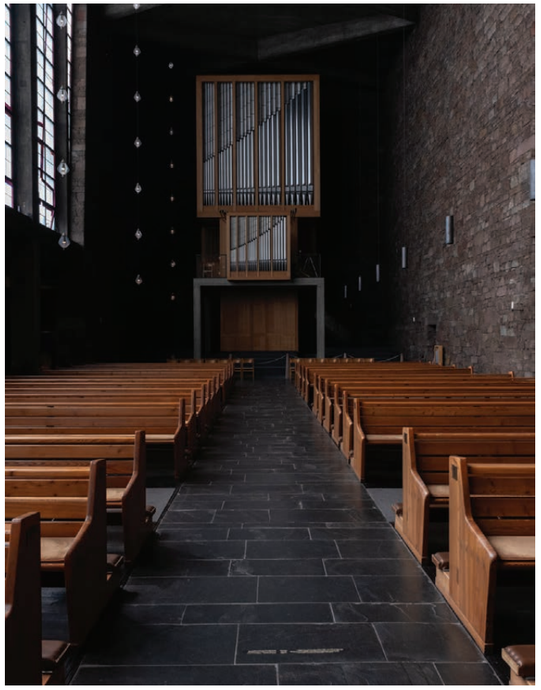
After I had watched individuals engage in this ritual of candle lighting and prayer, I decided to venture into the sanctuary, where I was drawn from the

darkness towards the light. The lines of demarcation between the two spaces are rigid – they do not bleed into one another but are completely separated at their border. The sharp distinction between the spaces reinforces the feeling that one small space sits inside the larger one, like a small chapel within a large cathedral, yet they are in the same room. The qualities of the sanctuary completely contrast the atmospheric and spatial qualities of the pilgrim's hall. The nave is easily three times as tall as the pilgrim's hall, and is much brighter, especially when the sun is shining. I also sat down in the nave for a lengthy period of time, and one thing I noticed is how often the lighting condition seemed to change. When the sun was out, the entire space was blindingly bright, but when it went behind a cloud, the interior became much darker. The changing light impacts the atmosphere tremendously, as it feels light and joyful when the space is bright, but dark and somber when the natural light disappears. One thing that remained a constant was the feeling of safety while I sat there for an extended period of time. The walls of the church are almost fortress-like, especially since they lack windows, which offered a sense of protection from anything happening outside, whether that be the activity of people, the changing elements, or something else. Within the walls, I was so unaware of everything in the outside world. Inside, I felt a sense of peace, safety, and refuge. There was no need to worry about the changing weather outside. Or the time. Or what one might be "missing out on" beyond the walls. This place seems to operate outside of the normal boundaries of time. In here, everything stands still in the best way.

I spent the other day in Cologne, and while I was there, I visited the Cologne Cathedral, which is one of the largest in the entire world. Like the Church of St. Anne, it is also home to relics, those of the Three Magi. However, the way that place feels is nothing like the way this place feels. While the grandeur of the Cologne Cathedral is astounding, it is overrun with tourists. There are so many people, both the interior and the exterior are crawling with them. There appears to be a complete disconnect between the people who are there and what the Cologne Cathedral holds. There is no reverence. But here in Düren, the opposite is true. While the Church of St. Anne is minuscule compared to the scale of the Cologne Cathedral, its beauty is just as astounding. Here, there are few tourists. Most of the people here appear to be locals or pilgrims. There is an extreme reverence for this place, its purpose, and what it holds. Most people who enter do not make a sound aside from their footsteps. They simply come to light a candle, say a prayer, and continue on their way. I wonder whether it is the location, away from the hustle and bustle of a large city, or the architecture of the church that contributes to this. Unlike in the Cologne Cathedral,

where I hardly felt larger than a mouse, here I felt like a normal person. Of course I was still dwarfed by the scale of the building, but it felt more intimate, especially in the pilgrim's hall. There is still majesty here, but on a scale that seems more "human", and possibly for those who believe, one more personal for humans to interact with God.





Previous Page: *The Line of Demarcation*
Above (Left and Right): *The Organ Inside the Safety of the Walls*

SYNTHESIS

At first glance, the present-day Church of St. Anne might not appear as grand or majestic as its predecessor. It seems to turn its back on the city since it lacks windows on the main exterior walls. However, Schwarz takes the hierarchy of a typical church and completely transforms it. The altar is moved to the corner of the plan, the sanctuary is split into two, and the "pilgrim's hall" is created. However, when one physically enters the space, moves through it, and exists within it, these are the reasons why this feels like the only appropriate response. When one walks around Düren today, almost nothing remains in terms of its historical, pre-war architecture. Most of the city today takes the form of the 1950-60s postwar building period – the buildings are simple, have clean lines, and are radically different from the architectural style that came before. When analyzed from this point of view, why would the church have been rebuilt in the "old" style if nothing else was? Instead, like its surroundings, it is reflective of the time of its construction, a time of uncertainty, when views and values were changing after the war and deciding how to move forwards from all of the atrocity and horror. While it seems like it may have completely gone against the idea of the typical cathedral, Schwarz was able to create a place that provides protection and sanctuary, where nothing outside is of any relevance. The Church of St. Anne as it stands today is not a site overrun by tourism like the Cologne Cathedral. Instead, it is a quiet, monumental resting place of true reverence that preserves the memory of the old church not only through the words of an exhibit, but through a transformative reconstruction whose material tells the story of its past.

KOLDINGHUS

Preservation
Johannes & Inger Exner | 1992
Kolding, Denmark

"the treatment the castle is receiving at present, during the sixth period of its history, is based on extreme respect for the authenticity of what remains and a clear presentation of the historic fabric with all its wear, weathering and patina. it is the antithesis of reconstruction."[8]

HISTORY

Koldinghus, Jutland's last royal fortress, dates back to the year 1268, but almost nothing is known about what it looked like for the first two centuries of its existence. No traces of the original structure remain today. The oldest parts of the structure that remain today are from the 1440s when King Christoffer of Bavaria constructed the North Wing. In the 1470s, King Christian I built the West Wing, which had a marksmen's gallery on the uppermost floor. These two wings were connected by a ring wall that had a moat around its outer edge.

In the 1540s, Koldinghus' defensive infrastructure was rendered useless when the use of cannons in battle increased, so King Christian III had almost the entire structure rebuilt. At this time the marksmen's gallery was transformed into the Great Hall and two new wings were constructed after the moats surrounding Koldinghus were filled in. The castle was whitewashed and the entire roof surface was covered in slate roof tiles to unify the exterior appearance. In 1597 the North Wing was destroyed by a fire. Following this destruction, King Christian IV rebuilt the wing and added another floor in order to make all of the wings the same height. King Christian IV also added the Giant's Tower, which had statues of Hannibal, Hector, Scipio and Hercules on top of it, who were four ancient heroes. During the period from 1715-1723, Koldinghus underwent

8 Johannes Exner, *Koldinghus: the conversion of an old royal Danish castle* (Monumentum, December 1984), 298.

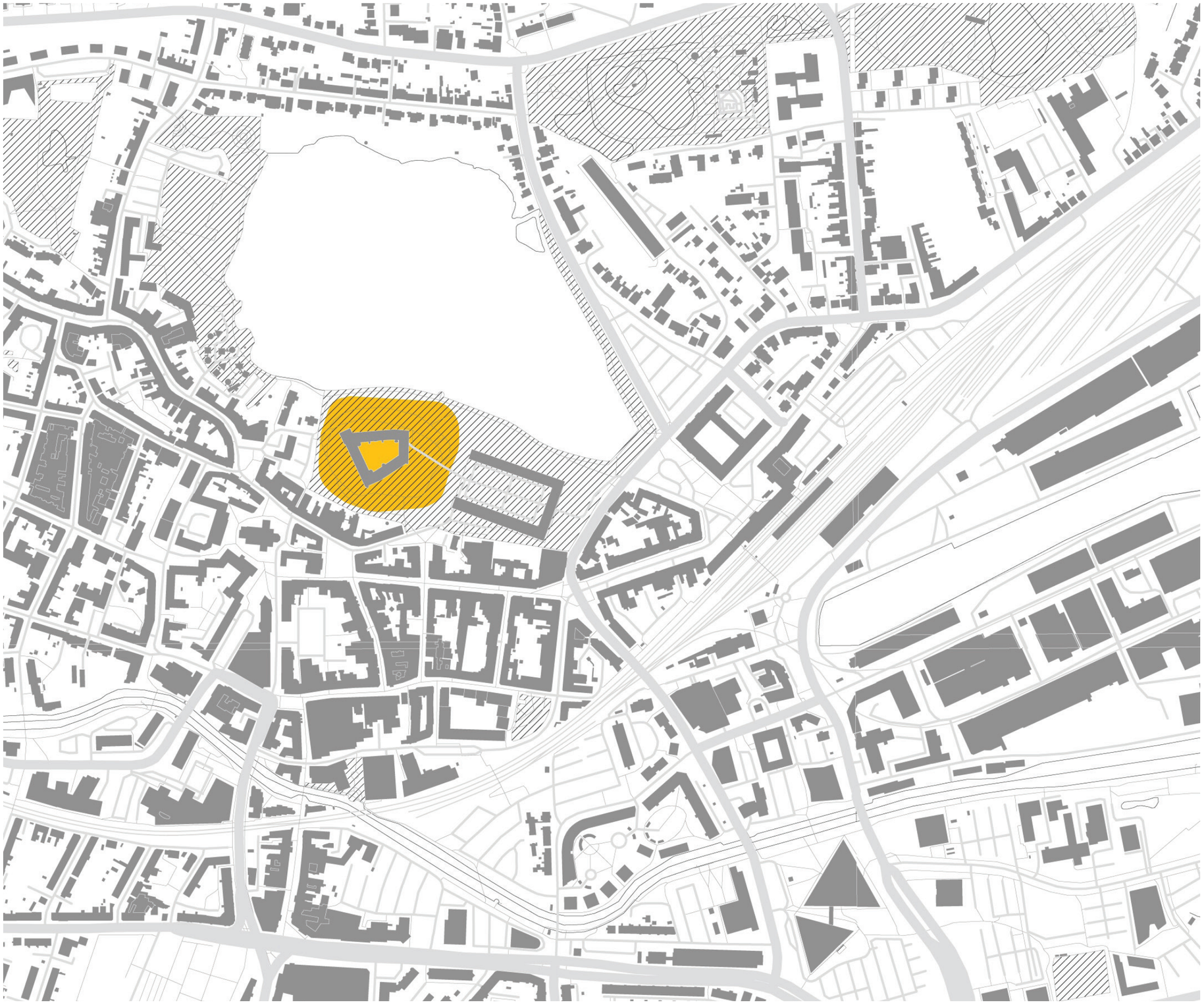
a major renovation in order to transform it from a Renaissance Castle to a Baroque Castle. Garrets and gables were removed to simplify the exterior appearance, while the interior was split up into smaller rooms since the large halls were no longer of any use.

On the night of 29 March 1808, Koldinghus was destroyed by a fire that originated in the guardroom and spread to the entire castle via the chimney. The collapse of the heavy slate roofs and the Giant's Tower during the fire crushed much of the castle. After the fire, Koldinghus lay in ruins. In 1831, it was decided that the ruins should be preserved as a monument to the past, but they were unstable and continued to deteriorate. In 1854, Scipio, one of the two remaining statues on top of the Giant's Tower fell during a storm. In 1874, portions of the walls in the south wing had to be taken down. In 1879, the Garden Tower collapsed. In order to stabilize the structure and protect it from further collapse, some restoration work was done, which included the creation of the Koldinghus Museum in 1890, the installation of the Royal Library interior in 1915, and the reconstruction of the Giant's Tower in 1932. Johannes and Inger Exner were commissioned in 1972 to complete the preservation of Koldinghus, which was finished in 1992.

Previous Page: *Koldinghus from Across the Lake*
Upper Left: *The Great Fire (Source: Koldinghus Exhibition)*
Lower Left: *Historical Koldinghus Exhibition*

CONTEXT

Koldinghus is located at the heart of the downtown Kolding, perched upon a hill that is the highest point of a relatively flat city, where it overlooks a stunning lake - Slotssøen. A walking trail encircles the lake, and Koldinghus is visible from every point on it. The scene of the castle on this hill is a picturesque one, the prominence of it contributing to its importance in the city. The Great Tower flies the Danish flag, both of which are visible from most of the surrounding area, not just from around the lake. The area immediately surrounding Koldinghus is diverse. To its west and north lie primarily residential areas, while the train station and harbor are located to its east. To its south is the downtown area, which is primarily commercial. Downtown Kolding shares many similarities with other Danish cities like Aarhus and Odense, as it has many buildings with a historic character, and easily walkable streets lined with grocery stores, other small shops, and restaurants. Once outside of a twenty-minute walking radius of Koldinghus, most of the city is residential. Life in Kolding is quiet and peaceful - it is a city filled with people eating at tables on the streets, walking around the downtown area or the lake, and sitting on park benches to admire the views.



BETWEEN OLD & NEW

Arguably, one of the most fascinating pieces of this particular project is the startling transparency of philosophy that the architects Johannes and Inger operated under in order to complete it. Though the Ministry of Public Building recommended that Koldinghus be rebuilt using traditional methods in 1969, the Exners joined the project with a much different perspective, one that recognized the long history of the building and thought about how to pay homage to its entire history, not just a moment in time. Unlike the common restoration practices of the time that would have restored it to a previous version of itself and erased the traces of its life, the approach taken by Johannes and Inger Exner used the restoration process to add another layer to Koldinghus' long and storied history. The Exners stated that, "If the life [of the building] has been historically eventful, it is a serious matter to remove or obliterate the impressions the building has received in order to restore it to its appearance at birth or to stop the historical process in any way."[9] For them, the reversion of the site to a fleeting moment in its history would have erased the past of the ruin, or even created a version of the castle that never truly existed.

Originally, the intent of the Exners was to leave the ruin in its collapsed state, as they proposed an entirely new structure around it to encapsulate what remained. However, Koldinghus as it exists today appears to take its original form, a compromise agreed upon by the architects and the state. The result is a version of Koldinghus that takes the shape it once took, but one with a clear distinction between the old and the new that creates a tapestry of materials and stories. Where sections of new walls were built in order to protect the ruin, they are covered in a series of dark-colored wooden shingles. The shingle-covered exterior is not limited to a regular shape, but one that moves up, down, and at angles to follow the edge of the ruin. Where new windows were inserted, typical bricks were used to fill in the gap between the ruin and the window. The bricks of the ruin are imperfect, crumbling, and smeared with mortar. The bricks of the infill around the windows are typical, modular, and neatly pointed. The visible material variety allows for people to visually register which parts of the castle remained when it was in its ruined state and what was rebuilt to create an image of the castle in the prime of its life, making it obvious that what exists today is a reconstruction of the past. Within the Ruin Hall, the complete separation of

9 Johannes Exner, *Koldinghus: the conversion of an old royal Danish castle* (Monumentum, December 1984), 286.

the old and new, both materially and structurally, shows that the work done during the restoration aligns with the values the Exners had and does not attempt to "stop the historical process in any way."[10] There, the walls of the ruin are comprised of oversized bricks that are varied in color and that have weathered significantly over time. The walls of the enclosure are a stark contrast to this. These walls appear to lack a material, they are simply white and nothing else. They could be made of anything from plastic to solid wood. But that is the point - these walls are not the focus. They act as a background and a shelter for what has been deemed important in this space, the ruins of Koldinghus. The floors act in a similar manner. The hardwood floors are of light tone, the same as that of the new structural columns, which is easily differentiable from the darkness of the bricks around it. The planks are laid so that their length spans the short direction of the hall and they meet in a cross-shaped pattern at the base of each column. Not a single part of the new floor touches the ruins. The edge of the floor follows that of the ruin, consistently separated by a few inches of air. The new, wooden structure is the antithesis of the original structure. Where the medieval building would have been fully supported by the thick, load-bearing walls, this insertion is a willowy, tectonic frame that that not only supports the walls and floors, but also contributes to the visual lightness of the new pieces and the way they appear to float within the space.

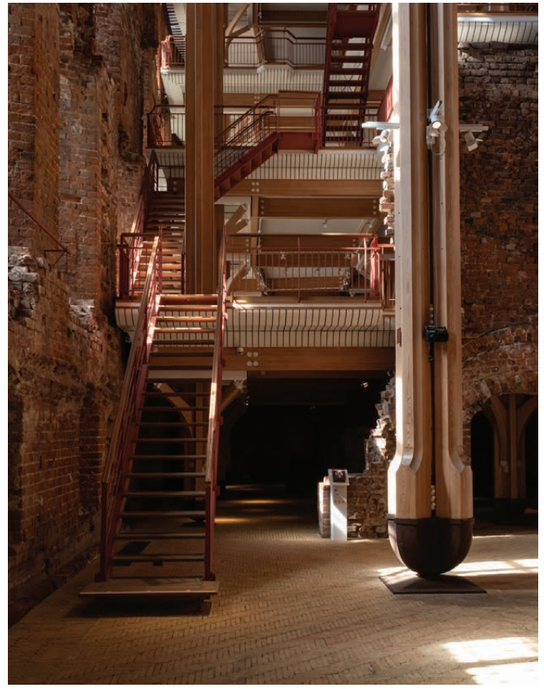
10 Johannes Exner, *Koldinghus: the conversion of an old royal Danish castle* (Monumentum, December 1984), 286.

Previous Page: *Approaching Koldinghus*
Upper Left: *Column Base*
Upper Right: *Separation between Floor and Ruin*
Right: *The Ruin's Crumbling Edge*

EXPERIENCE

As I approached Koldinghus for the first time, I walked up a path paved in large, smooth stones and lined with several tall poles that flew Danish flags. I headed straight for the giant gate at the end of the path, since it seemed obvious that that was the entrance. When I actually tried to enter, it turned out that the gate was really just for show. The entrance to the castle was just a small door to the right of the gate. The small door led me into the former guardroom where the Great Fire of 1808 began, which was nothing more than a dark room with a sign that described the events that transpired here. After I read the sign, I headed up a narrow set of steps and emerged in a much brighter room. This wing of the castle held a lot of functional program for the museum, including the ticket counter, the gift shop, and a small historical exhibit on Koldinghus. The small exhibit was comprised of two rooms, one of which had scale models of Koldinghus during various time periods and architectural drawings of the ruin. The other room had information about the different rulers who lived in the castle and directed its many renovations, daily life there, historical images, and other artifacts. The exhibit was very informative and set the stage for understanding not only the preservation and restoration work Koldinghus underwent, but also the long history of t he building.

I walked around the historical exhibit for some time, then exited the building to the inner courtyard. The shape of the inner courtyard was irregular, maybe even close to trapezoidal. There was a fountain near the center, while benches and planters filled with flowers lined the edges. I sat down on a bench for a few minutes to sketch, observe people, and take in some fresh air before I headed towards the main entrance stairs. These stairs culminated in a set of glass doors that led straight into the Ruin Hall. Once I walked through the doors, I was confronted with a large, suspended spiral staircase. From this point, I had two choices: to go up or down the staircase, or to walk to my right, through a small brick portal, and onto the steel gangway. This was the point where the intended sequential experience became a bit muddied to me. The building felt more like a “choose your own adventure” book than one with a specified path. I decided to approach the exploration in a methodical way, from the bottom to the top, so I went down the spiral staircase to the lowest level. The area at the base of the staircase felt small and intimate, as it held the elevators, restrooms, and was rather dimly lit. There was a small arch in that area that led to the Ruin Hall, an expansive space that encompassed all four stories of the South Wing.



Previous Page: *Entrance to the Ruin Hall*
Right: *From the Lowest Level*
Lower Left: *Looking Upwards*
Lower Right: *Column Details*

Once I passed through the arch, I could see the space in its entirety, where two timber-laminated columns, four stories tall, held up the roof and three steel gangways bridged the gap from the entry to the other side. In the Ruin Hall, there was no attempt to return this series of halls to their former glory or function. In fact, the experience of being there was almost like two different buildings in one. There is the ruin, the piece inserted during the restoration, and the shelter created during the restoration. The ruins stand on their own as a piece of history, and in some areas, seems to have been left to crumble away and collect cobwebs. The bricks are much larger than standard, modular ones today and appear to be laid in an English bond. The mortar is messy in some areas, almost like it was smeared over the face of the brick, while it has almost disintegrated in other areas. The new pieces are legibly different from the ruin that surround them. The hardwood floors take the shape of the ruin in a way, as their edge follows the edge formed by the ruin, entering into every window alcove and going around the old brick columns. However, the floors never touch the ruin itself - the two are separated by air. The timber-laminated columns and steel gangways are almost alien to the interior. While they are "flashy" in the sense that they seem to defy all structural logic, they still respect the existence of the ruin by not touching any part of it. They not only serve the functional purpose to hold everything together, but also an aesthetic purpose. The shelter stands on its own aesthetically, having only a white materiality. On the interior, it serves as nothing more than a background, and as something to protect the past. I spent a significant amount of time in the Ruin Hall, exploring every nook, cranny and detail. And these were not the only fascinating aspects of the space - tucked away in the corner by the elevator on the third and fourth levels were two different exhibits that explained the history of Koldinghus in depth. The exhibit on the third level is a slideshow of images from the Exners' personal archives and a series of process models that show early iterations of the main staircase to the Ruin

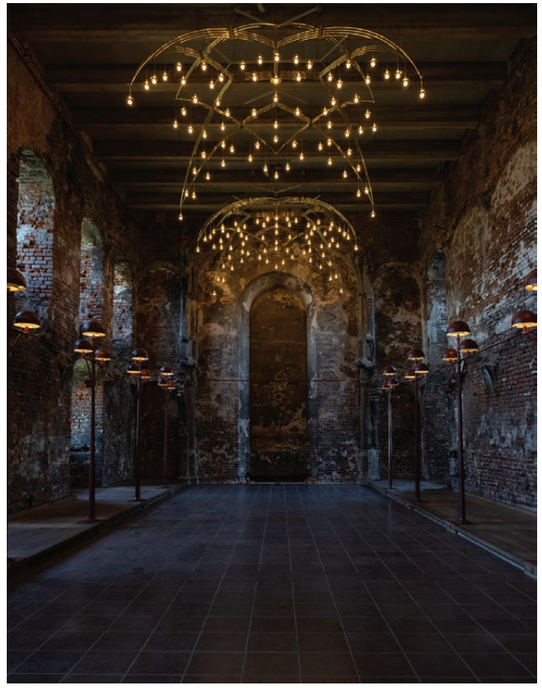
Hall, the Queen's Tower, and the transformation of Christian III's Chapel, while the exhibit on the fourth level is a video on the history of Koldinghus.

The other distinct space within the Ruin Hall was Christian III's Chapel, tucked away on the main level of the South Wing. The room was much smaller than I had anticipated it being, as it was so tight that even with a wide-angle lens it was difficult to photograph the entirety of the room. During the restoration, this space was converted into a lecture room, so it has a lot of seating, but only half of it is accessible since the balcony seating is not open to visitors. The seating is comprised of a series of benches that are painted white metal, with blue and white striped cushions. I spent a while here, taking in the numerous details in the furniture, materials, and structure. The floor is a series of square gray and white stone tiles. The lighting is a series of round bulbs hanging from strings in groups of three. In each group of three there is a pattern - one bulb hanging on a short string, one bulb hanging on a long string, and another bulb hanging on a short string, each individual bulb with a small gold "plate" immediately above it. The other detail that really caught my attention in this room were the bright blue painted accents everywhere. The color palette across the entire castle is overwhelmingly dark and muted colors, so this choice really accentuates the space in the castle.

Once I left the Ruin Hall, I ended up walking through several parts of the castle that were not part of the Exner's scope of work. Many of these rooms were temporary exhibitions, but some were also quite functional, holding things like workshops to produce period costumes from the previous "eras" of Koldinghus in order to promote its history today. I felt like many of these spaces paled in comparison to the grandeur of the Ruin Hall and Christian III's Chapel, as most of them had blank white walls and old wooden floors (with the exception of the Royal Library Interior). After winding my way through numerous spaces that all had the same character, I headed down the concrete spiral stairs in one of the turrets to arrive in the last area restored by the Exners. The Castle Chapel was a stark contrast to Christian III's Chapel because it felt like it was not intended to be inhabited. The Castle Chapel is another space paved in square tiles, though these appear to be dark gray slate. However, unlike in Christian III's Chapel, this room is devoid of furniture. The thing of interest in this room is the lighting - the lamps that line the edges of the space mark the location of the columns that once supported this room, and the three dome-shaped chandeliers represent the form of the original space. While there were people in here taking wedding photos and whatnot, most people just took a quick look at the space and then left since there weren't any places to sit and enjoy the room. After taking my own photographs, I exited the Castle Chapel

directly into the exterior courtyard, before heading back towards the entrance, gathering my things, and heading home for the evening.

Several days after I had arrived in Kolding, I realized I had failed to recognized that there was a museum in the stable yard right outside of Koldinghus. Though I had passed by the stable yard before, it appeared to just be a parking lot. On this particular day, I decided to take a shortcut through the parking lot and stumbled upon a museum. While the exhibit in the museum is about the Gestapo and the Nazi occupation of Denmark, and therefore does not have much of anything to do with Koldinghus, I still decided to go in. There, I met a man who not only explained the museum to me, but also spoke about Koldinghus. In this conversation, I discovered an interesting perspective on the restoration that I had not yet considered – a sense of pride. This man conveyed to me a sense of immense pride that he felt in not only having such an important part of his city's history preserved, but in having it become a world-renowned work of architecture. The remarkable restoration has placed his home on the map, and gives him something to be proud of as he gazes on it each day from the museum where he works.



Previous Page: *Lighting over the Balcony in Christian III's Chapel*
Above (Left and Right): *The Castle Chapel*

SYNTHESIS

When I reflect on my personal experience on the site, the distinct separation of the old and new, combined with the lack of a prescriptive sequence, resulted in material, spatial, and structural nuances that allowed for an experience of continual discovery. Admittedly, there were so many details that I failed to capture and catalog the first few times I went through Koldinghus, which I believe to be a testament to the thoughtfulness and care put into the restoration. While the parts of Koldinghus that were not restored by the Exners are filled with artifacts and activities to tell different stories, the spaces like the Ruin Hall and the Castle Chapel are empty, save for a handful of seats. There, where the pieces of brick and stone express visual memories of the castle's history, the architecture is the exhibit. The ruin is completely separated from the shell around it, leaving all evidence of its age and many renovations on display. The intervention does not stop or interfere with the historical process, as it does not change any part of the existing ruin or prevent it from further aging. The work done here is just one more layer in the building's long history. The old and the new pieces will continue to age and change independently of one another over time, allowing visitors to see the many layers of Koldinghus as something to be revered, while also preserving the legacy of the ruined castle. The memories encapsulated on this site are a series of complex additions and renovations that occurred over time and will continue to remain visible as people explore the ruin.

THE RIVESALTES MEMORIAL

Addition
Rudy Ricciotti | 2015
Rivesaltes, France

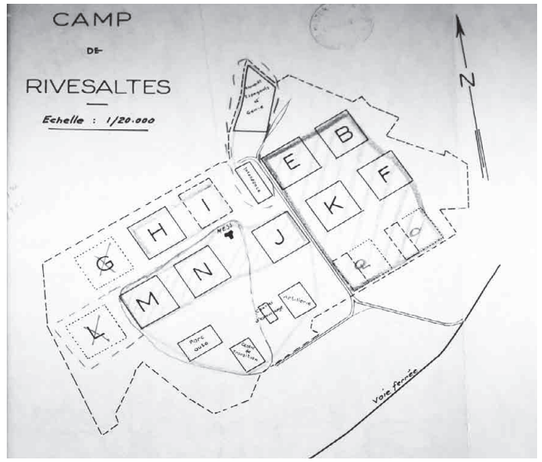
"the Rivesaltes Camp Memorial is a place of history and memories, a window onto the contemporary world." [11]

HISTORY

Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes, which opened in 1938, was originally constructed for the purpose of military training. But the Rivesaltes Camp has never had a permanent program. It has been everything from a military training center to a refugee camp to an internment camp to a detention center over the course of its life. Soon after it opened, on 12 November 1938, a decree made by the French Government called for the administrative internment of "undesirable foreigners" that could represent a potential danger to the country. The decree was intended to protect France, as it targeted refugees from Nazi Germany and Central Europe. However, the authoritarian Vichy Regime was established in 1940, who expanded the definition of "undesirable foreigners" to include additional minority groups and institutionalized anti-semitism. Over the span of only a few short months, more than 50,000 people were transported to internment camps in Southern France.

The rise of the Vichy Regime turned out to be a cataclysmic event in the history of not only France, but also the Rivesaltes Camp. During this period, many camps were closed and adapted for the purpose of internment - this one reopened on 7 January 1941. The majority of the internees that arrived that day were Spanish refugees and French gypsies. Within the first six months of operation as an internment camp, the camp had admitted more than 10,000 internees. Though it was used solely for the purpose of internment for a while, it became a deportation camp in 1942. The Vichy

11 Unknown, "Home Page," memorial du camp de rivesaltes, Accessed 20 December 2024, https://www.memorialcamprivesaltes.eu/en.



Regime interned over 5,000 Jews who were temporarily held here until they were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau via Drancy. On 22 November 1942, German forces occupied and emptied the Rivesaltes Camp. The camp detained almost 18,000 people in the two years before it was closed and its prisoners were transferred. The last chapter of the camp during the Second World War involved its use as a military training camp by the troops who defended the southern coast as well as a place to hold prisoners-of-war.

Following the end Second World War, the Rivesaltes Camp was largely inactive until after the end of the Algerian War of Independence when it was turned into a transit and internment camp. The largest group of people held there was the Harkis, Algerians who fought on the French side during the Algerian War of Independence. Following the war, France all but abandoned their allies, even though they were being persecuted and killed as traitors in Algeria. Though almost 100,000 of them made it to France, they were placed into camps where they faced harsh living conditions, completely segregated from the French without the opportunity to integrate. From 1962-1964, the camp held over 21,000 Harkis and their families. In 1964, the Rivesaltes Camp was finally shut down as a site of internment. Later, the camp housed Guinean soldiers and their families while the men fought for France. Though this was the last time the entire camp was functional, one block of the camp was utilized as a small detention center from 1986 until 2007.

Previous Page: *Between the Concrete Pillars*
Upper Left: *Camp Rivesaltes Map*
(Source: Rivesaltes Memorial Permanent Exhibition)
Lower Left: *View of the Barracks in the Rivesaltes Internment Camp*
(Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

CONTEXT

Rivesaltes is a commune in Southern France, approximately 40 kilometers across the border from Spain. Though the camp and the memorial bear the name “Rivesaltes,” they are actually located almost 10 kilometers outside of the center of Rivesaltes, in what is a rather industrial area comprised of some warehouses and equipment suppliers. The former Rivesaltes Camp and the Rivesaltes Memorial are located so remotely in relation to the commune that when I engaged in conversation with several locals in the nearby area, they were unaware of its existence. This was a sharp contrast to the other three sites I visited, as they were centrally located within their respective cities and seemed to be well-known and frequented locations. Even though the Rivesaltes Camp is not in the center of the commune, it seems as though it is integral to the history of the area, or it should be. For those who live here, maybe they are blissfully unaware of the history of this area and the camp, or willfully ignorant. Either way, this site, unlike the others, does not seem to play a role in the daily lives of the people here.

IMPOSSIBLE TO FORGET

"The Memorial of Rivesaltes, compressed between earth and sky, between past and memory, is located exactly in the present and the life itself. In this desert environment, a few dozen metres away, it no longer exists. Its formal violence demonstrates the impossibility of forgetting"[12]

In the mind of the architect himself, the Rivesaltes Memorial is not simply something placed on a site, but a piece of architecture designed in such a provocative manner that it requires all who visit it to face the injustices that occurred there. The mission of the memorial is not only to educate students, visitors, and the world about its role in history, but to serve as a warning for future generations about the dangers of forced displacement.

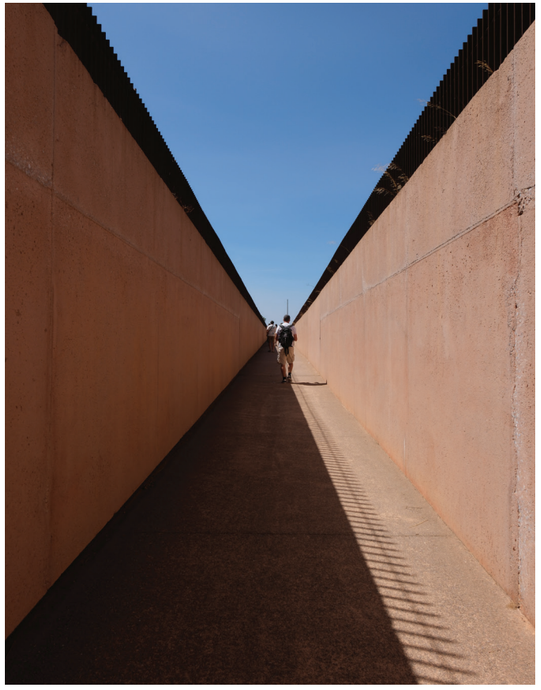
The architectural approach towards the site can be broken down into two separate categories: the physical and the experiential. The first encompasses the literal architecture of the memorial, while the second is largely focused on the user experience of both the site and memorial. The memorial is located on the only unbuilt area on the site, the former parade ground, in order to preserve what remained of the camp as it was. The careful placement of the memorial meant that there was no need to alter any of the crumbling remains and destroy the scars the camp has left on the earth. The memorial is not only the same ochre color of the dirt around it, but it is also buried in a pit in the ground, just barely cresting the surface of the earth. The roof subtly rises in height from the west to east across its length so that it never overtakes the height of the barracks of the camp or impedes the views across the landscape. The change in height is so gradual that it is not perceived until one walks around the entire camp to the far end of the memorial, only to find that it rises above the ground. These decisions make the memorial, although a large addition to the site, appear to be camouflaged, almost as if diminishing its own importance so that people look carefully at the site itself.

The interior of the memorial has a similar outward focus. The architecture, though interesting, is not the focal point. Instead, the interior heavily emphasizes the importance of the history presented in both the permanent and temporary exhibitions. This is largely achieved through a heavy contrast of color and light between the architecture and the exhibit. The entire interior is the same ochre-colored concrete of the exterior, as it was entirely cast-in-place, with the exception of the floors. The floors in the entry hall are long, thin bricks and the the floors in the exhibition hall are hardwood

12 Rudy Ricciotti, "The Rivesaltes Memorial Museum," World Architects, 4 May 2017, Accessed 20 December 2024, https://www.world-architects.com/ja/architecture-news/works/the-rivesaltes-memorial-museum

plank. The fact that the building is underground and lacking natural light, combined with the dark color palette of mostly untextured materials allows the interior to act as a background for everything that lies within. The exhibit material is either directly lit or backlit, so that it glows amidst the darkness. The gradual change in height also occurs on the interior, but it is much less perceptible. I would not have even registered the slope of the ceiling if I had not of pulled out my camera to take a picture of the wall and realized that I could not frame the image in a perfect rectangle.

The experiential approach to the site is what sets it apart from others. While other museums and memorials rely on exhibits with artifacts and signage to tell their story, this one relies almost exclusively on a self-guided audio tour. The only exception to this is on the interior, where for those who speak French, there are signs to read. For those who speak other languages, both the exterior and interior are conveyed via audio. During the journey through the camp, visitors are guided by a multitude of voices that include a narrator, historian, architect, and the survivors of the camp. Respectively, these voices talk about the history of the camp, the creation of the memorial, and their own personal stories. The audio guide allows people to take this heavy, emotional experience at their own pace and ensures that they all receive the same experience from the voices who made this memorial possible.



Previous Page: *The Entrance Gate*
Upper Left: *Into the Earth*
Upper Right: *Emerging from the Earth*
Right: *The Threshold Space*

EXPERIENCE

Upon arrival near the site, I stepped off the bus and immediately felt like I was in this otherworldly, deserted wasteland of a place. The bus stop was around the corner from the memorial, so I had to walk 10-15 minutes to reach it. The walk to the memorial consisted largely of a deteriorating sidewalk that was cracked, crumbling, and had concrete shards almost erupting from it before it transitioned into something more smoothly paved. There was not much to see as I walked down the sidewalk towards the memorial. On the left side of the road, there were a few warehouses and some windmills. On the right side of the road, there was an imposing wall that marked part of the original perimeter of Camp Joffre de Rivesaltes. The road dead-ended into the memorial, which was marked with a large, weathered, wooden gate and signage that read “mémorial du camp de rivesaltes” in all lowercase letters. I walked through the gate and into a parking lot that could only be described as a vast landscape of gravel, and felt a sense of fear and hopelessness wash over me. There were only a handful of cars in the parking lot. There was only one sound - the roar of the wind. I could not see anything other than the crumbling remains of the camp and the Pyrenees mountains in the distance. For a moment, I almost wondered whether the memorial was there at all, as this place easily could have been mistaken for a complete ghost town.

I saw the memorial itself only after I walked across the entire parking lot - a massive, ochre-colored concrete block buried in the earth framed by two concrete pillars. It appeared to stretch on endlessly, not visibly cresting the surface of the earth where it was buried. I walked through the space between the two concrete pillars, one of which had the word “sacre” written in graffiti letters on it, and headed towards the entrance of the building. The entrance was a ramp to the left of the memorial that descended into the earth and was lined with heavy steel pickets on both sides. When I stood at the top of the ramp, I saw the remains of the camp and the mountains around me. When I was one-third of the way down the ramp, I saw only the tops of the scraggly trees. When I was two-thirds of the way down the ramp, I saw only the sky. The ramp ended in a solid wall, which then turned right into the darkness. I turned right once more at the end of that ramp and was shocked by the blindingly bright sunlit exterior space that I exited into a number of feet below ground level. The entry into the bunker-like building was here, its thick doors made of rough stone propped open. There was a threshold-like space past the stone doors which concealed the

Previous Page: *Approaching the Camp*
Right: *The Path through the F Block*
Lower Left: *A Field of Debris*
Lower Right: *Crumbling Remains, Precariously Supported*

interior at its end with a set of glass doors that I only saw my reflection in. When I entered inside, I was given a ticket and an audio guide.

The self-guided audio tour led me back outside, first to the small courtyard and then back up the ramp to walk among the haunting ruins of the camp. Like when I first entered through the gate of the site, I saw nothing but the ruins with mountains in the distance beyond. This time, when I heard the loud roar of the wind, it sounded eerily like souls screaming and crying out. I also heard the thump of the wind turbines as they spun around furiously. I wandered completely alone, not a soul in sight. Once the audio guide started, I listened

as the narrator, the historian, the architect, and the survivors of the camp spoke to me. While I myself had no personal connection to the stories of those interned at the Rivesaltes Camp, I felt deeply connected to what had happened there as I listend to the narrative. I struggled to walk around as I imagined those imprisoned in the small shacks without any resources or basic necessities. The people held captive at Rivesaltes were unwanted, marginalized by everyone. The people held captive at Rivesaltes must have known that this was only a stop on their journey before they were transported to death camps, separated from their families or rejected by the country they served or supported These thoughts made it difficult to maintain any semblance of composure as I walked around. It was almost fortuitous that I was the only person at the memorial, as I did not have to pretend to be strong or unaffected as I listened to the stories they told. The way in which the architect described his contribution to the site was also quite moving. Ricciotti described his work as being submissive to the site, as he believed the architecture of the memorial should not impose itself on the site, but that the landscape of the site should impose itself on the architecture of the memorial. When I heard this, I suddenly understood what was happening. The architecture of the memorial was not the memory, but the existence of the memorial protected the memory around it from being wiped away.

After I had finished walking around the ruins of the former Rivesaltes Camp, I descended into the memorial for a second time, but this time to discover the exhibition within. I passed through the rough stone doors once more to the threshold space. The floor was covered in long, thin brick pavers, which had square lights about the width of three bricks inset into them. The square lights were directed upwards, and washed the lower part of the walls in a yellow light. The walls and ceiling almost blend together, as they were both the color of the exterior. An inscription on the wall to my left explained how the memorial came to be:

"In 1997, the Rivesaltes camp was threatened with destruction. Concerned citizens banded together and managed to save the site. Together, they prevented an entire part of 20th century history from falling into oblivion.

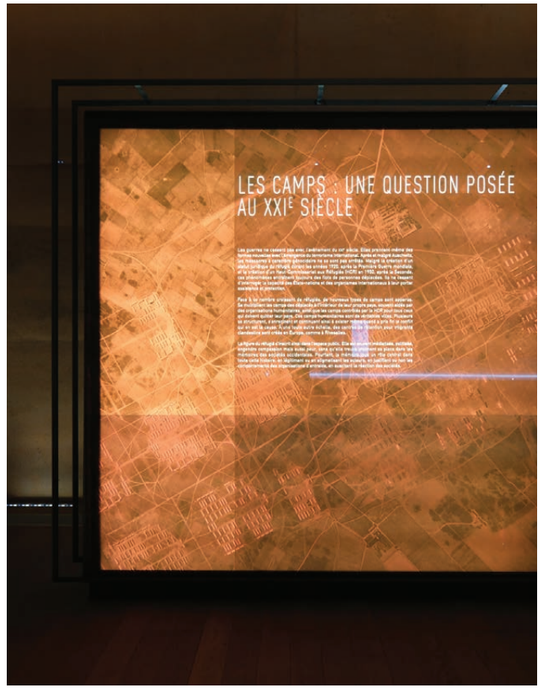
A year later, Christian Borguin, newly elected president of the Pyrénées-Orientales, decided to make this his fight. His goal? To make the camp a place of memory of the forced internment of all populations from 1939 - 1964. For over 15 years, he worked alongside the victims and their descendants to tirelessly convince authorities of its value.

The land for the memorial was acquired by the Pyrénées-Orientales Department. In 2011, the Languedoc-Roussillon region took over the project. Damie Alary, the president of the Languedoc-Roussillon region and Hermetine Malherbe, president of the department of the Eastern Pyrénées, helped complete the project."

There was a wood-framed, automatic glass sliding door that spanned the entire height and width of the room at the end of the space. From where I was standing, I was not able to see through the door to the interior. The glass reflected the space I was inhabiting, as well as the exterior behind me. I entered the interior to continue the self-guided audio tour. I walked past the ticket counter to a narrow opening, which led to a long, dark hallway. This hallway shared many similarities in language to the threshold space, especially in terms of lighting and material. Like the threshold space, this hallway was lit from the floor, but the flooring material and shape of the lights changed. The floor was covered in wooden planks, and the lights were inset into the planks, but these had a more rectilinear shape. Instead of lining both edges of the hallway, the lights were justified to the right side. While the walls and ceiling were also one material in this space, the lighting cast an inconsistent glow, which resulted in the illusion of multiple materials on the surfaces. The left wall was the darkest and most true to the color of the material, whereas the right wall appeared to be much lighter, as the lights washed out the color of the material.

When I exited the hallway, the space opened up into

a large room that held the permanent exhibition. The scale of the room was quite different than I expected when I saw the building from outside, as the permanent exhibition only occupies maybe a quarter of the length of the overall memorial. The space was incredibly dim, as most of the light actually came from the exhibits, which included six large panels around the edges of the room and a center display in the center of the room. The panels described major events in the history of the camp, while the central display held numerous maps, photographs, artifacts, and more. The information within the exhibit could have been explored in any order…if you speak French. However, the order in which the audio guide reads the exhibits was slightly confusing and unclear. Ideally, I think that it would make the most sense to walk around the perimeter, read the panels, and learn the overview of the history before diving into the smaller aspects, but I was at the mercy of the audio guide in the exhibition space. Architecturally, the exhibition space is quite simple. In the same way that the exterior of the memorial submits to the history of the site, so does the interior exhibition. The information and history being held there takes center stage, while the architecture works to support the memory of the place. As a visitor, one must also submit to the history of the site in a way, especially if not fluent in French, as the only way to experience the exhibition is via the audio guide.



Previous Page: *The Permanent Exhibition*
Above: *A Group of Students on Tour*

SYNTHESIS

Before I visited the Camp Rivesaltes Memorial, the images presented it in a light that suggested it had a monolithic and monumental quality that made the architecture the "attraction" of the site. While the memorial is undoubtedly monolithic and monumental, I would conclude that it is not purely because of the architecture, but because of the weight of the history of the site and the way in which these memories are conveyed to the visitors. Though I had no personal connection to the camp, the history of the site and the memories of the people who were interned here were constantly at the forefront of the experience, which helped me as an outsider to understand the magnitude of what happened here. While the physical existence of the memorial is important, it serves as more of a vessel for the history of the site and the memories of the internees than it does as an architectural object. The memorial reconciles the weight of the past on the site with the present by foregrounding the memory of the place, bringing to light the injustices of history, and confronting the past, all with the support of the architectural intervention. Months later, the experience of walking through this site and memorial lives on vividly in my mind - this place is indeed impossible to forget.

"memory isn't a given, it's something you work on"[13]

CONCLUSION

Throughout the course of this research, the intersections that have been revealed between individual memory, collective memory, and architecture highlight the ability of architecture to shape our understanding of the past. These findings suggest that a multitude of factors interwoven together transform a work of architecture into a container of memory. These factors are a combination of the site, its historical narrative, and the architecture that work to frame the experience of an individual so that they can concurrently form their own memories and a deeper knowledge of the past. The existence of a place does not necessarily result in any meaning or memory if there are no people to experience it or recognize its importance.

The variety of architectural responses among these sites each contain countless nuances with historical and cultural implications, all of which prove to be effective in unique ways when it comes to the reconciliation of the past and present. The transformation of Castelgrande and preservation of Koldinghus prompted more of an exploratory experience, while the transformative reconstruction of Church of St. Anne and the addition of the Camp Rivesaltes Memorial prompted more of a reflective experience. The former projects lack prescriptive sequences, allowing for a circulatory maze of spaces for visitors to wander around and discover. The latter projects more tightly control the experience, producing slower, more cognizant movements of people through a series of dark, quiet spaces. Regardless of the methodology, all of the architectural interventions resulted in a bridge between their historical narratives and the memories of individuals in the present.

Memory is not static, or even universal, as it continues to evolve through the interactions that people have with these sites over time. Though the question of monumentality was not one from the original proposal, this process prompted a recognition of the innate differences between places that are monuments by design, and ones that evolve organically. Monuments are often proposed only to commemorate what the world deems as the most significant events or conflicts across history, while architecture that organically evolves to become monumental acquires meaning over the course of history through our interactions with it. Though all of the sites have complex histories, they are lesser known, which brings to light that there is not a metric by which to say the legacy of something deserves to be preserved. The Church of St. Anne was a result of the decimation of rural Germany in the Second World War, something that forced much of the population to confront their shattered sense of cultural identity and rebuild from the ground up. The rise and decline of Castelgrande and Koldinghus were integral to the formation of the cities around them. The Rivesaltes Memorial, though intentionally designed as a monument, is one that has evolved over time to tell the stories that have been long been buried and ignored. Those stories include the complicitness of the French government in interning the Jewish population in the Second World War, as well as the government's negligence towards its allies, the Harkis, in the Algerian War of Independence. These stories are critical to the identities of the people from these contexts and are still worthy of remembrance, as they can impact the people who encounter them. The literal telling of these stories through exhibitions and guides is just one component of these sites. Though the languages these stories are relayed in may not be accessible to everyone, the experience of the architecture that has acquired meaning throughout the course of history is universal.

Though it has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words, it took only a few minutes to understand that I knew nothing about the

13 Thomas Fontaine, *Rivesaltes Camp,* Rivesaltes, Rivesaltes Memorial (Former Camp Joffre), 2015, Permanent Exhibit.

experience of these sites from the photographs I had seen online beforehand. There is no picture that can replace, or even mimic, the experience of standing within the depths of a mountain, sitting within the windowless walls of a church, exploring a ruined castle, or hearing the solemn stories of the survivors of an internment camp. Now, after having visited and documented these sites, the words that I wrote and the photographs that I took stir up the memories I felt while there as I look at them. Though the lens of the experiences I had and the lens of the camera I looked through both capture memories, one is more subjective than the other. The experiences I had will be subject to the error of my reconstruction of them over time. The likelihood that the memories will fade and change over time is high. The photographs I took will always remain the same - they will forever reflect the path I walked and all of the details I was enamored by and captured. When I look back at these sites through the lens of another, the effect is not the same, as those objective viewpoints lack the emotional connections and memories formed as a result of firsthand experience.

The body of research formed here melds objective truth and subjective understanding to conclude that architecture provides the ability to foster cultural understanding and historical awareness through experience. This ability is critical in an era where collective memory is at risk of being diminished by disconnection or apathy, as it gives everyone the opportunity to experience the legacy of that place and its importance. Within those experiences, architecture guides how we engage with memory and shapes our collective identities, while also leaving space for future interpretations.

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