ARCHITECTURE THAT TRANSFORMS HISTORY: REFRAMING THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE ATOMIC BOMB FOR A MORE CRITICAL FUTURE

TRINITY MEMORIAL GROUNDS

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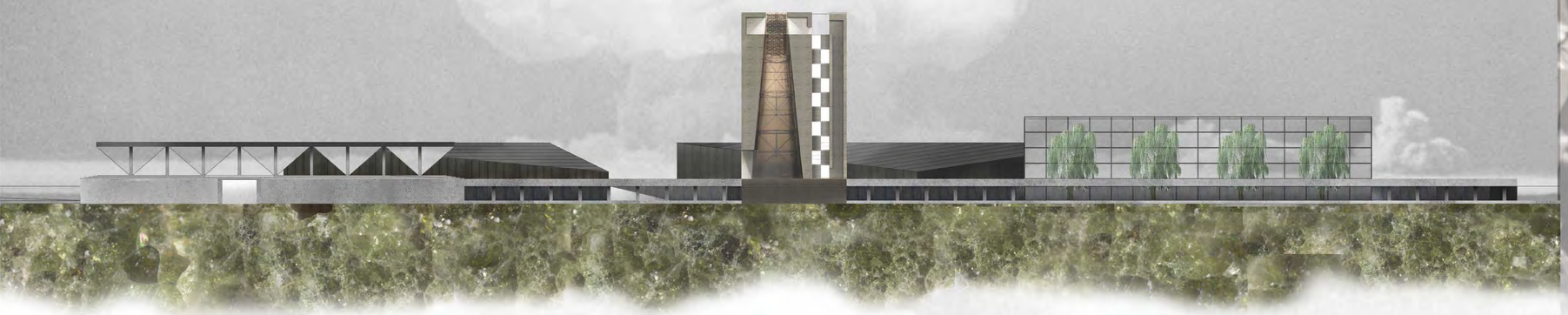
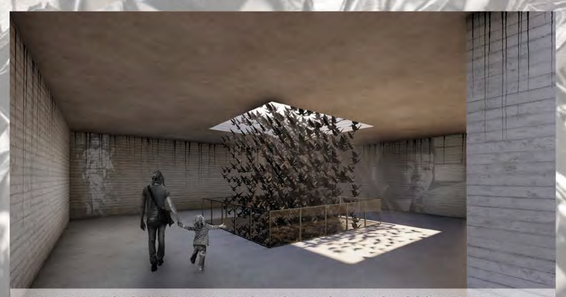
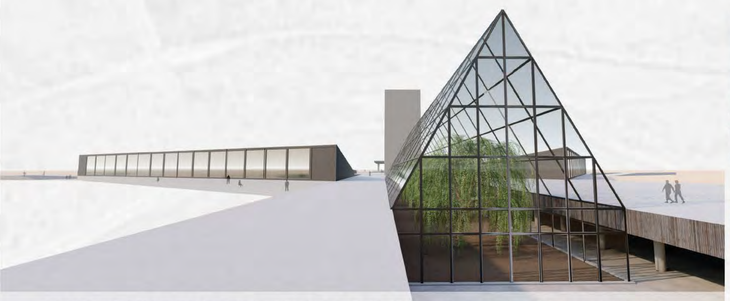
Memories allow us to keep things alive even after they have passed. Whether its people, places or moments in time, humanity has always found it necessary to retain what once was. Architecture has played a significant role in this effort from monuments focusing on names, heroes, and patriotism to abstract symbols of mourning and loss. How do we continue to evolve the way in which collective memory and history becomes part of present life and action as a motivating force for change, and how can architecture contribute? This is especially important when tackling some of the most important issues currently facing humanity, such as a nuclear disaster. By examining the significance of memory and forgetting throughout history and its relationship to loss of life, this thesis looks to transform the birthplace of the atomic bomb from a site once responsible for producing an instrument of destruction, into a site that becomes an instrument of peace and acknowledgment. With a critical approach, my design serves as a collection of representations and metaphors of various stories relating to the destructive consequences of the atomic bomb.





THE AREA THAT ONCE SUSPENDED THE FIRST NUCLEAR BOMB, IS NOW OCCUPIED WITH A FLOCK OF 1000 ORIGAMI CRANES MADE OF LEAD. THESE CRANES SYMBOLIZE IDEAS OF NUCLEAR FALLOUT, BLACK RAIN, TRACES IN HISTORY, AND THE DYING WISHES OF A LITTLE GIRL.

THE BASE OF THE VOIDED TOWER INTENDS TO ACT AS A REMINDER OF WHAT EXISTED AT THE SITE PRIOR TO THE DETONATION. THIS VOID TAKES THE PLACE OF THE ORIGINAL TOWER THAT SUSPENDED THE FIRST ATOMIC BOMB BEFORE IT WAS DETONATED 100 FEET ABOVE THE GROUND.

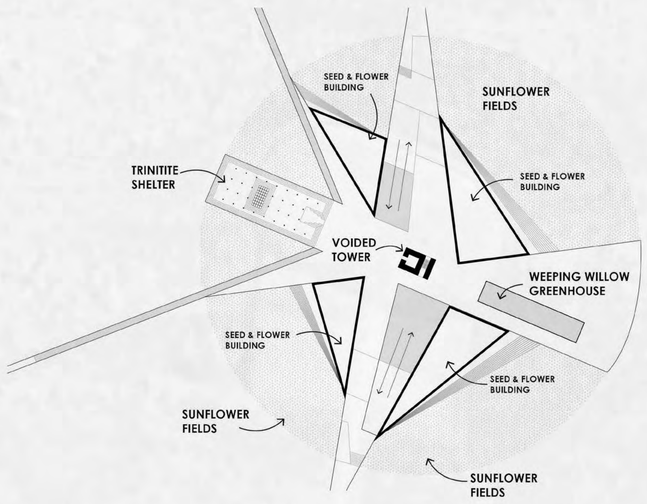


THE GREENHOUSE ON THE EAST END OF THE GROUNDS HOUSES FOUR WEEPING WILLOW TREES, ALL OF WHICH ARE DESCENDANTS FROM THE SEEDS OF THE TREES THAT SURVIVED THE BOMBINGS AT HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI. THE TREES ARE A SHARED SYMBOL OF HOPE BETWEEN THE SITES OF THE BOMB ORIGIN AND THE BOMB'S DESTINATIONS.

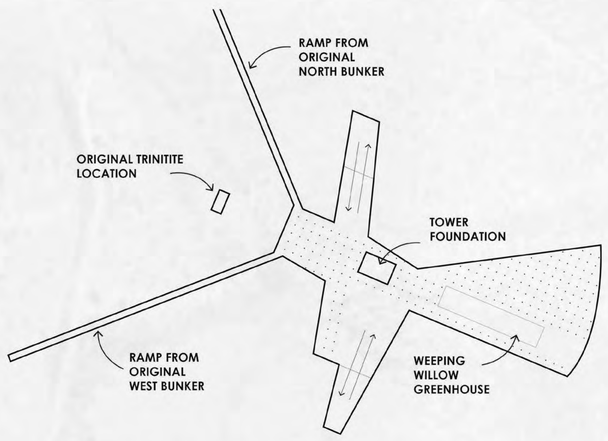
UNDERGROUND PROVIDES AN ENCOUNTER TO THE HORRIFIC CONSEQUENCES OF THE ATOMIC BOMB AT HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI, AS WELL AS ACCESS TO THE BASE OF THE FOUR WEEPING WILLOW TREES.

THE SEED AND FLOWER BUILDINGS ALLOW VISITORS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SITE. SUNFLOWERS NATURALLY FILTER OUT RADIATON FROM THE EARTH'S SOIL, LETTING THIS ACTION OF PLANTING AND HARVESTING SUNFLOWERS SERVE AS A HEALING PROCESS FOR THE SITE.

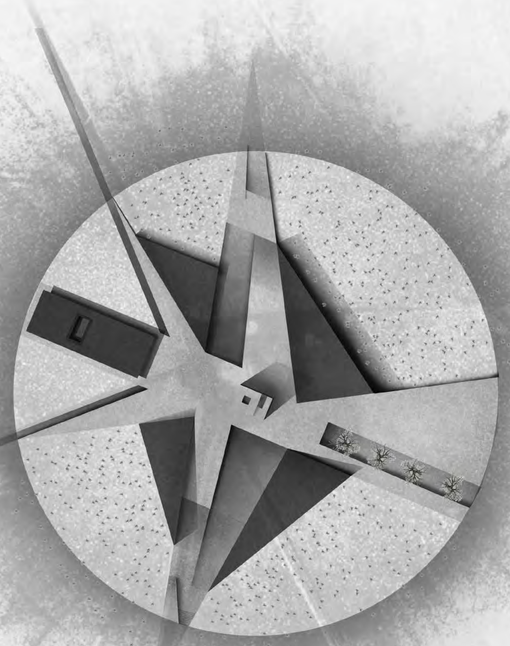
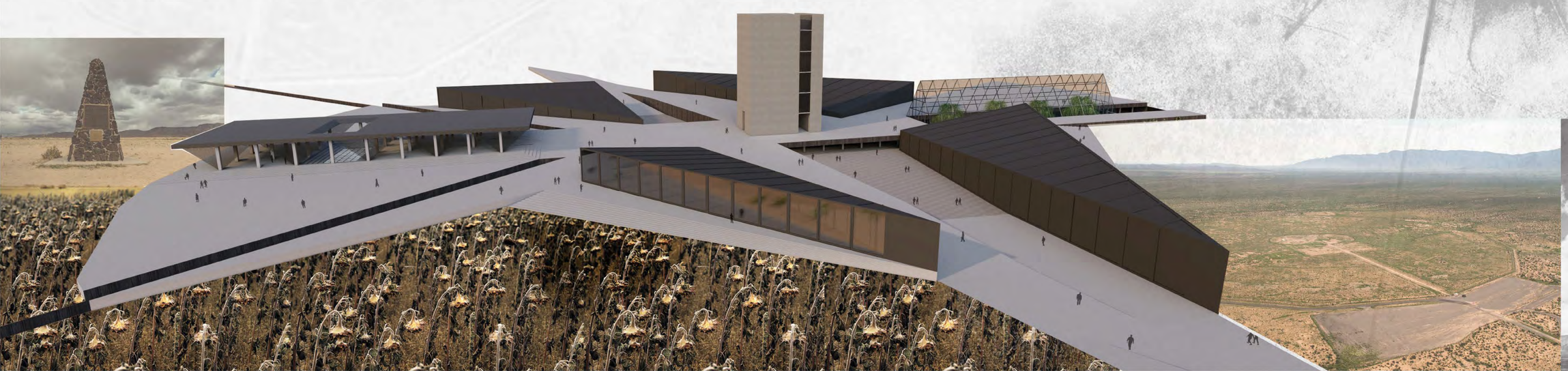
THE HEAT OF THE BOMB AT TRINITY WAS SO HOT IT MELTED THE SAND OF THE DESERT INTO A GLASS MATERIAL NOW KNOWN AS TRINITITE. THE TRINITITE SHELTER GIVES VISITORS A GLIMPSE OF THE AMAZING PHENOMENON.



GROUND LEVEL



UNDERGROUND LEVEL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