

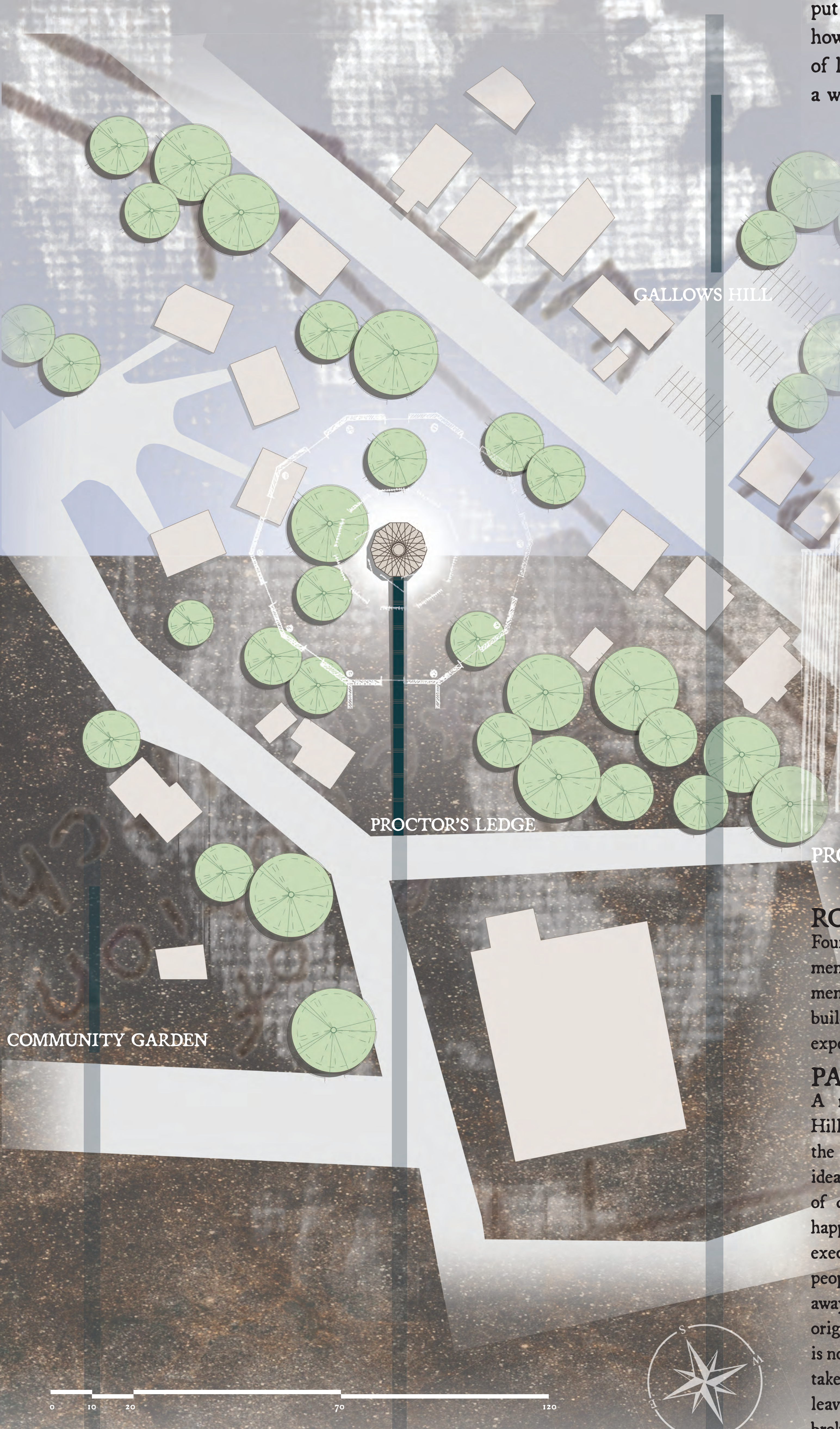
MEETING INEVITABILITIES

How Architecture Can Aid in Our Acceptance of Death and Improvement of Life

Human understanding of death and grief in the modern age has slowly become more separated from everyday life, and in turn, has become less precious- quality of life more often than not is put second to progress of arbitrary goals and industrialism. Fear of death, or more specifically how society acts upon the fear of death, has also become an ever increasing hindrance in quality of life. To highlight this experience, this thesis is placed in Salem, Massachusetts, the origin of a well-known historical example of the negative impacts of these acts- The Salem Witch Trials.

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"Living well and dying well are that of the same thing." - Mary Ann B. Carter
"Death is not the end of life, it is the beginning of the next life." - Rabindranath Tagore
"Just as there is no steady destination and no permanent abode, there is no sharp distinction between the living and the dead." - Rabindranath Tagore



PROCTOR'S LEDGE MEMORIAL BUILDING

ROOTED IN A PLACE

Four linear sites in Salem, Massachusetts, form connections through bodily scale and uprooted fragments of memories. The first three sites, located on and around Proctor's Ledge as well as Gallows Hill serve as a memorial to the 19 victims who had their lives taken from them on Proctor's Ledge. The fourth site, a new-build cemetery, elevates the woven ideas of the first three sites into a program that converges history, lived experience, and future perspectives of life cycles and celebrates the memories of those who have passed.

PAST

A relocated path from Gallows Hill to Proctor's Ledge symbolizes the shifting perception of historical ideas of death to current knowledge of death in general. This shift happened when finding the accurate execution site of the innocent people whose lives had been taken away in 1692. The pavement originally located on Gallows Hill is now used in the underground path taken into the memorial building, leaving behind it a shattered and broken idea of a place.

PRESENT

Showcasing the distinct separation of life, death, and memory in the Proctor's Ledge Memorial Building, one is confronted with the consequences of this separation, in the literal sense as a memorial, and a metaphorical sense as an architectural experience. The path, situated along a linear connection to the main approach of the Fort Lee Cemetery, aids in the journey taken from this separation into a convergence of these elements that appears in the architecture of the cemetery buildings.

FUTURE

Equidistant from Proctor's Ledge and Gallows Hill sits an abandoned, paved plot of land. Here, excavated stone from Proctor's Ledge forms a garden bed to serve the local community. The end of a journey for the stones in their designated place at Proctor's Ledge contributes now to sustained new life as a community garden. Memory, life, and death harmonize on the site and stand as a new precedent for the cemetery, as well as a new lens to understand death and grief.

MENDING THE PIECES

Understanding these elements of memory, death, and life as a unit and curating a program where these elements can coexist and compliment each other is a main idea that informed the design of the cemetery.

MEMORY

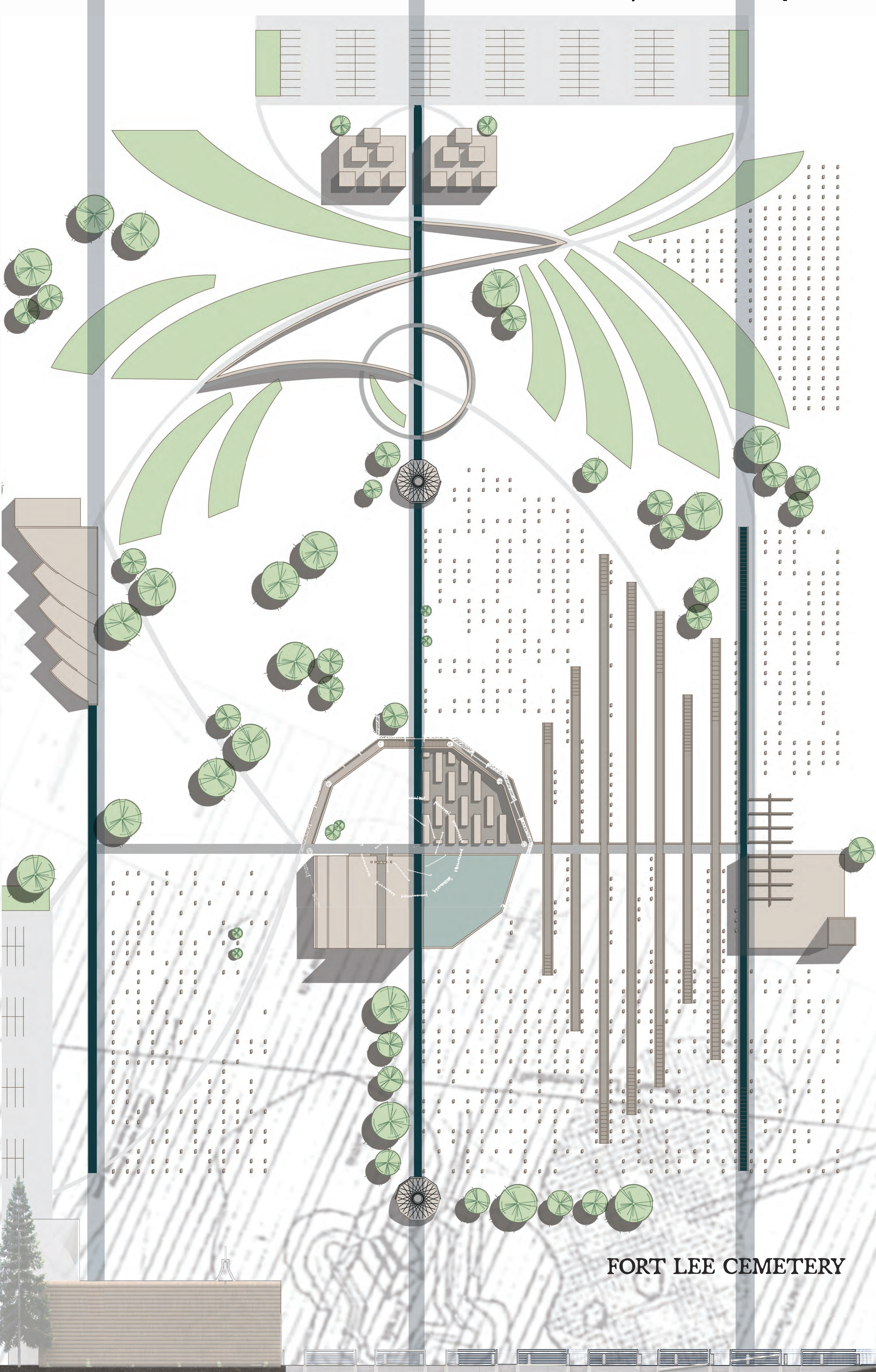
A museum located on the Eastern side of the cemetery is a unique program which celebrates the lives of the deceased in a very tangible way. Families can donate an item into the collection, which evokes new stories and interactions with the memories of others in the museum.

LIFE

A park, located adjacent to the grave sites, provides an opportunity to celebrate loved ones and gather together in a lively manner. Because of the location of the cemetery, people can become more comfortable truly living in the presence of death.

DEATH

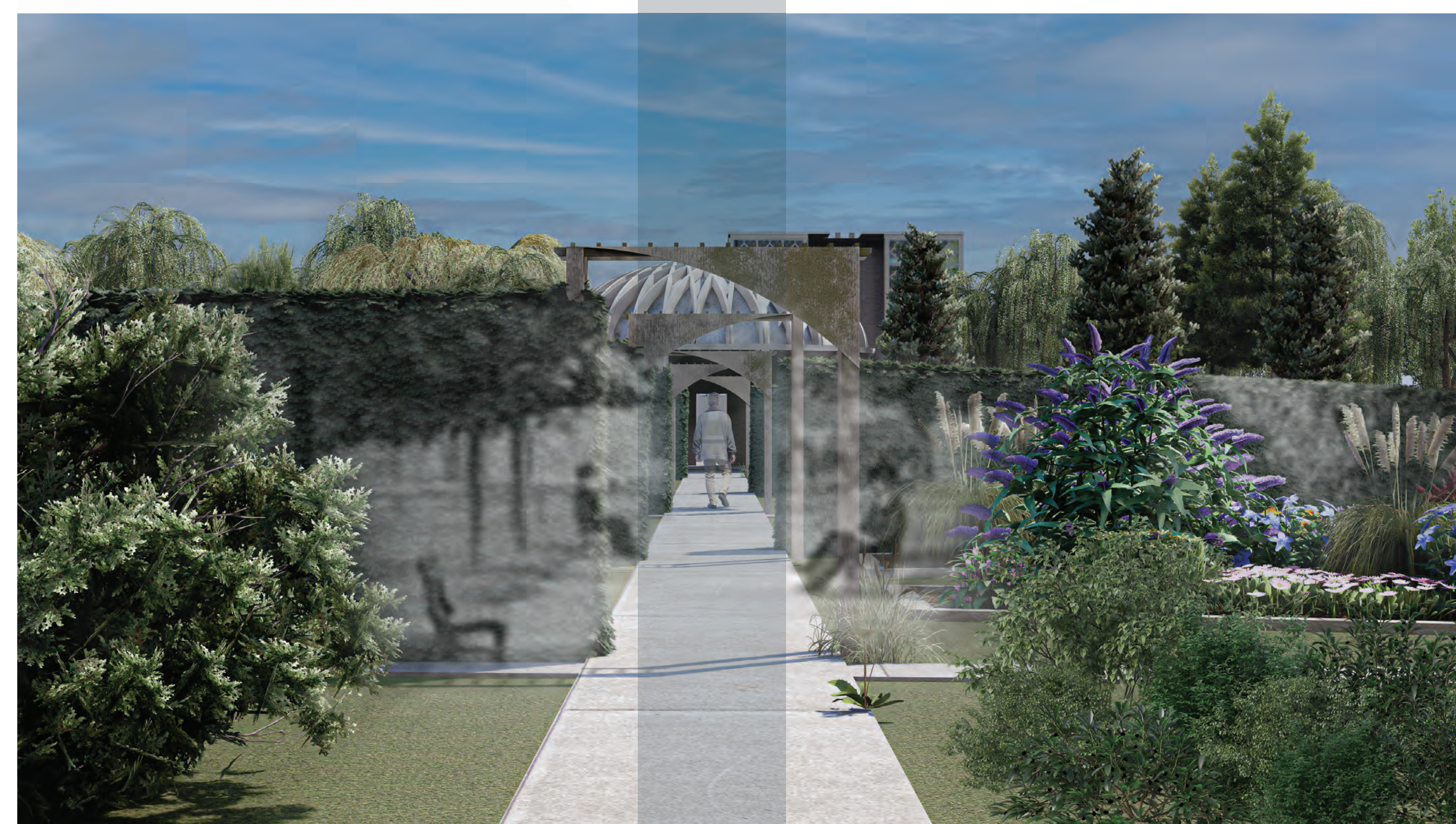
The cemetery is designed to accommodate many different types of funerary ceremonies, but is centered around the Greek funerary rites- A linear and perpendicular journey from the memorial building, representing the past, to the grave sites and mausoleum, representing how society views death in the present.



FORT LEE CEMETERY



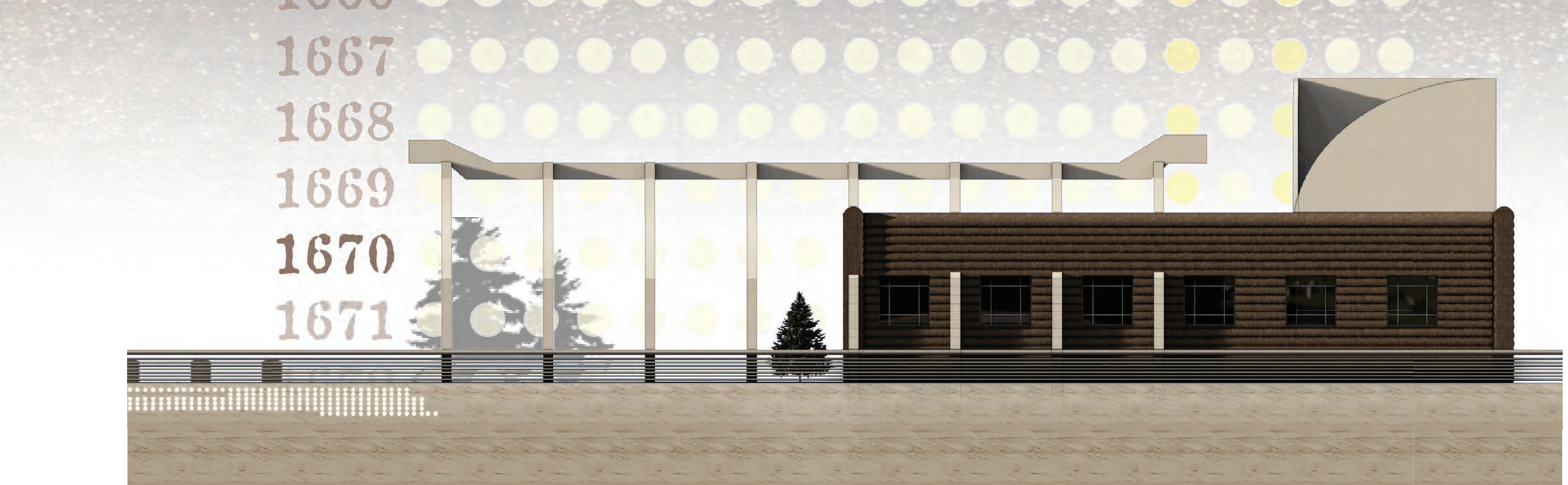
MEMORIAL WALK- NEW



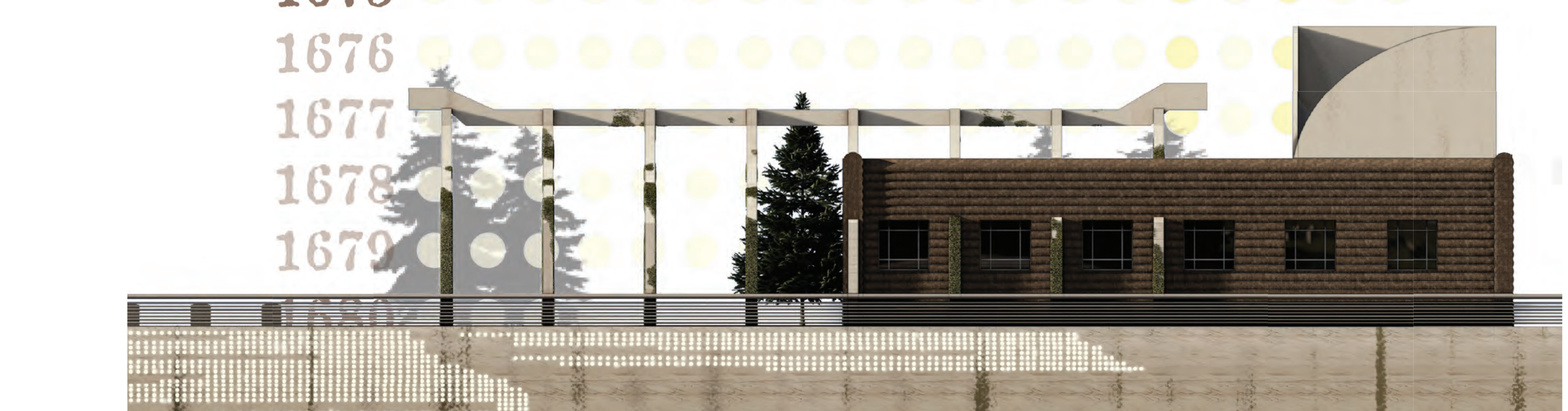
MEMORIAL WALK- 50 YEARS



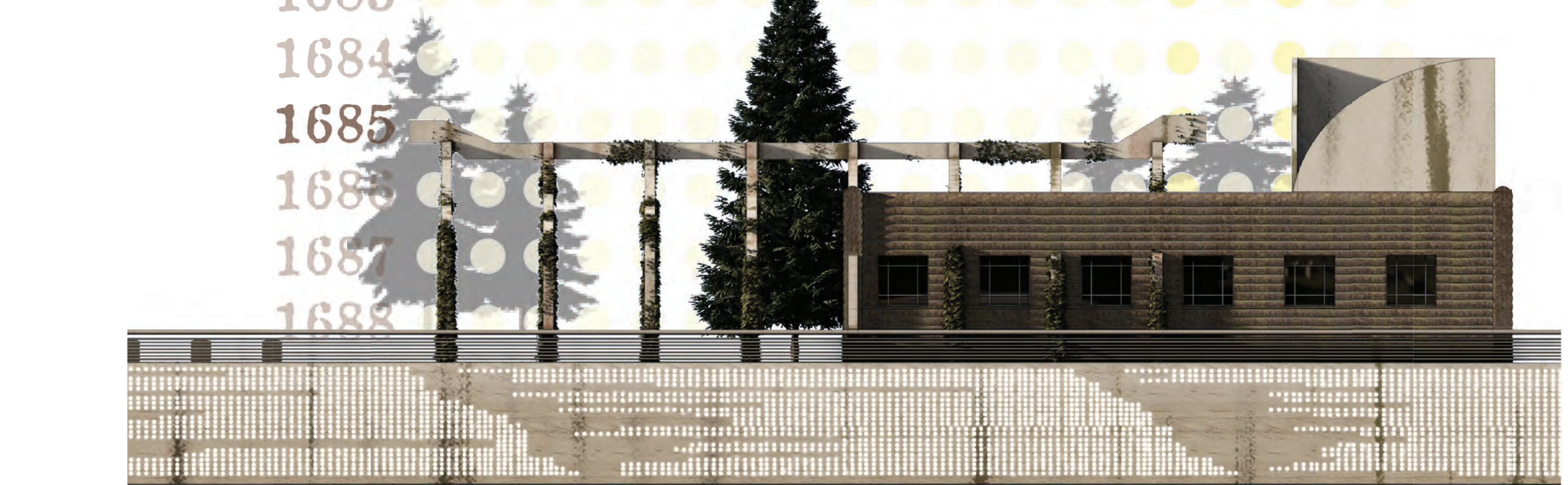
MEMORIAL WALK- 100 YEARS



MEMORIAL WALK- NEW



MEMORIAL WALK- 50 YEARS



MEMORIAL WALK- 100 YEARS

ANCIENT COMPONENTS

To accomplish the convergence of past, present, and future, as well as memory, death, and life, components taken from ancient practice and timeless design are implemented to allow society to look backwards- and in doing so, can look forwards with a new understanding of these practices.

TIME

Memorial walks feature descending slopes across the site, a drastic shift of spatial awareness. The walls of the memorial walks feature illuminations, each horizontal line representing a person's lifespan, and each light representing a year of life. Over time, the wall builds stories of interaction, generations, and history.

APPARTITION

Design elements are strategically placed to evoke memory and gloved apparitions. The three pavilions placed throughout the sites call on bodily memory and scale to connect the Proctor's Ledge Memorial site to the Fort Lee Cemetery. By doing this, the design invites comparisons and contrasts between the two sites, highlighting the different approaches to the representation of history, present, and future.

FRAGMENT

Taking fragments of the town of Salem is another way to converge these elements. The sanctum features a cast of a historic and well known church within the town, home of the oldest congregation in the town of Salem, which existed before the Trials, and still exists today. The ceremonial space is inspired by old colonial log buildings and ships that were docked in the ports. By intertwining the elements of the past, new design, and accommodating for future changes and patina, the design exists in every time.

