

Kota Damansara Memorial

Meor Mohammad Fared, Sarizal Yusman & Michele Julieana Vaz



Introduction

The Kota Damansara Memorial main objective is to cater for the demand of cemeterial spaces due to the increasing population and rapid development in the Klang Valley. Statistics have shown that the population rate has increased recently and 'crude death rate', which is the average annual number of deaths during a year per 1,000 population, has not changed from the year 2009 to 2010.

Thus, when the population increases while the crude death rate remains the same, the number of deaths actually increases which put a strain on land for burials. The issue of land shortage for burial represents a pressing concern in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur (Afia, M., and Reza, M., 2012). Lands that are reserved for such purposes are either being used for other developments or are being neglected.

The Kota Damansara Memorial envisages a memorial park worthy for all religions to give their humble farewells, and at the same time, resolves the issue of land shortage for burial purposes. The design explores the potential of having an integrated cemetery for all religions with the necessary facilities. The master plan for the design plays a crucial role in putting all the different beliefs together in harmony and peaceful way possible. The atmosphere of every single space is also explored thoroughly in order to give the greatest and most appropriate impact for such a solemn and grievous moment. The key outcome of this project is a carefully designed memorial park that humbly works for multi-faiths while giving the deceased a dignified farewell.

Site Analysis

The proposed Kota Damansara Memorial is located at Lot 2282 and Lot 2804, Kota Damansara, Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Currently, the site is a reserved Rubber Research Institute (RRI) land for cemetery and burial purposes. It is a 69 acres land surrounded by industrial and residential areas at the north and undeveloped RRI land at the south. The site is located along the Sungai Buloh Expressway and the Subang Airport.

Strength - The site is located at a strategic and serene place, which brings convenience to the community as well as creating awareness of 'death is a natural part of life'.

Weakness - The memorial park may lower down the value of the surrounding plots.

Opportunity - To redevelop mind sets on a memorial and a cemetery by creating different spaces such as pockets of parks in a cemetery that is surrounded by residential, it helps in acknowledging the death and departed.

Threat - People acceptance of multi-faiths cemetery might be tested which requires much time, patience and understanding.

Precedent Studies

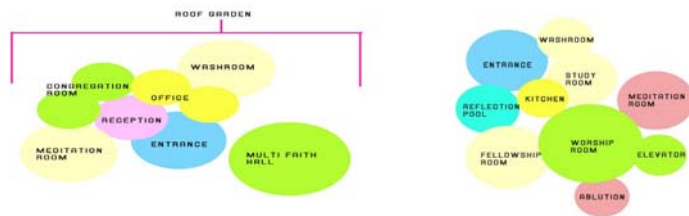
Three different projects of similar nature were studied and analysed Multi-Faith Centre, University of Derby, United Kingdom and Houghton Memorial Centre, Philadelphia, United States. Comparative analysis of the precedent studies as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1- Comparative Analysis of Precedent Studies

	Multi Faith Center, University of Derby	Houghton Memorial Center
Function	Center to promote mutual understanding between different beliefs and faiths	A global center of learning and discovery for all people; a place for prayer, meditation, study, worship, and education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · White concrete winding walls as an exterior. The white concrete breaks into fragments to let in natural sunlight · As a whole looks like a white subtle building with glass in between and wood materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Architecture and faith are intertwined and inseparable, each enriching and giving meaning to the other by their simultaneous presence in this revered structure. · From far the building looks like the old chapel, while the interior has been carefully revamped with new elevator and materials such as wood and resin, matched to the old stone material of the building.
Facilities Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reading · Meditation · Washing · Consultation rooms · Offices · Congregation room · Roof garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Prayer room · Study room · Meditation room · Worship hall · Fellowship room · Kitchen · Ablution · Reflecting pool · Washroom
Spatial Quality	The exterior is as of white concrete finishes. The interior however has a subtle feeling with timber and tile finishes. In some parts of the building, bare concrete finishes for the floor is being used.	Modest in appearance but the interior is overwhelming with the mixture of materials such as brick, resin, stained glass concrete and rough stone walls.

Natural Lighting	Introduced between the concrete fragments. Not the whole building is lit by natural lighting. The building uses natural sunlight more towards lighting up the building rather than creating atmospheres.	Filter through the old openings of the building. Openings are more though punctures and stained glass, giving spectacular lighting effects.
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Spatial Analysis



Research Methodology

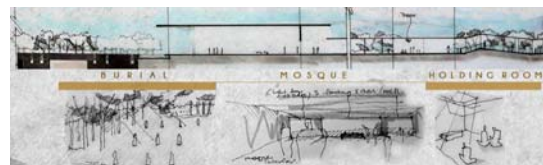
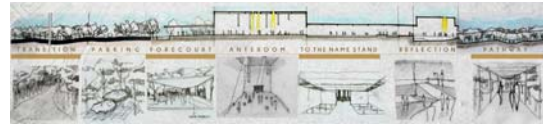
The project uses various research methodologies. The thesis started off with a research on the different religious aspects which focused mainly on the funeral rituals. Then there are researches on the requirements of places for burials as well as crematoriums in Malaysia. A site selection and analysis was conducted through the internet, Local Authority and multiple site visits.

The design process then continues with functional analysis, spatial planning and the idea on how the whole design works. The journey of the whole process is mapped out on the master planning of a 69 acres site. The designs rigours also go through weekly studio critiques with studio masters as well as supervisors. The overall process is a complete research and design process guided by experts and professionals and therefore seeks for a better practicable solution.

Design Strategies



The memorial park is a place where people undergo funerals, reminiscent the past, think of the loved ones, grieving, mourning and saying goodbye. Going through a funeral is going through a process. People of different faiths go through rituals in different ways to give the deceased a proper sendoff. Therefore, the idea behind the whole scheme begins with the journey; beginning from a person who knows the devastating news of a loved one leaving the world, to him or her coming for a visit, mourning, praying in a wake, attending the final prayer and ended with either a burial or a cremation. All these can be summarized into a process from Transition- Mourning- Climax- Back To Life.



The master plan seamlessly integrates the journey of funeral rituals of different religions within natural surroundings. The main components of Kota Damansara Memorial are purposely kept low, hugging to the ground and devoid of any ornamentation. Daylighting plays an important role in the design scheme to create a somber, contemplative mood. The Anteroom which serves as an intermediate room upon entering into the complex utilizes "light tubes" that gives a drastic ambience to the visitors and heightens the sense of beginning of a journey. Top lighting is employed in the Name Stand area conjuring an image of floating roof.



Anteroom



Entrance



Name Stand

Conclusion

The overall design of the Kota Damansara Memorial focuses on creating a memorial that serves for a true and humble farewell. It successfully blends the strict requirements of funeral rituals of different religions within serene natural surroundings. The austere and modest facade of its buildings accentuate the sombre and contemplative mood of the memorial park.

References

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