

COMPETITION ON THE ARCHITECTURAL-LANDSCAPE CONCEPT OF THE MEMORIAL ON THE AREA OF THE FORMER GERMAN NAZI DEATH CAMP IN **SOBIBÓR**

FIRST AWARD

Entry number **116**

The work was awarded for an excellent landscape and architectural solution for the new memorial of the Sobibor extermination camp. The Jury finds the design an exceptionally thoroughly considered architectural concept as a whole.

The idea is characterized by conciseness and simplicity of the main concept, based on the thorough philosophical considerations and commemorative symbolism of the place of execution.

The value of this idea is testified to by the manner in which the Way to Heaven (Himmelfahrtstrasse) has been marked out. Its trace restored by archaeologists is commemorated by a concrete wall that leads the eye of the visitor, walking along the main alley, away through the parallel wood.

The decision not to allow the visitors to use it "directly" - a prohibition of entry to it, was explained by the authors with the mystique nature of this trail's belonging to the world of the dead, inaccessible to us.

In the opinion of the Jury this is a brave decision, introducing a new, original and unique quality to the whole solution.

The question of protecting and commemorating the mass graves was resolved similarly. The whole clearing was covered with white gravel and surrounded with a concrete wall, preventing both the access and limiting eye contact of the visitors with the places of burial. The latter is possible exclusively from the designated site, through the only, vertical and narrow "crack" in the wall. The above mentioned crack was designed in the area of the current location of the "Mother and Child" sculpture as well as the Stone Plinth. This, however, remains a point for discussion - see "Recommendations".

Thus performed space arrangement - for the ones that are gone - from the visitors zone constitutes, according to the Jury, the most creative approach to the competition objectives. It should also be noted that the irregular contour of the wall allows for its flexible adaptation to any new archaeological discoveries, expanding the area of the mass graves.

The museum was designed as a simple, single-storey building. This allows for easy access from the driveway as well as the visual contact with the square where the prisoners carried out a revolt, and with the beginning of the Road to Heaven, which is designed as a claustrophobic interior with the two walls ending abruptly making a dead end alley.

The museum's functionality has been well resolved, i.a. by enabling the connection of the exhibition hall with the education room. The materials used for the elevation harmonize with the nature of the place and the surrounding landscape.

Recommendations of the Jury:

- The Jury wishes to draw the attention of the designers to the fact that the proposed method of the square's closure prevents sufficient contact of the site visitors with the area of the mass graves and the Mound of Memory .
- Creating a visible contrast between the wall surrounding the area of the mass graves and the wall surrounding the Way to Heaven is to be considered.
- Provide a separate entrance to the toilets from the outside.

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SECOND AWARD

Entry number **112**

The work was awarded for a very good solution for commemorating the entire area of the Sobibór extermination camp.

The concept is characterized by diligence and modesty in terms of solution. The Jury accepted the idea of a new Trail of Memory with the use of both the existing elements and the introduction of new elements (*'stops'*) as a correct solution.

The solution to the question of protecting the mass graves, without granting access to this area, manifested in covering it with a layer of stone (*coarse crushed-stone aggregate*), increasing with time through participation of visitors, is perceived as exemplary. As interesting albeit controversial, the Jury finds the planting of *Rosa agrestis* Savi, as the ground cover between the graves.

The museum was designed very carefully, after a thorough consideration of its symbolic dimension, having direct bearing on architectural solutions. The building was proposed to be partly buried in the ground, which gives it the necessary touch of moderation and modesty. The idea of preserving the soil (*'sacred soil'*) from the excavation of buildings for the purpose of raising an outside mound is also worth emphasizing. The concept of a closed *'silent'* building, is also prompted by the windowless building solution, with the lighting along the upper edges of the walls.

Functionally, the museum has been designed well, with a clear emphasis on the meaningfulness of the square in front of the building.

The solutions concerning the elevation correspond to the overall concept of the building, the use of white concrete will contrast favorably with the carefully designed greenery on the roof of the building.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that the designer of the entry resigns from the proposed planting between the mass graves.
- The Jury recommends that the car park be moved to the area closer to the museum (in the northern part).
- Consider a better connection between the exhibition hall and the ramp.
- Improve the access to the exhibition hall for the disabled.

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THIRD AWARD

Entry number **123**

The work was awarded, in particular, for an interesting solution proposed for the museum building.

The whole concept of protection of the area with the mass graves constitutes an interesting solution. The geometric, square area filled with black natural river cobble stones, meets the requirements of the competition, however, the proposal of covering the Mound of Memory with the aforementioned cobbles is highly controversial.

The museum was designed as a single-storey, low building. Using the above mentioned cobbles in the elevation (in gabions) produces the spiritual unity of the perception of the whole solution. The symbolism of "crossing the gate" is also worth emphasizing, as well as the idea of the open secluded places; places to take a rest but at the same time places of contemplation.

The functional solution of the museum building is fully correct, it allows to connect the exhibition space, the hall and the education room.

Recommendations:

- The Jury recommends resigning from the idea of covering the Mound of Memory.
- The Jury recommends that the car park be moved to the area closer to the museum (in the northern part).
- The designers should consider moving stones with the plates from the area with the graves to another location.

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HONOURABLE MENTION

Entry number **117**

The work was awarded for a very good solution of the Memorial Route .

The concept is characterized by the comprehensive solution for commemorating the entire area of the former Sobibór extermination camp.

A valuable symbolism (such as proposed “stone field of memory” at the place of parade ground), that was proposed by the authors should be emphasized.

The museum’s building is characterized by simplicity and unique functionality. This functionality is reflected in the direct and easy connection of the exhibition and educational hall.

In the Jury’s opinion, the contest work is overloaded in terms of form. In the Jury’s opinion the form is above the content, this applies in particular to the external elements of the museum elevation. They appear to be too aggressive in the surrounding area.