

**SITE OF EMERGING MEMORY:  
Ritual of Recollection in Post-Communist Sofia**

by

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A thesis  
presented to the University of Waterloo  
in fulfilment of the  
thesis requirement for the degree of  
Master of Architecture  
in  
Architecture

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2005

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Collective memory emerges within our physical realm through material and spatial manifestations that link personal and collective conceptions of the past and present. The role of the memorial, as the primary urban element of collective memory, aims to encourage selective remembrance and reconciliation as part of a cultural healing process held over time.*

*This thesis is situated in the city of Sofia, at a site of collective traumatic memory: the site of the former G. Dimitrov Mausoleum. Once considered the icon of Bulgarian communism, this building was symbolically demolished in 1999, following the collapse of the regime, leaving a scar in the heart of the city's fabric and consciousness. This site, along with its abandoned adjacent public square, has become a significant representation of the urge found across all of the former Eastern Bloc countries, to suppress and erase the memory of the recent traumatic past, as a means to heal. However, without any efforts to commemorate, reconcile or face the past, the restrictive environment of oppression during the regime has in turn been replaced by an environment of repression, where mourning has become an impossible task.*

*The modern tradition of public commemoration has been founded upon the notion that permanent monuments as physical objects can become representations of collective memory, preserved through time. Throughout the various attempts to create memorials, this assumption has remained for the most part unquestioned. However, the memorial as such has recently faced a major debate, as the issues of memory and forgetting have emerged as dominant concerns in dealing with the trauma that continues to haunt modern Western culture.*

*Consciously discrediting the reality of the events and the victims associated, the Bulgarian culture has created a form of disconnect between its identity and its collective memory. Challenging the static forms and detached imagery, this proposal will reexamine the traditional definition of the monument as object on pedestal. By revisiting the site where the void left by the demolished mausoleum still haunts those trying to forget, and*

*allowing the memory to emerge back into the collective consciousness, this proposition will allow the trace of the past to be transformed and connected to a new city narrative of remembrance. An engaged and dynamic ritual, beginning and ending at the memorial site, will draw a connection between space, time and memory through a series of new public spaces. Through the recovery of collective memory, it will offer an alternative to the healing process.*

*The memorial is dedicated to the countless victims of censorship and control during the Iron Curtain regime.*

## **Acknowledgements**

I want to thank my supervisor, Dereck Revington, for his inspiring ideas and continuous support through my journey. The advice and time given by my advisors, John McMinn and Robert Jan Van Pelt, also helped improve and clarify this project.

I would like to thank my external reader, Kathy Velikov for her time and commitment.

I would also like to thank all those who contributed to the material which I collected and documented during my research in Sofia- which proved more difficult than expected- but was vital to the project.

I am very grateful to my parents, for their incredible help and support, without which I could not have done this. Finally, I want to thank Leland- our conversations and collaborations have greatly influenced my work.

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**PART I      REMEMBRANCE**

*To flee from memory  
Had we the Wings  
Many would fly  
Inured to slower things  
Birds with surprise  
Would scan the cowering Van  
Of men escaping  
From the mind of man*

Emily Dickinson, 1872<sup>1</sup>

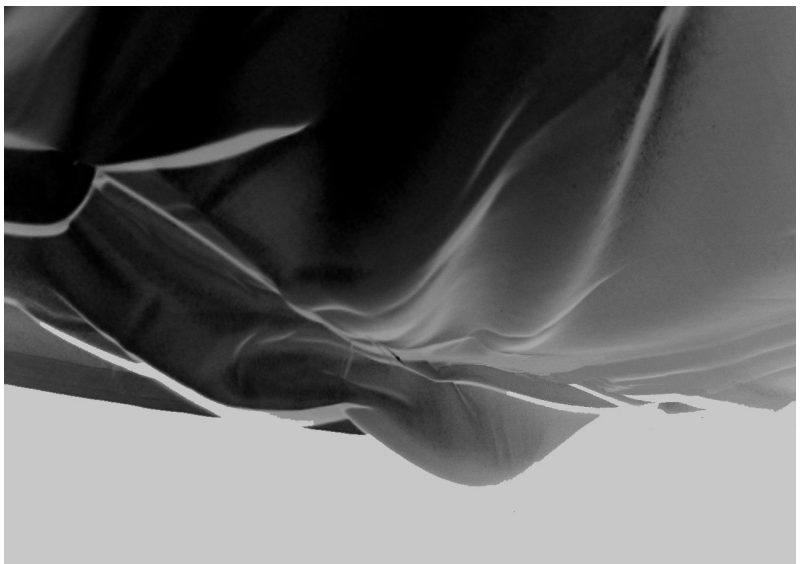


Fig. 1.0

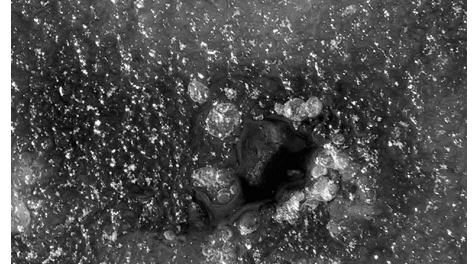
## 1.1 The Images of Memory

*“Porous memories fuse and interpenetrate. Fragments of song mingle in hot remembered afternoons, mysterious angers return at a flush with a chance forgotten postcard. Such memories were once the notions of fluids, animal spirits which meandered and rummaged through the pores of the brain. They held experience and history in bodies which were themselves porous, uncertainly coupled across tissues and skin with their air, their ethics, their land....”*

John Sutton: Philosophy and Memory Traces<sup>2</sup>

*Living leaves traces*; traces which can stir a sudden and mysterious emergence of hidden memories buried deep within the unconscious. In a continuous stream of images they flow defiant of one’s forgotten past, engulfing within its fluids the private and the emotional, the subjective and the bodily. Eroding through layers of resistance, memory eventually surfaces.

Like a small tear in the fabric that violently ruptures, the flashback of an uncanny memory is a shocking experience. Its impulsive and reckless arrival challenges seemingly rational existence; a terrifying and sublime revelation, forcefully exposing that which was private and concealed. Flooding into one’s entire being, it might return at night, to the one who thought he had escaped and forgotten, *“intact, worse, more dangerously connected, more open to things beyond the soul’s reach... as a distorted mask simply, a sidelong look, a deadpan face, or a dream shout that stays in the waking mind as a lumpish humanoid crouched there on the threshold.”*<sup>3</sup>



1.1



1.2

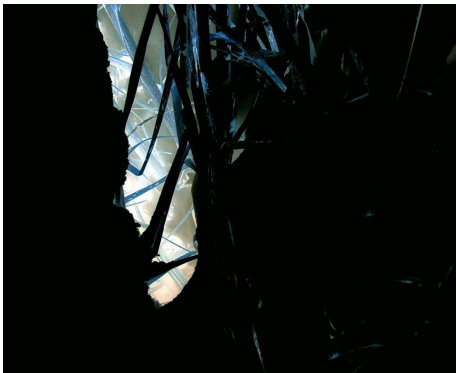
Fig. 1.0-1.2 ‘Uneasy Ghost’: River case installation by author

***“Blackness filled me, spread from the back of my head into my eyes as if my brain had been punctured. Spread from stomach to legs. I gulped and gulped, swallowing it whole. The wall filled with smoke. I struggled out and stared while the air caught fire.”***

Anne Michaels: Fugitive Pieces<sup>4</sup>



1.3



1.4

Fig. 1.3-1.4 'Buried': Land case installation by author

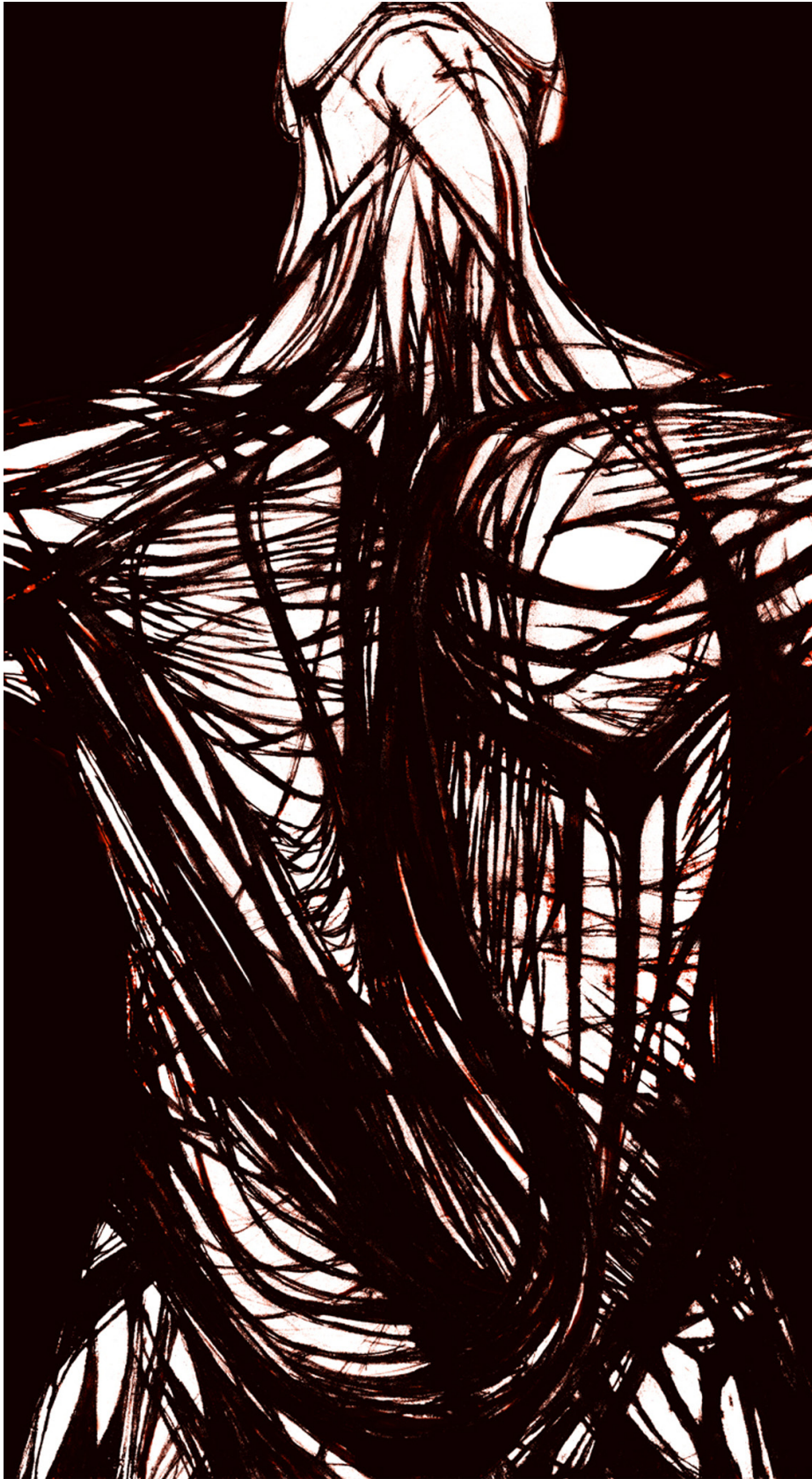
## Buried Memories

Human experience can be conceived as an interconnected narrative construction and reconstruction of mental associations, following traces, skeins of thought. Within this narrative, the most treacherous human condition is the shared inability to come to terms with the enduring pre-eminence of traumatic events within private or public existence.<sup>5</sup> These events are extraordinary, not because they are rare, but rather because they have the power to completely overwhelm the ordinary human adaptations to life.<sup>6</sup> Often external in nature, they quickly become incorporated into the internal realm, having the capacity to permeate the entire fabric of one's being, as well as one's culture. Often the most common means of escape from tragedies' predicament of irreversibility becomes the desire to banish such events into the realm of the *unspoken*. Freud's theories on the mental processes defined this force as *repression* to describe the way such emotionally painful events get blocked out of awareness so that they would not have to be experienced again. However these memories are never erased but get buried deep within the unconscious- a dynamic and active energy centre, hidden from the realm of the consciousness,<sup>7</sup> waiting to resurface.

A sudden revelation of a buried past, the uncanny is a force which ought to have remained hidden but has unexpectedly come back to haunt.<sup>8</sup> As a product of estrangement, this disturbing confrontation projects an ambiguity between the real and the dreamlike; emerging at the boundary of the conscious and the repressed. When the uncanny overlaps with everyday life, Freud puts emphasis on its repetition and coincidence, having a significant psychological resonance, as this "*involuntary repetition...forces upon us the idea of something fateful and inescapable...*"<sup>9</sup>

The powerful desire to deny traumatic events and their memories rarely succeeds in its aim to heal deep wounds. Folk wisdom is filled with ghosts that refuse to rest in their graves until their stories are told. Without an outlet for grief, the numbing emotional conflict of wilful amnesia instead leads to disconnect and loss of identity. Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are essential for the restoration of the social order as much as for the healing of individual victims of tragedy.





*"The image of pain.... absolute pain beyond flesh: ineffable, infinite affliction of being, from the dumb mouth of which the foetus hangs like some roping coagulation"*

Ted Hughes<sup>10</sup>

Fig. 1.5 *The Body As Wound*, pencil on board by author

## Memory Fragments

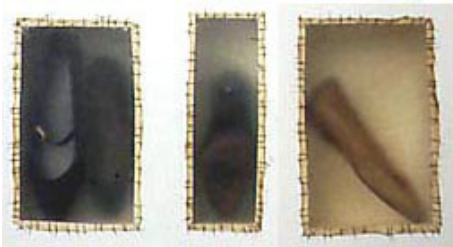
*"You have to begin to lose your memory, if only in bits in pieces, to realize that memory is what makes our lives."*

Luis Bunuel<sup>11</sup>

The usual communicative form for sharing personal event memories is the narrative, whether spoken or written. However the phenomenal experience of an event is often not primarily verbal, it is rooted in the senses; it is seen, heard and felt. Sensory imagery and strong visual imagery are integral to vivid memories. Conceptual works that offer us the factual and documentary, over the aesthetic, have a key role in helping to sustain memory through such imagery. In these works, the material object is never an installation or sculpture in the traditional sense, but it articulates memory by inscribing traces, offering awareness against the erasure of the past from present consciousness.

The work of artists, such as Doris Salcedo, attempts to reveal the breaks in the fabric of history which have been rendered silent, forgotten. Her work derives its meaning through the use of small details of individual memory in her attempts to bring together the gap between the private workings of grief and the public spectacle of politics<sup>12</sup>, in her case by giving visible form to the inexpressible effects of the terror, pain and memory of her native Colombia (a country that has been torn apart by violence for the past 50 years). Seeking to stage the set of the violent event, Salcedo uses found or abandoned objects, such as hospital furniture, trolleys, bed frames etc., which become the basic framework for her pieces, around which she generates an elaborate connection between the object itself and its embodied meaning. Constructing a complex visual narrative, she challenges the viewer to move beyond the material presence of the sculpture and to enter into a dialogue with the temporal and historical dimension implicit in the work, opening up an extended time-space relationship by activating body and space, matter and imagination, presence and absence.

Salcedo's sculpture captures the viewer's imagination in its unexpected, haunting visual and material presence. The title of her series of



1.6

**"Salcedo's work is about memory at the edge of an abyss. It is about memory in the literal sense, both the content of specific memories of violent acts and memory as process and as structure as the work enters into dialogue with the viewer. And it is about memory in the spatial sense, compelling the viewer to innervate something that remains elusive, absent."**

Andreas Huyssen, Present Pasts<sup>13</sup>

Fig. 1.6 Doris Salcedo: 'Atrabiliarios' 1993 (detail)  
niches: plywood, shoes, animal fiber and thread

installations titled *Unland* expresses her recognition of the ongoing displacement of individuals, families and communities in Colombia, as witness to the life stories of people forever scarred by the experience of violence.<sup>14</sup> The first of three installations, *Orphan's Tunic*, is constructed out of two used kitchen tables of differing proportions, fitted into one another. Appearing simple and unassuming at first sight, the table begins to come alive upon closer inspection; its muted but expressive power emerging slowly. A thin silk fabric covering the surface draws the viewer to look beneath; its cracks revealing lines, folds and wrinkles. The project's haunting effect is deepened when looking even closer, one notices thousands of miniscule holes with human hair threaded through them, weaved through the wood.

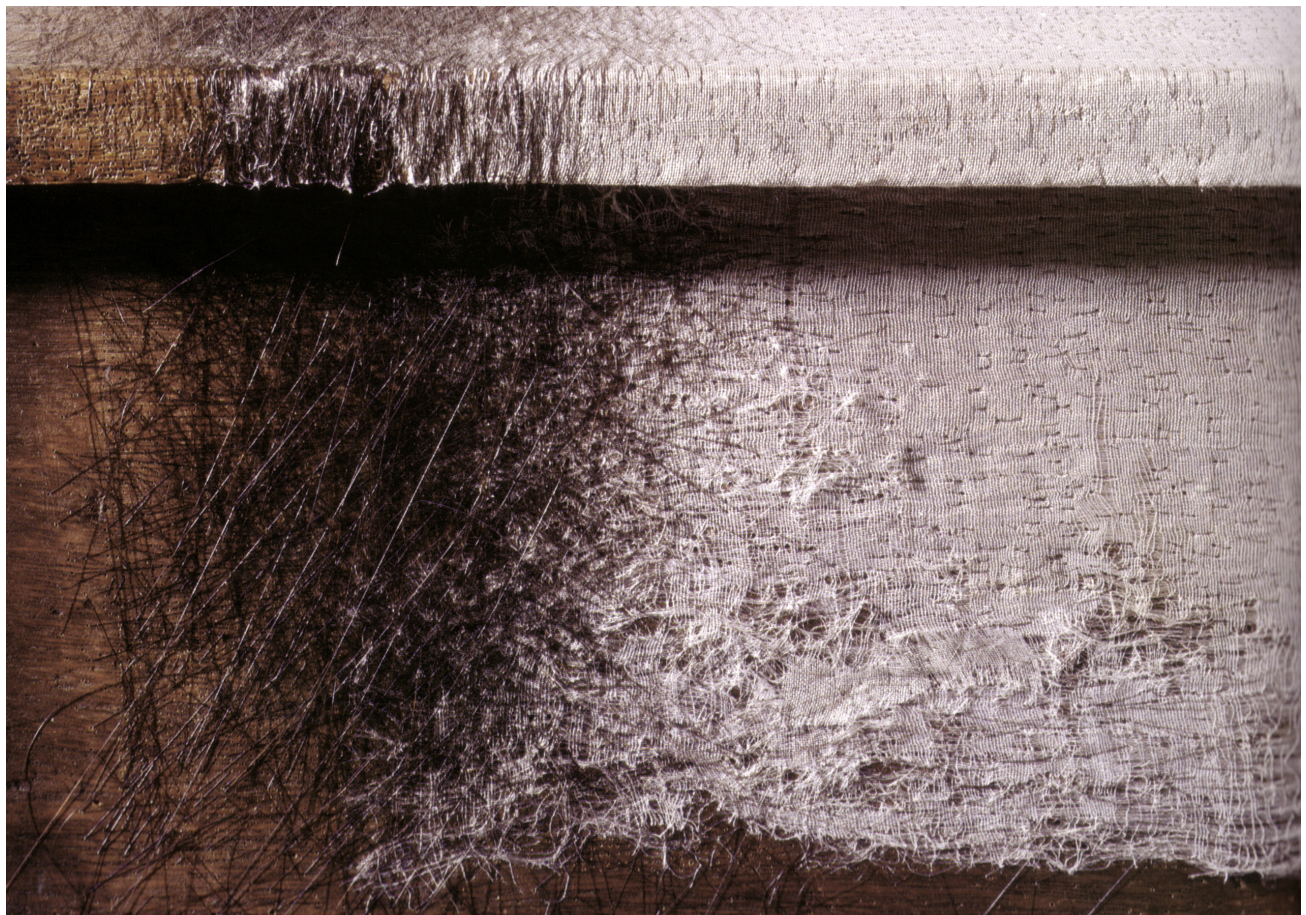


Fig. 1.7 Doris Salcedo: 'Unland: Orphan's Tunic'. 1997  
wood, cloth and hair

This work is based on Salcedo's encounter with a girl from an orphanage, who had witnessed the killing of her mother. Ever since the traumatic

Below:

Fig 1.8 Doris Salcedo: 'Unland: Orphan's Tunic'. (detail of the silk cloth merging with the human hair weaved through the wood)



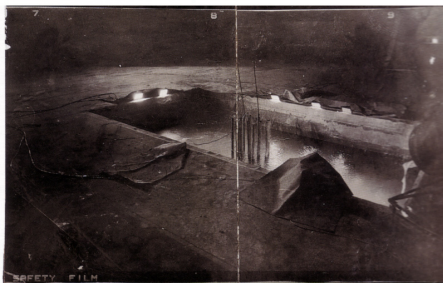
experience, she had been wearing the same dress day after day, made by her mother: her dress marking a memory of trauma.<sup>15</sup> This dress is translated as the tunic, and the tunic as the skin over the table, becoming a metaphor for the child's loss, forcing us to align the artwork as an index of death, a life, a trauma, a reality. From her perspective as perpetual witness, Salcedo has attempted to grasp the intuitive sense of an event which has occurred at one time, but of which no trace is to be found. The expressive power of her work unlocks depending on the viewer's engagement with it, within the flow of time.

Another artist who raises the questions of what to recall and how to depict the acts of mourning is Anselm Kiefer. The elaborate subjects of his work are often concerned with German history, focusing on the most traumatic and shameful events of the culture's past- those of the Third Reich, of Nazism, of the Holocaust.<sup>16</sup> For a German born in 1945, this ultimately raises the question of how to construct the images of events which he himself has no personal recollection of.

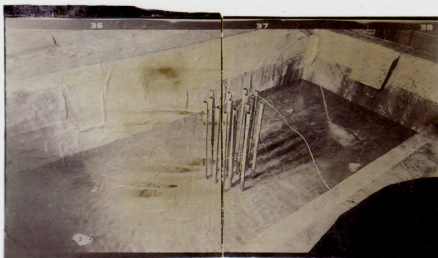
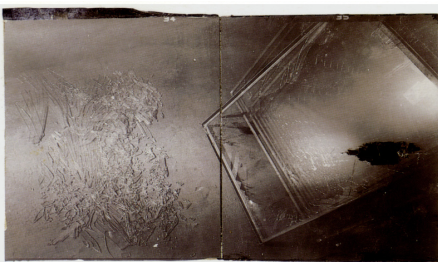
*"Some people want to forget where they've been; other people want to remember where they've never been."*<sup>17</sup>

Like the functions of memory, Kiefer's art evolves as an elaborate process of layering and interweaving of objects, texts, images and settings that encircle and intersect with one another to form a complex labyrinth of imagery. As associations are reiterated and altered, his memory constructions become dreamlike fixations that eventually come to constitute a personal memory for him, depicting an intimate and deeply emotional relationship with his themes. In other words, Kiefer's endless "acts of mourning" become for him his manifestations of a melancholia, or a 'mourning which never ends'.<sup>18</sup>

Thus, Kiefer is not acting as a historian; his memory constructions are random, subjective and interchangeable. The gigantic dimensions of his pieces, as well as the violent workings of the material palettes, surface upon surface, have a striking and haunting presence, making a forcible impression on the viewer, demanding his or her own interpretation and understanding of the German past.



1.9- 1.10



1.11- 1.12

The aim the artists working in the realm of memory is to expose the traces, the myths, the relics and stories of the past, which are in danger of being buried, repressed and lost. The significance in their work lies in their recognition that the tragedies of the past cannot be undone, however, unless addressed and given a significant role in the realm of the present consciousness, they will also never heal.

***“The blade and the wound...it is a common mythological and folklore motif that the wound, if it is to be healed, needs laid in it the blade that made it.”***

Ted Hughes: The Hanged Man and the Dragonfly<sup>19</sup>



Fig. 1.13 Anselm Kiefer: 'Lilith.' 1990. Book pages: photographs and sand on cardboard,

Opposite:

Fig. 1.9- 1.10 Anselm Kiefer: 'Isis and Osiris', 1987-91. Book pages: clay and mud on original photographs on cardboard.

Fig. 1.11-1.12 'Blood Flower.' 2001. Book: acrylic on lead and cardboard.

*"I was born in Sofia, Bulgaria. This is where I lived the first eleven and a half years of my life. One remembered morning, instead of school I arrived at the city train station. It was my family's second attempt at escaping our country, and this time successful...a journey which took several long days.*

*I never questioned the reasons.*

*When we arrived in Canada it was April 1<sup>st</sup> 1989, Bulgaria was still under communist rule. I thought I would never return again.*

*...There are no family picture albums or books revealing my country's history on the bookshelves here. My grandparents are not here to tell me stories of our ancestors...I abandon my memories in search of a new place I hoped would set me free. Here, I would be able to rebuild myself all over again. I will understand a new language. Soon, I will speak and think of new things. With new found attachment, my past would become a blur...*

*...In unexpected moments of remembrance, my abandonment haunts me. I sense the wanderings of my memories, self-willed and rousing me from sleep. How could I have predicted that I would become engulfed in mourning for places I once hardly knew, imagining them now empty as evidences of my departure? How could I have known that I would spend these nights dreaming of my landscape, of my river, of my city...*

*...I paint the eaves of forgotten villages, composing their structures from incomplete images in my mind. I sketch my house overgrown with grapevines. My fluid lines build up in thick layers, merging shapes and figures into endless empty horizons...*

*Is this my brand new self? I must waive aside these moments of pause that keep intruding on my new beginning.*

*Torn, I search for answers."*

Opposite:

Fig. 1.14 'Porous Memory'. photograph by author



**“To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it ‘the way it really was. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger.”**

Walter Benjamin<sup>20</sup>





## 1.2 Public Space of Memory

Hidden wounds cannot be cauterized without first being brought to light. As a means of dealing with trauma, the function of public commemoration appears to be universal: the physical manifestation of the knowledge and memory of a cultural past as a witness relating to history, community, tradition, reflection and authenticity. The power of the past to influence the present and the future relies heavily on this process of commemoration, and on the selectivity of remembering and of forgetting. The desire to publicly mourn and remember expresses a degree of importance that is attached to a specific event or experience, as well as the value of sharing this importance with others. In this sense, the collective unconscious does not take place in the ethereal psychic realm, but in the realm of physical space:

*“To commemorate is to take a stand, to declare the reality of heroes worthy of emulation, or less frequently, that an event that occurred at a particular place was indeed so terrible that it must be remembered forever....”*

Levinston: Written in Stone<sup>21</sup>



1.16



1.17



1.18

Fig. 1.16-1.17 WWI Cemetery, Somme, France 1919-20

Fig. 1.18 The Vietnam Memorial Washington, DC

### **Sites of Collective Memory: *Les Lieux de Memoire***

Individual memories unfold within a spatial, social framework. Multiple and dispersed, spectacular and ephemeral, they move like a current of continuous thought framed by time and space. Supported by a specific group, these memories operate as fragments within a larger socially constructed system – a system of *collective* memory. It follows that there are as many social frameworks as there are groups or institutions in society. Individual memory orients experience through this system linking it with family and social conventions, language, customs and religious beliefs. Each impression and each event, even if it concerns an individual exclusively, leaves a lasting memory as it connects to the thoughts that are framed by these specific systems of beliefs and opinions. In turn, these associated group frameworks become the instruments used by the collective memory to recompose images and ideas of the past.<sup>22</sup> Further, these recollections strengthen as they emerge at the junction of a greater number of frameworks, which intersect and overlap with each other:<sup>23</sup>

*“The frameworks of memory .....are like those wood-floats that descend along a waterway so slowly that one can easily move from one to the other, but which nevertheless are not immobile and go forward...and while following them we can pass as easily from one notion to another, both of which are general and outside of time, through a series of reflections and arguments, as we can go up and down the course of time from one recollection to another.....”*

Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory <sup>24</sup>.

Remembering is a selective and re-creative process. Collective memory endures and draws strength from the base of a coherent body of people and binds even the most intimate remembrances to one another. As collective memories evolve within a framework of a group, the method of discovering and preserving these recollections becomes a vital process for the individuals. Further, given that each group has particular memories which are crucial to them, they must get passed down to the following generations in order to ensure their duration and continuation. Thus, along with acts of transfer that make remembering possible, memories become

accessible through a process of mapping that localizes these recollections. Within this framework, these realms act as the *foundations* of collective memory against the passage of time.

The idea that place can hold meaning through an interaction between time and memory forms the central focus of Pierre Nora's *Realms of Memory (Les Lieux de Memoire)*. He draws a distinction between *places of history*- the places of past events- and *places of memory*- the places of present remembrances of past events. According to him, memory is made necessary when people become conscious of the discontinuity between the past and the present and look for a medium to recall it. This suggests a transformation of '*historical consciousness*' to '*social consciousness*' that has resonance in the realm of the present and future, rather than the past.<sup>25</sup> This renders places of memory as the external symbols of memory in the present, which in turn serve as a medium for the subjective sense of historical continuity; or as a 'the presence of the past within the present'<sup>26</sup> In Nora's system, memory therefore takes over from history as a dominant influence in society:

*"Memory is Life, borne by living societies founded in its name...history, on the other hand, is the reconstruction always problematic and incomplete, of what is no longer."*

Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory* <sup>27</sup>

Pierre Nora's notion of a 'memory place' is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community (in this case, the French community).<sup>28</sup> It encompasses sites, rituals, architecture, all forms of fine arts objects, commemorations, symbols and traditions which are part of a nation's history. These are the realms that manifest the power of culture and link private and collective conceptions of the past and present; where multiple interests and ideas can find a common ground. In other words, because they form the basis for the mental process of collective memory, the realms of memory represent the possibility for significant cohesion of national identity.

Collective memory results from a construction process that every human group carries out in a specific context, where public recognition and commemoration can be provided. Among the recollections that survive are those which societies reconstruct within their spatial frameworks.<sup>29</sup> Images of social spaces which people occupy, which they have access to, which they retrace their steps in, which at any moment they are capable of reconstructing – lie in the essence of collective recollection.<sup>30</sup> Thus, the realm of memory can be manifested in physical sites, where events of the past can be *experienced* in the present. This generates references to images which can be conveyed and sustained in the surrounding material environment in order to get accessed by collective memory:

*“Now space is a reality that endures: since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in our mind, we can understand how we can recapture the past by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings.”*

Maurice Halbwachs, On Collective Memory <sup>31</sup>

The relationship between the psychological and physical conditions of a site is rooted in the spirit of the place- *its genius locus*. It embodies the essence of a place in the context of its history, geography, myth and symbolism, fixing it in a precise time and space. As such, it becomes a principle necessary for understanding place as an urban artefact, manifesting a part of a city’s history, its distinct character as well as its memory in the public sphere. The relationship between *the locus* and the collective becomes a prevalent image in the city,<sup>32</sup> creating a sense of geographic timelessness that can anchor a group to a place in order to support its impressions. Thus, since human experience is placed in a specific social framework, the place as a physical artefact becomes a precondition for the construction of collective memory.



1.19



1.20



1.21

The Woodland Cemetery near Stockholm, Sweden (1935-40) by Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz.

Fig. 1.19 Approach to the crematorium

Fig. 1.20 The *genius locus* of the Woodland cemetery derives its narrative from the Nordic forest, its landscape and an embodiment of the ritual of burial and death.

Fig. 1.21 *Dromos* of the mortuary building

## The Topography of Collective Memory

Continuously transforming- a palimpsest that is being rewritten while previous text is being preserved- the city becomes the base for social memory narrative. A city's physical structure evolves, being reconstructed and reformed, resulting in a complex web of historical markers that point to its heterogeneous built past and urban present. The demands and pressures of social reality constantly affect the physical order of the city, adapting to other purposes or eradicated by different needs.<sup>33</sup> As a visual montage of memory, the city overlaps and superimposes images that contradict or merge into one another. This narrative structure relies on the viewer's memory to make the necessary associative links between fragments and layers in order to create a composition. Understood as such, memory becomes a guiding principle of the urban structure.

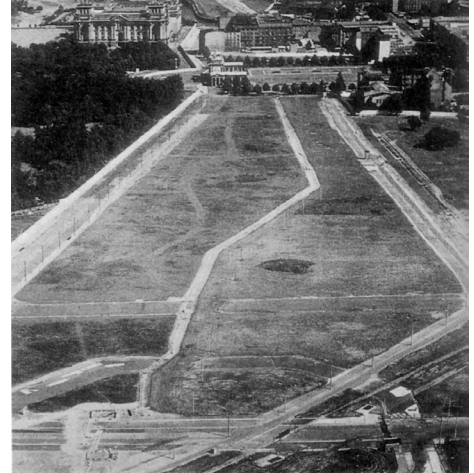


Fig. 1.22 The city as palimpsest: the history of Berlin can be traced in its physical structure; Berlin Wall area is a void between Liepziger Platz and Brandenburg Gate.



Fig. 1.23 Piranesi: Veduta di Campo Vaccino. Memory and fantasy hold essential roles in the city imagined by Piranesi as a visual construction overlapping images eroded by time and history.



Ancient cities present us with a collage of memory through such an experience of space and time. For Freud, the function of the individual mind compares to the city's texture composed of multiple layers of public and private spaces rooted in past history. He uses the metaphor of archaeology to compare the preservation of memories in the unconscious with the survival of the past structures of ancient Rome:

*"Now let us, by a flight of imagination, suppose that Rome is not a human habitation but a psychical entity with a similarly long and copious past- an entity, that is to say, in which nothing that has once come into existence will have passed away and all the earlier phases of development continue to exist alongside the latest one... The question might be raised why we chose precisely the past of a city to compare with the past of the mind. The assumption that everything past is preserved holds good even in mental life...Demolitions and replacement of buildings occur even in the course of the most peaceful development of a city..."*

Freud, Civilization and Discontents<sup>35</sup>

Memories flow through a person's mind, overlapping images of the past and present much like they flow through the fabric of the city. The city of Rome as imagined by Freud constitutes one of the most illustrative urban texts, having transformed over time but always growing upon its foundation. The layers embodied within it can be traced back to the very origins of the city, as Rome evolved within a complex narrative of history and memory, past and present.

In this sense, the city as a dynamic organism establishes a framework which helps govern the changes as well as the permanencies in its morphological form. As such, it must never be perceived as a series of isolated fragments, but must be understood as a historical text whose continuities, in the form of persistencies as well as transformations, reside in the deepest layers of its urban structure.<sup>36</sup> These *persistencies* are revealed through the physical artefacts of the past, such as monuments. The monument, created by will of the collective, is often seen as a catalyst which is capable of accelerating the process of collective memory construction. As such, it is expressed and engaged with through its architecture and landscape, becoming a focal point in the urban dynamic.<sup>37</sup>

**“At stake is the power of a commemorative site to keep the story alive as opposed to entombing it in the realm of the unspoken, of a past that is made to disappear yet once again”**

Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts*<sup>38</sup>



1.25



### 1.3 Instruments of Memory: *Commemoration*

Perception, memory and imagination depend on the imprint of mental images. Walking through a city's streets, we stumble before long, upon monuments and memorials. The spaces which monuments occupy are not incidental backdrops but in fact help inscribe meaning. In *The Architecture of the City*, Aldo Rossi identifies monuments as the primary elements of the city composition; as mental images that shape both the memory of each city as well as the possibility for a historical reading.<sup>39</sup> As such, the site of a monument has the power to become a persistent point of reference through time, and though its functions may change, it can remain an element which guides the form in which the city transforms.

Like written text narrative, which locates events in linear sequence, the memorial has the power to bring past events into cognitive order. As a visual structure, the aim of a memorial is to encourage a selective remembrance and reconciliation as a part of a healing process.

*How this might be achieved can be explored through analysis of what constitutes an appropriate physical manifestation of collective memory.*

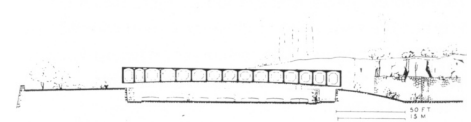
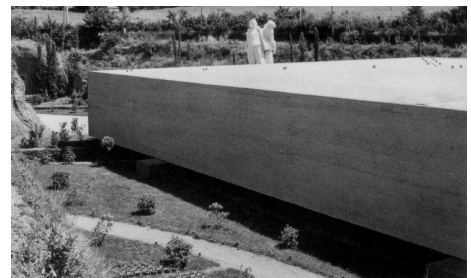


Fig. 1.26 Exterior, section and interior of Fosse Ardeatine Monument, Rome, 1945, commemorating the site of the murder of 335 Italians by German forces

The Western tradition of commemoration since the Renaissance has been founded upon a practice dedicated to the creation of material objects, natural or artificial, which act as analogues of human memory. This tradition rests on the concept put forward by Aristotle, according to whom memory *'is like the imprint or drawing in us of things felt'*<sup>40</sup>. In general, within this interpretation, if objects are made to stand for memory, then their physical endurance would ensure the persistence of that memory. By the same token, the decay or destruction of such objects results in the loss of memory, or forgetting.<sup>41</sup>

An explicit application of this model is documented in Alois Riegl's essay *'On the Modern Cult of Monuments'*. When a monument is considered to be an object, explains Riegl, it is nothing more than an indispensable catalyst which triggers a sense of life-cycle; displaying its true evolution by communicating the passage of time rather than any specific historical knowledge it might contain. The acceptance of the age value of the monument, he suggests is the *'only viable strategy...because natural forces are ultimately more powerful than all the wit of man'*.<sup>42</sup> For Riegl, in the tendency of monuments as objects to get reduced to dust through a natural process of decay, they became material enactments of the mental decay of images used to constitute the process of forgetting and ultimately, oblivion.<sup>43</sup>



1.27



1.28



1.29

Fig. 1.27 Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, Thiepval, 1932

Fig. 1.28 The Cenotaph, London 1919-20

Fig. 1.29 Monument to the Ghetto Heroes, Warsaw, Poland (1948). The central panel depicts men, women and children bearing arms in front of a backdrop of the burning ghetto.

Throughout the many and various attempts to build and recreate a physical consciousness of collective memory, few have challenged this unquestioned assumption: that a created object could represent memory. Time and time again, monuments have become representations of the Aristotelian- based notion which attempts to transfer memories to objects in order to preserve them from mental decay.<sup>44</sup> These monuments become permanent forms, offering a rigid structure and organization, which rather than supporting public memory narratives, simply *freeze* memory in the past. By insisting that its meaning is as fixed as its place in the landscape, the 'object monument' is oblivious to the mutability essential to the cultural artefacts. As such, its capability of enshrining offers little or no variability of interpretation, simultaneously obscuring any sense of personal *experience*:

*“Remembering has become a matter of meticulously minute reconstruction. Memory has begun to keep records: delegating the responsibility for remembering to the ‘lieu de memoire’, it deposits its signs as the snake deposits its shed skin.”*

Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory*<sup>45</sup>

Once a fixed monumental form is assigned to memory, the obligation to remember becomes diverted to some degree. Rather than preserving memory, it displaces a community’s memory-work with its own material form, unable to refer to anything beyond itself as a marker in space; a historical object. As a result, such monuments may not transfer events or memories so much as to bury them altogether beneath layers of national myth and explanation, encouraging witnessing and archival memory as their primary modes of commemoration. They authenticate their subjects with photographs, quotations and in a sense, dictate how an event should be recalled. Thus, as an instrument of memory, the monument as object remains self-contained and detached from the realm of time and space.

Recently, the monument as such has faced a process of redefinition and debate. Especially following the past two decades’ major upheavals – (WWI, WWII, the Vietnam War, the rise and fall of communism in the former Soviet Union and East Europe)- the issues of memory and forgetting have emerged as dominant concerns in dealing with the trauma which continues to haunt Western culture. One major influence on the discourse of reevaluating memory work was Freud’s theory on mental processes. In Freud’s view it was axiomatic that *‘in mental life nothing which has once been formed can perish- that everything is somehow preserved and in suitable circumstances...can once again be brought to light.’*<sup>47</sup> He identified the process of forgetting only as a repression which obscures the impressions received from consciousness; indissolubly linking remembering, repression and forgetting as the same psychic process. Rather than memory loss taking place through the passive attrition of time, as in Aristotle’s model, Freud posited it as the *active force*. Thus, Freud’s theory inverted the Aristotelian model, calling into question the assumption that objects are the analogues of memory.

**“A monument turns pliant memory to stone. It is as if a monument’s life in the communal mind grows as hard and polished as its exterior form, its significance as fixed as its place in the landscape. As an inert piece of stone, the monument keeps its own past a tightly held secret, gesturing away from its own history to the events and meanings we bring to it in our visits. “**

Robert Musil, *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*.<sup>46</sup>

Another major reason which brought increased doubt to the assumed relationship between objects and memory was a result of a crisis of representation that faced the generation of post-Holocaust memorial-makers in their search for appropriate means of commemorating historical trauma. As intersections between public art and political memory, these monuments could easily reflect the aesthetic and political ideals of the issues; however they also magnify the realization that conventional memorial practices are inadequate and inappropriate to the task- to keeping memory alive rather than fixing it in stone:<sup>48</sup>

*“For it may be the finished monument that completes memory itself, puts a cap on memory-work and draws a bottom line underneath an era that must always haunt...”*

James Young, *At Memory's Edge* <sup>49</sup>

### Counter-Monuments

“The old practice of memorial as sculpture on a pedestal has been replaced by the construction of memory sites in the expanded field that combine sculpture, landscape, architecture and their incorporation into the urban fabric.”

Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts*<sup>50</sup>



1.32

1.30



1.31



Though Rossi refers to monuments as persistent artefacts within the city's morphology, he also clearly illustrates that the city not only goes through a physical transformation, but also a transformation of the collective mental life of its inhabitants. The locus, as the place on which form gets imprinted, persists through many changes, particularly transformations of function.<sup>51</sup> Memory is thus sustained, not denied, by a sense of human temporality that could derive its nourishment from the very changes over time otherwise refused by the static, "timeless" memorial. In this sense, flexibility and temporality in effect engage a synthesis between mourning, commemoration and memorial, embodied in ritual; in emotional *experience*:

*"For although it is true that the fundamental purpose of a 'lieu de memoire' is to stop time, to inhibit forgetting, to fix a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial... all of this in order to capture a maximum possible meaning with the fewest possible signs, it is also clear that the 'lieux de memoire' thrive only because of their capacity for metamorphosis, their ability to resurrect old meanings and generate new ones along with new and unpredictable connections."*

Pierrra Nora, *Realms of Memory*<sup>52</sup>

Recently new ways of thinking about history and memory have attempted to challenge memorial's repetitive fixations and detached imagery. In place of the static form, these new models propose engaged, debatable connections between space, time and memory. Referred to as *counter-monuments*, these provocative memorial spaces avoid didacticism in favour of subjective emotion and immediacy. The most important space of memory for these artists and architects is not the space in the ground or above it, but the space between the memorial and the viewer, between the viewer and his own memory: the place of the memorial in the viewer's conscience and subconscious.<sup>53</sup> Rather than creating self-contained sites of memory, detached from our daily lives, these memorials inspire its visitors to look within themselves for memory. By attempting to build into these places the capacity for changing memory, generates a locus where each generation could search for its own significance in the past.<sup>54</sup>



1.33

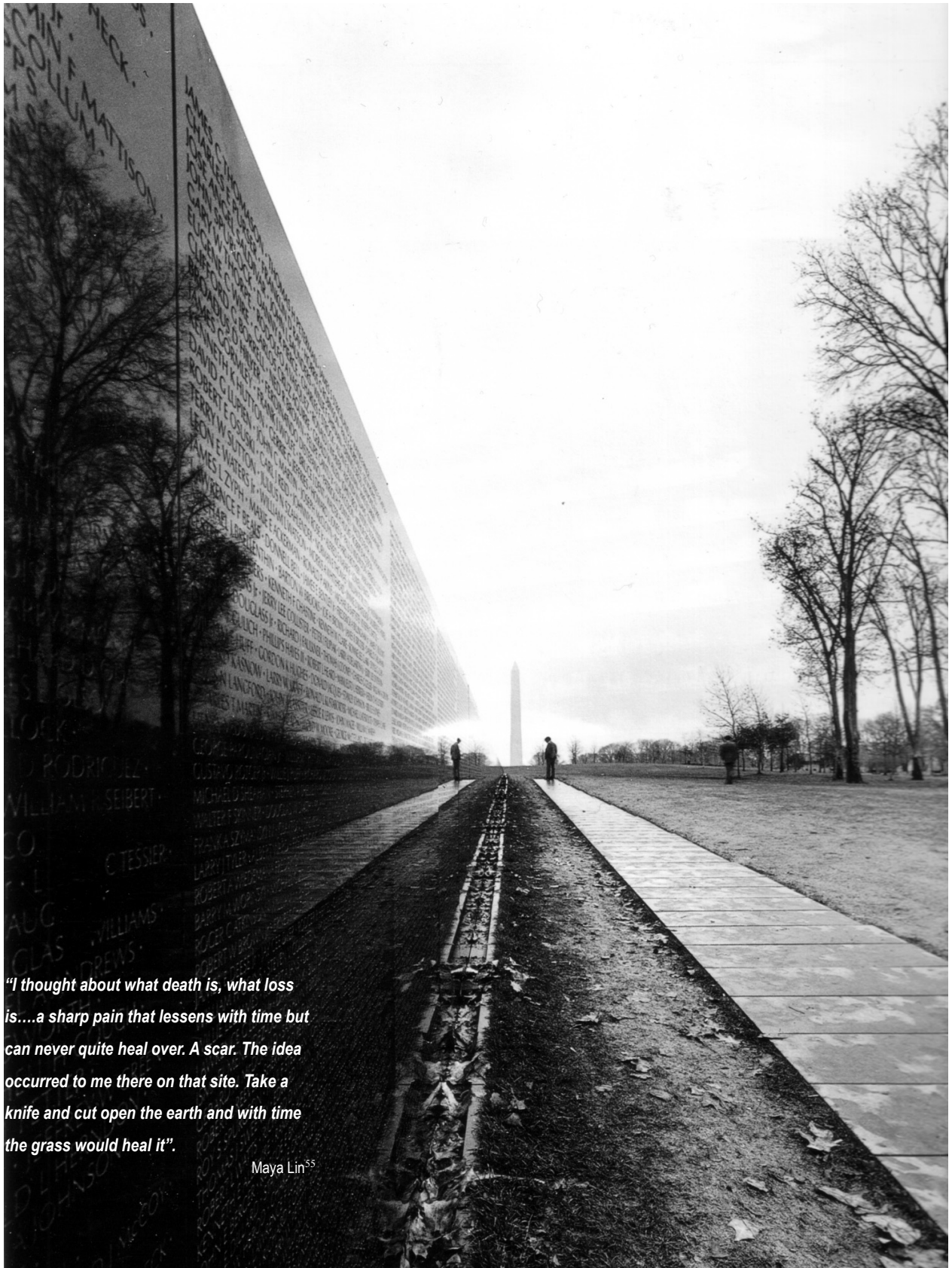


1.34

Fig. 1.33-1.34 Micha Ullman. *Bibliothek, Bebelplatz, Berlin* (1996). A small sunken pit of empty library shelves commemorates the Nazi bookburning that occurred there in 1933.

*Opposite:*

Fig. 1.30-1.32 *The New England Holocaust memorial, Boston* (1990) by Stanley Saitowitz consists of 6 etched glass towers over hollow foundations, lit by fire. The towers create a place for contemplation within the large urban setting.



*"I thought about what death is, what loss is....a sharp pain that lessens with time but can never quite heal over. A scar. The idea occurred to me there on that site. Take a knife and cut open the earth and with time the grass would heal it".*

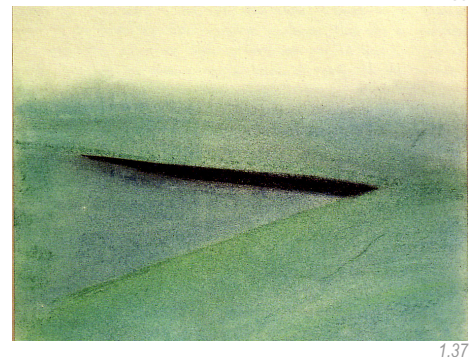
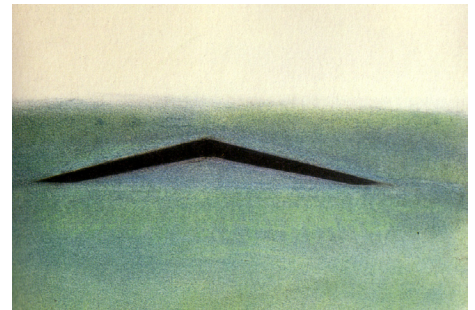
Maya Lin<sup>55</sup>

## A. VIETNAM Memorial: *Maya Lin*

Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam memorial is in many ways an inversion of typical war memorial imagery. In contrast to the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials adjacent to it, its form is an extended V made of two granite walls set into the earth engaging visitors to step down into it, rather than look up to it on a podium. On the two walls, the names of the dead are inscribed chronologically, listed according to their 'casualty day', from the vertex outward to the east and then back around from the west to the centre. This timeline, listing the victim's names without rank or hierarchy, in effect emphasizes the reality and individuality of each of the deaths. Abstracted, textual and black – the granite of the memorial challenges the heroic monumentality of the white marble of all the rest of the monuments on the Washington Mall. This mirrored surface provides a place for individual contemplation as visitors see their own reflection on the granite while reading the names of their loved ones. Lin characterized her design as “a rift in the earth bringing the Vietnam memorial into historical context”,<sup>56</sup> manifested as a gash in the earth; a scar only partially healed by the grass and trees over the mound in which the marble slabs are set.

There are many indications that the Vietnam memorial is an extremely successful site for the expression of grief. People who come here become immersed into their feelings, they touch the names carved on the wall; sometimes they trace them onto pieces of paper to take away. This memorial is not an act of closure; it implies terrible questions about war, about dying in vain. The structural inversions of black versus white marble, the gash in the earth versus the statue on a podium, abstraction versus figurative realism, articulate this questioning and a repudiation of a desire to forget the past. Decontextualizing the dead from the glorious causes, the inscription on the memorial is directed to the Veterans:

*“Our nation honours the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country of the Vietnam veterans. This memorial was built with private contributions from the American people, November 11, 1982.”*



### Competition criteria:<sup>57</sup>

1. Reflexive and contemplative in character
2. Harmonious with its site and surroundings
3. Provide for the inscription of 58,132 names
4. Make no political statement about the war
5. Occupy up to 2 acres of land

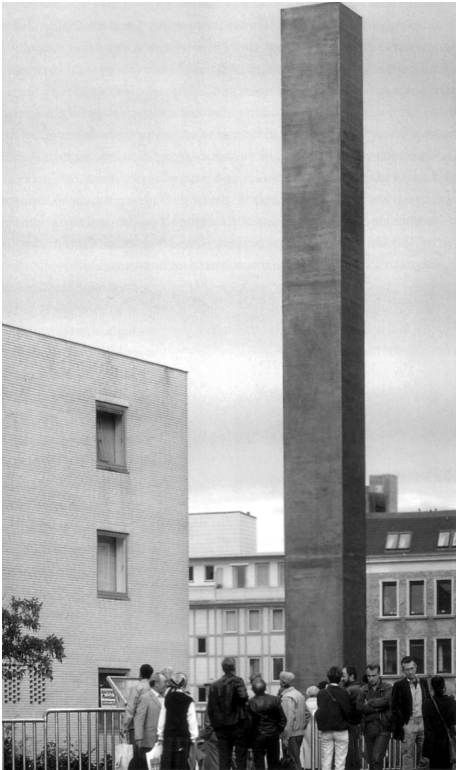


Fig. 1.36-1.37 Maya Lin's drawings for her competition entry; a rift carved out of the earth

Fig. 1.38 Photo of the existing Vietnam Memorial

Opposite:

Fig. 1.35 Photo of the existing Vietnam Memorial



1.39



1.40

"Its aim was not to console, but provoke, not to remain fixed but to change, not to be everlasting but to disappear, not to be avoided by its passers-by but to demand interaction, not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation, not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at its observers."

James Young, *Memory Against the Edge*<sup>58</sup>



1.41



## B. HAMBURG Memorial: *Jochen Gerz*

A counter-monument conceived to challenge the very premise of the idea of a permanent monument, the Hamburg Memorial by Jochen and Esther Gerz was built at the city of Hamburg's invitation for a "Monument Against Fascism, War and Violence- and for Peace and Human Rights". This project consists of a single column standing over 10 m high, divided into one meter square sections of hollow aluminium, the whole of which is covered with a thin layer of lead. A small sign with instructions invites passers-by to engrave their signature into the lead column, descending progressively into the ground as the available surface gets filled up. Normally, a signature marks the completion of a work, or its title. Here, signatures are the essence of the work itself; void of signatures the column would have stood the test of time as a bare sculpture, because there would be no act of sinking it into the ground.

In their original concept, the artists had hoped for row upon row of neatly inscribed names, as a visual narrative of a war memorial.<sup>60</sup> Trying to predict certain types of reactions, they had envisaged *indifference* for instance. However, they were surprised by the violent reaction of the public: signatures were being scratched over, blotted out by insults. Some people fired shots at the monument; others used knives, even saws, to cut into it.<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, the piece itself also received a lot of public rejection, deeming it an 'eye-sore', and an 'intentional visual pun'.

In their vanishing monument, the artists attempted to create a *performance piece* that initiates a dynamic and yet equal relationship between artist, work and viewer. Creating a progressive narrative, it also tried to denaturalize the distance between the artist and the public. Part of the community's mixed reaction to the counter-monument was tied to the discomfort with this very liveliness: being no longer at the mercy of the viewer's will, out of anyone's control. In this sense, the counter-monument accomplished what all monuments must: it reflected back to the people their own memorial projections and memories.

"What we did not want was an enormous pedestal with something on it presuming to tell people what they ought to think."

Jochen and Esther Gerz, *Galleries Magazine*<sup>59</sup>

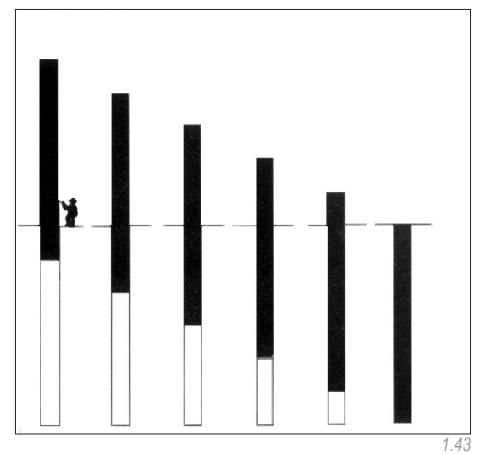
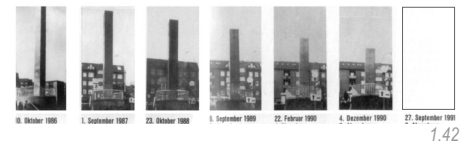


Fig. 1.42 A photographic record of the Harburg monument's disappearance

Fig. 1.43 Artist's conceptual sketch

Opposite:  
Fig. 1.39-1.40 The monument at its unveiling in 1986, then sinking

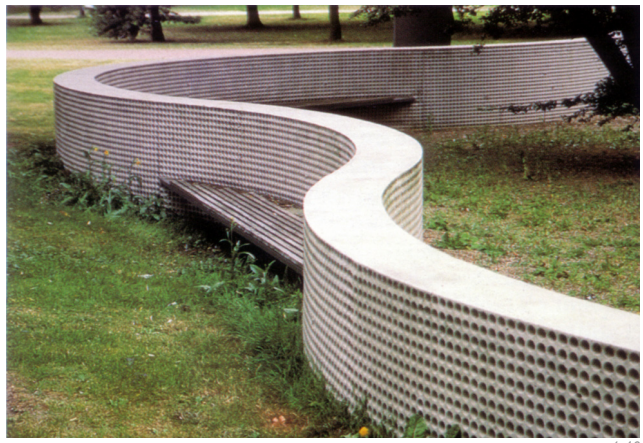
1.41 Graffiti scrawl on the monument: evidence of the monument's success.



1.44



1.45



1.46

Fig. 1.44 Views of the Bijlmer memorial

Fig. 1.45 Views of the memorial wall element

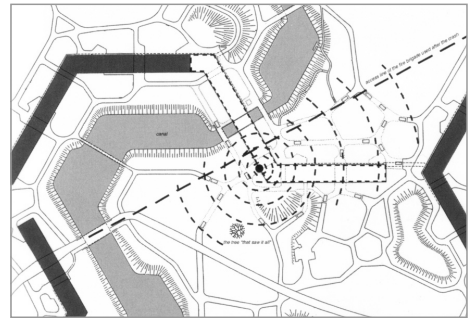
### C. BILJMER Memorial: *Herman Herzberger and Georges Descombes*

In November of 1992, a Boeing 747 cargo airplane crashed just minutes after its take off from the Amsterdam airport. The jumbo jet directly struck one of the residential wings of the Bijlmer quarter, killing 47 people. Soon after, the city of Amsterdam commissioned artists, art critics, local administrators and architects, who conducted phases of photographic documentation of the spontaneous 'memorial' that had evolved around an old tree which had survived the disaster, as well as from meetings and interviews with the inhabitants of the neighbourhood.<sup>62</sup> Out of this research, Georges Descombes and Herman Hertzberger approached the project by widening the analysis further and integrating the creation of a public monument with the redevelopment of the entire area which was devastated by the crash. Consequently they identified a series of elements: new pedestrian walkways, trees, pools and multiuse plateaux that served as the basis for their scheme.<sup>63</sup>

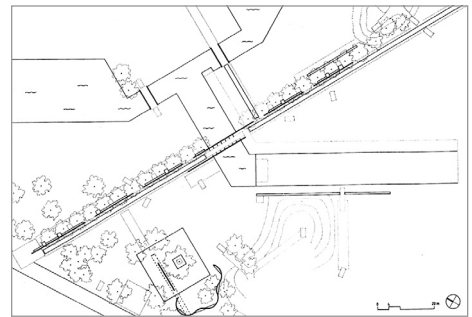
The final design is composed of four main elements. The memorial, created around the same tree that had been the original inspiration for the project, is a concrete commemorative wall, hovering above the ground and enclosed by a roof made of sheet metal. A lattice of display boxes which contain inscriptions and belongings donated by the relatives of the victims; the memorial wall acts as a collage of personalized spaces. The footprint of the destroyed residential building is engraved into the landscape; a lawn sloping toward a reflecting pool, which is connected to the network of canals which flow through the Bijlmer quarter. A new pedestrian axis of concrete and gravel traces a line of passage to the area of the plane crash used by the firemen at the time of the accident, crossing all the elements of the landscape. Finally, the concrete panels of identical size, positioned in the terrain, become a threshold between the new memorial and the network of existing pedestrian walkways that had been interrupted. All the elements of this composition come together to commemorate a traumatic event, but in their strong articulation and careful consideration they also create a landscape which offers spaces for relaxation, reflection and collective activities.



1.47



1.48



1.49

Fig. 1.47 Photo showing the crash site

Fig. 1.48 Siteplan of the plane crash

Fig. 1.49 Plan of the Bijlmer memorial

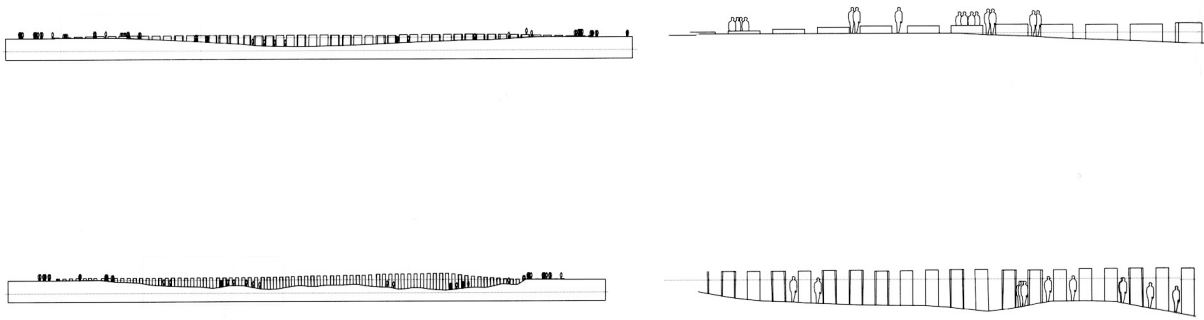
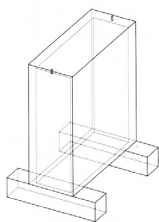


Fig. 1.50 Holocaust Memorial: concept sections



Fig. 1.51 Holocaust Memorial: concept siteplan



32 Fig. 1.52 Stone unit

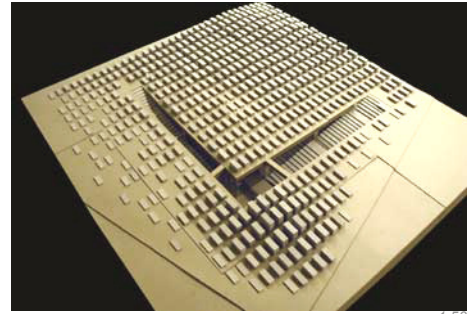
#### D. HOLOCAUST Memorial: *Peter Eisenman*

Peter Eisenman's *Memorial to the Murdered Jews* in Berlin uses the language of landscape to search for the dialogue between memory and place. In an aim to manifest instability inherent in what seems to be a rigid system, the design begins from a rigid grid structure of concrete pillars, spaced apart enough to allow for individual passage. The ground and the top planes of the landscape are determined by the intersections of the voids of the grid of pillars and the gridline of the larger site context of Berlin.<sup>64</sup> Through the shifting of the ground plane and the top plane, the slippage of the grid structure in effect causes a series of indeterminate spaces to develop in midst of what seems to be a rigid order. The actual spaces condense, narrow, and deepen, orchestrating a multi-layered experience. This agitation in the field shatters the axial directionality of the grid and makes it omni-directional. In this, it destroys the illusion of security of the order of the internal grid and of the frame of the city grid.<sup>65</sup>

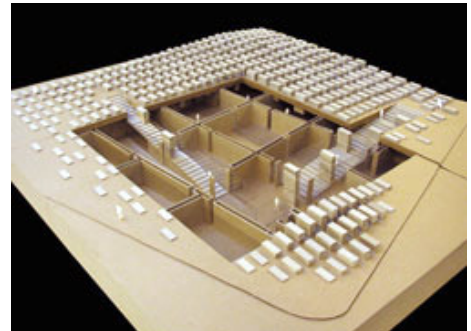
The combination of voids varies according to the position of the body, expanding and contracting with the movement of the observer. The immersion in space forces the body to make careful movements that creates a sense of instability for the individual. As visitors wade knee-, or chest-, or shoulder-deep into this waving field of stones, an implied sense of motion engages a memory that is not fixed in space. Creating a destabilization of the individual sense of time and space, this project attempts to retrace the loss of the past enhanced by a variety of internal relationships between size, surface, volume, material, colour and space. The presence of an experiential process in which *'the monument is no longer seen as an object but as a body of complex interrelation'*<sup>66</sup> tries to reconstruct an entire narrative that reveals the tragedy of the Holocaust, as visitors immerse themselves into the landscape.

*"The enormity and scale of the horror of the Holocaust is such that any attempt to represent it by traditional means is inevitably inadequate ... Our memorial attempts to present a new idea of memory as distinct from nostalgia in which the past remains active in the present."*

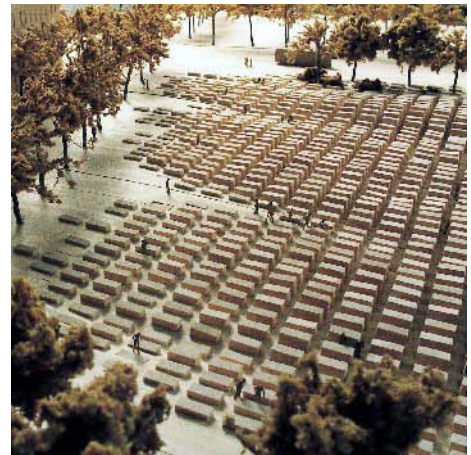
Peter Eisenman<sup>67</sup>



1.53



1.54



1.55

Fig. 1.53 The working model

Fig. 1.54 The working model showing the information centre below the surface

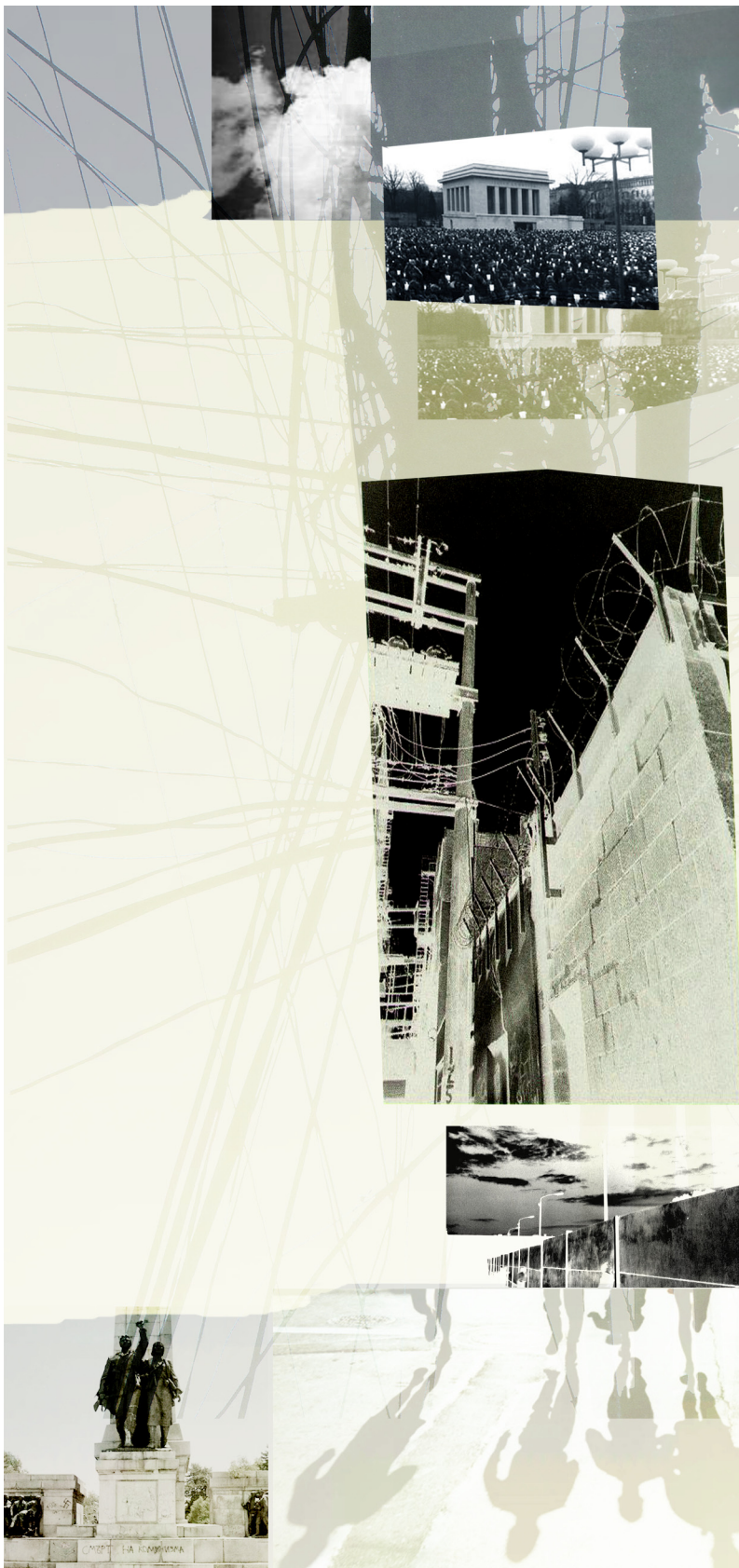
Fig. 1.55 Close-up view of the model



**PART II      FORGETTING**

**“Nowadays, time moves forward at a rapid pace.  
Forgotten overnight, a historic event glistens  
the next day like morning dew...”**

Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*<sup>1</sup>





## 2.1 Site of Traumatic Memory: *The G. Dimitrov Mausoleum*

*“For every image of the past that is not recognized by the present as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.”*

Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*<sup>2</sup>

The place of traumatic collective memory can be manifested through a site that carries a memory of a painful event- a scar that resonates in the spirit of the place and in its physical presence. Among these are places wounded by history's tragedies that have become sources of intense cultural aggravation or mourning; their ghosted memories reappearing in the consciousness of the collective. Post-Communist Eastern Europe is filled with proof of its traumatic recent past, in the statues, symbols and buildings that crowd the public spaces. In the midst of dramatic cultural transition, they have been reduced overnight from 'glorious monuments' to left over residues. There is an urge to erase or undo this physical layer of history, without any effort to commemorate, reconcile or face the past; erasing its references from collective consciousness.

Bearing eminence of traumatic memory is the site of the former Mausoleum of G. Dimitrov located in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia. Once considered Communist Bulgaria's most sacred site, the mausoleum held the body of the country's first Communist leader while its adjacent public space served as the platform for the government's public appearances. When the Communist system unravelled, the building was left empty and neglected, eventually demolished in Aug. 1999. Its site is now a scar in the city's fabric.



2.1



2.2

*Fig. 2.1 and 2.2 The G. Dimitrov Mausoleum in its days of glory during the years of Communism and during its symbolic destruction in 1999 after the end of the regime.*

### Totalitarian Regime: Communist Bulgaria

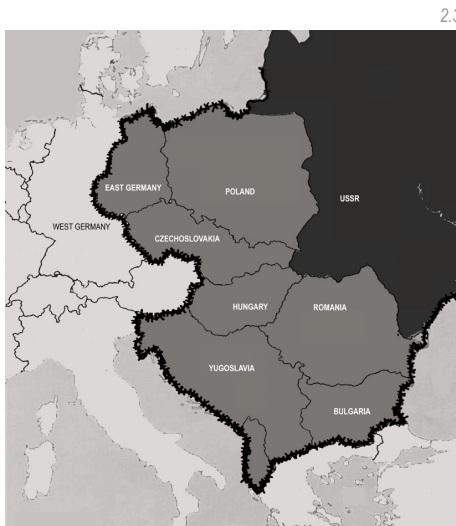
The Eastern Bloc consisted of a ribbon of territory west of the former Soviet Union, comprising of six nations (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and East Germany) reaching a thousand miles across and consisting of more than 100 million people.<sup>3</sup> At the end of the Second World War, a series of pacts divided the European continent and the Soviet Red Army occupied this territory with little difficulty, using it to form a more flexible buffer system with the west. Determined to gain both the political and ideological loyalty of these countries, the Soviet Union directed instalments of its own communist government and eliminated all other political competition. Rapidly, rigid censorship and a powerful secret police system ensured total control over the local culture, economics, property and industry. Further, fearing any external influence from the west, a new policy of isolation was enforced to create a barrier to communication, travel and free exchange with the rest of the world: the basis of the totalitarian regime behind the *Iron Curtain*.

The Communist regime used terror and fear to control its population. In Bulgaria, what the Communists saw as their main task immediately after coming to power in Sep. 1944 was to attack and dismantle the monarchy, and secure their own base of power. Following an election where for the last time a 'tolerated opposition' was allowed, they arrested and murdered the head of their opposition; an incident that shocked the free world and marked the realization for Bulgarians that their new government is a

Below:

Fig. 2.3 Map of the countries behind the Iron Curtain of Eastern European Bloc.

Fig. 2.4 The Berlin Wall



2.3



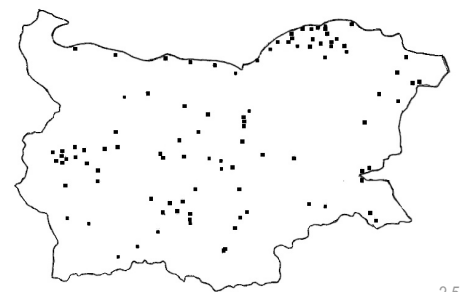
2.4

totalitarian regime.<sup>4</sup> Founding the organizations of the 'People's Militia' and its judicial counterpart the 'People's Courts', backed by the Soviet Army and a growing local security apparatus, they assumed control over the police and the courts and began terrorizing the country with mass arrests. Within six months, the regime created its first 'purge' of non-conformists in Bulgaria and over 2,000 persons were trailed and condemned to prison, deported or executed. Five years later, a second purge of dissident groups, religious groups, individuals who had participated in protests were also declared 'enemies' and eliminated.<sup>5</sup>

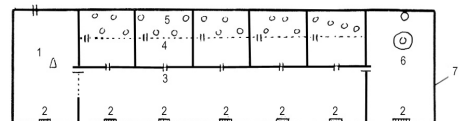
The Bulgarian Communists had the dubious distinction of making the bloodiest beginning of all the new regimes in Eastern Europe. In order to be effective, terror had to be absolute, and be somehow legitimized through ideology and propaganda.<sup>6</sup> The art, the press, the theatre, and the literature communities among others were limited to produce and publish only party-conformist material. At the same time, the church was deprived of influence and teachers were replaced on mass scale; school curriculum revised and prewar books burned. The arena of political, intellectual and artistic thought was kept under lock and key.

### The New Edifice: G. Dimitrov

The second task of the Bulgarian Communist government was to purge its own party members who displayed any independent interests or tendencies and install a new, trusted leader. Georgi Dimitrov, a native-born Bulgarian who had lived in exile for 22 years for his involvement in the communist movement returned from Moscow in 1945 and became head of state.<sup>7</sup> He supported the massacres of the 1944 purges, and encouraged the liquidation of all anti-communist resistance and the extermination of all 'counter-revolutionaries'.<sup>8</sup> During his leadership, Dimitrov created the 1947 Constitution, restructured the economic, political, and social structures by the Soviet model and established a system of forced labour camps for political prisoners across the country. By the time of his death in 1949, the Bulgarian Communist government had become the most rigidly loyal to the Soviet Union in the Eastern Bloc.



2.5



2.6

### Labour Camp Prison Cell<sup>9</sup>

1. Prison Guard
2. Windows covered with planks
3. Locked door with an iron punched plate for air.
4. Wire net
5. Four prisoners per cell
6. Communal toilet
7. Brick wall

Fig. 2.5 Between 1944 and 1962 there were approximately one hundred forced labour camps in a country of eight million individuals. It is estimated that there were 20,000 prisoners during the entire period of the regime.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Mausoleum: Icon of the Bulgarian Regime**

Dimitrov's unexpected death in 1949 led to the urgent call to memorialize his idealized spirit by the Communist government in a state mausoleum; similar to a number of other communist leaders, such as Lenin and Mao Zedong. The mausoleum was planned as a focal addition to the south side of '9<sup>th</sup> of September Square', symbolically on the site where he held many of his public political speeches. This square, according to a series of new urban plans, approved and signed personally by Dimitrov, was designated as the focal public space in the city, named after the day the Soviet Army first had entered Bulgaria in 1944.

Dimitrov's funeral procession stretched across the entire city, ending at the 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept. Square; to the Mausoleum where his embalmed body was placed behind glass in a climate-controlled chamber vault below ground level for the remainder of the Communist regime. Due to the unplanned nature of the situation, the design and erection of the mausoleum took place in expedient time frame, as architects and engineers made decisions directly on site while builders assembled the mausoleum in only eight days. The building was designed to function as a monumental structure; a rejoinder of Lenin's mausoleum (1930), staying close to the spirit of Social Realism encouraged by the regime. A ten meter marble-clad rectangular mass made of substantial walls made of brick and reinforced concrete was built as the backdrop of a raised podium stage for speeches accessible only to government officials.



For the next forty years, the site of the 9<sup>th</sup> of September Square, with the mausoleum in its background, was used as a platform and review stand for party members. At the mausoleum, ceremonial honour guards in red-braided dress uniforms changed hourly for forty years. A seven doctor team made daily inspections of the corpse and re-embalmed him every year and a half. Visitors would line up single file and solemnly shuffle along to see the preserved remains of the body of the country's '*Father of the Nation*'. The mausoleum, as the location for the ideological portrayal of the regime to the public, became a persistent image in the collective memory of the Bulgarian people.

Fig. 2.7 The mausoleum podium, accessible only to members of the party and used as their public stage.



Fig.2.8 . Aerial view of the G.Dimitrov mausoleum, following its completion in 1949. The monument was sited directly facing the former palace of the previous monarchy of King Alexander Battenberg, at the north edge of the City Garden. The space immediately in front of the mausoleum was named 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept. Square and designated as the new main civic space of the city of Sofia.



Fig.2.9 The 9<sup>th</sup> of September Square was often filled by the people of Sofia for various civic functions. The space framed by the structure of the mausoleum was used by the communist government for staging marches, assemblies, strikes, parades, passages of tanks, etc.



Fig.2.10 View of the mausoleum toward the Communist Party headquarters building. Together these two structures create a physical, ideological presence of the regime in the city.

### **Regime of Silent Terror**

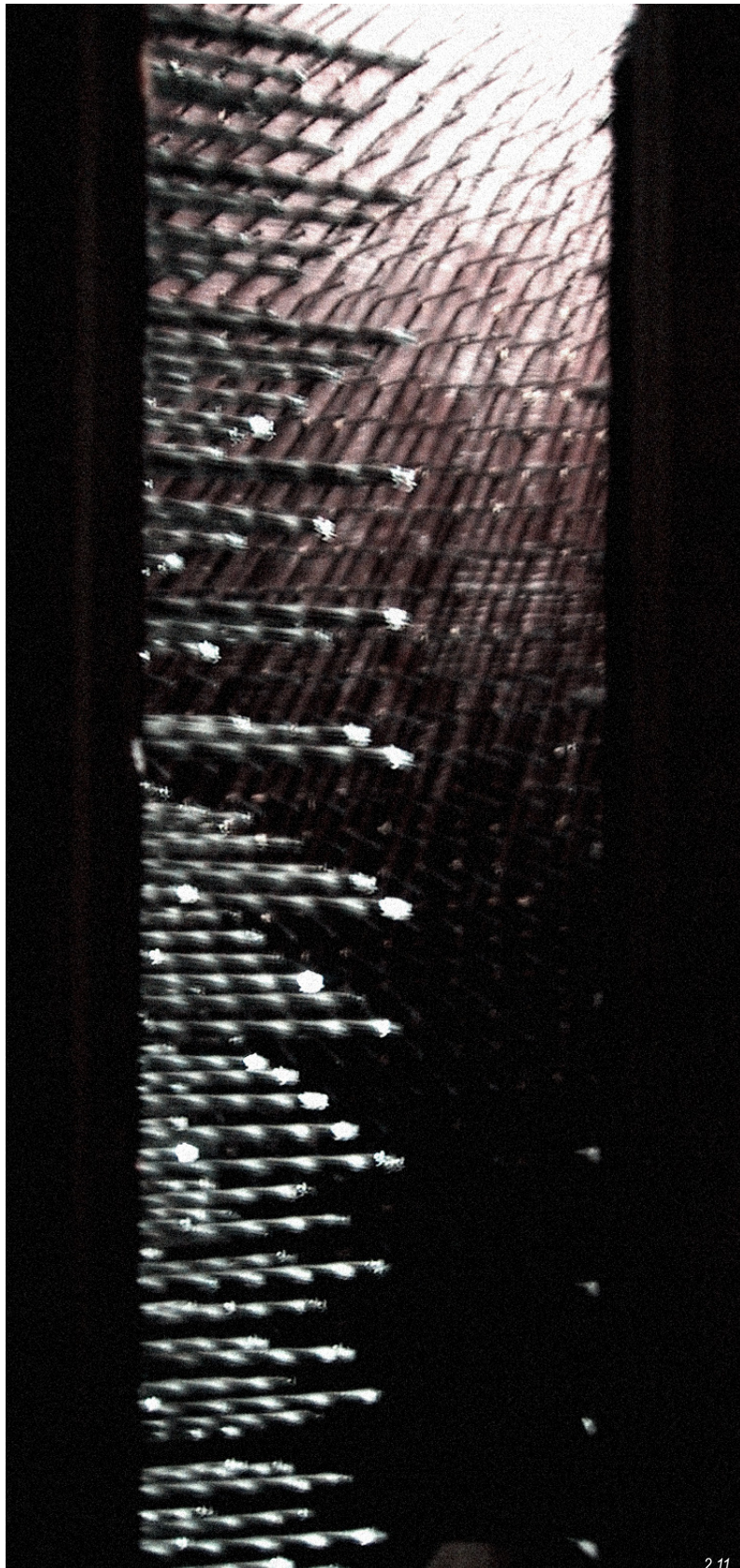
Art as narrative communication gives form to communal dreamscapes, where collective ideals are given shape. It follows that, when such collective communications are established, they cycle back new perceptions to the author. In this sense, art becomes the conscious narrative of the desires rooted both in the individual's and the collective's unconscious, and a narrative of the ideals and values of a society. The totalitarian doctrine of the Iron Curtain regime in Eastern Europe deliberately privileged the group over the individual, which meant that it had to provide an effective means of censoring the individual's manifestations as a psychological device of control. The liberating force that art is capable of expressing is dangerous for the censor, however if its voice and vision is distorted and controlled, eventually it is art that can become the most powerful censor of the collective:

*"This was perceived as an auxiliary instrument of transformation to the new order. Art, especially the fictional novel, had become the main vehicle of the new ideology".<sup>11</sup>*

*Thought* itself became both the *method* of censorship as well as the *subject* of censorship. While it attempted to distort and control every aspect of the individual's mind, it created a disconnect between the values of the culture itself and those of the authority. This kind of repression forced itself on as a defence against creativity, as a method to encourage obedience and eliminate self-knowledge, creating a state of distorted values and ideals.

### **Trauma: The Force of Censorship**

Human creativity is imperfect and irrational, born out of instinct. It involves inhabiting, managing and exploiting the primitive instinct of the self.<sup>13</sup> Creating art under a censor is like working alongside a constant intrusion; a reader who is always there over one's shoulder, criticizing and forcing his way into the intimacy of creating art. At an individual level, the contest with the censor begins to assume an importance in the inner life of the artist that at the very least diverts him from his true desires and at its worst distorts his imagination.<sup>14</sup> The communist regime fostered a new type of literature cast in the mould of socialist realism. Despite that artistic work



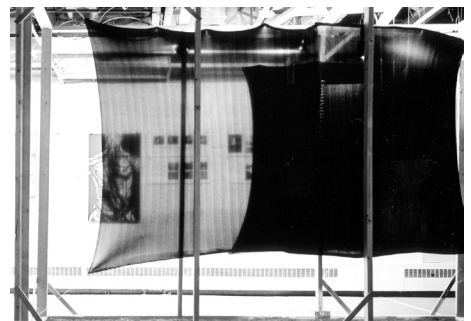
2.11

*There's a cool web of language winds us in,  
Retreat from too much joy or too much fear...*

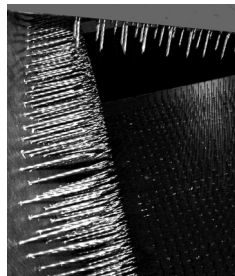
*But if we let our tongues lose self-possession,  
Throwing off language and its watery clasp  
Before our death, instead of when death comes...*

*We shall go mad, no doubt, and die that way.*

From 'The Cool Web' by Robert Graves (1927)<sup>12</sup>



2.12



2.13



2.14

*Fig. 2.11- 2.14 Images from the installation "Buried" by author. This piece was constructed using three plywood panels, which are suspended at eye level and pierced by over two thousand nails, wrapped by a dark cloth and lit from above. Arranged as a space to be experienced within, this piece has dual meaning; it creates a restrictive environment reminiscent of a prison cell, and in itself becomes a wound, an open interior of a body wrapped in silence- an interpretation of the psychological scars inflicted by censorship in a totalitarian regime.*

was backed up by generous government subsidies to encourage cooperation, the web of deception and distortion often produced sterile and mediocre results. The language of the idealized communist order became an abstract, forced language, closely monitored by the censors, eventually losing its traces of life.<sup>15</sup>

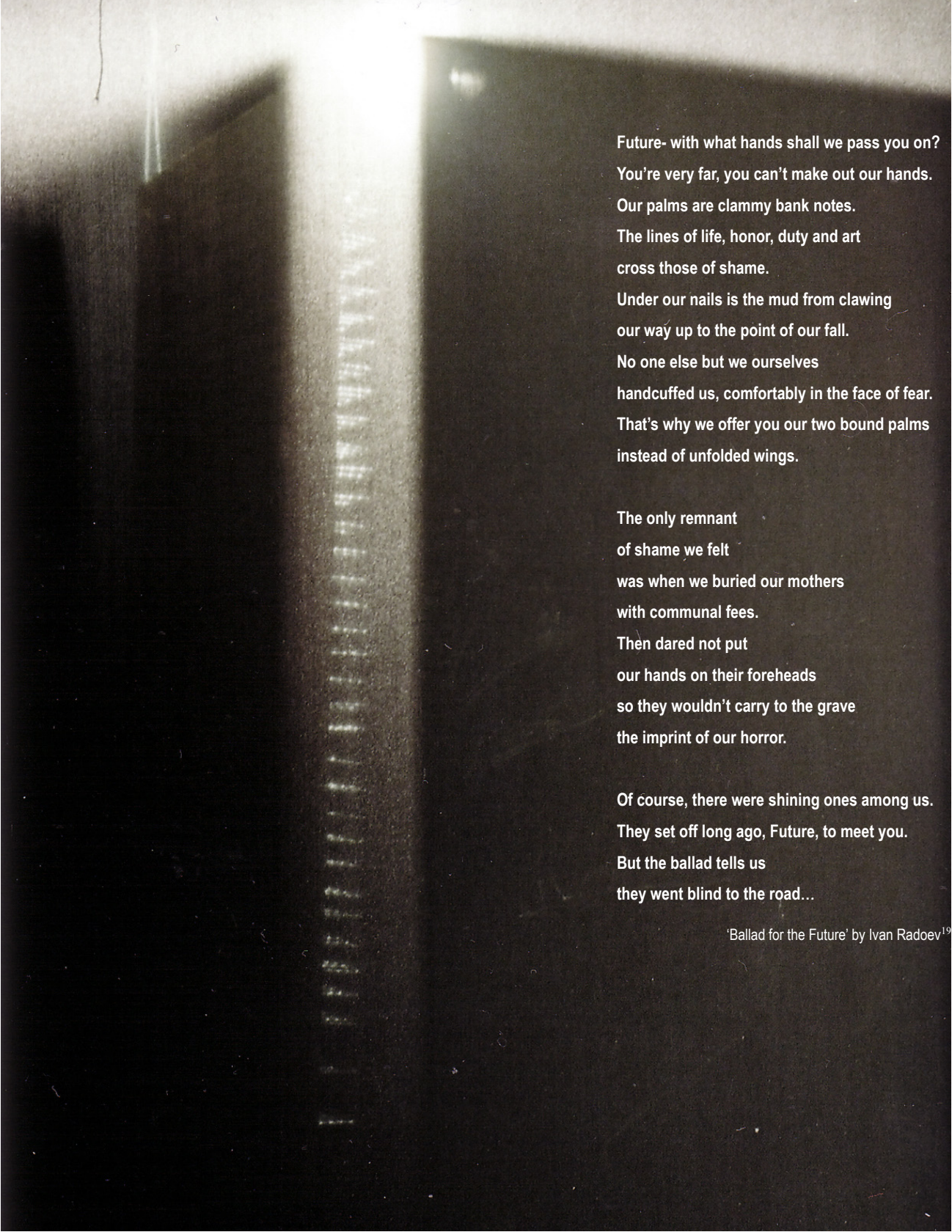
*"In the personal records of writers who have operated under censorship one can find eloquent and despairing descriptions of how the censor-figure is involuntarily incorporated into the interior, psychic life, bringing with it humiliation, self-disgust and shame. In unwilling fantasies of this kind, the censor is typically experienced as a parasite, a pathogenic invader of the body-self, repudiated with visceral intensity but never wholly expelled."<sup>16</sup>*

A decade into the establishment of the Iron Curtain, a sudden wave of critical literature began to gather momentum, as intellectuals took a sustained attack against some of the more stagnant aesthetic restrictions on their work, which they believed were leading to moral bankruptcy. They expressed their protests in secret literary clubs and private meetings or simply, in silence. Occasionally they attacked using the press to portray the lust for power of the regime's authorities. As soon as they began to gain momentum however, the authorities counter-attacked, setting more severe measures of control and censorship.<sup>17</sup>

This was manifested through the series of grand-scale purges in the mid-fifties, exterminating and filling up the labour camps across Eastern Europe with intellectuals and artists. Those who were better known were exiled- isolated, never to see their families or homeland again. Authorities saw that the only effective method of suppressing the emerging effort of rebellious manifestation was to sever the link of communication between the artist and the collective mass. Not only physically, but also on the level of one's consciousness. Based on the analysis of a produced piece of work, authors were declared 'mad' for proposing ideas that didn't comply with the prevailing ideologies.<sup>18</sup> When declared mad, the language of those who refused to conform became foreign and irrelevant. The gap between creator and censor widened further, sinking society into a state of deep neurosis.

Opposite:



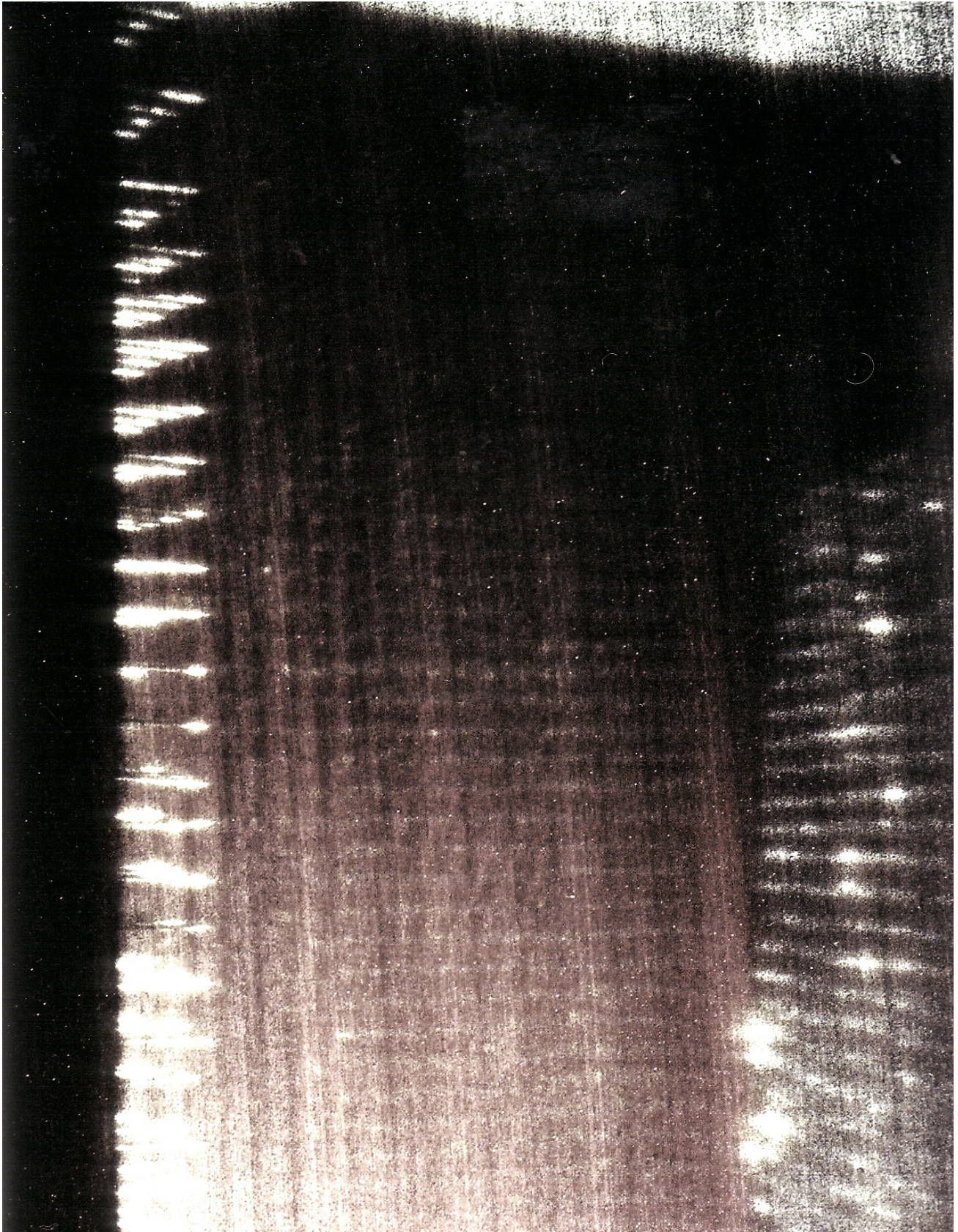


Future- with what hands shall we pass you on?  
You're very far, you can't make out our hands.  
Our palms are clammy bank notes.  
The lines of life, honor, duty and art  
cross those of shame.  
Under our nails is the mud from clawing  
our way up to the point of our fall.  
No one else but we ourselves  
handcuffed us, comfortably in the face of fear.  
That's why we offer you our two bound palms  
instead of unfolded wings.

The only remnant  
of shame we felt  
was when we buried our mothers  
with communal fees.  
Then dared not put  
our hands on their foreheads  
so they wouldn't carry to the grave  
the imprint of our horror.

Of course, there were shining ones among us.  
They set off long ago, Future, to meet you.  
But the ballad tells us  
they went blind to the road...

'Ballad for the Future' by Ivan Radoev<sup>19</sup>



*I promised myself that I would forget.*

*The masks which distorted my memories were copious. Yet, for years I could not escape the fantasies that my past held. Why couldn't I erase the scars they carved onto my mind?*

*...I try to reconstruct my memories. First, they appear as traces that are difficult to locate, hanging estranged in time and space that does not belong to them. Their blurred edges merge with images I locate from my new life here. I find myself in a landscape of strange proportions facing roads I am unable to cross that lead to undetermined places. Immobilized, I am lost in my search...*

*Had I lost you?*

*...As memory slowly relocates itself, countless lost places begin to reveal themselves. I anchor them.*

*I am stunned by the force of my recollections. Faded horizons reappear and I hear muted sounds again; and as I see faces I once knew I find solid ground beneath me. I hardly contain my own assurance. I want to discover this feeling again.*

*Years after my family left Bulgaria I return to the place that haunts me. There is a familiar smell and a familiar air that clings to my face. But my recollections had deceived me.*

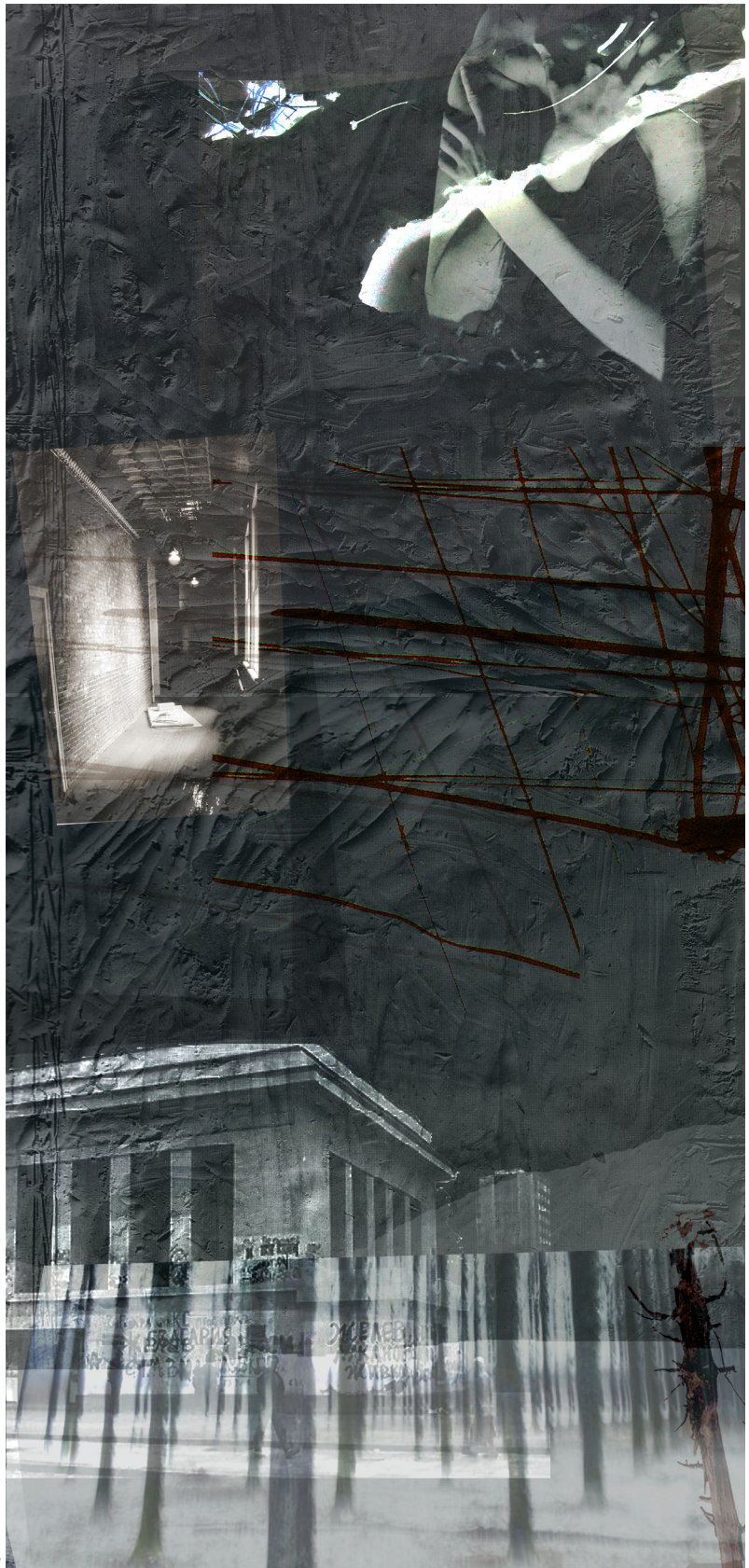
*The place of my memories has changed...*

Opposite:

Fig. 2.16 Image from the installation 'Buried' by author.

**“Wandering the streets that do not know their names are the ghosts of monuments torn down...”**

Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*<sup>20</sup>



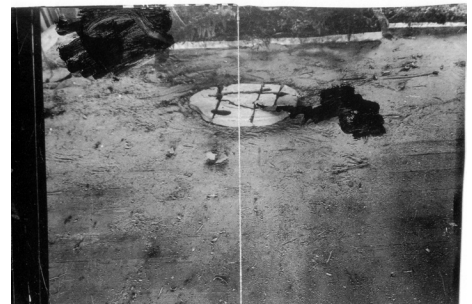
## 2.2 Memory Erasure: *Culture of Denial*

*"It regularly happens that important details have disappeared from the total picture of a recent recollection or that they have been replaced by falsifications of memory...even the most recent experiences can be subject to forgetting...if not completely swallowed up by, amnesia."*

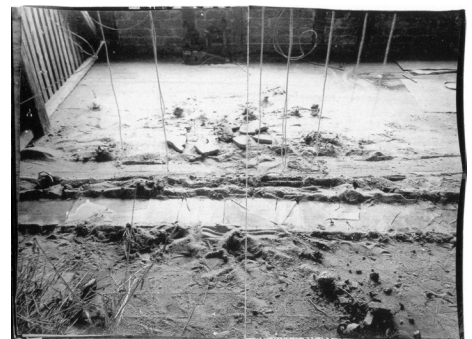
Sigmund Freud: Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis<sup>21</sup>

When the walls of the Iron Curtain came down in 1990, the Eastern European countries were left in search of their lost culture, in search of their identity, and in search of their memory. Immediately following a wave of exhumation of files from the banned archives of recent history- uncovering horror pictures, graves and skeletons, gruesome eyewitness accounts- the records were closed, proving too painful a confrontation. People began a concerted effort to refashion the past, erasing and transforming into ruins everything that, until quite recently had made up their social fabric.

Freud argued that while there remained repressed gaps within memory, the distortions created by the censors also remained as permanent forces within the unconscious, having the aim of maintaining it.<sup>22</sup> By suppressing the darkest memories of the terror of the recent past, the Bulgarian culture has obliterated an entire layer of its history by consciously discrediting the reality of the events. The restrictive environment of oppression during the regime has in turn been replaced by an environment of denial, where mourning has become an impossible task, continuously attacking the consciousness of the collective. This has created a society of distrust and obsessive archiving, as well as the perpetual search for collective identity.



2.18



2.19

*Fig.2.18 Anselm Kiefer's photographs titled "Iconoclastic Contovercy II". He assembles compositions with sand and dried glass strewn on his studio floor; a recurring motif in his psychological examination of the destuction and erasure of historical icons in order to achieve forgetting.*

*Fig 2.19 The fragments are smashed into scattered ruins in the final image of the series.*

### The Traces of History: Communism in Sofia

Collective memory, in its public embodiment, unfolds within our physical realm through material and spatial manifestations which trigger memories for those who have shared a common past. The city, seen as a man-made artifact constructed over time, retains the traces of history in its physical structure, leaving a system of persistencies within its layers. Drawing on the ideas of Halbwachs, Rossi describes “*the city as the locus of the collective memory*”, associated with its architecture and landscape. In this sense, memory is a key link of the urban structure, becoming the consciousness of the city: <sup>23</sup>

*“The union between the past and the future exists in the very idea of the city that it flows through in the same way that memory flows through the life of a person...”*

Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* <sup>24</sup>



2.20



2.21



2.22

In Sofia, the locus of collective memory of the communist regime was anchored at the site of the mausoleum of G. Dimitrov, located in the center of the city. Following the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the mausoleum was surrounded by protesters who demanded that the apparatus of the totalitarian regime be dismantled. However, the Bulgarian Communist party managed to secure its position by forging a new name and staying in power for the next seven years. During this emotional period, the space around and in front of the mausoleum was repeatedly domesticated and reclaimed by the people in the city. Candlelight vigils were held there for evenings on end as people continued their protests in silence.

In 1997, activists gained momentum and the city’s streets filled with people from across the country, determined to once again attempt to remove the government from power. The protests were organized along a specific route in order to pass by several significant landmarks in the city. Along the way, the mausoleum, the Communist Party headquarters building and the focal statue of Lenin at its apex, along with the Law Courts, the National Assembly, and the Palace of Culture marked the physical sites in the protests’ symbolic narrative of the regime’s total control over society. Conversely, the University of Sofia became the symbol of the student

community and the centre of the activities organized during the protests and, the Alexander Nevski Cathedral and the monument to “The Priest” were chosen to portray of the continuous opposition of the regime by the church. The protest route between these designated markers delineated its own space, outlining not only the central area of the city but also crossing locations that already had specific meanings in the collective unconscious of the citizens of Sofia.

The protests lasted for thirty days, eventually forcing the Communist Party to step down. To commemorate the end to this period, a final demonstration was organized and manifested as a spectacle parody of a funeral procession. The mausoleum, as the physical symbol of the regime, was both the starting and the final destination of the procession, closing a full circle. A mock-up of coffin was solemnly brought up to the stand, on which party leaders had stood to make their speeches, and then vanished down from the frame of the stand until it was no longer visible from the square.<sup>25</sup> This event embodied people’s powerful desire to bury communism’s memory, a collective ritual searching to “*destroy even its last remnants, to prevent it from coming to life again and living among us as an evil spirit.*”<sup>26</sup>

Erasing the past however, proved much more difficult. The forty-five years of Communism in Bulgaria had left behind a very distinct and visible layer over as well as below the built fabric of the city of Sofia. The regime had constructed its presence by placing statues and symbols across the significant spaces in the city, providing contour to public places and saturating them with explicit political values. Below the city level, a wide network of tunnels was discovered- secret passages and spaces connecting various government and civic buildings, used by those in power as back-up escape routes and hiding places; also uncovering a vast dumping ground for records and censored materials. Overnight, these sites had turned into persistent reminders of traumatic memories. In order to forget the painful past, the Bulgarian people began a desperate attempt to destroy and alter these physical remnants in their city, tearing down statues and renaming the streets in order to erase the physical traces of communism in their collective space of memory.

Opposite :  
Fig. 2.20- 2.22 The square in front of the G.Dimitrov mausoleum as the stage for people’s confrontation with the regime in the city.

Below:  
Fig.2.23- 2.24 Abandoned Icons: The sites of persistent reminders of a traumatic past are prevalent in post-Communist Sofia.



2.23



2.24



Fig. 2.25

-  protest route
-  landmark associated with route
-  protest traffic direction
-  landmark public space
-  route outline space
-  9th of September Square

1. The University of Sofia- gathering space prior to the procession
2. 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept. Square- starting and end point of the procession in front of the mausoleum
3. House of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party
4. Lenin Statue
5. St. Nedelia Cathedral
6. Law Courts
7. The National Palace of Culture
8. The Monument to Patriarch Evtimiy, referred to as "the Priest"
9. The National Assembly
10. The Monument to Tsar Osvoboditel
11. The Alexander Nevski Cathedral










scale 1:25 000





Fig. 2.26

-  inaccessible underground tunnels
-  areas with accessible underground spaces
-  areas of previously restricted underground spaces
-  areas of planned future underground development
-  vehicular tunnel passage
-  Ancient City walls- below street level
-  9th of September Square



scale 1:25 000



Fig. 2.26

- former symbols of communism
- former symbolic public space
- areas affected by the symbols of the regime
- axis of the symbols of the regime
- 9th of September Square

1. G.Dimitrov Mausoleum/ 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept. Square (1949- )
2. House of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party (1955- )
3. Lenin Statue (1955-1997)
4. Military Prison Camp (demolished 1960)
5. Military Museum (closed 1997)
6. The National Palace of Culture (1976- )
7. Monument to Bulgarian Communism (1978- )
8. Military Compound and Shooting Grounds (demolished 1960)
9. Monument to the Soviet Army (1954- )
10. Monument to The Socialist Revolution (1956- )

scale 1:25 000





Fig. 2.27

- streets renamed since the fall of the regime
- renamed public space
- canal
- 9th of September Square (renamed as Alexander Battenberg Square)

Following the end of the communist regime any names of streets or public spaces in Sofia which had any associations with people or events which happened after the Communist Party came to power in 1944 were changed. In total 760 streets, public spaces and neighborhoods were renamed, 134 of which are in the downtown area of Sofia.



scale 1:25 000

### **Iconoclasm: Tearing Down the Symbol of the Regime**

The destruction of buildings and monuments- iconoclasm- is a conventional way of aiming to achieve forgetting. The overthrowing of statues of Lenin and other heroes of Soviet communism that took place throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union following 1989 was the most demonstrative sign of the collapse of the old regime.<sup>27</sup> In Sofia, the mausoleum of G.Dimitrov, symbolically situated right in the core of the city could not be ignored. During the events of 1990, protesters demanded the immediate removal of Dimitrov's embalmed corpse and the obliteration of the structure's memory altogether.

*"The day after the body's removal, the inhabitants of the City of Truth organized a "trash fest" The people of Sofia brought along books, portraits, uniforms, and medals - in short, all sorts of relics proclaiming the intimate bond that supposedly existed between each person's private history and the Great History of Socialism. Carting the souvenirs of a past that already seemed remote, they hurled them against the walls of the mausoleum. But the tomb was empty and the mausoleum, now disburdened of its sarcophagus, seemed impervious to their actions; their gestures could not conceal it. The mausoleum proved to be more cunning and cruel than the somewhat short memories of its supporters and adversaries. It had acquired an existence apart from the presence or absence of its miserable human remains. It submitted without flinching to defilement and burial under debris; presaging that, sooner or later, the day would come when it would be cleaned off and restored."*<sup>28</sup>

The mausoleum, empty and neglected, became a canvas for people's public expression during their troubled time of transition. The huge block covered in graffiti, was seen as an embarrassment; a blatant reminder in a city trying to shake off its communist past. In Aug of 1999, the mausoleum was demolished in an attempt to erase the traumatic memory of the past from the image of the city. The only thing left of the structure is the underground vaults where the body laid, capped by a slab of concrete. This left behind a void in the most-prominent space of the city, far more noticeable than the monument that stood in its place. This site, along with many endless empty statue plinths, has become a significant symbol of the urge found across all of the former Eastern Bloc countries, to suppress and erase the memory of the recent traumatic past.

**And now-  
Let's lie down on the square  
Let's drift collectively off to sleep  
For two, tree, five, six centuries.  
There's no longer any need to dream-  
Someone else will dream for us.  
Our own nightmares!  
He'll even interpret them for the world.  
Incorrectly.**



Fig.2.28. In the post-communist years, the building was left empty and neglected. However, while discussion raged about the future of the monumental structure, it changed appearance several times. In 1997, it was covered with dozens of black spots for a promotion of Walt Disney's film "101 Dalmatians." Later that year, it was turned into an Egyptian pyramid for an open-air staging of Giuseppe Verdi's opera "Aida." After the production's success, the National Opera began staging open-air productions in the square in front of the mausoleum.



Fig.2.29. After years of wrangling over what to do with the mausoleum, the government decided to knock it down. After three attempts to demolish it with explosives, the 1.5m thick walls of the structure still stood. .



Fig.2.30. In desperation, the structure was demolished using smaller detonations and mechanical gear, finally collapsing the mausoleum to the ground.

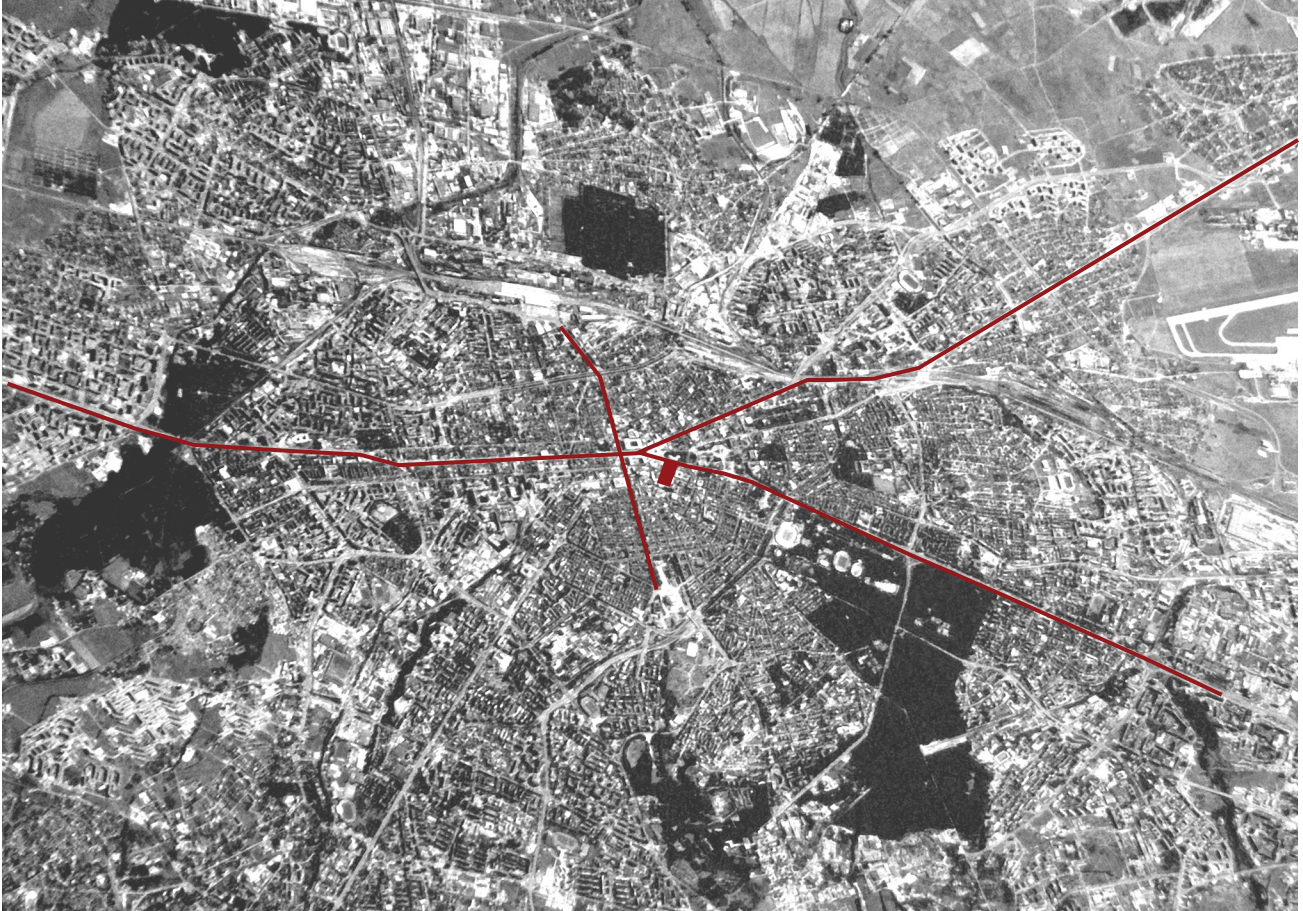
**“It showed complete and symbolic helplessness of the people and their inability to combine the past and the present”**

<sup>30</sup> 'The 24 Chasa' daily Bulgarian newspaper



**PART III      EMERGENCY**

Fig.3.0





### 3.1 Site Context

Located in the core of Sofia, the former 9th of September Square, sited at the gateway of the *City Park*, has been a persistent landmark in the development and experience of the city. As the oldest public garden in Sofia, this site has undergone several transformations, but most significant was its incorporation into the master plan of the Communist regime following WWII, with the addition of the symbolic ceremonial square at its north face and the construction of the Mausoleum of G. Dimitrov there. Deliberately aligned to a new city axis, this space connected physically and visually to the focal landmarks of the regime.

This site has always had the power to draw people together. However since the symbolic destruction of the mausoleum in 1999, the identity of this space has been displaced and disconnected from its urban context. Abandoned, the public plaza in front of the mausoleum, once the most significant gathering space in the city, has now become a surface parking lot; the concrete slab over the footprint of the mausoleum is covered by planting attempting to conceal its traces and blend in with the park once again.



3.1



3.2

Fig. 3.1 - 3.2 The former 9th of September Square. "Do Not Walk!" signs are placed in the planting covering the traces of the demolished mausoleum.

Opposite:

Fig. 3.0 Aerial of Sofia highlighting the study area and main axis.



Fig. 3.3

- park/ green space
- city cemetery
- rivers
- downtown area
- site area
- major city axis

*Located in heart of the Balkan Peninsula, Sofia is situated at the foot of two mountains in the western part of Bulgaria. Founded over 7,000 years ago at the site of strategic crossroads and a source of hot and cold mineral springs, the city has been known to ancient civilizations as Serdika, Sredetz, Triadiza and eventually- Sofia, designated as the capital of Bulgaria in 1879.*

scale 1:100 000



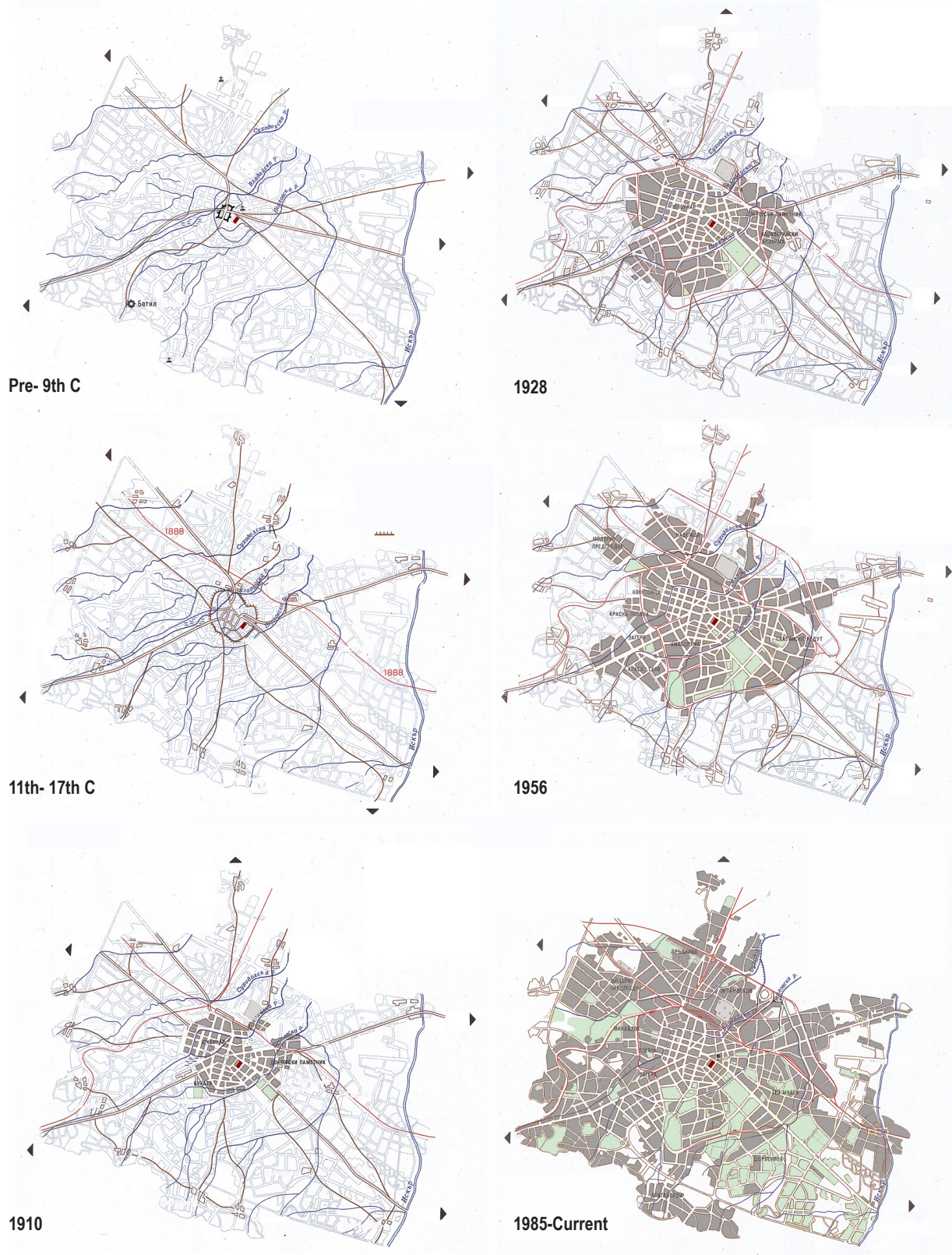


Fig. 3.4 NTS

## Site History

Although the site known today as the City Park lies outside the walls of the original ancient city of Serdika, its history as a significant space in the urban fabric of Sofia was established in the 13th C when the city was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. The site evolved as the first garden in the city, in a prominent location across the Turkish town hall, adjacent to a public square which was then used as a large open market. Archives from the 14th C have determined that the town hall was built by the head of the local Turkish administration as the base for civil government, judicial court, and law enforcement for the entire province<sup>1</sup> and its garden was an important addition to the city core.

Following the liberation from Ottoman rule in 1879, the town hall was converted into the residence of the new governor, King Alexander I; its garden still being the only public park in the city. Within the first months after Sofia was declared the capital of Bulgaria, the park underwent an extensive reconstruction and was renamed the Alexander II Garden. Since most of it had been treeless open space, the majority of the park was replanted; a new alley network was constructed, as well as a low fence, a café and a musician's kiosk. The King's Palace was also renovated; most of the original structure was rebuilt completely and the east wing was added.



3.5



3.6

Fig. 3.5 The Turkish Town Hall with its public garden in front.

Fig.3.6 The Royal Palace and eastern gate to the public park

Years later, the public square to the west of the palace was also re-planned and widened drastically (to 130m x 70m), clearing out a number of existing buildings and becoming the largest square in the city- the Alexander Battenberg Square. Although this was the site of the majority of important public events, such as military and civic festivals and celebrations, the adjacent park also hosted many of the city's activities. For instance, open-air concerts were held in the park every week, since unlike the large open square, the park offered shade during the hot summer. The park underwent a series of further reconstructions of its alleys, plantings, fencing and infrastructure but more or less remained in the same configuration and layout until following WW II.

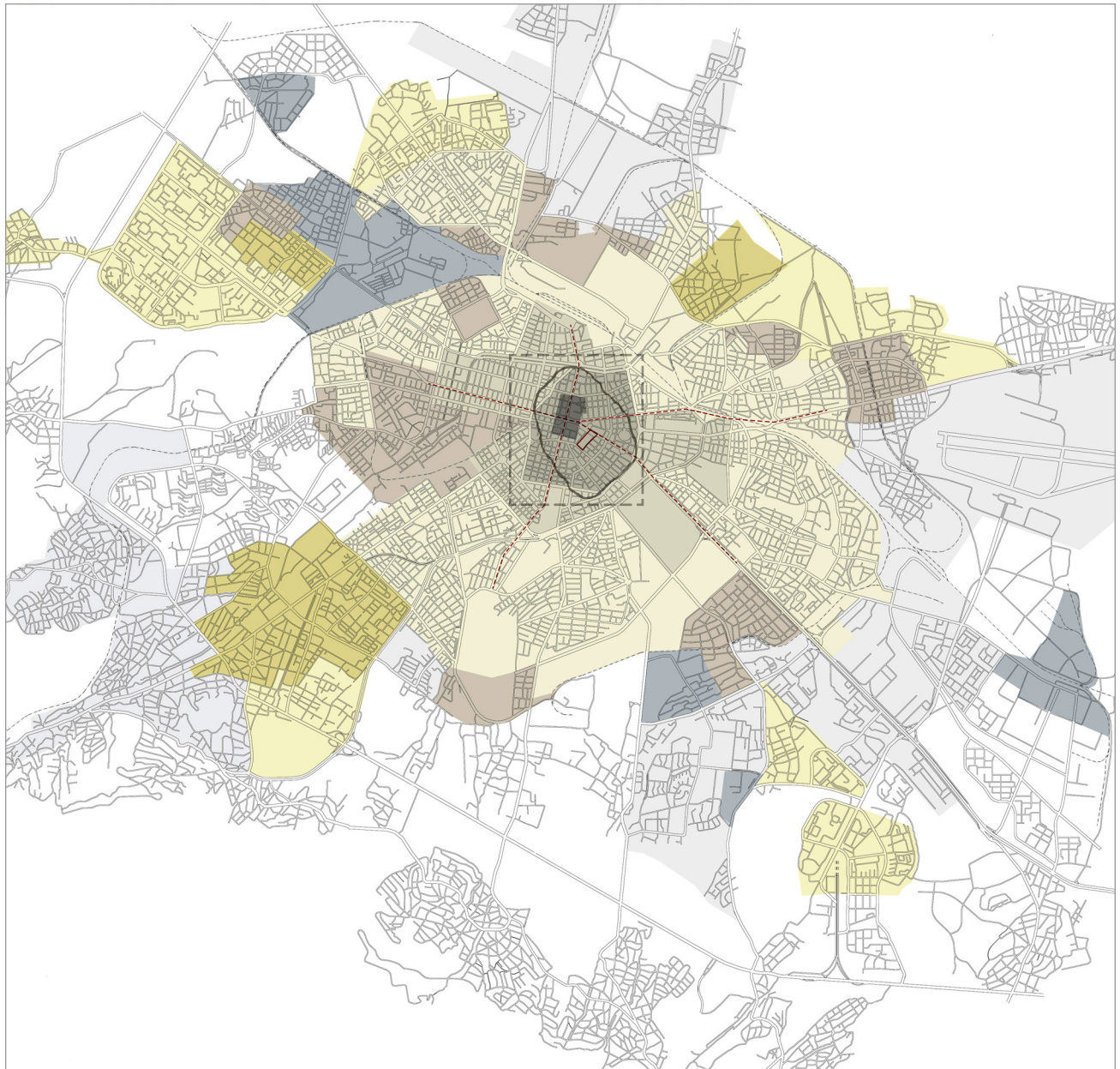
















Fig. 3.7

- |   |                     |   |                 |
|---|---------------------|---|-----------------|
|  | Roman City- Serdika |  | 1961            |
|  | Ottoman City        |  | 1970            |
|  | 1881                |  | 1980- today     |
|  | 1890                |  | downtown area   |
|  | 1915                |  | site area       |
|  | 1925                |  | major city axis |
|  | 1934                |   |                 |
|  | 1950                |   |                 |



scale 1:100 000

### 1945 Sofia Core Redevelopment

The political situation in the country following WW II gradually changed both architectural thinking and practice in Sofia. Before reaching official formulation, the consciousness and the adaptation of the architects toward future changes were demonstrated from the first days after the arrival of the Soviet Army in 1944. During that year, an open competition was announced for the elaboration for the new master plan of Sofia, urging 'the beginning of a methodological struggle against modernism and formalism, and an end of the adulation of contemporary West European influence'<sup>2</sup>, fully supporting the aesthetics of social realism.

The new master plan proposed a reconstruction and densification of the city centre with grand structures to shelter the new political power. Key streets were widened and formalized in order to create strong physical and visual links to new monuments and landmarks. The establishment of a new 'fork' axis situated the Communist Party headquarters at its apex, emphasizing it as focal in the city. This led to the demolition of entire

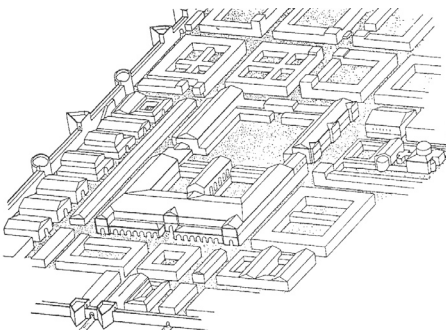


Fig. 3.8 The Roman forum of Serdika

*The ancient city of Serdika lays 10m. below today's contemporary city of Sofia. Conquering the Thracian tribe of the Serdi, which had settled in the region for almost 2000 years, the Romans established their city in 46 AD as an administrative center for the East Roman Empire; its layout following the principles of the Hippodamian plan.*

scale 1:20 000

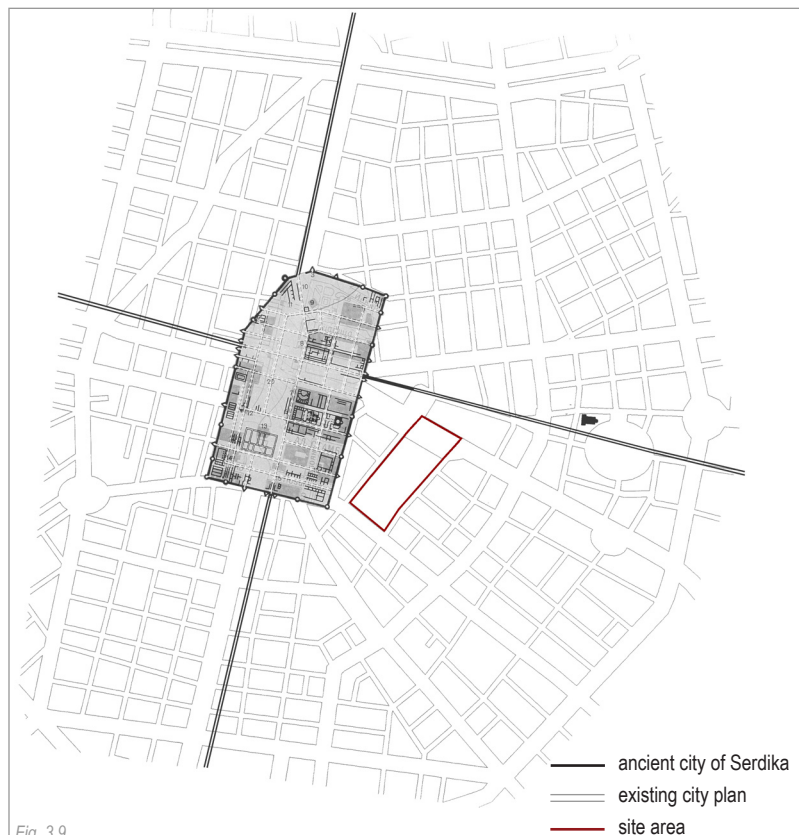
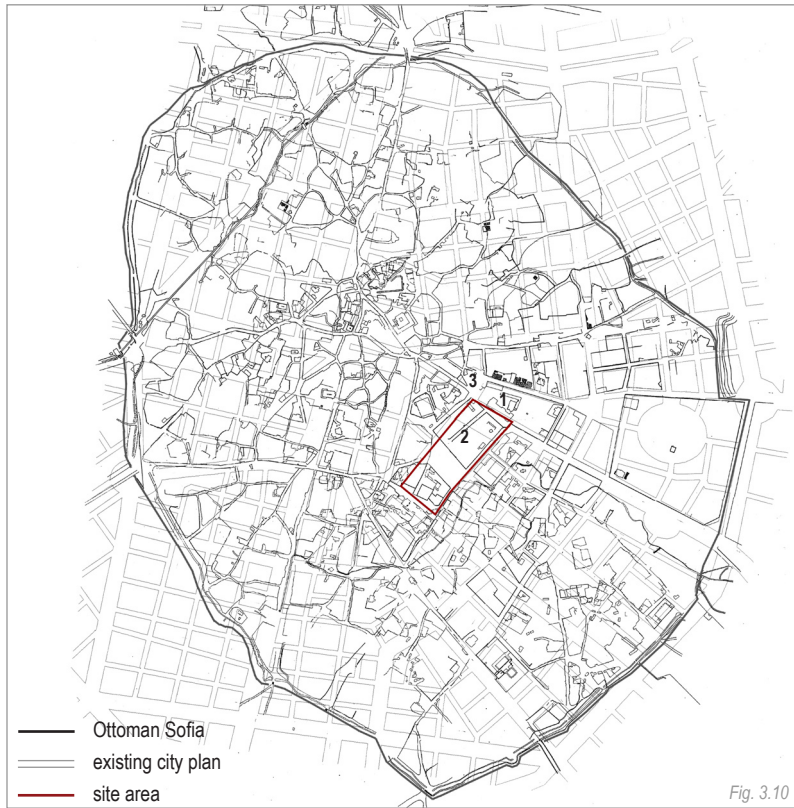


Fig. 3.9



*During the five centuries of Ottoman occupation, the image of the city transformed as a Turkish administrative city; the numerous domes and minarets not only dominated the city's silhouette, but their traditional orientation to kaaba affected the street directions and the composition of the adjacent squares.*

1. Turkish Town Hall
2. Town Hall garden
3. Town Market

scale 1:20 000

**Site History: Ottoman Sofia 11-17th C**



*The Liberation from Ottoman rule marked a turning event in the urban development in the city. A new 'European' street layout led to a large scale reconstruction of the core.*

1. King Alexander's Palace
2. Public Garden
3. Public Square

scale 1:20 000

**Site History: Post-Liberation Sofia 18th C**

During the first decade of the 20th C the city prospered and grew. The National Theatre was established along with the Bulgarian University, the Art and Science Academy, and many other cultural institutions in the city's core. Bulgaria remained a monarchy through both WWI and WWII until 1944.

- 1. King Alexander's Palace
- 2. Alexander II Garden
- 3. Alexander Battenberg Square

scale 1:20 000

**Site History: Sofia City Core 1936**



Above:  
 Fig.3.13 The Communist Party Headquarters. View down the new axis of Blvd. Ruski toward the Mausoleum of G.Dimitrov. These massive buildings claimed to portray the standards for a new formal representation and monumental value, but in fact created cold and unfriendly spaces between them, eliminating individual sense of scale.

blocks in the very heart of the old city, diminishing the sense of historic development and replacing it with a different image- that of the new political power. In the new plan, the space of 9<sup>th</sup> of September Square appeared for the first time as a main civic square replacing the role of the former Alexander Battenberg Square, which had been reduced in size due to constructing the Party headquarters over a large part of it.

The placement of 9<sup>th</sup> of September Square distinctly separated the Royal Palace of the abolished monarchy and the City Park adjacent to it. With the building of the G. Dimitrov Mausoleum in 1949 at the south side of the square and along the axis of Blvd. Ruski, a new series of reconstructions were initiated for the City Park. The new composition attempted to break the longitudinal axis of the park with the former Palace by opening it up toward the National Theatre, and placing a fountain and civic space across, perpendicular to it.<sup>3</sup> This helped to change the park's orientation and to emphasize the new geometry of the 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept. Square, specifically its alignment to the Party headquarters axis and to situate it as the main ceremonial space for the political regime in the city.



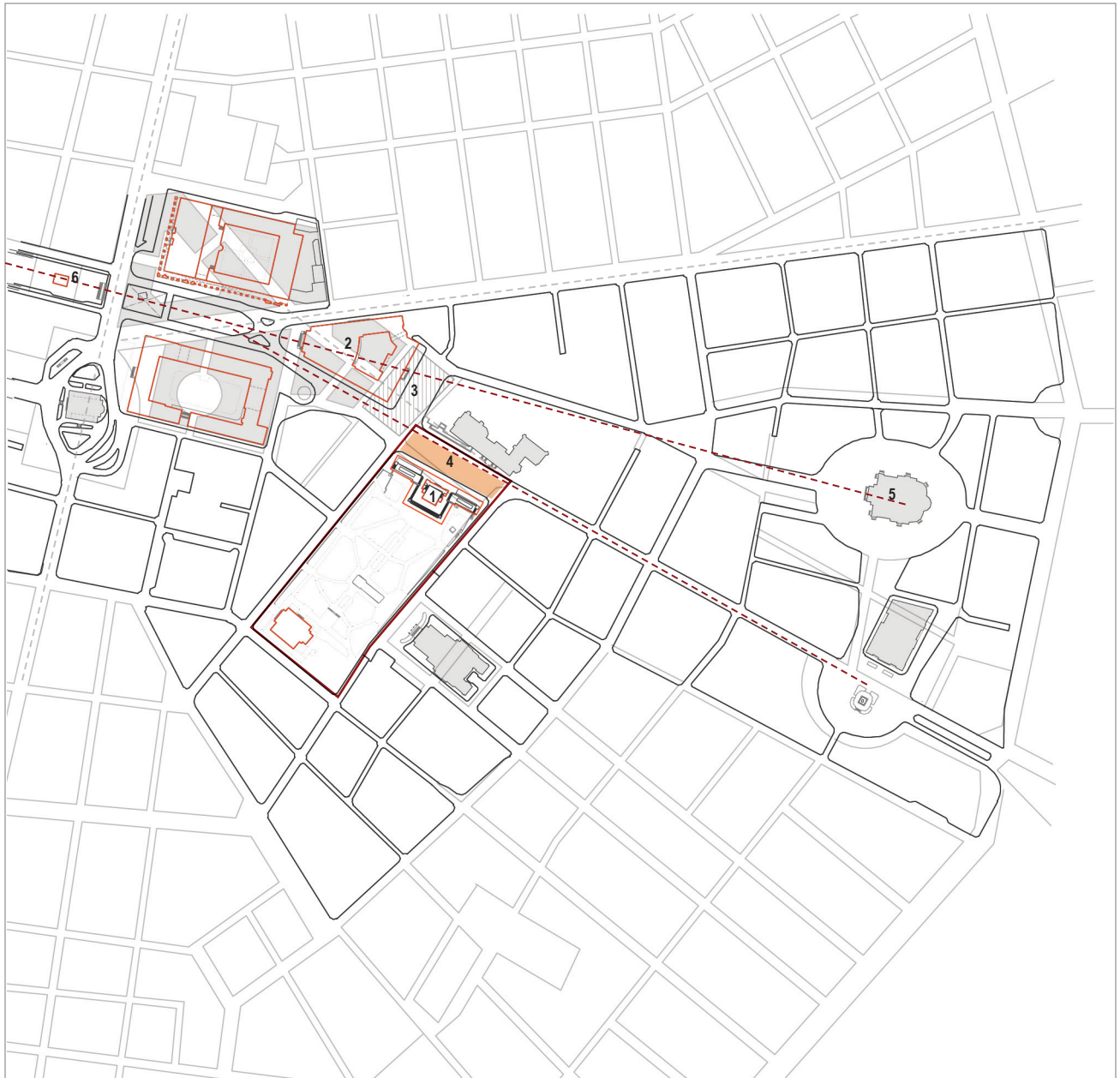


Fig. 3.14

- 1945 new masterplan
- pre-1945 street grid
- existing building
- new construction (1945-)
- former main square
- new main square
- - - new city axis
- · · former city axis
- study area

- 1. G. Dimitrov Mausoleum ( 1949)
- 2. Communist Party headquarters( 1955)
- 3. Former Alexander Battenberg Square
- 4. 9th of Sept. Square (1949)
- 5. Alexander Nevski Cathedral
- 6. Lenin Statue



scale 1:7500



Fig.3.15 Overview of the study area including the Royal Palace, The City Garden and the Alexander Battenberg Square. 1936

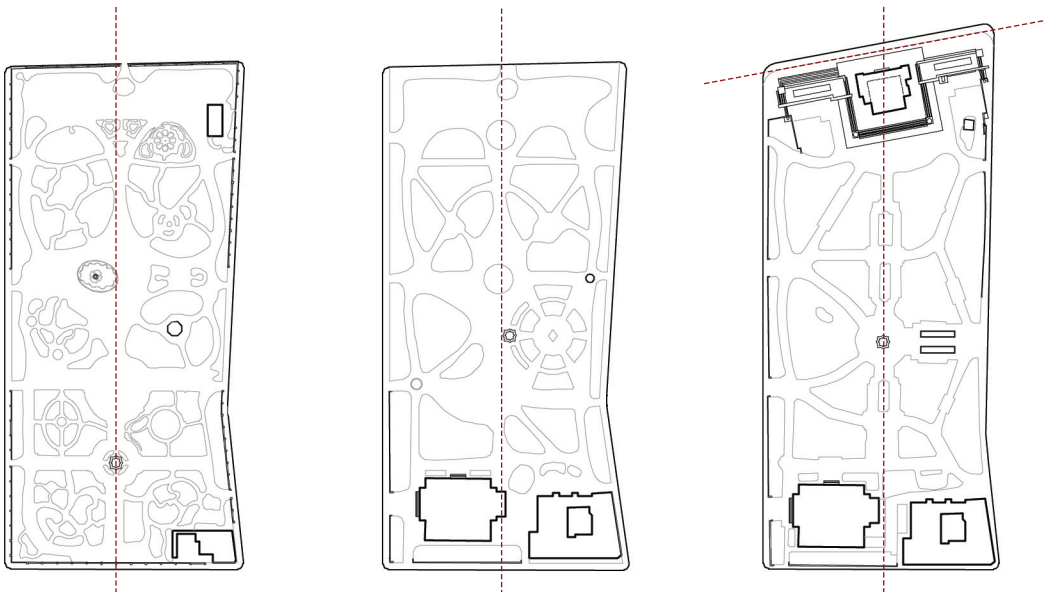
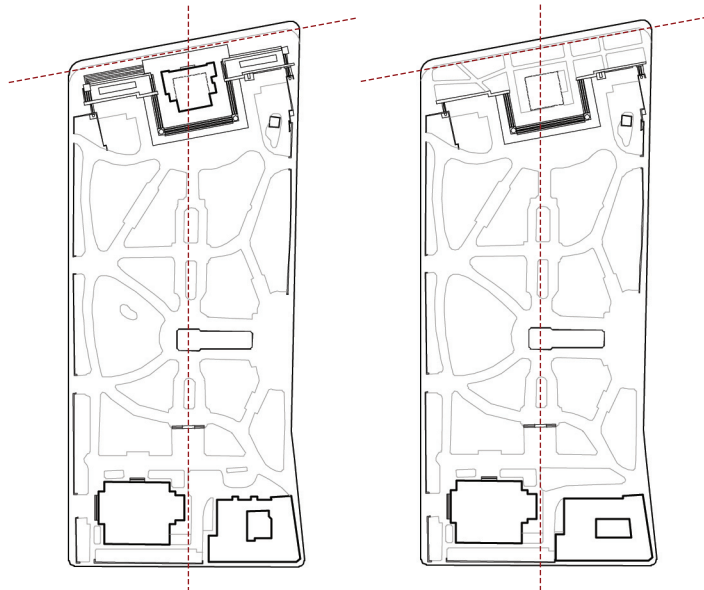




Fig.3.16 Overview of the study area including the new mausoleum The City Park and the new Communist party headquarters. 1955.

Below:

Fig. 3.17 View down the axis of 9th of September square toward the Communist headquarters.



1976

1999- present

Fig. 3.18



scale 1:4 000



**VIEW A** (See Fig.3.30, p79)

Fig.3.19 The steps of the empty platform of the former G.Dimitrov mausoleum occasionally get used as seating.

Below:

Fig.3.20 The footprint of the demolished mausoleum

Opposite:

Fig.3.21 The underground mineral waters in Sofia were used by the ancient civilizations who constructed catchments, water supply systems, mineral baths and fountains. Centuries later, parks were built around some of the mineral springs in the city, celebrating the origins of settlement in the area, and used as drinking water by the local people. Today, there are eight springs still flowing in downtown Sofia; Fig.3.22 the fountain situated in City Park is used on a daily basis.

## Site Analysis

### Park Activity

The City Park offers a quiet space in the heart of the capital city. Facing the National Theatre, an outdoor cafe with a large covered patio is open and busy until late at night. Around the fountain one could witness a range of activities which happen sporadically, from chess games to book fairs to musical performances. But most of the reasons that attract visitors to the park involve the shade and space it offers; to sit between its mature trees, the sculptures which spill out of the art galley, or to bring children to play here.

### Civic Space

The addition of 9th of September Square at the north end of the City Park in 1949 brought a new civic programme to the site. Communist parades and ceremonies were held there regularly throughout the years of the regime, and the space was regularly filled with thousands of spectators, performers and political figures. During the fall of the government, the space served as the gathering point for protestors and as a common ground for expression which reached out to the collective. Following the transition, the mausoleum on the site was converted into a variety of functions, from a nightclub to a stage and backdrop for outdoor performances. However, as many saw it as the 'symbol of autocratic totalitarian power'<sup>4</sup>, the mausoleum was demolished in 1999 and with that the civic square was abandoned as a gathering space. Today, it is used as a surface parking lot, and a space for advertising billboards for passers-by.

**VIEW B** (See Fig.3.30, p79)



3.20

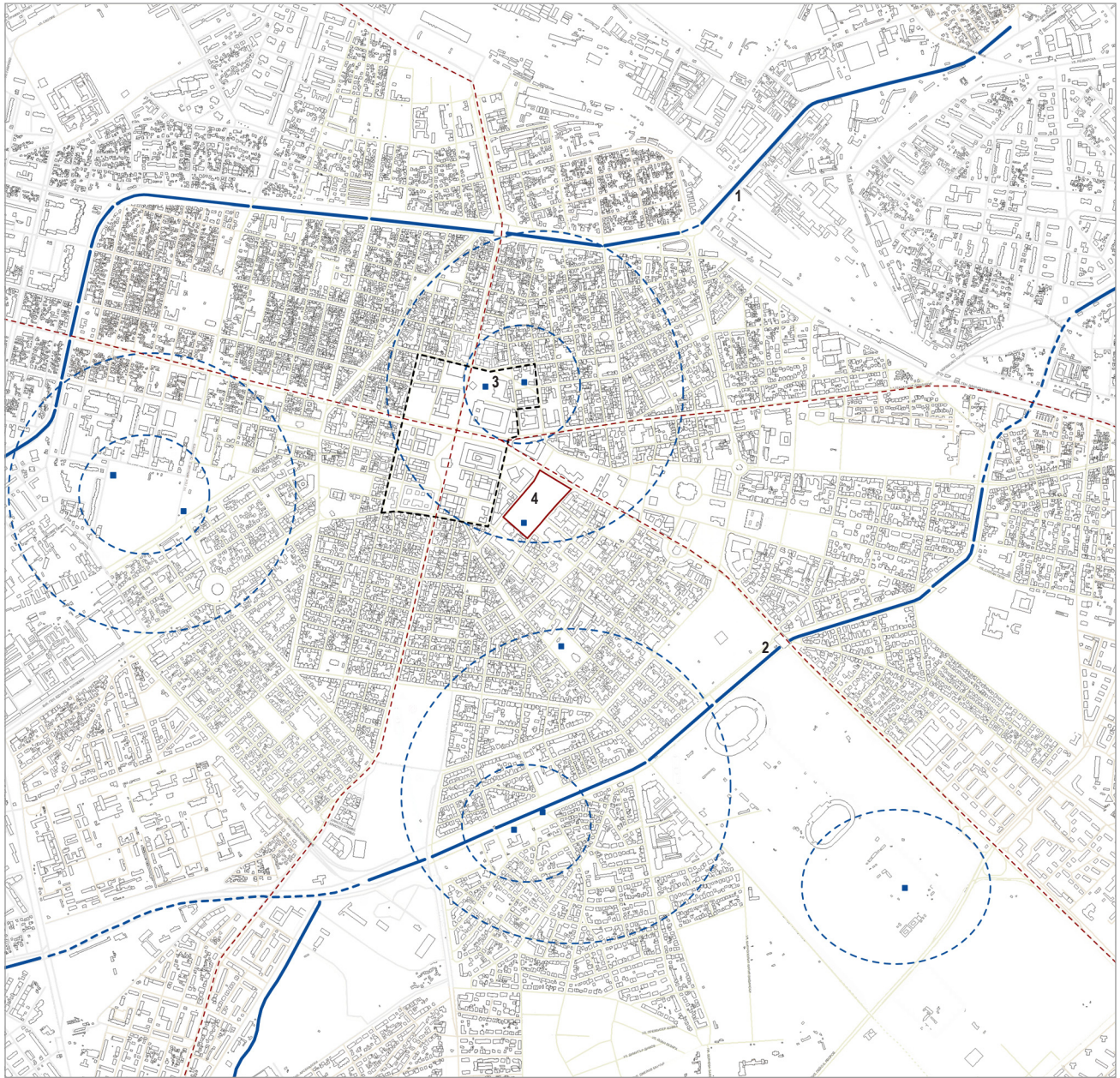


Fig. 3.21

- |  |  |                          |
|--|--|--------------------------|
|  | river/ canal                                 | 1. Vladayska river canal |
|  | mineral water spring                         | 2. Perlovska river canal |
|  | potential spring water discharge area        | 3. Sofia Centre Springs  |
|  | study area                                   | 4. City Park Spring      |
|  | axial artery                                 |                          |
|  | underground walls of ancient city of Serdika |                          |



Fig. 3.22



scale 1:25 000

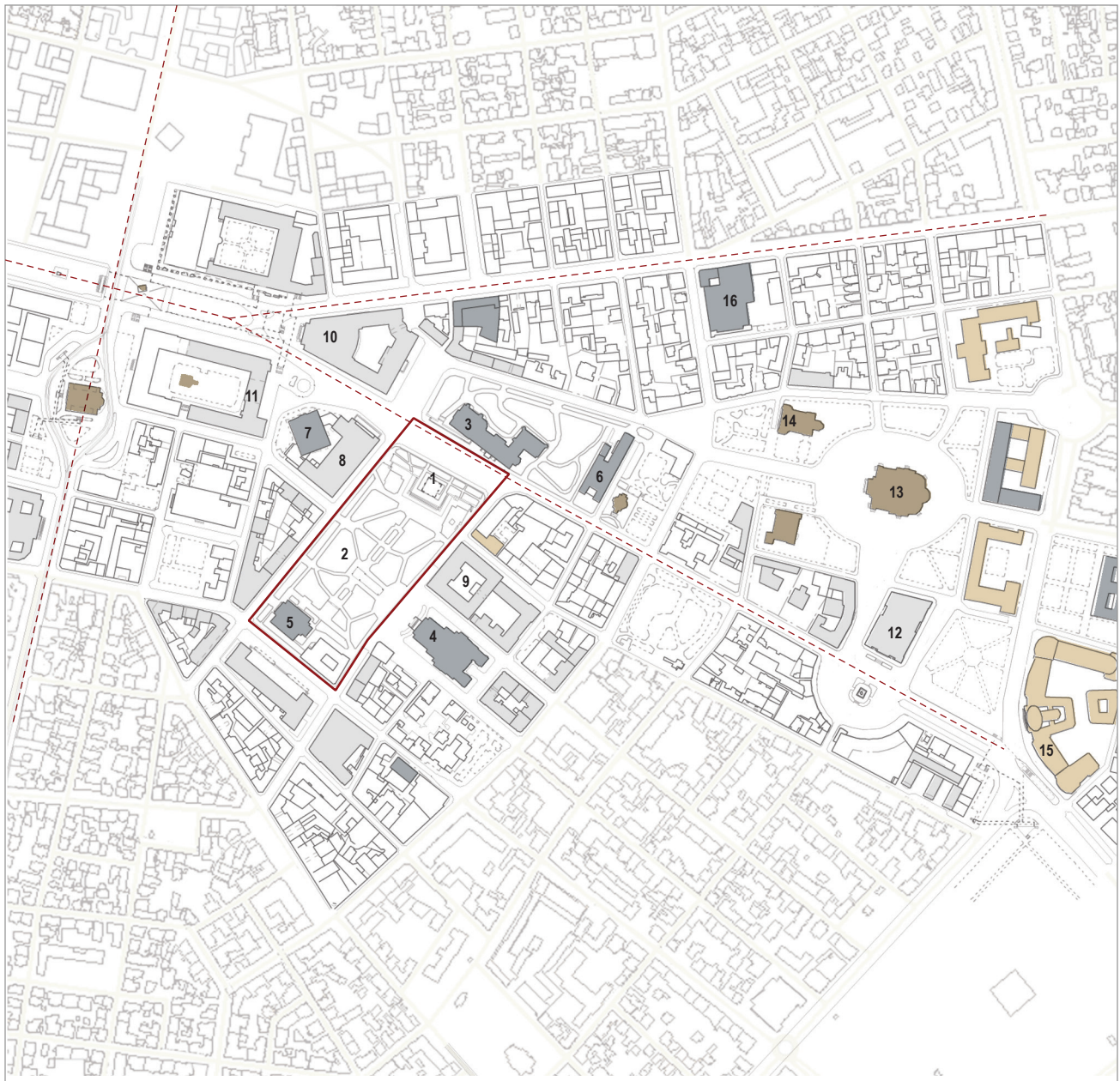


Fig. 3.23

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #444; margin-right: 5px;"></span> cultural</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #ccc; margin-right: 5px;"></span> civic/ government</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9c08c; margin-right: 5px;"></span> educational</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: #8b6914; margin-right: 5px;"></span> religious</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border-bottom: 2px solid red; margin-right: 5px;"></span> study area</li> <li><span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; border-bottom: 2px dashed red; margin-right: 5px;"></span> major city axis</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. former G. Dimitrov Mausoleum</li> <li>2. City Park</li> <li>3. National Art Gallery</li> <li>4. National Theatre</li> <li>5. Sofia Art Gallery</li> <li>6. Museum of Natural History</li> <li>7. Archeological Museum</li> <li>8. National Bulgarian Bank</li> <li>9. Ministry of Defence</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. former Central Committee of the Communist Party (now National Assembly)</li> <li>11. Presidency</li> <li>12. Parliament</li> <li>13. Alexander Nevski Cathedral</li> <li>14. Ancient Roman Cathedral St.Sofia</li> <li>15. Sofia University</li> <li>16. Sofia Opera and Ballet</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|

scale 1:7500



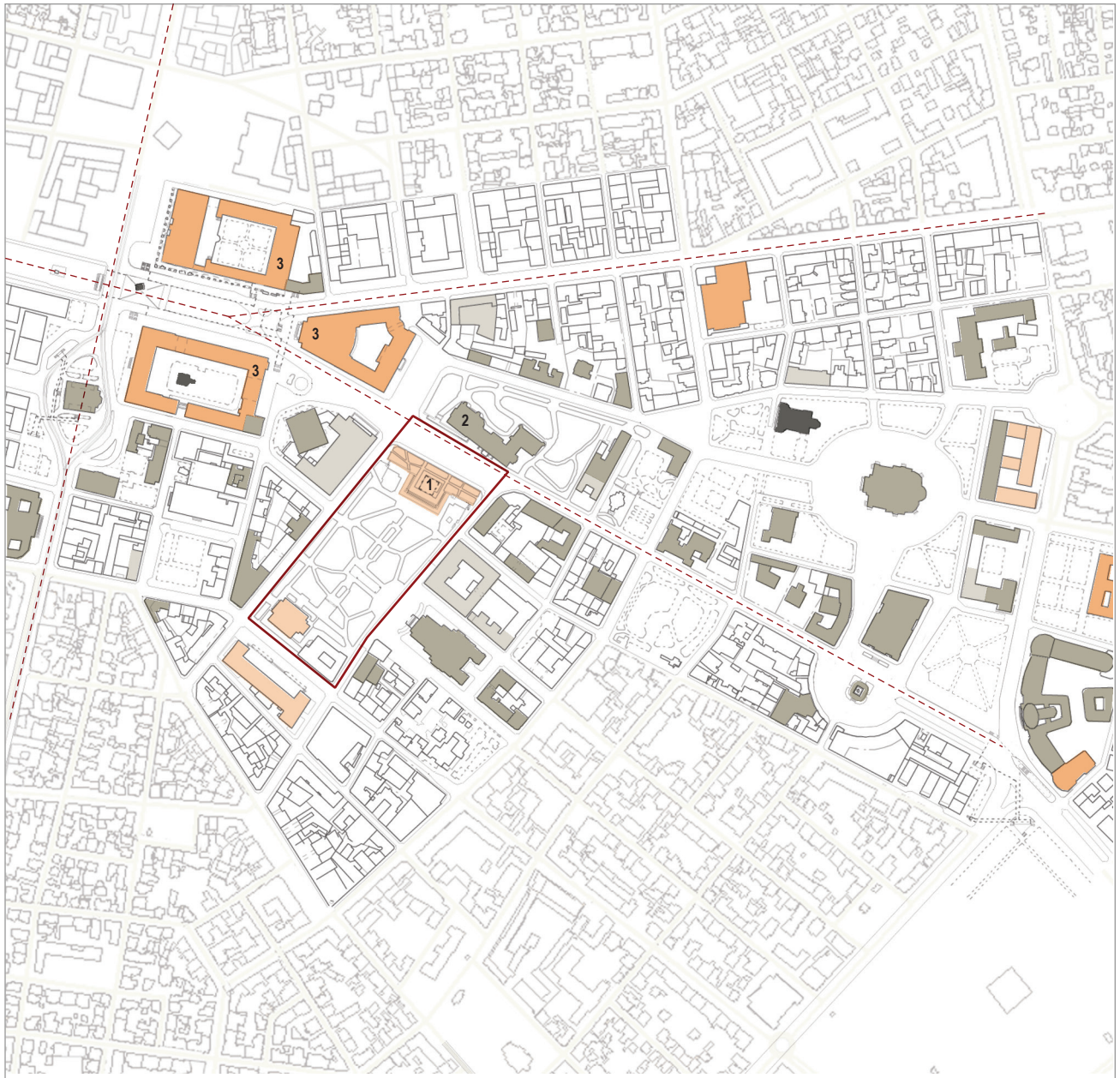


Fig. 3.24

- Ancient Roman
- Pre- 1936
- 1937- 1944
- 1945- 1949
- 1950- 1960
- study area
- major city axis

1. former G. Dimitrov Mausoleum (1949)
2. Alexander Battenberg Palace (1895)
3. Communist Party headquarters (1955)



scale 1:7500



Fig. 3.25

- park
- civic/ ceremonial space
- archaeological site
- study area
- major city axis

- 1. former 9th of Sept. Square
- 2. former Communist ceremonial space
- 3. City Park
- 4. Sveta Nedelia Square

scale 1:7500





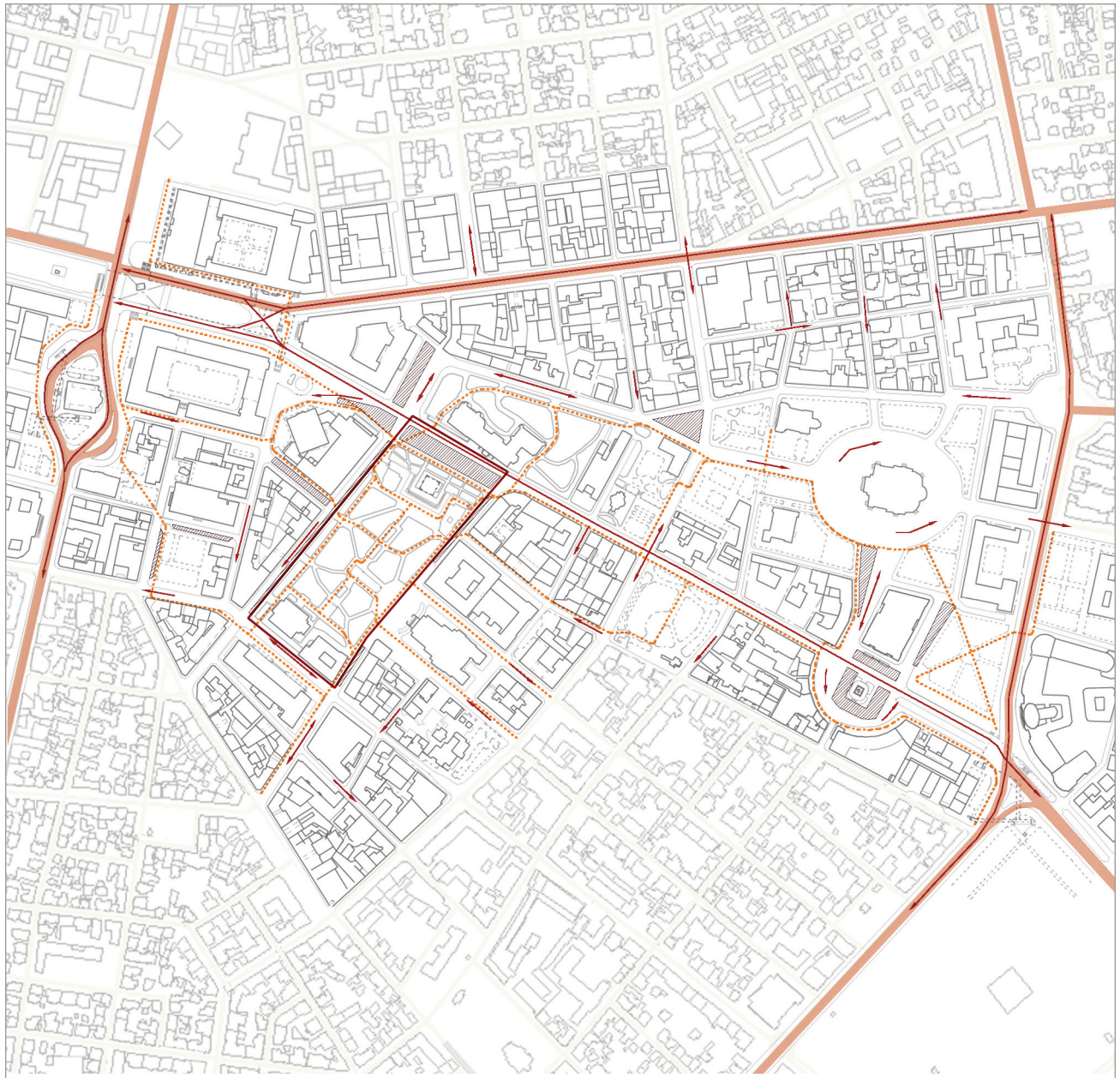


Fig. 3.26

- major traffic flow
- traffic direction
- area used as surface parking
- main pedestrian flow
- study area



scale 1:7500



VIEW C (See Fig.3.30)

3.27



VIEW D (See Fig.3.30)

3.28



VIEW E (See Fig.3.30)

3.29

*Cultural Buildings: There are a number of key cultural buildings within the context of this site which have been designated as architectural and historical landmarks. The former Royal Palace currently houses the National Art Gallery, which was established in 1948 and contains over 12,000 pieces of Bulgarian artwork. This was the first building in the city to be designed by Viennese architects, as was the National Theatre years later. The collection of the Archaeological Museum is housed inside a former Turkish Mosque built in the 15th C situated to the west of the park and consists primarily of Thracian, Greek and Roman pieces. At the far end of the park is the Sofia Art Gallery, which was actually a casino until 1944. It now contains over 3,000 pieces of mostly contemporary Bulgarian art, and hosts occasional musical recitals.*

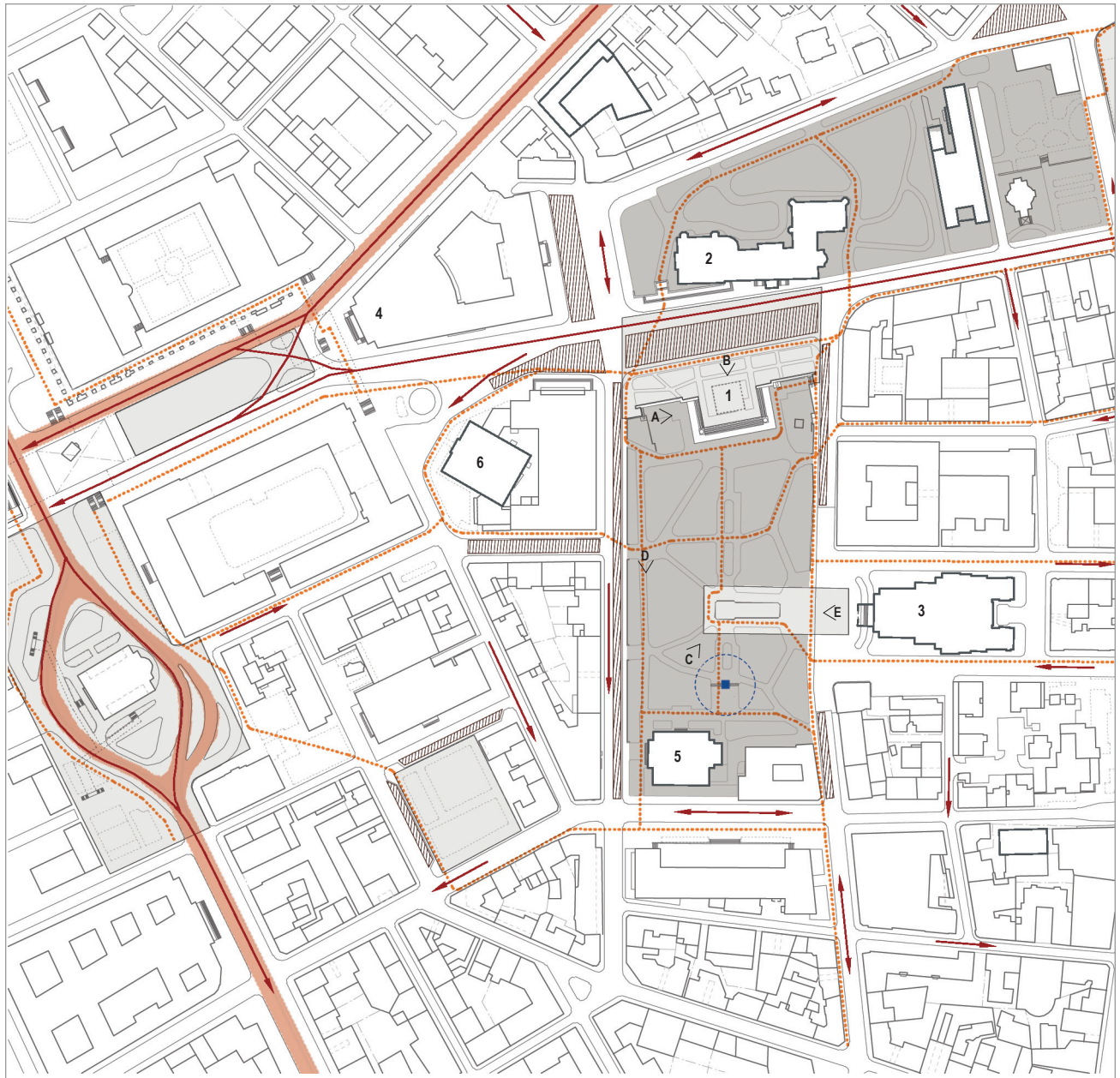


Fig. 3.30

- park
- civic/ ceremonial space
- cultural building
- area used as surface parking
- major traffic flow
- traffic direction
- main pedestrian traffic
- water spring

1. former G. Dimitrov Mausoleum
2. National Art Gallery
3. National Theatre
4. former Communist Party headquarters
5. Sofia Art Gallery
6. Archeological Museum



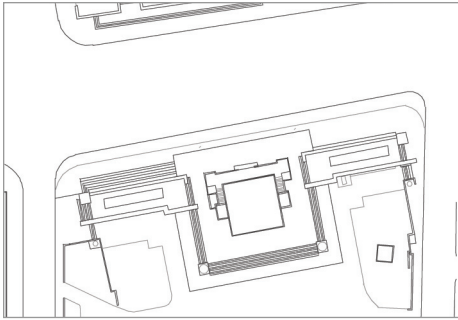


Fig. 3.31 Ground Plan of Demolished Mausoleum of G. Dimitrov. Scale 1:2500



Fig. 3.32

**Structures + Spaces of Historical Significance** scale 1:4000

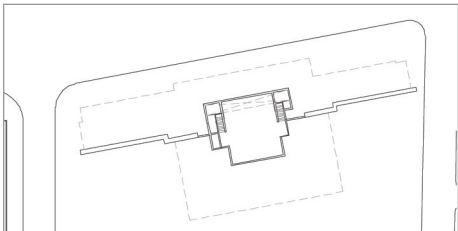


Fig. 3.33 Vault Plan of Demolished Mausoleum of G. Dimitrov. Scale 1:2500

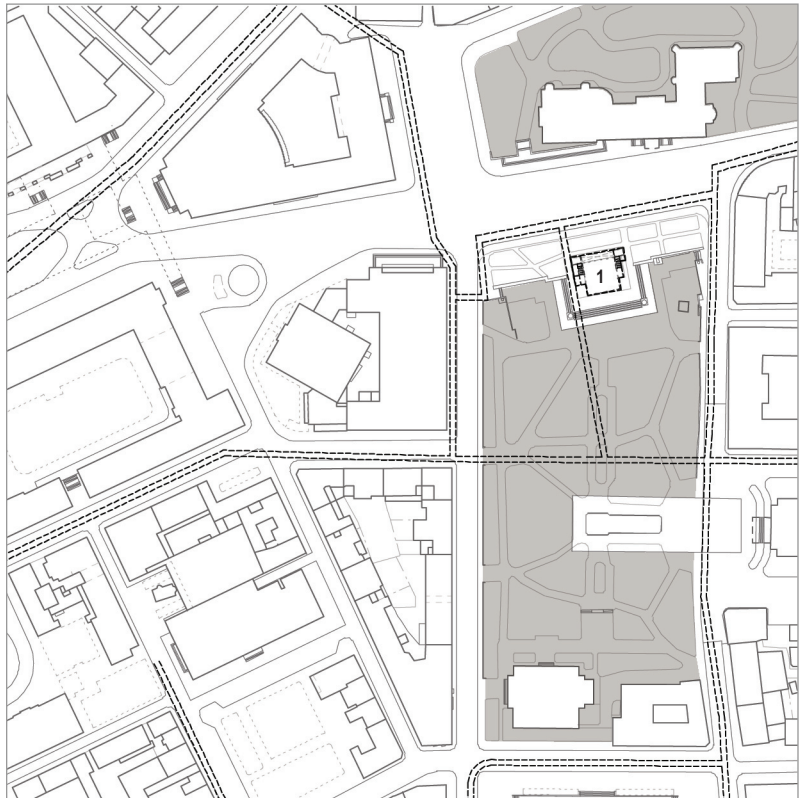


Fig. 3.34

**Underground Tunnels + Mausoleum Vault** scale 1:4000

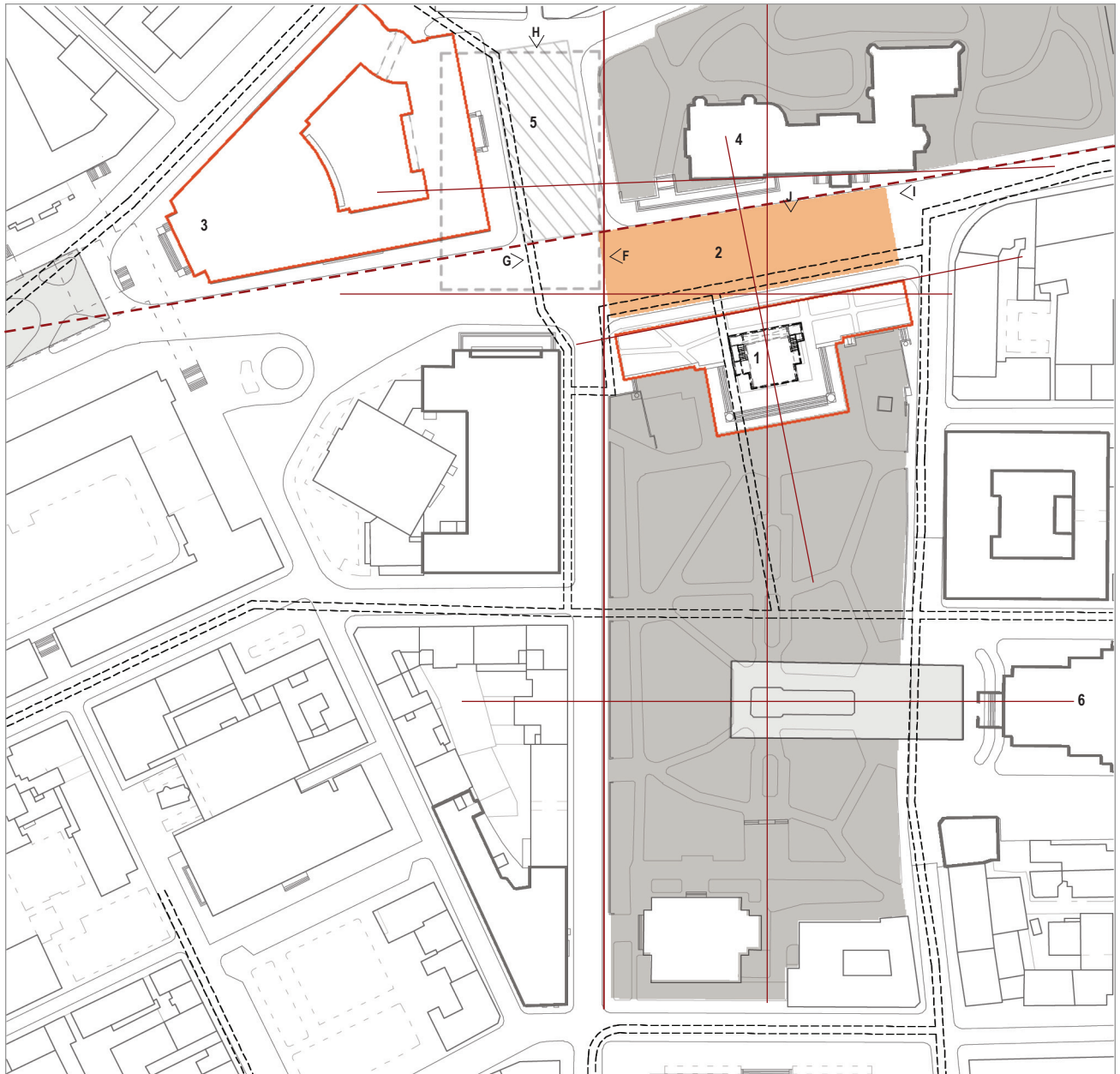


Fig. 3.35

- building of historical significance ( pre-1944)
- building of significance for the Communist gov't (1945-1999)
- main city square (pre-1944)
- main city square (1945- 1999)
- underground tunnels, mausoleum vault
- park
- civic space
- Post-1945 major city axis
- site axis

1. former G. Dimitrov mausoleum/ existing vault
2. former 9th of Sept. Square
3. former Communist Party headquarters
4. National Art Gallery
5. residual space from historical A. Battenberg Square
6. National Theatre



scale 1:2500



VIEW F (See Fig.3.35, p81)

3.36



VIEW G (See Fig.3.35, p81)

3.37





**VIEW H** (See Fig.3.35, p81)

3.38



**VIEW I** (See Fig.3.35, p81)

3.39

Below:

**VIEW J** (See Fig.3.35, p81)

3.40



*...There is something hidden, something secret in the air of Sofia...*

*I start to wander through the streets, which seem to guide me to a place I need to see. As if awoken from amnesia, I begin to recognize this sidewalk, this corner, this building...*

*But I find confirmation that my city has been transformed. It is no longer the invaded city of one street and one square, but a place that I must rediscover. I am distracted by the gazes I see on people's faces as I pass by, worn out and silent. I see their hidden glances as I take pictures of what was once there, or there, or there...of what I know and what has changed...*

*Where are you taking me?*

*...No one here wants to tell me their story. The past is buried beneath the heavy layers of denial, undisturbed by the ghosts of the forgotten. I try to intrude, to uncover, but now even in the history books, Bulgaria's past ends in 1944- this place, as though suspended in time, has not existed for the last sixty years. A place that no longer remembers...where its streets are without names or with names different from those they had yesterday. A city without its names and a people without their past...*

*I never knew the city without the mausoleum there...*

*There is a scar in the city where it used to hover over as a gloomy reminder of some treachery which could not be overcome. It was knocked down, as though removing it would take back the time and heal the city. The old chess players have been playing their game in the adjacent park since before they built it and through its destruction, as if nothing happened...*

*Had the mausoleum's destruction erased their painful memories?*

*I looked, I understood.*

*I see now that I never had to leave here to forget...*

Opposite:

Fig. 3.33 'In Ruins' site detail photograph by author.





**“Social memory can only be stimulated in indirect ways through listening or in commemoration and festive occasions when people gather together to remember in common the deeds and accomplishments of long-departed members of the group ” ·**

Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*<sup>5</sup>



3.42

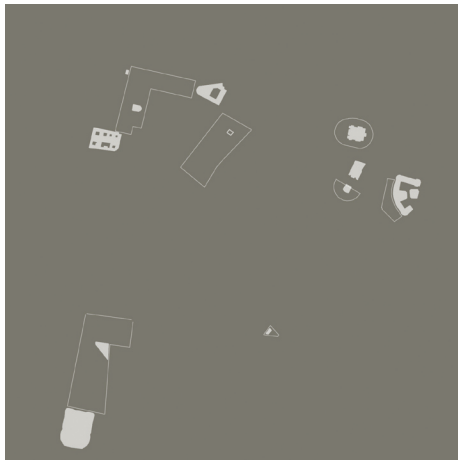
## 3.2 Ritual of Recollection

*"It was through acts performed at a sacred site that the illusion of mundane time was suspended."*

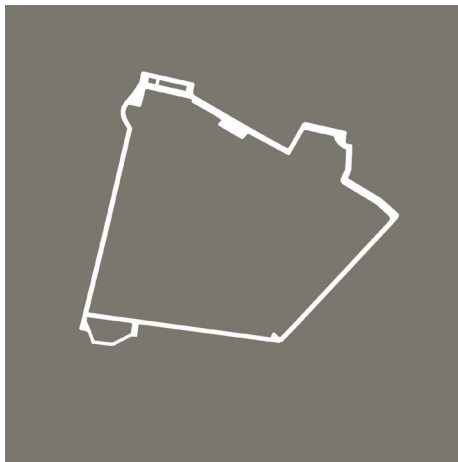
Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember*<sup>6</sup>

Collective memory, rather than being *preserved* as an objective record, must always be *reconstructed* in the context of the present.<sup>7</sup> For Halbwachs, the imagery of collective memory focuses on particular people, events, and their spatial reference points- *their places of memory*. These places are often further reinforced in the collective memory by acts of commemoration; through an observance ritual or public celebration directly linked to a significant space and time.<sup>8</sup>

Remembering through commemorative ritual sustains social memory in the present as a form of communication<sup>9</sup>; as a depictive representation of past events which localizes memory by a kind of social mapping within physical space. These rituals are repetitive, implying continuity with the past, usually recurring annually at a fixed historical date. They often mark beginnings and endings, festivals of renewal or passage, but there is also a distinctive class of rites which are dedicated to the remembrance of a specific historical event, and do so by ritually creating a formalized narrative<sup>10</sup> performed by the collective in physical relation to a place of memory.



3.43



3.44



3.45

Above:  
 Fig. 3.43 1997 protest landmarks  
 Fig. 3.44 1997 protest route  
 Fig. 3.45 underground tunnels

## Constructing a Narrative of Recollection in the City

*"Seizing the Origins of Place, helping to reinvent rituals that mark the city, rendering visible its constituent paths; inserting them in order to create structuring and meaning in the imagination of urban dwellers...."*

Pierre Thibault<sup>11</sup>

The communist regime has left behind a layer of wounded sites within the physical fabric of Sofia which continue to haunt the psyche of the Bulgarian people. Instead of attempting to bury these associations of a traumatic recent past by abandoning them or tearing them down into ruins throughout the city, these sites must be readapted and recreated into a new image.

Within this context, the void left behind by the demolished former mausoleum in the city core will be transformed and reconnected back to the city fabric, creating a locus for the emergence of the memories which have been suppressed over the last decade. Becoming the site of a new memorial and urban square, it sets the stage for collective remembrance, establishing a framework for ritual events connected to a series of new urban spaces.

The series of additional sites is derived from the intersection between two traces left from the communist regime: the underground layer of the secret tunnels built during the regime, and the aboveground layer of the route outlined by the protests of 1997 in the attempt to bring down the regime. This route was consciously selected by the protesters to pass along several significant landmarks in the city, thus delineating a space in the city core and creating a narrative reminiscent of this period of the recent past. This route will be reconstructed as part of a new remembrance ritual drawing a relationship between space, time and memory.

The geometries extracted from these traces will create the basis for the series of key sites which will function as anchors connecting the new ritual of recollection. The Memorial Square at the site of the former communist mausoleum marks the beginning and end of the ritual, just as this site did

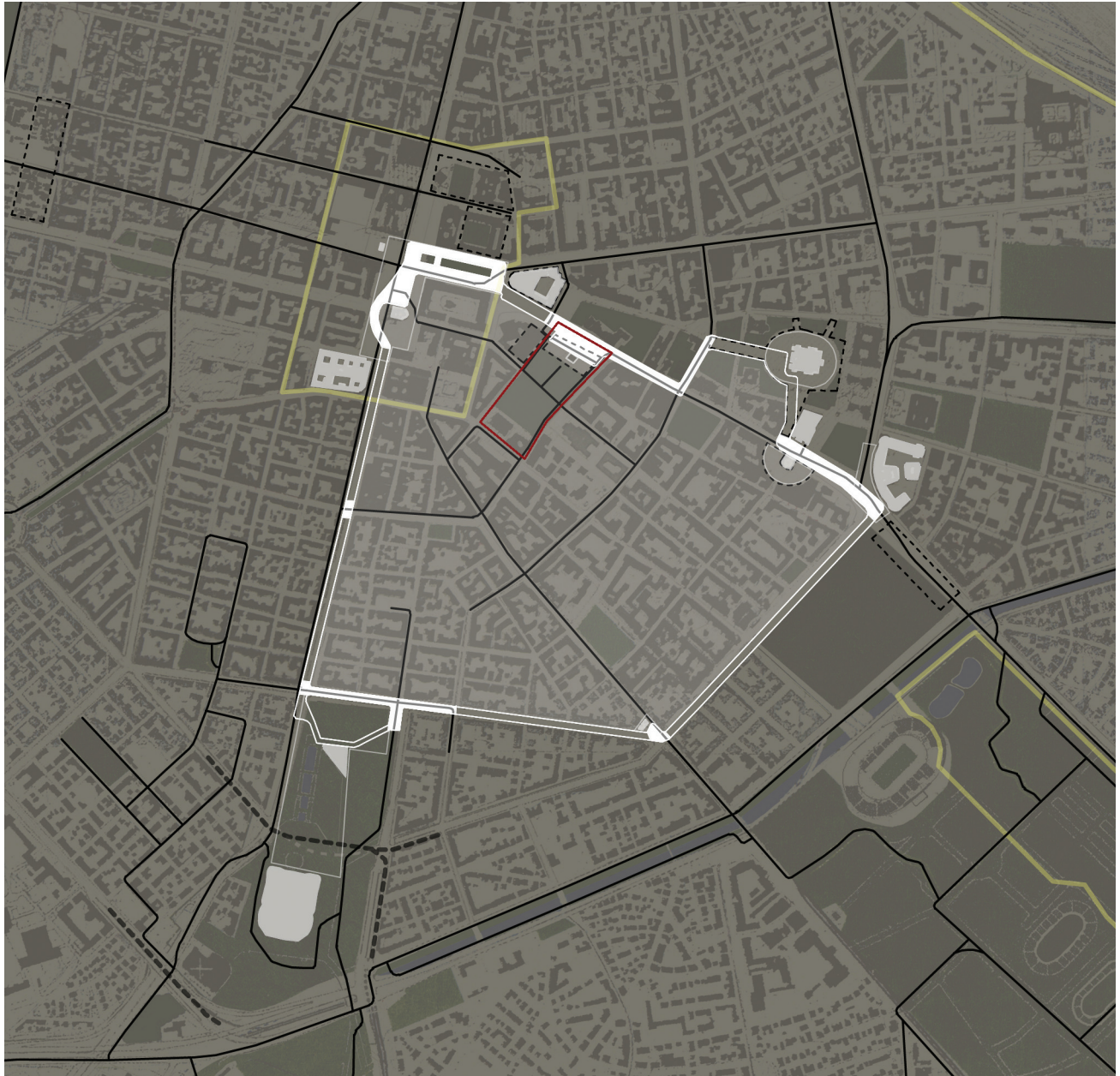









Fig. 3.46

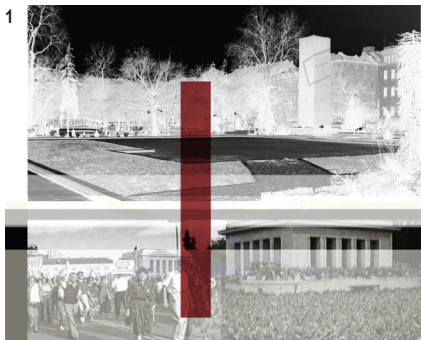
-  protest route
-  landmark associated with route
-  underground tunnel
-  intersection (route + tunnel)
-  protest space
-  ancient Roman walls- below street level
-  study area



scale 1:15 000



Fig. 3.47

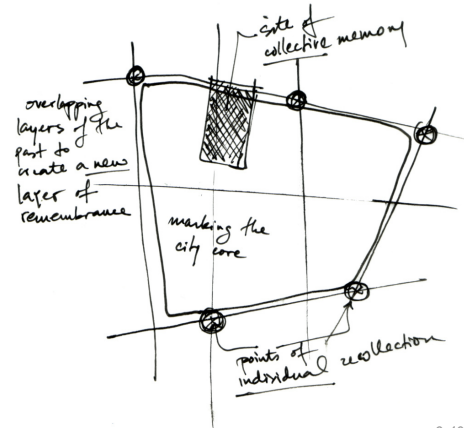


during the protests of 1997. From here, a series of urban installations: an urban island, a shelter canopy, an open stage, a meeting place, a water well, and reflection pools, emerging along the route as spaces which become part of the new physical layer of recollection, open to multiple points of focus and interpretation.

*“Recalling a memory involves the individual making a physical, or mental, journey around familiar sites and recounting mental images that are encountered along the route. The images themselves do not function as literal representations but serve as codes or triggers, they are symbolic rather than iconic devices.”<sup>12</sup>*

A candlelight vigil will mark the event annually, passing along these urban spaces which are linked through light and materiality. A series of black granite slabs trace sections of the underground tunnels and become the connecting elements along the route. Their mute surfaces, resembling burial markers, emphasize awareness of the past overcome, while the illumination from below suggests that the memory is still alive. This narrative will provide individuals with a framework within which their memories are localized in the present and can be communicated with the collective group through a commemorative ritual event using the social and physical context:

*“Formalized physical enactment and symbolic displays, which are fluid and dynamic, therefore provide two key elements for collective memory: one offers structure and organization; the other offers flexibility, variability and personal interpretations.”<sup>13</sup>*



3.49



3.50

Above:  
Fig. 3.49 ritual route Parti sketch  
Fig. 3.50 granite burial marker

Opposite:  
Fig. 3.47 Route of Remembrance Site Plan  
Scale 1:15 000  
Fig. 3.48 Route of Remembrance concept Site Section

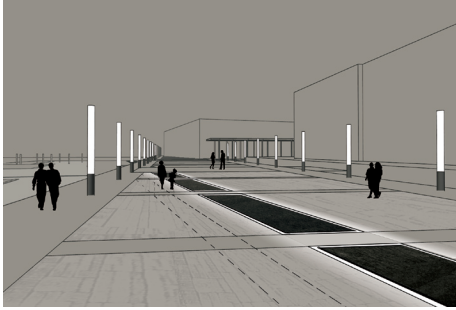
1. Former 9th of September Square
2. The former Communist Party Headquarters
3. City Core
4. Palace of Culture
5. The Priest (Popa) monument
6. Sofia University
7. Nevski Cathedral



- ritual route
- underground tunnel
- key landmarks
- protest space
- ritual sites

Fig. 3.48

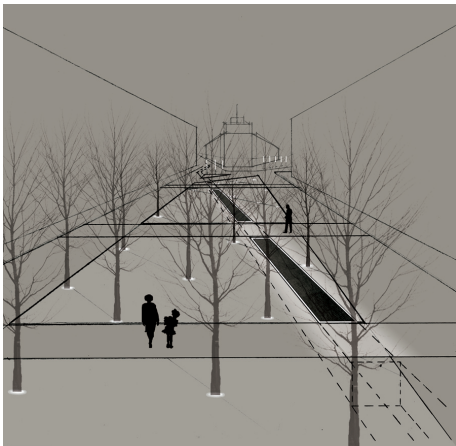
## Urban Installations



3.51

### **SITE 1. Former 9<sup>th</sup> of September Square: *Memorial Square***

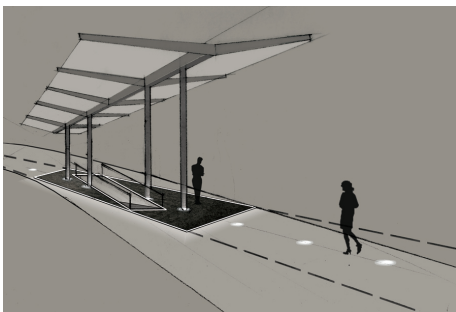
This is the site of the former mausoleum and the former main ceremonial square in the city, 9<sup>th</sup> of September Square. This site will be recreated into a new image for the citizens of Sofia as a new urban space which will site both the gathering and the ending place of the city ritual of remembrance. It will also site a new memorial, dedicated to those censored during the years of communism. Here visitors can step down into the vault of the former mausoleum and enter the once secret space of the underground tunnels.



3.52

### **SITE 2. The former Communist Party Headquarters: *Urban Island***

The island located immediately across the former Communist Party Headquarters is framed by two large mirrored structures to signify the importance of the building. Today the site is a neglected space, never used by people because of its intimidating scale and historical implication. A new urban space will replace the existing island, connecting to the new axis of the Memorial Square. The urban island will be planted with a grid of trees creating a visual screen to the former Party headquarters and break the former axis in order to create a physical space with new meaning within the city fabric. The tunnel below will be marked with granite, locating it within the planted grid.



3.53

### **SITE 3. City Core: *Shelter Canopy***

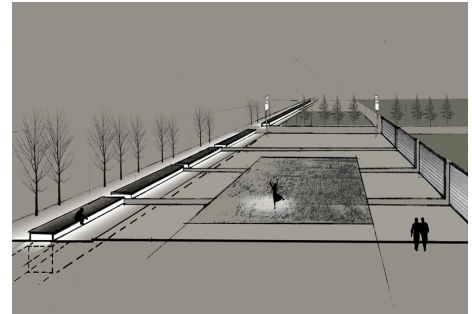
This site is situated in the heart of the city, which is used by many pedestrians and also where several directions of traffic pass through. On this site, the tunnel below will be symbolically marked by a granite slab and above a new canopy will also vertically locate this site along the route of recollection. During the rest of the year the canopy will serve as a bus-stop shelter and cover the pedestrian underpass staircase.

### **SITE 4. Palace of Culture: *Open stage***

The next site along the route of recollection passes by is the 'National



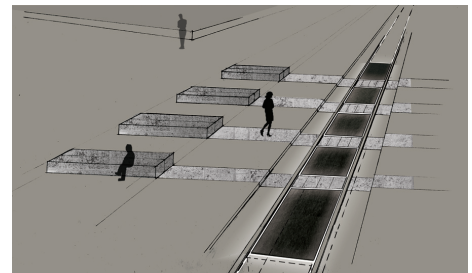
Palace of Culture' (NDK), which has a large open court with fountains and a giant monument to 'Bulgarian Communism' which has been consecrated and chipped away at since the fall of the regime. During the protests of 1997 this was a significant landmark along the route signifying a house of cultural censorship. Here, above the underground tunnel, a series of raised black granite slabs illuminated from beneath can be used as sitting plinths which frame a new large public performance stage and connect it to the urban narrative of recollection.



3.54

#### **SITE 5. The Priest (Popa): Meeting Place**

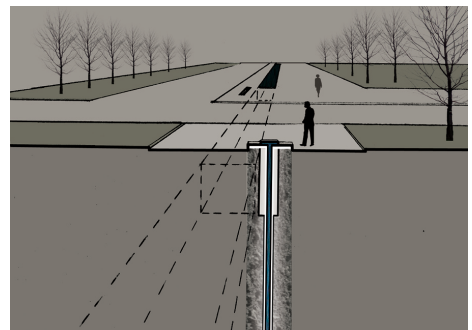
The square around the monument to Patriarch Evtimiy was used during the protests of 1997 to signify a positive icon in the city. This space is a popular meeting place where three major streets intersect. Black granite sections, over the underground tunnel which runs beneath the streetcar tracks, are illuminated and are connected to new seating benches for the public space by a series of paths.



3.55

#### **SITE 6. Sofia University: Water Well**

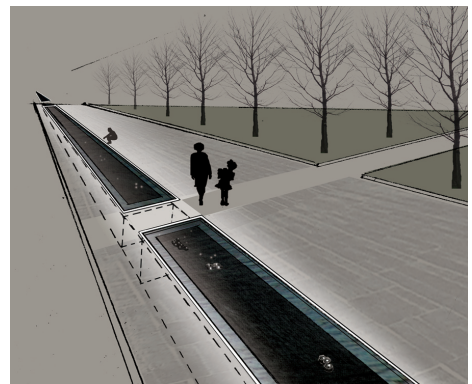
The students of the Sofia University were instrumental in organizing and announcing the protests of 1997. At this site, there is a pedestrian underpass connecting the four sides of the intersection severing the underground tunnel. A constructed water well draws water to a series of surface pools, containing the slabs of granite constructed over the underground tunnel and extending toward the next site.



3.56

#### **SITE 7. Nevski Cathedral: Reflection Pools**

The new series of reflection pools extend and connect this site to the University of Sofia. The Nevski Cathedral, as the main religious temple in the country represented an opposition to the corrupt regime of communism and was used as a positive landmark during the protests of 1997. The route heading to its destination in front of the mausoleum on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept. Square deliberately broke its circular course in order to pass by the cathedral. The reflective pools which contain the slabs of granite, constructed over the underground tunnel, extend toward a pedestrian promenade framing the view of the Cathedral.

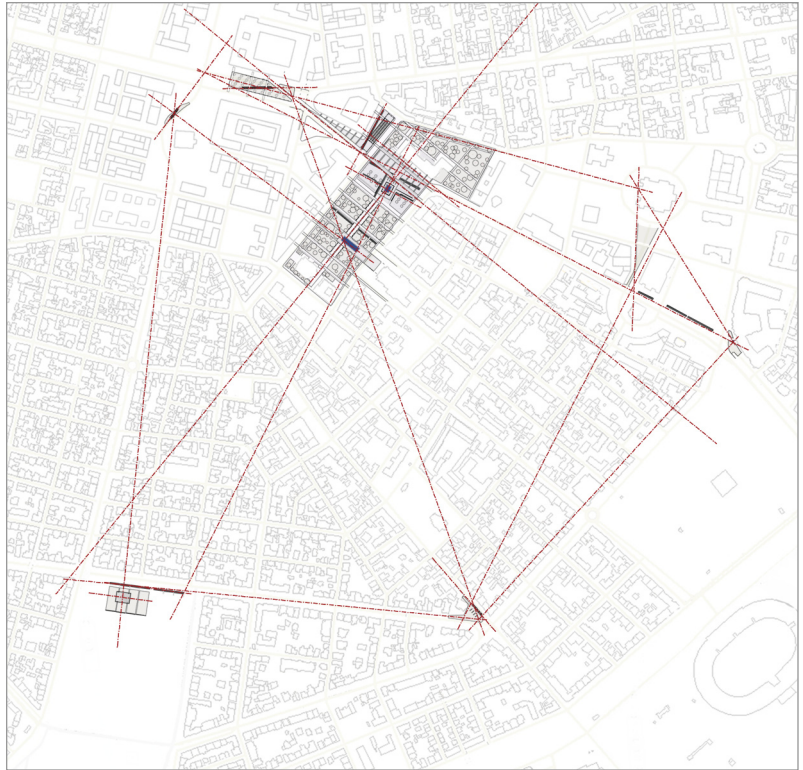


3.57

scale 1:15 000

**Urban Installations: Axis Diagram**

Fig. 3.58



SITE 1

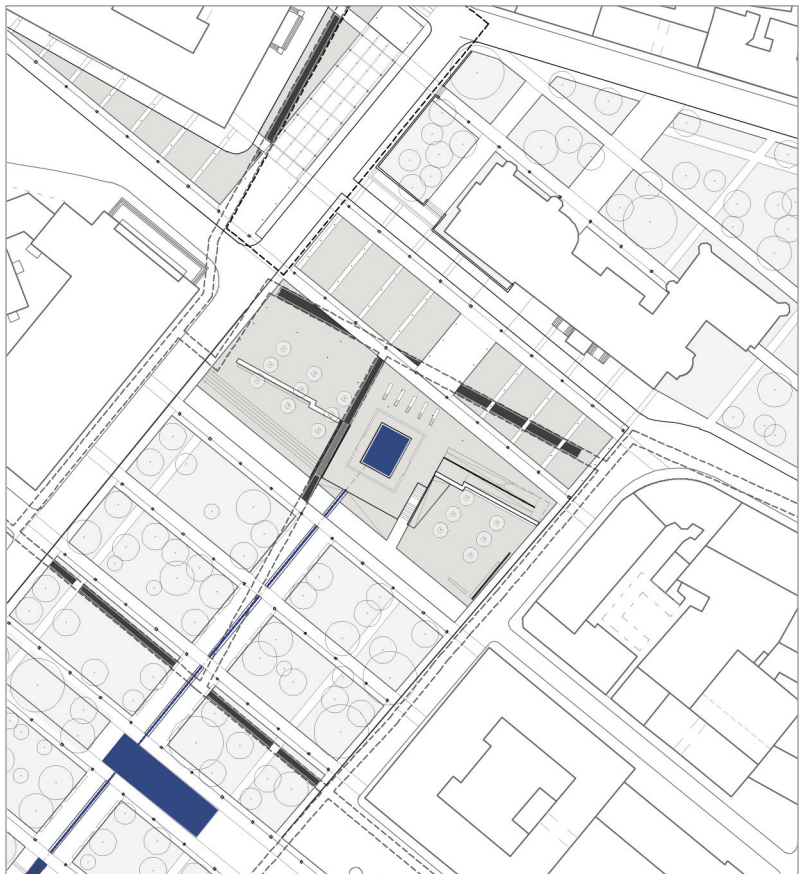


Fig. 3.59

scale 1:2500

**94 Site 1: Memorial Square**

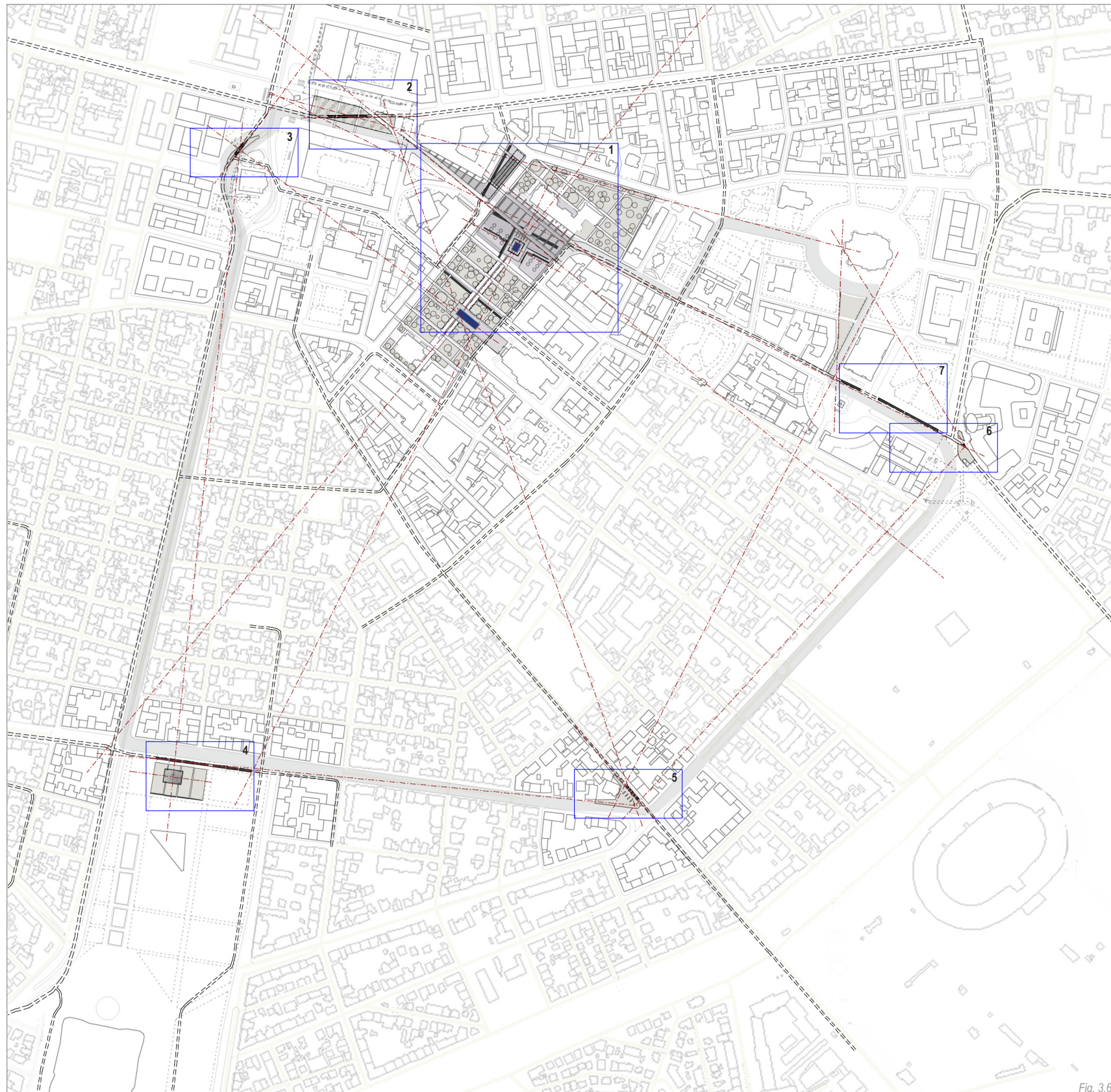


Fig. 3.66

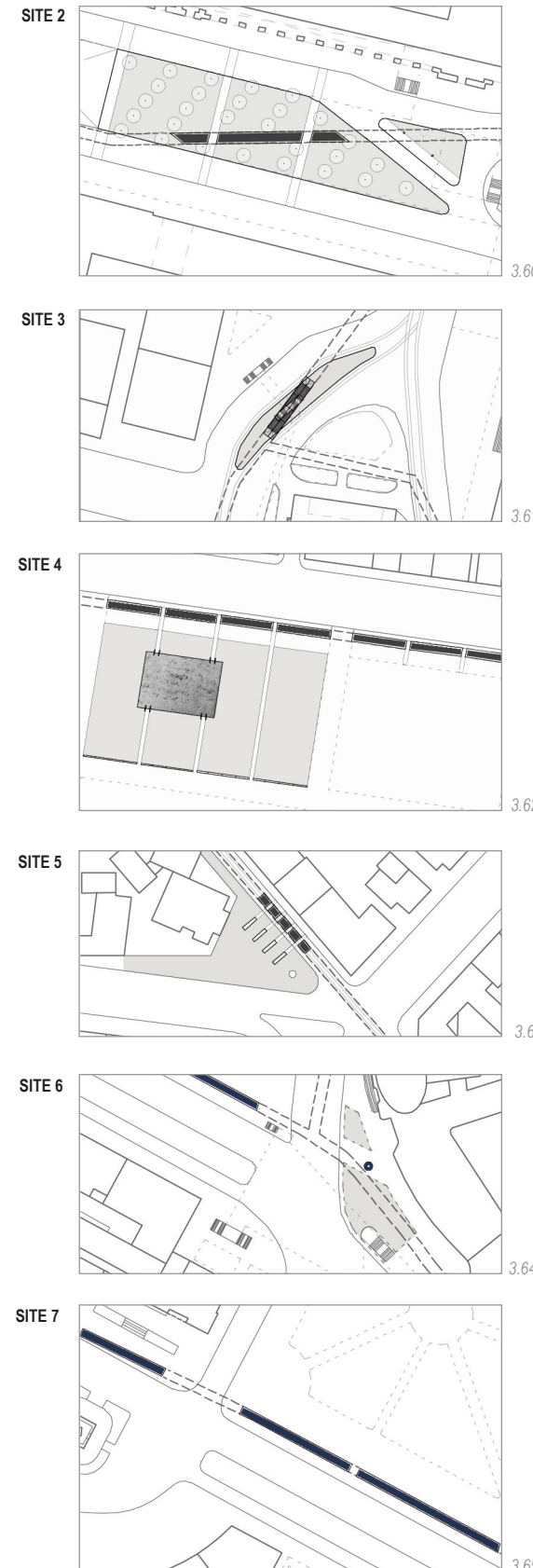


Fig. 3.59- 3.65 Urban Installations Plans  
Scale 1:2500

- 1. **SITE 1:**  
Former 9<sup>th</sup> of September Square: *Memorial Square*
- 2. **SITE 2:**  
The former Communist Party Headquarters large: *Urban Screen*
- 3. **SITE 3:**  
City Core: *Shelter Canopy*
- 4. **SITE 4:**  
Palace of Culture: *Open stage*
- 5. **SITE 5:**  
The Priest (Popa): *Meeting Place*
- 6. **SITE 6:**  
Sofia University: *Water Well*
- 7. **SITE 7:**  
Nevski Cathedral: *Reflection Pools*







-  commemoration route
-  tunnels
-  new urban installation
-  black granite slab
-  urban axis
-  water

Fig. 3.66



“Even now, when I try to remember... the darkness does not lift but becomes yet heavier as I think how little we can hold in mind, how everything is constantly lapsing into oblivion with every extinguished life, how the world is, as it were, draining itself, in that the history of countless places and objects which themselves have no power of memory is never heard, never described, never passed on.”

W.G Sebald, *Austerlitz*.<sup>14</sup>



### 3.3 Emerging Memory

*“By searching for the repression...by uncovering the resistances, by pointing out what is repressed, we really succeed in accomplishing our task- that is in overcoming the resistances, lifting the repression and transforming the unconscious material into conscious...”*

Freud: Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis<sup>15</sup>

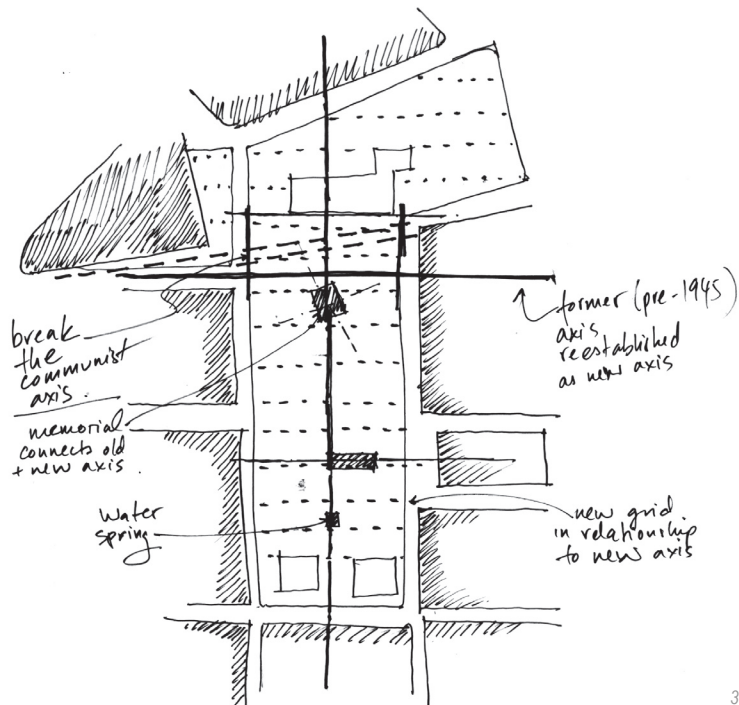
Bulgaria's recent traumatic past has not been commemorated in any collective manner. The inability to publicly discuss and mourn since the fall of Communism is a significant aspect that has affected the search for a new identity. In the efforts to heal, there seems to be a conscious collective urge to forget, however this apathy and withdrawal is dangerous during a period of cultural reevaluating and must be confronted.

The proposed Memorial Park at the site of a fallen icon challenges the repression of memory and provides a context open for interpretation, in which it could emerge. The practice of creating an object monument on a pedestal is rejected, and replaced by a counter-memorial, stripped of commentary and extraneous information. Its images carry no obvious meaning but rather engage the viewer by situating memory within material space; sustaining it in time through collective ritual. The new memorial honors the countless victims who have suffered or were affected by wrongful death, imprisonment, censorship or exile. It also faces the social obligation toward the lack of accountability for those responsible for the crimes and mistakes of the Communist era. Though this gesture will never efface past suffering, it will help invest the past with moral significance.

## The Memorial Park

The site of the City Park was formally redesigned during the extensive urban reconstruction following its incorporation into the communist masterplan in 1945 when the 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept. Square was added. The site was deliberately aligned to the new city axis in order to have a physical and visual connection to the focal landmark of the regime- the Communist Party headquarters to the east. This composition changed the original longitudinal axis of the park, in order to emphasize the new geometry of 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept Square, and its relationship to the Party house axis.

The new design incorporates the abandoned site of the demolished mausoleum, reestablishing its place in the city fabric by reconfiguring its axis, focus, space and meaning. The City Park is connected with the garden space behind the art gallery and renamed *Memorial Park*, rerouting vehicular traffic around it. The new plan deliberately breaks the existing communist axis, opening up the park back to its original orientation. A new civic space replaces the 9<sup>th</sup> of Sept Square, reinforcing the new axis, while the geometry of the former mausoleum and existing underground tunnels emerge through the memorial bearing a direct reference to that period of history.



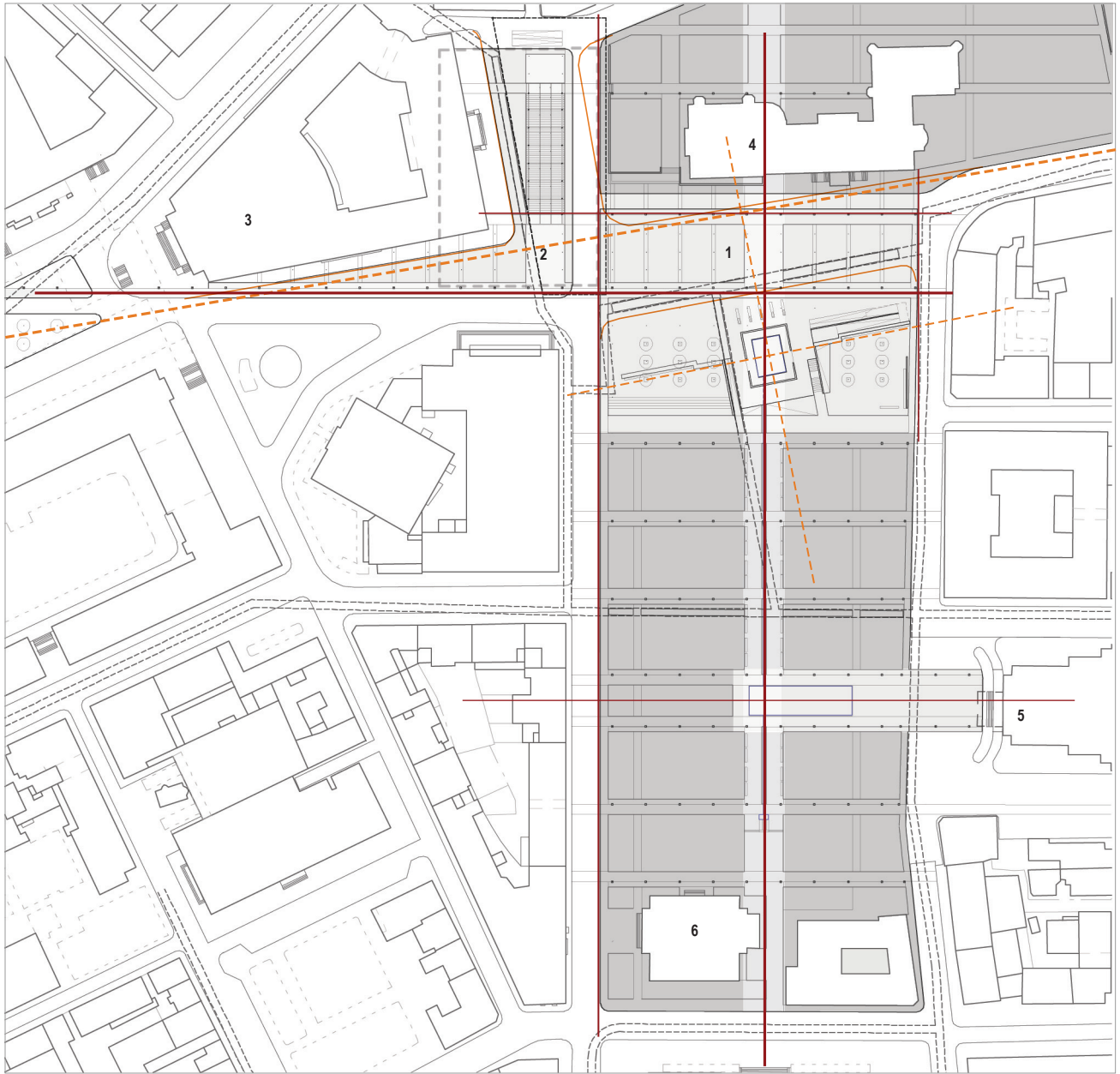


Fig. 3.69

- new site axis
- axis of significance for the Communist gov't (1945-1999)
- main city square (pre-1944)
- former streets (post-1945)
- underground tunnels
- park
- civic space

- 1. Memorial Square
- 2. Market Square
- 3. former Communist Party headquarters
- 4. National Art Gallery
- 5. National Theatre
- 6. Sofia Art Gallery



scale 1:2500

## Design Elements

The park is no longer just a green space in the city, a place of refuge. An essential aspect of the Memorial Park plan is that it serves as an urban space connecting the site of a new Memorial Square to the rest of the city fabric, specifically to the adjacent Market Square and the surrounding cultural programmes. The plan makes use of the existing mature trees, water spring and fountain which are incorporated into the design of the urban park, while the memorial descends into the vault and tunnels of the former mausoleum. This aspect ties to the site's historical context and gives it a clear identity as a place where past, present and future connect. The narrative of remembrance extends through the use of light which, like a field of lanterns in a forest, creates an experience of energy and rhythm throughout the entire site.

*"The light of the live city is not merely light for running, light for security, light for shopping. Rather, it is atmosphere, stimulus and the mediation between space and experience, between anticipation of events and experience of the city."*<sup>16</sup>

The site plan is developed through a series of design elements:

### *Planes*

The different planes are established by change in levels and by distinguishing hard surface space vs. soft surface space.

### *Lines*

A series of paths are inserted over the entire site which follow the new axis and reinforce the orientation of the surrounding context.

### *Points*

A new grid of light elements enhances the linear structure of the entire site.

### *Connectors*

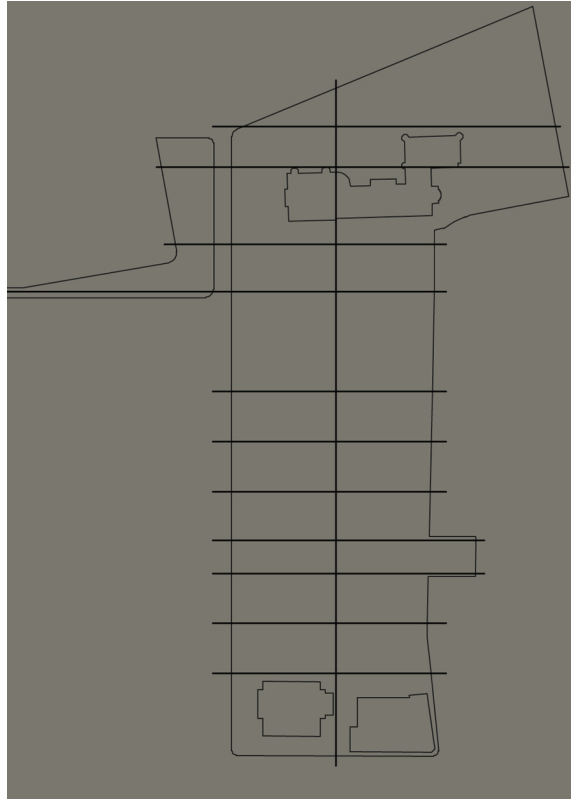
The elements of water and granite slabs which run over the existing underground tunnels act as hinges connecting the different spaces of the site.





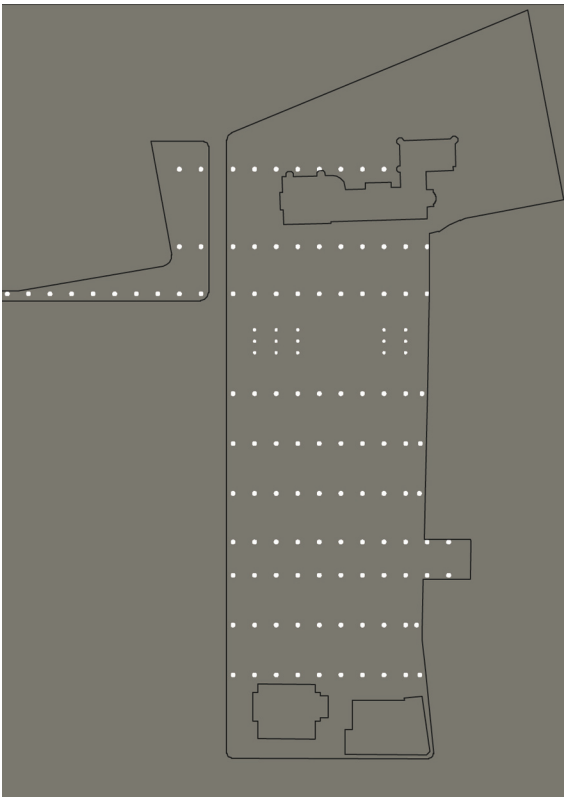
1. Planes

3.70



2. Lines

3.71



3. Points

3.72



4. Connectors

3.73

**1. Planes: Surfaces**

*Hard Surfaces*

The hard surfaces of the ground plane are used for circulation and gathering spaces. The finishes range in texture and module depending on the elements: a rough, light concrete paving grid covers the Memorial Square following the new site geometry; the same finish is used for the main axial path which runs north-south comprised of large prefabricated slabs. Both are intersected by a network of paths which is finished in dark grey, polished concrete. The ground plane surfaces also include areas of existing crumbling white granite tiles, used over some of the traces of the former mausoleum as crushed gravel.

*Soft Surfaces*

The surface of the existing City Park is lawn grass which needs excessive maintenance in the shady areas beneath the dense mature trees. A new ground cover will be used as an alternative to the grass which will create a natural soft surface for the park. Local moss and short wildgrass ground covers will be planted such as geranium macrorrhizum, lavender, oakmoss etc. which thrive in shade and local forests. The natural cycle of these plants bloom flowers in the spring, turn red and orange in the fall and live beneath fallen tree foliage during late fall and winter.

*Surface materials:*

- 3.74. textured concrete paving
- 3.75. textured concrete
- 3.76. polished concrete
- 3.77. gravel

- 3.78. wildgrass groundcover (spring)
- 3.79. wildgrass groundcover (summer)
- 3.80. dried leaves/ groundcover (fall)
- 3.81. dried leaves/ groundcover (late fall- winter)



3.74



3.75



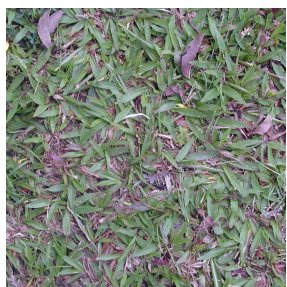
3.76



3.77



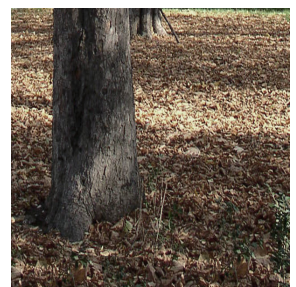
3.78



3.79



3.80



3.81

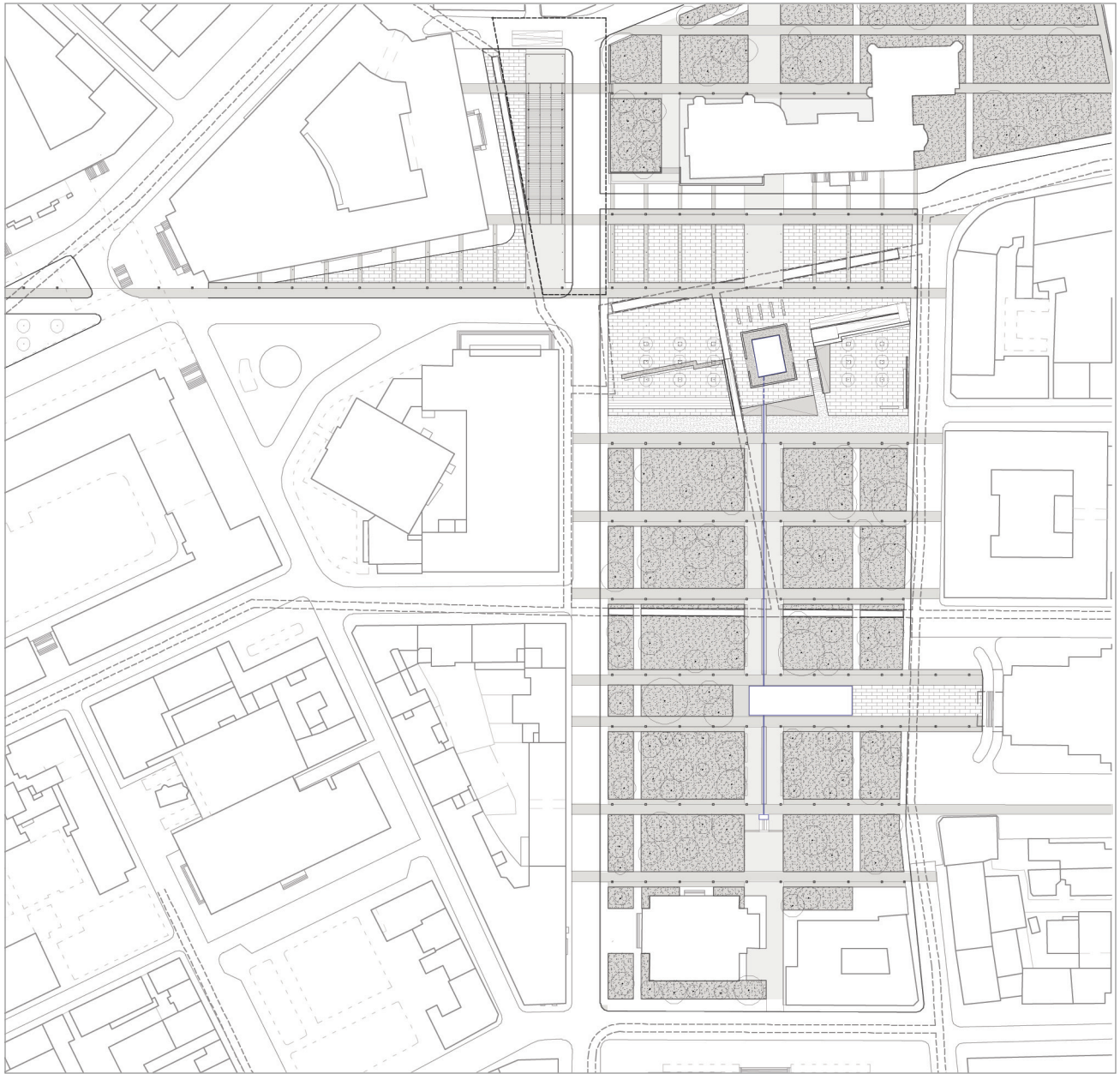







Fig. 3.82

-  seasonal wildgrass groundcover
-  textured concrete paving
-  prefabricated textured concrete
-  prefabricated polished concrete
-  gravel



scale 1:2500

2. Lines: **Paths**



3.83



3.84

Above:  
Fig. 3.83 path in forest  
Fig. 3.84 'Slate' by Andy Goldsworthy: cut to below

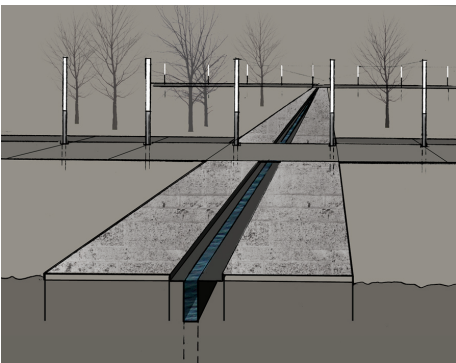


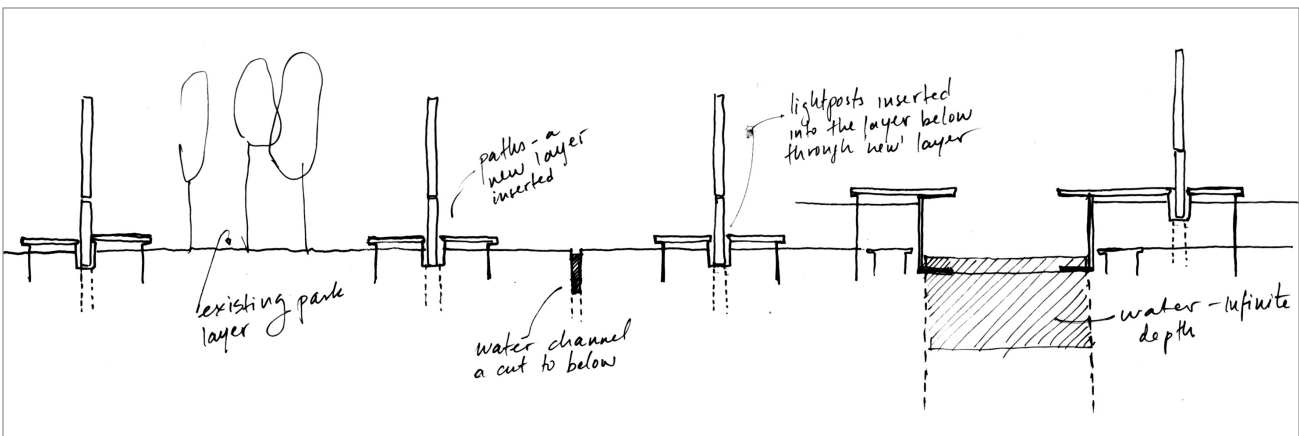
Fig. 3.85 view down the main axial path

Access through the site is via a clear network of paths which run parallel to one another, intersecting a main axis. The paths are inserted over and as such create a new layer in the existing park. Incorporating the paving over the Memorial Square and the Market Square as well as the plaza in front of the Theatre at the same level as the paths forms a series of platforms, which are part of this layer. The north-south axial path is interrupted at several locations and is divided by the water channel, slowing the passage through, also becoming a resting space in the park, framed by seating benches on both sides.

The paths floating over the park are similar to paths in a forest, delineating the area for circulation and leaving the natural planes of the groundcover untouched. However through the paths, a series of cuts and slits between the light structures give a sense of depth and connection to below. The water channel and the opening over the memorial pool are interpreted as such cuts.

The smooth concrete surface of the paths is extended through the secondary system of paths which include sidewalks and routes connecting existing buildings on the site, as well over the existing street paving.

Below:  
Fig. 3.86 Conceptual Section sketch of paths



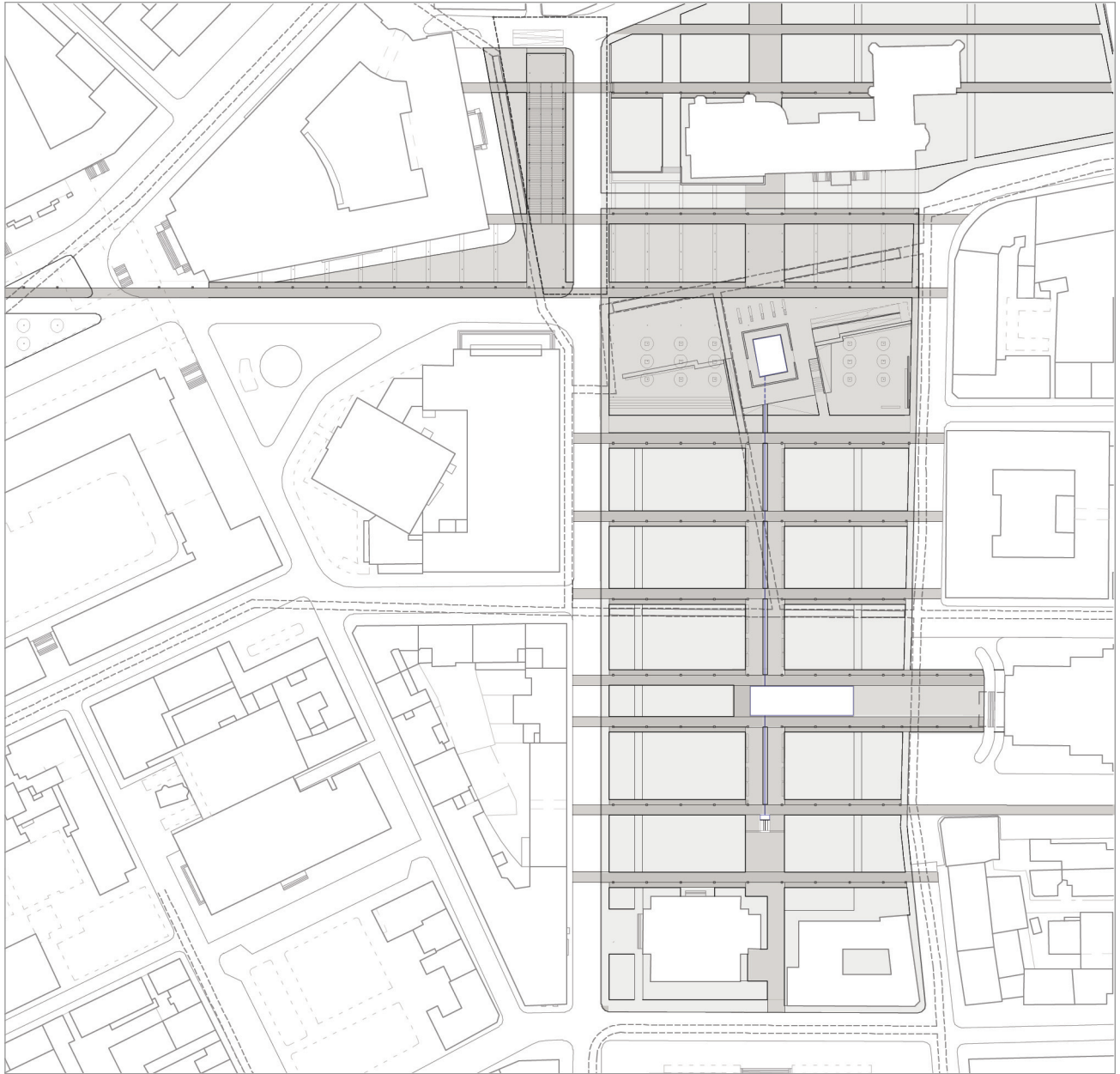


Fig. 3.87

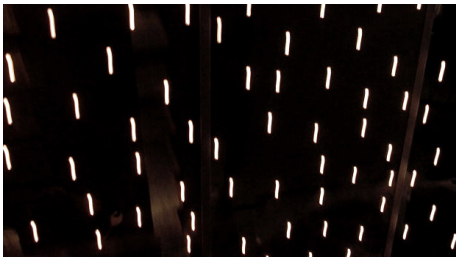
- site area
- primary paths
- areas of hard surface at the level of the paths



scale 1:2500

3. Points: **Lanterns**

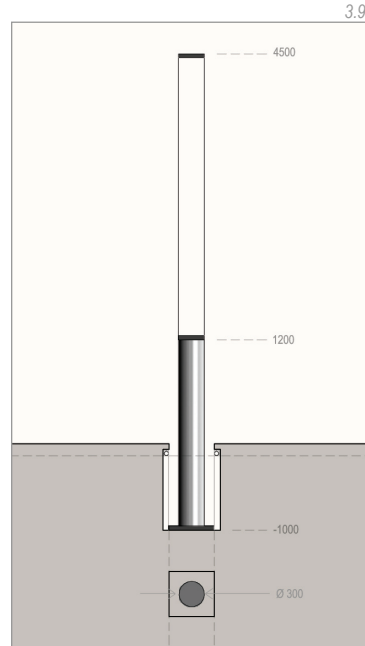
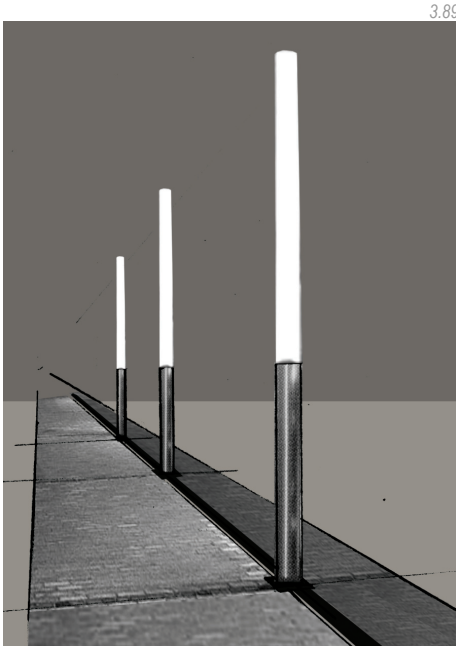
The grid of light structures is used not only to create a uniform lighting distribution for the entire site but to help visually structure and link the space. The stacks vertically reinforce the new site layout and help break the previous relationship to the communist axis. The cylindrical light fixtures are metal halide lamps, with ceramic tubes and brushed stainless steel bases, which render an even white light glow. Inserting them into the concrete surface of the paths and linking them with thin slits creates an assumption of deep cuts into the layer beneath. The lights structures in this sense become elements which vertically link the existing and the new by intersecting both layers.



Above:  
Fig. 3.88 grid of light

In the darkness, the light hovers above the surface of the site between the trees and glows like a field of lanterns suspended in a forest. This image becomes particularly powerful and reminiscent of candle light vigils held here during the years of protests. The Memorial Garden, as the starting and ending space of the remembrance ritual held annually in the city at dusk, illuminates and merges with people holding candles, becoming the stage for collective mourning, commemoration and celebration.

Below:  
Fig. 3.89 Light post image  
Fig. 3.90 Light post detail 1:75  
Fig. 3.91 Light post application photo



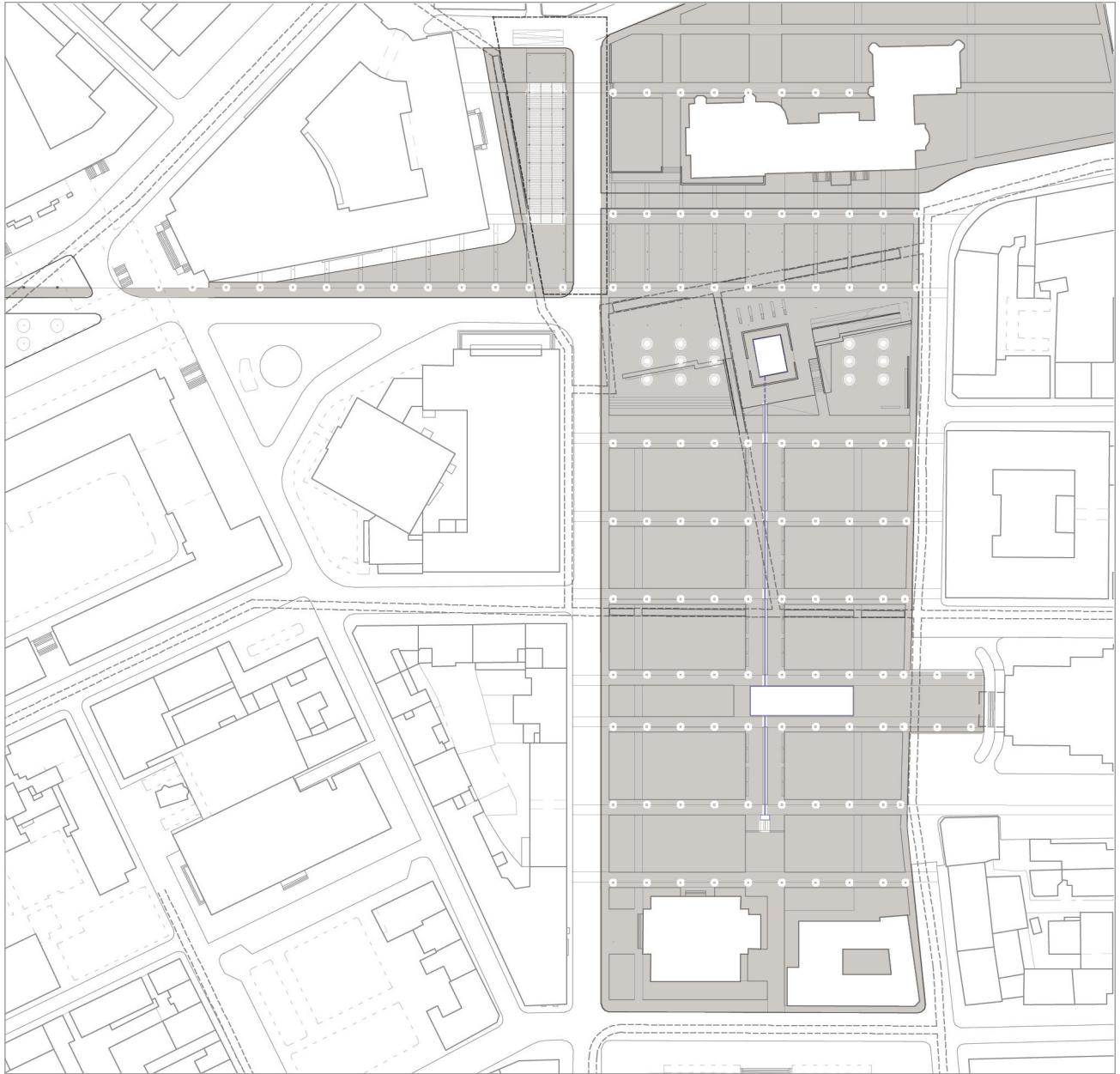


Fig. 3.92

- site area
- lightposts (lanterns)
- illuminated tree grove
- illuminated market canopy



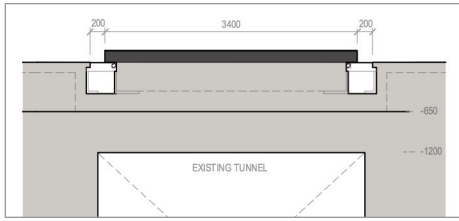
scale 1:2500

4. Connectors:

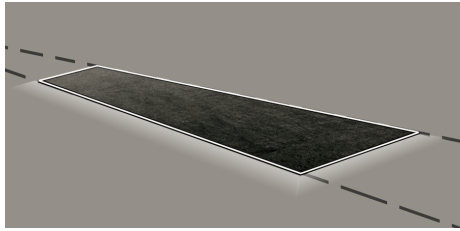
**Water + Granite**

*Black Granite Slabs*

The three spaces on the site- the Memorial Square, the Memorial Park and the Market Square are linked by a series of black granite slabs that trace the existing tunnels left behind by the communist regime over the ground plane. Reminiscent of burial markers, the slabs also emerge within the series of urban spaces along the route of recollection. By illuminating them along their perimeter, the sense of connection to the tunnels beneath is reinforced, creating the illusion of a heavy mass suspended over them.



3.93



3.94

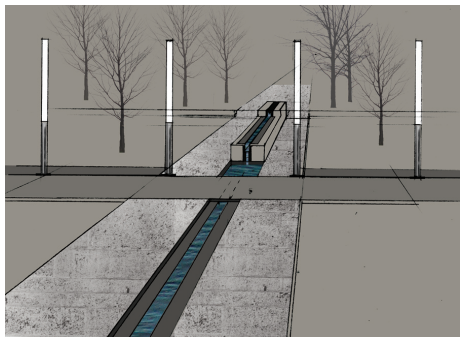
Above:  
Fig. 3.93 granite slab detail 1:100  
Fig. 3.94 granite slab

Below:  
Fig. 3.95 water channel view looking toward spring  
Fig. 3.96 water cycle sectional diagram

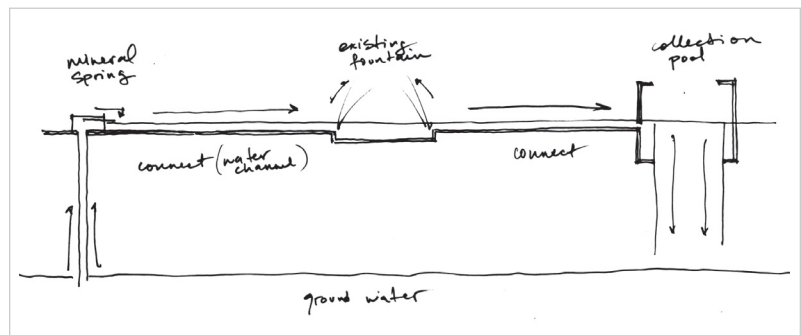
Fig. 3.97- 3.100 four site water elements: spring, fountain, channel, collection pool

*Water*

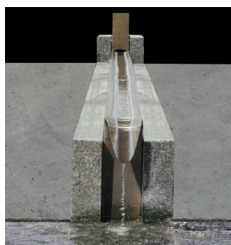
The element of water is present on the site as an existing mineral spring and a fountain pool oriented toward the National Theatre. A new surface water channel cut into the axial path will connect a new spring fountain to the existing pool fountain across the park to a new collection pool located inside the existing vault of the former mausoleum, which is part of the new memorial. The slow moving, dark water of the collection pool gives the assumption of infinite depth, soaking back into the earth only to emerge back from the spring fountain. This connects the cycle of water, symbolic of rebirth and renewal, to the narrative of remembrance.



3.95



3.96



3.97



3.98



3.99



3.100



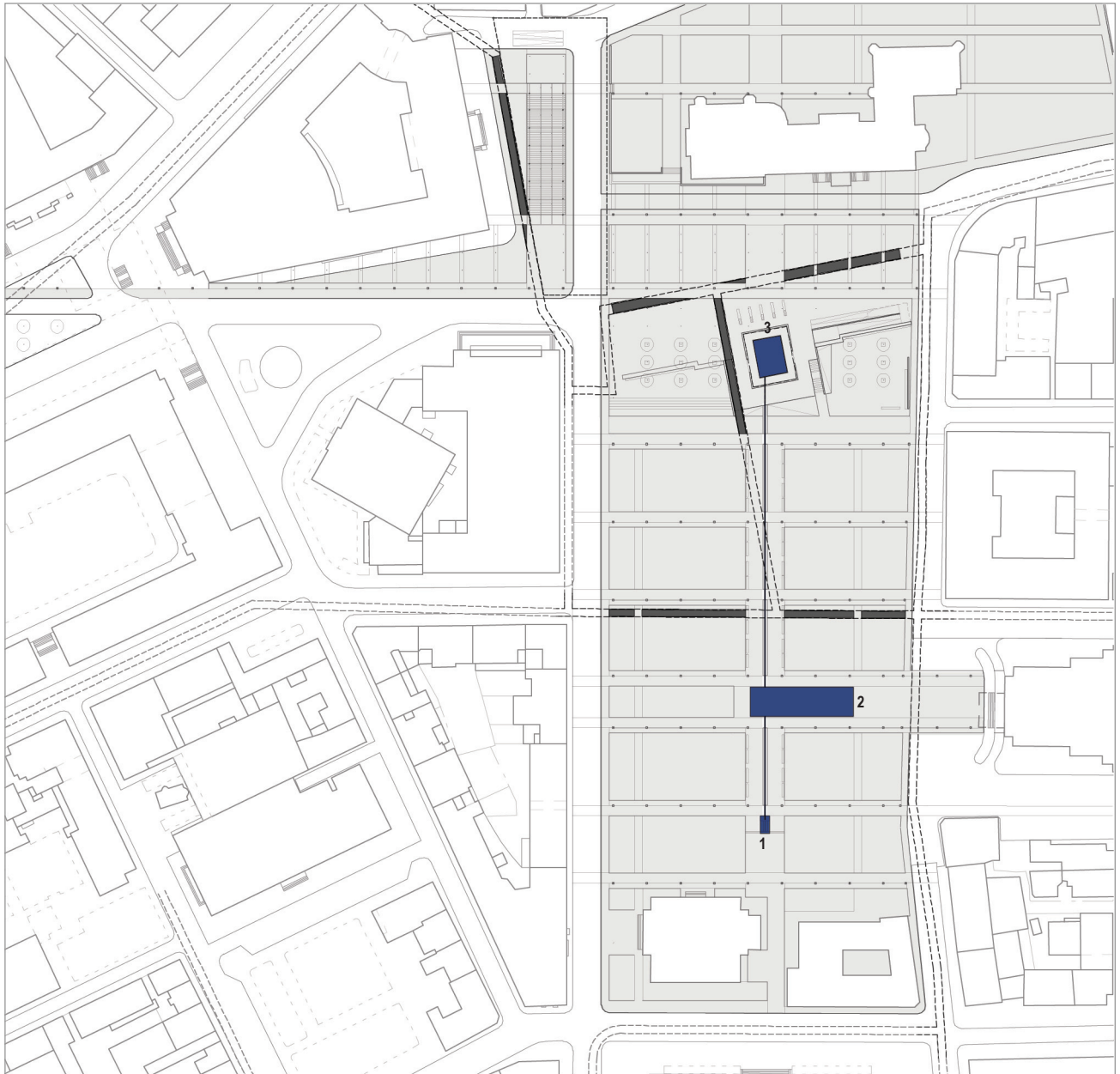


Fig. 3.101

- site area
- water
- underground tunnels
- black granite slab

1. Mineral Spring Fountain
2. Fountain Pool ( theatre)
3. Collection Pool ( memorial)



scale 1:2500

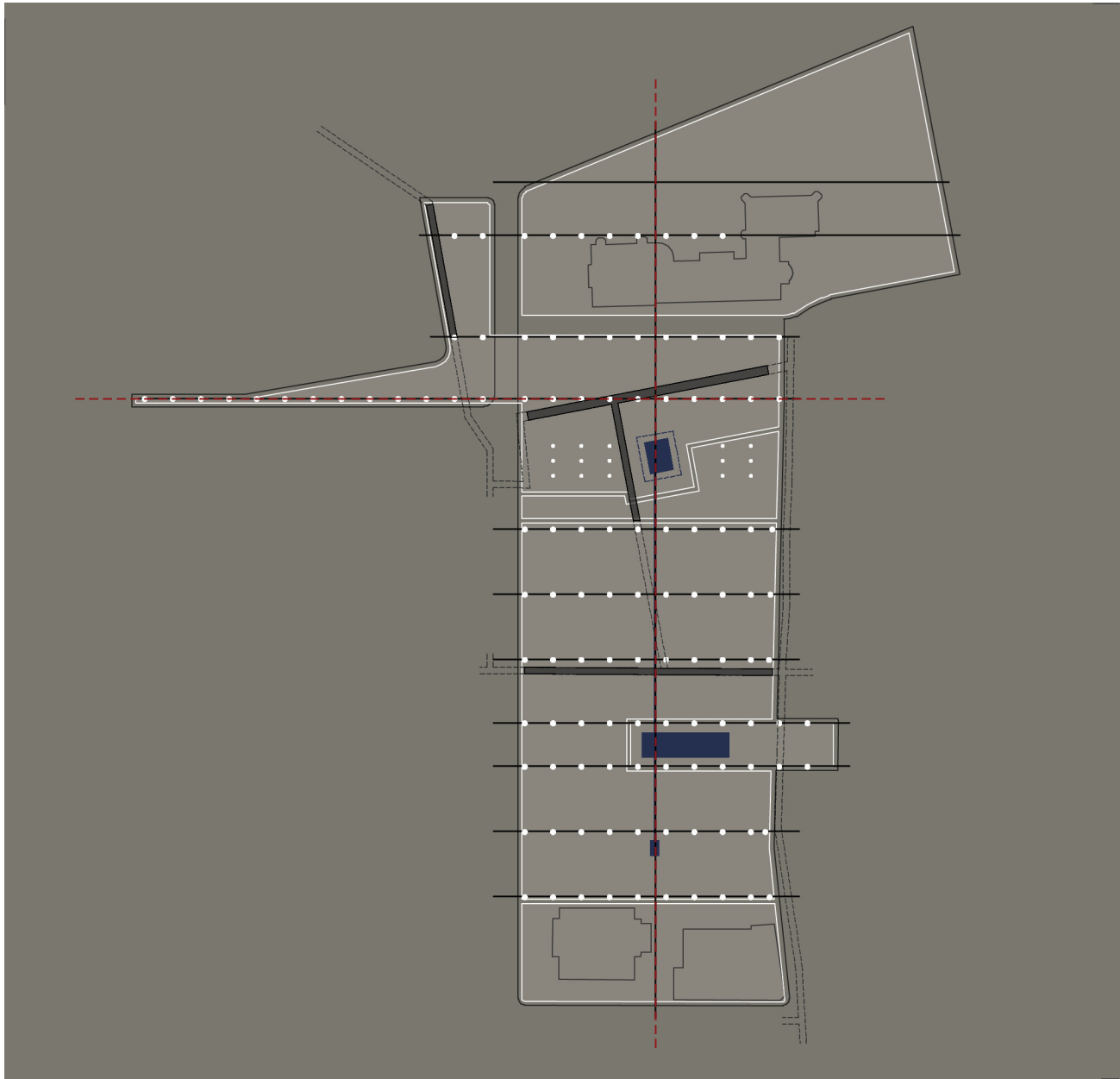
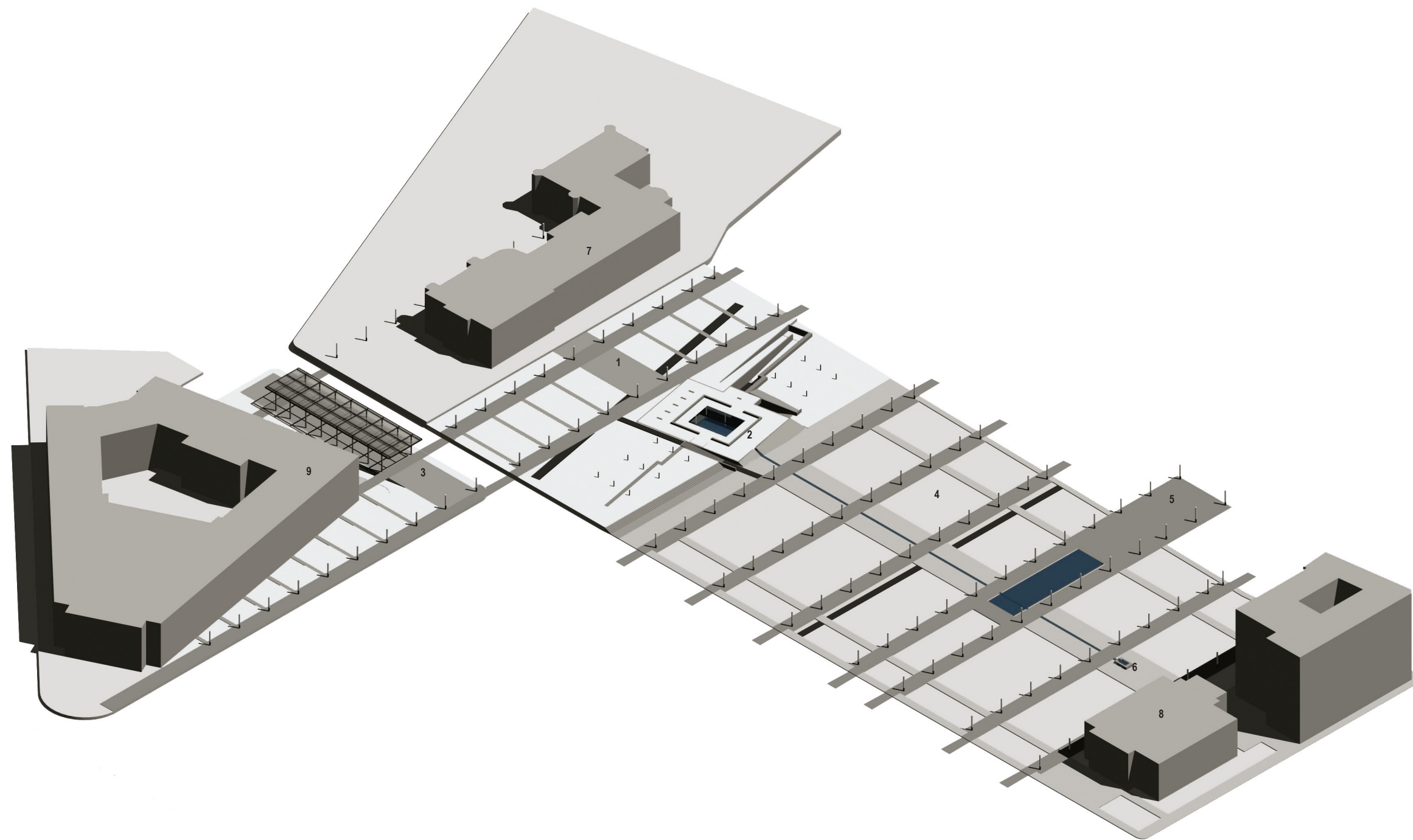


Fig. 3.102

- Planes
- Lines
- Points
- Connectors: water
- Connectors: black granite
- new site axis

scale 1:3000.

**Site Design Elements: Composte Diagram**

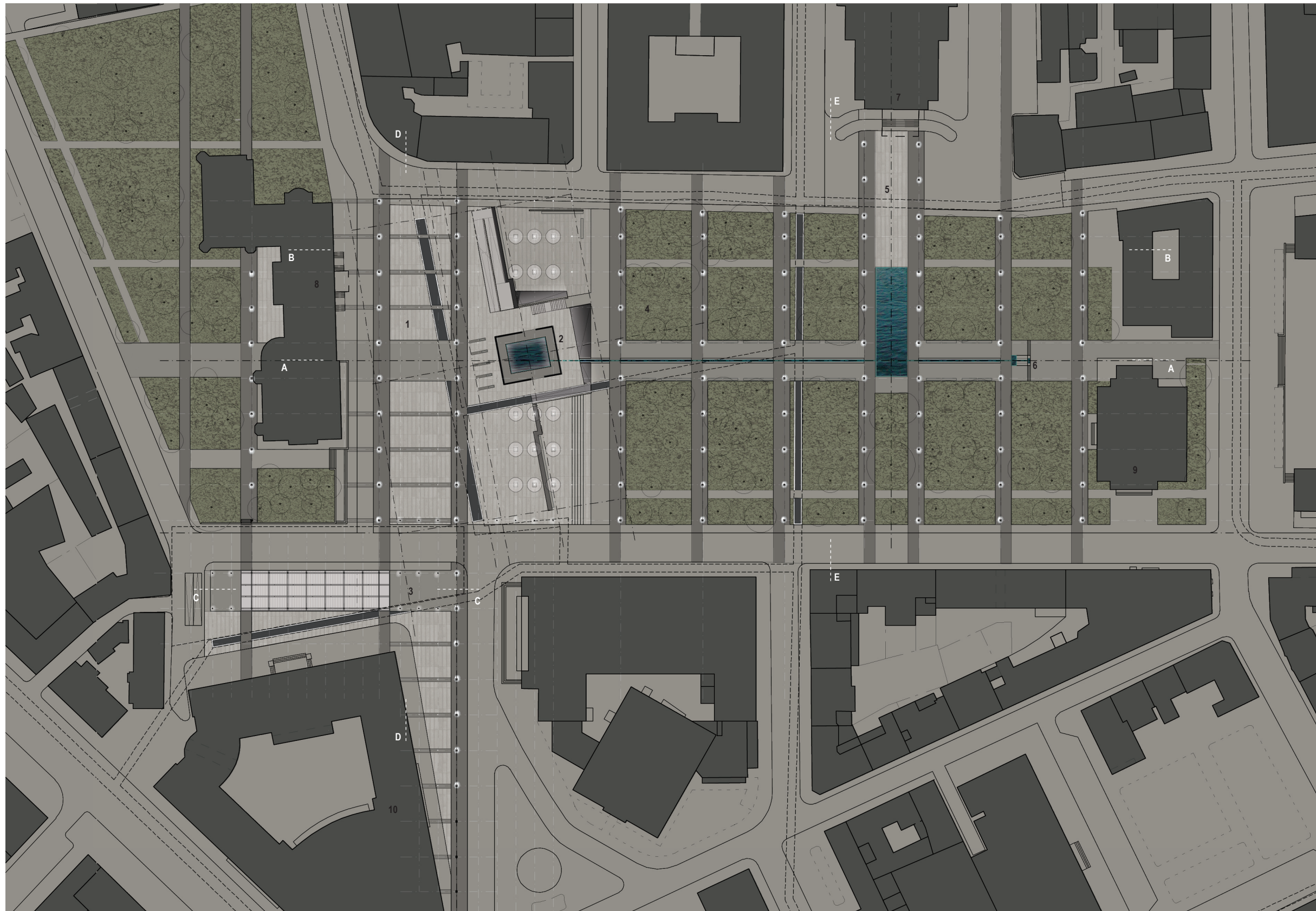


1. Memorial Square
2. memorial
3. Market Square
4. Memorial Park
5. National Theatre plaza
6. mineral spring
7. National Art Gallery
8. Sofia Art Gallery
9. former Communist Party headquarters

Fig. 3.103

scale nts





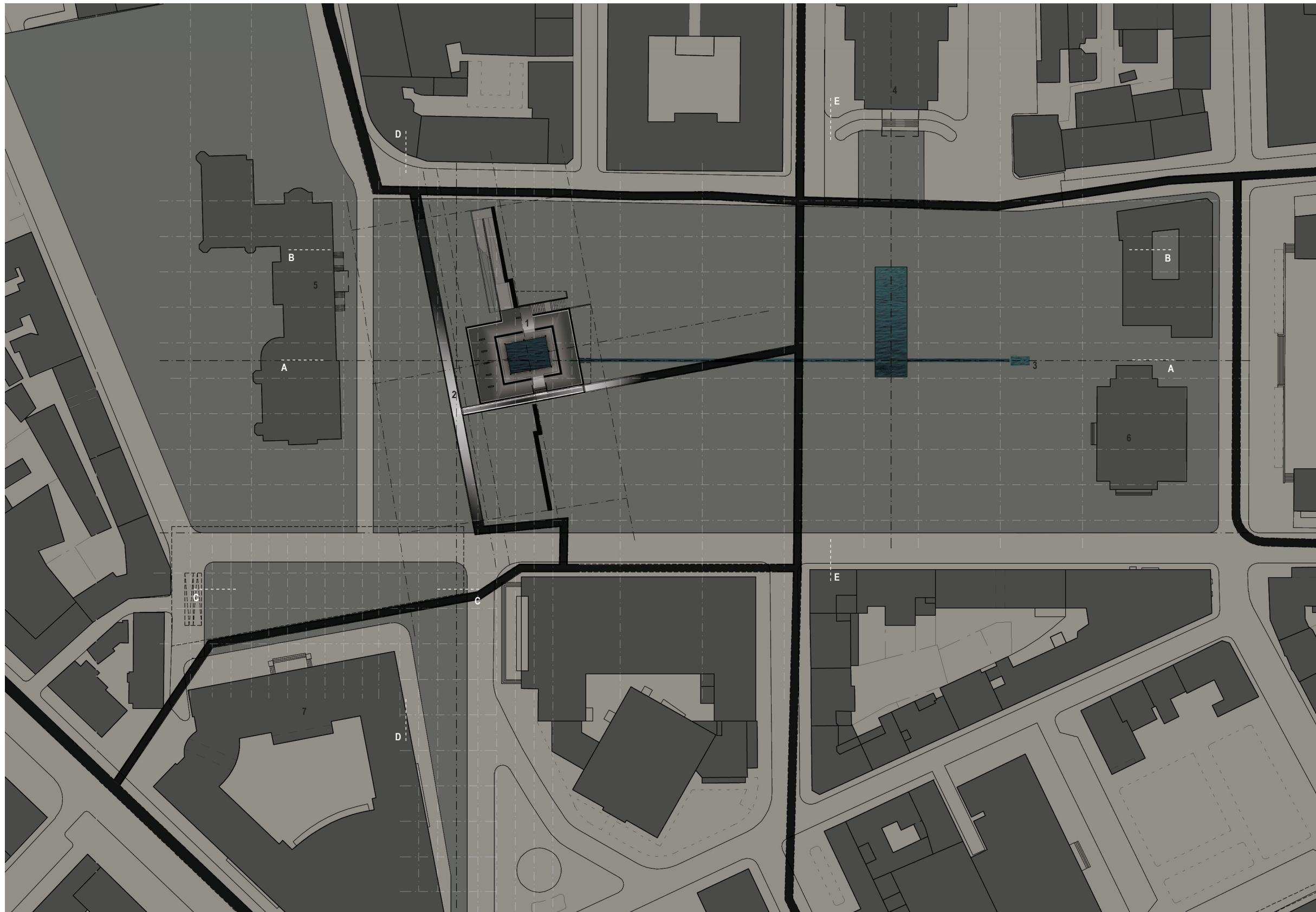
1. Memorial Square
2. memorial
3. Market Square
4. Memorial Park
5. National Theatre plaza
6. mineral spring
7. National Theatre
8. National Art Gallery
9. Sofia Art Gallery
10. former Communist Party headquarters

Fig. 3.104

scale 1:1500

**Memorial Park: Ground Level**





- 1. Memorial
- 2. existing underground tunnel network
- 3. mineral spring
- 4. National Theatre
- 5. National Art Gallery
- 6. Sofia Art Gallery
- 7. former Communist Party headquarters

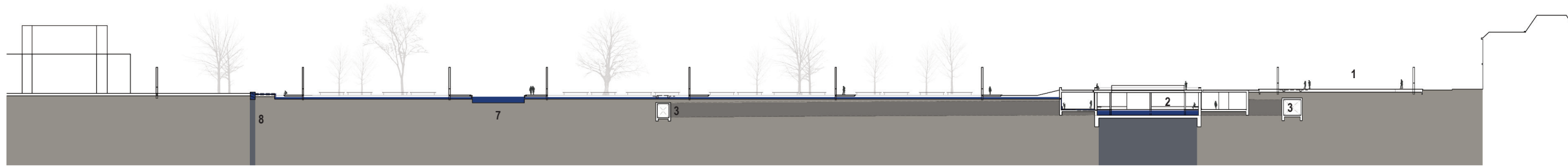
Fig. 3.105

scale 1:1500

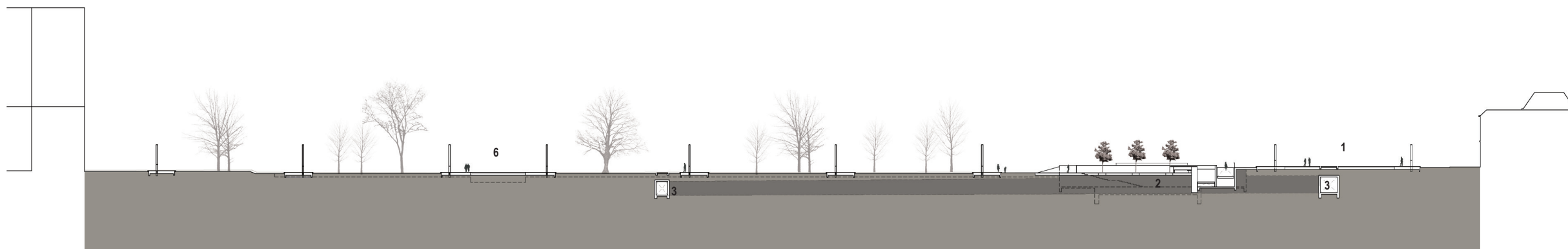
**Memorial Park: Lower Level**



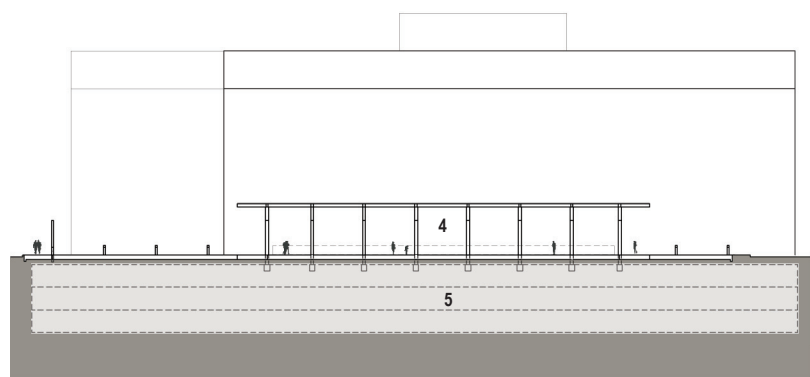




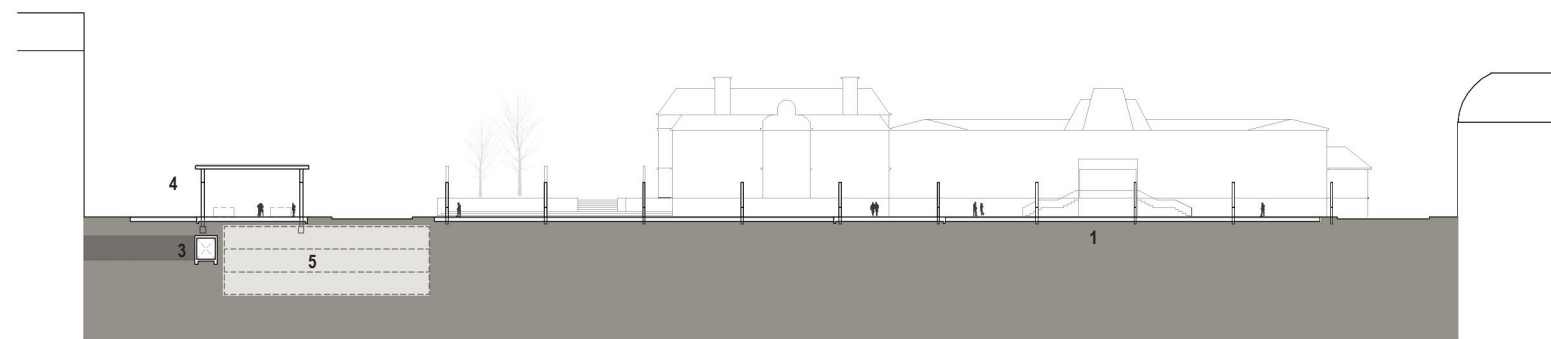
**A-A**



**B-B**

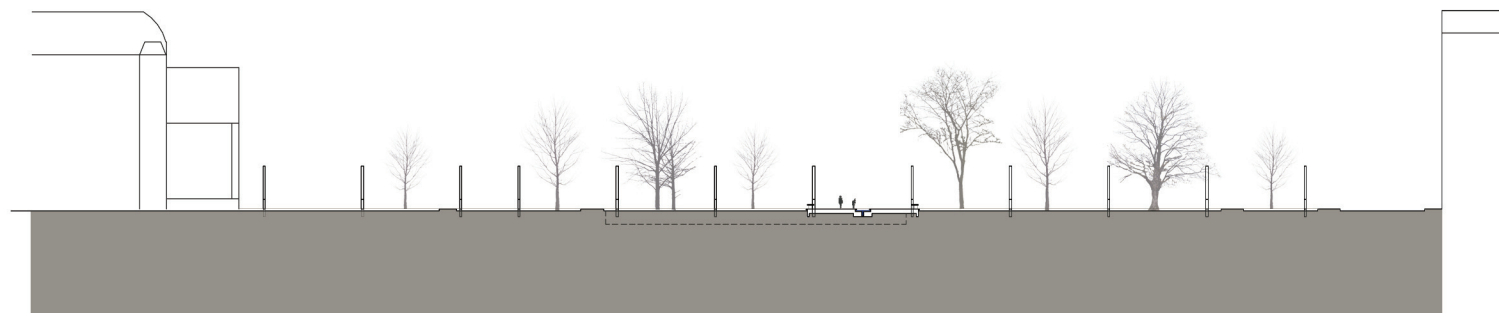


**C-C**



**D-D**

- 1. Memorial Square
- 2. memorial
- 3. existing underground tunnel
- 4. Market Square
- 5. underground public parking
- 6. National Theatre plaza
- 7. National Theatre fountain pool
- 8. mineral spring

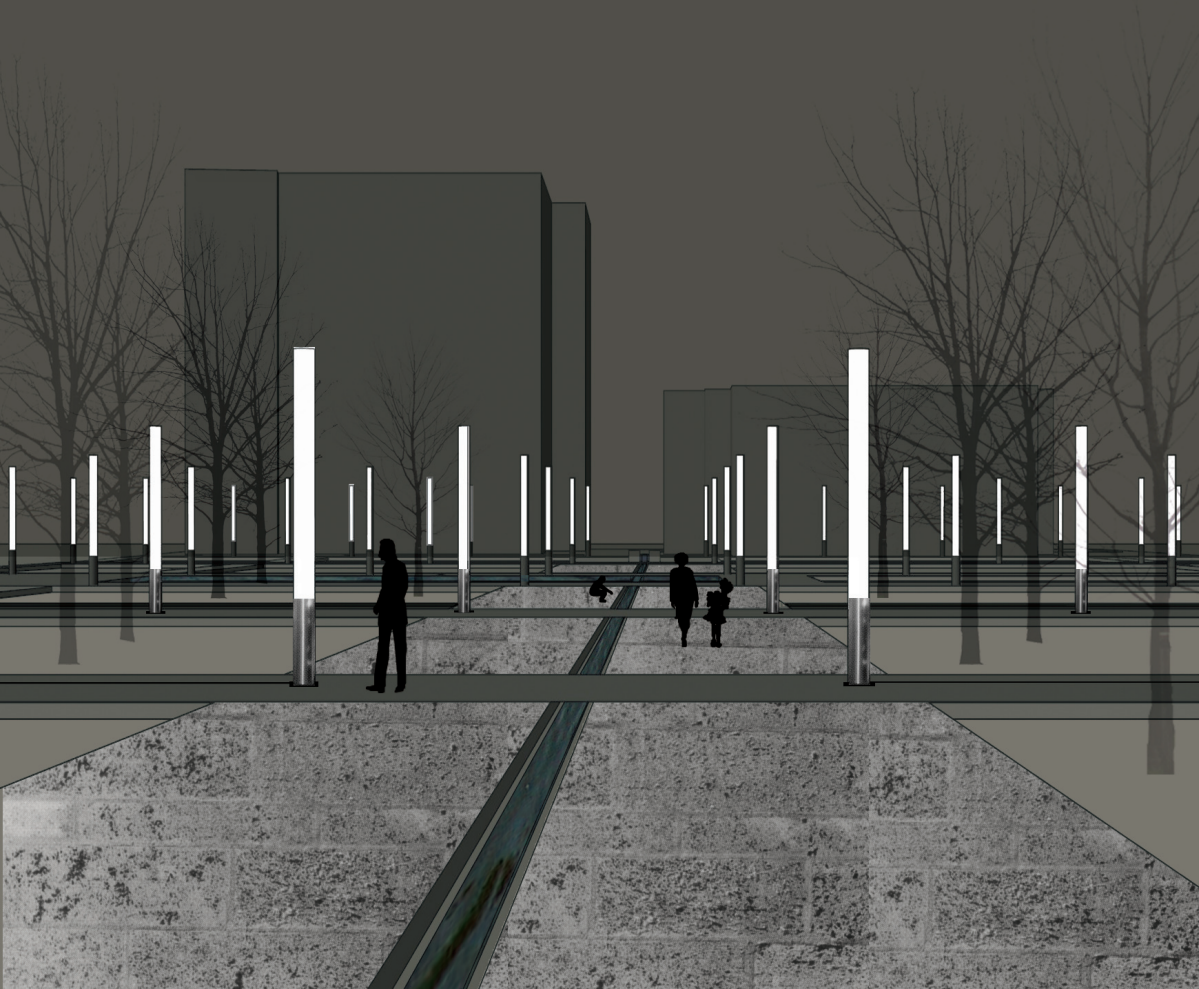


**E-E**

Fig. 3.106

scale 1:1000

**Memorial Park: Site Sections**



*Fig. 3.107 The Memorial Park illuminated at night. View down the main path looking south.*

3.107

## Memorial Square: Memorial *Against Censorship*

### *Memorial Square: celebrative space*

The new Memorial Square connects the north and south sections of the park, by removing the street access which divided the two. This creates a large pedestrian space; an open square which lends itself to gatherings and celebrations, becoming a focal civic space in the city.

The square's platform is at the same street level as the Market Square adjacent to the east. Though on the same site, the footprint of Memorial Square replaces the former 9th of Sept. Square; its image has also changed, no longer bearing resemblance to that of the communist regime. The new geometry of the space reinforces the new axis, as do the vertical lighting elements and the horizontal paths which are laid over it. The Memorial Square is part of a new physical layer which extends over the old, but without entirely erasing it- emerging through are the traces of the mausoleum and tunnels beneath, revealing what once stood there.

### *The Memorial: contemplative space*

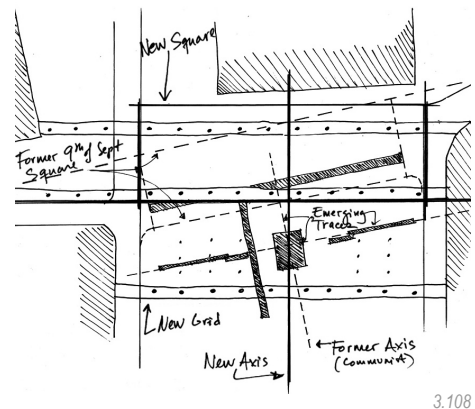
The new memorial inhabits the existing vault of the mausoleum buried beneath the ground; its concrete slab cover is removed- leaving it exposed, to the open sky. A space constructed on the traces of the past, it restores them as artefacts which can be explored once again, yet bearing a very different meaning now.

Transforming and reconnecting this site back to the city fabric creates a new locus for the emergence of traumatic memories which have been suppressed over the last decade. From above, a void: an opening to below exposes the vault; within it, a pool of water: a sanctuary at once intimate and collective. The memorial is experienced through passage where materiality, light and texture create the context, in which memory can emerge. Stripped to the bare essentials, here the silence and emptiness speak.

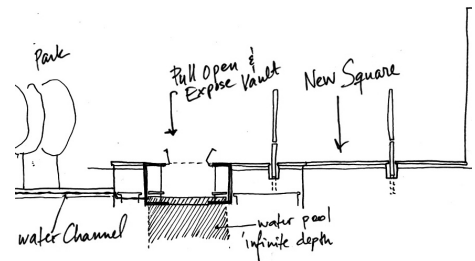
The memorial is titled *Against Censorship*.

## Memorial Programme:

1. Memorial Square
2. memorial mezzanine- opening to the memorial below
3. courtyard
4. sanctuary (vault)- water collection pool
5. exhibition gallery
6. wall of names
7. tunnel space
8. Memorial Park



3.108



3.109

Above:

Fig. 3.108 Memorial Square plan parti sketch

Fig. 3.109 Memorial Square section parti sketch

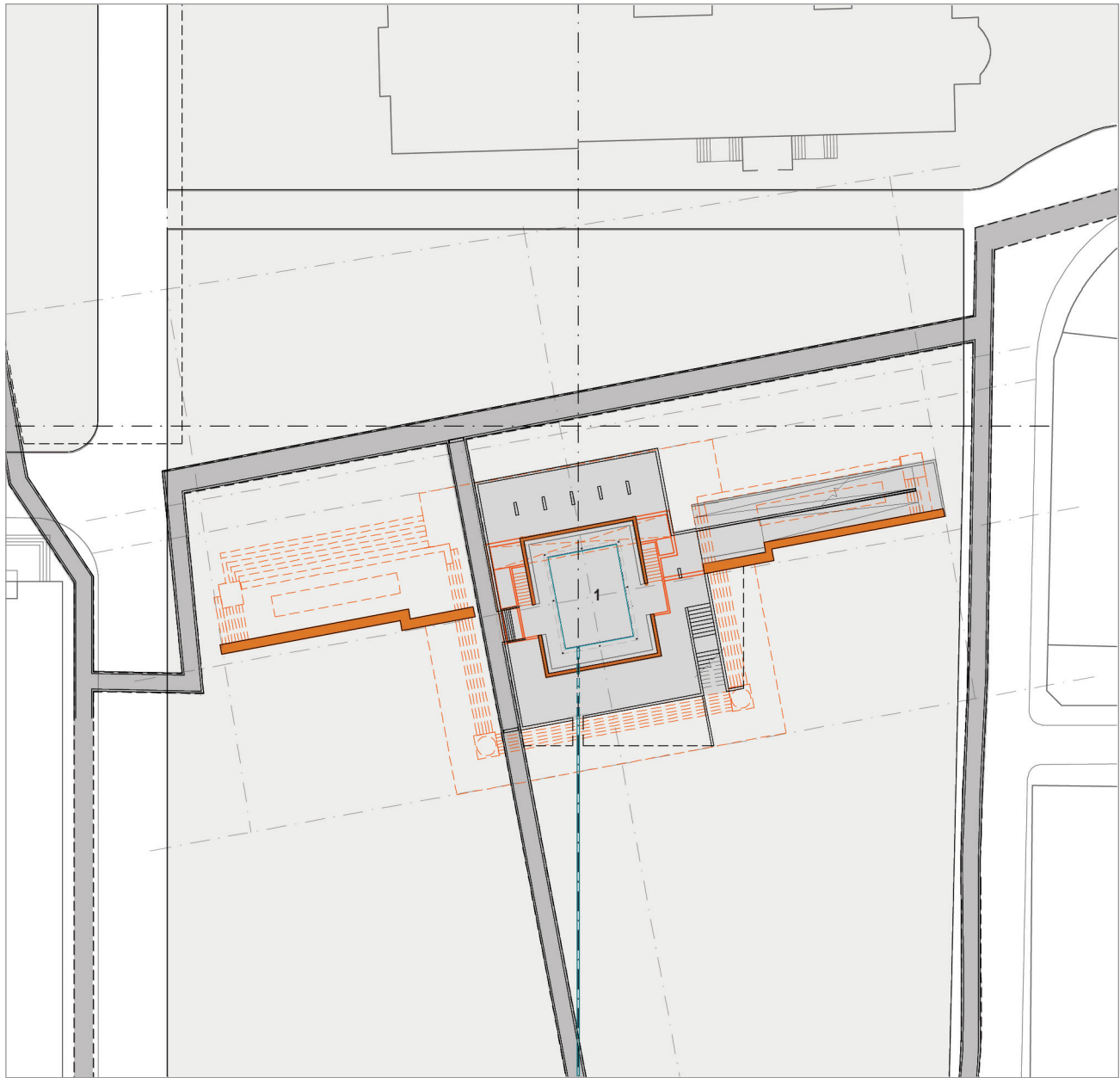


Fig.33110

- site area
- existing underground tunnels
- new memorial space
- remaining mausoleum walls
- demolished mausoleum

1. Memorial Sanctuary (vault)

scale 1:1000



### Passage: Descending into Memory

The space of the memorial begins at the level of the square. From above, the open void exposes itself; it takes the shape of an excavated hole in the ground. A mezzanine, enclosed by two continuous seating benches, looks down into the sanctuary- a once forgotten pit out of which memory emerges. The steel rod railings stick out from the concrete as if the earth was forced open to expose the pool of water below.

The existing vault of the mausoleum was situated on a sloped site, which allows the memorial to have two entrances at different levels. Descending into the memorial sets it direct contrast with memorials placed on podiums to be looked up at; rather here the visitor submerges into a space in order to experience it. From the public square, an open ramp descends down; from the park, a gradual stair arrives to an entrance hall.

The memorial is comprised of a sequence of enclosed spaces and an open sanctuary adopting the space of the mausoleum vault. Once inside, one can proceed into the exhibition galleries, toward the wall of names, which wraps around the exterior walls of the existing vault. Etched onto glass, and suspended in front, are the names of the honored victims, like a screen over them. The rooms surrounding the vault are silent; either left empty or used for temporary exhibitions that feature the work of previously censored as well as new artists. A cut into the concrete wall releases the stream of water from the water channel outside, which spills down a steel gutter into the internal space of the memorial. The water runs down the wall, trickling beneath the floor into the water collection pool, creating a strong sense of connection to the park outside.

Entering the sanctuary on a platform over the pool emphasizes a sense of awareness. The dark water below fills the space, creating the illusion of infinite depth. Slow moving, as though soaking into the ground, the water embodies the image of loss, at the end of its cycle. The existing walls of the mausoleum vault are exposed inside the sanctuary space- their original stone texture left intact; they are covered in slogans and graffiti from the period of protests at the end of the regime, as historical evidence.

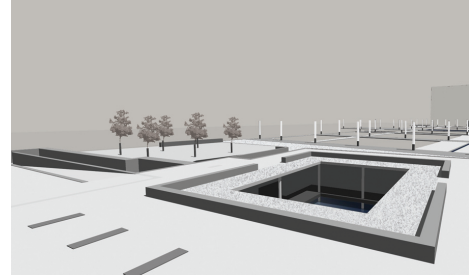


Fig. 3.111 View of the mezzanine over the vault opening

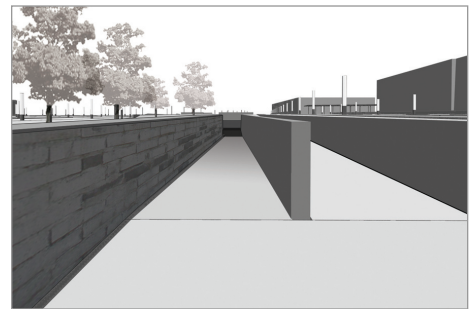


Fig. 3.112 View descending down the ramp into the memorial



Fig. 3.113 View descending down the stair from the park with side courtyard

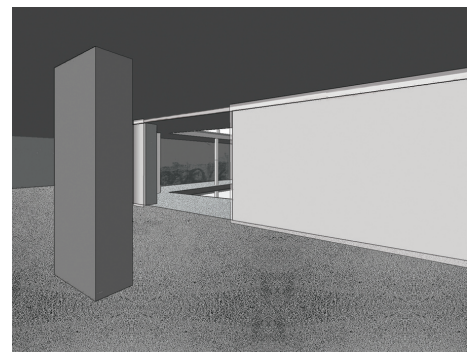


Fig. 3.114 View inside the memorial entrance hall

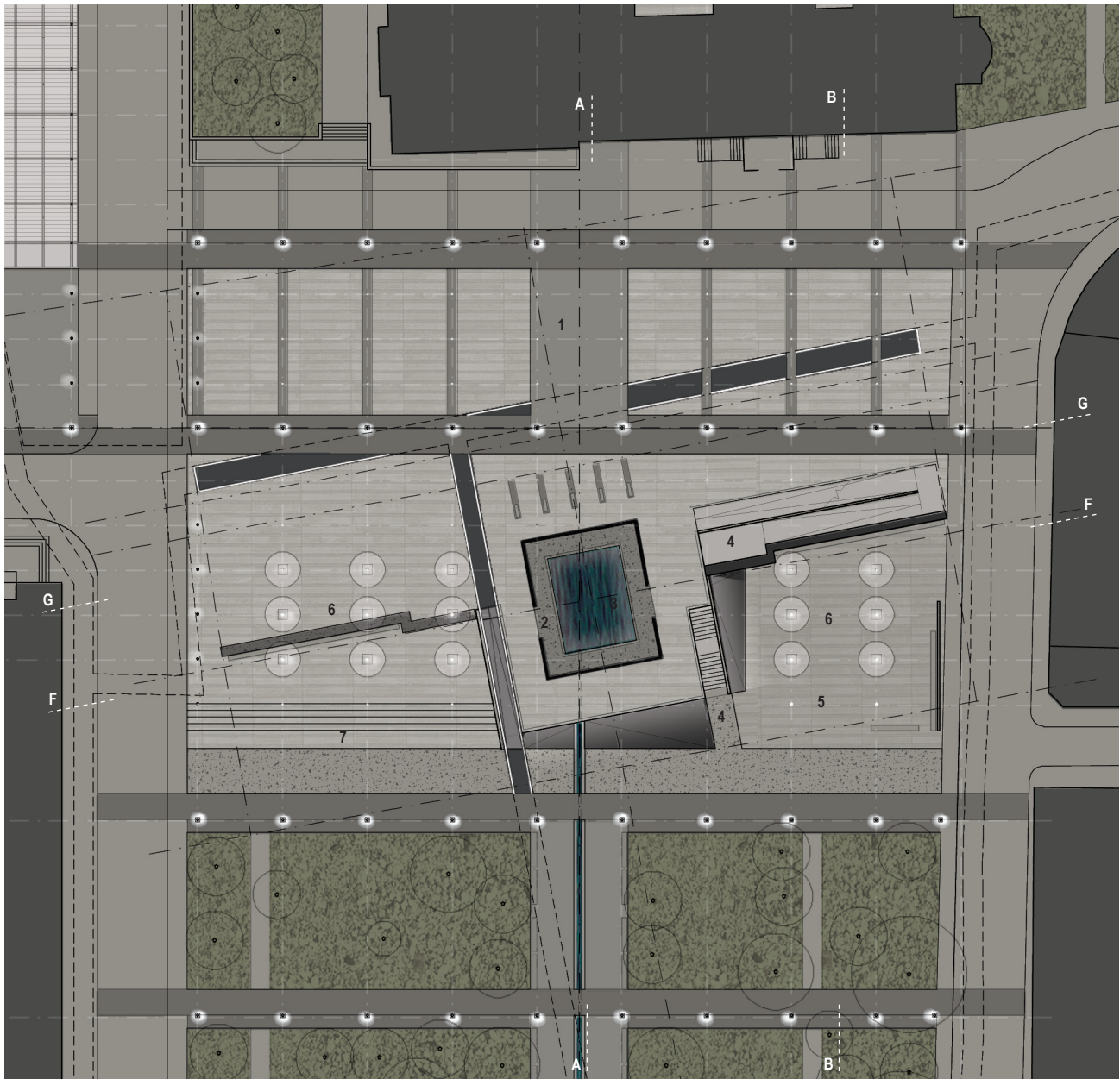


Fig. 3.115

1. Memorial Square
2. mezzanine over memorial
3. opening to memorial below
4. entrance to memorial
5. memorial courtyard
6. tree grove
7. steps/ seating

scale 1:1000



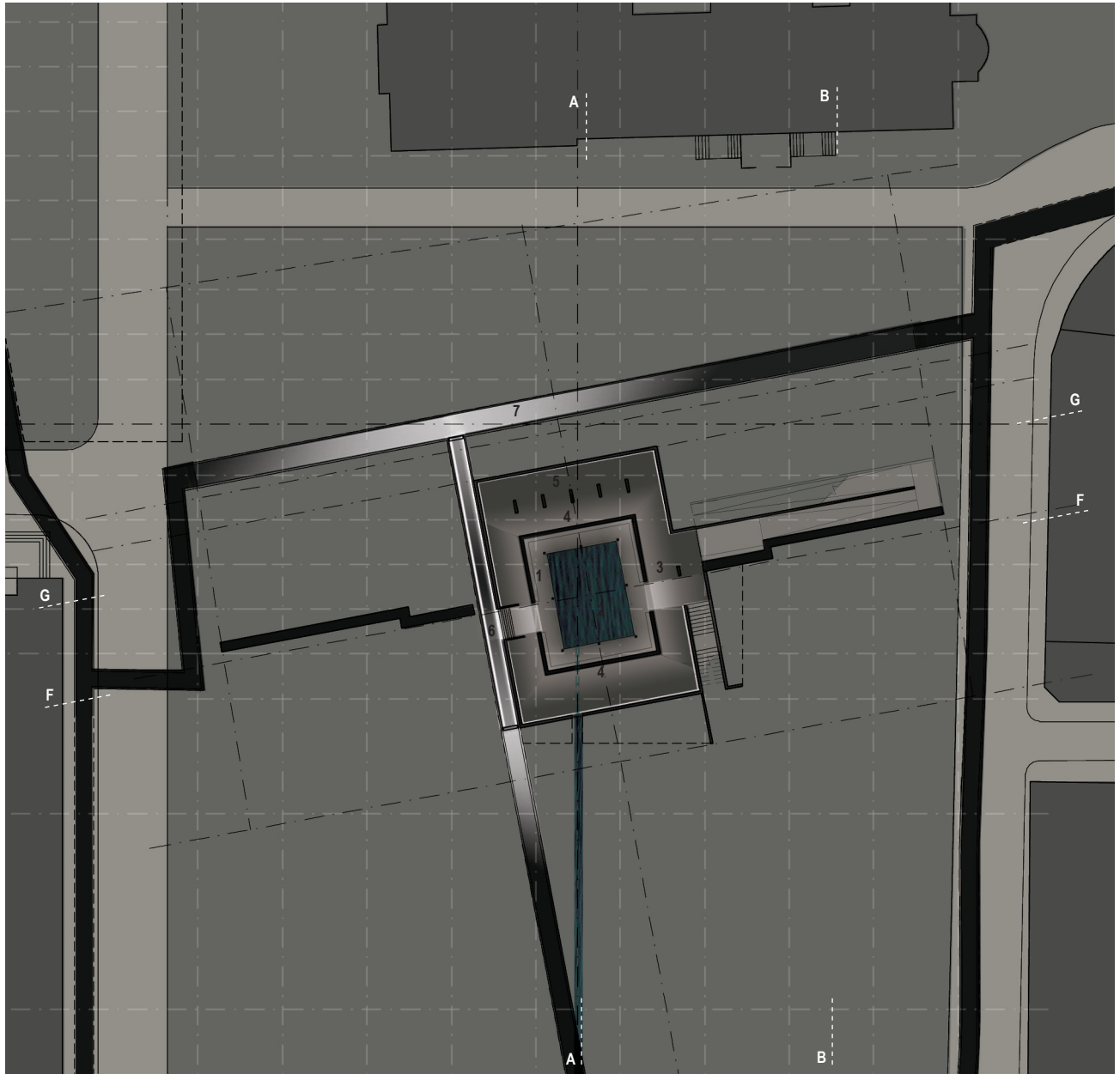


Fig. 3.116

1. Memorial Sanctuary (vault)
2. water collection pool
3. entrance gateway
4. wall of names
5. exhibition gallery
6. accessible tunnel space
7. closed tunnels



scale 1:1000

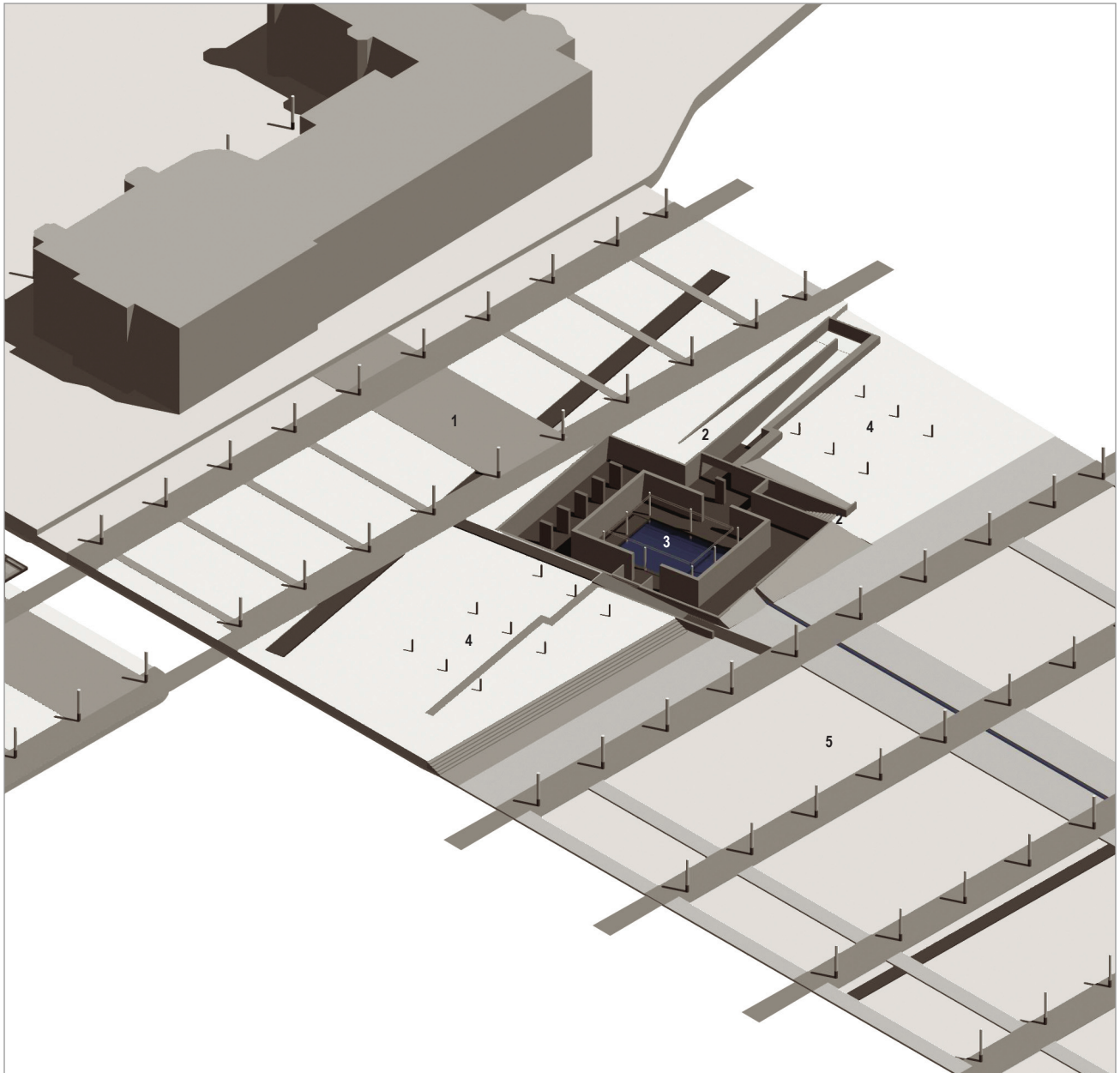
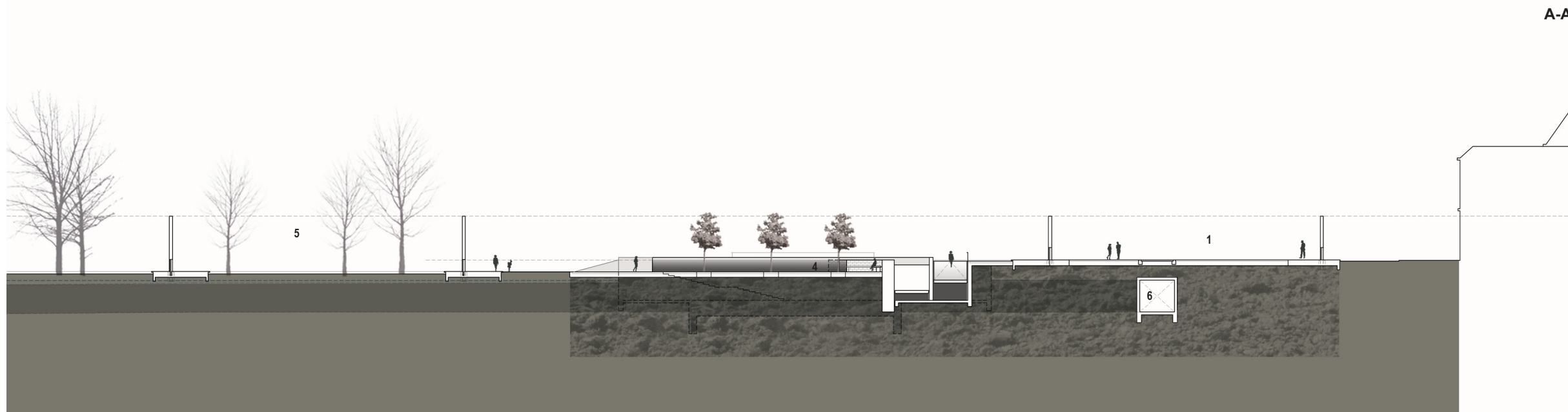
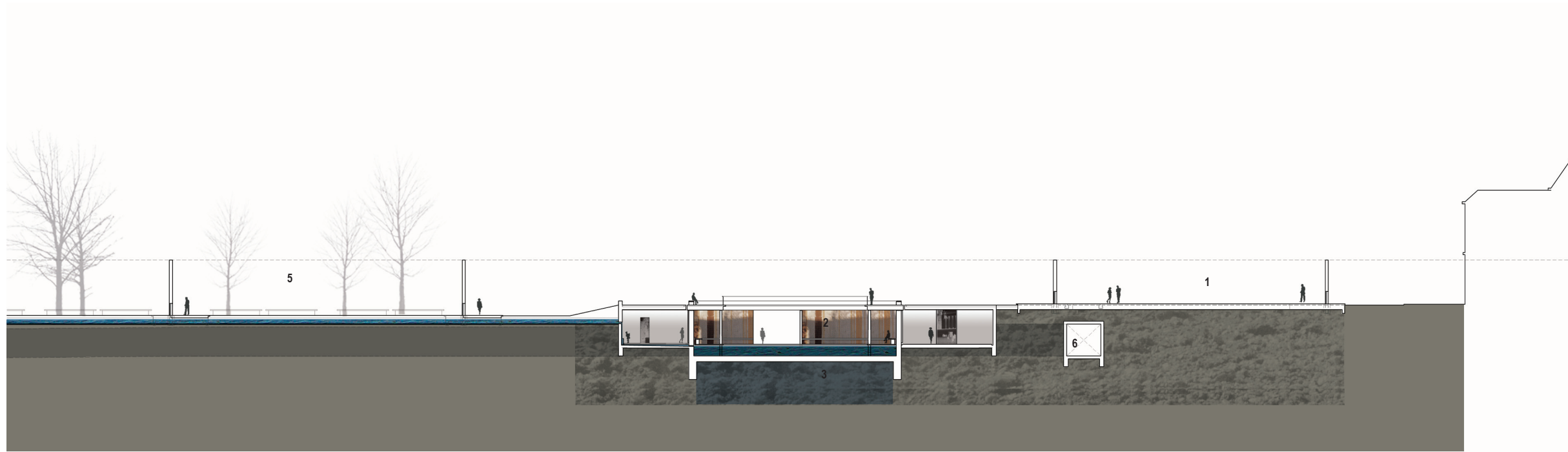


Fig. 3.117

1. Memorial Square
2. entrance to memorial
3. Sanctuary (vault)
4. tree grove
5. Memorial Park

scale nts





**A-A**

- 1. Memorial Square
- 2. Sanctuary (vault)
- 3. water collection pool
- 4. courtyard
- 5. Memorial Park
- 6. closed tunnels

**B-B**

Fig. 3.118

scale 1:500

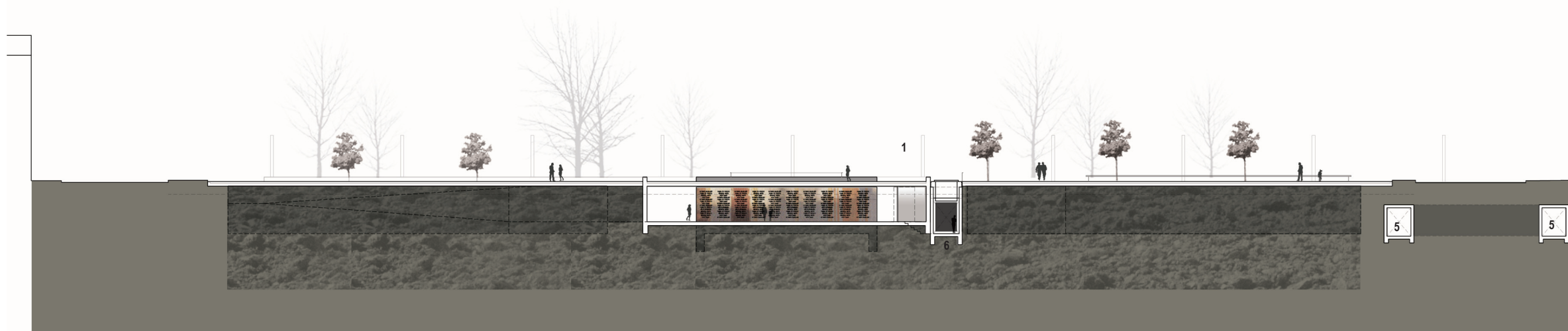
**Memorial Square: Site Sections 1**





**F-F**

- 1. Memorial Square
- 2. Sanctuary (vault)
- 3. water collection pool
- 4. courtyard
- 5. Memorial Park
- 6. closed tunnels
- 7. accessible tunnel space

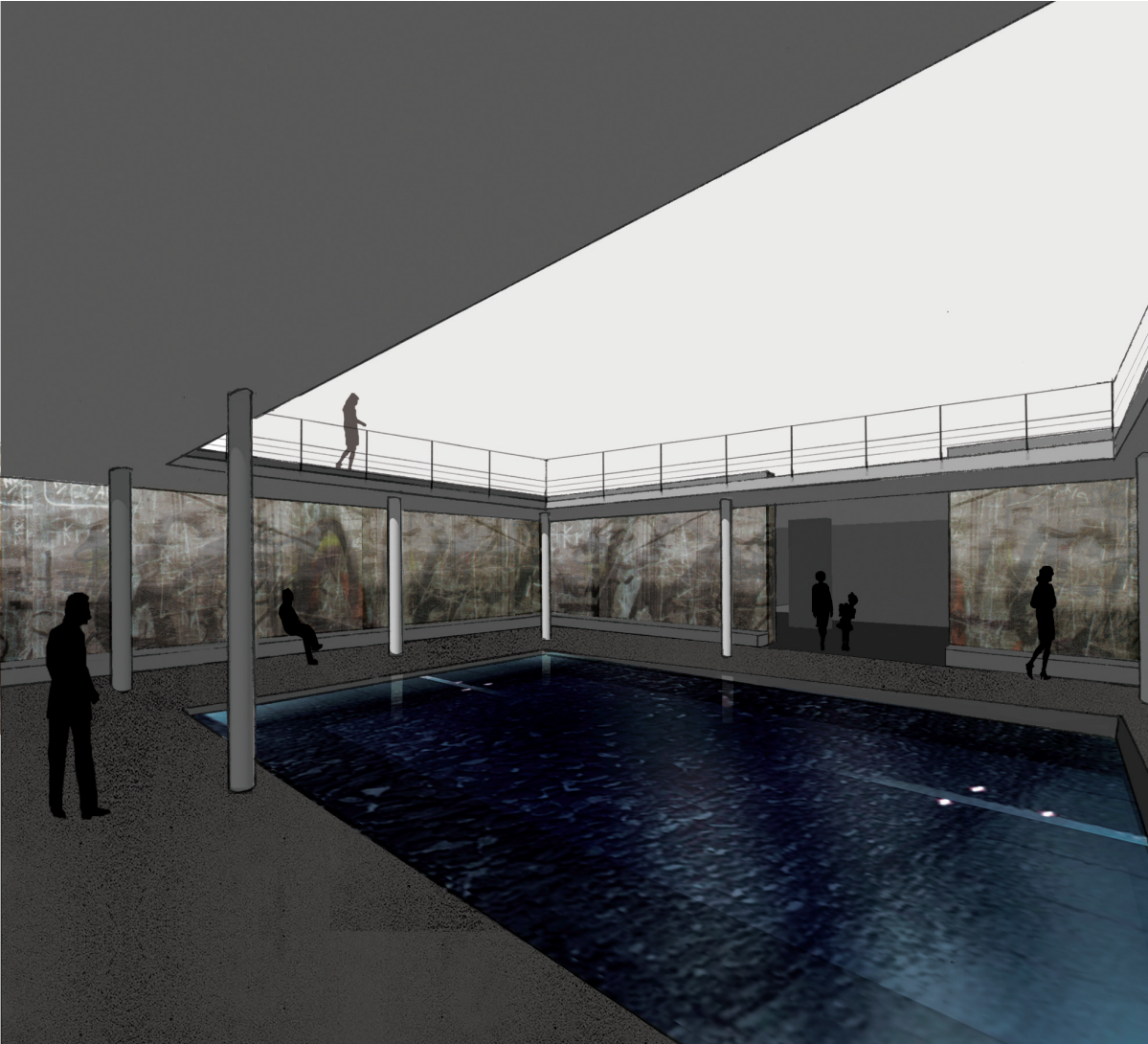


**G-G**

Fig. 3.119

scale 1:1000

**Memorial Square: Site Sections 2**



3.120

*Fig. 3.120 View inside the sanctuary inside the former mausoleum vault.*

The sanctuary blurs the distinction between inside and outside space. The inward quality invites the visitor to retreat and stop inside the space, enclosed to the edge of the platform, sheltering a continuous bench along the wall. This internal courtyard, open to above, fills with water when it rains, and with silence in the night; a space open for reflection and contemplation.

The rest of the materials in the memorial are mute, stripped of detail. The exposed formed concrete walls in the galleries are left untreated, to their natural cycle of life. The ground surface of the memorial is distinct from the rest of the site. Starting outside, paths leading to the memorial entrance and within the mezzanine space above are covered in crushed gravel; inside, the exposed aggregate concrete surface is also rough to walk on.

Light is the main element in the space. Shadows are cast from above, by the light which filters in through the slits along the edges of the walls as the time passes through the day. Dimmed, the space blots out distractions and creates tension between the dark solemn spaces and the open courtyard of the sanctuary.

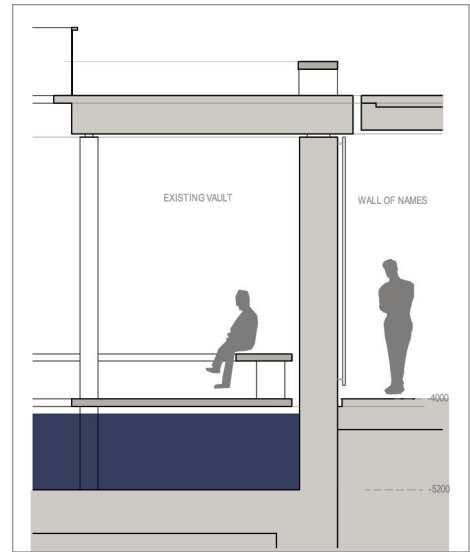


Fig. 3.121 detail of the Wall of Names. scale 1:100

*Memorial materials:*

- 3.122. existing retaining wall
- 3.123. existing vault wall ( graffiti)
- 3.124. water collection pool
- 3.125. glass wall of names
- 3.126. formed concrete walls
- 3.127. light
- 3.128. cast concrete ceiling
- 3.129. exposed aggregate floor surface



3.122



3.123



3.124



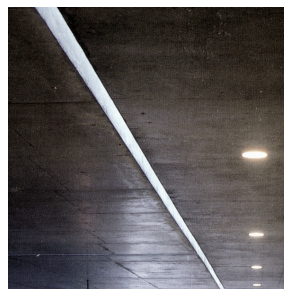
3.125



3.126



3.127



3.128



3.129



3.130

The underground tunnels built below the city stretch for hundreds of meters, linking government buildings, bunkers, bank vaults, and other secret underground spaces of the communist era. The mausoleum vault was connected to this network, separated by thick steel vault doors. Though the existence of the concrete underground city has been recently revealed, the exact location of these spaces still remains unknown.

The memorial spaces converge to a stair which takes the visitor down into the tunnels. This is the only section of the secret tunnels which is opened for the public to explore. The tunnel is narrow; its heavy ceiling creating the sense of being deep beneath the ground. Its darkness in contrast to the open air sanctuary seems even darker. Shadows are cast from above, through cuts along the edges of the ceiling. The two ends are abruptly blocked off by steel doors, allowing light in from the perimeter, acknowledging that the tunnels continue on. The doors are room-height in pre-oxidized steel, which resemble the gates used to block off these spaces before, and could be opened to expose and connect to other parts of the tunnel eventually. Here the silence of the tunnels is pronounced, a space where the everyday life has vanished, the tunnel's dark ends disorienting.

The bare walls of the tunnel perform as a screen on which memory is projected on- an opportunity for introspection and reflection. They could also be incorporated into the temporary public gallery, as exhibition space. Rather than create a monument that reflects on a recreation of the past, reflection is found in the present by making the viewer first and foremost admire the solemnity of the space and evocation of silence, by slowing down the pace and considering the timeframe of the visit through the monument.

Finally emerging outside, a transitional exterior courtyard flanks the exit between the memorial and the park. In this space, one of the existing retaining walls of the mausoleum left intact is exposed, enclosing a treed grove and seating benches. From here one could stop to collect one's thoughts, or continue to meander through the park of memories, along the water channel toward the spring.

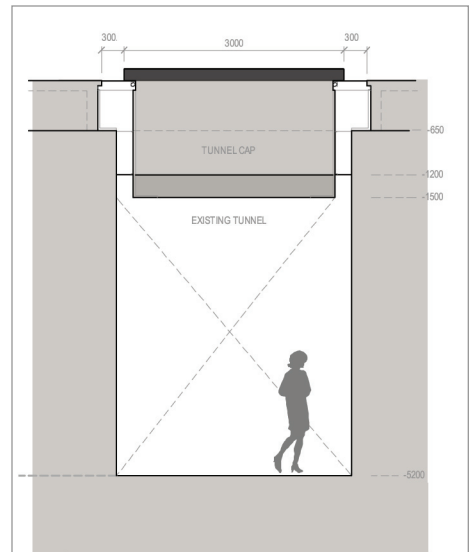
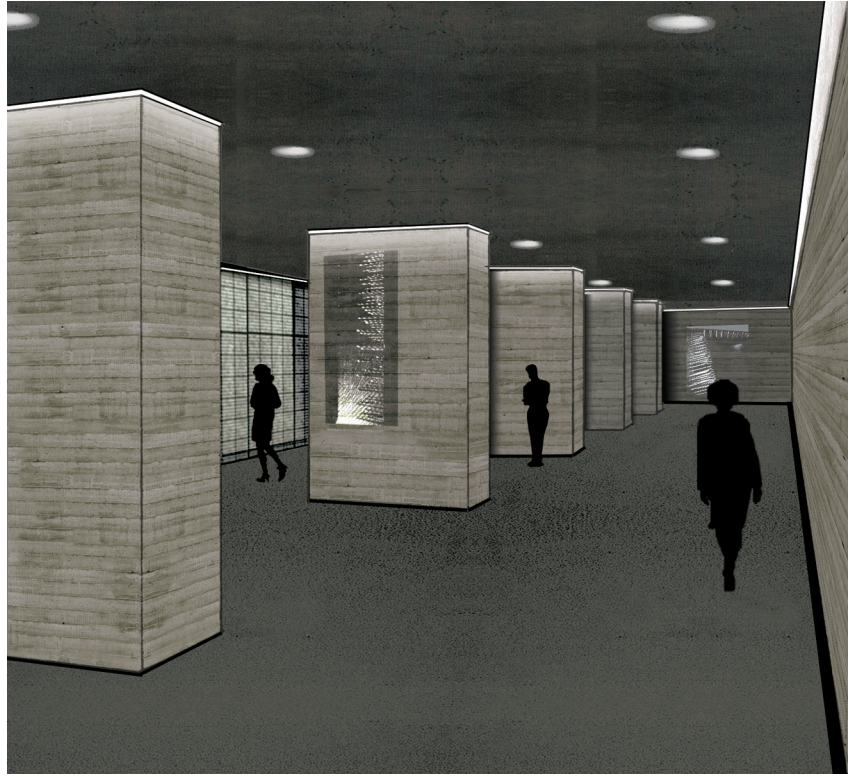


Fig. 3.131 detail of accessible tunnel . scale 1:100

Opposite:  
 Fig. 3.130 View inside the accessible tunnel  
 Below:  
 Fig. 3.132 the tunnel steel gate





3.134



3.133



*“...passing through narrow spaces or being in water are based upon fantasies of intrauterine life, of existence in the womb and of the act of birth...”*

Freud: Interpretations of Dreams <sup>17</sup>

*Opposite:*

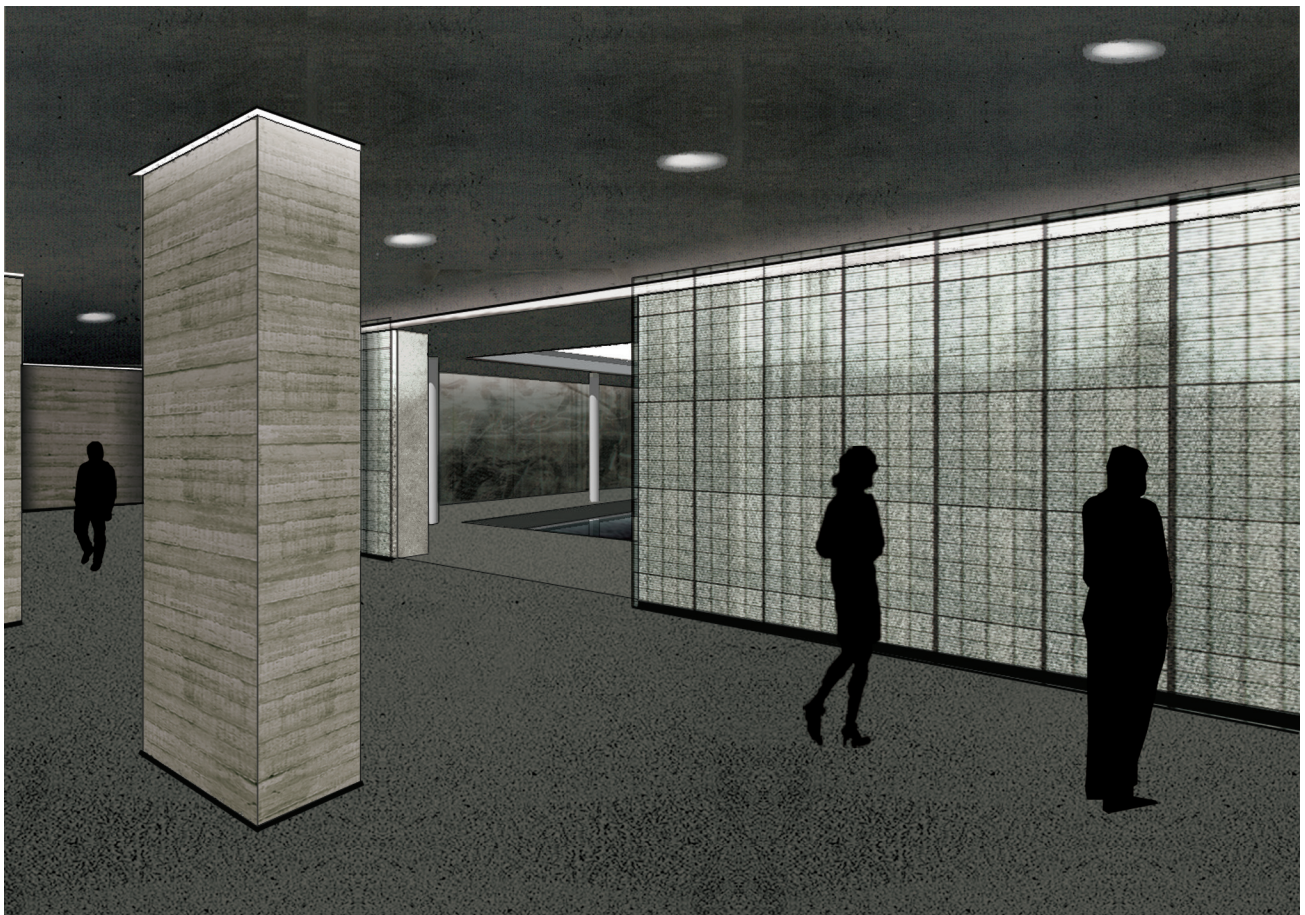
*Fig. 3.133 View inside the south gallery*

*Fig. 3.134 View inside the north gallery*

*Below:*

*Fig. 3.135 View of the Wall of Names, in the memorial entrance hall*

3.135



*A decade after the collapse of communism, I still tiptoe around my city of ghosts...*

*I see the contradictions of a place so rich in culture and so evidently without a sense of identity. I feel the continuous presence of two realities, one daily recreated by the people here, and the other inscribed in the physical remnants left to decay throughout.*

*Soon it will be time to face the pile of ruins...*

*Should the fragments of mausoleums, statues, emblems, slogans and symbols be removed and erased altogether? Buried out of sight...Or should they be put on display in museums, frozen in time for everyone to look at? Their meanings engraved into stone, spelled out...*

*One thing is undeniable...one day, unpredicted, eroding through the layers of resistance, memory will resurface...*

*...For no matter how many relics are exhumed and reburied, their scars will reappear; no matter how many stories get reinvented or places renamed, and how many symbols get replaced with new meanings- their scars will not heal. Despite how many statues are smashed or how many fragments are placed in museums, they will never erase the need for mourning and commemoration.*

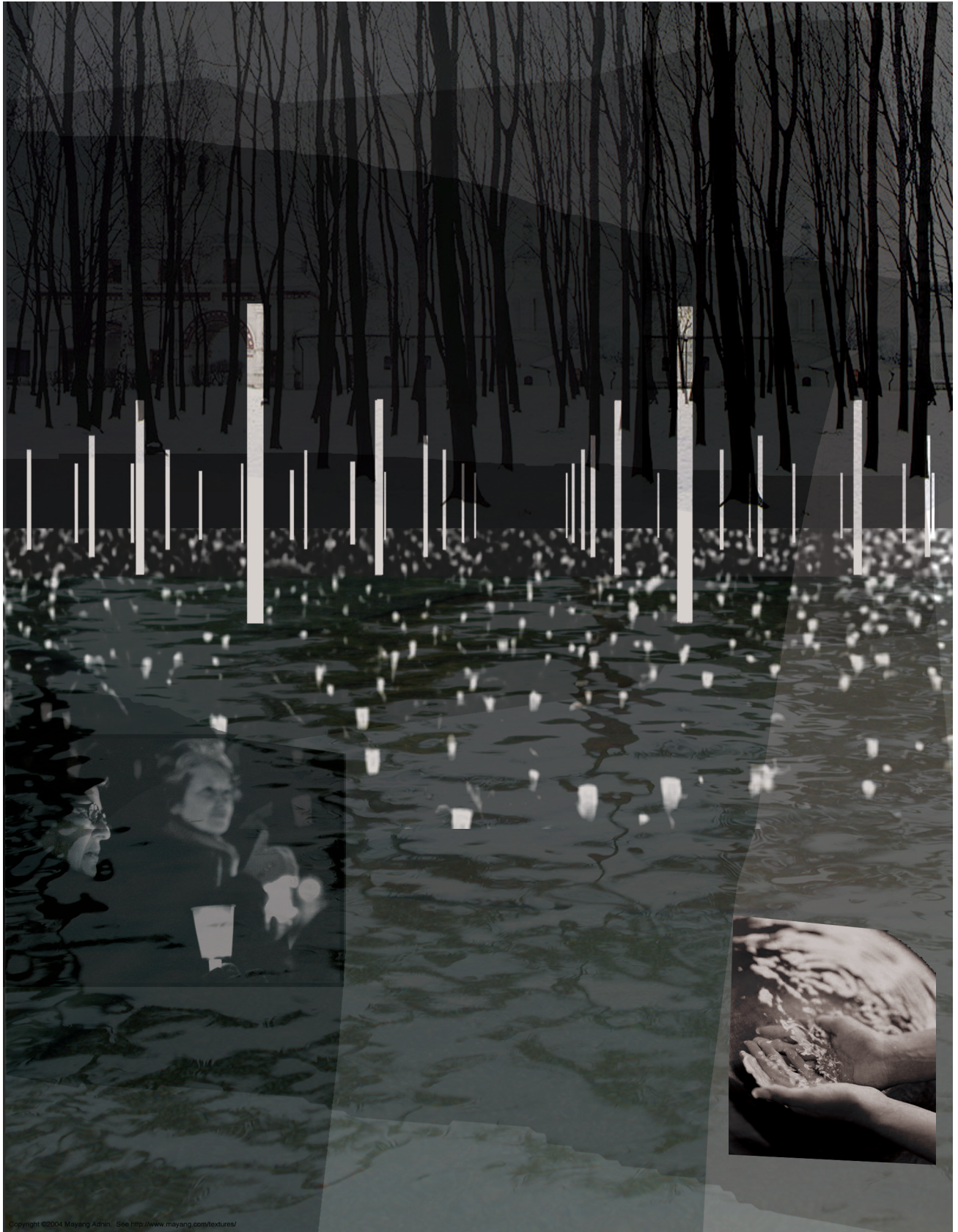
*I leave this place of denial, and hope to find it different again someday...*

*A place where the stone no longer crumbles in silence; a haunting presence in the distance. But a place where the images of the past transform and reconnect with their city, illuminated with new hope and imagination. Where the sound of water flowing speaks and tells a once forgotten story. A place which exposes and owns its wounds, its traces, its stories...*

*A place of one reality.*

*Where history lives and memories, though painful, emerge...*

*Yp. '05*





## **A0 APPENDICES**

## A.1 Poetry

### Poetry from Clay and Star : Contemporary Bulgarian Poets

#### **Nostalgia, or a Painful Return to Memories**

*by Stephan Tsanev (1936- ) p97*

*A city forsaken by its dwellers,  
a city wracked by an invasion or some treachery,  
dead city, city for two, city of one street, one square, one  
bench, or a city of one room plus one moon-*

*No,  
don't go back,  
you won't find what you are looking for,  
don't dig for coins with your old, forgotten  
image on them-  
we overvalue relics...*

*How incredible we are:  
Caesars, Cleopatras, Krums, Pericleses-  
and how much incredible with our simple names!*

*All else has been preserved:  
the street, the square, the bench, the room, the moon,  
(like a magnifying glass held up to what we lived)  
we're the only thing missing- what an affront!- we scream but no one  
a city re-inhabited, a city well rebuilt,  
a city minus two.*

#### **Urban Tree**

*Alexander Gerov (1919- ) p25*

*Is there a mind in you, universe?  
There's no mind...  
The starry night bends over me,  
black, deep and huge.*

*And thousands of tangled birds  
Have gathered to sleep in the tree.  
They huddle and in horror  
cry their tiny souls.*

### **Ballad for Dialectical Materialism**

*Ivan Radoev (1927- ) P56*

*The time will come, after insomnias and strayings,  
after long marches through mountains and epochs,  
for the squadron to dismount.*

*The distance from stirrup to earth  
will be strange to us.*

*We'll still be reeling from the head-on blows,  
from the sad treacheries of sons and fathers,  
from the free air  
we swallowed with our tears for the dead-  
we'll be dizzy.*

*Who are you? -history will ask us -  
from which dynasty? Where are your medals?  
Your architecture? Music? Painting?*

### **Meteor**

*Ivan Davidkov (1926- 1990) p54*

*Before you cry out, Stop- you'll fall on your back  
and above your eyes the horse  
with vast haunches will shine like a forest  
set aflame by the falling leaves. You'll see  
its bridle- two ropes stretched taut  
between sky and earth on which  
you'll be able to crawl tight-lipped  
above the pain. You'll yank yourself like a nail  
from the dry earth into which your last hour  
hammers you. But your hands will touch  
only the stallion's tired snorts,  
the wind. You'll fall downwards  
into yourself, and pierce this chasm  
like a huge black meteor.*

*Your soul will leave on tiptoe  
so as not to wake the outstretched body-  
and your last cry will flash like a knife  
jabbed into the sky's ribs.*

### **Gates**

*Georgi Borisov (1950- ) p186*

*These people on the road- why they've gone out,  
where they're heading in this fog, I don't know,  
since in their tall house behind the iron gates  
they've left the dead man alone.*

*He lies bareheaded and unseen within,  
his puzzled eyes are wandering.  
My god, he says, everyone here is dead,  
what use are these gates to them?*

### **When a Poet is Born**

*Stephan Tsanev ( 1936- ) p95*

*When a poet is born  
the executioners seize  
their rusty axes  
they spin their grindstones, they hum happily-  
executioners don't lack for work  
when a poet is born.*

*When a poet is born  
Socratic skulls  
smash open their coffins,  
blow reveilles on vertebrae and shinbones-  
for resurrections loom  
when a poet is born.*

*When a poet is born  
only mothers cry,  
they veil themselves at dusk,  
stare in horror and the empty cradles-  
for themselves they've created nothing-  
when a poet is born.*



### **Adaptation**

*Konstantin Pavlov (1933- ) p77*

*Quick!*

*We're due at the square,  
The square with the mighty fountains,  
Mighty fountains gushing odors  
Of rose and benzaldehyde.  
We've got to be there at 5:30.  
Sharp! Just as the initiation said- 5:30!...*

*Soft music will melt our bones,  
A soft voice will gently urge:  
"Relax...  
Relax completely..."  
We'll each walk our own circle,  
We'll beat ourselves with gentle blows.  
And wracked with guilt, nearly suicidal,  
We'll recount our past crimes.  
And in the middle of the square,  
Right smack in the middle...*

*We'll confess with vast relief  
Our most heinous thoughts.  
No one will listen to anyone else-  
We'll be talking to ourselves...*

*Till the very moment, when we're all convinced  
That words are no longer necessary-  
And we won't think twice,  
And thoughts won't torture us...*

*And now-  
Let's lie down on the square  
Let's drift collectively off to sleep  
For two, three, five, six centuries.  
There's no longer any need to dream-  
Someone else will dream for us.  
Our own nightmares!  
He'll even interpret them for the world.  
Incorrectly.*

## A.2 Reference Articles

Friday, August 27, 1999 Published at 17:34 GMT 18:34 UK

bbc.co.uk

# World: Europe Communist bastion finally crumbles



After the second attempt the building still almost looked as good as new

### Georgi Dimitrov

Co-founded Bulgarian communist party 1919

Led uprising 1923

Exiled in Berlin 1929

Accused of Reichstag fire 1933

Directed Bulgarian resistance 1944

Appointed Bulgarian Prime Minister 1945

Died near Moscow 1949

It took Bulgarian workmen almost a week of round-the-clock toil to demolish one of the major symbols of communism in this Eastern European country.

For six days it looked as if Bulgaria's socialists would have the last laugh after the government failed again and again to bring down the white marble mausoleum in the capital Sofia that once contained the embalmed body of the country's first communist leader, Georgi Dimitrov.

In 1949 it had taken Bulgarians six days to erect it along the lines of Lenin's tomb in Moscow.

Using explosives and bulldozers, demolition gangs finally levelled the monument which Prime Minister Ivan Kostov had called a symbol of totalitarianism.

### Embarrassment to the government

The failure to destroy the building had become embarrassing for Bulgaria's Union of Democratic Forces government.

From the beginning hundreds of spectators were watching the demolition, often heckling the politicians present.

After the failed first attempt on 21 August some compared the fiasco with "the impotence" of the administration.

### National debate

The decision to destroy the Dimitrov Mausoleum was taken after a heated national debate.

The former leader was embalmed and interred in the building

in 1949. Mr Dimitrov's body was removed from the mausoleum and cremated in 1990, a year after the collapse of communism in Bulgaria.

The fate of the empty building remained a thorny issue.

While ministers said that the mausoleum was an obstacle to redeveloping the capital, some political opponents alleged that the plan was pure politicking ahead of local elections.

One opinion poll found that about two-thirds of the population disapproved of demolition and wanted the monument preserved.

### **Big bang not big enough**

It always stood a good chance of survival. After all, it had been designed to withstand a nuclear attack.

At their first attempt, demolition experts packed the 1.5-metre thick walls of the building with some 600kg of explosives.

The first detonation rocked the capital, shattering the windows of surrounding government buildings and covering the central 9th of September Square in a thick cloud of smoke and dust.

As the dust settled, the iconic monument was still standing, albeit a little lop-sided.

The demolition team did not concede defeat and returned a few hours later for another go.

It failed in similar style. The government declared that a third detonation on Sunday evening would do the trick. Even more people turned up to watch the spectacle, this time with the promise of an extra 300kgs of explosives.

### **'Technical errors'**

It was another impressive failure, but the government was not prepared to take the blame.

Deputy Minister of Construction Teodor Dechev blamed the blunders on technical errors in the detonation.

Lessons had been learned from that wasted weekend though. Instead of going for the spectacular big blast, the government decided to gradually chip away at the obstinate marble giant.

On Monday the workmen returned with bulldozers and more explosives.

With a series of smaller detonations and mechanical demolition gear they finally razed the mausoleum to the ground.

# THE PRAGUE POST

www.praguepost.com

Nov 17-23, 2004  
Volume 14, Number 46

## AFTER THE FALL

**The struggle to come to terms with the communist past has dimmed the future more than anyone anticipated in 1989.**



### **Students demand freedom during a Nov. 17, 1989, rally in Prague.**

Peaceful demonstrators were later viciously beaten by police. The following days saw a chain of mass protests that led to the collapse of the communist regime. Vaclav Havel, top, led calls for democracy.

By Dinah A. Spritzer  
Staff Writer, *The Prague Post*

About the only sure thing one can say of the Czech Republic on the 15th anniversary of the so-called Velvet Revolution is that nothing turned out the way anyone expected it would. And that is because no one knew what to expect.

Fewer than 1,000 anticommunist activists were organizing against the government just prior to November 1989, according to the files of the Czechoslovak secret police, and even the protesters had only a vague idea of what would come after the regime crumbled.

Their achievements -- democracy and freedom from tyranny -- are what Czechs today can be most proud of, Vaclav Havel told the Czech News Agency Oct. 20.

But it is the 68-year-old ex-president's afterthought that hints at what might be called a Velvet malaise, a sense of disappointment that permeates a society still healing from more than four decades of totalitarianism: "All this is much more complicated and takes more time than we believed then, in the atmosphere of general enthusiasm," Havel said.

Some foreign observers, often unable to distinguish among the former Eastern bloc countries, flippantly refer to the Czech Republic as one of those ex-totalitarian regimes still distinguished from the West by a lower standard of living, gray architecture and a dour populace. What such a broad-brush assessment misses is how the

Czechs dealt with the last years in a different way than neighbors such as Hungary, Poland and even Slovakia.

The economic free-for-all of the early 1990s, a continued disenchantment with politics, a sluggish judiciary and the inability to openly debate the moral residue of the previous regime all contribute to the unique social tensions of the post-communist Czech Republic. On the upside, the country and some of its neighbors have done in 15 years what it took post-World War II Europe much longer to accomplish -- economic stability, a democracy based on rule of law a free press and respect for human rights.

### **Short memories**

Whether on the left or right of the political spectrum, nearly all observers of Czech society agree it is burdened with the inability to publicly ponder the past regime without extreme discomfort. "Not only did we not discuss why we put up with communism, we haven't even solved what was done after the last war," said Jiri Musil, sociologist and professor at Charles University, referring to the thorny issue of Czechoslovakia's expulsion of nearly 3 million ethnic Germans in 1946. "On the other hand, if you look at the German experience after World War II, they needed 20 years to come to grips with Nazism. We have to wait until our grandchildren ask us what happened."

Musil acknowledged that in Poland and Hungary, public reckoning with the past has been more successful. Despite early efforts by the Czechoslovak government to criminalize the last regime, society has a sense that most people got away with something, Musil added. Only two major political figures of the communist era were ever sentenced to jail time, and a court deemed one too old to go to prison. "Those who collaborated, they were able to change their hats and now have positions of power that are not proper," Musil said.

Even now there are weekly newspaper revelations about former Czechoslovak secret police agents working at government ministries.

"It's a pity we did not have something like in South Africa, a truth-and-reconciliation commission," Musil continued. The price of not meting out punishment, according to Musil, is a sense of distrust, political apathy and frustration among ordinary people. "Too much velvet I think was not quite fair," he said.

Musil and other sociologists interviewed for this article claim that today young people are far removed from the moral corruption they say characterized society under communism.

But how can young people draw lessons from the past if they don't know anything about it? The subject of communism and its demise is rarely addressed in the Czech school system.

"In high school, we didn't discuss anything that happened during communism or 15 years ago," said 23-year-old Zuzana Hasarova of Brno, now studying law and accounting at Masaryk University. "I am sure at least some of the teachers were former members of the Communist Party, and they avoided the whole subject."

### **Center of the world?**

Two communist dictums still permeating Czech life are that it is the state's job to take care of individuals and that individuals shouldn't

bother with anyone but themselves. "The regime lasted 40 years, and it will take 40 years to develop a normal, Western-style, civic-oriented society," said Libor Roucek, a member of the European Parliament who fled Czechoslovakia in 1977 and returned in the 1990s to become involved in politics.

Jan Jirak, a professor of media studies at Charles University, said his biggest disappointment 15 years after the end of the communist regime is "that people are still walking around in a bubble of mirrors; they see just themselves. I had hoped people would have more of a sense of community by now, but this selfishness was bolstered by the right-wing political elite of the 1990s," he said, recalling the motto of a political leader of the period: "Selfishness is the engine of development."

Yet many Czechs have adopted a broader feeling of commitment to their neighbors, said Simon Panek, a student leader of the November 1989 anticommunist protests and now director of humanitarian aid for the People in Need charity. "Not long ago we collected 1.4 million Kc (\$56,000) [from public donations] to finance the construction of a school in Ethiopia," Panek said. "It took some time for people in the Czech Republic to behave this way."

Fifteen years is not a long enough time to develop a political class, many pundits have argued. "I am extremely happy with how things turned out because I expected the transition to democracy to take a lot longer than it did. After all, Argentina tried to make such a transition for 50 years," said Vladimira Dvorakova, head of the political science department at the Prague University of Economics. She noted that in Hungary and Poland, bureaucrats were already being sent West for training in the 1980s. "We did not have that advantage. And a problem that persists today is that politicians are not accountable and civil servants still do not know that it is their job to serve the public," she said.

The development of political life in the Czech Republic has also been distorted by the long-term rivalry of President Vaclav Klaus, formerly head of the right-wing Civic Democrats, and Vaclav Havel, who served as president for 13 years.

"The Czech Republic's approach to European integration is so polarized in comparison with other Central and East European countries because the EU became a key point of difference between Havel and Klaus," said Heather Grabbe, enlargement expert at the Center for European Reform, a London-based think tank. "The Czech Republic was also the first of the new member state to develop a strong europhobic strand in its national political debates."

She added that another unique aspect of the Czech political scene is its inability to achieve a full post-World War II reconciliation with Germany. "The Czech political class is much more prone to nationalist rhetoric about Germany than its counterparts, such as Poland," she noted, citing a country that lost millions more victims to the Nazi genocide than Czechoslovakia.

### **The economy**

Unlike Hungary and Poland, Czechoslovakia had no private sector in 1989, a source of trouble for inexperienced politicians. "We adopted the voucher privatization system, which proved to be disastrous. We



Crowds demanding democratic reforms gather at Wenceslas Square in November 1989. photos by Tomki Nemeč



A young demonstrator throws flowers at heavily armed security forces at Narodni triad Nov.17. Shortly afterward, riot police beat peaceful protesters.

are still feeling the effects today," Roucek said. "The banking sector was privatized far too late." Small and medium-size businesses also took a long time to blossom.

"Czech taxpayers are still burdened by the bad debts the state took on because politicians let their friends privatize state companies and then bankrupt them," Roucek said.

The standard of living in the Czech Republic is approximately 60 percent of that in West European countries, according to several leading economists. That situation leads to a nostalgia for the old days among the most impoverished citizens, who often cast their votes for the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, which holds nearly a quarter of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies.

This month the European Bank for Development and Reconstruction (EBRD) announced that it expects the Czech Republic's growth in gross domestic product this year to rank among the slowest of 27 European countries, at 4 percent. On a more positive note, the Czech Republic continues to attract the highest level of foreign investment in the region.

Pavel Sobisek, chief economist for Raiffeisenbank in Prague, said, however, that the Czech Republic has "a high level of corruption, probably higher than in many other Central and East European countries." The EBRD report cited earlier notes that public procurement procedures are still not transparent in smaller towns.

In such an environment, Roucek said, it is not surprising that the younger generation is fixated on their own personal well-being, not the public good. "I read an interview last weekend with a participant in TV Nova's *Superstar* talent contest. He said he would not vote [in the Nov. 5-6 Senate and regional elections] because politics would not improve his personal life. What a pity that this is the attitude of successful young people."



# A concrete city under Belgrade

## Bunker network may have hidden war crimes suspects

The Associated Press

**BELGRADE:** An investigation of the shooting of two soldiers has revealed, beneath the Serbian capital, a Communist-era network of tunnels and bunkers that could have been hideouts for war crimes suspects.

The complex, 5 square kilometers, or 2 square miles, in size — called a “concrete underground city” by the local media — was built deep inside a rocky hill in a residential area of Belgrade in the 1960s on the orders of the Communist leader Josip Broz Tito. Until recently its existence was known only to senior military commanders and politicians.

The secret was revealed during an investigation this month into the deaths of two soldiers who were guarding an entrance to the complex. Both were found shot and killed.

Official explanations of the Oct. 5 incident have failed to satisfy the soldiers’ families or a skeptical media, sparking speculation that fugitive Bosnian officers wanted by the United Nations for atrocities during the 1990s Balkans wars may have sought refuge in the complex, which was originally designed to resist nuclear attack.

“My son died because he saw some big secret,” Petar Milovanovic, the father of one of the two soldiers, said recently. “They had to die to take the secret to the grave with them.”

The army initially said the two soldiers shot each other, then backtracked and reported that one had murdered the other before committing suicide. An independent commission is now investigating.



The Associated Press

A military police officer guarding the spot where the death of two Serb soldiers last month led to the discovery of a giant web of bunkers and tunnels under Belgrade.

The circumstances surrounding the deaths — and any link with high-profile war crimes fugitives such as General Ratko Mladic — remain murky. But the inquiry has shed light on a complex that was once so secret, military men here say, that NATO did not even suspect its existence when it bombed Serbia in 1999.

Tito, who ruled Yugoslavia from World War II until he died in 1980, ordered it built because he feared a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union after his country’s 1948 split with Stalin.

According to media reports citing military sources, an elevator shaft 56 meters, or 185 feet, deep leads to a six-story underground complex with reinforced concrete walls 3 meters thick.

The main hall is as big as a subway station and could be used to shelter tanks and trucks, the reports by the Vечernje Novosti newspaper and other media said.

Tunnels stretching for hundreds of meters link palaces, bunkers and safe houses. Rooms are separated by steel vault doors 3 meters high and 30 centimeters thick.

The complex has its own power supply and ventilation.

Former President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia is believed to have convened his war cabinet there in 1999 while NATO bombs fell on his country for 78 days to punish him for cracking down on independence-seeking ethnic Albanians in Kosovo.



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## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>4</sup> Anne Michaels: *Fugitive Pieces*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc.(1996) p7.
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- <sup>10</sup> Ted Hughes, *see above*, p91.
- <sup>11</sup> quoted by Andreas Huyssen: *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (2003). p120.
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- <sup>13</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *see above*. p118.
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- <sup>15</sup> Ibid: p116.
- <sup>16</sup> Daniel Arasse: Anselm Kiefer. New York: Harry N. Abrams (2001) p28.
- <sup>17</sup> Eli Cohen and Gila Almagor from their film *Under the Domim Tree* quoted by James Young: *At Memory's Edge*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2000). p1.
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#### **1.2 Public Space of Memory:**

- <sup>20</sup> Walter Benjamin: "Thesis on the Philosophy of History." *Illuminations*. ( transl. H. Andredt) New York: Schocken Books (1985). p.225.
- <sup>21</sup> Sanford Levinston: *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies*. London: Duke University Press (1998) p137.
- <sup>22</sup> Maurice Halbwachs: *On Collective Memory*. (transl. L. Coser). Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1992) p40,48.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid: p171.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid: p182.
- <sup>25</sup> Susannah Radstone: *Memory and Methodology*. Oxford; New York: Berg (2000). p 45.
- <sup>26</sup> Pierre Nora. *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. Vol.1, *transl*: A. Goldhammer, New York: Columbia University Press (1996). p20.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid: p 3.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid: p XVII.
- <sup>29</sup> Maurice Halbwachs: *On Collective Memory*. (transl. L. Coser). Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1992) p189.
- <sup>30</sup> Paul Connerton: *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1989). p37.
- <sup>31</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *see above*. p140.
- <sup>32</sup> Aldo Rossi. *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge: The MIT Press (1982). p130 -131.
- <sup>33</sup> Ibid: p115.
- <sup>34</sup> Andreas Huyssen: *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. (2003). p101.

<sup>35</sup> Sigmund Freud. *Civilizations and its Discontents*. trans:J.Stachey. NY: Penguin Books (1991) p257.

<sup>36</sup> Aldo Rossi, *see above*. p57.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*: p22.

### **1.3 Instruments of Memory: Commemoration:**

<sup>38</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *see above*. p101.

<sup>39</sup> Aldo Rossi, *see above*. p57.

<sup>40</sup> Aristotle: *Aristotle on Memory*. trans: R. Sorabji, London: Duckworth, (1972). p51.

<sup>41</sup> Adrian Forty: *The Art of Forgetting*. Oxford: Berg Publishers (1999). p4.

<sup>42</sup> Alois Riegl: "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin" trans: K.Forster. *Oppositions*, no 25 (1982). p31.

<sup>43</sup> Adrian Forty, *see above*. p4.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*: p15.

<sup>45</sup> Pierre Nora, *see above*. p8.

<sup>46</sup> Robert Musil: "Monuments". *Posthumous Papers of a Living Author*. trans: Peter Wortsman. Hygiene, Colorado: Eridanos Press, (1987).p 61.

<sup>47</sup> Sigmund Freud, *see above*. p256.

<sup>48</sup> Adrian Forty, *see above*. p6.

<sup>49</sup> James Young: *At Memory's Edge*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2000). p92.

<sup>50</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *see above*. p109.

<sup>51</sup> Aldo Rossi, *see above*. p7.

<sup>52</sup> Pierre Nora, *see above*. p15.

<sup>53</sup> James Young, *see above*. p118.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*: p118.

<sup>55</sup> Daniel Abramson, *quoting Maya Lin*: "Maya Lin and the 1960's: Monuments, Time, Lines and Minimalism." *Critical Inquiry*. no 22 (1996) p.688.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p688.

<sup>57</sup> Adrian Forty: *The Art of Forgetting*. Oxford: Berg Publishers (1999). p138.

<sup>58</sup> James Young: *At Memory's Edge*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2000). p31

<sup>59</sup> James Young, *quoting Jochen and Esther Gerz* : *At Memory's Edge*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2000). p120.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, p134.

<sup>61</sup> Anna Novakov. "Invisible Monument: Jochen Gerz in conversation with J. Lichtenstein and G. Wajeman." *Veiled Histories: The Body, Place and Public Art*. San Francisco Art Institute Critical Press, NY, NY (1997) p.66.

<sup>62</sup> Michele Reboli: "Boeing 747 El Al/ Bijlmer Memorial" *Casabella*. No 675. (Feb.2000) p28.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p28-31.

<sup>64</sup> Peter Eisenman: "Memorial to the Murdered Jews" *Casabella*. No 675. Mondadon Publishing (Feb.2000) p 38-41.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p38-41.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p38-41.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p38-41.

## PART II FORGETTING Notes:

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### 1.1 Site of Traumatic Memory:

- <sup>1</sup> Milan Kundera, *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, transl. by Aaron Asher. New York: Perennial Classics. (1999) p10.
- <sup>2</sup> Walter Benjamin: "Thesis on the Philosophy of History." *Illuminations*. ( transl. H. Andredt) New York: Schocken Books (1985). p225.
- <sup>3</sup> Donald R Shanor. *Soviet Europe*. N.Y: Harper & Row, Publishers (1975). p1
- <sup>4</sup> J.F Brown. *Bulgaria Under Communist Rule*. New York: Praeger Publishers (1970) p11
- <sup>5</sup> Hristo Devedjiev. *Stalinization of the Bulgarian Society, 1949-1953*. Philadelphia, PA: Dorrance & Co. (1975) p18
- <sup>6</sup> Tzvetan Todorov. *Voices From the Gulag: Life and Death in Communist Bulgaria*. Pennsylvania, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press (1999). p14.
- <sup>7</sup> J.F. Brown, *see above*. p11
- <sup>8</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *see above*. p38.
- <sup>9</sup> Hristo Devegjiev. *see above*. p178.
- <sup>10</sup> Tzvetan Todorov, *see above*. p39.
- <sup>11</sup> From the poem by Robert Graves "The Cool Web" (1927). *The Complete Poems: In One Volume* (edited by B. Graves) N.Y.: Paul and Co. Pub. Consortium (2001) p283
- <sup>12</sup> Nissan Oren. *Revolution Administered: Agrarianism and Communism in Bulgaria*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press. (1973) p.136.
- <sup>13</sup> F. Nietzsche. *Twilight of the Idols*. London, UK: Penguin Classics. (1990). p84
- <sup>14</sup> J. M. Coetzee. *Giving Offence: Essays on Censorship*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. (1996) p10
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid*: p160
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid*: p10. (referring to Danilo Kis: "Censorship/ Self-Censorship" from *Index on Censorship 15/1 (Jan.1986, p44)*)
- <sup>17</sup> Nissan Oren, *see above*. p136.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid*: p136.
- <sup>19</sup> Poem by Ivan Radoev. "Ballad for the Future." transl. by Sapinkof, Lisa and Georgi Belev. *Clay and Star: Contemporary Bulgarian Poets*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Milkweed Editions (1992) p58 During the Communist regime Ivan Radoev's work was severely attacked by government critics for its ironic and satirical social content and often banned from publishing.

### 2.2 Memory Erasure:

- <sup>20</sup> Milan Kundera: *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, transl. by Aaron Asher. New York: Perennial Classics. (1999) p217.
- <sup>21</sup> Sigmund Freud: *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. trans:J.Stachey. London, UK: Penguin Books (1991).p324
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid*: p174.
- <sup>23</sup> Aldo Rossi. *The Architecture of the City*. Cambridge: The MIT Press (1982). p130 -131.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid*: p131
- <sup>25</sup> Iveta Todorova-Pirgova: "Symbols and Images of 'Evil' in Student Protests in Sofia, 1997." *Cultural Analysis 2*, University of California (2001) p120.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid*: p121.
- <sup>27</sup> Adrian Forty. *The Art of Forgetting*. Oxford: Berg Publishers (1999) p10.
- <sup>28</sup> Regine Robin quoting Vladimir Gradev: "Le Mausolee de Dimitrov", *Communications 55* (1992)79-80 in "Requiem for a Topped Statue: History as Kitsch and Remake" *Queues, Rendezvous, Riots: Questioning Public Art and Architecture*. Banff, Alberta: Walter Phillips Gallery Inc. (1994). p.81-98.
- <sup>29</sup> From the poem by Konstantin Pavlov "Adaptation". transl. by Sapinkof, Lisa and Georgi Belev. *Clay and Star: Contemporary Bulgarian Poets*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Milkweed Editions (1992) p77
- <sup>30</sup> Article by Reuters (www.Reuters.com) posted on Aug 23, 1999, quoting The Bulgarian daily newspaper "The 24 Chasa"

## **PART III EMERGENCE Notes:**

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### **1.1 Site Context:**

<sup>1</sup> *Sofia: 120 Years as Capital of Bulgaria*. 2001: The Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Professor Marin Drinov Academic Publishing House. p490.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid: p526.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid: p508.

<sup>4</sup> *The Sofia Echo* ([www.sofiaecho.com/sofsight05.php](http://www.sofiaecho.com/sofsight05.php)) is Bulgaria's weekly English newspaper also published in the Web Issue 45, Nov 12-18 (2004).

### **1.2 Ritual of Recollection:**

<sup>5</sup> Maurice Halbwachs: *On Collective Memory*. (transl. L. Coser). Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1992) p24

<sup>6</sup> Paul Connerton: *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1989) p43.

<sup>7</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, see above. p40.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Connerton, see above. p38.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid: p72.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid: p45.

<sup>11</sup> Pierre Thibault: *Projects + Achievements*. Quebec, Canada: Belle Publishing(1997) p168

<sup>12</sup> Adrian Forty: *The Art of Forgetting*. Oxford: Berg Publishers (1999). p173.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid: p173.

### **1.3 Emerging Memory:**

<sup>14</sup> W.G Sebald: *Austerlitz*. München : C. Hanser (2001),p24.

<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud: *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. (transl: J. Stachey). London, UK: Penguin Books (1991),p489.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Batz: "Urban Light, the Stage-Sets of the City" *Topos* issue 2004/ March 46, p19.

<sup>17</sup> Sigmund Freud: *Interpretations of Dreams*. (transl.: Dr.A.A.Brill). NY: Modern Library edition (1994). p272.

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