

PLASZOW

Design, Strategy, and Intervention Work Booklet



Callie Jo Bernier

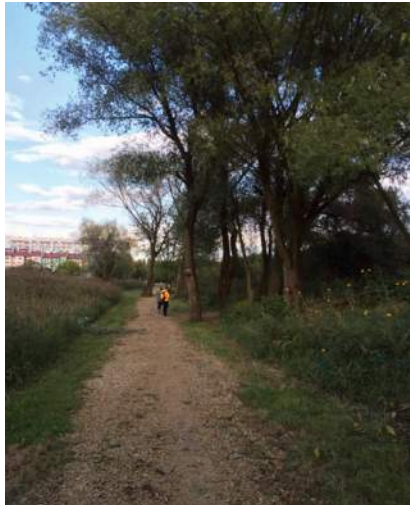
Fall 2014

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DESIGN GUIDE



Design Statement

Through an ecological lens, Plaszow will be connected to the rest of Krakow and regain a 'place' within the city context. Locals will be the primary users, yet visitors will be welcomed and directed through Plaszow in order to learn the lessons of the past and preserve the memory of the site. Landscapes are continuously evolving spaces that do not represent one moment in time. Time has subtly interposed itself in Plaszow, disconnecting the physical setting to its past. Working across different scales and interdisciplinary approaches, Plaszow will be designed and managed to be an enduring natural and historical preserve.



GROUP ANALYSIS

Memento

Throughout the week of analysing Plaszow, I couldn't help but think it is actually a beautiful place. Despite the site's dark past, there were families enjoying evening strolls, red berries filling the Crataegus trees, and gorgeous views of sunsets over Krakow. I got the impression that the locals have moved on, not forgotten, but moved on in life. All that remains of the ex-concentration camp is foundational ruins being overgrown by vegetation and an altered landscape. In life, what one leaves behind is what they are remembered by, as well as through the lives of others.

Because of these observations, I started to think that the snail shell I found on site was somehow representing the cycle of life. One leaves something behind which is then used by others or makes its way back to the earth, just like the snail shell and the camp of Plaszow. The camp is being consumed by the soil and vegetation as time moves on and it becomes a distant memory and point in time. It should never be forgotten, but I can't help but feel it is time to move on.

Plaszow should become functional and useable again, but in a way locals feel is respectful and appropriate. The cycle of life must continue. Just as nature evolves, so must human perspective and emotion. I think the site would best serve the local community as a nature preserve, which functions more like a park while still being respectful of the site's history. With lack of greenspace in Krakow, the locals would benefit from Plaszow being a user-friendlier place. The site and locals are not ready for big change because not enough time has passed. However, I think they are ready to change their perception of the site and how they use it.



Context

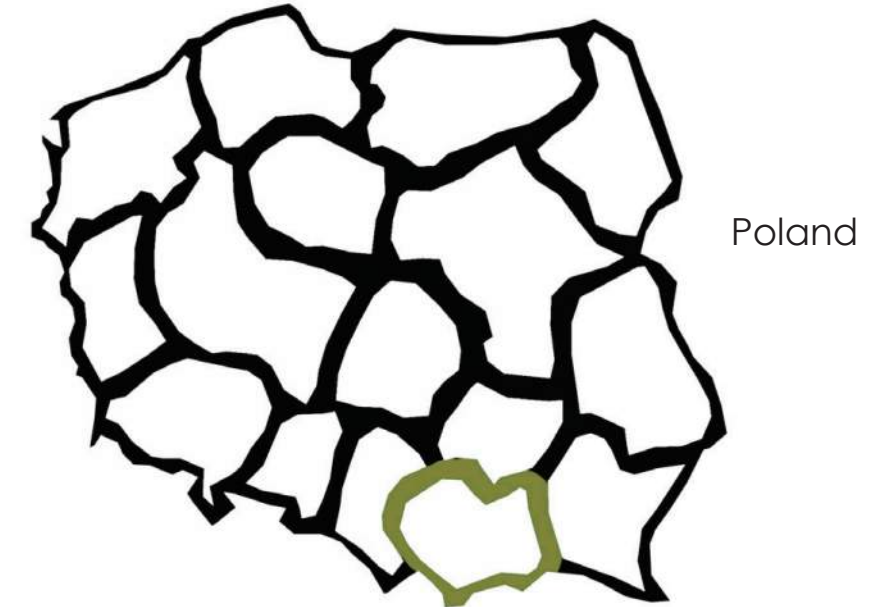
Plaszow is situated 3.5 kilometres south of the city centre of Krakow, Poland. The site is located on the border of the Krzemionki mountain chain northeast of the city. Because of this elevated position with views over most of Krakow, the site has historically been used for strategic positioning of monuments, forts, and bases. This has lent the site to multiple uses over time and its heritage can be seen through the area.

It is a World Heritage Site being the location of Krakus Mound believed to have been built around 500 AD. Krakus Mound is the highest point on site. It provides views of Krakow and some of the site, up to the valley edge. As a tourist attraction and look out to the location of Schindler's List, Krakus Mound is highly maintained.

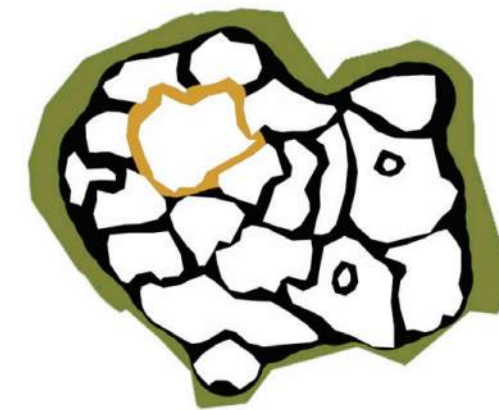
Much of the site has been carved away for its limestone. Steep cliffs were cut to allow trains as well. These cuts manifest themselves as two large quarries that now divide the site. The fact that Schindler's List was filmed in one of the quarries disorients visitors from the actual location of Plaszow concentration camp.

The southern end of the site was used as a working camp by the Nazis between 1942 and 1945. The camp functioned for only two years, but during that time many were killed. Ultimately, it is thought that over 10,000 people were murdered and buried here. Before the red army invaded, the camp was destroyed and evacuated by the remaining Nazis.

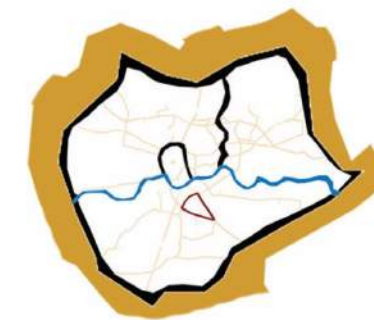
Although the camp was a relatively minor point in history in comparison to the centuries of activities occurring previously, it is the main point of contention on site today.



Poland



Lesser Poland



Krakow County

Existing Plan



Just south of the ecologically significant Visula River, Plaszow is surrounded by highways and railways making it unapproachable. It used to reside on the outskirts of the city, but now it is within the city limits. For this reason, the primary users are local residents in need of open space due to an overall lack of greenspace in Krakow. They have used the site for recreational purposes for the past 50 years, which upsets the few tourist who visit the site to learn about its history. The locals have a sense of being and memory on site, while most tourists base their findings on Schindler's List and become disorientated on site. This is why tours are infrequent in this part of Krakow, especially compared to the popular Jewish ghetto in Podgorze.

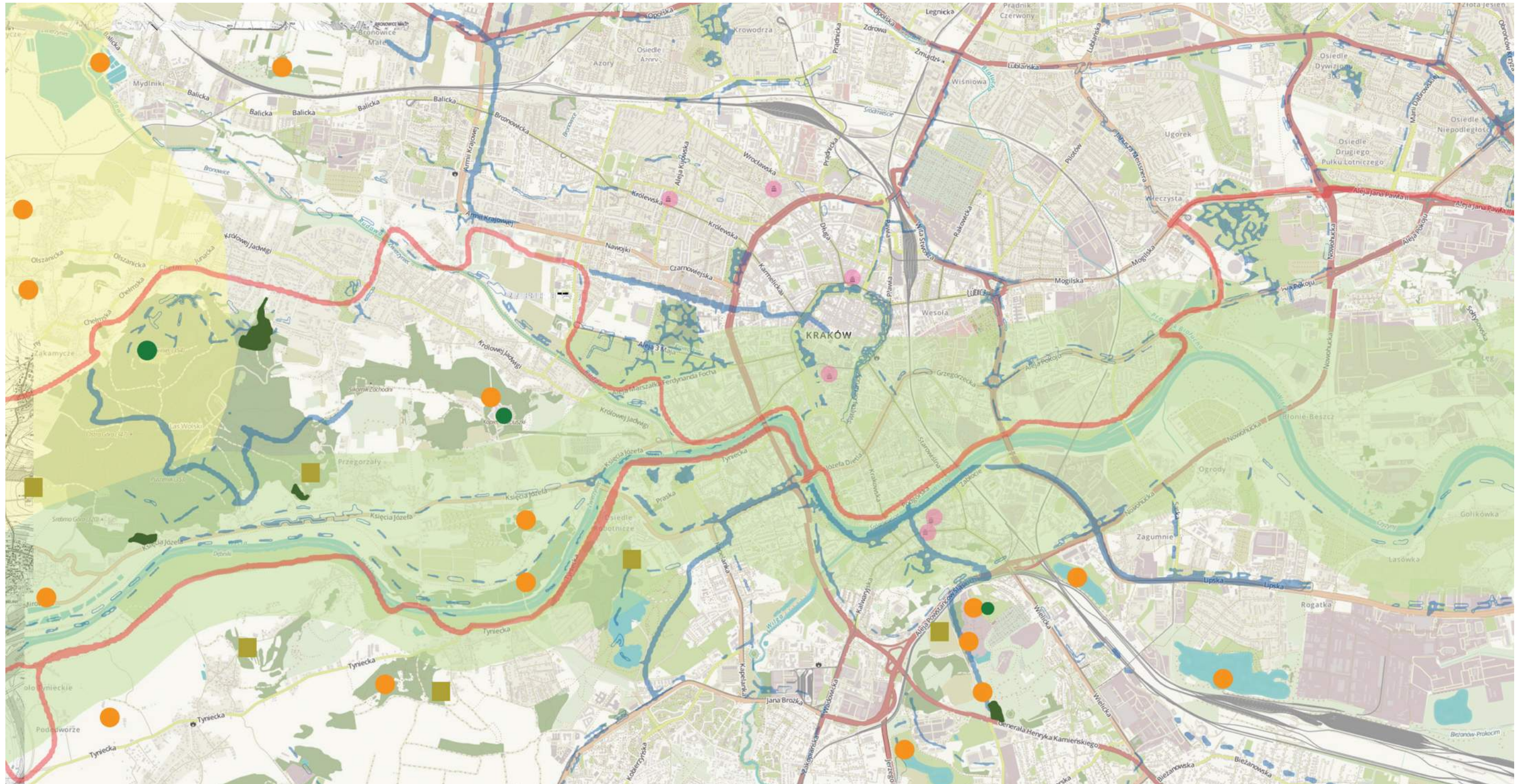


Time has subtly interposed itself between the site and the past, both in terms of memorialisation and regenerating vegetation. Only a deliberate act of memory could reconnect them. By revealing the archaeology of the camp, it could become a heritage site for all visitors. However, any materiality change without local consent would alter the local sense of place forever. In other words, the communities must be a part of any design implementation.

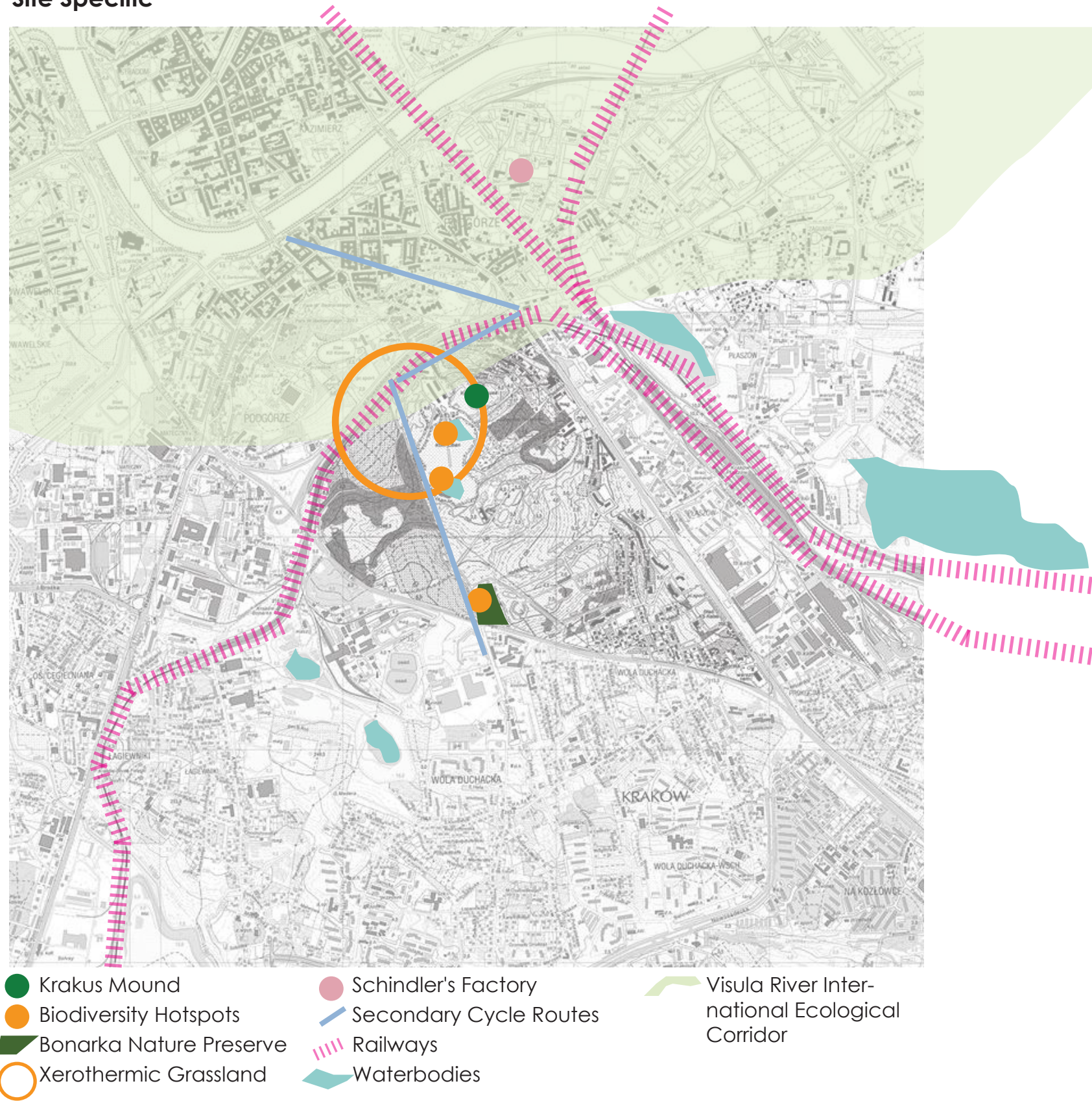


LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

Citywide



Site Specific



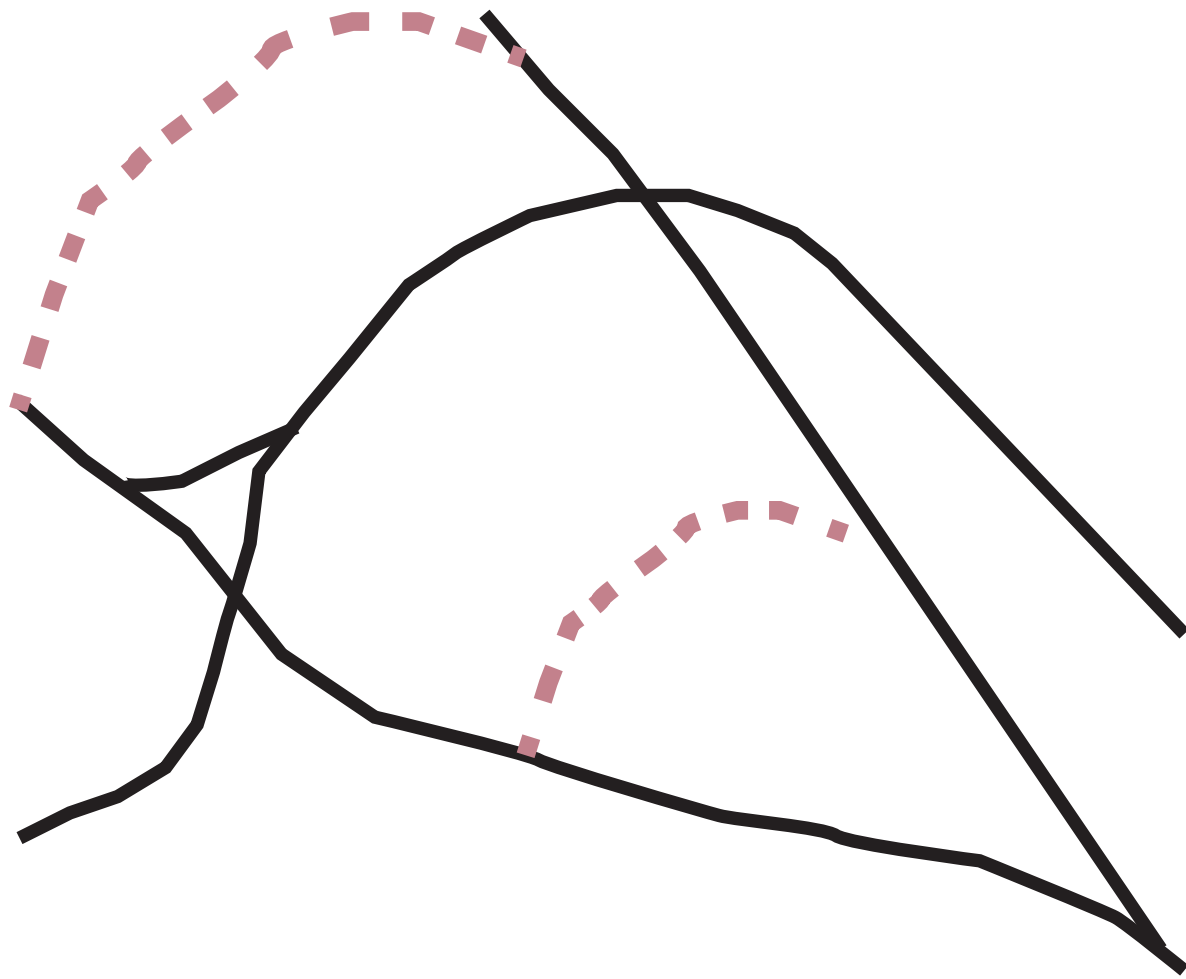
By looking at the site specifically, it is evident that the important ecological corridors and elements--Visula River, waterbodies, railways, biodiversity hotspots, and xerothermic grassland--are located primarily in the northern portion of the site. The Liban quarry has the potential to be an ecological haven for wildlife.





MASTER PLANNING

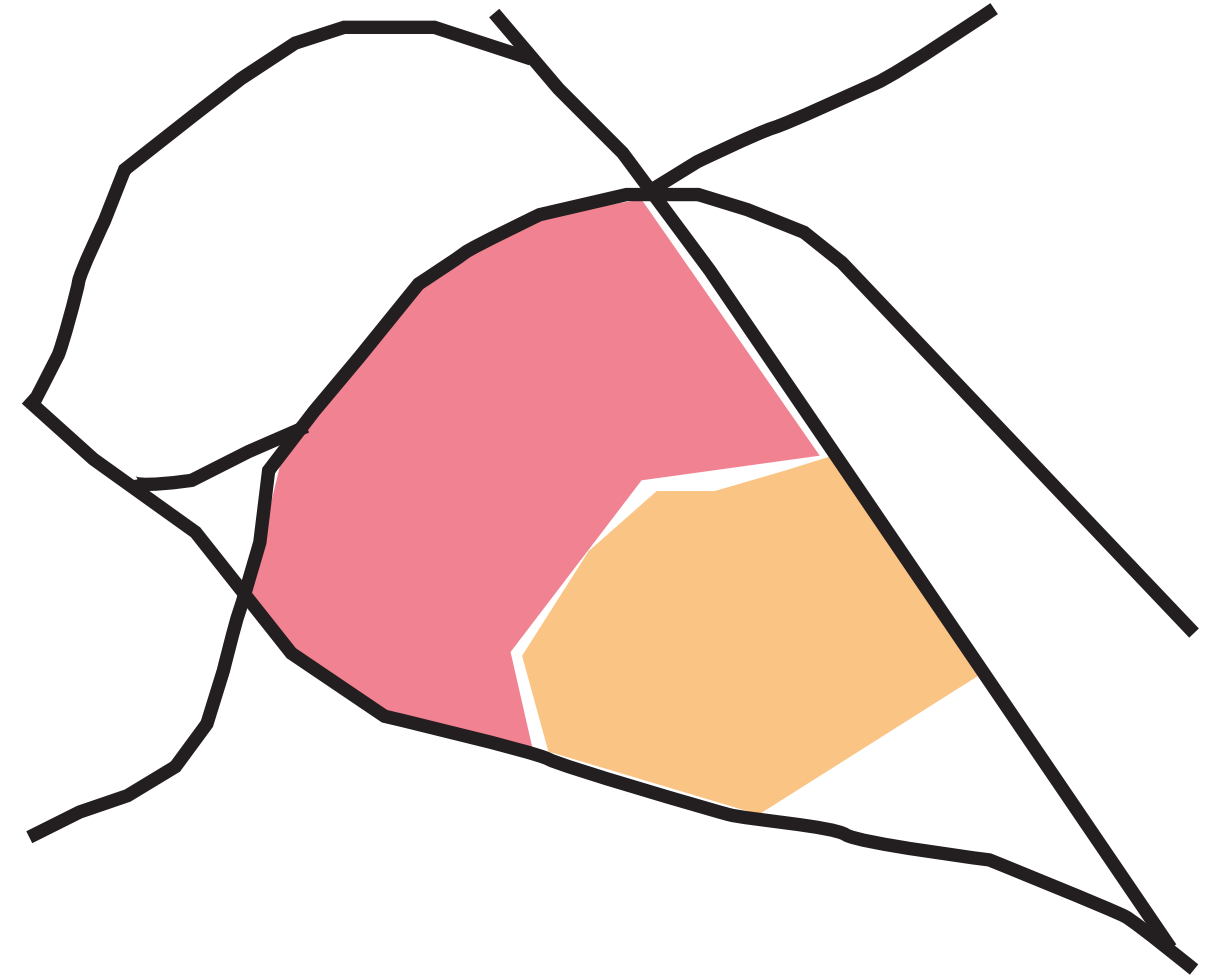
Composition



The existing roads to the north of the site mimic each other in an arc shape. This shape can be replicated where the concentration camp's outer fences were located to create a nice composition between the site and its surroundings.

--- Division

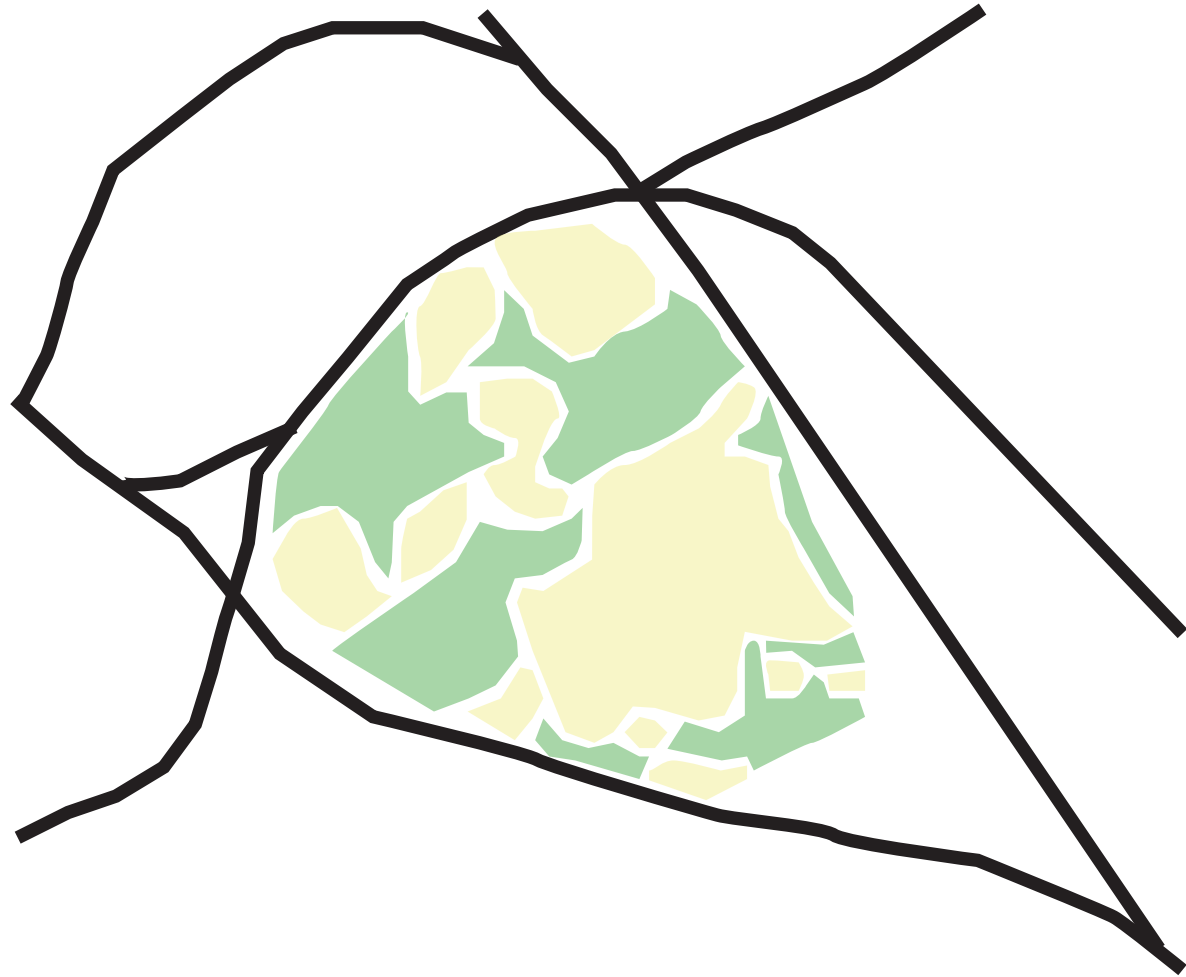
Form



Formed from the composition, the northern portion of the site is more naturalistic and serpentine due to the ecological corridors that exist in this region. On the other hand, the southern portion of the site is geometric in form because of the previous concentration camp layout.

◆ Serpentine
◆ Geometric

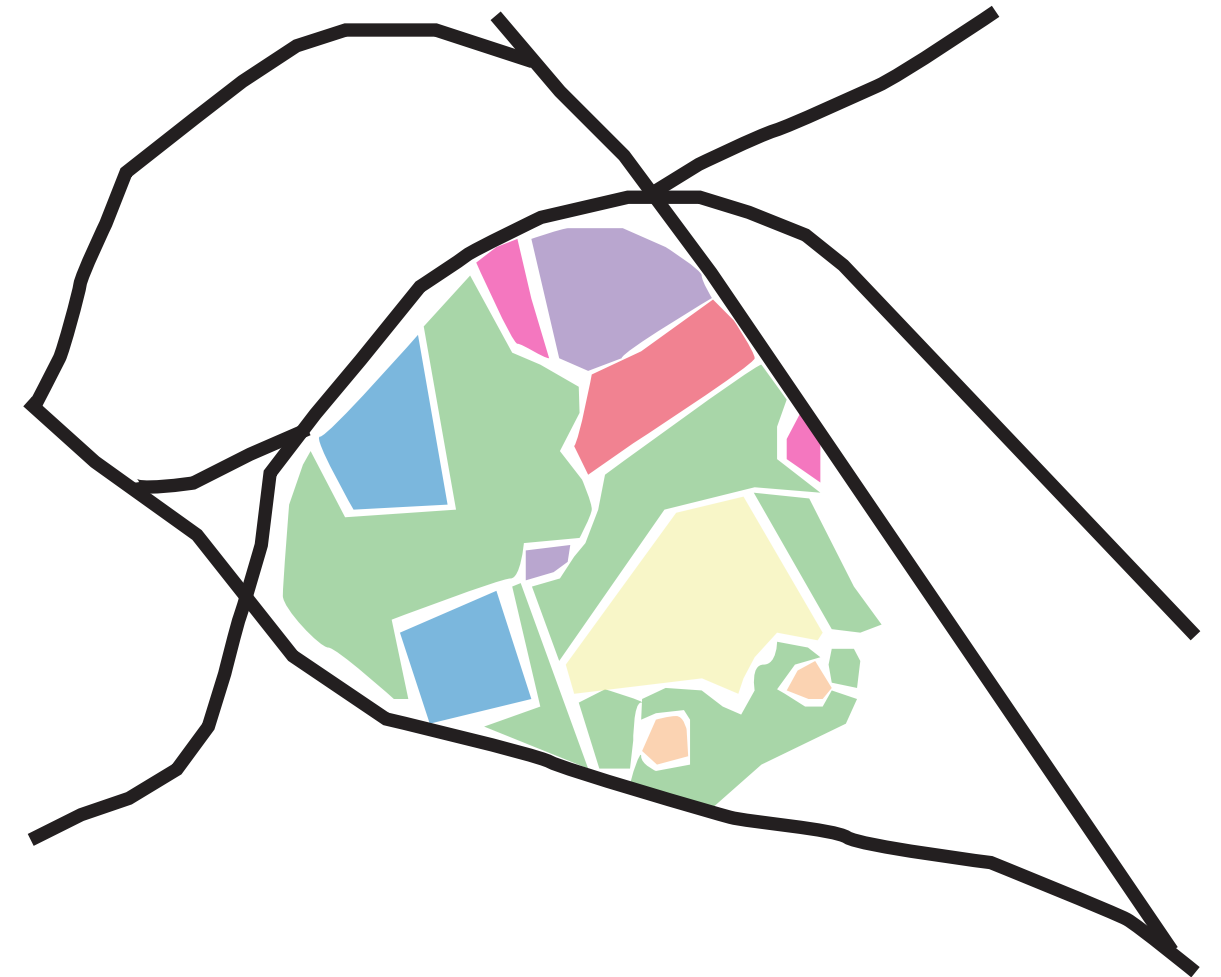
Space



Through exploration of design concepts and site tension surveys, certain areas were either opened or enclosed using existing and proposed vegetation to create a variety of spatial experiences.

- Open
- Enclose

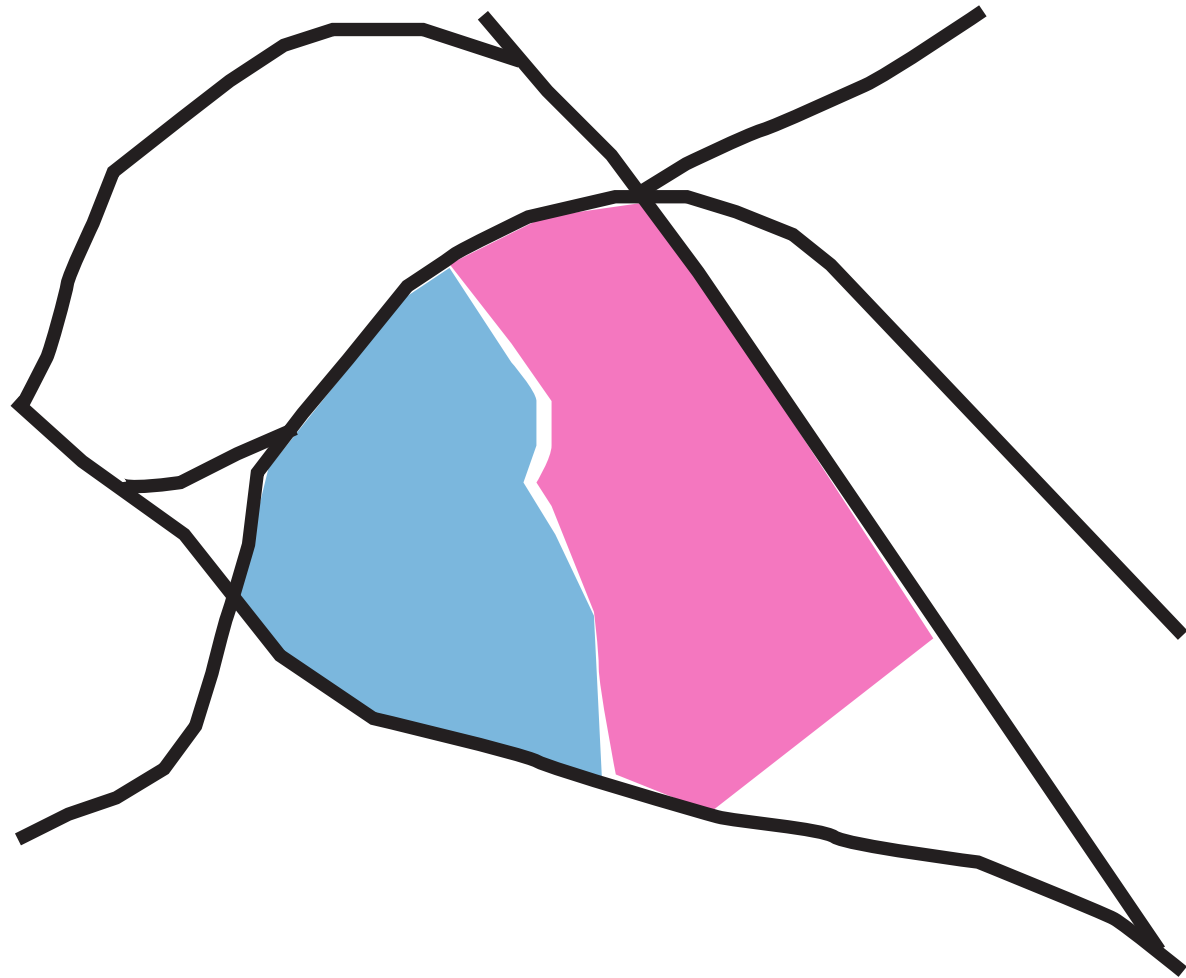
Programme



The site's edges--particularly the eastern edge that leads directly to the city centre--were programmed in order to invite visitors to explore.

- Visitor Entrance
- Pre-WWII History
- WWII History
- Mass Grave
- Cemetery
- Allotment
- Greenery

Visit



Because of the location of historical elements on site, as well as the proximity to the city centre and other attractions such as Schindler's factory, the eastern side of the site was designed for tourists. Meanwhile, the western side with allotments and recreational spaces was designed for locals.



Master Plan Layers

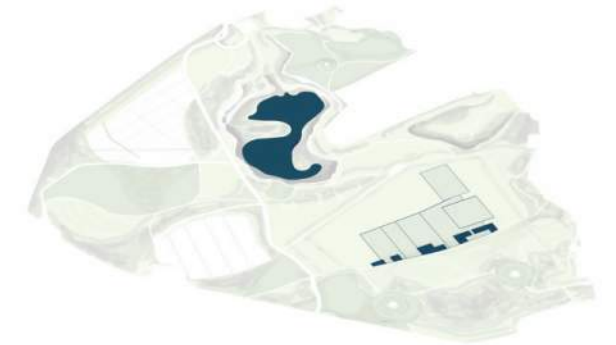
Plant



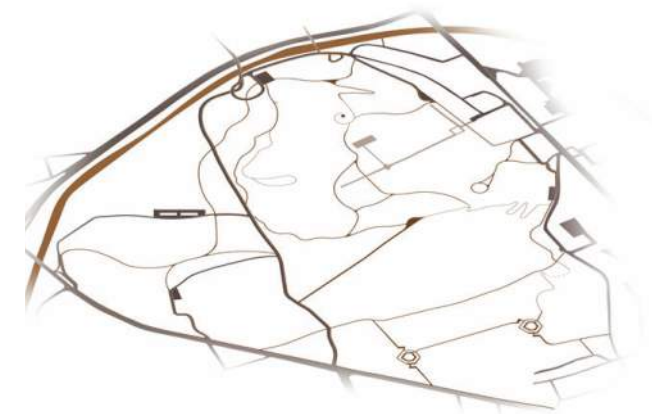
Rock



Water

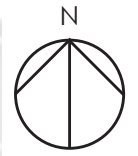


Route



Proposed Master Plan

1:2500



KEY

- HARDSCAPE**
- Railway
- Road/Parking Lot
- Path/Cycle Route
- Ditch
- Site Building
- Grave
- Rock Circle
- Pre-Burial Rubble
- Memorial
- Playground
- Cave
- Exposed Limestone
- Mass Grave Pebbles

- SOFTSCAPE**
- Existing Tree
- Proposed Tree
- Off-Site Tree
- Apple Tree
- Wetland Vegetation
- Lawn
- Meadow
- Pond
- Off-Site Waterbody

Master Plan Sectional Elevations



SECTIONAL ELEVATION A
City Quarry
1:100



SECTIONAL ELEVATION B
Liban Quarry
1:250



SECTIONAL ELEVATION C
Concentration Camp
1:100



SECTIONAL ELEVATION D
Mass Grave Memorial
1:100





DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Design Development Diagrams

CONSTRAINTS

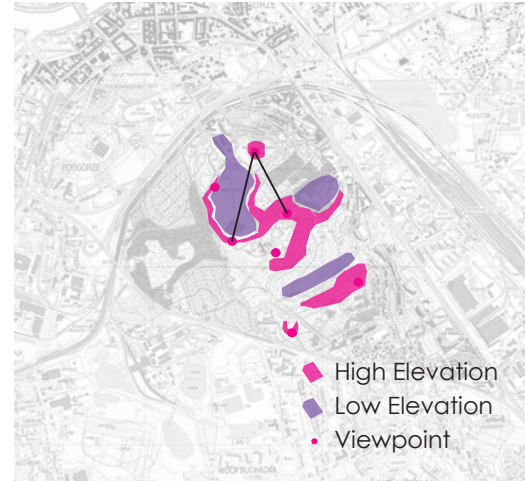
CITY & SITE INTERFACES



SITE PROGRAMMES



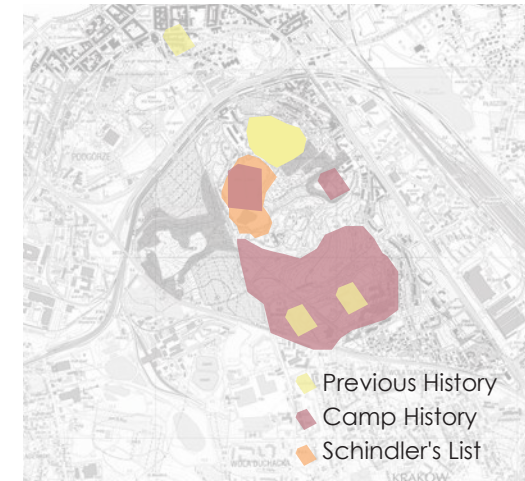
SITE TOPOGRAPHY



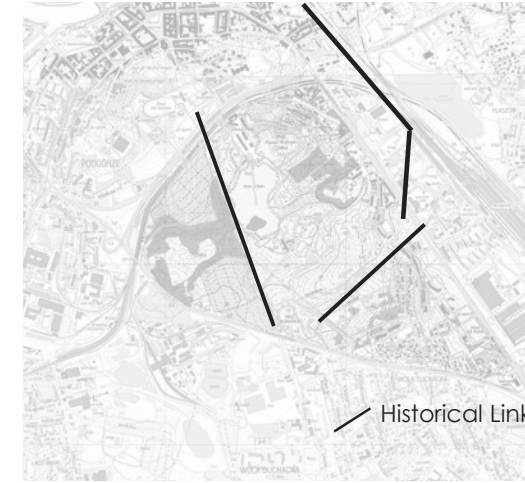
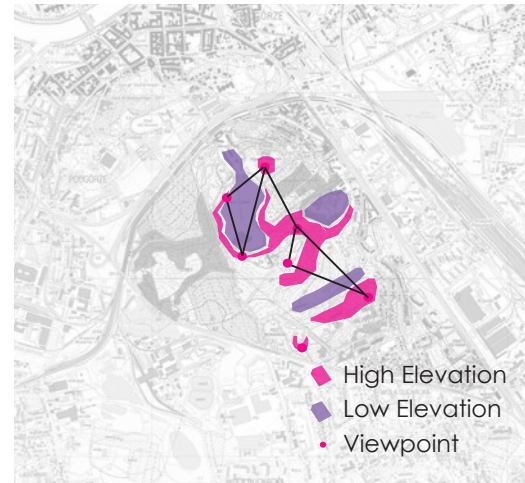
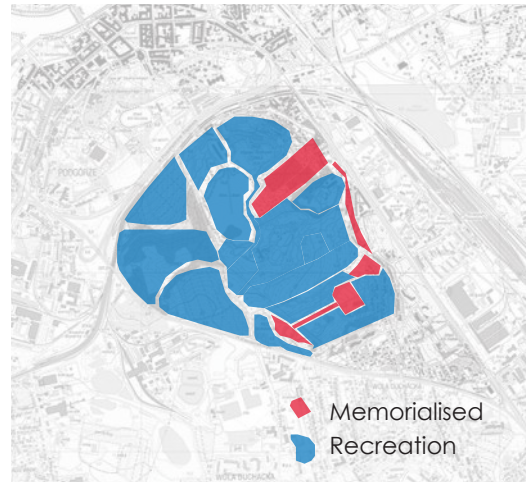
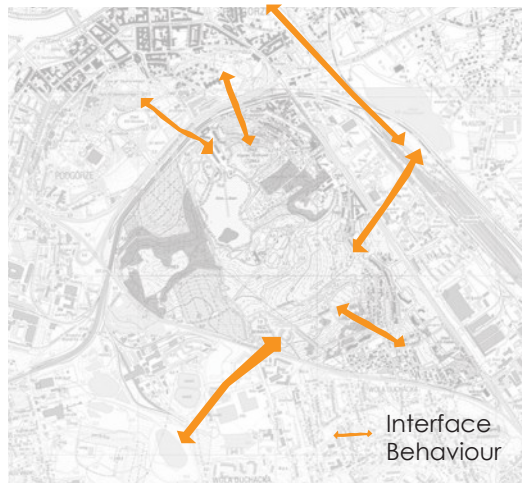
SITE MAINTENANCE



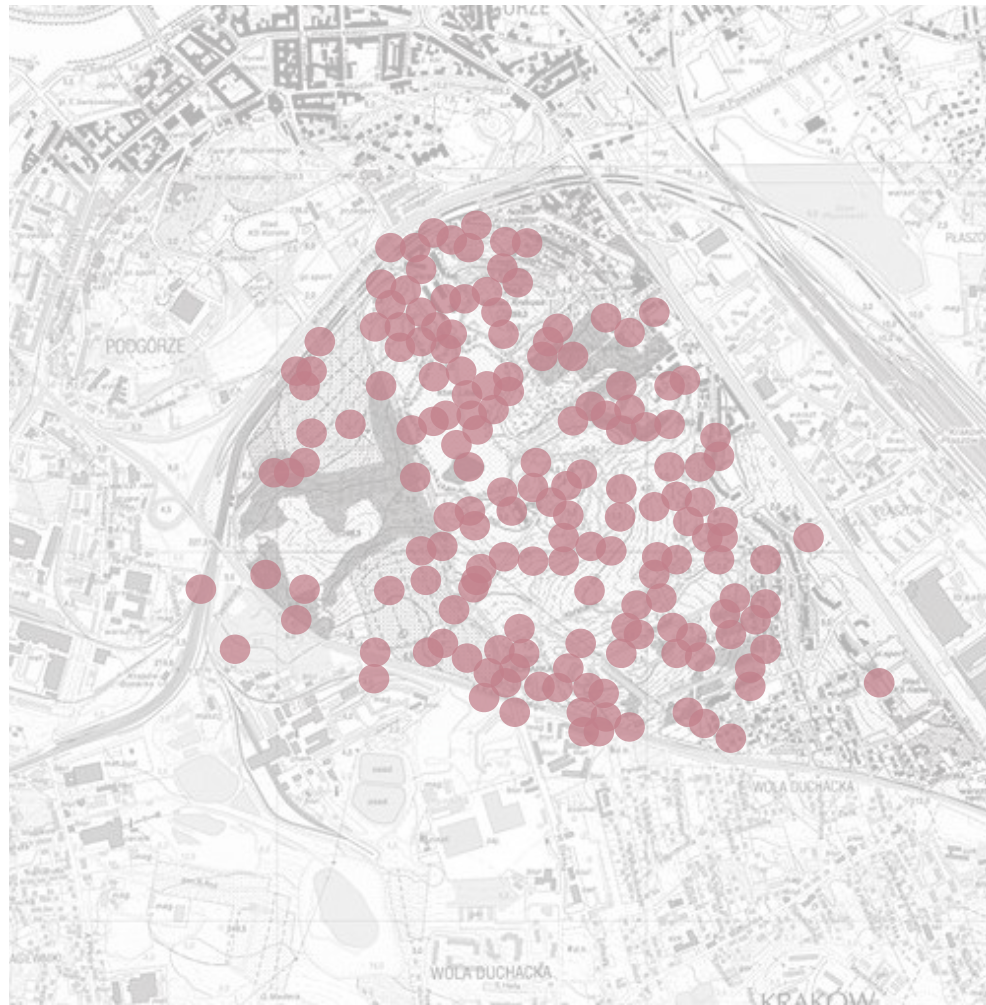
SITE HISTORY



OPPORTUNITIES



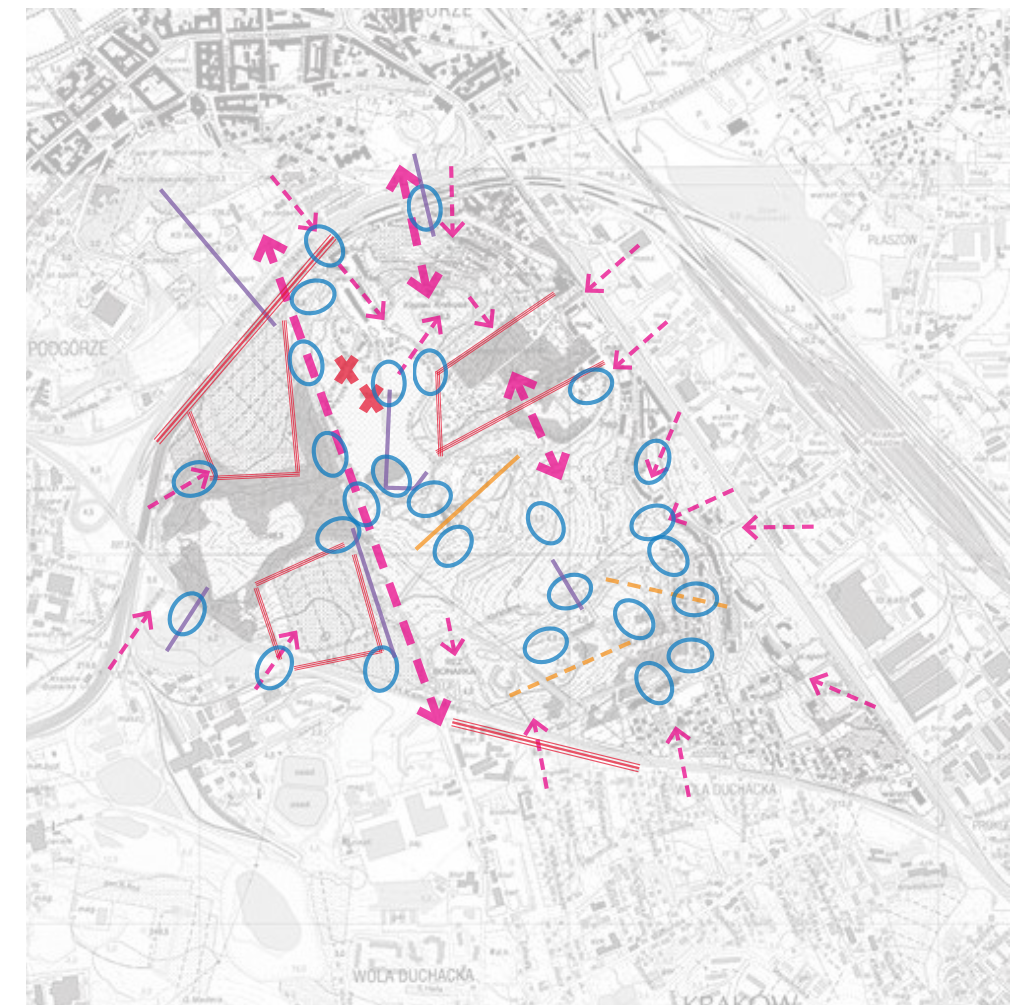
Existing Areas of Constraint



● Problematic Areas

A variety of problematic areas were found after layering a variety of tensions on site: historical, transportation, restrictive access, parking, vandalism/trash, fragmented habitat, safety, invasive, noise, view, erosion, maintenance, hydrology, signage, etc.

Proposed Areas of Opportunity



○ Open Areas
 ↗ Access Axis
 - - - View Open
 — View Barrier
 == Barrier
 — Habitat Link

Once the problematic areas were identified, solutions were devised for each to relieve the existing tensions. The solutions generally included opening up the space, providing access, opening a view, blocking a view, limiting access, or linking habitats. Some historical elements (particularly ones associated with Schindler's List) were removed to improve orientation on site and decrease confusion.

Conceptual Exploration

Influenced by the strategy plan and design development diagram layers, spatial and temporal aspects of change were explored:

Krakus Mound, allotments, water treatment plant, geological interest site, and graveyard require slow change or protection from change due to their history and/or functionality

The access points, quarries, memorials, and viewpoints require immediate change

The camp and regenerating woodland require slow change

Overall minimal change is required in order to respect the site's history and maintain its place and memory

Long-term effects of change

Ecologically - vegetation manipulation for design purposes

Economically - raises surrounding living value

Socially - remembrance and respect but useful and purposeful

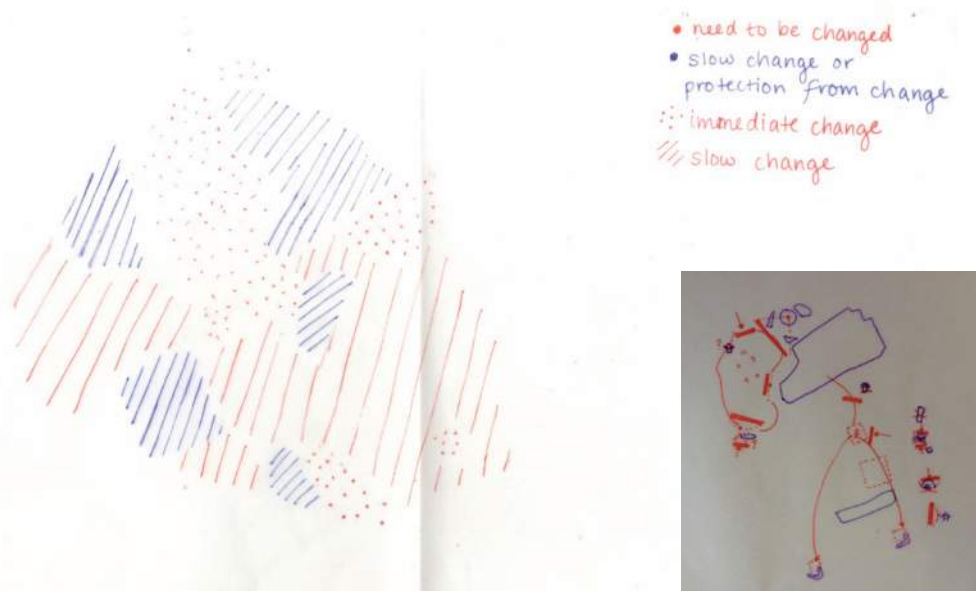
Change happens due to

Designer

Maintenance team

Vegetation evolution

Locals and tourists



Stage 1: Master plan conception



Stage 2: Detail design conception



Precedent Studies

Ravensbruck

The memorial at Ravensbruck exhibits a variety of sculptures and monuments by local artists. Nonetheless, it makes me ask questions like, 'how do you enter the site?' and 'what do you feel?'



Auschwitz

A big visitor attraction, Auschwitz functions more like a museum with barracks filled with victims' belongings.



Belzec

The memorial at Belzec is interesting in that it uses artificial rock to prevent plant growth. The paths are cut through the remains. 'Earth, do not cover my blood; let there be no resting place for my outcry' Job 16:18. It matters! People must be educated. Cobble paths were used to make the journey painful and slow for visitors. However, the mass graves are undistinguishable.



Treblinka

Slabs of concrete represent the railway ties and graves as you approach Treblinka. Unlike Belzec, having a monument in the landscape rather than the landscape be the monument makes 'for a more personalised, reflective experience.' Yet, the mass graves here are undistinguishable like at Belzec. The memorial at Treblinka is based on the concept that if you make a permanent memorial, nature will still consume it.



Majdanek

The context of Majdanek is similar to Plaszow in that it is in the city limits of Lublin and surrounded by cemeteries and residential buildings. What's interesting about this site is that the locals dismantled most of the buildings after the war, but 3 years later they were rebuilt along with the fences for a memorial. The human ashes were collected and placed beneath an uplifted large stone monument that represents the great weight in memory the site possesses. A memorial walk leads to memorials and a manicured lawn represents the Appellplatz.



Bergen-Belsen

The memorial at Bergen-Belsen is quite natural. For instance, the foundation of the crematorium is outlined and sunken, gravestones are located amongst grass land, and mass graves are uplifted with planting. Nevertheless, these landscaping plans to redesign the area around the mass graves in 1945 were against the survivors' wishes. They wanted the buildings etc. to remain in order to tell their story. This is the opposite of what occurred at Majdanek.



Mauthausen

An interesting detail of the Mauthausen camp was the 'stairway to death.' The aim of this stairway was the exhaust the victims as they approached their death.

Chelmno

Similar to Majdanek, a large stone structure memorialises the lives of the Holocaust.



TIME-BASED STRATEGY

Hydrology

EXISTING HYDROLOGY



Waterbodies

EXISTING VEGETATION



- Lawn
- Regenerating Meadow
- Woodland
- Regenerating Woodland
- Allotments
- Cemetery
- Wetland

PROPOSED HYDROLOGY



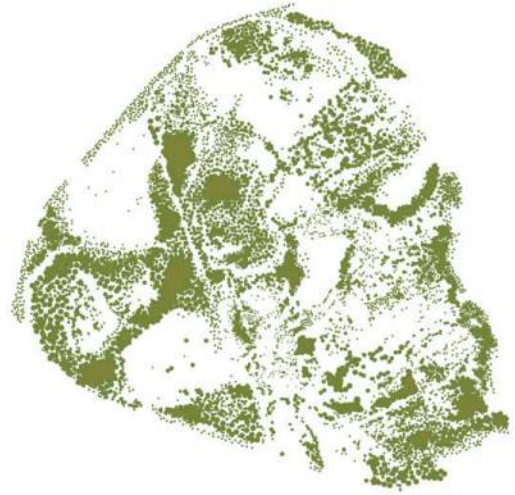
Waterbodies

PROPOSED VEGETATION



- Lawn
- Regenerating Meadow
- Woodland
- Regenerating Woodland
- Allotments
- Cemetery
- Wetland

Vegetation Evolution



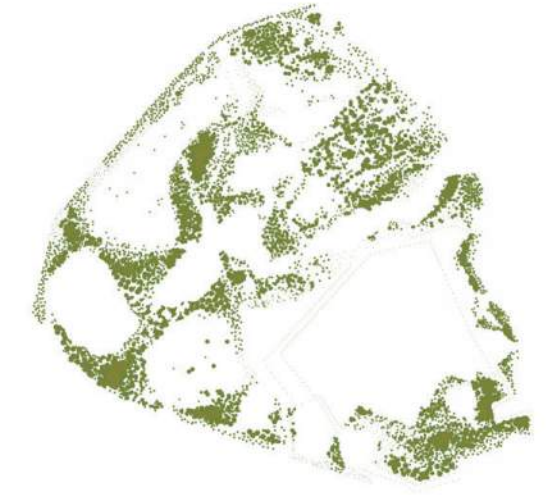
Existing



1 Year
Harvest



2 Years
Harvest



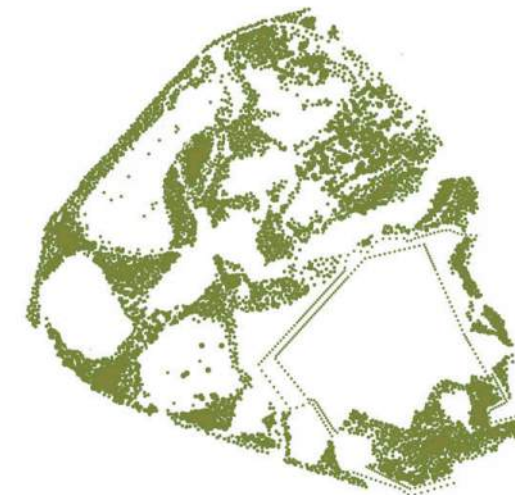
3 Years
Plant



Proposed



25 Years



50 Years



DETAIL DESIGN

Design Concept

The location of the concentration camp was chosen for further design exploration in order to reconnect the site to its past and preserve the memory of its history. This was accomplished with naturalistic interventions: plant, rock, and water.

Plant: The outer fences of the camp are represented by seasonal apple trees. This allows visitors to recognize the scale or extent of the camp. Apple trees were appropriate for the site because of what they symbolise: knowledge, immortality, temptation, fall of man into sin, and sin itself.

Rock: Both mass graves will be filled with small pebbles that individuals place as an act of remembrance. This concept is derived from the Jewish tradition of placing a pebble on a grave to never forget or stop building the memorial.

Water: The existing Nazi ditches will be adopted to create a central reflection space, as well as to show where the main camp roads used to exist. This closed water system will use the existing topography to flood a series of artificial pools that are shaped and placed based on previous Nazi ponds and barracks.



Possible Origins of Jewish Tradition of Placing Rocks on Graves

Warning: Jewish priests impure if within 4 ft of corpse

Comfort: after a person dies they continue to dwell in the grave and stones keep them in this world and in their grave instead of becoming a haunted spirit

Protection: keep demons and golems from graves

Legacy: flowers die, stones last

Memory: Hebrew word for 'pebble' is tz'ror or 'bond,' in certain prayers Jews ask that the deceased be 'bound up in the bond of life' meaning they continue to live through us

Remembrance: never finished building the monument to the deceased

Place: shared an experience with another

Love: God's name is 'The Rock of Israel'

Respect: sign of respect for the dead, individual marks a grave

Message: put note under stone, paper disintegrates and rock is left

Soul: shepards used to carry a sling of rocks to remember the number of sheep out in the field, keep departed's soul in God's sling



Detail Plan



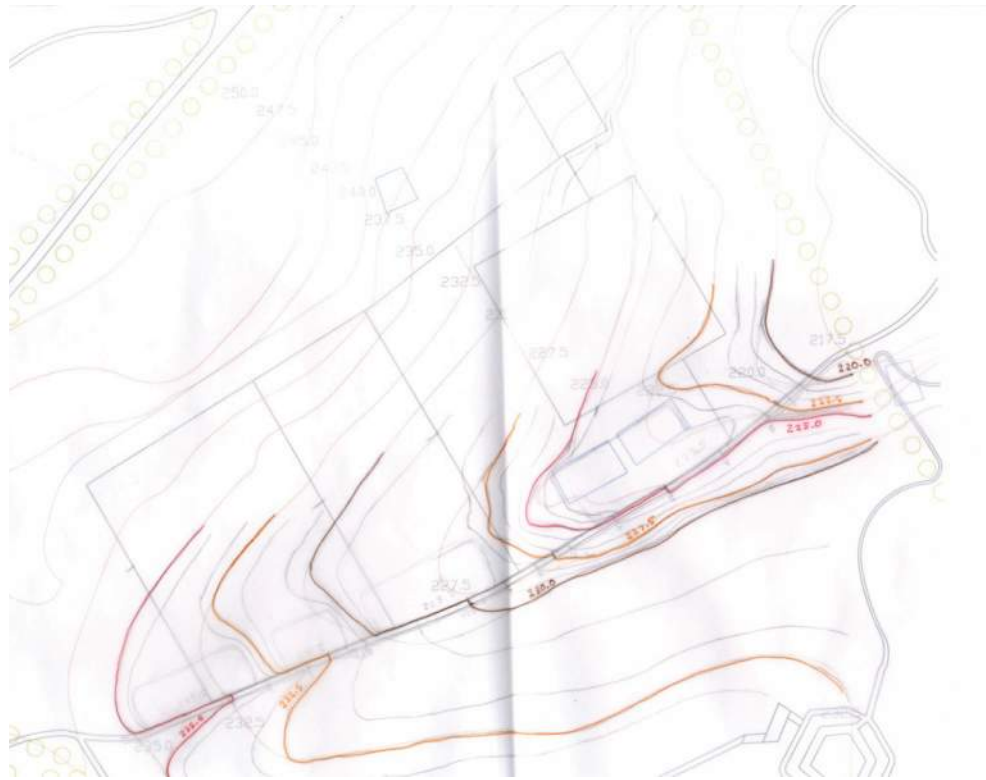
Detail Plan 1:750



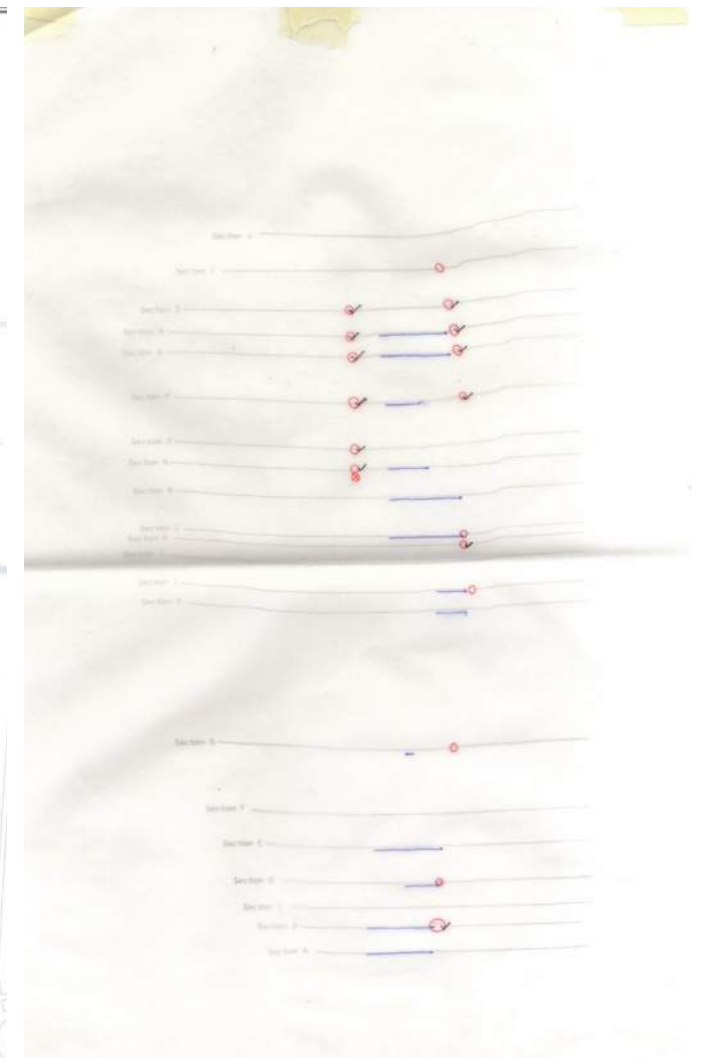
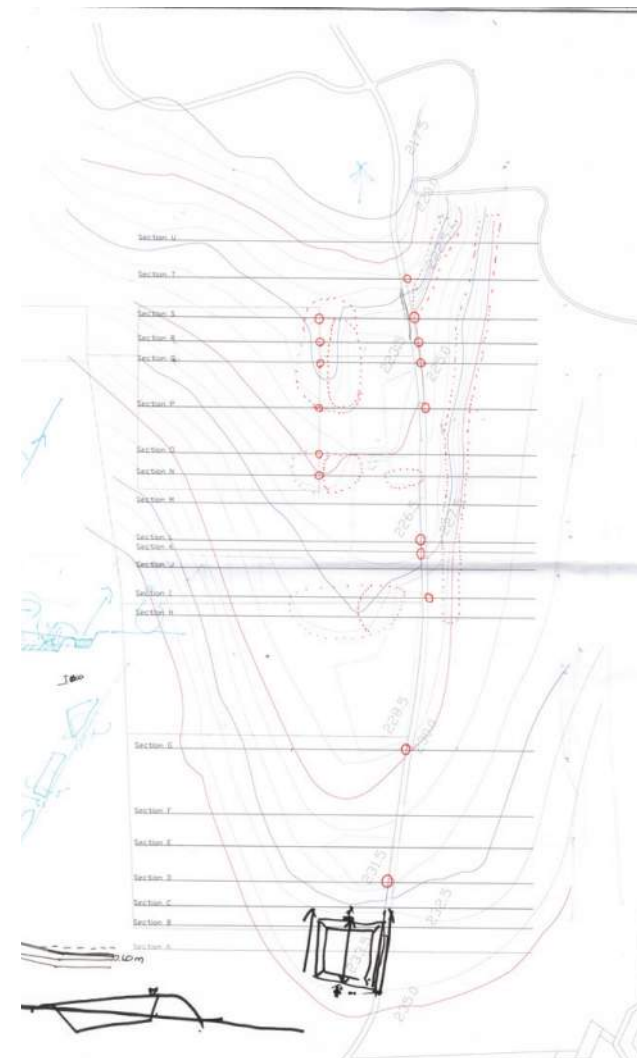
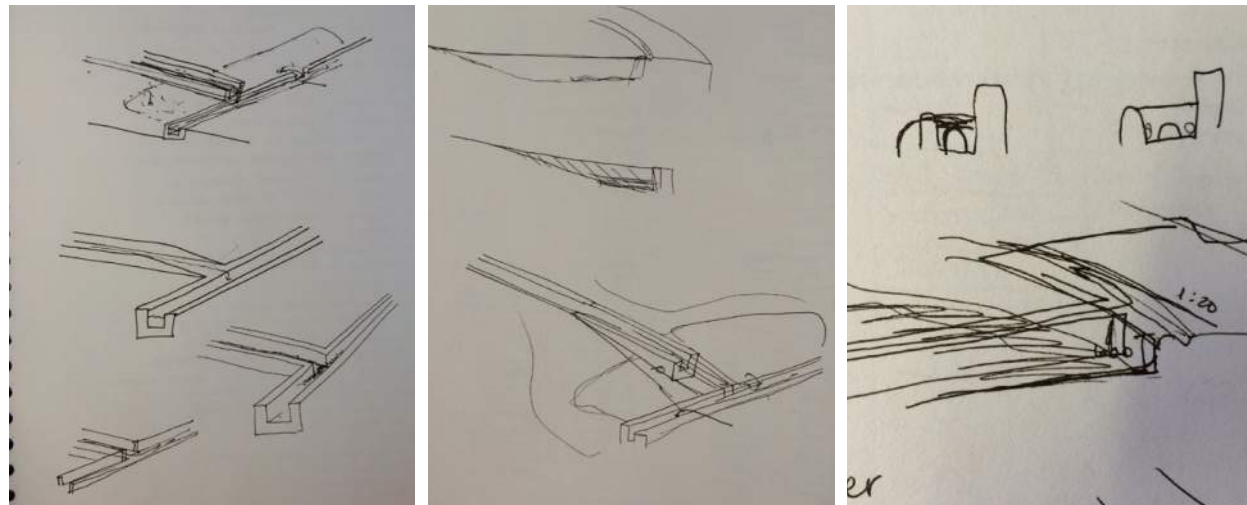
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Out of the three naturalistic interventions carried out to reconnect the site to its past, water was chosen to detail further. The Nazi ditches represent the manipulation of topography and hydrology on site, which in turn created varying habitats and plant communities. In order to emphasize this, artificial ponds were designed. The ditches flow to the southern long ditch where they flow over into the ponds. This creates a peaceful sound effect for visitors walking along the path or reflecting in the central location of the camp.

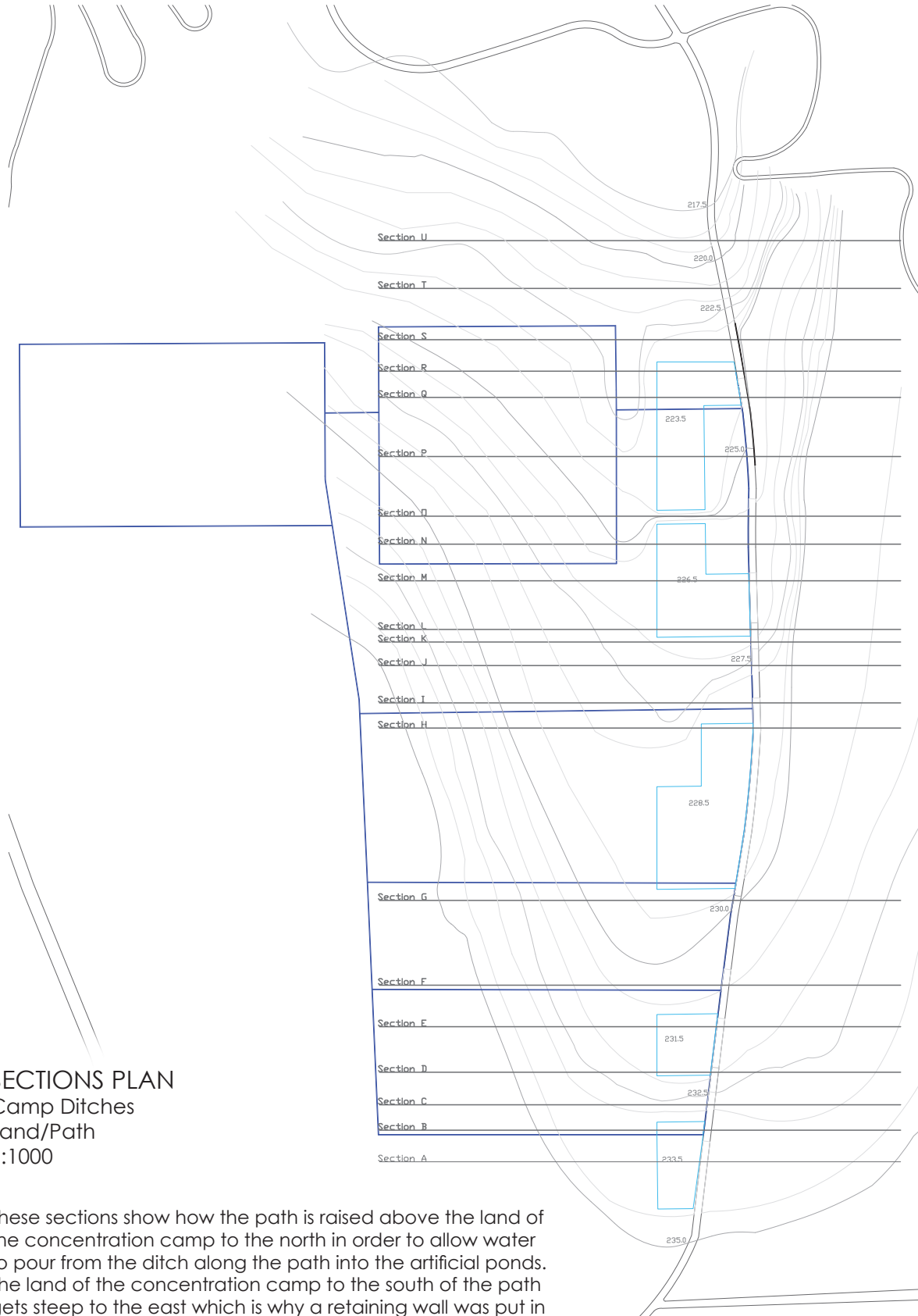
Detail Design Development



One of the constraints on site was that nothing could be taken from the site, especially the ground because it is sacred. For this reason, when creating the reflection ditches, the existing topography was used. Where changes needed to be made in order to ensure flat areas for the artificial ponds, the ground was filled. In other words, no cutting took place in the design.

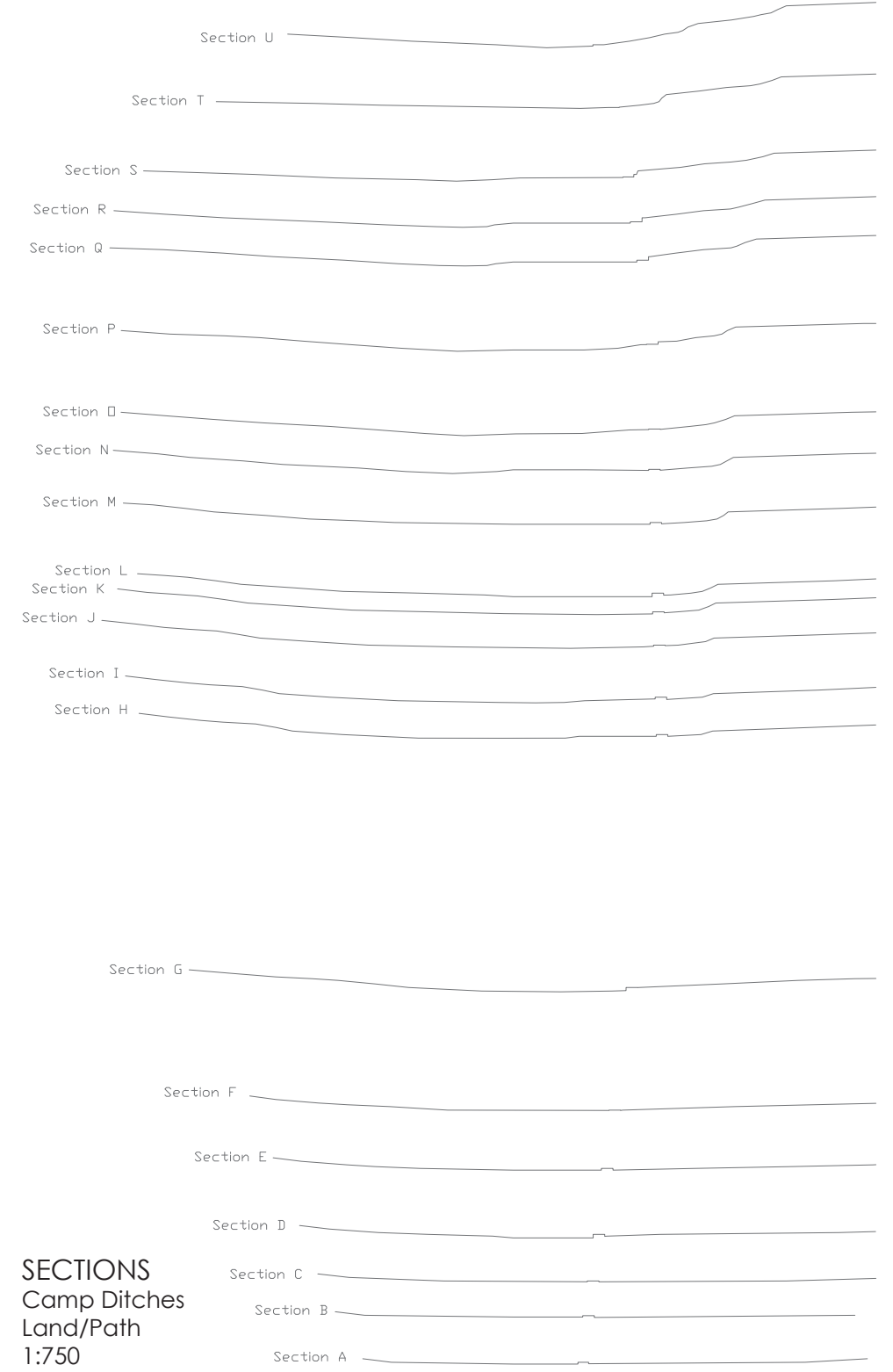


Sections



SECTIONS PLAN
Camp Ditches
Land/Path
1:1000

These sections show how the path is raised above the land of the concentration camp to the north in order to allow water to pour from the ditch along the path into the artificial ponds. The land of the concentration camp to the south of the path gets steep to the east which is why a retaining wall was put in place.



SECTIONS
Camp Ditches
Land/Path
1:750

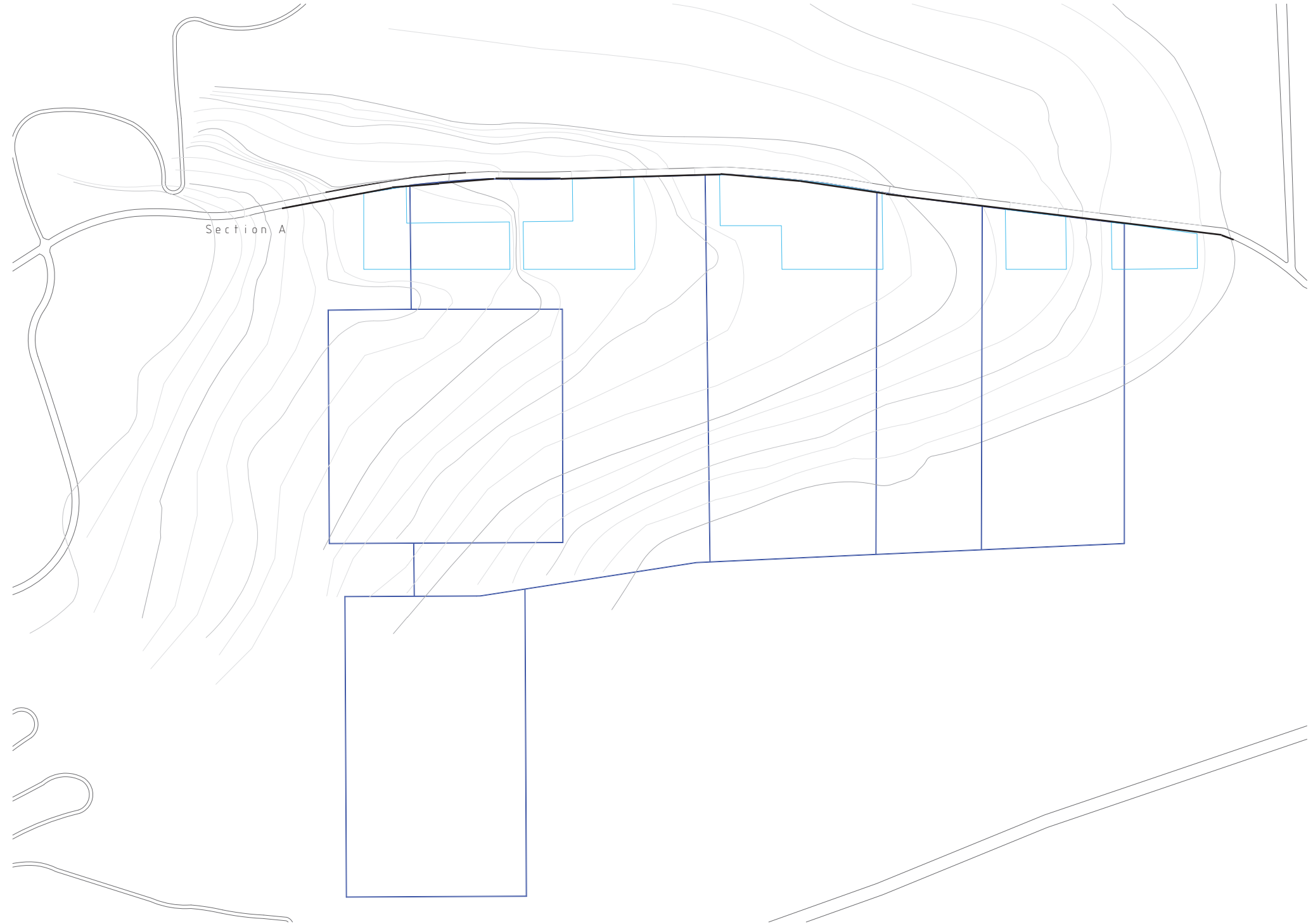
Sections

LONG SECTION
Camp Ditches
Land/Path
1:750

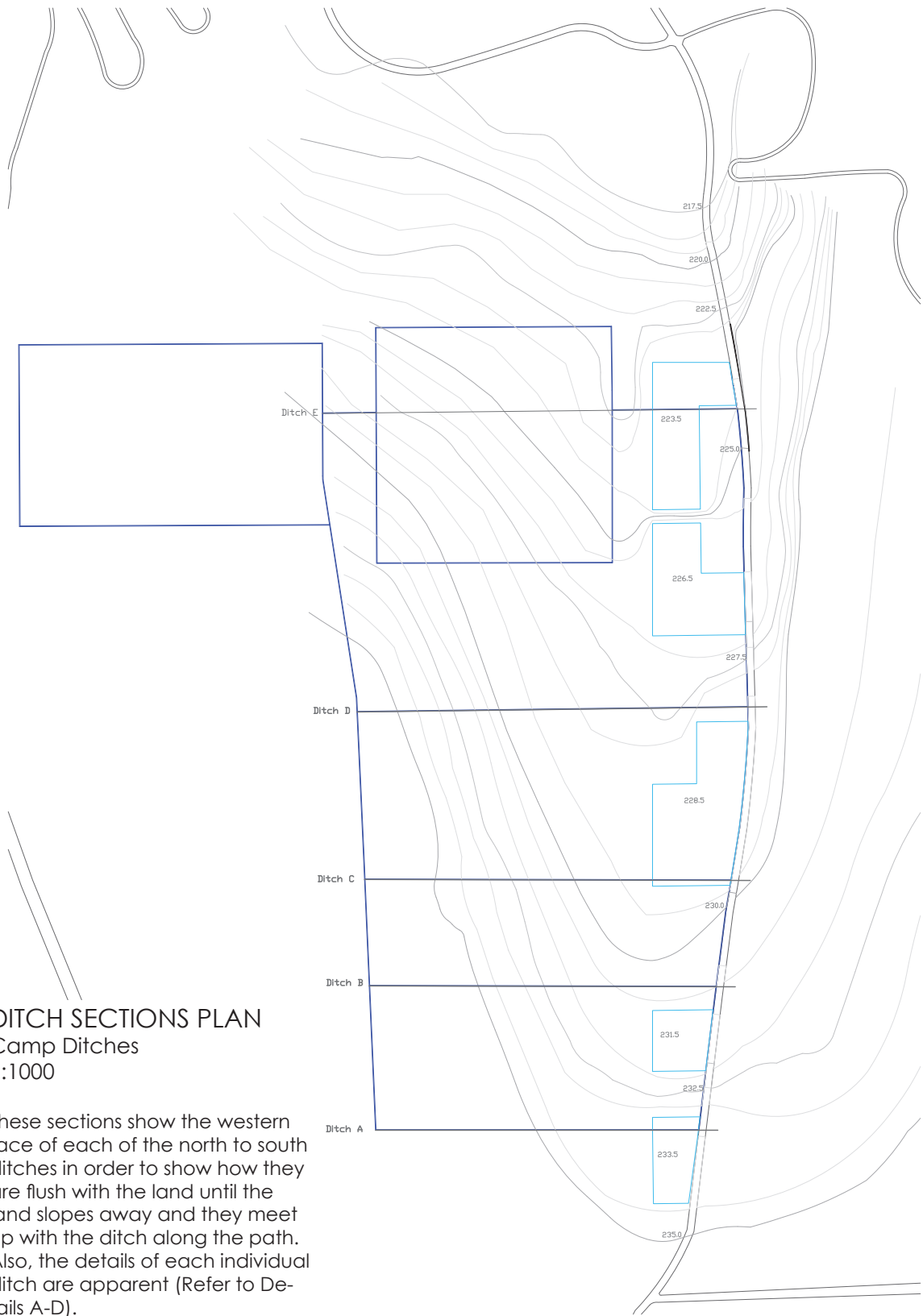


LONG SECTION PLAN
Camp Ditches
Land/Path
1:1000

The long section along the north side of the path shows how the land slopes and flattens for the pools in relation to the height of the path. The path is never higher than 600mm from the land and never steeper than a 1:20 gradient, so a handrail is unnecessary.

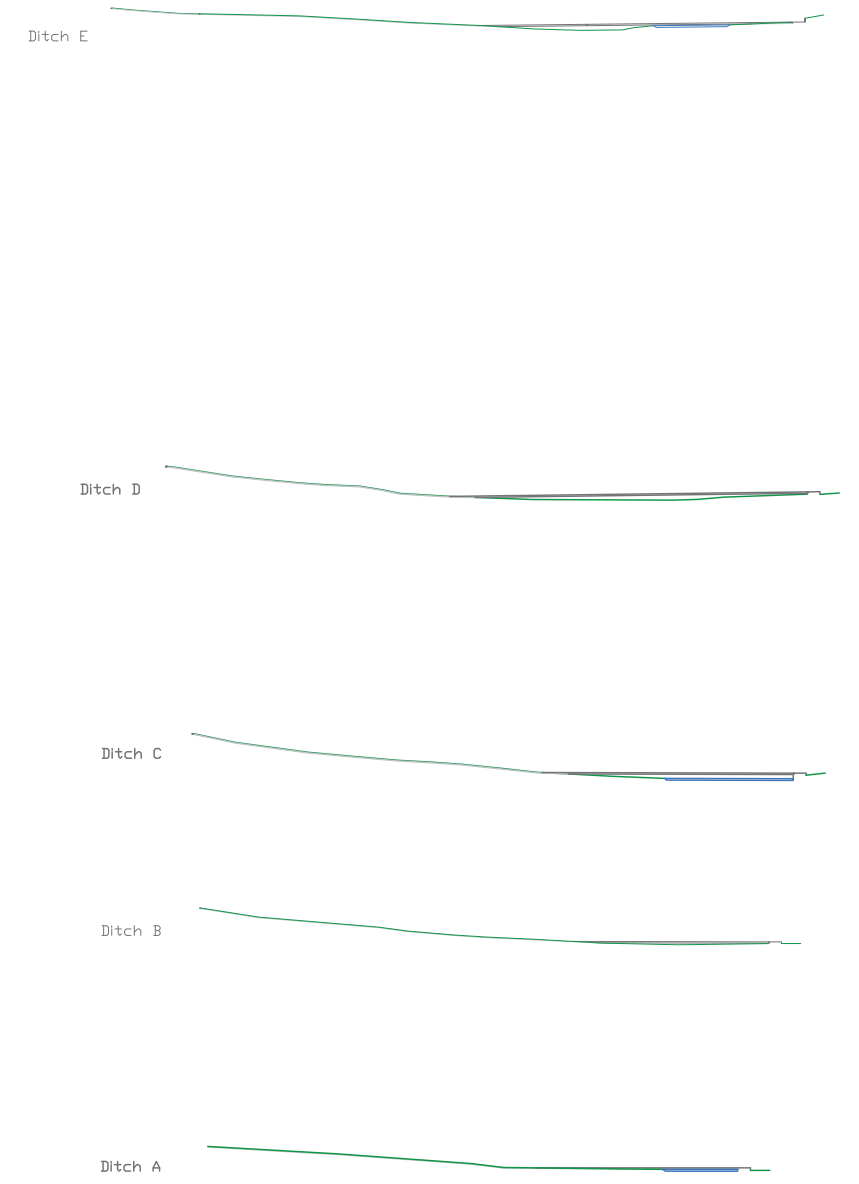


Sections



DITCH SECTIONS PLAN
Camp Ditches
1:1000

These sections show the western face of each of the north to south ditches in order to show how they are flush with the land until the land slopes away and they meet up with the ditch along the path. Also, the details of each individual ditch are apparent (Refer to Details A-D).



DITCH SECTIONS
Camp Ditches
1:750

Ditch Thresholds

DETAIL A
Underground Ditch
Meadow/Lawn
Ditch D
1:20



DETAIL B
Underground Ditch
Path/Lawn
Ditch E
1:20



DETAIL C
Overground Ditch
Over Water
Ditch C
1:20



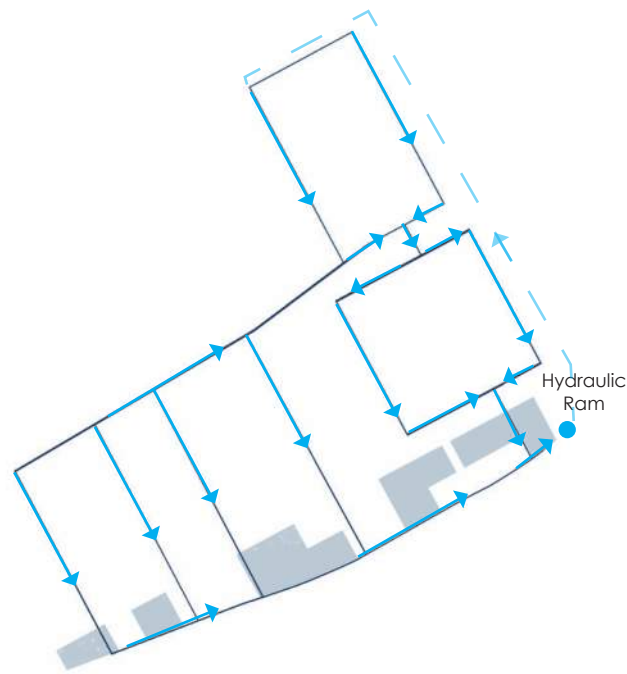
DETAIL D
Overground Ditch
Over Land
Ditch B
1:20



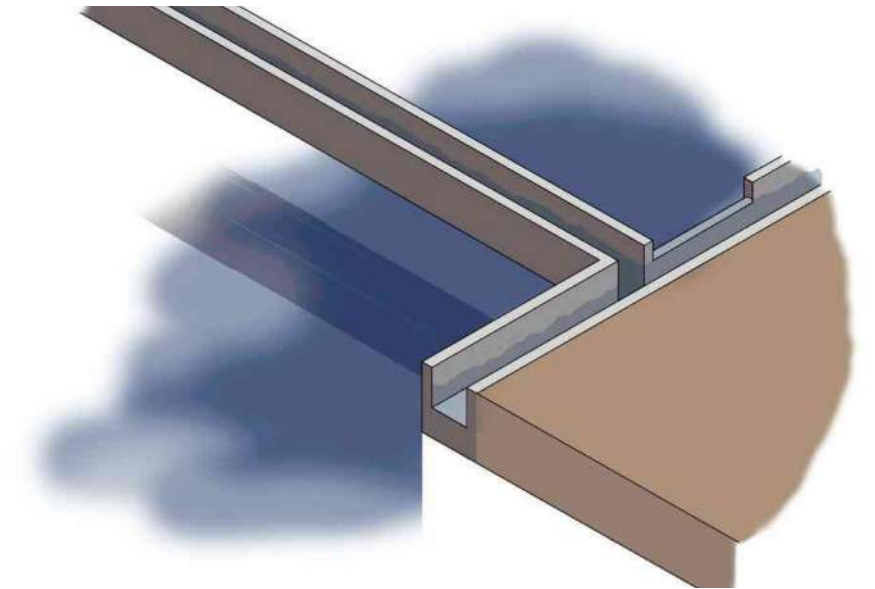
Water Ditches

The proposed water ditches use existing ditches that ran along the roads of the concentration camp. This brings back the location of the actual camp in a subtle manner, so visitors are no longer influenced by Schindler's List. The water ditches will be a closed system with a hydram at the lowest point that pumps water back to the top of the system without any external energy consumption, purely water powered. This controls the flow rate of water, especially during heavy rains or long droughts. Nonetheless, there will be an overflow/discharge pipe that connects to Jerozolimska Street's drainage system.

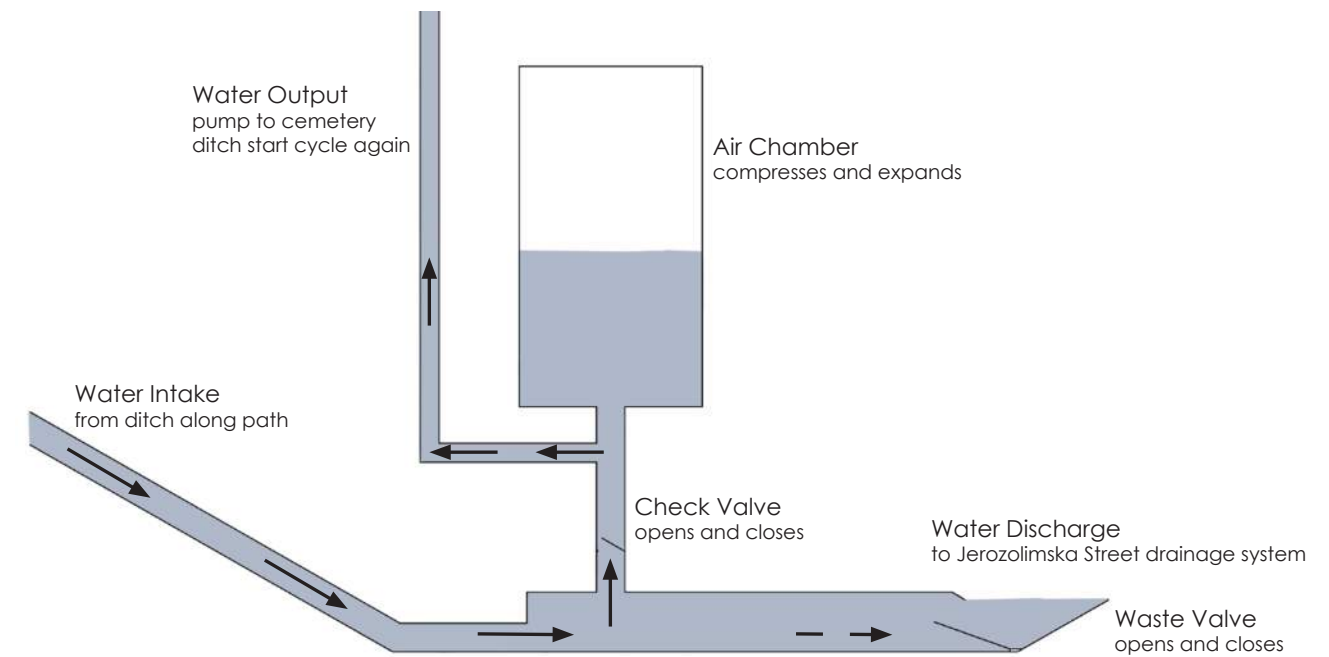
Water Flow Diagram



Isometric A
Camp Ditches
1:20



Water Circuit
Hydraulic Ram



Visuals

