THE EVOLUTION OF THE PULSE NIGHTCLUB MEMORIAL: FROM VERNACULAR TO OFFICIAL

by

MARGOT MCLAUGHLIN

(Under the Direction of Wayde Brown)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the evolution of the Pulse Nightclub memorial from a vernacular, grassroots memorial to an officially designed memorial. This study determines and analyzes each stage of memorial development through a comparative analysis of case studies to identify commonalities, differences, and trends. Four queer memorials in the United States are examined and compared to the Pulse Interim Memorial including the Stonewall National Monument, Harvey Milk Plaza, National AIDS Memorial Grove, and the Transgender Memorial Garden. This research determines the socio-political influences causing LGBTQ memorials to transition from sites with local significance that facilitate grief to sites with national significance that are incorporated into the collective memory of the queer community and the United States as a whole. Stewardship and agency over decision-making processes by the affected community is essential to memorialization within the queer community. This is important in understanding the role of queer memorials within LGBTQ history and historic preservation.

INDEX WORDS: Collective memory, Vernacular, Grassroots memorial, Queer memorial, Pulse Nightclub Memorial

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Plastic beads, bracelets, and rainbow bandanas are woven through the openings of a metal fence. Angel wings, hearts, and rainbow motifs are visible everywhere. Vinyl banners with smiling faces, graduation photos, and baby photos reading “Forever in our hearts,” and “In loving memory,” line the sides of the fence, and painted rocks, fridge magnets, a bible, plastic flowers, stuffed animals, and rubber ducks are placed all around. A wooden heart-shaped sign with a poem, “Death leaves a heartache no one can heal, love leaves a memory no one can steal.” Each item has been placed at the site of the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida over the last seven years, creating physical markers of those lost on the night of June 12, 2016, and cementing their memory in time and space. Throughout time, groups of people have used places to shape their community's history. These places hold memory that is cultivated over time by a particular community, becoming part of their story. This is true of the LGBTQ community, however, the spaces associated with queer history have largely gone unrecognized by those outside of the community until recently.

In 2016, the National Parks Service (NPS) published *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer History.* This marked the most significant recognition of queer history in historic preservation. This theme study is a compilation of research about topics in American queer history to help identify and nominate properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The creation of the LGBTQ theme study, funded by the Gill Foundation[1] was a significant step towards recognition of LGBTQ history by one of the leading

[1] The Gill Foundation is a philanthropic organization based in the United States that focuses on advancing LGBTQ+ equality and rights. Founded by Tim Gill, a software entrepreneur and LGBTQ+ activist, the foundation works to

actors in the preservation of cultural heritage. With the support of 1200 pages of information, LGBTQ historic sites have been nominated, recognized, and celebrated as important sites of cultural heritage in a way that they hadn't before.

The theme study discusses the reasons why LGBTQ history has not been documented with the same intentionality as other group's histories. "In the 1960s no lesbian, gay man, bisexual, transgender person, or queer gave a thought to their sites and actions being historic. They were struggling for their basic rights, explicitly denied them by their government and the larger society around them."[2]. So, while sites of queer history and culture have existed for as long as humans have, it has not been documented and recorded to the same extent as other aspects of American history. The theme study also discusses the way that these spaces were built outside of mainstream society out of necessity. "A community of people, identical to other American citizens except for the objects of their affections, was united by its shared oppression and came together in the 1960s and the 1970s not to "fit in" but to build their own community for themselves within the enveloping context of American society."[3]. This presents the argument that LGBTQ history is a distinct and unique facet of American history that warrants investigation in its own right. It was a deliberate choice to construct a unique communal identity, "…LGBTQ people created and continue to create communities across the nation to provide for their needs, provide support when needed, and more recently to celebrate their shared past and historic

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support organizations and initiatives that promote inclusivity, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunities for the LGBTQ+ community.

[2] Megan E Springate, ed., "LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History," *National Parks Service Department of Interior* 1 (2016): 01–1.

[3] National Parks Service, *LGBTQ America.* 01-3.

sites."[4] This energy toward making queer history visible in the landscape is a facet of LGBTQ culture that is now coming into its own.

Bars and taverns are important sites of community for queer individuals, making them a distinct feature of LGBTQ cultural heritage. This is largely due to societal restrictions preventing LGBTQ people from being open about their identity in public spaces. They met others and built a community within these sites of nightlife. These places became more than just spots to dance and have fun, but served as community centers where ideas were shared, connections were built, and organizing was done. "It was often at these bars that community organizations started, held fundraisers, held meetings and special events, and connected with their LGBTQ public." [5]

Following the events of the Stonewall Uprising in 1969[6], there was a notable increase in the number of social spaces for LGBTQ people across the country, including community centers, health centers, churches, bookstores, collectives, and communes. Queer spaces became more visible and accessible in the decades following the Stonewall Uprising due to the newly found national recognition. Queer spaces continue to gain visibility outside of the queer community to this day.

It is widely recognized among preservationists and historians that places hold stories and that the documentation and preservation of these spaces is very important to understanding the identity, culture, and history of different community groups. While the work done by the NPS was a welcome step in acknowledging LGBTQ history, their research predominantly focuses on buildings and structures. This leaves a gap in understanding LGBTQ memorials as discrete,

[4] NPS, 01-3-01-4.
[5] NPS, 01-3.
[6] The Stonewall uprising of 1969 was a series of protests triggered by a police raid on the Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village. Patrons resisted the raid, leading to several days of protests and clashes with law enforcement. The uprising catalyzed the modern LGBTQ rights movement, inspiring increased activism and advocacy efforts.

specific, and distinct places of memory. Memorials have a unique ability to show what is important to us as a culture and what or who we choose to remember. Within contemporary preservation discussions, LGBTQ memorial sites deserve further research in order to understand their role in the collective memory of the queer community.

In the wake of the attack on the popular gay nightclub, Pulse, in Orlando, efforts have been made to honor the loss of life and commemorate the space as an important community space through a memorial at the sight of the club. The events that followed the tragedy in 2016 reflect the political and social forces that have shaped LGBTQ commemorative spaces. This thesis explores the process of commemoration and memorialization of the Pulse Nightclub Memorial, from its grassroots, vernacular inception to its formalized designed state. Through a multidisciplinary lens, I evaluated the sociopolitical influences that have caused the transition and altered the memorial's meaning and significance to its original community. This thesis investigates the complex relationship between collective memory, identity, and the spatial representation of tragedy within the context of LGBTQ memorialization. These memorials may be urban public space such as the Harvey Milk Plaza in San Francisco following the assassination of the first openly gay elected official in the United States. In other cases, there are instances where community members have crafted private spaces for contemplation and remembrance linked not to a specific event, but to a broader phenomenon, such as the Transgender Memorial Garden in Saint Louis. In either case, these memorials begin as grassroots efforts that are conceived and curated by those directly impacted, be it friends or family or the local LGBTQ community. When these spaces become designed memorials, additional factors become important. The transformation of a community-crafted memorial, serving as a conduit

for mourning, into a designed representation of queer history, changes the essence of the site and places it within a broader context.

What does this transition process involve? There is not a consensus among queer individuals and the broader community on how to memorialize LGBTQ sites of tragedy. The decision process is a sensitive one and stakeholders are tasked with considering many different and sometimes conflicting perspectives. This lack of consensus is particularly evident in the evolution of the Pulse Nightclub Memorial. Given the event's national significance, the Pulse Nightclub Memorial has progressed from an informal and vernacular state to an interpreted one and will further evolve into a final designed memorial in the near future. What sets this site apart is the interim memorial stage. The interim memorial was designed to be a temporary steppingstone between the initial vernacular memorialization and an official design. However, it has remained on the site for several years beyond its initial projected lifespan and creates a unique opportunity to analyze the timeline of vernacular to official memorialization.

My goal with this thesis is to identify this process of memorialization, showing the phases from the initial event, immediate aftermath, and vernacular memorialization to official design and interpretation. I will examine how the Pulse Memorial has approached this transition and compare it to other queer memorials to create a framework for understanding how queer sites of trauma are transitioned into memorialized spaces in a way that honors the evolving role of the memorial to a community at each phase. This framework aims to preserve the memorial's significance to the original community while enabling its expansion into a site of collective memory with national significance. The evolution of these sites from vernacular to designed spaces reflects the shifting political and social forces that shape the preservation and commemoration of LGBTQ history. What causes LGBTQ memorials to evolve from inception to

a designed space, and how is that process influenced by the site's context, positionality, and purpose?

Discussion on Terminology

Decision to use LGBTQ and Queer

I use LGBTQ and queer interchangeably in this thesis. The events and memorialization process at Pulse have taken place in today's social and political landscape, in which it is common to use the terms queer and LGBTQ. I acknowledge that these terms were not used or not used in the same way during the second half of the twentieth century when several of the case studies took place. I am aware of the discrepancy of referring to people in the past as LGBTQ before terminology was used. I have tried to use the term gay instead of queer or LGBTQ when context appropriate. For this paper, the term queer is an all-encompassing term to refer to individuals whose sexual and/or gender identities diverge from the societal norm that is heterosexual and cisgender. According to the Human Rights Campaign Glossary, queer is

> A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, including those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. [7]

Ella Myers described it perfectly in *In Queer Monumentality: The Power of Symbolic Form,* stating that "I hold a social constructionist understanding of sexual and gender identities."[8]

[7] "Glossary of Terms," Human Rights Campaign, accessed March 4, 2024, https://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms.

[8] Peter Jan Margry, Cristina.Sánchez-Carretero, *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death,* Berghahn Books, Incorporated, 2011,

For this thesis, I will be using the definition of grassroots memorials coined by Peter Jan Margry and Cristina. Sánchez-Carretero in their book *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death.* They define grassroots memorials as "the phenomenon of placing memorabilia, as a form of social action, in public spaces, usually at sites where traumatic deaths or events have taken place."[9] These types of memorials may also be referred to as vernacular or ephemeral memorials in related literature.

It is important to acknowledge the racial dimension of what happened at Pulse. The nightclub had a strong Latino presence and many of those killed on June 12, 2016, identified as Latino. While this thesis does not factor in this intersecting identity, it is important to acknowledge that there is future research to be done on how this identity impacts the memorialization process at Pulse.

[9] Margry, Peter Jan, Sánchez-Carretero. Cristina. *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death,* Berghahn Books, Incorporated, 2011.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate existing, related literature in three areas: collective memory, vernacular memorialization, and interpretation of queer history and queer theory. This review not only seeks to identify gaps in current knowledge but also aims to provide a foundation for understanding the context surrounding the Pulse Nightclub Memorial and selected case studies. While each of these topics are distinct areas of study, each is an important component of understanding the transitional process of queer memorials from vernacular to designed spaces. First, understanding the concept of collective memory is necessary for understanding how and why we create memorials in our built environment. Next, zooming in on the function of vernacular memorials (also referred to as makeshift, grassroots, or ephemeral), provides the basis for understanding the initial response to the tragedy at Pulse. Finally, the last layer and most specific is the study of queer theory and how queer history is and has been interpreted. Each of these themes builds upon each other and provides a background for the existing discussions around collective memory, vernacular memorialization, and queer history. The goal of this chapter is to provide a foundation and identify the gaps in this existing literature.

Collective Memory

Pierre Nora is a prominent French historian known for his work on French memory and identity. He is credited with the development and popularization of the concept of collective memory, the shared memories, experiences, and recollections that a group of people, often within a community, society, or culture, collectively hold and pass down through generations. Nora was born in Paris in 1931. His life as a highly educated academic in France shapes his perspective

"The Era of Commemoration," by Pierre Nora is a part of the larger work titled *Realms of Memory,* which Nora coordinated. In this chapter, Nora explores the phenomenon of commemoration in contemporary society. This essay was written in 1996. He discusses how societies engage in acts of remembering and preserving their past through various commemorative practices, such as monuments, museums, and ceremonies. Nora emphasizes the importance of these acts in shaping collective memory and identity. He also reflects on the tension between official, institutionalized forms of commemoration and more spontaneous, grassroots expressions of memory. Nora provides insights into the complex ways in which societies remember and commemorate their history, highlighting the role of memory in constructing a sense of continuity and identity.

Nora argues that commemoration is a cultural practice, emphasizing how societies engage in various acts of remembrance to preserve and transmit their historical narratives. This includes the establishment of monuments, museums, and ceremonies dedicated to remembering specific events or figures. Another primary argument made is the role of commemoration in shaping collective memory and identity. Nora highlights how these commemorative practices contribute to the construction of a shared understanding of the past, fostering a sense of continuity and identity among a group or society. Nora discusses the tension between official, institutionalized forms of commemoration and more spontaneous, grassroots expressions of memory. This tension reflects the diverse ways in which individuals and communities remember their history, with some acts of remembrance being orchestrated by authorities and others emerging organically from the people. [10]

[10] Nora, Pierre. *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*. Edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman. Translated by Arthur Goldhammer. Vol. III: Symbols. New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.

Pierre Nora is known for his work on collective memory and the concept of "lieux de mémoire" (sites of memory).[11] He has played a significant role in shaping discussions about historical consciousness, memory, and identity. However, his writing on collective memory is significantly centered around French history and French culture. Nora's perspective as a French scholar is rooted in a society with a long and rich historical tradition, where memory plays a central role in shaping national identity. France's intricate relationship with its past, including periods of glory and trauma, informs Nora's exploration of "lieux de mémoire" and the ways in which French society constructs and preserves its historical narrative. His work reflects a cultural landscape deeply intertwined with memory, where symbols, rituals, and commemorations serve to uphold and transmit national identity across generations. With "lieux de mémoire" being a distinctly French idea, how does it translate to American memory creation?

Limitations to his work include that it predates significant shifts and developments in the commemoration landscape. He was writing at a time before the events of 9/11 and before the rise of participatory memorial design[12]. He was also writing from a distinctly French perspective, shaped by the cultural context of French history and politics. The cultural context surrounding memorialization has evolved since this foundational writing.

Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture by Rafael Samuel is a seminal work that explores how societies construct and engage with collective memory. Samuel, a British historian known for his contributions to the study of social history and collective memory, examines various sites and practices where memory is performed, including museums,

[11] Nora,. *Realms of Memory,* 609.
[12] Participatory memorial design emerged as a response to traditional top-down approaches to memorialization. It emphasizes community involvement. This approach gained traction, particularly in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Through participatory processes, stakeholders such as survivors, descendants, and residents contribute to the design, ensuring a more comprehensive and historically accurate representation.

monuments, commemorations, and rituals. He argues that these "theatres of memory" serve as stages where individuals and communities negotiate their identities, histories, and understandings of the past. Samuel traces the evolution of memory practices from traditional forms of commemoration to modern manifestations shaped by media, technology, and globalization. He highlights the political and ideological aspects of memory, showing how it can be manipulated and contested by different groups. Overall, Samuel's work provides valuable insights into the complex and dynamic nature of memory in contemporary culture.[13]

James E. Young is a prominent American scholar known for his work in the fields of Holocaust studies, memory studies, and cultural memory. He is a Professor Emeritus of English and Judaic Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Young has authored several influential books on the subject, including *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* and *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture.* His research delves into how societies remember traumatic events like the Holocaust and how those memories are reflected in art, architecture, and public memorials. Young's scholarship often explores themes of reconciliation, remembrance, and responsibility, drawing on American experiences of grappling with difficult historical truths.[14]

Vernacular Memorialization

Martin J. Murrey, professor of urban planning at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, wrote, *Commemorating and Forgetting: Challenges for the New South Africa,* in 2013. Murrey is a highly accomplished researcher in the fields of urban studies and planning, global urbanism, cultural geography, distressed urbanism,

[13] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 2012).
[14] James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meanings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), xvii + 398.

development, historical sociology, and African studies. He has written six books and three co-edited volumes, and has written nearly 70 journal articles. *Commemorating and Forgetting* addresses the role of myth and memory in the formation of collective identities, and the relationship between collective memory and vernacular memorialization. Murrey writes that "…unsanctioned vernacular performances of shared mourning are useful guides to understanding the ways that local communities choose to remember the past." [15] As part of this analysis of vernacular memorials, Murrey also speaks more generally about the act of constructing a narrative of the past. Specifically, Murrey focuses on the relationship between collective memory and the framing of events, people, and places in post-apartheid South Africa. Murrey argues that commemorative practices, especially those that end autocratic rule and begin a new era of inclusionary politics are a type of history-making exercise that presents a curated interpretation of the past. He argues that there is a narrative generated that discards conflicting or diverging historical information for the sake of creating a positive, uplifting, or simplified narrative. He believes that history and memory, while they overlap, are not the same.

Murrey finds that in the aftermath of tragedy, the location of the event becomes entangled with collective memory. "Particular places…have become the fixed, externalized locations of what was once an internalized social memory." [16] He writes that these sites become places of pilgrimage, intended for public viewing, and argues that these sites "…act as conduits, or heuristic devices, for the transmission of historical consciousness, a collective awareness that the present owes a genuine depth to the past."[17]

[15] Martin J. Murray, *Commemorating and Forgetting: Challenges for the new South Africa*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2013, 147.
[16] Martin, *Commemorating and Forgetting*, 145.
[17] Martin, *Commemorating and Forgetting*, 145.

Grassroots Memorials: the Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death, is a book written in 2011 and edited by Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sánchez-Carretero. Margry is an ethnologist and a senior research fellow at the Meertens Institute, at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam, and a guest professor of Religious Studies at the University of Leuven. His work focuses on contemporary religious cultures, rituals, and cultural memory. Sánchez-Carretero is an anthropologist and a staff researcher at The Institute of Heritage Sciences (Incipit) of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Santiago de Compostela, Spain, and holds a PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on the role of heritage formation processes in contemporary societies.[18] The book analyzes the process of grassroots memorialization that expresses grief as well as social protest and represents forms of social action. The book defines grassroots memorials as, "…the process by which groups of people, imagined communities or specific individuals bring grievances into action by creating an improvised and temporary memorial with the aim of changing or ameliorating a particular situation."[19] The book evaluates a number of case studies in which politics, the media, and the construction of memory, traumatic death, and mourning rituals in public space intersect.

This book builds upon the academic literature around "the politics of death and memory, the relationship between history and memory, memory and nation building, and the memorialization of catastrophes, war and monuments, and links between death and remembrance,"[20] by evaluating these concepts through the lens of grassroots memorials. In this book, they explain grassroots memorials as "the phenomenon of placing memorabilia, as a form of social action, in

[18] Margry, Peter Jan, Sánchez-Carretero. Cristina. *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death,* Berghahn Books, Incorporated, 2011.
[19] Margry, Peter Jan, Sánchez-Carretero. Cristina. *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death,* Berghahn Books, Incorporated, 2011, 2. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ugalib/detail.action?docID=769397. Created from ugalib on April 10, 2023, 17:26:32.
[20] Margry, Sánchez-Carretero, *Grassroots Memorials,* 1.

public spaces, usually at sites where traumatic deaths or events have taken place."[21] They elaborate by stating that grassroots memorialization is understood as the process of community groups transforming their grief into action by creating improvised and temporary memorials to change or improve a tragic situation. They state that the memorials discussed in the book are multifaceted, serving both as a place of mourning and also as a site of protest and expression of social and political dissidence. The authors introduce the concept of the "Rubik's Effect"[22] as a metaphorical framework for understanding various aspects of memorials. They associate the study of memorials with a Rubik's Cube, where different sides represent different dimensions of analysis. These dimensions include discussions on the nature of memorials (spontaneous, formal, or informal), the temporal aspects of the phenomena, the locations of memorials, motivations for depositing objects or visiting sites, the material culture at the sites, and the role of media in constructing, disseminating, and reproducing the social event. The metaphor emphasizes the multidimensional and complex nature of studying memorials.

The primary findings of the book are twofold. First, that Grassroots memorials are inherently performative. The action of placing memorabilia and offers on sites of tragedy is both a facet of grieving as well as a statement calling for action. They are performative in that "…the participants are also asking for social change: not only to commemorate or to protest, but also to find an answer, to seek an understanding of what has happened, to ask for responsibilities, or to demand changes."[23] By memorializing tragedy in public space, these memorials serve as social and political statements about the values and demands for change spurred by a tragic event. The second main point of this book is that grassroots memorialization is democratic. The authors

[21] Margry, Sánchez-Carretero, 2.
[22] Margry, Sánchez-Carretero, 10.
[23] Margry, Sánchez-Carretero, 3.

state that the creation of makeshift memorials is an ultimate expression of the democratic process since they usually are not created by a particular group or organization. “They come from the lowest level of organization and are aimed at influencing social and political situations and developments.”[24] This bottom-up structure is an essential characteristic of grassroots memorials and creating the social change that they often represent.

In 2003, professors, Ekaterina V. Haskins, and Justin P. DeRose wrote, “Memory, Visibility, and Public Space: Reflections on Commemoration (s) of 9/11.” Haskins is an assistant professor in the communication department at Boston College, whose research focuses on cultural politics, rhetorics of memory and identity, and the impact of media and popular culture on practices of civic engagement. DeRose is a graduate of Boston College in 2002 and was a second-year law student at the time of publication at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. The purpose of this paper was to reflect on the aesthetic and political function of commemoration within the context of debates over public art and public space in the United States. The authors argue that both street memorials and the permanent memorial at Ground Zero represent the tension between utopian and critical relations within art and the public. This article discusses the different responses to the future use of the Ground Zero site, with it being such an emotionally potent location of mass tragedy. Similar discussions are in progress surrounding the Pulse Nightclub property and the decision-making. “A memorial is by definition a material expression of mourning for lost lives and opportunities, but it can be more than petrified grief. It can be a stage for cathartic closure and critical reckoning,” [25] writes Haskins and DeRose. This critical reckoning is what generated highly contested debates around how to contextualize, process, and

[24] Margry, Sánchez-Carretero, 4.
[25] Ekaterina V. Haskins, and Justin P. DeRose. "Memory, Visibility, and Public Space." *Space and Culture* 6, no. 4 (2003): 378. https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331203258373.

memorialize grief. Similar to the approach of my research, their goal was not necessarily to propose an ideal design for the memorials, but more to contemplate the aesthetic and political function of commemoration within the context of debates over public art and public space in the United States.

The authors argue that street memorials and formally designed exhibitions both exemplify the tension between utopian and critical reflection in public art. This is a theory coined by visual critic W.J.T. Mitchell in 1990 which states that public art can either serve as a representation of the ideal public sphere, or it can serve as a contradicting, ironic, or even subversive critique of the public space it occupies.[26] They go on to discuss the street memorial, identifying this practice of vernacular memorialization as the ephemeral memorial. The authors claim that this temporary and fleeting act is contradictory to the Western memorial tradition. "For most, rotting flowers and disintegrating posters prompted haunting memories rather than a hopeful tribute to those lost. Indeed, most municipalities, like New York, hurried the process by collecting and discarding the thousands of abandoned objects."[27] They compared these street memorials in New York following 9/11 with the NAMES Project Aids Quilt, identifying that both projects are grassroots, unofficial, and interpreted as a whole instead of as individual instances of memorialization.

The authors discuss how these vernacular memorials following 9/11 were transformed into curated museum exhibits and how this curation fundamentally changes the experience. The authors write about the reframing and layering of representation as things shift toward "ordered memory."[28] They argue that the shift from public to private space brings a level of order and

[26] Haskins & DeRose, "Memory, Visibility, and Public Space," 379.
[27] Haskins & DeRose, 381.
[28] Haskins & DeRose, 384.

control that is not characteristic of vernacular street memorials. “The transfer of memorial objects and images from the uninhibited space of the street to the safety and order of the museum replaces the unruly public sphere of the vernacular memorial with the utopia of a politically untainted civic arena.”[29] So, what does this mean for a memorial that remains on the site where these ephemeral memorials were placed but becomes a more refined designed space for mourning? Does this same transformation and curation process occur?

LGBTQ History in the United States

Dr. Susan Ferentinos is a public history researcher, writer, and consultant specializing in the history of gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ identities. Ferentinos is a renowned public historian, specializing in gender, sexuality, and LGBTQ identities in American history. Her expertise lies in interpreting and sharing LGBTQ history, with a focus on inclusivity and intersectionality. In 2019 she wrote,“Ways of Interpreting Queer Pasts,” which created an overview of a variety of interpretive methods that serve as tools for sharing queer history. This article is significant in the way that it compiles and organizes ways that LGBTQ history is collected, interpreted, and shared. Ferentinos argues that efforts to present Queer history in the US are evolving into a more mainstream effort. Over the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the amount of LGTQ interpretive efforts by institutions that aren’t specifically LGBTQ-focused. This article supports the theory that over the past 50 years, LGBTQ history has become increasingly visible and therefore has become a more mainstream subject matter. Ferentinos argues that in regard to LGBTQ history, “as increasing numbers and types of venues are tackling this topic; interpretation is becoming more nuanced and interpretive methods more varied.”[30] The primary

[29] Haskins & DeRose, 387.
[30] Susan Ferentinos, "Ways of Interpreting Queer Pasts," The Public Historian 41, no. 2 (May 01, 2019), 21. doi:10.1525/tph.2019.41.2.19. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26862123.

findings of this article are the number of efforts to interpret LGBTQ history has increased enough that there are no longer only a number of examples but a breadth of instances that can be analyzed for trends and methodology. The author has a positive attitude towards future possibilities and innovations in interpretation and believes that representation will become more inclusive and intersectional.

> "Ongoing LGBTQ historical interpretation will no doubt pay more attention to differences within LGBTQ communities and better highlight the experiences of bisexual and trans folk, people of color, women, and non-urban populations. It will consider the ways intersectionality informed Queer political activism and the ways LGBTQ identities and desires influenced the larger historical narrative." [31]

Ferentinos discusses the memorials that I am evaluating, such as the Harvey Milk Plaza, and the Transgender Memorial Garden. The article also touches on the Pulse Nightclub Memorial, but only discusses briefly vernacular memorialization efforts in Amsterdam, and does not mention the memorial in Orlando. Ferentinos does not evaluate the memorials for design, how they are received by the LGBTQ community and general public, or the process of how these memorials were created. To understand how queer history is interpreted today, it is important to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these memorials. My research builds upon Fernentinos' general overview of the ways that we interpret queer history, by focusing specifically on queer memorials and diving deeper into how, why, and for whom were they created. I used this basis of information to explore how the memorialization process for Pulse in this new era of documenting and sharing queer history.

[31] Ferentinos, "Ways of Interpreting Queer Pasts," 42.

This chapter provided an overview of existing literature in three key areas: collective memory, vernacular memorialization, and interpretation of Queer history and Queer theory. Each of these areas offers valuable insights into the context surrounding the Pulse Nightclub Memorial and selected case studies. Through an exploration of collective memory, we understand the importance of commemorating and preserving the past in shaping identity and continuity within societies. Vernacular memorialization, on the other hand, sheds light on the initial grassroots responses to tragedy and the ways in which communities construct narratives of the past. Finally, an examination of Queer history and Queer theory deepens our understanding of the complexities inherent in memorializing marginalized communities and the evolving interpretations of their histories.

CHAPTER 3

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

This chapter considers the history of each case study memorial, as well as the Pulse Interim Memorial, in order to gain an understanding of how each memorial has evolved over time. This chapter also discusses the history of memorial design in the last forty years which is necessary in understanding the design approach of each of these memorials. Each of the case studies — the Stonewall National Monument, the Harvey Milk Plaza, the AIDS Memorial Grove, and the Transgender Memorial Garden — were selected as prominent LGBTQ memorials in the United States. This chapter also discusses why each of these memorials was selected and how understanding their trajectory from inception through design can help us to better understand the memorialization process at Pulse.

The Participatory Memorial Design Movement

Each of the case study memorials are considered to be 'participatory memorials.' This was a movement in memorial design towards a more contemporary approach, one that positions the visitor as an active participant and frames their experience around their interaction with the site. The participant experiences the memorial through movement, investigation, and contemplation. This is in contrast with more traditional memorial and monument design in which visitors view a static object that usually is accompanied by a narrative of the event or person that is being commemorated.

Criteria for Selecting Case Studies

I have investigated these four memorials because they each have a unique positionality that I will be investigating in the Pulse Interim Memorial.

Stonewall National Monument in New York City is recognized on a national level, with designations both as a National Monument, and as a National Historic Landmark. The Stonewall Uprising is recognized as a nationally significant event in LGBTQ history and has become a part of the nation's collective memory. This monument may be the most recognized LGBTQ monument in the country. Investigating how and why the events of Stonewall and its subsequent memorialization came to be is important in investigating the significance of the Pulse Nightclub shooting and its memorialization process.

The National Aids Memorial Grove in San Fransisco is an example of vernacular memorialization that has resisted the transformation of a formal design process. Caretakers, friends, and family of those affected by Aids have maintained control over the memorial so that its stewardship is community-led. By understanding how and why this memorial has maintained its vernacular, grassroots nature, I can compare this with the Pulse Memorial and understand what drives these sites to be taken over by a formal design process.

The Harvey Milk Plaza is significant to my research because it is an example of a memorial that was not originally designed as one. The space now known as the Harvey Milk Plaza, is the entrance to a train station in the Castro District in San Fransisco. The space has adapted slowly over time to accommodate its use as a gathering space and memorial but is currently undergoing redesign. By examining the evolution of the Harvey Milk Plaza, I will be

able to understand how an urban-space-turned-memorial functions and in what ways the stewards of the space are adapting it to meet their needs.

The Transgender Memorial Garden located in St. Louis represents a memorial that is intended for a particular community group within the LGBTQ community. This memorial is intended to honor the specific and unique experience of the trans community and memorialize those killed for being trans. In 2023, 406 trans individuals were killed for being trans, according to "Transrespect versus Transphobia Worldwide" (TvT), a comparative qualitative-quantitative research project initiated by Transgender Europe (TGEU).[32] Investigating this memorial allows for a deeper understanding of the intersectionality that exists within the group that the Pulse Memorial aims to honor.

Defining Community

The concept of community is complex, with many different overlapping identities, experiences, and contexts. In terms of the case study memorials and the Pulse memorial, there are different scales of community that grow broader and more general as the scale increases. When referring to the communities involved with each memorial, the most immediate community refers to those directly affected by the event that prompted the development of the memorial. So in the case of Pulse, this community group consists of the friends and family of those killed at Pulse as well as the survivors. The next scale of community included the local queer community. For Pulse, this would include queer people including activists, organizers, and public figures in Orlando. There is then the Orlando community as a whole, including

[32] "TMM Numbers." TvT. Accessed March 19, 2024. https://transrespect.org/en/map/trans-murder-monitoring/#.

stakeholders not within the queer community but who have proximity to the memorial. This continues to scale up to include the queer community in the United States as a whole, Americans, etc. Each community group is intersectional and intertwined. This can make it difficult to distinguish key stakeholders, specifically when trying to prioritize those most affected. However, understanding these different levels of community is important in understanding each memorial and its collective memory.

The Stonewall National Monument

The Stonewall National Monument has become a significant national symbol of gay civil rights. While not a memorial to the loss of life, its significance to LGBTQ history, and prominence as a National Historic Landmark make it an important site to examine in order to understand the history of commemoration in this community. The Stonewall National Monument is comprised of Christopher Park, a small, triangular green space adjacent to the Stonewall Inn. The park has served as a gathering place and focal point for gay rights activism since the events of 1969 Stonewall Uprising. The Stonewall Inn, originally constructed in the 1840s as stables, underwent several alterations before becoming a bar in the late 1960s. the Stonewall Inn itself is a privately owned establishment and not part of the designated monument area.

The Stonewall National Monument is the site of the Stonewall Uprising, a series of spontaneous demonstrations in response to a police raid on June 28, 1969. This event is pivotal in the gay rights movement, galvanizing a community and sparking a wave of activism and advocacy for gay rights. The Stonewall Uprising was a catalyst for the formation of numerous gay rights organizations and played a crucial role in the broader struggle for civil rights in the United States. Furthermore, the preservation and designation of the Stonewall National

Monument as a symbol of gay civil rights highlights the evolving nature of American architectural heritage

The Stonewall Inn, located in Greenwich Village, is a two-story building constructed between 1843 and 1846. The building was originally two separate structures that served as horse stables. Evidence of this original use can be seen in the height difference between the east and west sections of the building and the structural wall that runs through, previously separating the two stables. [33] These stables were characteristic of the pre-car West Village in the mid to late 19th century when the area was more working class. The development of the horse omnibus and the horse-drawn streetcar in the 1820s and 1830s incorporated Greenwich Village into the metropolitan area of New York, transforming it from a northern country retreat to a working-class neighborhood of the city. [34] The façade of the building that exists today was constructed in 1930 when the east and west sections were combined and turned into a restaurant called Bonnie's Stonewall Inn. The restaurant was open for 36 years. After closing, it became the iconic gay bar known as the Stonewall Inn in 1967. [35]

[33] David Carter, Andrew Scott Dolkart, Gale Harris, and Jay Shockley, "Stonewall," National Historic Landmark Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999).
[34] Francis Morrone, "A History of the East Village and Its Architecture" (New York, NY: Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, 2018).
[35] "Stonewall National Monument Cultural Landscape (U.S. National Park Service)," National Parks Service, accessed November 28, 2023, https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/stonewall-national-monument-landscape-976163.htm.

Figure 1 View of the Stonewall Inn with previous signage, taken two months after the Stonewall Riots, Davies, Diana,1969. NPS.Gov. Accessed 2023. https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/stonewall-national-monument-landscape-976163.htm .

The interior of the building remained divided into two sections during its occupation as the Stonewall Inn. The walls were painted black and two makeshift wooden bars occupied the interior space. Much of these modest interior features were destroyed during the uprising. Today, the interior is divided into two businesses with modern interiors, one of which is a bar named after the famous Stonewall Inn.

Christopher Park, is a triangular-shaped greenspace directly across Christopher Street, south of the Stonewall Inn. The land was previously subdivided in the early nineteenth century, but after the Great Fire of New York in 1835, the community called for its transformation into an

open greenspace. The park was dedicated in 1837. [36] The park was further developed during the 1880s and 1890s during the beginnings of the City Beautiful Movement. According to the National Register Nomination, Christopher Park was "a favorite hangout for young, often homeless, gay street kids." [37] The use of this space by gayyouth is characteristic of the park's location and setting, as many were homeless due to descrimination and estrangement from their parents.[38] Christopher Park's proximity to the Stonewall Inn likely led the park to become a safe space for these kids, much like the gay bars themselves became refuges for many. The park's triangular shape is due to it being a junction point between Christopher Street, Grove Street, and West 4th Street at Seventh Avenue South. The position of the greenspace and its connection with the Stonewall Inn contribute to how the events of the uprising played out. There were several streets leading in and out of the site, allowing for movement that led to a significant confrontation.

Following the closure of the Stonewall Inn Restaurant in 1967, the Stonewall Inn operated as a popular gay club. Like many gay nightlife establishments at this time, the club was said to be run by the Mafia. Three men who had grown up together in Little Italy took over the Stonewall Inn and were responsible for operations. In the mid-twentieth century, the mob's involvement in the management of gay bars was a prevalent phenomenon, given the societal discrimination faced by that community. Gay bars were targeted in frequent police raids and subject to relentless harassment, prompting the mafia to capitalize on this vulnerability. Establishments like the Stonewall Inn operated with a precarious understanding with law enforcement, often paying bribes to avoid raids. However, the dynamics took an unexpected turn on the night of June 28,

[36] The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "New York City's Landscape Legacy: Christopher Park," accessed November 29, 2023, https://www.tclf.org/landscapes/christopher-park.
[37] Carter, Dolkart, Harris, Shockley, *Stonewall-NR-Nomination*, 12.
[38] Shelton, Jama et al., "Homelessness and Housing Experiences among LGBTQ Young Adults in Seven U.S. Cities," Cityscape 20, no. 3 (2018): 9–34, accessed January 31, 2023, https://www.jstor.org/stable/2624870.

1969, when Stonewall patrons resisted a police raid, sparking the protests and demonstrations that marked a pivotal moment in the struggle for gay rights.[39]

This historical context underscores the intricate relationship between organized crime, societal biases, and the resilience of marginalized communities in their quest for acceptance and freedom. The history of gay bars being run by the mafia serves as a reminder of the lengths to which these communities have had to go to secure spaces where they could express their identities and find solidarity. The Stonewall riots stand as a testament to the power of collective resistance and the eventual emergence of a broader movement that reshaped the narrative surrounding LGBTQ rights.

The raid on the Stonewall Inn in 1969 marked a critical turning point in the history of the LGBTQ rights movement, catalyzing the modern fight for equality and acceptance. On the night of June 28, 1969, the Stonewall Inn faced yet another routine police raid. Raids on gay bars were common during this era, driven by discriminatory laws and societal prejudices. Fed up with the incessant harassment and humiliation, the patrons of the Stonewall Inn, including drag queens, transgender individuals, and queer people of color, resisted the police when they invaded the bar. Tensions escalated as the crowd, both inside and outside the bar, grew defiant and began to fight back. As the raid intensified, the atmosphere shifted from one of submission to a collective uprising.[40] The rebellion continued to grow, as protests and demonstrations erupted in the days that followed.

The impact of the Stonewall riots, as they came to be known, inspired a generation to challenge systemic discrimination and demand equal rights. Activism increased, and LGBTQ

[39] Ann Bausum, *Stonewall : Breaking Out in the Fight for Gay Rights* (New York: Viking, an imprint of Penguin Group, 2015).
[40] Carter, Dolkart, Harris, Shockley, 7.

individuals, galvanized by the events at the Stonewall Inn, began organizing for their rights on a broader scale. The riot's impact was not limited to Greenwich Village, or even New York City, but reached a national and international scale, leading to the formation of numerous advocacy groups and the push for legislative change. The event prompted the annual commemoration of Pride Month each June, recognizing both the progress made and the ongoing struggles faced by the LGBTQ community. The raid on the Stonewall Inn in 1969, while initially a violent clash, ultimately became a catalyst for transformative social change, laying the foundation for the contemporary fight for LGBTQ rights and acceptance. The movement led to increased visibility for LGBTQ people. This brings to light how central the issues of visibility and the right to live and exist in American architecture are to the events of Stonewall. It demonstrates how Stonewall became more of a representation of larger more abstract ideas to further the acceptance of the LGBTQ community.

According to the National Register Nomination, Franklin Kameny, one of the most prominent early gay activists said that "by the time of Stonewall, we had fifty to sixty gay groups in the country. A year later there was at least fifteen hundred. By two years later, to the extent that a count could be made, it was twenty-five hundred. And *that* was the impact of Stonewall."[41] In "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," by Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crage, the authors make the argument that gay history is divided into two epochs; "before Stonewall" and "after Stonewall." [42] The authors believe that the events that transpired in and outside of the Stonewall Inn, as well as across the street in Christopher Park, were remembered because they were the first conflict of this nature to meet two conditions.

[41] Carter, Dolkart, Harris, Shockley, 8.
[42] Armstrong, "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," , 724-751 https://www.jstor.org/stable/25472425.e

"Activists considered the event commemorable and had the mnemonic capacity to create a commemorative vehicle." They write that Stonewall "was a result of complex political developments that converged in this time and place." [43] Armstong and Crage are considering the effects and the significance of the Stonewall Uprising through the lens of sociology, as two in that field, but it is important to look through an architectural lens as well. The physical environment and the proximity of the bar to a public open space reveals how and why the Stonewall Inn became a landmark. The cultural and social context in which the events of Stonewall took place is part of part of the larger picture.

In 1999, the Stonewall Inn and surrounding site was the first property in the United States listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its association with LGBTQ civil rights. The site was designated as a National Historic Landmark the National Register of Historic Places in 2000.[44] The park was declared a National Monument in 2016 by President Obama. This was the first national park site dedicated as a National Monument in LGBTQ history.[45] The sites designated on the National Register of Historic Places include the public spaces adjacent to the Stonewall Inn including Christopher Park, Christopher Street, and the sidewalks along Christopher Street, Grove Street, Waverly Place, Gay Street, Greenwich Avenue, Sixth Avenue, and West 10th Street. The Stonewall Inn and surrounding site were of recent origin when designated in 2000, so it received Criteria Consideration G. National Historic Landmark Themes included "Creating Social Institutions and Movements," specifically reform movements, and

[43] Elizabeth A. Armstrong and Suzanna M. Crage, "Movements and Memory: The Making of the Stonewall Myth," *American Sociological Review* 71, no. 5 (Oct 01, 2006), 724-751. doi:10.1177/000312240607100502. https://www.jstor.org/stable/25472425.

[44] "Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation." Stonewall Inn State Historic Site. Accessed December 1, 2023. https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/stonewallinn/details.aspx .

[45] "A National Park for Stonewall." National Parks Conservation Association. Accessed December 1, 2023. https://www.npca.org/advocacy/5-a-national-park-for-stonewall#:~:text=On%20June%2024%2C%202016%20President,modern%20LGBTQ%20civil%20rights%20movement.

falls under the historical context of “Social and Humanitarian Movements and Civil Rights Movements.”[46] According to the nomination, there is no known architect or builder. It is clear from the nomination that the significance of the Stonewall Inn is entirely related to the Stonewall Uprising. The inn itself is more of a vessel for a social and cultural movement, but in that, the architecture itself becomes important.

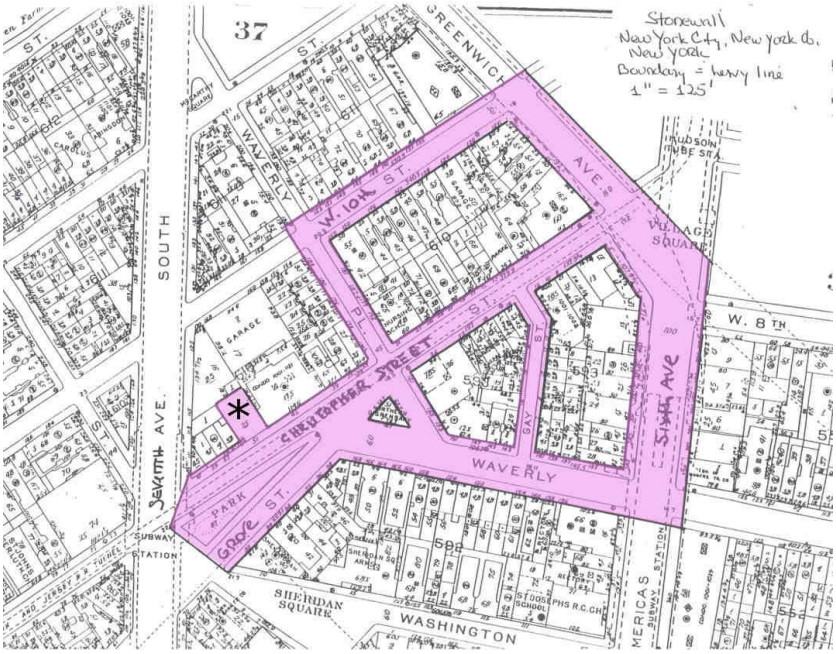

Figure 2 Boundary of the Stonewall National Landmark Designation. National Register of Historic Places Nomination, 1999.

Christopher Park, integral to the Stonewall National Monument, commemorative design elements, including statues that pay homage to the LGBTQ rights movement and the transformative events of the Stonewall Uprising. Among them is the iconic "Gay Liberation" statue, sculpted by George Segal, which portrays two same-sex couples and a lone individual, providing representation for the LGBTQ community. Additionally, the "Gay Liberation Monument" by artist Karin Spritzler celebrates the courage and defiance of those who fought for equality at Stonewall. These statues, carefully placed amidst greenery and shaded pathways,

[46] Carter, Dolkart, Harris, Shockley, 6.

serve as the primary design elements of the monument. The sculptures contribute to the park's role as a living memorial to the struggles and triumphs of LGBTQ individuals.

Figure 3 "Gay Liberation" by George Segal located within Christopher Park.“Gay Liberation Monument in New York City, NY,” Public Art Archive, accessed March 19, 2024, https://publicartarchive.org/art/Gay-Liberation-Monument/ae00b9e5.

Harvey Milk Plaza

The Harvey Milk Plaza, located in the heart of San Francisco's Castro District, serves as a prominent memorial and public space dedicated to the legacy of Harvey Milk, a pioneering LGBTQ activist and politician. Established in memory of Milk's contributions to civil rights and social justice, the Plaza’s purpose is to remember his legacy and honor his contribution to LGBTQ history.

This site was not originally designed to be a memorial. The plaza serves as the entrance to the Castro Muni Station and was originally designed as a transit station entrance. It was constructed in the late 1970s, by Howard Grant for Reid & Tarics Associates.[47] However, the plaza was unofficially given the name "Harvey Milk Plaza" in 1979, one year after Milk's assassination at his office in San Fransisco City Hall. The plaza is not designed to be a gathering space, but it has effectively functioned as one since the late 1970s. Harvey Milk Plaza came to be known as the historic heart of San Fransico's LGBTQ community.

The plaza was officially designated as Harvey Milk Plaza on September 15, 1985, by Mayor Dianne Feinstein, the Board of Supervisors President John L. Molinari, and Harvey's successor, Supervisor Harry Britt. In 1997, the city added Castro's landmark flagpole to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of Milk's death, and in 2017, they added a neon sign that reads "Hope Will Never Be Silent" to the façade of a building adjacent to the plaza. The addition of the sign was in honor of the fortieth anniversary of Milk's election to the San Fransisco Board of Supervisors.[48]

Milk was a charismatic, openly gay politician. Elected in 1977, Milk served for less than a year before being assassinated by a homophobic fellow supervisor. His assassination brought national attention to his legacy and to gay rights. In his time as a politician, he was a champion for gay individuals, racial minorities, women, the working class, those with disabilities, and senior citizens.[49]

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[47] "The Memorial at Harvey Milk Plaza," The Memorial at Harvey Milk Plaza, accessed February 15, 2024, https://www.harveymilkplaza.org/.
[48] harveymilkplaza.org
[49] Lillian Faderman, "Harvey Milk: His Lives and Death", Jewish Lives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,shib&db=cat06564a&AN=uga.9949111252002959&site=eds-live.

Harvey Milk Plaza has been a makeshift, grassroots memorial for nearly 45 years. It was not designed with the intention of being more than a public transit-oriented space. However, over the last half-century, it has been a location of countless gatherings, protests, celebrations, and vigils. In 2017, the Americans with Disabilities Act required that the plaza install an additional elevator. This became the catalyst for the Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza and the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects to conduct an international design competition, won by the international architectural firm, Perkins Eastman.. However, even after several revisions, the project faced much criticism. The design was eventually abandoned because of unresolved design issues. Four years later, the Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza went back to the drawing board.[50]

In 2021, landscape architecture firm, SWA Group was selected as designers of the plaza. The firm has experience with memorial design, haven designed memorials to shooting victims in El Paso, Texas and Newtown, Connecticut. Due to the outcome of the last design competition, SWA began by gauging community sentiment. They collaborated with Civic Edge Consulting on an outreach campaign that asked community members a series of questions about what they wanted out of the new design. One of the questions asked members if they wanted a memorial to Milk himself, or to the civil and human rights movement of which Milk was a part. Community members wanted it to be centered more around the civil rights narrative than Milk himself.

[50] Lydia Lee, "A Place for Harvey Milk: Landscape Architecture Magazine," Landscape Architecture Magazine - The Magazine of the American Society of Landscape Architects, January 25, 2023, https://landscapearchitecturemagazine.org/2021/07/06/revive-and-reboot/.

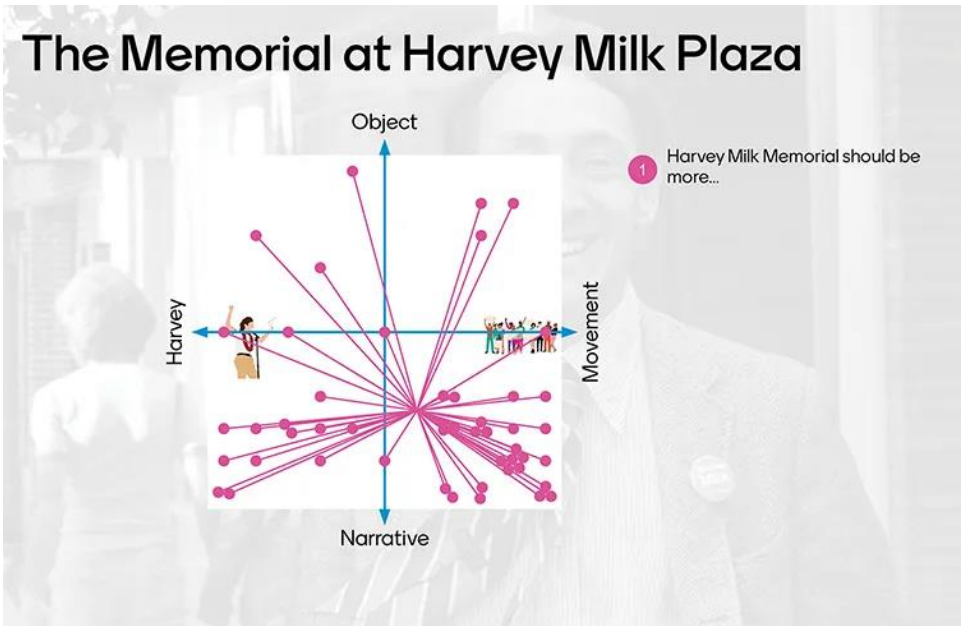


Figure 4 Visualization of neighborhood feedback conducted by SWA Group. LAM Staff, "A Place for Harvey Milk - Landscape Architecture Magazine," Landscape Architecture Magazine - The Magazine of the American Society of Landscape Architects, January 25, 2023, https://landscapearchitecturemagazine.org/2021/07/06/revive-and-reboot/.

On November 9, 2023 the Mayor and Board of Supervisors of San Fransisco passed an act titled, "Resolution accepting a gift of design documents with an estimated value at $1,275,000 from the Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza to assist Public Works in the redesign of Harvey Milk Plaza; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act."[51] As of February of 2024, the project has not broken ground.

These design competitions call into question the historic significance of the plaza. The site underwent a Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE) through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. The site was deemed historic and qualifies for the National Register of Historic Places solely because of its programmatic function. While the plaza does have a couple of physical features that are deemed historically significant, the events that have taken

[51] Inc. Granicus, "Gift Acceptance - Friends of Harvey Milk - Redesign of Harvey Milk Plaza - Estimated Value at $1,275,000," City and county of San Francisco - file #: 231011, November 9, 2023, https://sfgov.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6366465&GUID=DBE4EAE7-4DC1-4E8A-9D77-458183B6604F&Options=&Search=.

place there are what make the plaza eligible for the National Register.[52] Opponents to the redesign believe that the plaza is historically significant and therefore should not be demolished in order to build the new memorial. One of these opponents is Howard Grant, the architect responsible for the original design.

Grant is an architect and openly gay man whose career spanned the mid-twentieth century. He was part of the Bay Area Rapid Transit Conceptual Design team and was the designer of several San Fransisco transit stops including the plaza at the Castro Muni Metro Station. Grant opposed the redesign because he believes that "There is no compelling reason to go through the agony of demolishing the present plaza and greenbelt to end up with a smaller plaza that is hidden behind an entrance to the Muni station."[53] Grant told Bay Area Reporter that any attempt to redesign the plaza must have a compelling argument for why a historic site should be demolished. He believes that due to site's eligibility for the National Register, the local community should seek its listing as a historic site.

Many community members are in support of the redesign, emphasizing the need for a community gathering space that honors Milk's legacy. In an article from local independent publication, *Underscoresf*, drag queen and community activist Juanita More explains why she believes the redesign of Harvey Milk Plaza is necessary. As a member of the Honorary Committee for the Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza, More and other local politicians, celebrities, and artists believe that the new plaza could provide the setting for future activism while commemorating Milk's work as a civil and human rights activist. "…bringing a new heightened purpose for the memorial is as essential now as it has ever been before. It's a chance to continue

[52] harveymilkplaza.org
[53] Matthew S Bajko, "SF Planners Find Harvey Milk Plaza to Be Historically Important," Bay Area Reporter, July 10, 2020, https://www.ebar.com/story.php?ch=news&sc=latest_news&id=294737.

allowing people to be seen; to be heard; to have the chance to participate in creating the change they want to see in the world."[54] More discusses the ways in which local small businesses in the Castro District have been hit by rising rents and the COVID-19 pandemic, and how the redevelopment of the plaza will help support the recovery of these businesses. Fellow Committee member and drag queen Sister Roma, agrees with More. "I'm proud to serve on the Honorary Committee of the Friends of Harvey Milk Plaza, and 100% support their plans to create a beautiful, safe, accessible gathering space honoring 'The Mayor of Castro Street,'"[55]

Harvey Milk was a civil servant. His legacy connects with the people of San Fransisco as well as the queer community as a whole. His impact was to further representation for gay people, and this message is broad, universal, and inclusive of many community groups. Harvey Milk Plaza has always served the purpose of public gathering space since its inception. It has always had the dual role of community space and memorial. Its evolution into a vibrant gathering space speaks to the enduring legacy of Milk.

[54] Juanita MORE!, "SF's Harvey Milk Plaza Needs to Remain a Community Gathering Place," *Underscore_SF*, January 12, 2024, https://underscoresf.com/sfs-harvey-milk-plaza-needs-to-remain-a-community-gathering-place/.
[55] MORE! *Underscore_SF.* 2024.

National AIDS Memorial Grove (NAMG)

The National Aids Memorial Grove began as a local effort among friends. In 1988, as the AIDS epidemic was accelerating, a group of San Fransisco residents came together to conceive the Grove. Some were involved in local environmental efforts, and some were landscape designers and architects; all were connected with the gay community. The group wanted to create a living memorial that represented hope and positivity within the grieving process. They identified a site in Golden Gate Park that was a damp, topographical low point in the park. The seven-acre plot of land was mostly overgrown, and not taken care of. After signing a 99-year lease with the San Francisco Park Department, they got to work creating a memorial enveloped in the trees. "Visitors would move into the darkness and shadows of the woods and emerge into the light of a meadow, and in which they would encounter a number of hardscaped "broken circles," including a circular list of names called the Circle of Friends."[56] In September of 1991, the first Volunteer Workday in the Grove included a Ground breaking ceremony with Mayor Art Agnos and over 200 community volunteers. Guided by renowned designer Garrett Eckbo, twenty-two Bay Area landscape architects, garden designers, architects, artists, and park personnel developed the basic design and Master Plan for the AIDS Memorial Grove.[57]

Joshua Gamson is a sociologist and author known for his research on contemporary Western commercial culture, mass media, and social movements. As a professor of sociology at the University of San Francisco, he has made significant contributions to the field through his research and writing. Through this work, he sheds light on the intricate relationship between space, identity, and social change. In 2018, Gamson wrote an article for the *Social Problems*

[56] Joshua Gamson, "The Place That Holds Our Stories': The National AIDS Memorial Grove and Flexible Collective Memory Work," *Social Problems* 65, no. 1 (November 30, 2017): 33–50, https://doi.org/10.1093/socpro/spx043, 36.
[57] "The San Francisco Examiner from San Francisco, California," The San Francisco Examiner (San Francisco, California), June 11, 2000, 72.

peer-reviewed academic journal titled, “The Place That Holds Our Stories’: The National AIDS Memorial Grove and Flexible Collective Memory Work.” Gamson delves into the impact of physical spaces on our collective memory and political narratives in American society. The article explores the significance of the National AIDS Memorial Grove as a site for collective memory work, demonstrating how its flexible and evolving narrative structure accommodates diverse experiences related to the AIDS epidemic. Gamson writes from the perspective of someone who has witnessed and been affected by the AIDS epidemic. This section draws upon *The Place That Holds Our Stories* as a primary account of the memorialization process.

The creation of the Grove began as a grassroots effort that was community-led and community-run. The founders, later board members, utilized community involvement and funding from wealthy donors and corporate sponsors. They were a well-connected group and were able to bring together San Francisco’s political, social, and financial elites as well as organizers within San Francisco’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. “Their first fundraiser was at the home of philanthropist James Hormel; co-founder Alice Russell-Shapiro is a member of the Haas family, wealthy owners of Levi-Strauss; and the Advisory Committee they put together included Mayor Art Agnos, State Senator Quentin Kopp, Diane Feinstein, and Madeleine Haas Russell.” [58] Early on, the board recognized that they did not want to appear in competition with AIDS services and advocacy organizations. They wanted to convey that the first priority is those living with AIDS, and that the commemorative act should come second to this. Therefore, they decided to rely entirely on private funding. Another aspect of the Grove's inception that points to its grassroots nature is how it was constructed. The whole memorial was built by community members, and this community involvement was a central part

[58] Gamson, “The Places that Hold Our Stories,” 39.

of the vision for the space. “The acts of organizing, volunteering, and creating the Grove were, and continue to be, part of the healing process, creating a living testimony to renewal” [59] It took two months of weeding and clearing to create the Grove. Volunteers were responsible for all renovation and upkeep and, to this day, the memorial is run by volunteers. These regular workdays became community rituals of their own. Each workday would end with a healing circle, where volunteers would stand together with hands clasped, listening to announcements, sometimes sharing poetry or music, and “throwing names” of loved ones suffering or who had passed. The cultivation of the memorial itself served as a conduit for bringing community members together.

Figure 5 Volunteers participating in the "healing circle" after a workday in 2015. Flickr, March 9, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalaidsmemorial/albums/with/72157720217780434.

Several years later in October 1996, The Grove gained national recognition. Representative Nancy Pelosi led the legislative effort, backed by President Bill Clinton, to establish the 'AIDS Memorial Grove Act of 1996.' This enactment officially designated the Grove as the nation's

[59] Gamson, 39.

AIDS Memorial, placing it in the same league as distinguished memorials like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, and the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor.[60] This level of recognition brought more funding, which resulted in improvements to the memorial and hiring of more staff. The founders never imagined that the Grove would have such national attention. They had planned to disband the board after fundraising. Instead, the national designation of the Grove led an effort to improve upon the memorial by hosting an international design competition.

The goal of this design competition, announced ten years after the Grove opened, was to create a "new memorial element: that would draw more attention to the somewhat hidden grove and "tell a story" that speaks to its "new global reality"[61] Over 200 designs were submitted. However, the competition as a whole was unsuccessful. The decision to redesign the Grove was controversial and strongly contested among board members and the local community. Those advocating for the redesign believed that it was necessary to serve future generations and tell the story of the AIDS epidemic. Many thought that the garden alone did not communicate the breadth of tragedy and loss that AIDS caused. Some did not feel that the emotional impact of a "lovely garden" was compelling enough. Opponents of the redesign, many of whom were volunteers and founding members, argued that the Grove was a complete and fully realized memorial. Co-founder Alic Russel-Shapiro stated that "The Grove itself is the marker," and that "Nothing more needs to be superimposed on top of it."[62]

The disagreement about how to convey the memorial's message came to a head when the competition winner was selected. The design, known as "Living Memorial" was conceived by

[60] The National AIDS Memorial, accessed February 3, 2024, https://www.aidsmemorial.org/.
[61] Gamson, 39.
[62] Gamson, 40.

two young New York-based designers, Chloe Town and Janette Kim. The design was a metaphor for a wildfire, featuring black carbon fiber rods emulating burnt trees that plants would eventually grow from. (Figure 2).

Figure 6: Living Memorial Rendering by Jannette Kim and Chloe Town. San Francisco / 5 finalists compete on design for national AIDS ..., accessed March 9, 2024, https://www.sfgate.com/health/article/SAN-FRANCISCO-5-finalists-compete-on-design-for-2704428.php.

The design was praised for conveying the magnitude and devastation of the AIDS epidemic through creating a visceral reaction in viewers. While some felt that the design was thought-provoking, others felt it was intrusive. "Opponents were not having it. They saw the design as intrusive, ugly, defiling of sacred space, and unnecessary"[63] These opponents believed that the current form of the Grove was potent with meaning on its own. "For some participants, the most powerful memorial technology is nature itself, as the natural cycle of emergence,

[63] Gamson, 40.

growth, decline, death, and regrowth, along with the experience of shadowy forest giving way to sunny meadow, serve as both metaphor and marker of loss, survival, and hope. For others, however, this seemed too nuanced"[64]

The design won in 2005 but after five rounds of voting the board decided not to proceed. The reasoning was a lack of funding and staff to support the scale of the design. This decision process put a significant strain on the NAMG board. "It really tore us apart as a board," former board member Gina Gatta said. "We spent months and months and months on this, and it really took the direction away, and it exhausted the board. It made enemies. There was just so much conflict. Everybody had such ownership over this place"[65]. The disagreements that arose during the design competition highlight an important issue in the commemorative process. Who was the Grove for?

> Tension over the purpose of memorializing, which exploded in the design controversy, emerged quite early in the Grove's history. Organizers' original emphasis was on creating a place where local residents who had lost friends and lovers could openly grieve, remember those who had died, get comfort and healing from nature, and find community. Designed to be a sort of open-roofed cathedral, the Grove functioned like a private memorial space, and taking care of the land was understood as a mechanism for coping with traumatic memory.[66]

The original purpose of the Grove was to serve the immediate community and provide a place for mourning, reflection, and respite. However, over time as the memorial received national designation, the function shifted to include public storytelling aimed at a national audience that would last far into the future. "As a national destination oriented towards future generations, the

[64] Gamson, 42.
[65] Gamson, 40.
[66] Gamson 40-41.

Grove needed to provide "the story" of AIDS: a push towards narrative closure tied to the NAMG's organizational function."[67] This was reflected even in the NAMG mission statement. Their original statement read "a living tribute to all lives touched by AIDS." Currently, their mission statement is, "By sharing the story of the struggle against HIV/AIDS, we remember, in perpetuity, the lives lost, we offer healing and hope to survivors, and we inspire new generations of activists in the fight against stigma, denial, and hate for a just future."[68] This shows a clear evolution in the mission of NAMG, one that reorients themselves more outwardly.

While the "Living Memorial" was never constructed, additions to the memorial has allowed for more flexibility and inclusivity in the memorial's messaging. Different parts of the Grove have been added since the 1990s. Gamson argues that three forces facilitate flexible memory production with NAMG. The first is that AIDS is an ongoing and changing phenomenon "The AIDS Quilt, for instance, is perpetually unfinished, as new panels are added, and its panels are often put in different combinations, such that it provides "no unified interpretive authority" and "if it can claim a narrative at all it is a protean one."[69] There is no search for closure and there is intentionally room to accommodate as evolving narrative. The second factor is that flexible memory-making is encouraged by organizational conditions. It is advantageous to the Grove's success for them to appeal to a wide variety of stakeholders. "Heterogeneous storytelling that does not narrow to a linear narrative, for instance, is useful both for engaging Grove members and for facilitating fundraising,"[70] Gamson states that this fluidity can be an organizational resource, a way to bring many people together to create a flexible narrative with loose boundaries. The final factor that Gamson cites is that nature itself is a means

[67] Gamson, 41.
[68] National AIDS Memorial Website
[69] Gamson, 46.
[70] Gamson, 46.

of memorializing. The Grove represents regrowth, healing, and learning. It represents the cycle of life and death. The volunteer-supported structure allows participants to be stewards of the memorial, as a forever changing, evolving, and growing entity. The circle motif used in the hardscape design supports this metaphor communicated through the natural elements of the memorial.

Figure 7 The Circle of Friends located within the National Aids Memorial Grove. Flickr, March 9, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalaidsmemorial/albums/with/72157720217780434.

The National Aids Memorial Grove is a poignant example of the tension between its meaning, purpose, and constituents with queer memorials. The memorial evolved over several decades from a grassroots, inward-focused space for grieving, into an outward educational tool for future generations to learn from. This transition process was spurred by the increased visibility brought by the National AIDS Memorial Grove Act in 1996. NAMG has had to accommodate this transition, while also maintaining the community-run framework on which the memorial was founded.

Transgender Memorial Garden

The Transgender Memorial Garden, located in St. Louis, Missouri, is the first transgender memorial garden in the United States. The garden is fundamentally a grassroots effort by local community organization called the Metro Trans Umbrella Group (MTUG). According to their website, "MTUG is a grassroots, trans-focused organization that began in 2013 when a few folks envisioned a loving community where transgender people could thrive. We strive to serve, unite, strengthen, and empower trans people by creating visibility, providing education, and promoting positive change in St. Louis and beyond."[71] The organization, which was formed in 2013 to provide a wide range of community support such as food pantry delivery, support groups, name change assistance, and a local community center, conceived of the memorial garden idea in 2015.

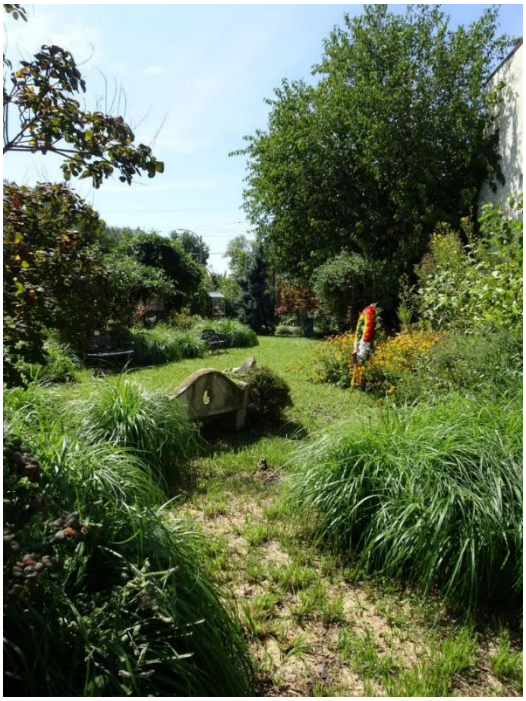


Figure 8 View from the East side of the Transgender Memorial Garden in St. Louis. "Lou Visits the Transgender Memorial Garden," Garden, October 18, 2021, https://garden-lou.com/garden-lou-visits-the-transgender-memorial-garden/.

[71] "Metro Trans Umbrella Group." Stlmetrotrans.org. Accessed February 19, 2024. https://www.stlmetrotrans.org/.

The idea for the memorial garden was conceived by Leon Braxton Jr. a local queer community member and activist. Braxton saw a Facebook post by Lewis E. Reed, president of the St. Louis Board of Aldermen, encouraging citizens to plant trees in local neighborhood gathering spaces. “"I thought the #Plant4Peace project would be a great opportunity to support our St. Louis transgender community and those we have lost with a memorial or reflection park," said Braxton. "So, I contacted Reed's office about my wild idea just to see if it was even possible."[72] #Plant4Peace, a local tree planting campaign, donated the trees for the memorial and they were planted in October on a plot of land owned in part by the City of St. Louis and a local business owner. "In what I believe is a breathtaking vote of confidence and support, the city of St. Louis, Mission St. Louis, and the local business were completely on board with our idea. Every conversation I’ve had has been wonderfully supportive." said Jarek Steele, member of MTUG, to Boom Magazine, St. Louis-based LGBTQ publication.[73]

The memorial garden was opened on November 20, 2015 on Transgender Day of Remembrance. MTUG had a budget of between $250-$300 and relied entirely on volunteers and community support.[74] However, after six years, the decision was made to move the garden to a new location. This followed years of negotiation to purchase the land from the city and the private owner. While MTUG was able to purchase the land from the city, the private owner was unwilling to sell. MTUG’s executive director Sayer Johnson stated in an article by Rachel Lippmann for St. Louis Public Radio, that they did not think it was worth the emotional toll of trying to change the mind of the owner. “It was not going to be worth the fight involved. We

[72] Colin Murphy, “Exclusive: St. Louis Transgender Memorial Garden to Be Unveiled in the Grove Nov. 20th,” Boom Magazine - St. Louis, September 29, 2015, https://www.boom.lgbt/st-louis-transgender-memorial-garden-to-be-unveiled-nov-20-in-the-grove.
[73] Murphy, Boom Magazine, 2015.
[74] Murphy, Boom Magazine. 2015.

have already experienced so much trauma as a community, we didn't want to engage in that."[75] Local neighborhood, Benton Park West, was struggling to find volunteers to maintain their community garden, so MTUG created an agreement with the local neighborhood association and took over the space to create the new memorial garden. MTUG's community center is located nearby, so the relocation of the garden allows the organization to be a better neighbor, said Elaine Brune, MTUG's board chair. "We can work jointly with them to provide a really, really wonderful space for our organization and for the Benton Park West neighborhood," they said.[76]

The Transgender Memorial Garden has been and continues to be completely community-run. MTUG hosts monthly cleanup days in the warm months. The memorial itself is constructed of native plants, steppingstone pathways, commemorative benches, bird feeders, a bird bath, and two archways covered in creeping vines. A handmade wooden sign reading, "Transgender Memorial Garden," stands next to one of the archways. Below is the quote "They tried to bury us. They didn't know we were seeds." The garden is not officially designed by outside professionals but is instead a vernacular garden constructed of native plants that attract local pollinator species including butterflies, an important symbol to the transgender community. "MTUG actually has full ownership of the garden, but we do have a relationship with the neighborhood association, and we encourage neighbors to come and volunteer with us! We currently have a volunteer day, one Saturday a month," said volunteer manager Sarah Jiang to St Louis-based garden blogger, horticulturalist, and landscape designer, Jo Batzer.[77] The purpose of the garden is to provide a space to mourn the loss of transgender people to violence and celebrate

[75] Rachel Lippmann, "Transgender Memorial Garden Finds New Home in South St. Louis," STLPR, July 7, 2021, https://www.stlpr.org/race-identity-faith/2021-07-06/transgender-memorial-garden-finds-new-home-in-south-st-louis.
[76] Lippmann, 2021.
[77] Jo Batzer, "Garden-Lou Visits the Transgender Memorial Garden," Garden-Lou, October 18, 2021, https://garden-lou.com/garden-lou-visits-the-transgender-memorial-garden/.

transgender lives. “This garden serves both as a reminder of those whom we’ve lost and also as a very living and tangible symbol of hope in our city that tomorrow will be better days,” said Jaimie Hileman, president of MTUG’s board of directors.[78]

Pulse Nightclub Memorial

The Pulse Nightclub shooting, which occurred on June 12, 2016, in Orlando, Florida, stands as one of the deadliest mass shootings and acts of domestic terrorism in United States history. During the early hours of the morning, a gunman opened fire inside the crowded nightclub, targeting patrons during Latin Night at the well-known gay bar. The attack resulted in the tragic loss of 49 lives and left 53 others wounded, many with life-altering injuries. The shooting sparked widespread shock, grief, and outrage across the nation and around the world, reigniting debates about gun violence, LGBTQ rights, and the prevalence of hate crimes. The Pulse massacre also underscored the vulnerability of marginalized communities, particularly queer and transgender people of color, to violence and discrimination.

The Pulse Nightclub was established in 2004 by Barbara Poma and Ron Legler. The club was in memory of Poma’s late brother, John Poma, who died of complications of HIV in 1991. The name was chosen “as a tribute to John’s heartbeat, which would continue to “beat” in a club that personified his joy for life.”[79] The club served as a vibrant and popular queer club for twelve years.

The events of June 12 had a significant global impact, with outpouring of grief from every corner of the globe. Over weeks and months, material expressions of mourning emerged

[78] Stlmetrotrans.org, accessed March 19, 2024, https://www.stlmetrotrans.org/.
[79] James Halpern, Amy Nitza, and Karla Vermeulen, *Disaster Mental Health Case Studies: Lessons Learned from Counseling in Chaos* (New York, NY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019).

spontaneously from across town and across the world and took all forms. From video games to stuffed animals, candles to rosaries, and from flowers to furniture, a city's collective grief, and that of a world mourning with it, affected material changes in how citizens behaved, remembered, and felt.[80]

The following day, thousands of people gathered at Dr. Philips Center for Performing Arts in Downtown Orlando for a candlelight vigil on the lawn. In the weeks after vigils were held at nearby Lake Eola and outside of Orlando Regional Medical Center, just down the street from Pulse and the location where victims were taken to the night of the tragedy. These sites became some of the main depositories of what James Young called "stages of memory." These offerings "pointed simultaneously to the conspicuous absence of those whose lives had been taken and to a community resolved to remedy that absence with material and social presence, to redress death by affirming life, and to combat hate with love."[81]

[80] Adam M. Ware, "Materializing Humanity: Memorial Collecting after Pulse," *Museums & Social Issues* 12, no. 2 (July 3, 2017): 92–98, https://doi.org/10.1080/15596893.2017.1367218.
[81] Ware, "Materializing Humanity: Memorial Collecting after Pulse," 2017.

Figure 9 Ephemeral memorialization at Pulse Nightclub following the shooting on January 12, 2016. National ASLA presentation by Dix.Hite+Partners, 2021.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, vigils and makeshift memorials emerged as expressions of mourning and resilience, all over the world, while calls for stricter gun control measures and. comprehensive hate crime legislation intensified. Queer memorials across the country, including all of the case studies discussed in this thesis, hosted vigils to those lost at Pulse and were sites of vernacular memorialization. Immediately following the tragedy, numerous offerings, signs, flowers, and memorabilia were left at the Pulse Nightclub. The grassroots memorialization of the lives lost that night was instant and widespread. There was a prompt effort to document this grassroots memorialization by Pam Schwartz, Executive Director of the Orange County Regional History Center. Schwartz collected items such as trinkets, letters, and mimentos from the site to be documented and preserved.

In 2016 following the tragedy, the OnePulse Foundation was established by Poma. The foundation's mission was to "To create and support a memorial that opens hearts, a museum that opens minds, educational programs that open eyes, and legacy scholarships that open doors."[82] From the very beginning, there was energy and conversation around creating a memorial at the site of the nightclub. In January of 2017 a task force was established composed of community leaders, stakeholders, first responders, victims' families, survivors. Kody Smith, CEO of Orlando-based Landscape Architecture firm, Dix.Hite + Partners, became involved with the foundation in 2017 alongside founder, and CEO at the time, Chris Hite. In a conversation with Smith in September of 2023, he spoke to the immediate decision to seek advice from people involved in the aftermath of other tragedies.[83] The task force traveled throughout the US, connecting with other memorial leaders to learn how they approached the process of commemoration. One of the ideas that they were inspired by was creating an interim memorial which was done at the Oklahoma City National Memorial and Flight 93 National Memorial.

Dix.Hite + Partners began designing the interim memorial in July of 2017. The memorial was intended to be a temporary installation for no more than two years before the final memorial was installed. The site opened in April of 2018. The monument was funded by the OnePulse Foundation as well as major fundraising efforts by Dix.Hite. Smith claims that they construction budget was $450,000 and Dix.Hite raised around $250,000 to $300,000.[84] In several instances, people donated their time and labor to the creation of the memorial due to personal ties with the victims or local community. For example, the site was built by Jones Clayton Construction, who donated their services for free. The landscape contractors donated their labor because one of their

[82] The OnePulse Foundation's website was terminated following their dissolution in December of 2023. This mission statement was documented by chat.openai.com before January 2022. The mission statement may have changed since 2022, but there is no way to access information from their website.
[83] Kody Smith (CEO of Dix.Hite+Partners), video call discussion with the author, September 22, 2023.

foremen was a killed that night at Pulse. Dix.Hite designed seating that was built by several Dix.Hite staff. Traces of different people's generosity are found all over the site.

Figure 10: Dix.Hite staff constructing the 'love' benches for the interim memorial."*Pulse Interim Memorial," Dix.Hite+Partners, accessed March 9, 2024, https://www.dixhite.com/projects/pulse-interim-memorial.*

The interim memorial was built in a somewhat temporary manner and was intended last for a fixed period of time. During the two years that the OnePulse Foundation would host an international design competition to select a permanent memorial design. Yet, the interim memorial is still there seven years later.[85]

For the design competition, the OnePulse Foundation put out a Request for Qualification (RFQ) and around 70 firms responded. Four of the top responses were selected and asked to submit a video explaining their concept. They also received a stipend to design the memorial at the nightclub sight as well as a museum that would be nearby. The winning design was by Coldefy & Associés, an architectural firm based in Lille, France. Coldefy served as lead architect, in collaboration with Rena Dumas Architecture Intérieure, an architectural and interior

[84] Kody Smith (CEO of Dix.Hite+Partners), video call discussion with the author, September 22, 2023.
[85] Within this time, the interim memorial has won the 2019 ASLA Florida Frederic B. Stresau Award and the 2019 ASLA Florida Award of Excellence. "Pulse Interim Memorial," Dix.Hite+Partners, accessed March 1, 2024, https://www.dixhite.com/projects/pulse-interim-memorial.

design firm based in Paris, France and HHCP Design International, an architectural and planning firm based in Orlando, Florida.[86] After the winning design was selected, Dovetail Design Strategies, a design firm based in Orlando, Florida, was engaged to host community engagement events. “there’s always a lot of curiosity with the ultimate memorial. In 2017, that new memorial was going to be in the ground by 2020. It's 2023 and they’re still in conceptual design,” said Smith.[87]

The foundation experienced some shifts in personnel beginning in 2022. Poma decided to step down as executive director to focus on fundraising efforts. By April of 2023, Poma announced that she was stepping down from the foundation. Publicly, The Foundation states that this decision was part of a "planned leadership transition" that began in 2021. However, in conversation with Smith, he shared that there was a conflict between Poma’s husband’s silent partner and the foundation regarding the sale of the property to the foundation.[88] As of September 2023, the foundation was being forced to rethink the location of the memorial. “The site is no longer a focus. They have pretty much abandoned being able to any type of memorial on the site itself, and we are looking for other options now.”[89] By November of 2024, the foundation announced that they would be scrapping the museum and that the property had been sold to the City of Orlando.[90] By December of 2023, the foundation dissolved.[91]

[86] “National Pulse Memorial & Museum,” Coldefy, December 19, 2022, https://coldefy.fr/projet/national-pulse-memorial-museum/.
[87] Kody Smith, 2023.
[88] Kody Smith, 2023.
[89] Kody Smith, 2023.
[90] “Pulse Nightclub Property to Be Bought by City of Orlando and Turned into a Memorial,” NBCNews.com, October 19, 2023, https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/out-news/pulse-nightclub-property-purchased-city-orlando-turned-memorial-rcna121193.
[91] “Dissolution or Withdrawal OnePulse Foundation, Inc,” Florida Department of State Division of corporations, filed December 28, 2023.

After private conversations with several foundation members, consensus would suggest that the foundation faced difficulty executing the memorial due to a lack of funding and an increasingly controversial public image.[92] "There have been a couple of sets of parents to victims who have been completely against the foundation since day 1. And it's gotten worse and worse," said Smith. "Communities have grappled with how to handle the sites of mass shootings, attempting to balance honoring the victims with curbing public fascination," stated an article from the Wall Street Journal announcing the sale of the property.[93] "Following previous failed attempts to buy the land, where the Pulse building now stands unused and surrounded by a temporary display honoring victims, city officials in Orlando approved a deal this week to secure the property for $2 million," stated CBS News.[94] Some survivors and victim's families grew frustrated with how the foundation was handling funding.

> For years, families of the 49 people killed in the massacre at Pulse have pushed for a permanent public memorial… Survivors have called for the same, although some, like Maritza Gomez, also argue that focusing resources on the investigation into what really happened that night should be a priority.[95]

It is clear from speaking with several foundation members, that they had expected to raise more money to support the construction of the memorial and the museum, and they were unable to meet fundraising goals. Some cited COVID-19, and some expressed that they may have been too

[92] Interview with an anonymous source, November 7, 2023, Orlando, Florida, Conversation with OnePulse Foundation board member.
[93] Orlando to buy pulse nightclub land to Build Memorial - WSJ, accessed March 1, 2024, https://www.wsj.com/us-news/orlando-to-buy-pulse-nightclub-land-to-build-memorial-3f523eed.
[94] Emily Mae Czachor, "Orlando to Buy Pulse Nightclub Site to Build Memorial after Emotional Pleas from Shooting Survivors," CBS News, October 24, 2023, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/orlando-buy-pulse-nightclub-2-million-memorial-mass-shooting-victims-survivors-emotional-pleas/#:~:text=The%20city%20of%20Orlando%20voted,permanent%20memorial%20at%20the%20site.
[95] "Pulse Nightclub Owner Steps down from OnePulse Foundation," WESH, April 5, 2023, https://www.wesh.com/article/pulse-owner-quits/43511273.

ambitious. All expressed their genuine desire to effectively honor victims, their families, and the queer community. As of March 2024, The City of Orlando owns the property, and the interim memorial is still in place and open to the public.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

This chapter introduces my approach to data collection and analysis in order to understand what causes LGBTQ memorials to evolve from a vernacular memorial into a formally designed space, and how that process is influenced by the site's context, positionality, and purpose. Four case studies of LGBTQ memorials are examined, as well as the Pulse Interim Memorial. These memorials include the Stonewall National Monument, the Harvey Milk Plaza, the National AIDS Memorial Grove, and the Transgender Memorial Garden. For a detailed discussion of why each case study was selected was addressed in chapter 2. This chapter will cover my approach to answering my research question, methods for collecting data, and how I then synthesized this data to understand how and why each case study developed over time from a vernacular to officially designed commemorative space.

To collect data, I traveled to Orlando, Florida from November 5 to November 7 2023. I visited the Pulse Interim Memorial on November 6, 2023, performed a site analysis, and spoke with several memorial visitors. On November 7, 2023 I spoke with Chris Hite and Kody Smith, Dix.Hite+Parters Founder and former CEO and CEO respectively. On November 7, 2023 I interviewed a OnePulse Foundation board member who wished to remain anonymous and on November 8, 2023 I spoke with a second OnePulse Foundation board member. Additionally, I interviewed Smith on September 22, 2023.

Approach

My approach to answering the question of how and why these memorials have evolved is threefold. First, I performed a historical analysis of each case study to understand the inception

of the memorial, the history of how it has been commemorated, and the perception from stakeholders throughout the process. This information was distilled into the primary phases of a queer memorial's development allowing for a standardized comparison of each case study to the other and to the Pulse Interim Memorial. The second facet of my approach is the inventory and analysis of each case study and the Pulse Interim Memorial. I conducted a site visit to the Pulse Interim Memorial for inventory and analysis of the site, its context, and the design. I analyzed each of the case studies via photographs, Google Earth, and videography. The third and main facet of my approach is discussions with stakeholders, designers, and the public. These conversations ranged in formality, from recorded interviews, private conversations, spontaneous on-site interviews, and virtual correspondence like email.

In developing my methodology, I was inspired by alternative methods of site analysis. My approach to the site visit to the Pulse Interim Memorial was heavily influenced by *Curious Methods* by Karen Lutsky and Sean Burkholder from Places Journal in 2017. [96] Lutsky, Assistant professor of landscape architecture at the University of Minnesota, and Burkholder, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, explored methodologies of 'probing' a site that challenges traditional practices in site analysis. Their writing influenced my approach in that I took extensive photographs of every element of the site, and I made initial observations verbally, recording my reactions, thoughts, and perceptions as I worked through each area of the memorial. This allowed me to take the role of participant in the memorial and provided room to document my personal, emotional reaction to the space.

This method of site exploration is intended to allow room for capturing personal biases with the acknowledgment that my role as the researcher is inherently not objective. This is due

[96] Karen Lutsky and Sean Burkholder, "Curious Methods," Places Journal, May 2017, accessed March 4, 2024, https://doi.org/10.22269/170523.

not only to the emotionally charged nature of sites of tragedy but also because of the intersecting identities that I and the memorial hold. It is valuable to my research to acknowledge how I as a member of the LGBTQ community interact with a memorial commemorating an act of mass violence against it.

Data Collection

Data was collected through primary source documents, secondary sources, and through a site visit to the Pulse Interim Memorial. Primary sources included Interviews with the CEO of Dix.Hite+Partners, Kody Smith, and founder and former CEO Chris Hite. Smith and Hite were both involved in the OnePulse Foundation and Dix.Hite+Partners designed the Pulse Interim Memorial. Conversations about my research began in the Summer of 2023 and included several in-person conversations, a recorded interview with Smith on September 22. 2023, and in-person meetings before my site visit on November 6, 2023. I also spoke with two OnePulse Foundation members on November 7 and 8, 2023. These conversations were kept off the record, however, the insights from these discussions have been affirmed by other means throughout the research process. The last form of interview consisted of impromptu conversations with two memorial visitors on November 6, 2023, during the two to three hours that I spent at the Pulse Interim Memorial. An additional primary source is the official websites of each memorial, which include resources such as photographs, renderings of memorial design, and information about the history and mission of the organization in charge of the memorial.

It is important to note that the OnePulse Foundation website was terminated following the dissolution of the foundation, so for information about the OnePulse Foundation I relied on interviews with board members, Smith, and secondary sources.

I gathered data from secondary sources including scholarly articles about each memorial, peer-reviewed journals, and especially with the smaller scale memorials, local blogs from horticulturalists, landscape architects, historians, or members of the local queer community.

Analysis

To analyze the data collected, I first developed a framework that categorized each phase of memorial development based on the background research performed. The phases include Immediate Aftermath, Grassroots Memorialization, Catalyst for Further Design, Design Competition, and Formally Designed Memorial. I then evaluated each case study and calculated how many years the memorial spent in each phase. I entered these numbers into Excel and then created a graph visually depicting the amount of time that each phase lasted, as well as how long each memorial had been around. I then took this data and converted the length of each phase into a percentage out of 100. This allowed for a comparison of the percentage of time that each memorial spent in each phase without accounting for the age of the memorial, which ranges from 56 years to eight years. To enhance the visual presentation of the data and facilitate effective communication, I converted the raw data from Excel into graphics such as timelines and charts using Adobe Illustrator.

In evaluating each memorial, seven factors were considered: time, movement, acknowledgment, management, inclusion, context, and memory. These factors were selected to assess the scale and formality of each memorial. The time section inquiries focus on identifying evidence of ephemeral and participatory memorialization. Within the movement section, questions aim to gauge the extent of programmed activities and the level of prescribed experience. The acknowledgment section examines the dedication of the site and explicit acknowledgment of specific individuals, providing insight into the affected community group.

The management section offers insights into the scale of the memorial. In the inclusion section, I ask questions that decipher the intended audience and potential visitors of the memorial. Lastly, the context section explores the surrounding environment to understand the reasons behind people's travel to the memorial site.

To summarize how I evaluate the development of queer memorials, I have employed a threefold approach, including historical analysis, inventory and analysis of case studies, and discussions with stakeholders. Drawing inspiration from alternative methods of site analysis during site exploration, acknowledging personal biases, and intersecting identities. Data collection methods incorporate both primary sources such as interviews and site visits, as well as secondary sources. The analysis section outlines a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including the development of a framework for categorizing memorial development phases and the evaluation of six key factors for each memorial. The combination of each of these techniques reveals information about the how and why of each case study and the Pulse Interim Memorial developed from vernacular memorials to officially designed commemorative spaces.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this chapter is to present my research on how queer memorials evolve from vernacular memorials to designed spaces, as well as provide a comprehensive analysis of the data collected. This chapter examines the development of each case study over time, looking at the timeline of development from inception to memorialization. This section discusses the framework developed to evaluate each stage of the memorial. The next section of this chapter will examine the design elements of each case study. In this section, each memorial is evaluated for seven factors: time, movement, acknowledgment, management, inclusion, context and memory. Each memorial is then compared to reveal patterns, trends, similarities, and differences. The goal of this chapter is to uncover how and why each of the four case studies as well as the Pulse Interim Memorial developed over time, and what can be learned from each process.

The Development of Queer Memorials Over Time: From Vernacular to Designed

Primary Phases of a Queer Memorial's Development

In order to effectively compare the development of each case study memorial as the Pulse Interim Memorial, it is necessary to distill the process into distinct and comparable categories. This process of establishing each category and characterizing each phase was done based on the context and background research for each case study. I acknowledge that not all of the case study memorials neatly fall into each category. Each memorial has its own trajectory and uniquely experiences each phase. This approach generalizes for the sake of comparison. These comparisons lead to observations about trends and patterns that shed light on the process of a

queer memorial evolving into a designed space. I have established five phases of queer memorial development from a vernacular space to an officially designed space.

These phases are not meant to imply that this memorialization process is linear, or that a professionally designed memorial is the end goal. The designed memorial phase follows the design competition phase, but this result is not necessarily favorable or an indication of success. Additionally, in some cases, the design competition phase resulted in a return to the grassroots memorial phase, reaffirming the values and purpose of the memorial. The purpose of these phases and the visual depiction of them seen later in this chapter is to create comparable categories in order to understand how each memorial developed over time. Below are the criteria for each phase.

1. Ephemeral Memorialization

   This phase consists of the instant, ephemeral memorialization that happens after the tragedy or event that spurs commemoration. This phase could include the hosting of vigils, leaving flowers, images, gifts and offerings, and other forms of gathering. In this phase, the role of the memorial is to facilitate grief, and in some cases send a message to the public about the event that occurred. There is no design guidance for the memorialization practice. It is characterized by mass gatherings and mass accumulation of commemorative artifacts. This phase is most present in memorials to specific events, which is characteristic of three of the case studies: Harvey Milk Plaza, the Pulse Interim Memorial, and the Stonewall National Monument.

2. Grassroots Memorialization

   This phase is characterized by local, community-led efforts to commemorate the tragedy or event within their own community. These memorials range in quantity and quality of

design elements, and both elements are either constructed incrementally over time or constructed by unskilled professionals. There is usually an organization that stewards the memorial. This governing group ranges in sophistication and scale. They could be a group of survivors or family members, a board of community members, or a non-profit organization. These memorials often lack large-scale visioning for their design, but this is not always true. The primary characteristic of grassroots memorials is their self-governance, and connection to the affected community.

3. Catalyst for Further Design

   This phase is less of a distinct stage of memorialization, but rather an instance. A catalyst for further design is often connected to an increase in the scale of recognition for a memorial. For the Stonewall National Monument, it was designated as a national monument in 2016. For the National Aids Memorial Grove, it was when the memorial was designated by Congress as the nation's sole federally designated AIDS memorial. Not all memorials have this catalyst moment, but identifying one when applicable helps to understand the motivation for why a more grassroots queer memorial would become a more officially designed space.

4. Formal Design Competition

   The design competition phase is a structured process, often on an international scale, where architects, designers, and artists from around the world are invited to submit their proposals for the memorial design. These competitions typically have a defined set of criteria, objectives, and requirements outlined by the organizing body. The submitted designs, which are evaluated by a panel of judges or experts in the field, are narrowed down to a group of finalists. After a design is selected, it may undergo further refinement

in collaboration with the organizing body. Rounds of voting for approval and community feedback events could lead to further development of the winning design. The time frame for the design competition itself is often less than a year, but for the purposes of this thesis, this phase includes the refinement process after selection.

5. Designed Memorial

   This phase refers to the memorial that has been designed and constructed following a design competition. This phase may also refer to a memorial once it has acquired a level of design over time that is cohesive, involves expert designers, and involves large-scale future visioning for the site as a whole.

Phases of Memorial Design (Years)

	Stonewall National Monument	**Harvey Milk Plaza**	**National AIDS Memorial Grove**	**Transgender Memorial Garden**	**Pulse Interim Memorial**
Ephemeral Memorialization	0	1	0	0	2
Grassroots Memorial	23	38	14	9	6
Formal Design competition	1	7	2	0	1
Designed Memorial	31	0	17	0	0
Total Years	55	45	33	9	8

Figure 11: Chart of case study memorials in each phase of memorialization. Generated using Microsoft Excel.

Discussion of Case Studies

Stonewall National Monument

The Stonewall National Monument is the oldest site out of the five. It is also the only site that is not technically a memorial commemorating the death of a group or individuals. This site is included because of its major historical significance to the LGBTQ community. The inception of the memorial is marked by the Stonewall Uprising in 1969, sparking the LGBTQ rights movement. In 1992, the Gay Liberation statue by George Segal was added to Christopher Park. This marks the beginning of the official design phase, as Christopher Park became an intentionally designed space for the purpose of commemorating the legacy of the LGBTQ rights movement. This site did not undergo a design competition, so the time spent commissioning Segal is used instead to characterize the period of redesign for the site. In June 2015, the Stonewall Inn was designated a New York City landmark and in June 2016, President Barack Obama designated the Stonewall National Monument, including the Stonewall Inn and Christopher Street Park. The design of the park ultimately evolved over the last 50 years. The site experienced an increase in national significance in 2016, but this did not directly affect the level of design of the site.

Harvey Milk Plaza

In November 1979, one year following the assassination of Harvey Milk, the plaza was unofficially named ‘Harvey Milk Plaza” as a commemoration of his passing. The year prior was marked by ephemeral memorialization of Milk’s passing around the Castro District and within the plaza. Nearly two decades later, in 1997, Castro's landmark flagpole was added to the plaza to honor the 20th anniversary of Milk's death. Then, in 2017, to mark the 40th anniversary of

Harvey Milk's election to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, a neon sign bearing the phrase “Hope Will Never Be Silent” was installed on a nearby building facade adjacent to the plaza. Each of these additions to the space happened over an extended period and in a manner that did not involve cohesive higher-level planning, therefore this level of memorialization is characterized as grassroots.

Due to the plaza being a public space owned by the local government, there was never actually a point in the lifespan of the plaza where it was not officially managed by a governing body. However, the space as a memorial and not as a public plaza has been formed slowly over time due to community interest. The community drove the space to be officially recognized as Harvey Milk Plaza, commemorating him primarily through the name itself. In 2017 the first design competition for the plaza's redevelopment was initiated, marking the beginning of the seven-year design competition phase. This effort continued into 2021 with a second design competition, which remains an ongoing process. A design has been selected for the final memorial but is still in the phase of discussion and revision. There is no public timeline for construction.

National AIDS Memorial Grove

The concept for the memorial grove was conceived in 1988, followed by the first community workday to construct the memorial in September 1991, officially marking the beginning of the Grove. In October 1996, the AIDS Memorial Grove Act of 1996' was passed, officially designating the Grove as the nation's AIDS Memorial. In the five years before the act, the Grove functioned entirely as a grassroots memorial, completely community-run, and intended to serve the immediate local community. Once the AIDS Memorial Grove Act was passed, this increased the scope of attention towards the memorial. Eight years later, following a

two-year design competition, the 'Living Memorial' design was announced in March of 2005. However, the Board rejected the 'Living Memorial' concept in 2007, just two years later.

The Grove did not successfully transition from catalyst for further design to design competition to winning design. Instead, it has added design elements over the years, developing a master plan in 1992, and constructing the pathways, crescents, etc. as well as tending to the landscape over the last fifty-five years. In 2013, the NAMG Board initiated a 5-year strategic plan, which aims to transform the grove over the next 25 years. This type of long-term visioning and gradual change over time has allowed for the Grove to adapt its messaging and expand its mission while maintaining the essential elements of the space that have been in place for half a century. I have categorized the grove after the AIDS Memorial Grove Act was passed as a designed memorial because the scale of recognition and purpose of the memorial increased significantly. Design decisions after this act, including the recent twenty-five-year visioning plan, are all aimed at supporting this national level of significance. It is, however, important to point out that the memorial has maintained characteristics of a grassroots memorial for its entire lifespan, most notably through stewardship from community members.

Transgender Memorial Garden

The Transgender Memorial Garden has existed as a community-run, grassroots memorial since its inception in 2015. On November 20th, 2015, the garden officially opened on Trans Day of Remembrance. In 2019, the Metro Trans Umbrella Group purchased the two plots of land and tried to purchase the third, a process that spanned approximately a year. Finally, in 2021, the memorial transitioned to a new location. The creation of the garden was not motivated by a particular event. The garden was created and constructed by local, queer individuals from St. Louis. The garden is managed by the Metro Trans Umbrella Group, a non-profit organization.

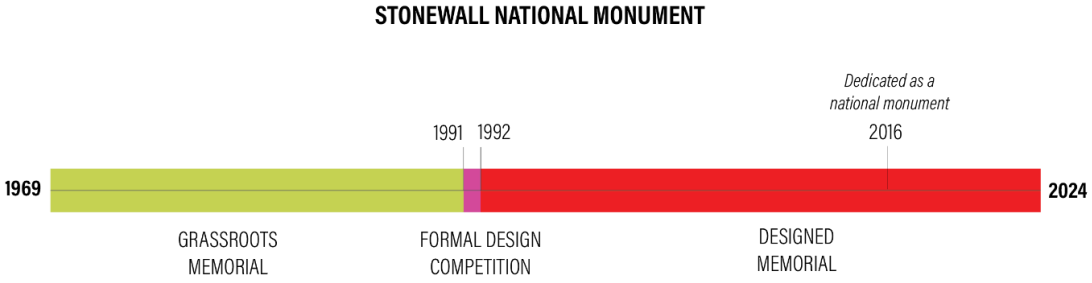
The memorial itself is not formally designed but features design elements that have been constructed and created by the stewards of the site. This memorial is unique in that it has remained a grassroots memorial for the entirety of its lifespan and there has not been an attempt to introduce a higher level of design.

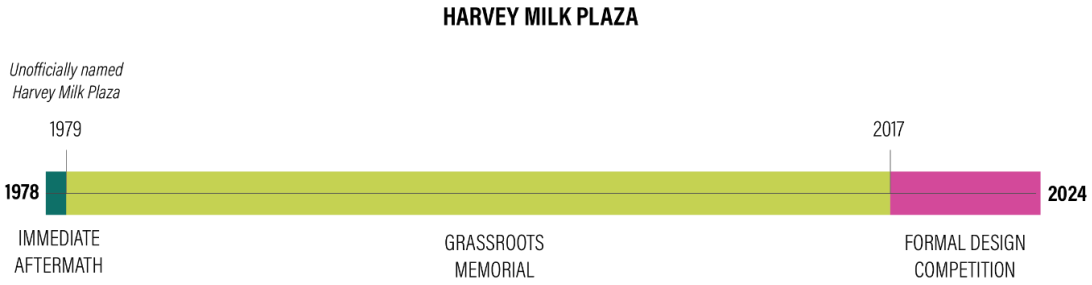
The Development of the Pulse Interim Memorial

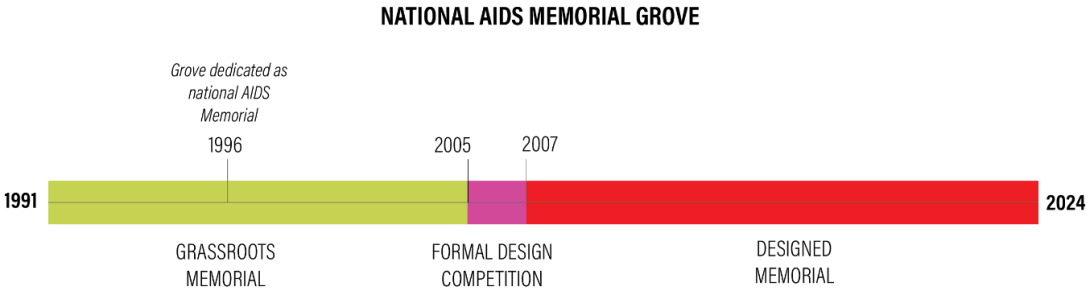
The Pulse Interim Memorial is the most recent queer memorial out of the case studies. The shooting at Pulse occurred on June 12, 2016, followed by the creation of a task force in January 2017, within seven months of the event. In July 2017, Dix.Hite began designing the Interim Memorial. The Interim Memorial opened in April 2018, nine months after they began the design process. This means that for two years, the site existed as the location for ephemeral memorialization in a loosely organized structure. The structure consisted of people like Pam Schwartz collecting artifacts from the site to be cataloged and preserved at the Orange County Regional History Center. There was no design direction during this phase. Once the interim memorial had been built, the site entered what I am characterizing as its grassroots memorialization phase.

While there is a higher-level design process taking place and involvement from professionals, the level of involvement from the community, and the continued function of the site as a place to grieve, leave gifts, etc. qualifies this memorial as a grassroots effort. It is important to acknowledge the foundation's presence at this time and its intent from the beginning to create a second, permanent memorial that reaches an international audience. In March 2019, the International Design Competition was announced. By October 2019, the winning design was selected. After four years of deliberation, in October 2023, the City of Orlando purchased the Pulse Nightclub site. Finally, in December 2023, the OnePulse Foundation dissolved, marking

the end of its operations. From this point, the memorial has been under the case of the City of Orlando, and the interim memorial still stands and is open to the public.







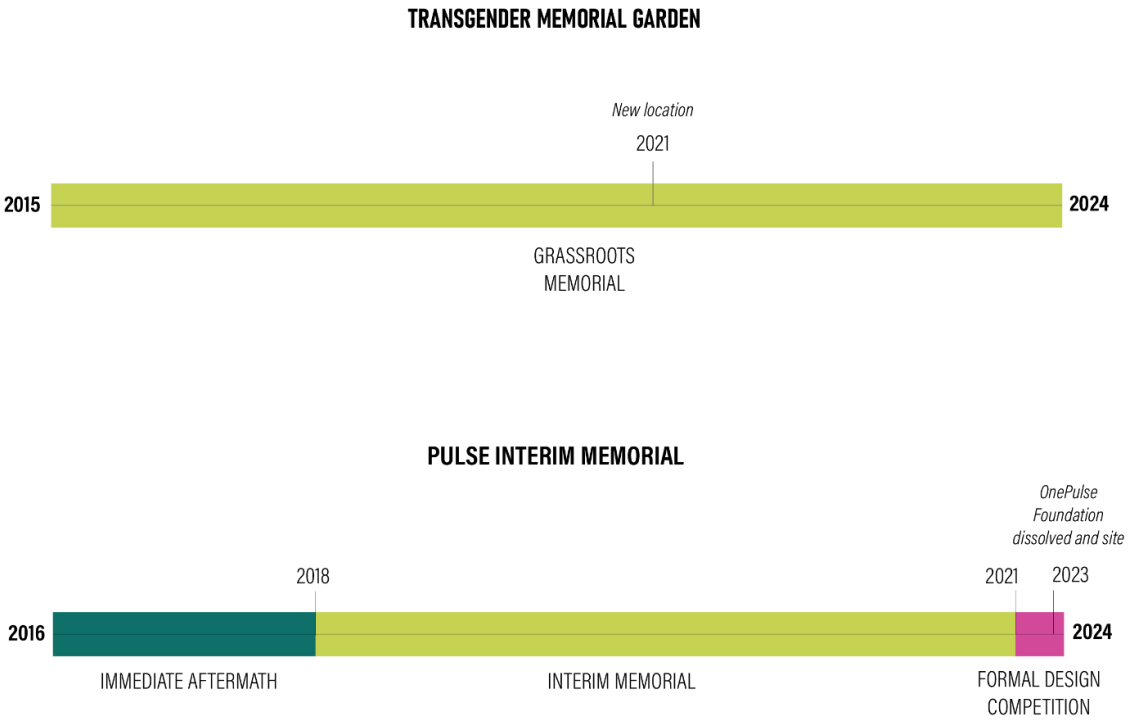


Figure 12 Memorial timelines are based on a percentage of each phase out of the total lifespan of the memorial. Created by the author using Excel and Adobe Illustrator.

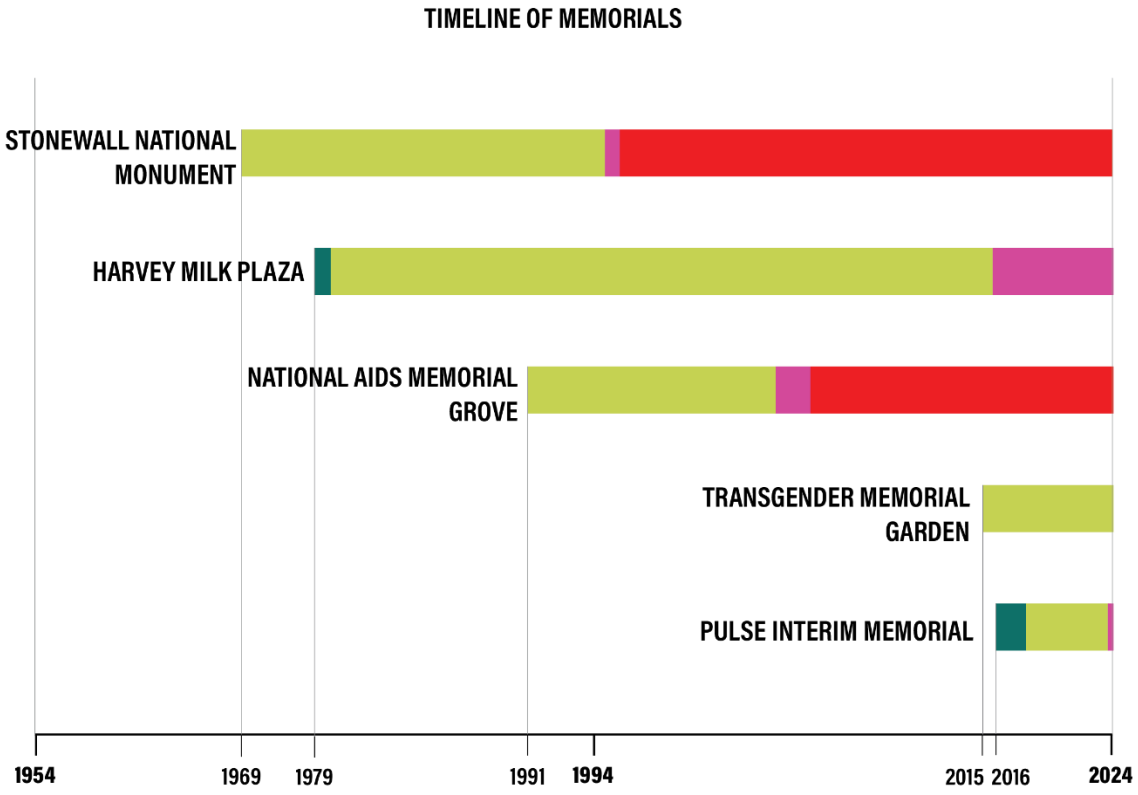


Figure 13 Timeline of each memorial. Created by the author using Excel and Adobe Illustrator.

Design Elements of Queer Memorialization: A Critical Examination

Each memorial was evaluated for seven factors: time, movement, acknowledgment, management, inclusion, context and memory. These factors were designed to reveal information about the scale and formality of each memorial. Questions in the time section probe the site for evidence of ephemeral memorialization and participatory memorialization. Questions in the movement section aim to understand the degree of programming present. How prescribed is the experience? The acknowledgment section reveals who the site is dedicated to and if there is an explicit acknowledgment of these individuals. This helps to see how specific the affected

community group is. The management section reveals information about the scale of the memorial. The inclusion section has questions that decipher who the memorial is intended for and who visitors of the memorial may be. And finally, the context section asks questions about the surrounding environment, revealing information about how and why people are traveling to the memorial.

Stonewall National Monument[97]

- TIME: Evidence of memorial artifacts
    - *Is there an intentional space for these artifacts?*

      No, there are no areas intended for the placement or artifacts.

    - *If not, where are they being placed?*

      There are images of the fence decorated with rainbow flags, so it appears that at times the fence is decorated with objects temporarily.

    - *Does it seem like this form of engagement was considered during design?*

      There are no explicit forms of engagement with the site besides sitting on the benches or walking through the park. There are interpretive signs intended to be read.

- MOVEMENT: navigating through space
    - *How do visitors engage with the space?*

      There are three entrances to the park, with one primary entrance. The park is triangular, with the narrowest point facing northeast. The main entrance is on the western side of the triangle. The two secondary entrances are on the north and south sides of the triangle. All three pathways lead to the central paved area with seating. The majority of park visitors engage with the site by sitting on the benches and observing their surroundings. The circulation of the site is more in line with park design than experiential memorial design.

    - *Is there a directed path of movement?*

[97] See Appendix 2

There is a directed path of movement in and out of the site and to the central paved area. There is also a sidewalk surrounding the triangle on all sides that provides additional circulation. The western entrance indicates the starting point for experiencing the memorial, with the statues framed by a metal archway with the central paved area just beyond.

- *Is there opportunity for self-guided movement through the space?*

  Yes, there is opportunity for self-guided movement. Visitors can enter and exit from multiple threshold points. The direction of movement is not necessarily prescribed.

Figure 14 View of plaza space at Christopher Park and the 'Gay Liberation' statues by George Segal. 1. "Stonewall National Monument (U.S. National Park Service)," National Parks Service, accessed March 9, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/ston/index.htm.

- ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Explicit Acknowledgement of Affected Individuals

  - *Are there elements such as name plaques, stones, or other legible acknowledgments of those to whom the memorial is dedicated?*

    There are no commemorative elements that list the names of those involved in the Stonewall Uprising. However, there is imagery along the perimeter of the fence that provides acknowledgment of those involved throughout time.

- MANAGEMENT: Who manages the site?
    - *What group or group(s) manages the memorial?*
    - The site is managed by the National Park Service (NPS), a federal agency within the United States Department of the Interior.
    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of local to national significance?*

      This management is at a national level. This site has a national level or significance,
    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of professional organization to community volunteers?*

      The NPS are professional leaders in the field of historic preservation. While the NPS often collaborates with local communities and volunteers in various capacities, its primary responsibility lies in the professional management and preservation of national parks, monuments, and historic sites across the United States.
- INCLUSION: Who that this memorial is intended for?
    - *Is there a specific group within the LGBTQ community for which the memorial is for? Has this changed over time?*

      The memorial appears to be for the LGBTQ community as a whole, as well as the broader local community. The site is a public park, so individuals of all sexual identities visit the park regularly. The 'Gay Liberation' statues provide a generalized representation of gay and lesbian couples that serves to represent a variety of members of that community. They are not directly representative of all groups within the LGBTQ community, however, their design allows queer individuals to see themselves reflected in the statues.
    - *Does it seem like there is an intended audience for the memorial?*

      The intended audience for the site seems to be those interested in LGBTQ civil rights history. The memorial is equally aimed towards visitors, evidenced by the amount of interpretive signage, as well as locals, evidenced by the quantity and variety of visitors using the site primarily as an urban park.

- *Does it seem like a victim's family member would visit this memorial?*

  This site is not a memorial to a tragedy so there are no specific victims to which this space is dedicated.

- CONTEXT: Where is the site situated?

  - *What is the character of the surrounding area?*

    The surrounding area of the Stonewall National Monument at Christopher Park in New York City is characterized by a vibrant, historic neighborhood in Greenwich Village. It features a mix of residential buildings, businesses, restaurants, and cultural institutions.

  - *How do people get to the site?*

    People can get to the site by various means of transportation, including subway, bus, walking, biking, and car. The nearest subway stations are the Christopher Street-Sheridan Square Station (1 train) and the West 4th Street Station (A, B, C, D, E, F, and M trains).

  - *What is the entry experience like?*

    The entry experience to the site is welcoming and accessible. Visitors can enter the park from different directions, with pathways leading to the center of the site.

- MEMORY: What is the collective memory of the site?

  - *What narrative is being presented?*

    The Stonewall National Monument memorializes one of the most significant events in LGBTQ History that has become central to the collective memory of LGBTQ history in the United States. However, the Gay Liberation statues located in Christopher Park represent a cisgender and white perspective, with one lesbian and one gay couple. This imagery of gay life is largely connected to the context of the gay community in the 1990s when it was created. This does not include the intersectional identities and perspectives present at the time of the Stonewall Uprising, and active today.

  - *How does this memorial fit into queer history?*

    This memorial has come to represent the catalyst of the LGBTQ civil rights movement. In LGBTQ history there is a clear narrative distinction between the

time before and the time after Stonewall. While this is not entirely historically accurate, as there was organizing, riots, and uprisings before Stonewall, The events of Stonewall have become the beginning of the story of LGBTQ activism in the United States.

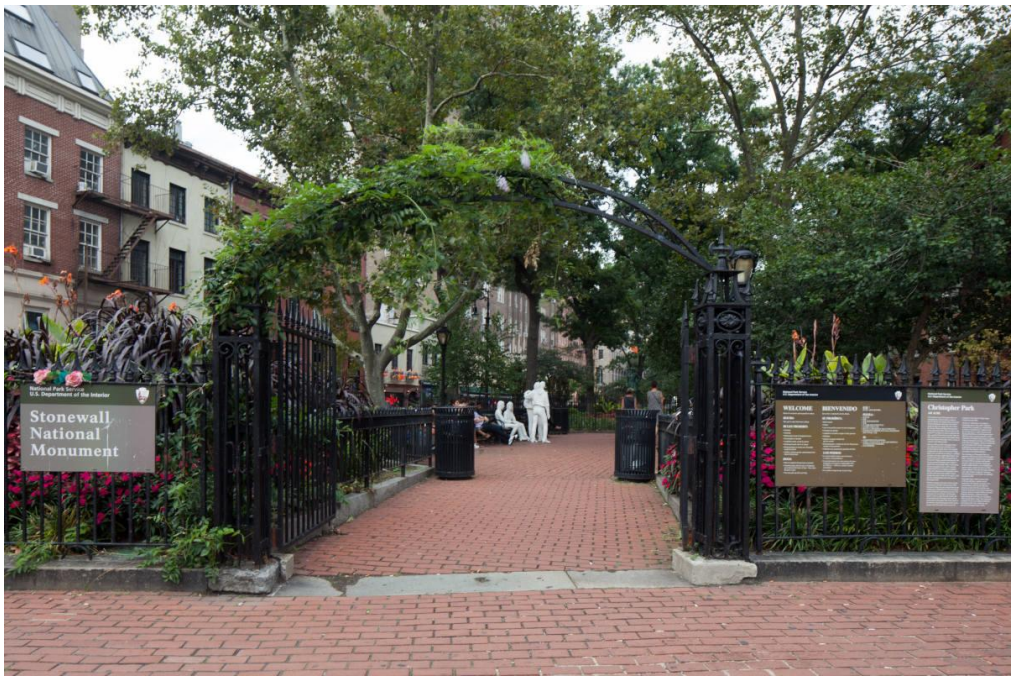


Figure 15 Entrance of Christopher Park. "Christopher Park / Stonewall National Monument," NYC LGBT Historic Sites Project, accessed March 5, 2024, https://www.nyclgbtsites.org/site/christopher-park/.

Harvey Milk Plaza[98]

- TIME: Evidence of memorial artifacts
    - *Is there an intentional space for these artifacts?*

      No, there is not intentional space for artifacts to be left on site.
    - *If not, where are they being placed?*

      Artifacts are not typically left at the site in honor of Harvey Milk, however during times when the plaza has been used to commemorate other events of tragedy within the queer community such as the shooting at Pulse, a vigil for a community member, it can be assumed that artifacts are left temporarily.

[98] Appendix 2

- *Does it seem like this form of engagement was considered during design?*

  No, this form of engagement was not part of the design programming for the site.

- MOVEMENT: navigating through space

  - *How do visitors engage with the space?*

    The site is an urban plaza at the entrance to Castro Muni Station. Because of this, movement through the plaza is designed for pedestrian transportation. Most people are likely passing through the site as part of their commute.

  - *Is there a directed path of movement?*

    The directed paths of movement also serve as the public sidewalk leading to the stairs down to the train station entrance. Movement is directed efficiently. In the Plaza area toward the street, there is the opportunity for less directed navigation of the space, but particularly on the northwest edge of the site next to the planters and the pride flag, the path of movement is narrower and more directed. The planters enclose the space and provide a buffer for the street.

  - *Is there opportunity for self-guided movement through the space?*

    Yes, the plaza area has the most opportunity for self-guided movement through the space. It is a major point of movement, at the corner of Market St. and Castro St.

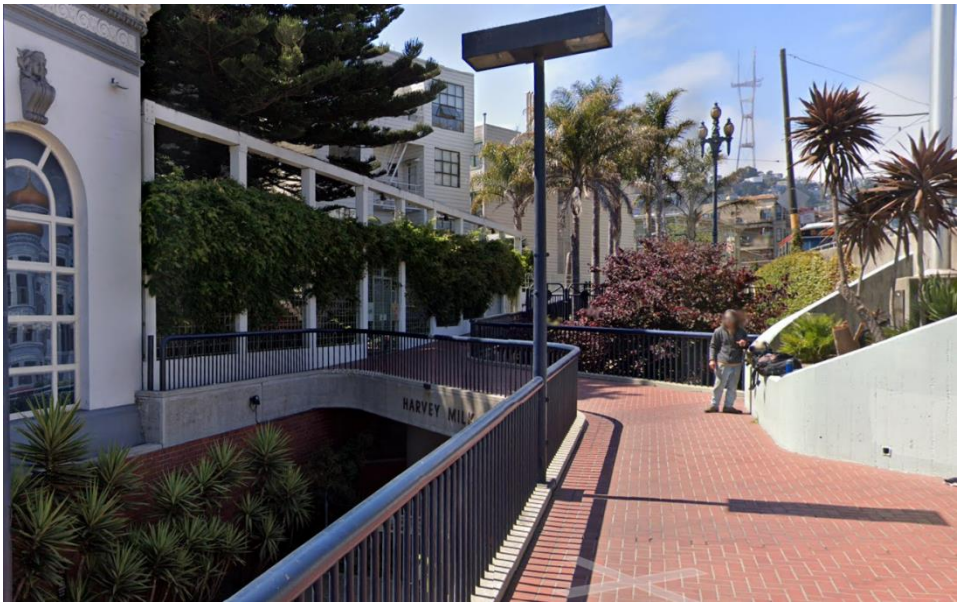


Figure 16 East corner of Harvey Milk Plaza with view of the train Castro Muni Station and 'Harvey Milk Plaza' sign. Google earth, accessed March 6, 2024, https://earth.google.com/web/.

- ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Explicit Acknowledgement of Affected Individuals

    - *Are there elements such as name plaques, stones, or other legible acknowledgments of those to whom the memorial is dedicated?*

      The plaza is named Harvey Milk Plaza, with a sign located at the entrance of the train station. The sign is located above the entrance, which is a story down from street level, making the sign less visible from street level.

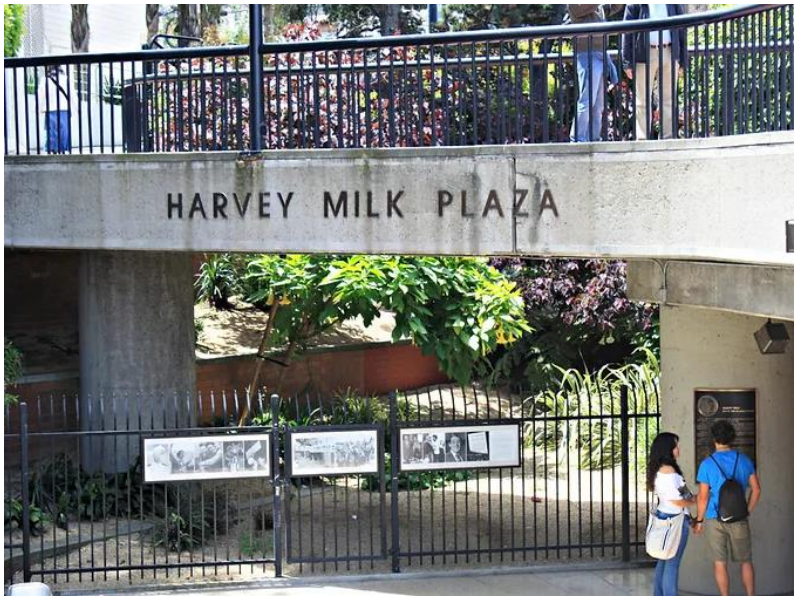


Figure 17 Harvey Milk Plaza sign above Castro Muni Station. "Save Harvey Milk Plaza: Mission Statement," saveharveymilkplaza, accessed March 9, 2024, https://www.saveharveymilkplaza.org/.

- MANAGEMENT: Who manages the site?
    - *What group or group(s) manages the memorial?*

      The plaza is owned and managed by the city of San Francisco's government. Therefore, it is ultimately owned by the municipality and falls under the jurisdiction of the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department.

    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of local to national significance?*

      This group is of local significance since it is the local city government.

    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of professional organization to community volunteers?*

      The Parks and Recreation Department consists of professionals with an education in environmental studies, urban planning, landscape architecture, or related disciplines in some cases, but not all.

- INCLUSION: Who that this memorial is intended for?
    - *Is there a specific group within the LGBTQ community for which the memorial is for? Has this changed over time?*

      The Harvey Milk Plaza is intended for the local community, both within the Castro District as well as the city of San Fransisco. The Castro district does draw large amounts of tourism, particularly of queer individuals, and the Harvey Milk Plaza serves as a central focal point to the Castro District. The site is a public space, so it is intended to be used by everyone.

    - *Does it seem like there is an intended audience for the memorial?*

      The intended audience for the design elements at the plaza that are specific to Harvey Milk, namely the pride flag and neon sign, are intended specifically for the queer community.

    - *Does it seem like a victim's family member would visit this memorial? How frequently?*

      It is unclear whether any family members or friends of Harvey Milk specifically have visited the site. If they live locally then they may use the train station for which the plaza is the entrance, but there is no way to verify this.

- CONTEXT: Where is the site situated?
    - *What is the character of the surrounding area?*

      The character of the surrounding area is historically significant, located in San Francisco's Castro District which is known for its LGBTQ culture and activism. The area is primarily commercial, businesses, restaurants, cultural landmarks, and residential buildings.

    - *How do people get to the site?*

      The plaza faces the intersection of Market St. and Castro St. so the plaza edge is permeable from multiple sides. The plaza is easily accessible by public transit, including Muni buses and the Castro Street Station, a major hub for the city's subway system. Additionally, visitors can reach the site by walking, biking, or driving.

    - *What is the entry experience like?*

      The area is very public, bustling and high energy. There are multiple points of entry.

- MEMORY: What is the collective memory of the site?
    - *What narrative is being presented?*

      The plaza, being dedicated to Milk, memorializes his legacy as an activist and hero to gay community. His name has come to represent San Francisco’s strong queer rights presence and the plaza itself has embodied this through community organizing events throughout the years. Milk as an individual became representative of a larger message of queer activism.

    - *How does this memorial fit into queer history?*

      This memorial is an important part of the history of the Castro District and San Francisco’s gay community. The memorial is particularly connected with the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s before and after Milk’s death and during the LGBTQ civil rights movement. The memorial today is representative of the LGBTQ community more broadly, connecting this local history to a central, public, highly visible space.

National AIDS Memorial Grove[99]

- TIME: Evidence of memorial artifacts

    - *Is there an intentional space for these artifacts?*

      There are areas on the site where people can leave artifacts, but it is not formally designated. Areas for interaction include several Inukshuks, a traditional Inuit structure made of stacked stones or other materials used for various purposes, including navigation, travel routes, as well as for ceremonial or spiritual purposes.[100] Flowers and gifts are sometimes left in the Circle of Friends, likely in connection with a person whose name is inscribed. Mementos and gifts can be left in most areas of the site in an ephemeral manner.

    - *If not, where are they being placed?*

      Items are placed primarily near engraved names like in the Circle of Friends or several crescents.

    - *Does it seem like this form of engagement was considered during design?*

      The engraved names are an intentional design element that likely draws visitors to the site to visit the names, much like they would the grave of a loved one. The act of bringing gifts such as flowers when visiting a grave translates to the design of this space.

[99] See Appendix 2
[100] "Inukshuk," Canadian Heritage, accessed March 24, 2024, https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/art-monuments/public-art/inukshuk.html.

Figure 18 The Circle of Friends on World AIDS Day in 2010. Flickr, March 9, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalaidsmemorial/albums/with/72157720217780434.

- MOVEMENT: navigating through space

    - *How do visitors engage with the space?*

      The grove is characterized by many of the features found in a large public park including walking trails, a meadow, shaded areas, and paved sections with seat walls. Visitors are asked to engage with the site as a park. However, within the crescents, visitors engage with the site more as a memorial, with a more secluded, contemplative environment and areas to sit.

    - *Is there a directed path of movement?*

      There is directed movement through the site. There are two entrances, the main portal at the north corner of the site, and the south portal. There are directed walking paths around the site that connect with the rest of Golden Gate Park on the east of the site. Pathways direct visitors to the meadow, the crescents, and other features of the site.

    - *Is there opportunity for self-guided movement through the space?*

      Yes, navigation through the site is self-guided. The central meadow serves as the place with the most flexible movement, and there is no linear sequencing of spaces around the grove. Visitors can move from either entrance in multiple directions around the site.

The master plan for the NAMG includes [A] *South Portal;* [B] *The Dogwood Dell;* [C] *Dogwood Crescent/Circle of Friends;* [D] *Main Portal;* [E] *The Redwood Grove;* [F] *The Maples;* [G] *The Meadow;* [H] *The Pines;* [I] *The Woodland Stream;* [J] *Pine Crescent;* [K] *The Dry Creek;* [L] *Meadow Overlook;* [M] *The Oaks; and* [N] *Fern Grotto and Dell.*

Figure 19 Original master plan for the National AIDS Memorial Grove, with some features having since changed. Courtesy of the National AIDS Memorial."The Avery Review: Memory Work: The Dilemma of the National AIDS Memorial Grove, accessed March 9, 2024, https://averyreview.com/issues/52/memory-work.

- ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Explicit Acknowledgement of Affected Individuals

    - *Are there elements such as name plaques, stones, or other legible acknowledgments of those to whom the memorial is dedicated?*

      Yes, the Circle of Friends consists of engraved names in a circular pattern around the patio space. Individuals can pay to get the name of a loved one inscribed in the circle. This includes both the living and deceased, and may include those who did not die of AIDS. There is no alphabetical, categorical, or chronological order to the names. There are also various commemorative plaques and signage around the memorial. On the West side of the site there are several other memorials such as the Homophile Memorial that have been added over time.

- MANAGEMENT: Who manages the site?

    - *What group or group(s) manages the memorial?*

      The grove is managed by the National AIDS Memorial organization, a nonprofit that collaborates with the Golden Gate Park administration and the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department to oversee the management and maintenance of the Grove. The organization has signed a 99-year lease with the park.

    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of local to national significance?*

This organization is within a national scale of significance, managing events such as World AIDS Day, managing the official national AIDS memorial designated by Congress, and managing the famous AIDS Memorial Quilt.

- *Where does this group fall on the scale of professional organization to community volunteers?*

  The board for the National AIDS Memorial has a wide range of qualifications and expertise and includes healthcare professionals, activists, researchers, and leaders in various fields. The organization does rely on volunteers from the community for upkeep and maintenance of the memorial, although there is a professional gardening staff as well.

Figure 20 The Circle of Friends. Flickr, January 31, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalaidsmemorial/albums/with/72157720217780434.

Figure 21 Engraved names of those affected by the AIDS Epidemic in the Circle of Friends. Flickr, January 31, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalaidsmemorial/albums/with/72157720217780434

- INCLUSION: Who that this memorial is intended for?

    - *Is there a specific group within the LGBTQ community for which the memorial is for? Has this changed over time?*

      The memorial began as a way to honor those who had been affected by the AIDS epidemic. This has historically centered on gay men. The National AIDS Memorial Organization has made a conscious effort over the years to widen the scope of inclusion. The memorial is for those affected by AIDS, either directly or indirectly, and both within and outside the LGBTQ community.

    - *Does it seem like there is an intended audience for the memorial?*

      The intended audience seems to be more centered towards friends, family, and loved ones of those affected by AIDS. The grove is publicly accessible and could be visited by local individuals at Golden Gate Park. Those visiting from elsewhere specifically to see the grove are also a consideration, however, the design elements of the grove center around commemoration of individuals, so those who are connected with those individuals seem to be the primary audience.

    - *Does it seem like a victim's family member would visit this memorial? How frequently?*

      Yes, it appears that friends and family members of those whose names are engraved at the grove are frequent visitors of the memorial. The exact frequency of their visits is unknown, but the programming of the space encourages this level of visitation.

- CONTEXT: Where is the site situated?
    - *What is the character of the surrounding area?*

      The area surrounding the grove is Golden Gate Park, a large urban park in San Fransisco. It features gardens, playgrounds, lakes, museums, and cultural institutions and is a major recreational spot for locals.

    - *How do people get to the site?*

      Visitors can reach the Grove by car, parking in nearby parking areas within Golden Gate Park. Additionally, public transportation options such as buses and light rail provide access to the park, with designated stops within walking distance of the grove. Pedestrians and cyclists can access the grove via pathways and trails within the park.

    - *What is the entry experience like?*

      Visitors enter through one of two ‘portals’ which provide a shift in environment as per the name. the two portals consist of a paved area that leads you into the densely vegetated grove beneath a large tree canopy.

- MEMORY: What is the collective memory of the site?
    - *What narrative is being presented?*

      The National AIDS Memorial Grove presents a narrative of reflection and rebirth. The goal of the grove from the beginning was to create a space to honor, mourn, and celebrate those affected by AIDS. The memorial focuses on messages of positivity and hope. The

    - *How does this memorial fit into queer history?*

      This memorial represents a very significant and difficult time in queer history during the AIDS Epidemic. The effect of AIDS on the gay community was significant, and this memorial is representative of the community building that resulted.

Figure 22 Volunteer workday at the Grove in 2015. Flickr, January 31, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalaidsmemorial/albums/with/72157720217780434

Transgender Memorial Garden[101]

- TIME: Evidence of memorial artifacts
    - *Is there an intentional space for these artifacts?*

      There is not a designated space to place artifacts. I have not observed any examples of people leaving artifacts, but this absolutely may occur.

    - *If not, where are they being placed?*

      This could not be determined through available images of the site.

    - *Does it seem like this form of engagement was considered during design?*

      It does not appear that there has been an overall design determined for this site and it is not evident that there has been discussion about creating a design element dedicated to the leaving of artifacts.

- MOVEMENT: navigating through space
    - *How do visitors engage with the space?*

[101] See Appendix 2

Visitors engage with the space similarly to how one would engage a community garden or small neighborhood park. There are benches, open grassy areas, and lush planting. Visitors may also be engaging with the site as volunteers, tending to the garden.

- *Is there a directed path of movement?*

  There is some direction of movement, with dirt trails leading you through more heavily planted areas of the garden. The central space is mostly an open lawn. Visitors are likely drawn around the site by the various focal points like statues, benches, etc.

- *Is there opportunity for self-guided movement through the space?*

  Yes, the experience of navigating the garden is entirely self-guided.

Figure 23 Rainbow wreath and bench in the Transgender Memorial Garden. "Lou Visits the Transgender Memorial Garden," Garden, October 18, 2021, https://garden-lou.com/garden-lou-visits-the-transgender-memorial-garden/.

- ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Explicit Acknowledgement of Affected Individuals

  - *Are there elements such as name plaques, stones, or other legible acknowledgments of those to whom the memorial is dedicated?*

The space is dedicated to transgender individuals who have lost their lives. The garden's sign reads, "They tried to bury us. They didn't know we were seeds." There are also several commemorative benches around the site.

Figure 24 Transgender Memorial Garden sign. "Lou Visits the Transgender Memorial Garden," Garden, October 18, 2021, https://garden-lou.com/garden-lou-visits-the-transgender-memorial-garden/.

- MANAGEMENT: Who manages the site?
    - *What group or group(s) manages the memorial?*

      The memorial is managed by the non-profit organization, Metro Trans Umbrella Group, who describe itself as a grassroots, trans-focused organization. The group works in partnership with the Benton Park West neighborhood association, who currently owns the property.

    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of local to national significance?*

      The group has local significance with members consisting of local activists, organizers, and professionals. The garden is also maintained by local volunteers. The stewardship of the space is entirely centered around the local community.

    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of professional organization to community volunteers?*

      The group consists of a range of professionals and volunteers. The staff and board members likely hold credentials in education, philanthropy, mental health support, etc.

- INCLUSION: Who that this memorial is intended for?

    - *Is there a specific group within the LGBTQ community for which the memorial is for? Has this changed over time?*

      This memorial is dedicated specifically to transgender individuals. This has been the case for the entirety of the memorial's lifespan and is built into its mission.

    - *Does it seem like there is an intended audience for the memorial?*

      The intended audience for the memorial seems to be transgender individuals in the St. Louis area. Likely, those who are involved with the Metro Trans Umbrella Group either receiving support or volunteering would know about the garden and visit it. It is also likely that the surrounding residents visit the garden since it used to serve as a community garden and arguably has the role of a small-scale neighborhood park as well as a memorial.

    - *Does it seem like a victim's family member would visit this memorial? How frequently?*

      There are no specific victims to which this memorial is dedicated, but it is entirely possible that friends and family of transgender individuals who have passed away would visit this memorial.

- CONTEXT: Where is the site situated?

    - *What is the character of the surrounding area?*

      The surrounding area consists of a residential neighborhood. Benton Park West is known for its historic architecture and diverse community.

    - *How do people get to the site?*

      People can either walk to the site or drive and park on adjacent residential streets. People can also bike and park their bikes at the garden.

    - *What is the entry experience like?*

      Visitors enter off of the sidewalk through a wooden archway covered in vines. This creates a portal-like entry experience, separating the streetscape from the interior of the garden.

- MEMORY: What is the collective memory of the site?

    - *What narrative is being presented?*

      This memorial presents a narrative of reflection and resilience among the transgender community. The garden itself represents this resilience and it's continued maintenance by local volunteers reflects the grassroots values of the memorial. This is exemplified in this quote carved into the memorial's sign, reading, "They tried to bury us. They didn't know we were seeds."

    - *How does this memorial fit into queer history?*

      This memorial fits within recent queer history, where there has been an increased effort to be more inclusive of different intersectional identities. The memorial is important to trans history and responds to current issues of violence against the trans community.

Figure 25 Street corner of Wyoming St. and California Ave. adjacent to the Transgender Memorial Garden. "Lou Visits the Transgender Memorial Garden," Garden, October 18, 2021, https://garden-lou.com/garden-lou-visits-the-transgender-memorial-garden/.

Pulse Interim Memorial[102]

In addition to an in-person site analysis, the Pulse Interim Memorial was evaluated on the same seven factors as the cases studies in order to compare and contrast results across categories.

Results

- TIME: Evidence of memorial artifacts
    - *Is there an intentional space for these artifacts?*

      Yes, there is a curving metal fence in the center of the site on which visitors can string, hang, or place objects, signs, and flowers. There are also panels and erasable markers placed around the Pulse neon sign that allow for a place to write messages.

    - *If not, where are they being placed?*

      Items are mostly consolidated to the offering wall. Some flowers have been left at the base of the sign.

    - *Does it seem like this form of engagement was considered during design?*

      Yes, there is an intentional design element dedicated to facilitating memorial artifacts. This is a major part of the design.

[102] See Appendix 2

Figure 26 Pulse neon sign with panels for writing messages. By the Author, November 6, 2023.

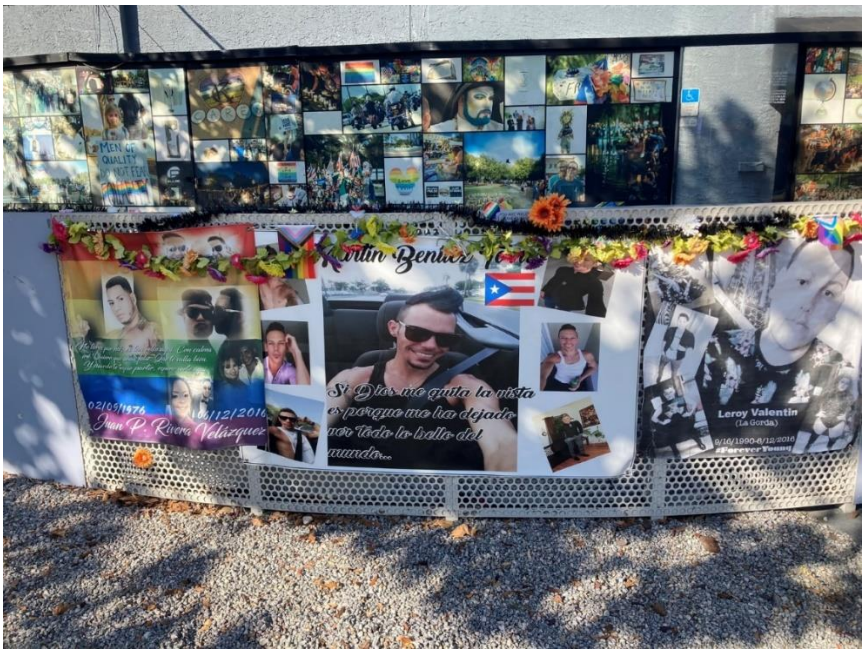


Figure 27 Offering wall for visitors to leave gifts and memorabilia. By the author, November 6, 2023

- MOVEMENT: navigating through space

    - *How do visitors engage with the space?*

      Visitors are intended to enter from the northwest corner of the sight off of Orange Ave. where the iconic Pulse neon sign is located. Visitors are loosely directed from north to south and then around to the west, hugging the eastern façade of the nightclub building. In the northeast corner of the site there is a shaded area to sit, slowing movement and allowing for reflection and rest. Visitors primarily move along two parallel paths, one next to the ribbon wall of images, and one next to the offering ribbon wall. Interactive elements include the offering ribbon wall and the writable panels around the Pulse neon sign.

    - *Is there a directed path of movement?*

      There is a gravel path directing movement through the site. The gravel path is wide and leaves room for self-direction.

    - *Is there an opportunity for self-guided movement through the space?*

      Yes, the site can be entered from any point along the northern and eastern edge of the site. These edges are permeable and at two points, one on the north corner and one at the eastern edge, the gravel path connects with the sidewalk. The site is intended to be entered from the northern edge, but this eastern point of entry is used by those who drove and parked, since the adjacent street has on street parking and is the only available parking.

Figure 28 Shaded seating with 'love' benches. By the author, November 6, 2023

- ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Explicit Acknowledgement of Affected Individuals

    - *Are there elements such as name plaques, stones, or other legible acknowledgments of those to whom the memorial is dedicated?*

      There is a plaque with the names of the 49 victims.

Figure 29 Plaque with names of the 49 victims. By the author, November 6, 2023

- MANAGEMENT: Who manages the site?

    - *What group or group(s) manages the memorial?*

      The site is now managed by the city of Orlando, but it used to be managed by the OnePulse foundation and owned by club-founder Barbara Poma.

    - *Where does this group fall on a scale of local to national significance?*

      The OnePulse foundation had a national presence, hosting an international design competition, fundraising on an international scale, and providing resources. The site is now owned by the City of Orlando, which is a local entity with local interests.

- *Where does this group fall on a scale of professional organization to community volunteers?*

  The OnePulse foundation was made up of experts in a variety of fields from all over the world. The memorial is now managed by the City of Orlando, which consists of professionals in governmental roles. The site is likely managed by the parks department, however this is not able to be verified.

- INCLUSION: Who that this memorial is intended for?

  - *Is there a specific group within the LGBTQ community for which the memorial is for? Has this changed over time?*

    The memorial is specifically for the victims of the shooting on June 12, 2016. The 49 individuals, referred to as the 49 angels, are honored through photographs, plaques, and images left on the site by their loved ones.

  - *Does it seem like there is an intended audience for the memorial?*

    The intended audience appears to be both locals and visitors from out of town. There is limited parking available, which could indicate that walking is encouraged, implying local visitors. However, the memorial is undoubtedly a destination for those visiting Orlando, who may have a personal tie to the event or the gay community. During my site visit, I spoke with two visitors, one had just moved to Orlando and had been meaning to visit the memorial. The other was a woman from Ohio who was visiting Orlando with her son.

  - *Does it seem like a victim's family member would visit this memorial? How frequently?*

    It is evident that family or friends of victims had visited the site at some point in the last seven years. This is seen in the posters attached to the offering ribbon wall that have photos and messages of and for the victims, often signed by their loved ones. There are flowers left on the site that indicates that someone left them there within the last few weeks, but it can't be determined who left the flowers.

- CONTEXT: Where is the site situated?

  - *What is the character of the surrounding area?*

    The surrounding area is mostly commercial. Across the street is a Wendy's. There are gas stations, smoke shops, and other similar businesses. I turned onto the side street to park. There is street parking, and this turns into a residential area.

- *How do people get to the site?*

  People can either walk, drive, or bike to the site. There are sidewalks on both the north and east sides of the site. There is on street parking on one of the streets. There is no place for bike parking, however during my site visit I did see someone bike to the memorial.

- *What is the entry experience like?*

  The entry experience is generally self-guided, with two sides of the memorial mostly open to the sidewalk. There is more of a prescribed entry experience when you enter from the northwest corner of the site by the Pulse neon sign.

- MEMORY: What is the collective memory of the site?

  - *What narrative is being presented?*

    The narrative presented at the Pulse Interim memorial is one of love and acceptance for the queer community. In response to the attack on the Pulse Nightclub in 2016, the memorial focuses on highlighting acceptance in the face of hate and discrimination. This is central to the design of the memorial and reflected in numerous design elements.

  - *How does this memorial fit into queer history?*

    As the most recent memorial, the role of Pulse in queer history is still being determined. The large-scale response, including the creation of the OnePulse Foundation, is characteristic of current efforts to increase representation of the LGBTQ community through formal design by internationally renowned designers. The Pulse Memorial is connected to nationwide attention toward LGBTQ history in the last ten to fifteen years.

Figure 30 View of Orange Ave. and the Pulse neon sign. By the author, November 6, 2023

Comparing the Pulse Interim Memorial to the Case Studies

Each memorial handles the management of artifacts and the facilitation of leaving gifts in honor of those being memorialized. At the Stonewall National Monument, there is limited evidence of memorial artifacts, and no intentional space designated. Similarly at Harvey Milk Plaza, there is no intentional space for artifacts, however there is evidence that artifacts have been left to commemorate various events throughout the course of the plaza's lifespan. The Transgender Memorial Garden does not have designated spaces for artifacts either. The National AIDS Memorial Grove allows for artifacts to be left in various areas, with intentional design elements facilitating engagement, specifically the Circle of Friends, where names of those affected by AIDS are engraved. This is not necessarily a programmed activity. The Pulse Interim Memorial provides intentional space for artifacts, with design elements facilitating engagement, including the ribbon wall and the message boards. The Pulse Interim Memorial likely has this designated programming due to how the event spurring the development of the memorial was the most recent out of the five memorials. It also was designed with the specific intent of facilitating the memorialization of Pulse temporarily before a final memorial is constructed. This element of

the memorial is well-used and seems to resonate with visitors. In a conversation with one of the people who visited the memorial at the same time as me, she mentioned that seeing the artifacts and images of those who died helps her to resonate more with what happened and connect with those who died.[103] This element is particularly useful in the earlier stages of a memorial, but it is not clear how long this form of memorialization is desired by memorial visitors.

The way that visitors navigate each memorial is similar, with some degree of direction, balanced with opportunity for self-direction. All sites have some form of pathways navigating the site varying in scale. The Pulse Interim Memorial and the Stonewall National Monument have the most directed pathways, and at Pulse, they are the most intentionally designed as part of the user experience. This is characteristic of the counter-memorial movement and supports the idea that each of these memorials is influenced by this movement in memorial design. Two of the memorials also serve as public greenspace, which also supports the non-traditional forms of memorialization seen in the last few decades.

At the Stonewall National Monument, there is no explicit acknowledgment of names, except for the imagery at the perimeter of the site. This is consistent with the monument commemorating an event, the Stonewall Uprising, and not specific people. The Harvey Milk Plaza acknowledges Milk through the plaza's name and location, with a sign located above the entrance to the train station. The National AIDS Memorial Grove has specific acknowledgment through engraved names in the Circle of Friends and various commemorative plaques. The Pulse Interim Memorial acknowledges the 49 victims through a commemorative plaque with all their names, a similar approach to the Grove. The difference is that the group of people commemorated at Pulse is finite, while the names added to the Circle of Friends continues to

[103] Interview with an anonymous source, November 6, 2023, Orlando, Florida, Conversation with Pulse Interim Memorial visitor.

grow over time. the Transgender Memorial Garden acknowledges who the memorial is for through the garden's sign and commemorative benches.

The management of each memorial varies from local to national significance, and from more informal and community-led, to professional. The Stonewall National Monument is managed of the highest scale since it is by the National Park Service (NPS) at a national level. Both the Harvey Milk Plaza and the Pulse Interim Memorial are managed by local government groups. The redesign of Harvey Milk Plaza is being organized by the Friends of Harvey Milk, which is a non-profit organization similar to the OnePulse Foundation and the National AIDS Memorial Organization, but this organization does not steward the site currently. Management by a non-profit organization is present in four out of five of the memorials as some point in time, but currently only the National AIDS Memorial Grove and the Transgender Memorial Garden are run by non-profit groups.

Each memorial is dedicated to specific community groups, which range in scale. The Stonewall National Monument is intended for the LGBTQ community and the broader local community, aiming to commemorate the pivotal events of the Stonewall Uprising, which have become a part of the collective memory of the entire queer community. Harvey Milk Plaza is primarily intended to be used for the local community, with some design elements catering to the queer community and honoring the legacy of Harvey Milk. The Castro district is a historically LGBTQ area of San Fransisco, and the plaza serves as an important central point in the district. The redesign, however, appears to be intended to draw a larger audience. The National AIDS Memorial Grove is dedicated to those affected by AIDS directly or indirectly, with ongoing efforts to broaden inclusion over time. In contrast, the Transgender Memorial Garden in St. Louis is specifically dedicated to transgender individuals in the area, with provisions made for

friends, family, and community members. Lastly, the Pulse Interim Memorial serves as a space for both locals and visitors, particularly those affected by the tragic shooting at the Pulse nightclub.

Each memorial is located within a different context. The Stonewall National Monument is located in Greenwich Village, a vibrant historic neighborhood in New York City. The Transgender Memorial Garden is also located within a historic neighborhood in St Louis and is surrounded primarily by residential neighborhoods primarily. The National Aids Memorial Grove is uniquely positioned within a larger park, making it the most secluded of the sites. Both the Harvey Milk Plaza and the Pulse Interim Memorial are located in busy, commercial areas, which increase their opportunity for visitors from a wider array of people.

Every memorial has become a part of the narrative of LGBTQ history in the United States. Places like the Stonewall National Monument and the Harvey Milk Plaza have taken events and people in gay history and transformed and adapted these stories to represent broader messages of heroism. Places like the Transgender Memorial Garden and the National AIDS Memorial Grove represent larger messages of resilience in the face of tragedy and violence. The Pulse Memorial follows this pattern of galvanizing the LGBTQ community following a tragedy, responding to hate with messages of love and acceptance. The narrative of Pulse has been consciously expanded to one of a national scale that encompasses the LGBTQ community as a whole. Each memorial is important to the collective memory of the LGBTQ community as a whole, shaping a shared history that is comprised of many individual experiences.

Conclusion

Remembering Pulse: Scale of Memorialization and Narrative Building

The scale of memorialization conceived of by the OnePulse Foundation was one of international significance; a scale that matches the international response to the tragedy in 2016. Both foundation members that I spoke with described an ambition to create a memorial and museum that would be a testament to the lives of LGBTQ individuals everywhere. The foundation's goal was to commemorate Pulse on a scale that would have lasting significance. This corroborates the theory presented by Murrey that the creation of memorials is in itself an act of trying to be remembered. "The construction of sites of memory often reflects the fear of those who want always to remember that without material embodiment of remembrance what happened there would succumb to the culture of amnesia and gradually face from historical consciousness." [104] This scale requires cooperation and funding on a significant scale. According to Kody Smith, the foundation's fundraising goal to construct the museum and memorial was $10,000,000. They were able to raise only a third of that. This led to the subsequent cancellation of the museum project and the dissolution of the foundation altogether. All the while, heat from the press was growing, with questions of money management and respect for the victims posed.

The OnePulse Foundation may have overshot its ability to effectively serve both roles of a memorial, to facilitate grieving as well as educating the public about what happened and how it connects to the broader world. The foundation, from the beginning, aimed for the largest reach and to represent something more than what happened on June 12. According to the foundation members that I spoke with, there was an intention from the beginning to build a memorial and

[104] Martin J. Murray, *Commemorating and Forgetting: Challenges for the New South Africa* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013)146.

include a larger response than just the memorial. Unlike the four case studies, the catalyst for transforming Pulse into a formally designed memorial through an international design competition was present from the very beginning. Maybe this level of memorialization was too much too soon. The interim memorial, which effectively combines design programming with opportunities to engage with the site in ways that are more characteristic of grassroots memorials, has been in place for more than triple its intended lifespan. The site is visited regularly and engagement with the site both in leaving mementos and artifacts as well as writing messages on the boards is still happening on a regular basis. The interim memorial was designed specifically to be this steppingstone between the two modes of memorialization, processing grief, and education, and it seems that we are not ready yet to exit this phase.

However, the interim memorial has certainly facilitated broader conversations about LGBTQ rights over the seven years of its existence. The story of what happened at Pulse and what it means on a local, national, and international scale are an important part of the memorialization process. In *Commemorating and Forgetting: Challenges for the New South Africa,* Martin Murray writes that "the practice of commemoration is as much a political-cultural process shaped by the anxieties of the present as it is a historical narrative influenced by an accurate reconstruction of the past." [105] What is the story that is constructed from what happened at Pulse? The memory of Pulse is centered around acceptance of the LGBTQ community in the face of adversity and attack. It serves as a piece of a larger story about the positionality of Queer people in America during the 2020s and the prevalence of mass violence in our country. The racial element of the attack is often left out of the bigger narrative. The group that was attacked was simply the queer community. The memory of Pulse is, to the broader public, part of the

[105]Murray, *Commemorating and Forgetting,* 13.

social effort for Queer rights and acceptance. At the interim memorial on the whiteboards beneath the icon Pulse sign where people are invited to leave messages, someone had written in several places, “2023 do not forget this. Hate is winning right now in Florida. Don’t Destroy us.” This message, evidently written recently, appears to be in response to the current political tension in Florida surrounding queer rights. This is evidence of the Pulse memorial and the memory of what happened here becoming a conduit for a much broader conversation about Queer rights. It expresses anxieties about current social and political events that are connected to Pulse through the collective memory of queer Americans.

Approaching Queer Memorialization: Looking to the Past

There has not currently been a successful LGBTQ memorial in the United States that was executed through an international design competition. The Aids Memorial Grove has added to their design over time but was unsuccessful at selecting a design competition winner. The Harvey Milk Plaza is currently undergoing this process, but they have faced friction surrounding the destruction of the current plaza. The Transgender Memorial Garden has stayed in the hands of the local community since its inception and, due to its scale, it will likely never become more professionally designed. The Stonewall National Monument is somewhat of a different story in its evolution. The site is the Stonewall Inn itself, to which interpretive materials have been added. George Segal’s sculpture, “Gay Liberation,” was commissioned in 1979 for Christopher Park, and added in 1992. The design of the park has been tweaked over time, but the overall configuration is mostly the same.

With Pulse looking to examples such as the Oklahoma City Memorial, the 9/11 Memorial in New York City, and other designed commemorations of mass tragedy, it is equally important to consider the ways in which this design process of bringing in outside voices of authority on an

international scale has played out with queer memorials specifically. Martin Murrey writes that "… vernacular, commonplace, and everyday modes of remembrance refer to those social practices of memorialization that are created outside official and institutionalized sanction." This definition parallels themes of queerness, which are inherently outside of the norm. The interim memorial takes these features of a vernacular memorial and curates them into a designed space. The final memorial will transform the space into an even more formal space. Is the presence of a formal design process antithetical to queerness?

The case of the Pulse Memorial serves as an example of the challenges and complexities inherent in memorialization efforts. Despite initial ambitions for international significance, the project faced obstacles and scrutiny, highlighting the delicate balance between remembrance, education, and community engagement. As we reflect on the process of queer memorialization, it becomes evident that there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Each memorial is a product of its context, shaped by local dynamics, community needs, and historical legacies.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Each case study as well as the Pulse Interim Memorial has evolved from inception to memorialization in a variety of ways. The purpose for creating each memorial impacts the scope of who the memorial is ultimately for. While sites such as the Stonewall National Monument memorialize a significant event in queer history, others focus on honoring a specific community group like at the Transgender Memorial Garden and the AIDS Memorial Grove. Harvey Milk Plaza and the Pulse Interim Memorial honor specific individuals who lost their lives in acts of violence related to their identity. This in turn affects how these memorials develop over time.

Sites like the Transgender Memorial Garden have remained in the hands of a local advocacy organization since its creation in 2015, which means that the memorial is stewarded by the local community. Others like the Stonewall National Monument and AIDS Memorial Grove have evolved over time and gained a greater level of significance that increased design efforts and programming, and an expansion of the memorial's mission. Harvey Milk Plaza and the Pulse Interim Memorial all experienced international design competitions that significantly expanded the group of stakeholders involved in the memorial. In both cases, the design competition process has not been smooth and there has been resistance from members of the community. Neither memorial has successfully redesigned, and the future of each site is unknown at this time. There is not a consensus among queer individuals and the broader community on how to memorialize LGBTQ sites of tragedy. The decision process is a sensitive one and stakeholders are tasked with considering many different and sometimes conflicting perspectives

To understand these memorials, this thesis investigated the intersection of collective memory, vernacular memorialization, and queer history. Each memorial is a vehicle for memory making and helps to shape the collective memory of the local, national, or international queer community. These memorials' function to facilitate grief, and at a certain point have shifted in purpose to include educating others about what happened and representing a larger message. However, In the case of Pulse, this expansion into representing a larger international message of love and acceptance for the queer community has not been entirely successful. Conversely, the interim memorial which was intended to only last two years has lasted for seven and counting. It continues to be visited, and the grassroots memorialization process of leaving messages, gifts, and flowers has yet to subside.

Opportunities for Future Research

The breadth of topics related to this research are vast and interdisciplinary. There is ample opportunity for future research that could go in a number of directions. These are some of the main opportunities for future research that would allow for a deeper understanding of this topic:

1. Conduct an in-depth analysis of the proposed designs for the Pulse memorial and the Harvey Milk Plaza memorial to evaluate their effectiveness in commemorating the respective events and honoring the communities they represent.
2. Monitor the progress and developments regarding the proposed designs for the Pulse memorial and the Harvey Milk Plaza memorial to understand how they evolve and take into account public discourse and engagement.

3. Investigate the relationship between queerness and community building, focusing on how the unique experiences and identities within queer communities influence the design and function of memorial spaces dedicated to LGBTQ individuals
4. Explore the role of foundations established in the aftermath of tragedies, such as the OnePulse Foundation and the Friends of Harvey Milk, in managing the memorialization process. Analyze their strategies, challenges, and impact on shaping the narrative and legacy of these events within their respective communities.

One of the most important elements in designing queer memorials is community involvement. Memorials like the National AIDS Memorial Grove and the Transgender Memorial Garden which have incorporated community involvement as a major component have demonstrated greater stability and resonance within the LGBTQ community. Community involvement is essential to queer memorials specifically in decision-making processes. The incorporation of community input not only strengthens the design process but also ensures that the memorial accurately reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives within the community it seeks to commemorate. This allows for a sense of ownership and agency among those directly impacted by the memorial.

As preservationists and stewards of history within the built environment, considering the shifting role of memorials over time and the importance of community involvement in queer memorials is crucial. Ten, twenty, or fifty years into the future, will people still come to the Pulse Memorial to write a message or leave a gift in honor of the lives lost? Or will space serve an entirely different function? What would those messages be in 2050? Once the events at Pulse become a moment in queer history and a distant memory to an aging population, what will the memorial mean to people on a local, national, or international scale?

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Appendix 1

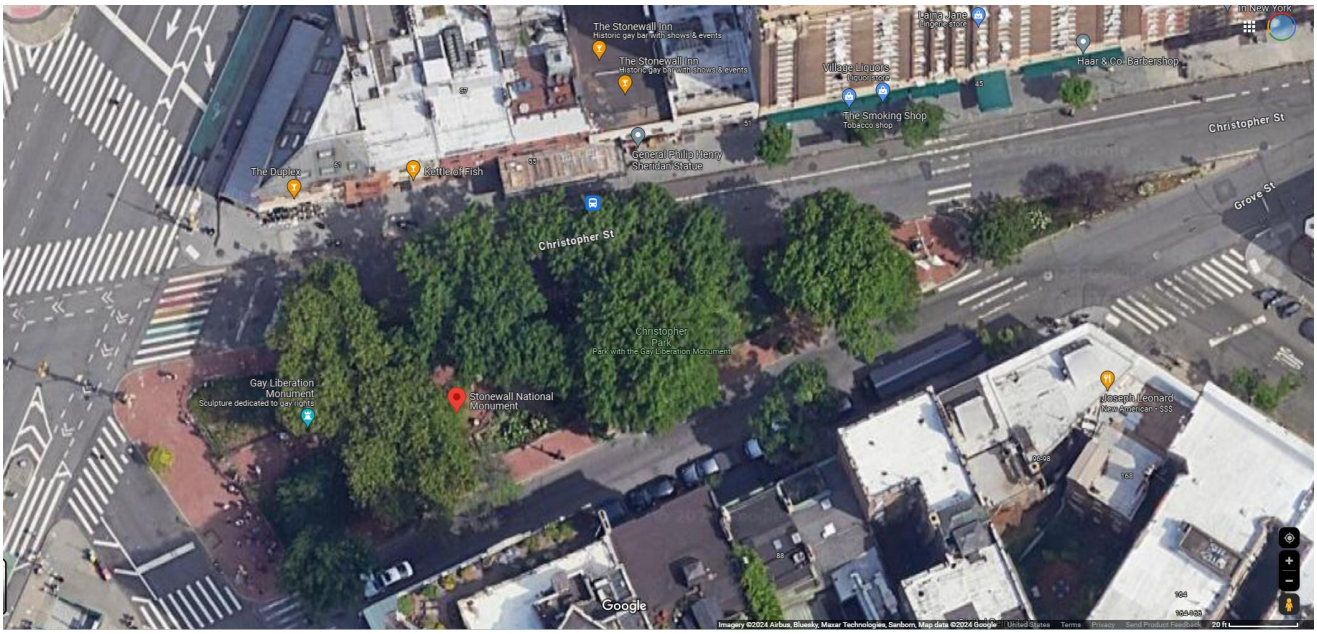

Figure 31 Google Maps, screenshop captured on March 24, 2024, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Stonewall+National+Monument/@40.7335818,-74.0049156,786m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x89c2599473b1e70b:0x3705993e6c1fbd59!8m2!3d40.7335778!4d-74.0023407!16s%2Fg%2F11b

Stonewall National Monument

Design Elements:

- "Gay Liberation" statues by George Segal
- Interpretive Signage at entrances and throughout landscaping
- Images of Stonewall Uprising on the outer perimeter of the fence
- Paved pathways
- Central circular area surrounded by benches
- Landscaping buffer around perimeter

Harvey Milk Plaza

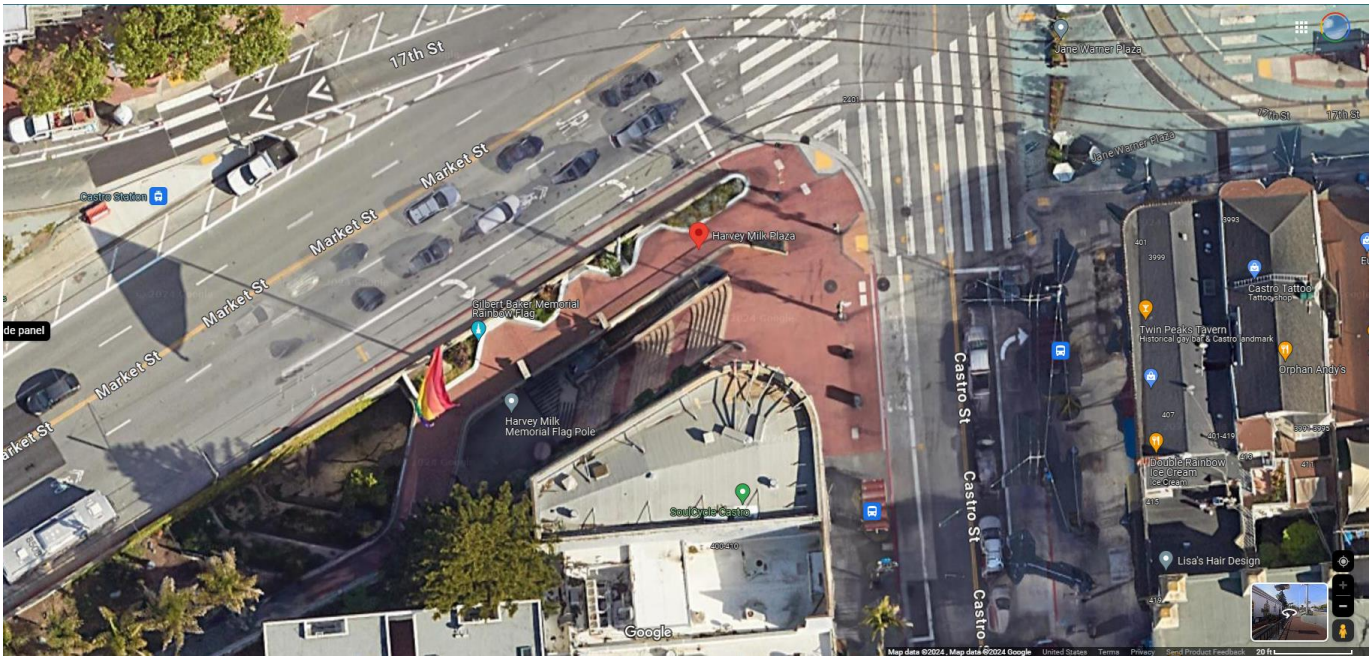

Figure 32 Google Maps, screenshop captured on March 24, 2024, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Harvey+Milk+Plaza/@37.76241,-122.4379886,820m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x808f7ff320b87d41:0xa79a9b97d0b7949d!8m2!3d37.7624058!4d-122.4354137!16s%2Fg%2F11l032vj9f?entry=ttu

Design Elements:

- Entrance to Castro Muni Station
- Flagpole with rainbow flag
- Neon sign reading “Hope Will Never Be Silent”

National AIDS Memorial Grove

Figure 33 Google Maps, screenshop captured on March 24, 2024, https://www.google.com/maps/place/National+AIDS+Memorial+Grove/@37.7698894,-122.4633346,819m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x80858085fd809303:0x16832e25352a6b86!8m2!3d37.7698852!4d-122.4607597!16zL20vMDloZnI2?entry=ttu

Design Elements:

- South Portal
- Dogwood Dell
- Circle of Friends
- Main Portal
- The Redwood Grove
- The Maples
- The Meadow
- The Pines
- The Woodland Stream
- Pine Crescent
- The Dry Creek
- Meadow Overlook
- The Oaks
- Fern Grotto and Dell
- Artist Portal
- Hemophilia Memorial
- Crescents
- Benches

- Boulders
- Lawn space
- Tree Grove/landscaping

Transgender Memorial Garden

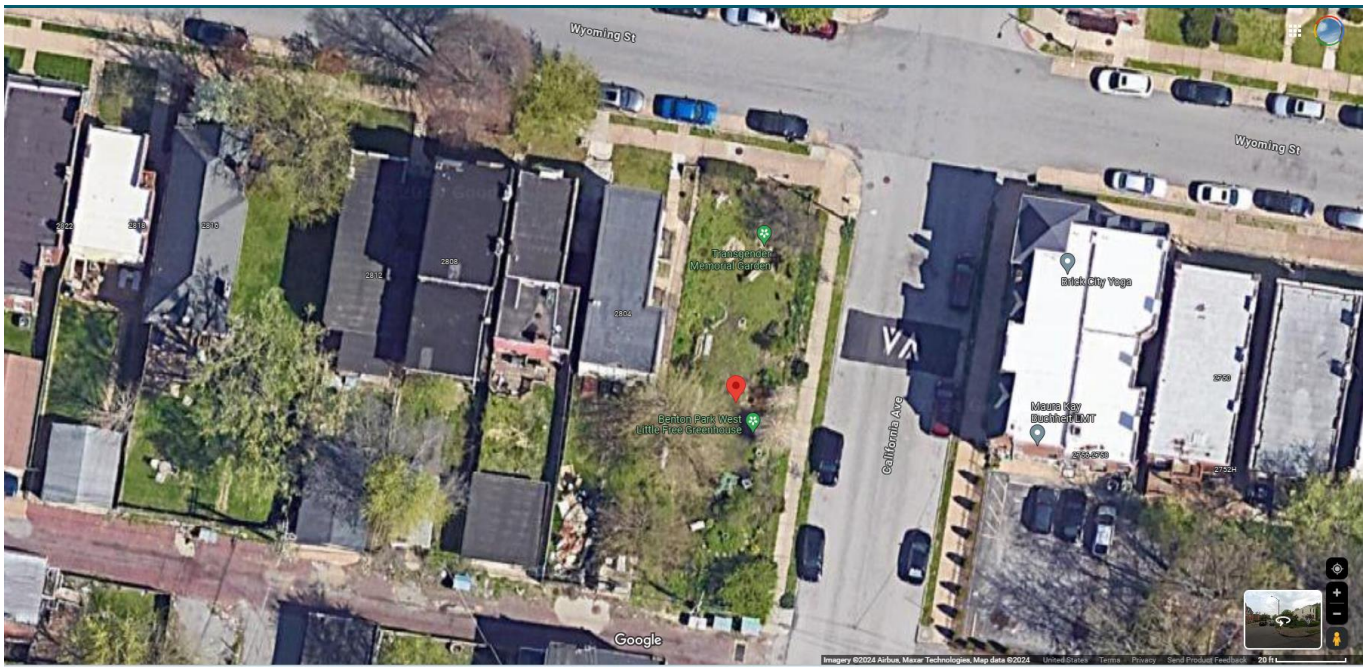

Figure 34 Google Maps, screenshop captured on March 24, 2024, https://www.google.com/maps/place/2800+Wyoming+St,+St.+Louis,+MO+63118/@38.5972012,-90.2320629,810m/data=!3m2!1e3!4b1!4m6!3m5!1s0x87d8b4712e8629c1:0xb4dc466adf74b105!8m2!3d38.597197!4d-90.229488!16s%2F

Design Elements:

- Commemorative bench
- Stone statues and benches
- Cast iron archway with metal butterfly
- Bird feeder
- Bird bath
- Wooden sign
- Surrounded by historic buildings in a mostly residential area
- 2 cabinet structures, 1 used for propagating plants
- Wooden archway entrance and stone steppingstones leading in
- Rectangular form

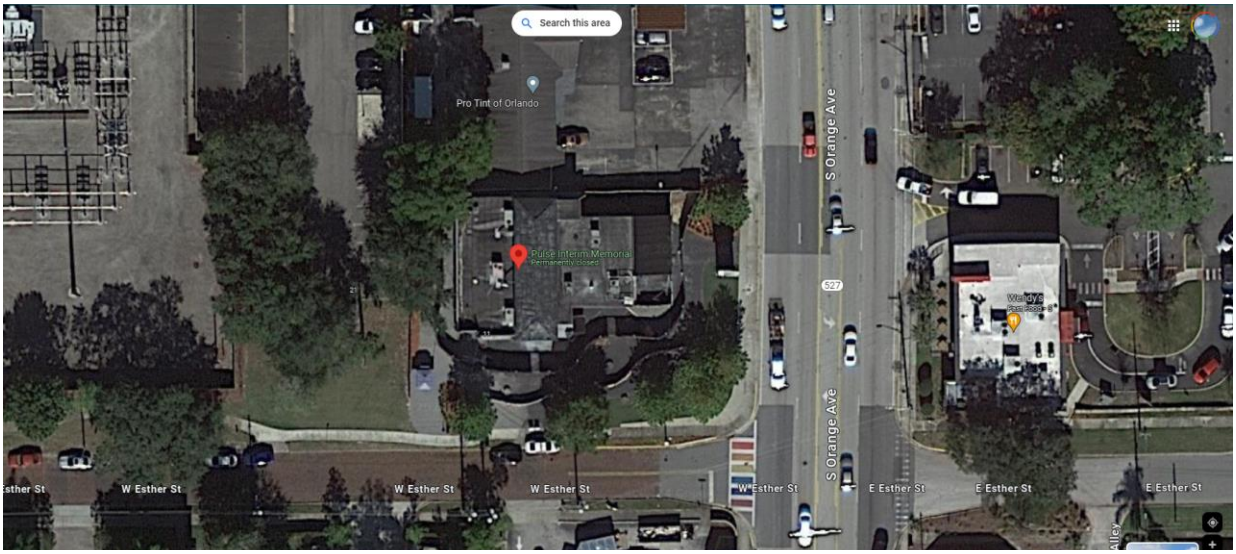

Figure 35 Google Maps, screenshop captured on March 24, 2024, https://www.google.com/maps/place/Pulse+Interim+Memorial/@28.5195422,-81.3767608,57m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m10!1m2!2m1!1spulse+nightclub!3m6!1s0x88e77ba7daac7a6d:0x3ff332027c996464!8m2!3d2.

Figure 36 Pulse Interim Memorial Master Plan, Dix.Hite+Partners, 2016.

Pulse Interim Memorial

Design Elements:

- Offering Wall: A place for you to leave flowers or mementos of your love and support.

- Viewing Areas: There are three viewing areas of the building. You will be able to see where the Pulse Nightclub iconic waterfall was at the entrance, a wall of the building where our 49 Angels names are listed and around the rear of the building to view the openings of the rescue from the bathrooms.
- Ribbon Wall of Photographs: The panels surrounding the building are filled with pictures of the community and the world's response of love and support and artifacts collected from the Orange County History Center.
- Digital Guest Book: A place for you to sign in, leave a message, connect with the Pulse Memorial and share your experience.
- Pulse Nightclub Sign: This is the original sign for the Pulse nightclub and a place where you may write your own message on the panels provided.
- Survivor Grove: A green space with benches to provide time for contemplation and reflection.