



Dermot Foley Landscape Architects (DFLA) were commissioned by Dublin City Council Parks, Biodiversity and Landscape Services to integrate a new memorial in an existing space in the very centre of the city. Peace Garden, at the junction of two major roads and within the historic medieval walls of Dublin, had been closed for many years. Elements of a previous design were damaged and the space suffered from anti-social behaviour. Peace Garden was selected for refurbishment as part of Dublin City Council's 'Liberties Greening Strategy'. DFLA worked closely with the client and contractor to complete the project in an extremely short time-frame of only three months.

Tranquillity

The design intent was to create a space of intimacy in a very busy city-centre location, using materials that would calm the experience while at the same time draw the visitor toward the richness of the material nature of the space. More practical considerations included the requirement to open the space, improving visibility and increasing passive surveillance. The project manages to balance the contradiction between intimacy and openness.

By subtly manipulating the existing sunken levels of the space DFLA managed to 'separate' the experience from the busier street level. The orbiting geometry concentrates on a circular plinth and this further divorces the experience from the surrounding din. The circle evokes the opening in the Menin Gate in Ypres. Soil from the four provinces of Ireland along with soil from Flanders, Belgium, was placed in separate containers within the circular plinth, by local school children.

Materiality

A very fine level of detailing is used, in tune with what would conventionally be expected of a civic sculpture, but the finely crafted steel, stone and timber is dispersed in a planted and grass landscape that ultimately envelopes the space and provides the character. Shot-blasted Leinster Granite slabs operate as a device for the lawn to infill and as a route through the lawn. The same granite is employed in the circular plinth, and on the steps at the entrance, affording cohesion through materiality. Rough-hewn Irish Limestone is employed as small sets between the granite slabs. The same natural stone, with a honed finish, forms solid retaining benches, adhering to the gentle topography and addressing both the centre of the space and the borrowed landscape. Herbaceous ground cover planting, chosen for fragrance and colour, fill pockets throughout the park. The 'canopy' layer, *Viburnum farrieri* and *Prunus yedoensis* provide seasonal foliage, floral display and fragrance.



Materials and atmosphere (top down) - lighting illuminating the circular plinth, Irish Limestone solid retaining benches with the Munster coat of arms engraved in the Limestone (Photograph: Paul Tierney), Irish Limestone small format sets and Leinster Granite slabs (Photograph: Paul Tierney)



Aerial photo capturing the orbiting geometry concentrating on the circular plinth and the sunken nature of Peace Garden (Photograph: Paul Tierney)



Concept sketch capturing the geometry and sunken nature of Peace Garden



View capturing the subtle manipulation of the sunken levels of the space which 'separate' the experience from the busier street level (Photograph: Paul Tierney)

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