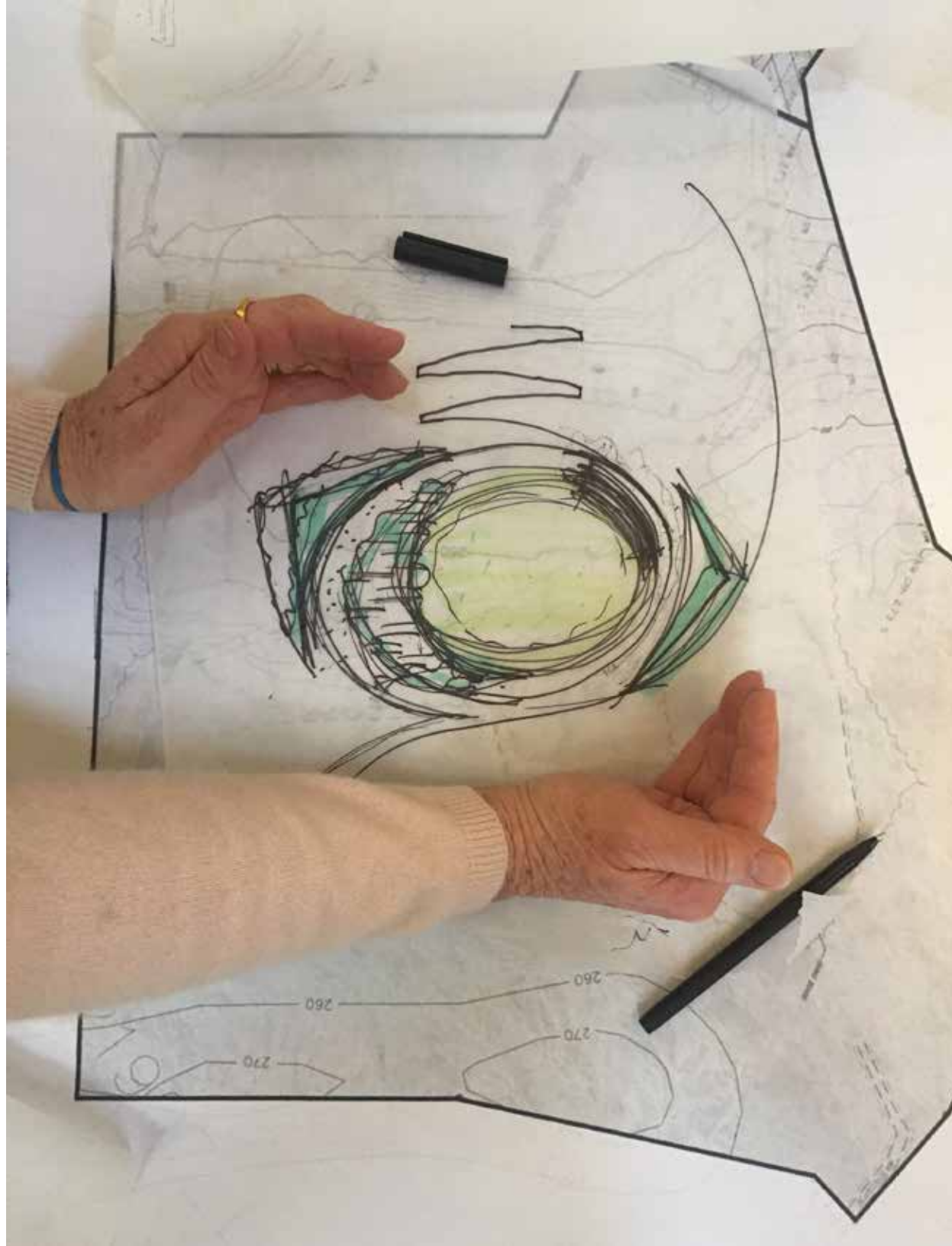


let the earth hold us + heal us.




“

If I could mend your heart,
I would weave together the
edges of your threadbare spirit
and soothe your pain, your
shock and your disbelief. ”

– Mary Farr

Author + Pediatric Hospital Chaplain



a place to rest our minds and hearts
a place to remember
a place fertile with loving kindness
and compassion

From the book *Bearing the Unbearable*
By Joanne Cacciato, Ph.D.



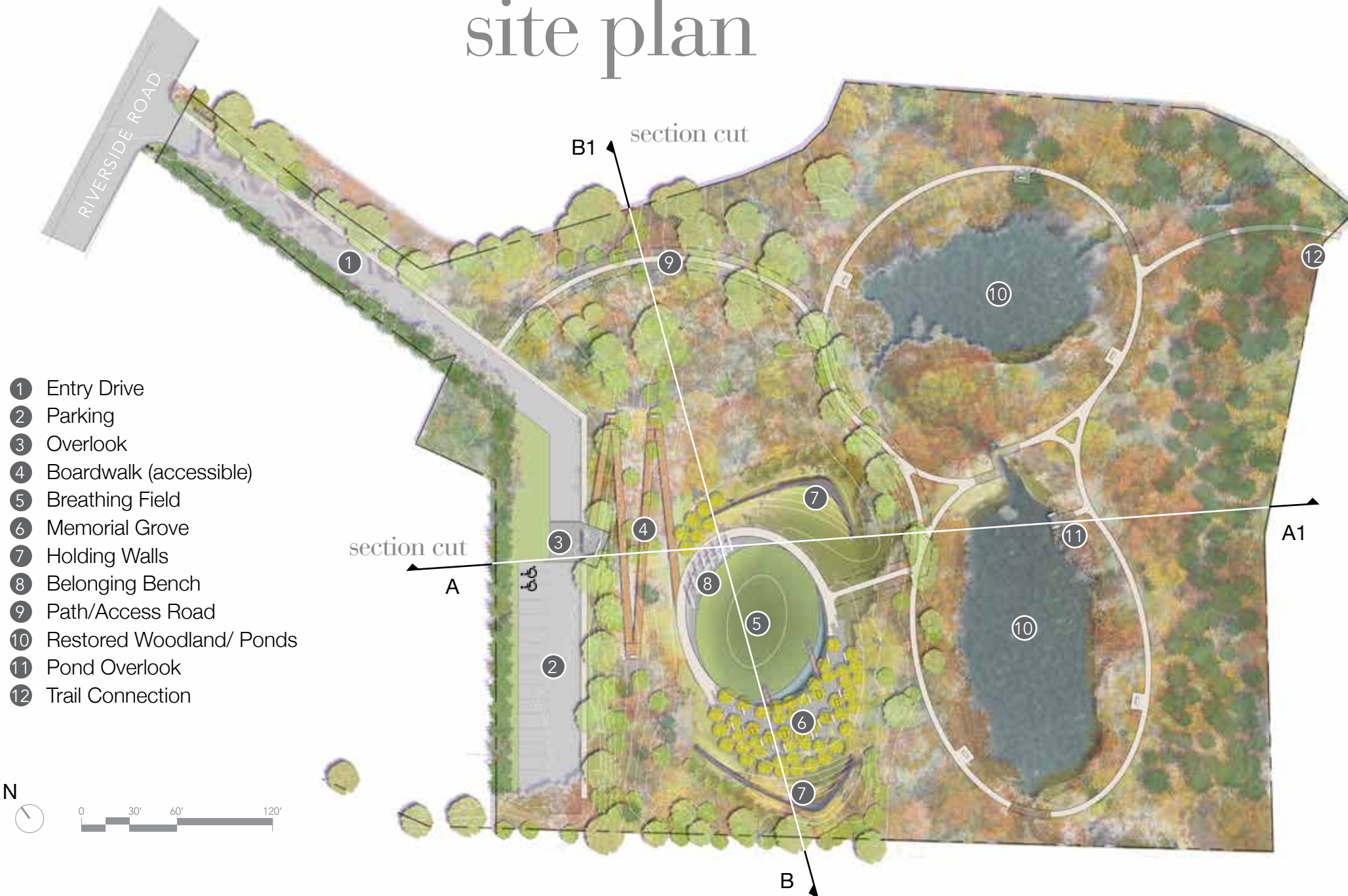
a place for belonging



This Sandy Hook Memorial proposal creates a series of distinct experiences, from entry to the memorial and back. Each experience is designed with the intention of creating healing environments to support quiet reflection and conversation. Each place within the larger site is held gently, by creating expansive views, and intimate spaces simultaneously. We carefully considered safety and visibility in this design, and also the importance of this place belonging to the families, survivors and community, while being inviting and powerful to the broader public.



site plan



The entry off Riverside is announced by a simple stone wall with the name of The Memorial. As you turn into the drive the surface changes to gravel, signaling a slower pace. The drive is lined with hemlocks to screen adjacent properties, and guide visitors. A stone paving threshold welcomes visitors. A low stone wall shifts movement to The Overlook, providing a first glimpse of The Memorial.



Parking /
Entry Drive

Overlook

Boardwalk

Memorial

Restored Woodland and Ponds

Section / Elevation A- A1



Restored Woodland

Memorial Grove

Breathing Field

Belonging Bench /
Community Arbor

Holding Walls

Restored Woodland /
Access Path

Section / Elevation B- B1

plan enlargement



- ① Overlook
- ② Boardwalk (accessible)
- ③ Memorial Grove
- ④ Reflection Pool
- ⑤ Holding Walls
- ⑥ Breathing Field
- ⑦ Belonging Bench
- ⑧ Community Arbor
- ⑨ Woodland Walk



Overlook

Boardwalk

Belonging Bench /
Community Arbor

Holding Wall /
Breathing Field

Reflection Pool



Section / Elevation C- C1

Holding Walls

Memorial Grove

Reflection Pool

Breathing Field

Community Arbor /
Belonging Bench

Holding Walls



Section / Elevation D- D1



a place to pause



The Overlook This is the personal entry, and a moment to pause before descending a gentle slope to The Memorial. The vantage point offers a view overlooking the memorial and is punctuated with a quote etched into the glass panel. A stone bench offers a place for reflection prior to descending through the restored native woodland canopy along the accessible boardwalk, and arriving at the central part of the memorial, The Breathing Field.

the overlook



The inscription on glass at The Overlook is to be determined with input from the families and community. The proposed idea reflects our understanding of the role of this place for community and family members:

**“This is our path.
This is our place
of grief and memory
and honoring.
Please sit beside me.
Tell me your story.
I will tell you mine.”**

– Teri Kwant

View from The Overlook, looking east

setting the context


“On December 14th 2012 our lives were irreparably changed by an act of violence that took the lives of 20 first graders and 6 educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School. We ceased that day to exist as we once were. We mourn the absence of our loved ones every day. We know the darkest of all nights yet hope to bring the light of our loved ones into the world. We are the paradox. We are the bearers of the unbearable.”

The Event Should it be desired, we have reserved a place for an informational panel to be mounted on one of The Overlook walls. This could provide context for the memorial. The language included here, is only a suggestion for possible content.



a place to breathe

The Breathing Field Breath is the physical manifestation of life and can bring us into the present moment. This open lawn is gently bowled to cradle us and create both a physical and emotional openness to take a moment and breathe. It is surrounded by meadow and forest and held by the shape of the land and the solidity of the holding walls. Here, there is nothing to read, nothing to do, just space to be with the softness of the land.





the breathing field

View looking west to the Breathing Field



a place to remember



The Memorial Grove Through our work with bereaved parents, we've learned that in addition to the terrible loss they bear every day, they also can become very isolated. They've described to us how even those they know intimately, find it hard to engage in conversation about their loss, or about their lost child. In response to this, we have created a nurturing place to reflect on who these children and adults were. We will ask the victim's families about their daughter, their son, or their mother or uncle, to discover what they loved, their idea of fun, their passions, and joys, or simply their favorite color, and incorporate these short stories about them on each bench.

the memorial grove



View looking east

memorial benches

Section



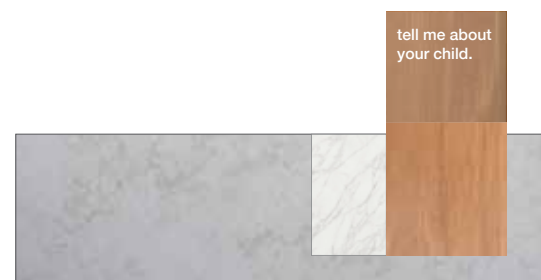
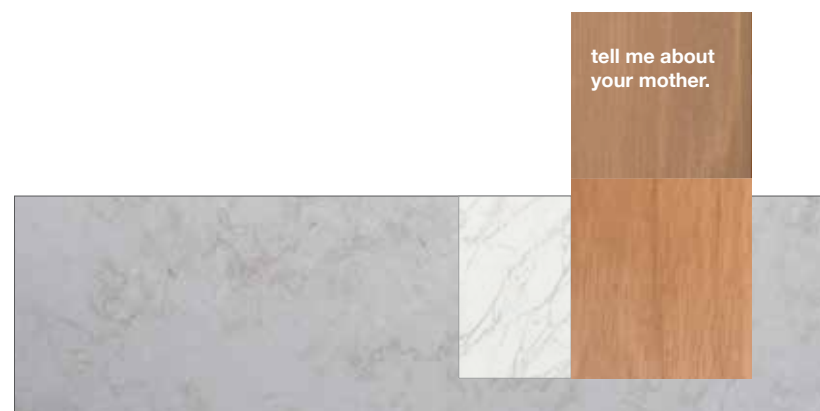
The inspiration for these chairs came from a quote we read by one of the parents who lost a child in this tragedy. He remembers his child every morning, seeing his empty chair. We want to enliven these chairs with stories of each one.

“I look at his empty chair at the kitchen table and still can’t wrap my head around the fact that he’s really gone forever. I won’t ever heal or move on from the agony of Daniel’s death, but I’m so thankful that you’re helping me honor my kindhearted boy and carry on his legacy.”

– A Sandy Hook Parent

memorial benches

Front elevations



memorial benches: detail

“

his laughter
filled every
room of the
house.

”

Tell me about. . . your child, your sister, your mom, your daughter, your brother, your uncle your nephew. Through a series of statements and questions embedded on the seating benches, memories are recalled, stories are told. Quiet contemplation and conversation happen.

Throughout the meandering pathway in the grove we see their varied sizes, the magnitude of the loss, and also get to know each one.

Plan view 6 x 2 x varied heights



Light grey granite base + marble inset a chair made from hardwood or a sustainable and durable wood-like substrate

memorial grove: birch

We chose this species of tree for several reasons. White birch are native to the Connecticut River Valley, and they can live about 140 years.

Birch are characterized by the eye-shaped markings in their bark, earning them the nickname of “The Watchful Tree.” They watch over the space, even when people may not be present.

Also, two decades ago, while researching her doctoral thesis, ecologist Suzanne Simard [Yale University] discovered that birch trees communicate their needs and send each other nutrients via a network of latticed fungi buried in the soil — in other words, she found, they “talk” to each other. It’s this network, that connects one tree root system to another tree root system, that allows them to thrive.



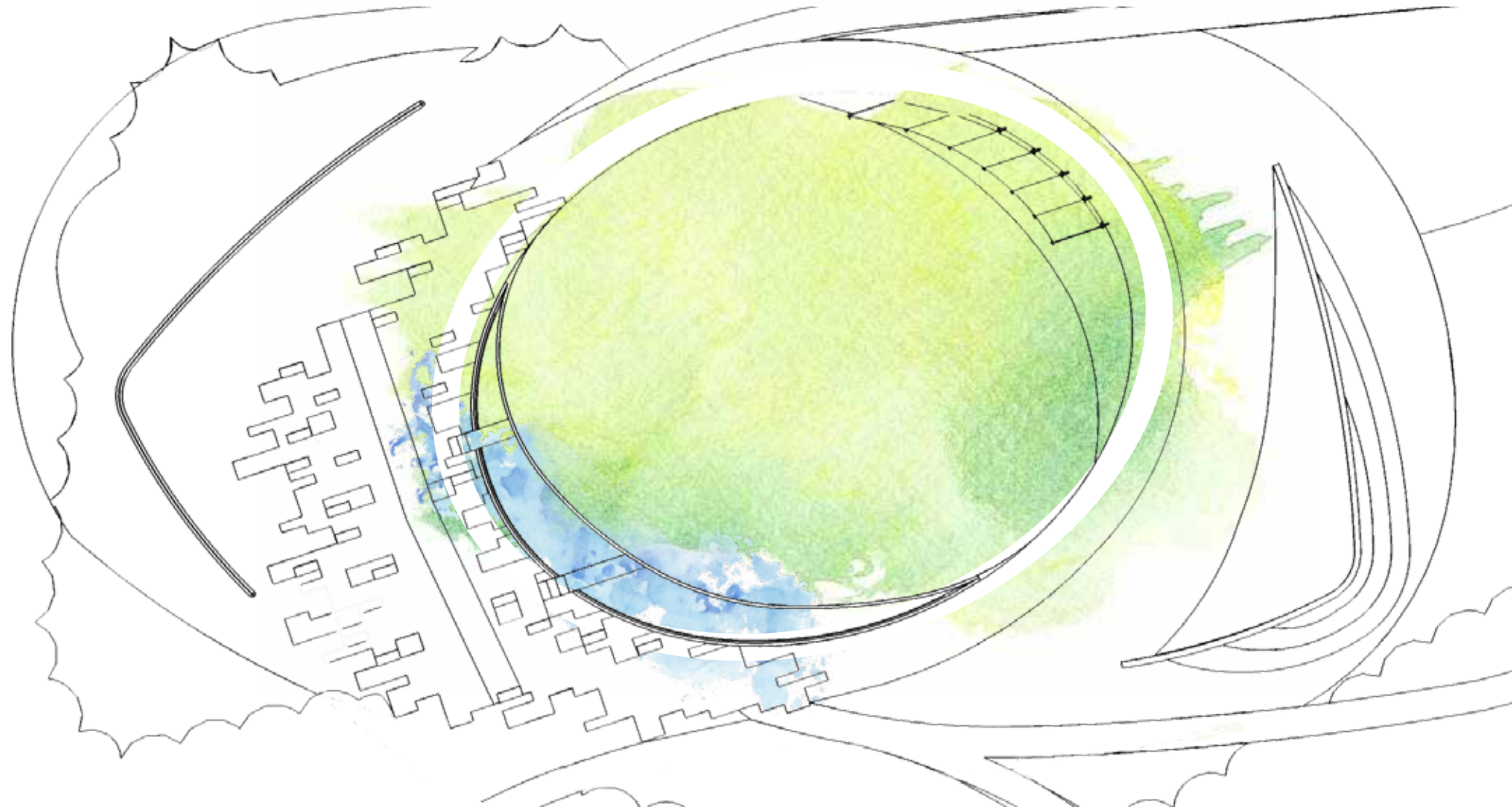


a place to reflect



A Reflection Pool The dark polished surface of the pool lets a skim of water flow across its surface and fall with thin a crescent basin. This pool provides a gentle sound that masks noise from the surrounding environs and offers a soothing and reflective quality of water for The Memorial Grove. It also creates privacy, for visitors and their quiet conversations. The polished surface will also provide reflection during times when the water is not running.

a reflection pool





a place to connect



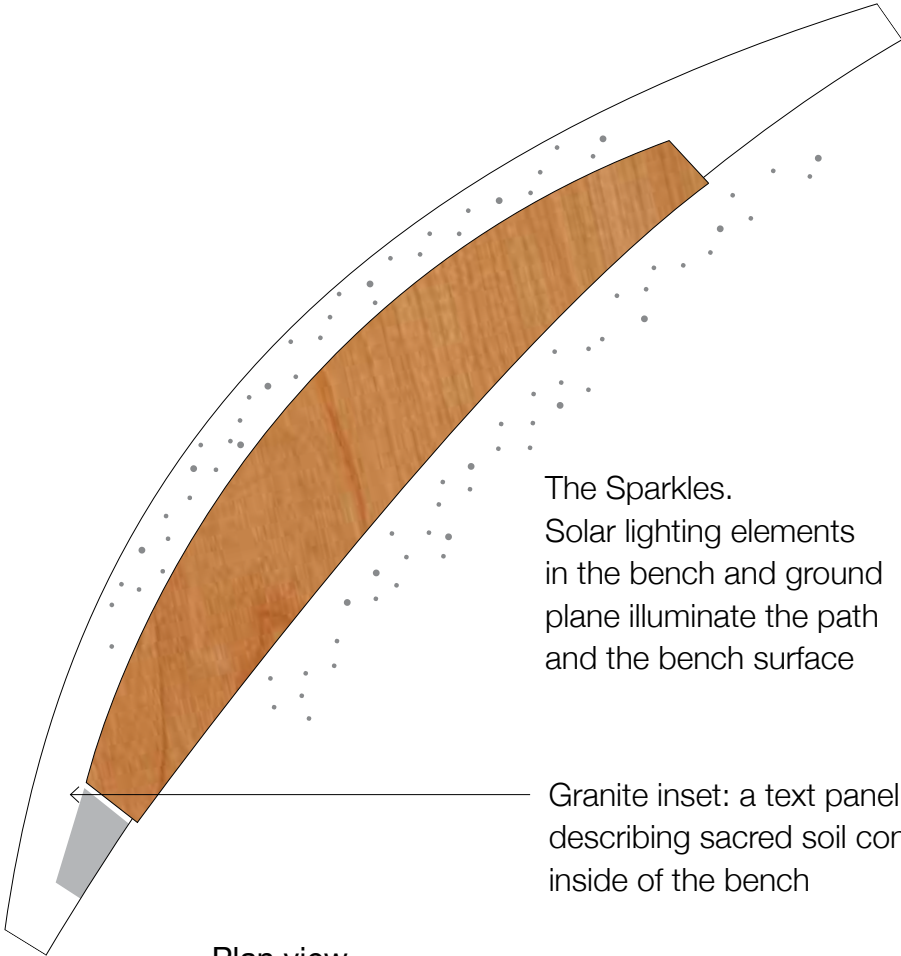
The Community Arbor + Belonging Bench This bench sits directly opposite The Memorial Grove and provokes an opportunity for conversation. The arbor structure creates an open shelter infused with colored glass beads overhead and so it will transform sunlight into hundreds of points of colored light – representing the outpouring of love and grief of the community. A crescent stone bench retains the sacred soil, with a text explanation on its surface. This Belonging Bench offers a place to sit and quietly connect with one another, or reflect back across The Breathing Field to the Memorial Grove.



belonging bench / community arbor

View looking south toward The Memorial Grove

belonging bench



The Sparkles.
Solar lighting elements
in the bench and ground
plane illuminate the path
and the bench surface

Granite inset: a text panel
describing sacred soil contained
inside of the bench

Plan view

“The town still sparkles.” This bench contains sacred soil—the remains of the expressions and outpouring of grief, sympathy and sorrow from the Sandy Hook and Newtown community.



the site + sustainability



Solar lighting will be integrated into the benches and arbor to provide ambient lighting. Natural stone and reclaimed hardwoods will be utilized for paving and benches within The Memorial. The site will be restored to support an enhanced natural experience through selective forest management and the introduction of native species. Impervious paving materials within the parking area will capture runoff and provide infiltration. We will explore the reuse of the pond water for the reflecting pool through a filtration system that is powered by solar or wind. Our goal is to integrate these high/low technologies and keep a small footprint on the land.



thank you.

We are a team deeply committed to collaboration. We believe in engaging fully with families and community throughout the design process. As a result, we consider this proposal a starting point for discussion. We would be so honored to work with you, and for you to create this important memorial.

