

# Designing a memorial place at the University of Twente

*Baukje Faber, Industrial Design Engineering, University of Twente, the Netherlands*

## Introduction and relevance

The University of Twente (UT), Figure 1, includes a 146-hectare campus with more than only educational and research facilities. However, something the UT still wished for was a memorial place, not only to commemorate but also to take a moment and think quietly for yourself. This wish also resonated with students and employees and so having such a place would add value for both. Besides, it would broaden the possibilities and resources at the UT, and so it would add value to the UT and the campus as a whole.



*Figure 1, 146-hectare campus of the UT*

To realize this, a working team consisting of two student union board members, a student psychologist, a father of a deceased student, three Campus & Facility Management employees and an Industrial Design student, was set up. The assignment for the student was to execute the entire design process which would result in a final design for the memorial place.

## Approach

In the thesis, the main-question "How will the final memorial place at the UT look?" is answered. This main-question consists of the sub-questions (1) "What is the exact wish of the team/UT for the memorial place?", (2) "Why do other memorial places look the certain way they do?", (3) "What are the boundaries that should be considered when making a memorial place?" and (4) "How will the students be commemorated?". The sub-questions were answered by several methodologies. These methodologies were meetings (with team members), questionnaires, literature/desk research, visiting and observing at memorial places, and in-depth interviews with several stakeholders.

The answer to sub-question 1 was a list of requirements and wishes. These requirements and wishes were used to guide the design process. For sub-question 2, four aspects were found that influenced the design of a memorial place: anti-vandalism design, material choice, visual (design) language, and the function of the memorial. Answering sub-question 3 resulted into more requirements and wishes. Sub-question 4 was divided into four more questions. (1) "What should be commemorated?". Deceased UT students and employees will be commemorated. (2) "How does that become clear?". An explanation sign near the memorial explains the message behind it. (3) "How do people want to

*commemorate?*". Frequent activities done to commemorate are lighting a candle, leaving things behind at the memorial place, sitting in silence or saying something (in front of a group). Lastly, (4) *"How can this be facilitated?"*. By facilitating the resources needed to do the above-mentioned actions, people can commemorate at the memorial place.

After the research, the main-question was answered by a structured design process. In the ideation phase, 4 basic forms (square, circle, triangle and organic), functions to personalize the memorial place and different meanings were ideated. The concept phase consisted of converging and further detailing of the concepts with potential. Also, the location was chosen, see Figure 2. The detailing phase consisted of converging as well, this time into 4 concepts. Those concepts were further detailed in two rounds. First, the main details (e.g., elevation, filets/chamfers). After that, more detailed ideation was done (e.g., lighting, mesh choice, colour). After the choice of this last detailed ideation, 5 final concepts were presented to the team. The team has chosen one final concept which was finalized in terms of measurements, material, explanation sign and the environment design.



Figure 2, The location for the memorial place



Figure 3, Final design for the memorial place on campus

## Result

The chosen final design was a 360° interaction memorial with 4 different shapes, see Figure 3. A moon, sun, butterfly, and wing were represented within the memorial. By doing so, 4 interaction possibilities were incorporated, and visitors could give their own meaning to it (by leaving things behind at a certain symbol). The 360° light ring stood for the complete (High Tech Human Touch) UT. The elevation could be seen as both a star and a flower. Due to the elevation build-up, the gravel, and the colour, the memorial fits well into the environment.

## Conclusion and recommendation

In conclusion, the main-question has been answered. The design of the memorial place was namely finalized in terms of memorial design, environment design, material, measurement (see Figure 4), and location.

The final design was made from concrete. Although concrete would be not expensive (and the UT had a concrete workshop), production and construction costs (also of the environment) could raise the costs of the memorial place. The exact calculation of the costs was beyond the scope of the thesis. It was advised that the UT further researches the exact costs and methods to realise the memorial.

To fix the memorial into the ground, pole(s) at the bottom of the memorial would be placed. However, the dimensions, location and number of poles were not determined, thus it was recommended to do so in the next stages.

Lastly, the memorial place had to be created, preferably by a student/employee. However, the UT was in charge of the process of finding someone. It was recommended to speed up this process in order to place the memorial on campus as soon as possible.

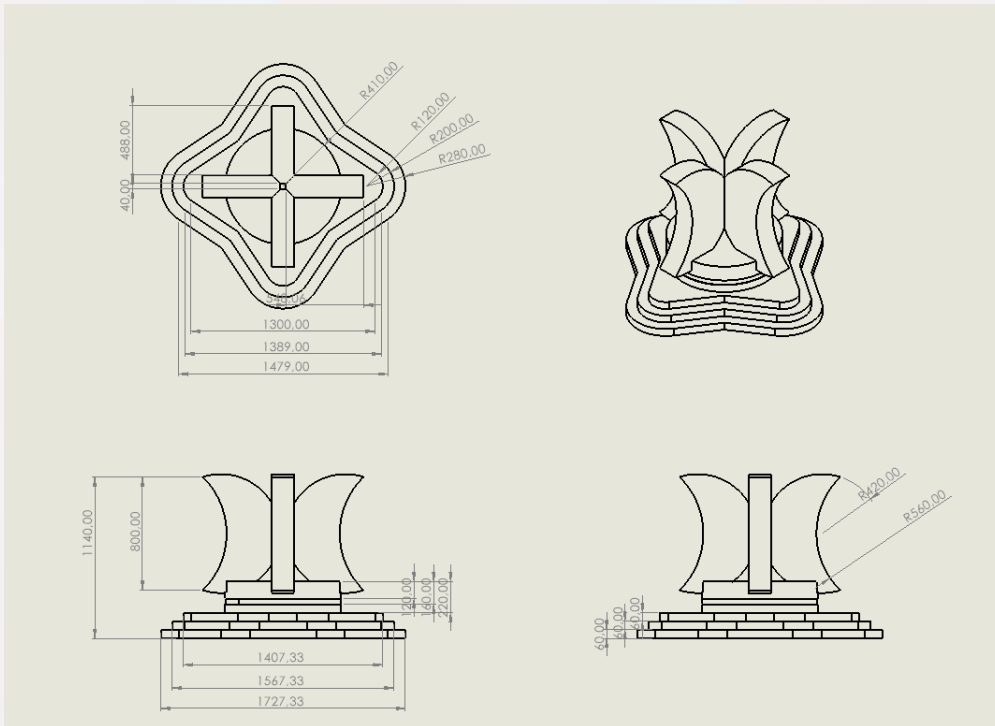


Figure 2, Measurements final design