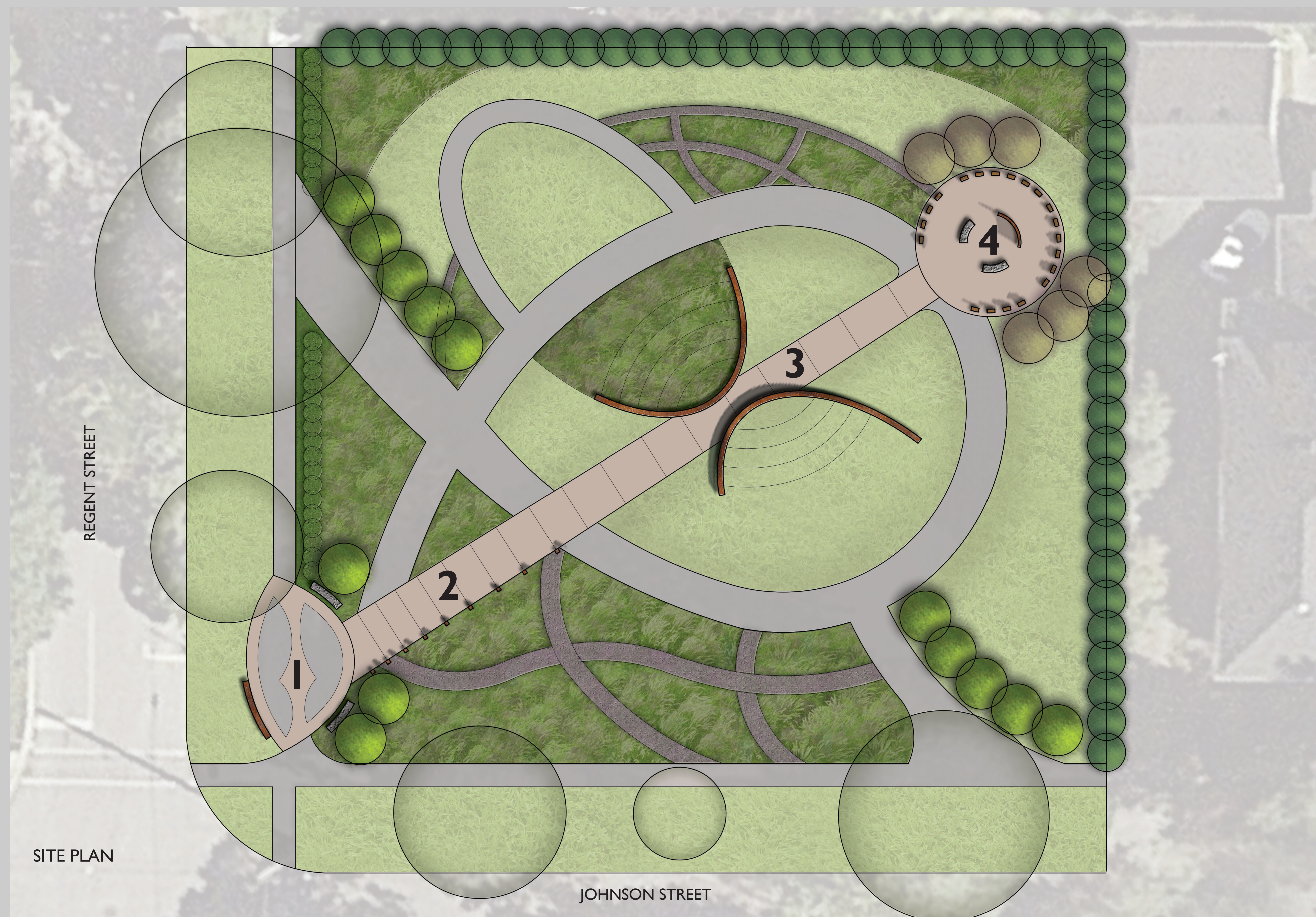


RITE OF PASSAGE



Our approach to the creation of Rite of Passage is one that encompasses the whole park space as opposed to creating a static piece of work for placement. The concept behind the art is based on an experience where the space engages and informs visitors. Rite of Passage represents the concept of passage, struggle, freedom and community for the black residents of Niagara-on-the-Lake. This narrative is supported by several linked elements that work in concert with each other to create a synergy of form and experience. Our goal for this art installation is to create a memorable 'sense of place'. The traditional idea of locating single statues or art pieces in a public park has limitations related to the static nature of placed art. The fundamental strength of Rite of Passage is the strong spatial and temporal user experience.

1 The user experience starts at the Park entry wall. This is the street edge profile for the park. The cor-ten steel wall displays the park name on the street side. On the inside of the wall there would be an information panel providing historical background. The wall is the terminus of several paths including the central spine that connects the park entry point with the main feature. The paved area in front of the wall is designed as a stylized Nyame Biribi Wo Soro (West African Adinkra symbol of hope). Seating is provided at the edge of the paved entry area.

2 The main path represents the concept of a passage to freedom. The path would be paved in a manner to distinguish it from all other park surfaces. Along the path, thin post markers on one side evoke the underground railway as they cast shadows across the path. These markers would also have integrated light sources to provide path illumination and increase the visibility of the park entrance after dark.

3 The passage to freedom cuts between two opposing arced steel walls that represent the barriers to freedom that the original black residents would have contended with on their journey. The pinch point allows visitors to engage with the concept of struggle and barrier to passage in the journey from slavery to freedom. The walls would be inscribed with key dates and information as outlined in the historical background document. Visitors would engage with the texts at the pinch point as it continued around the curve of each wall. The figures cut out of the ends of the walls represent freedom from bondage.

4 Moving past the opposing curved walls visitors move into the open area where the communal circle is located. This is the central feature of the design. The communal circle evokes various ideas of cultural community, group support and dialogue between people both past and present. The design of the abstracted forms allows the viewer to provide their own interpretations. In the center of the communal circle is an arced weathering steel wall that presents the words "UNYIELDING", "JOURNEY", "FREED" and "DREAMS" cut into the face of the steel. The squares cut into the steel represent the approximate locations of black owned and rented properties during the 19th century. The cut outs in the wall allow visibility to the backside. The top of the wall has a cutout of the North Star which was a beacon of hope for people travelling North to escape slavery. There are two places to sit in front of the wall. These seat structures also house the illumination sources for the wall.

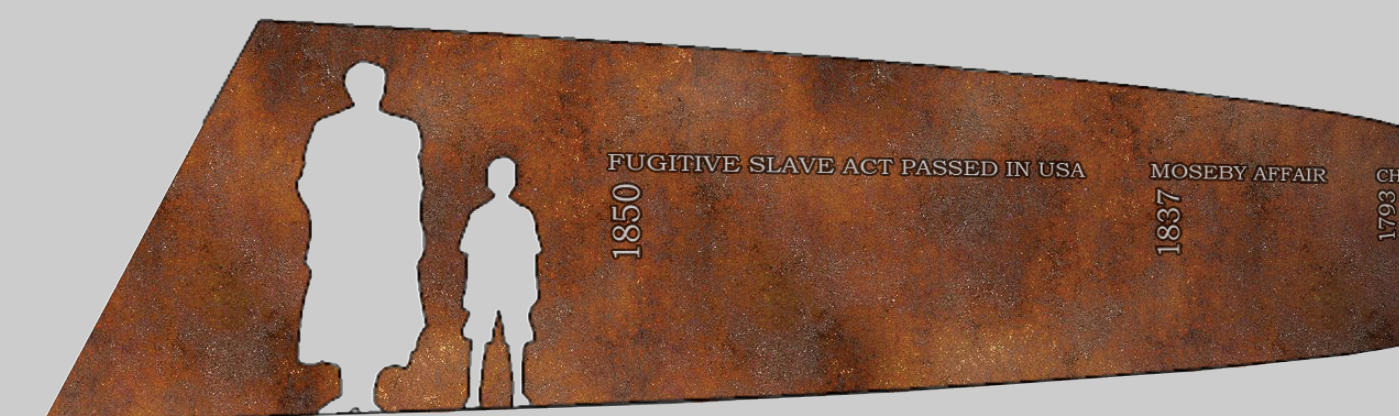


COMMUNAL CIRCLE



COMMUNAL CIRCLE FEATURE

Dates and historical references for steel wall:
 1793 – Chloe Cooley - Act to limit slavery
 1812 – Richard Pierpoint active, former Butlers Rangers
 1837 – Moseby Affair
 1850 – Fugitive Slave Act passed in USA
 1880 – Passing of John Waters



FIGURES AND HISTORICAL REFERENCES IN COR-TEN STEEL WALL (VIEWING WEST)

