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The Future is Open to the Past

Public Memorials in Evolving Urban Landscapes

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This paper examines decision-making about the location and design of new public memorials in three major world cities: London, Berlin, and New York. All three cities have remained foci of political and economic power over several centuries. The historical development of each city has been marked by numerous shifts in the spatial distribution of political power and its representation, and the installation of hundreds of memorials to a plethora of subjects throughout their built fabric. Each new memorial in these respective cities must find a place within a complex constellation of existing forms, settings, and values, and each new work also contributes to an ongoing redefinition of priorities regarding collective memory and identity. In each city, commemorative works have to fit within a constantly evolving landscape, potentially undermining their long-term effectiveness as markers of memory. Ongoing demand for new memorials in London, Berlin, and New York has created a need to develop strategies for regulating the themes, sites and designs of future memorial proposals. The paper examines the historical evolution of formal planning strategies and decisions in each city, in relation to the proposals and designs of individual new memorials, and the availability of suitable sites.

London, Berlin, and New York are all major world cities, with important economic, political and cultural roles. They have been foci of both national and supranational power over several centuries. These cities are also host to a large number of public memorials, which form complex geographies of memory. The term “public memorial” here refers to purpose-built, publicly-accessible urban settings whose function is to commemorate past people, events, places and concepts, but excludes historical arte-



facts and sites that have educational functions yet lack symbolic form. Public memorials represent and teach visitors about the histories of the respective cities, and of their nations.

The history of each of these cities has been influenced by a wide range of individuals and groups, and by many important events, both internal and external. There has also been much physical reorganisation of the urban landscapes themselves. Each new commemorative work in these respective cities thus emerges within a constantly evolving landscape, and must find a place within a complex constellation of existing forms, settings, and values. As public memorials themselves have taken on new subjects, locations and forms, each new work contributes to an ongoing redefinition of priorities regarding collective memory and identity.

This paper examines the ongoing development of principles and practices that have guided the location and design of individual public memorials in these three cities, the rationales shaping them, and some of the key points of conflict that have arisen in this decision-making. The paper's primary focus is on the last two decades, during which there has been a significant increase in demand for new memorials in each city, although it also looks back to other key periods where there was great demand for new memorials and significant shifts in their forms and subject matter, in particular the "memorial mania" of the later nineteenth century and the years following World Wars One and Two.¹ Over this time frame, ongoing demand for new memorials has prompted the development of official urban design concepts, planning strategies and policies to regulate the siting, design and theme of future memorial proposals. Despite these initiatives, "non-conforming" memorials also keep arising, due to a wide range of factors, including shifts in political power and aesthetic preferences, changes in the urban fabric and infrastructure, rediscovery of historical knowledge through archives and archaeology, and the desire to commemorate new events that do not easily fit into existing frames of reference. This last point links to the many actors that have become active in supporting new memorials, many of whom are new to the cities' memorial commissioning processes.

1. Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

The following summaries of commemorative planning and development in each case study city draw upon interviews with planners, formal planning and project briefing documents, parlia-

mentary decisions, wider public and professional discourse, spatial analysis of individual sites and their wider constellations, and participant observation of individual memorial sites and visitor behaviour within them. These summaries provide a basis for the ensuing comparison of new memorial types, themes, locations, links to place, and constituencies. These factors continue to open up new dimensions of commemoration and broader historical awareness and collective identity, and require constant revision of the physical and strategic plans that seek to manage commemoration and bring predictability to a process that is fundamentally unpredictable.

London

Over the past two millennia, London has developed around several different centres of power, most of which lie within the Borough of Westminster.² There are more than 400 memorials in London, and over 300 statues and memorials within Westminster alone.³ The installation of statues in public spaces in London had been regulated since 1854, with the introduction of the Public Statues (Metropolis) Act, under which all projects still require approval from the Office of Works. Much of the capital's commemoration is concentrated in a small triangle linking Parliament Square and Buckingham Palace to Trafalgar Square, via the Thames's Victoria Embankment, Whitehall, and Pall Mall. Westminster Council believes that this southwest corner of the Borough is now saturated, but 70% of applications for new memorials are in this area. The council have developed supplementary planning guidance that generally excludes new memorials in this area, emphasises the importance of site specificity, requires a minimum 10-year delay between an event and its commemoration, proposes temporary commemorations for urgent remembrance of major events, and suggests alternatives to freestanding sculpture.⁴ From 1996 to 2010 it also convened a Public Art Advisory Panel.

Very few among London's public memorials are located where tragic events occurred. Small memorials at the Tower of London and nearby Tower Hill remember their use for numerous executions, and there are several memorials at the sites of police shootings. Two recent memorials at Liverpool Street Station (2003, 2006) commemorate the arrival point of Jewish children rescued and resettled from Nazi Germany before World War Two.

2. Lawrence Vale, *Architecture, Power and National Identity*, 2nd edition (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008).

3. Peter Matthews, *London's Statues and Monuments* (Botley: Shire, 2012); City of Westminster, *Statues and Monuments in Westminster: Guidance for the Erection of New Monuments Supplementary Planning Document (Approved Version)*, no date.

4. City of Westminster, *Statues and Monuments*.



Some memorials are located at sites where famous individuals formerly lived or worked. But most London memorials recall heroes, victims and events from the far-flung corners of the British Empire. Four concentrated memorial precincts in Westminster exemplify this assemblage of imperial interests, three of them originally focusing on commemorating victories in the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-15, and subsequently accommodating later wars. Waterloo Place was created in 1816 by John Nash as the southern terminus of the Regent Street axis. Central memorials to the army Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York (1834), and the Crimean War (1861) are ringed by numerous individual statues, including not just Victorian military leaders, but also Florence Nightingale (1915), who was a nurse in the Crimea, and polar explorers Franklin (1866) and Scott (1915). Trafalgar Square (1845) and Parliament Square (1868) are both managed by the Greater London Authority, not Westminster Council. Trafalgar Square was laid out as a set piece, with three raised corner plinths occupied by statues of George IV and two generals, Admiral Nelson standing high atop a central column, and a 1675 statue of Charles I adjacent to the south. Being a major civic space, there are limited opportunities for further embellishments. The fourth plinth stood empty for more than 150 years. Since 1999, a range of new, temporary artworks have been commissioned for this plinth, which keep the square's meanings at play, leaving space open for alternative symbols and values. These have included a fibreglass statue of Air Chief Marshal Sir Keith Park, who led the Battle of Britain, after a permanent version was rejected. A smaller permanent version was subsequently installed in Waterloo Place. A prominent statue of Major-General Charles Gordon (1888), placed between the fountains in Trafalgar Square's very centre, was removed in 1943. Parliament Square contains statues of many former Prime Ministers, as well as Abraham Lincoln and former South African presidents Jan Smuts and Nelson Mandela, who is, exceptionally, still alive.

The first memorial built on Hyde Park Corner, a major traffic intersection between Green and Hyde Parks, was Constitution Arch (1830), commemorating Britain's victories over Napoleon. The arch was renamed for the victorious commander Wellington in 1846, and in 1883 it was moved to one side and rotated 120 degrees to allow road widening. World War One memorials to the Royal Artillery (1925) and Machine Gun Corps (1925) originally occupied small separate traffic islands, until they were brought together on the current widened roundabout in 1963. Four recent memorials commemorate the sacrifices of Commonwealth allies in both World Wars. Canada's war memorial (1992) is 500m east, behind the Canada Gate facing Buckingham Palace. The Memorial Gates (2002) immediately east of Hyde Park Corner commemorate the armed forces of the Indian subcontinent, Africa and the Caribbean. The Australian War Memorial (2003) takes the form of a curved perimeter water wall specifically designed to shield out the views, noise and fumes of the intersection's surrounding traffic. The New Zealand War Memorial (2006) occupies a berm with similar function on the opposite corner.

5. Stephen Heathorn, "The Civil Servant and Public Remembrance: Sir Lionel Earle and the Shaping of London's Commemorative Landscape, 1918–1933," *Twentieth Century British History*, 19, no. 3 (2008): 259–87.

6. Heathorn, "The Civil Servant."

The increasing speed and volume of London's street traffic had long affected memorial siting decisions, especially because no major road-widening schemes were developed in the city between 1905 and 1962. Police and council resistance to placing the Cenotaph (1920) and Earl Haig's statue (1928) in the middle of Whitehall had required Cabinet intervention. Trafalgar Square and Hyde Park Corner were two of the city's three busiest traffic sites, but they also remained the most popular sites for new memorial proposals.⁵ London's Animals in War Memorial (2004) was cleverly positioned in the wide median of Park Lane at a pedestrian crossing point into Hyde Park. In addition to traffic issues, the task of achieving aesthetically and thematically balanced allocation of memorial sites was complicated by the limited powers of the Office of Works and of the central government generally, the different extents of political power and connections behind different proposals, and memorial sponsors' general opposition to the compromises necessitated by co-ordinated compositions of memorials.⁶

Westminster Council's responsibility for evaluating new memorial proposals excludes the Royal Parks (St James's, Green, and Hyde Parks). Hyde Park in particular continues to accumulate new memorials, including those to Lady Diana (2004), the 7 July terrorist bombings (2009) and RAF Bomber Command (2012). The first case has some connection to place, sitting near Diana's former residence, Kensington Palace. Placing a permanent, collective memorial to the 7 July bombings in a relevant site posed significant challenges, because three of the terrorist bombs were detonated inside different underground train tunnels, a geography which is invisible from the surface. Immediately after the event, temporary, informal tributes of flowers and cards piled up in parks and in building doorways adjacent to these busy sites, but were quickly removed. Small permanent plaques were later installed at these sites, and it took several years to decide on the (unrelated) Hyde Park location. The Diana and 7 July memorials illustrate a wider thematic shift toward so-called "victim" memorials (instead of heroic monuments), and a loosely-corresponding design trend toward "spatial memorials," which occupy significantly more ground and invite visitors to spend time within a landscape setting, rather than just observing it from outside as they pass by. The Lady Diana Memorial Fountain is a low, abstract form integrated with the Hyde Park landscape, and is popular for paddling. The 7 July memorial is a closely-spaced field of 52 steel pillars



that visitors can walk between. Such intimate schemes are much less well suited to small, busy, exposed, high-traffic sites and to formal co-ordination with other pre-existing memorials than are relatively narrow, monolithic, traditional statues and cenotaphs.⁷

7. Doss, *Memorial Mania*; Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

These two examples also illustrate how quickly demand arises for permanent commemoration of the deaths of innocent victims, in comparison to war memorials like Bomber Command that are only built 67 years after the event, when most of the survivors have also died. Both victims' memorials were erected on non-council-controlled sites well before the minimum 10-year delay required by Westminster's memorial policy. A policy intended to put public symbols of remembrance into wider historical context seems somewhat ill-attuned to loved ones' more pressing personal needs to grieve.

Berlin

Berlin has been monumentally masterplanned several times during its 775-year history. The first major scheme was Schinkel's nineteenth century neoclassical masterplanning of the main east-west axis Unter den Linden, with its Brandenburg Gate (1791), Neue Wache (1816), which was originally a memorial to victory over Napoleon, and equestrian statue of Frederick the Great (1851). A competing cross-axis was subsequently constructed in 1901: a "Victory Avenue" lined with 32 statues of noblemen that provided a southern approach to the Siegessäule or "Victory Column" (1873) at its original site on Königsplatz, where the Reichstag (1894) also stood.

The Soviet Army erected two prominent memorials to their fallen in Berlin immediately after 1945, and a memorial to the Berlin Airlift was installed outside Tempelhof Airport in 1951. However, most of the city's post-war memorials date from after the 1991 decision to make Berlin capital of the reunified Germany, and most of these focus on the darker aspects of national history, not triumphs. Many of these darker memorials are located at sites somehow connected with the historic events, and many of these are in the city centre. For example, a memorial to Georg Elser was installed near Hitler's former Berlin bunker, although Elser attempted to assassinate Hitler in Munich. One memorial to murdered communist leader Rosa Luxemburg exists near the

former communist party headquarters; another is adjacent to the Tiergarten canal where the Nazis clandestinely killed and dumped her. The memorial underneath Berlin's Bebelplatz (1995) remembers the Nazi book burnings that occurred there, and the Memorial at Grunewald railway station (1991-98) commemorates its use for the deportation of Jews during the Holocaust. Memorials to those who died trying to cross the Berlin Wall during the partitioning are mostly located on the wall's former alignment.

Within the last decade, several major new memorials have been built in central Berlin on sites unrelated to the national crimes being recognised. These are predominantly memorials to various victim groups of Nazi persecution. The most high-profile is the two-hectare Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe (2005), which lies near the Brandenburg Gate between the Parliamentary Quarter and the leisure precinct Potsdamer Platz. A memorial to Nazi persecution of homosexuals was installed across the road in 2008 and a memorial to persecuted Sinti and Roma next to the Reichstag in 2012. But these memorials' thematic links to the seat of government are weak. More importantly, the selected sites offered high visibility to passing tourists and were available for the government to donate. This area had always remained unbuilt and in government ownership because it was the rear gardens of the government ministries on Wilhelmstrasse, and because after World War Two it lay within the wall zone. What these site selections thus illustrate is not a comprehensive plan, but isolated, pragmatic responses to opportunities. Coordinated masterplanning has been undertaken for commemorations along the former Berlin Wall zone, but in this case the site itself provided physical and temporal continuity, and even here, the presence of the (unrelated) Holocaust memorial, and the construction of private houses on land that has reverted to its historical owners, illustrate the difficulties of upholding a larger commemorative space concept in a city that has been spatially and symbolically destroyed and reorganised numerous times over the last two centuries.⁸

8. Vale, *Architecture, Power*; Jennifer Jordan, *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2006).

Germany's National Monument to Freedom and Unity, currently under construction, is a unique example in Berlin of a recent celebratory memorial. It is prominently placed in the historical centre of Berlin authority, near the former royal palace and GDR parade ground. There are different views about the appropriateness of installing this new memorial on its historically-laden site,



which is the pedestal of a former “national memorial” to Kaiser Wilhelm, emperor of Germany’s First Reich. The *Linke* (Left) Party argues it “gives the pretence of a fatal national historical continuity, depicting German history not as oppositional and contradictory, but rather as guided by reason to the present.”⁹

Berlin does not now have a masterplan for future memorials, or a set of preferred sites. Options abound, because the city has many wide streets, plazas and parks, and much vacant land. The theme, siting, and design of each individual new public memorial in Berlin must go through extensive public and parliamentary debate. Many analysts argue this intensive process itself is a very important part of the necessary remembering and reckoning with the past.¹⁰ The German constitution gives Berlin’s city-state government prime responsibility for approval of memorials, although the German parliament’s policy for the development and management of commemorative sites encourages the lead roles to be assumed by non-governmental agencies, foundations, and citizens’ initiatives, ideally in partnerships.¹¹ Like much of Germany’s political constitution, this approach reflects a desire to avoid the repetition of Germany’s particular history of centralised authority and propaganda.

In Berlin, temporal, spatial and thematic coordination of memorials through broader plans and policies is difficult to achieve, and not necessarily desired. Differences in the scale, centrality and prominence of the city’s numerous memorials stimulates debates about the relative importance, suffering and political clout of various victim groups. There are also questions about victims and aspects of history that still remain invisible. The number of memorials also raises the spectre of an “inflation of memory,” where each individual memorial and the events they commemorate begin to lose their impact as the city centre continues to stockpile what has been called Germany’s “arsenal of guilt.” The increasing numbers of proposals have hastened calls for a decentralisation of new memorials in Berlin.¹²

New York City

New York has over 300 memorials. New York’s city government does not initiate new memorial proposals. Commemorative initiatives are brought forward by non-governmental parties

9. Ausschuss für Kultur und Medien (22. Ausschuss), *Beschlussempfehlung und Bericht... zu dem Antrag... Errichtung eines Freiheits- und Einheits-Denkmal*, Deutscher Bundestag Drucksache 16/6974, November 7, 2007, author’s translation

10. James Young, “Memory and Monument after 9/11,” in *The Future of Memory*, edited by Rick Crownshaw, Jane Kilby and Antony Rowland, (New York: Bergahn Books, 2010) 77-92. Jochen Spielmann, “Der Prozess ist genauso wichtig wie das Ergebnis. Fußnoten zu Kunst-Wettbewerben als Kommunikationsformen der Auseinandersetzung,” in *Der Wettbewerb für das ‘Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas’: Eine Streitschrift*, Neue Gesellschaft für Bildende Kunst, (Berlin, Verlag der Kunst, 1995), 128-45

11. Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, *Fortschreibung der Gedenkstättenkonzeption des Bundes: Verantwortung wahrnehmen, Aufarbeitung verstärken, Gedenken vertiefen*, Deutscher Bundestag Drucksache 16/9875, June 19, 2008.

12. Petra Bornhöft, “Commemoration Saturation: Can Berlin Handle Any More Memorials?,” *Spiegel Online*, November 5, 2007.

and are privately funded. Most works are proposed for sites managed by the city's Parks and Recreation Department, and these are initially vetted by the Director of Art and Antiquities, on the basis of thematic appropriateness, formal compatibility with their surrounding landscape, potential impact on park use, aesthetic merit, quality of workmanship, and adequate safety and maintenance arrangements. Final legal approval for a memorial is then determined on aesthetic grounds by the Public Design Commission (formerly the Art Commission of New York), whose peer-nominated members include a range of design professionals and curators.¹³ A committee of experts had already been set up to advise on monuments proposed for city parks in 1873, and the PDC/ACNY has existed since 1898.¹⁴ Many memorials are crowded within Manhattan's few major parks and plazas, and both agencies are very cautious about further intensification at these sites. These procedures do not apply to sites managed by non-City agencies, notably Battery Park City and the World Trade Center.

In spite of New York's intensive urban development, several recent public memorials have been developed on sites to which they have an intrinsic historical connection. The African Burial Ground National Monument was initiated in 1991 when excavation work for a new high-rise federal government office building uncovered the remains of 419 people. Archaeological investigation revealed an expansive 2.5 Hectare historic site outside the defensive wall of the former New Amsterdam settlement, where perhaps 20,000 free and enslaved Africans had been interred between 1626 and 1794.¹⁵ The office building's plans were modified, and one quarter of the site was left vacant for a permanent memorial and for re-interment of excavated remains.¹⁶ The National September 11 Memorial (2011) occupies the footprints of the destroyed World Trade Center towers. A broad civic coalition is currently seeking to build an on-site memorial to 143 workers killed in the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire.¹⁷

Most other new memorials in New York have not carved out new spaces for themselves within the extant urban fabric. They have generally been incorporated into new or redesigned public open spaces, in particular those that have been created on landfill. In Battery Park City, examples include the New York City Police Memorial (1997) and the Irish Hunger Memorial (2002). Both are expansive landscape works. Some local residents groups have

13. Personal interview with Jonathan Kuhn, Director of Art and Antiquities, New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, November 1, 2011; New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, *Guidelines for Donating Works of Art to the City of New York/Parks & Recreation*, updated February 2010.

14. Michele Bogart, *The Politics of Urban Beauty: New York and its Art Commission* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

15. http://www.africanburialground.gov/ABG_Main.htm

16. Michele Bogart, "Public Space and Public Memory in New York's City Hall Park," *Journal of Urban History* 25 (1999): 226-57; Sarah Katz, "Redesigning Civic Memory: The African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan," unpublished masters thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2006.

17. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Triangle_Shirtwaist_Factory_fire, accessed January 23, 2013.



complained that such memorials for mourners and tourists are increasing at the expense of open space for recreation by local families.¹⁸ Battery Park, at Manhattan's southern tip, is a ten-hectare site containing 21 separate memorials, including national memorials to the Eastern (Atlantic) World War Two campaign, the Merchant Marine, and the Korean War. Here, too, open space needs have been compromised, and the park is now being substantially reorganised to improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation and provide a large open lawn for public events. Eleven memorials are being relocated; the proposed plan arranges them as nodes along a regular perimeter promenade that is separated from the park proper by a low wall and cycleway. The memorials will be clustered thematically as "Explorers," "Defenders," and "Mariners."¹⁹

18. Julie Iovine, "Memorials Proliferate in Crowded Downtown," *New York Times*, March 13, 2003.

19. City of New York Parks and Recreation and The Battery Conservancy, "The Reconstruction of the Battery Park and Perimeter Bikeway: Concept Submission," 27 October, 2009 and "Preliminary Submission," 17 April, 2010 and 8 June, 2010, New York City Design Commission archives file 1371.

New York's open space management plans had to account for very expansive temporary commemorations of the September 11 attacks in 2001, which spread well beyond the attack site into the everyday public realm. Here the focus was on accommodating and managing the behaviour of mourners and other visitors, through access protocols, rulebooks, signs, guards, and demarcation of sites where informal memorials were permissible. Ephemeral commemorations include "Tribute in Light," on the anniversary of the attacks, when searchlights reproduce the outlines of the destroyed towers. These kinds of commemorations show that not all planning has to promote permanence, because people's memories and feelings are strongest at certain times. Planning can occur in time as well as in space, to optimise shared use of space over time; and it can engage the ephemeral and intangible. The informal commemorations of September 11 show that temporary memorials can have a lasting impact on memory and the meaning of place.²⁰

20. Jonathan Kuhn, personal interview.

Central Park is much-desired as a site for memorials, due to its centrality, openness, popularity of use, and beauty, and the Parks and Recreation Department has always resisted new incursions. Nevertheless, the park contains approximately 20 memorial statues and a World War One infantry memorial. In addition, major plazas at the park's four corners are occupied by prominent memorials to explorer Columbus (1892), Civil War General Sherman (1903), the battleship USS Maine (1913), and at the northern end, in Harlem, much more recent commemorations of African-American musician Duke Ellington (1997) and statesman and former slave Frederick Douglass (2010).

Analysis

By their nature, individual memorials are reasonably intransigent. These case studies show that in spite of great urban change, focal commemorative precincts also persist within cities, provided that the nations they represent retain legitimacy. New memorials have continued to be placed in and around New York's Battery and Central Parks and four key precincts in London, all of which have existed for over 150 years. These additions have extended and refined narratives of national identity, for example through the inclusion of African-Americans and Commonwealth allies. In Berlin, because of the absence of an overriding national imaginary, anti-memorials have taken centre stage; the nation is remembered negatively in terms of what it should not have done.

21. Savage, *Monument Wars*; Karen Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

22. Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

23. Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, *Fortschreibung der Gedenkstättenkonzeption*.

24. Doss, *Memorial Mania*; Charles Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 4. (1986): 688-719. Nicholas Watkins, Frances Cole and Sue Weidemann, "The War Memorial as Healing Environment: The Psychological Effect of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Vietnam War Combat Veterans' Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms," *Environment and Behavior* 42 (2010): 351-75.

25. Savage, *Monument Wars*.

Many new memorials, especially in Berlin, are "victims" memorials.²¹ Such projects can seldom be incorporated into larger commemorative assemblages because they are usually thematically at odds with the kinds of overarching, positive narratives of culture, national identity and heroism under which statues of prominent individuals can be gathered. The *Linke's* critique of Germany's National Monument to Freedom and Unity emphasises that Berlin's memorial landscape *should* have formal and spatial discontinuities. Berlin illustrates that the promoters of a victims' memorial seldom even want to see their suffering compared to that of other victim groups.²² Relativising the Holocaust is specifically proscribed by a German parliamentary ruling.²³

"Victims" memorials are often of the "spatial" type: architectural and landscape settings that provide a therapeutic, existential sense of refuge for mourners.²⁴ Examples include London's Diana fountain, Berlin's Holocaust Memorial and New York's Irish Hunger Memorial. In comparison to the free-standing monoliths and bronze statues that preceded them, it is physically difficult to integrate such schemes within dense urban streetscapes or complex commemorative assemblages, because each memorial creates its own large, discrete setting, with specific entry and viewing points.²⁵ Such spatial memorials thus tend either to be introduced as part of a wider urban masterplan (like the National September 11 Memorial at the World Trade Center), or to opportunistically take over excess open spaces. New York shows the distinctive advantage of waterfront infill as an oppor-



tunity to expand a city's commemorative landscape, provided that the memorials' designs contribute to open space objectives. In contrast, war memorials have mostly retained traditional forms such as statues, temples, obelisks and arches, and have thus continued to fit into existing commemorative precincts. In London's tight streets and roundabouts, such memorials have stood their ground in the face of growing, accelerating automobile traffic. Hyde Park Corner has continued to expand as a commemorative precinct through the rearrangement of traditional memorials and the subsequent utilisation of "spatial" memorials.

Memorials in these three historic cities sometimes occupy sites directly connected with the persons or events being commemorated, although not as often as one might think, considering the amount of history that has happened in each city. Berlin's Bebelplatz has a specific, historical connection to its site outside Humboldt University, and could not easily have been assigned a different location. Official recognition of governmental culpability for a past crime greatly enhances the prospects that the memorial to that crime's victims will obtain a prominent or historically significant site, as illustrated by Berlin's numerous memorials to Nazi crimes and New York's African Burial Ground. Such commitments constrain the planning options for future memorials. Old memorials are seldom removed, although they are sometimes rearranged or relocated to improve amenity for pedestrians or vehicles.

Given the increasing demand for memorials, finding adequate new spaces is a significant concern for city councils. The 10-year delay required by Westminster council helps to manage demand, as do requirements for applicants to cover future maintenance costs, aesthetic review by experts and parliamentarians, and the sublimation of some initiatives into temporary installations. A complementary response is to increase the supply of attractive sites, through the expansion or reorganisation of existing precincts, as with Hyde Park Corner and the intersections at the north end of Central Park. Berlin's former wall zone provided space for a major memorial unrelated to the wall's history. A localised terrorist attack in New York produced a space where that event could later be commemorated. But in the post-war era, no major new commemorative precincts were created in the central areas of these three cities, and this is a significant reason that their planning agencies struggle to meet demand.

26. George Orwell, *1984* (Fairfield, Iowa: First World Library, 2004), 46.

27. Benjamin Barber, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 2013)

The slogan of the ruling party in Orwell's *1984* was "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."²⁶ But commemorative representation in democratic countries like the USA, UK and Germany is not determined by either national or city-wide governments. The themes of recent memorials in all three cities highlight that commemorative projects do not only represent the powerful. The rapid proliferation of memorials in recent years is partly due to the increasing fragmentation of urban identity, with citizens making claims on behalf of different collectivities and different histories. Many new public memorials in all three cities commemorate tragic events. Such events are not often celebratory and not necessarily unifying, and decisions about the siting and design of such memorials are, almost by necessity, often emotional and political. The kinds of political and physical frameworks that exist for decision-making about public memorials are thus important. Among the three cities, New York has actually had the strongest continuity of authority and judgment regarding memorial development. This is perhaps in part because it is not a national capital and thus, not subject to the same changing political demands as are the seats of national governments.²⁷ It is also a consequence of vesting power in the Parks and Recreation Department, which has taken a wide and long-term view of the amenity of public artworks, and the PDC, which has at least in principle held a broad, independent view of historical significance. By comparison, planning for commemoration in London is rather decentralised and accommodating. Responsibilities are divided amongst the Borough of Westminster, City of London, Greater London Authority, and Royal Parks. The former agencies have continued to uphold a discourse of proud nationhood, which has only recently been extended to commemorations of World War Two and Commonwealth alliances. The latter agencies tend to have more permissive, inclusive and even experimental attitudes toward commemorative sites, themes and forms. The result is a highly differentiated commemorative landscape. It is perhaps unsurprising that commemoration in Berlin does not follow an overall formal framework, given numerous past shifts in the city's politics, historical consciousness, and urban structure; post-war Germany's mistrust of centralised control; and the desire for detailed, participatory, case-specific debate about each new memorial proposal. Berlin's history is not very rigidly controlled, and the authorities do not want to preclude options for its future commemorations. But problems



with recent memorials in Berlin, related to crowding, relativism, and the historical resonances of selected sites, suggest that commemorative frameworks and guidelines are perhaps needed in Berlin for very practical planning reasons: to manage supply and demand, to set some priorities, and to manage conflicts.

These three city case studies illustrate that tensions will always exist between the commemorative interests of various groups, and between commemoration and the other changing uses of public space. Many memorials endure longer than their constituencies, people's understandings of the past keep changing, and allowances have to be made for the demands of tragic events which have not yet taken place. The decision to keep the fourth plinth of London's Trafalgar Square open, rather than lock it down with another triumphant permanent monument, shows one way that commemorative planning can remain open to future themes and to forms of remembrance that are yet to be imagined.