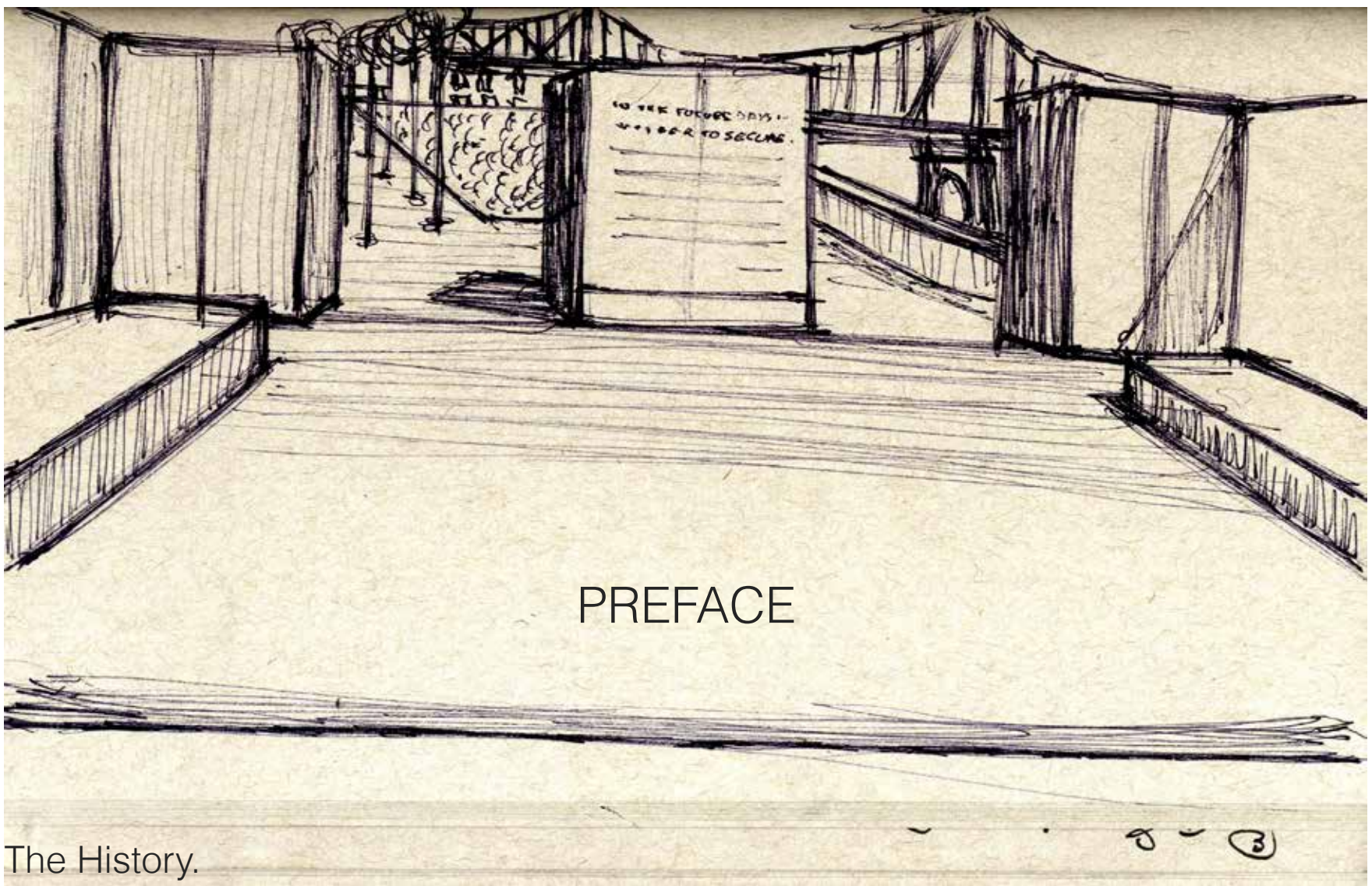


FOUR FREEDOMS PARK: Site Analysis





The History.

The Franklin D. Roosevelt "Four Freedoms Park" is an exceptional place located at the tip of Roosevelt Island, in dead center of the East River. Accessed from the Aerial Ferry, the Freedoms Park is the only memorial to the former president, in his home State of New-York.

And as the Man himself, the story of this park is quite amazing in itself.

In 1960, New-York city Mayor John Lindsay had a plan for the reinvention of Roosevelt Island, then called Welfare Island. Giving to execute this project, one of the most famous architects of the 20th Century, Louis Kahn, developed drawings for this monumental and modernistic narrow stretch of Land. Unfortunately, the economic crisis of the 1970' put a stop to those ideas, and the Architect passed away, making the project sink into oblivion.

It was only 40 years later, in 2010, that the project was finally started again, following Kahn's drawings, and recently opened for the public to enjoy.

The Project.

As Interior design students, we learn how to develop site analysis of our spaces. Mostly Interior spaces, we discover how the study of spaces can inform us a lot on how it is used by humans. Matters of circulation, occupation, activities, and successful and unsuccessful aspects, are drawn through diagrams, which we also use to understand how a modern design is apprehended and used by people.

Both as a young Design student, and now as an Environmental Theorist, I was interested in applying these understandings and observation to a larger, and opened air space. Following in parallel concepts driven from a class I have been taking, "Politics of Public Space", and especially from William Whyte's "The Social Life of Small Urban Space", this Park came as a perfect occasion to apply White's observations, and understand the functioning of the Four Freedoms Park, according to its architectural design.

The Method.

In order to do so, I made two trips to the island.

In the first, a beautiful Spring Sunday, the park was swarming with tourists, locals, families, groups and individuals, joggers, dog masters, artists, etc. In this first visit, I merely contemplated myself of observation, making mental notes of ideas that started rising, and, as most people, I enjoyed the excruciatingly unique landscape and serenity that offered the Park.

In this mayhem of activities, it was also hard for me to understand specific performances of the space, for in that day and weather, the whole space was packed, already proving its success, and ability to perform for various programs.

In my second visit, a gloomy May Sunday, a storm was on the forecast, which I believed to be a favor, for less people would probably be there, offering me the time to understand the specifics of the space. Using Zeisel's method of observing behaviors through mapping, I created a multitude of maps, that over the course of a couple of hours, started to form patterns of occupations.

For this Site Analysis Summary, I have selected a pair of maps for six categories which I believe to start indicating how people use the park according to different groups of users.

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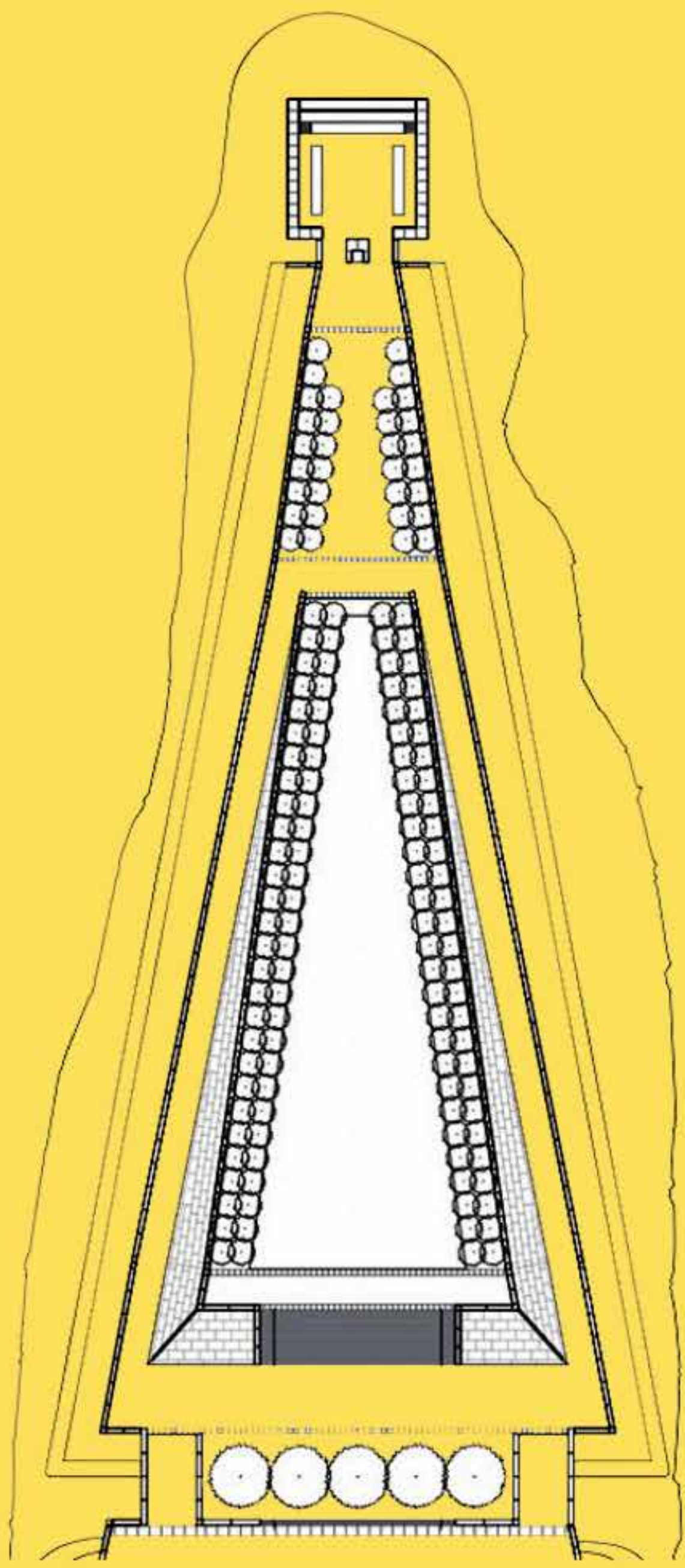
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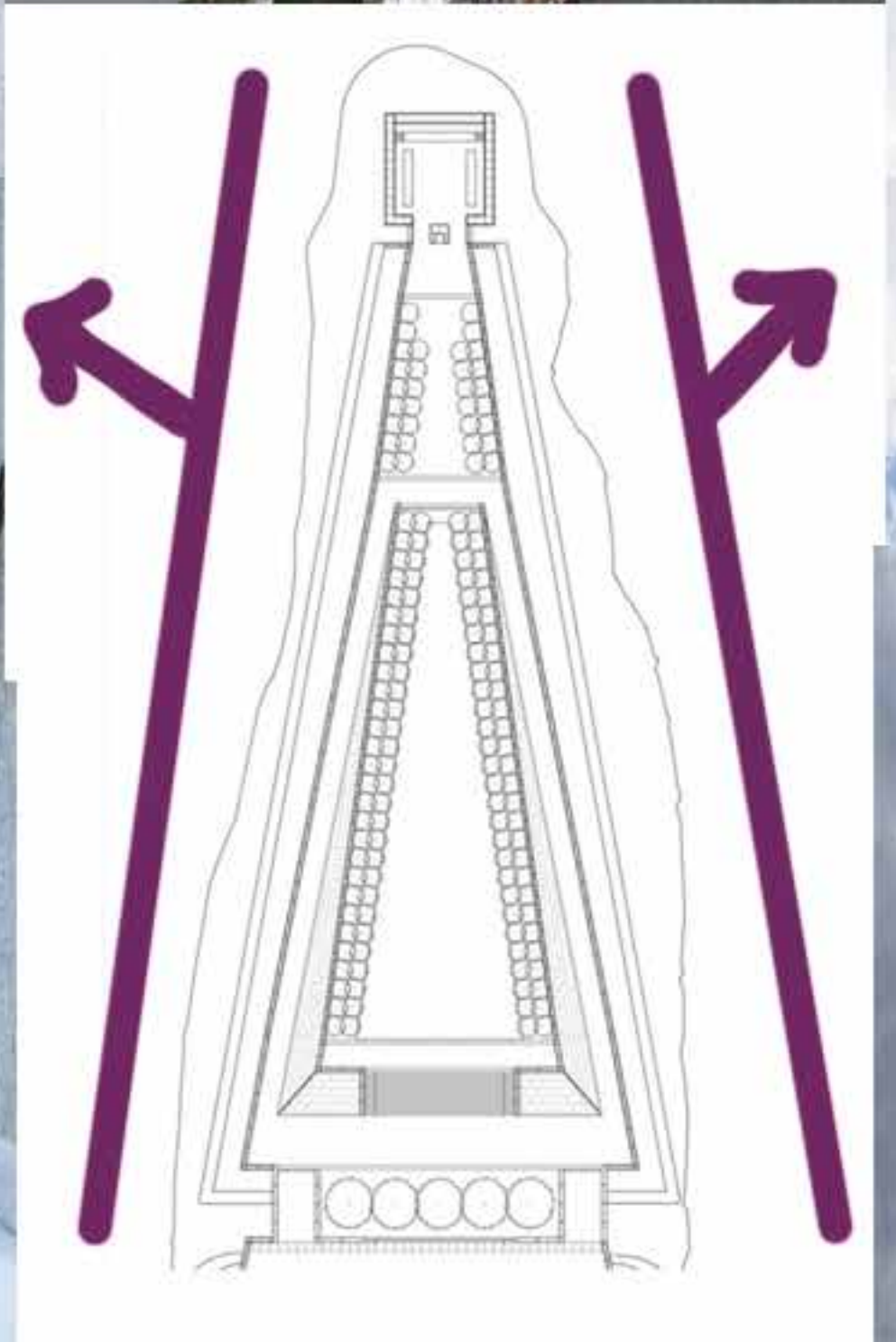
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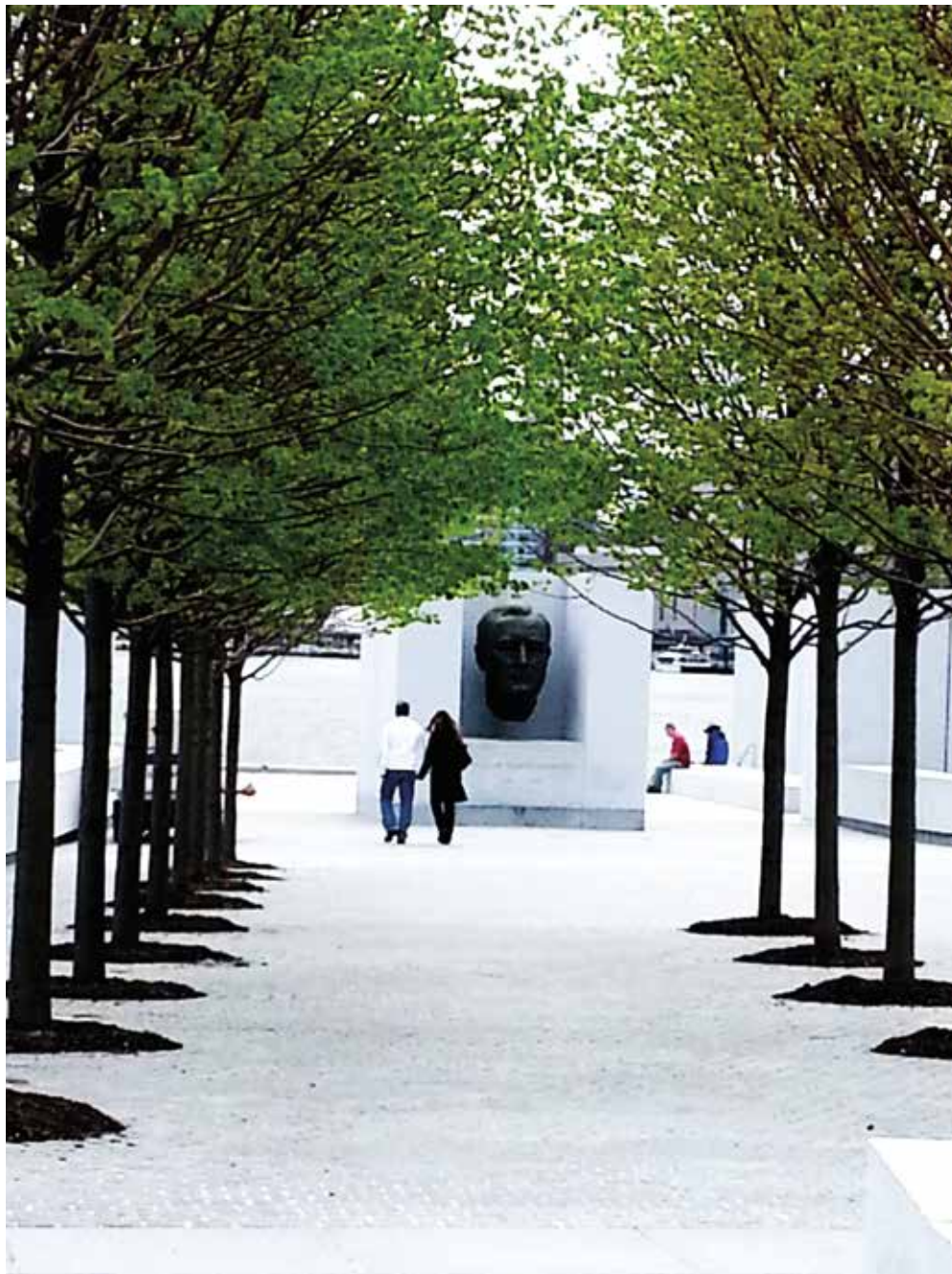
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The Weather, first factor of occupancy.

As a contrast to my first experience of the Park, under a beautiful blue and sunny sky, my second visit was under a stormy sky, thick grey clouds and powerful wind forming an atmospheric anxiety. The rain was not here, but it could be have been any minutes before a powerful shower.

For the first few hours after my arrival to the island, the park was as mysterious as the weather. Few people where present, and moving quickly around the park, as if to just see and experience the views of the location. This scarce occupation allowed me to follow different programs, and understand various activities taking place.

Nevertheless, the stormy sky cleared out, and the weather became gorgeous. Quickly, people swarmed in, and the Park became very active. The pace of people slowed down, and all areas started to fill. This sudden contrast of quantity enabled me to witness to distinct use and circulation in the space, according to the weather.

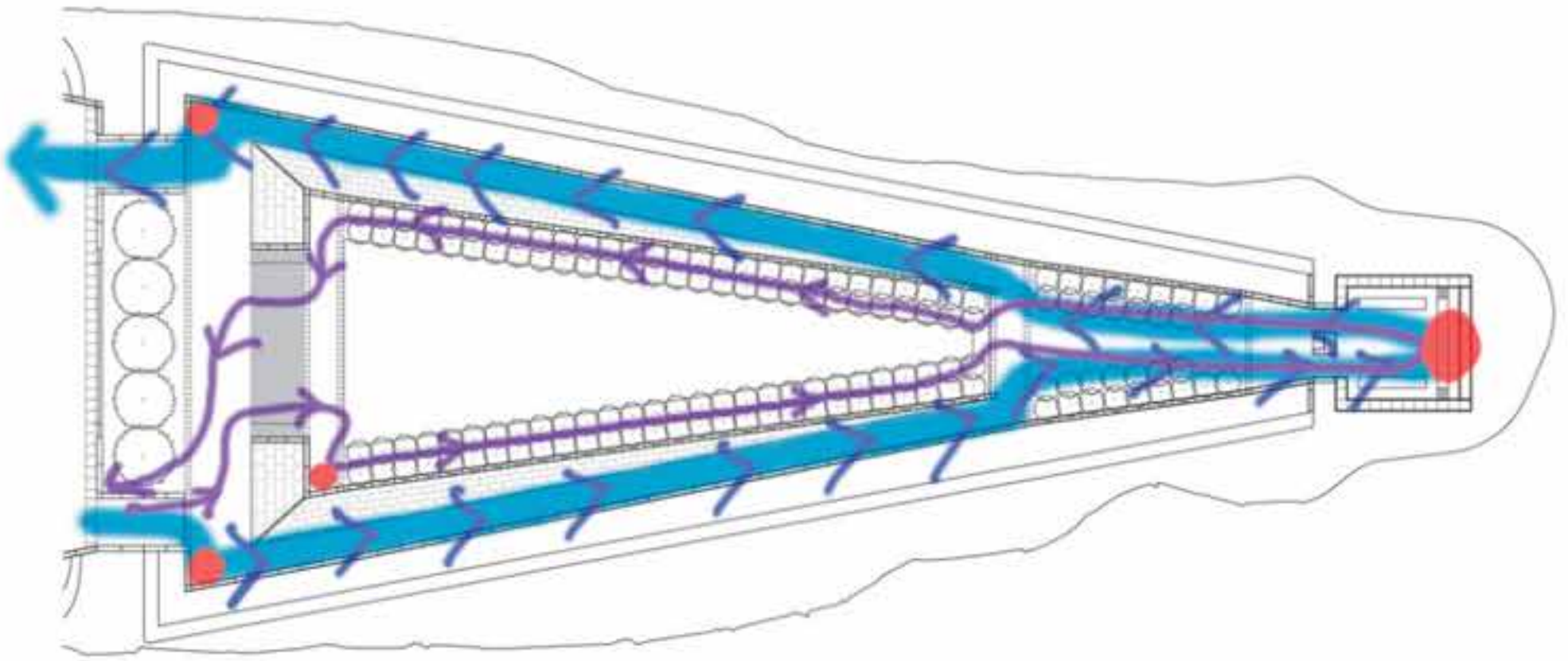
Cloudy Weather.

Under the tumultuous sky, the park is relatively empty. People come for quick visits, often just circling around the park, looking at the various sceneries offered, and leaving. The central garden is barely walked upon, perhaps beside a kid playing.

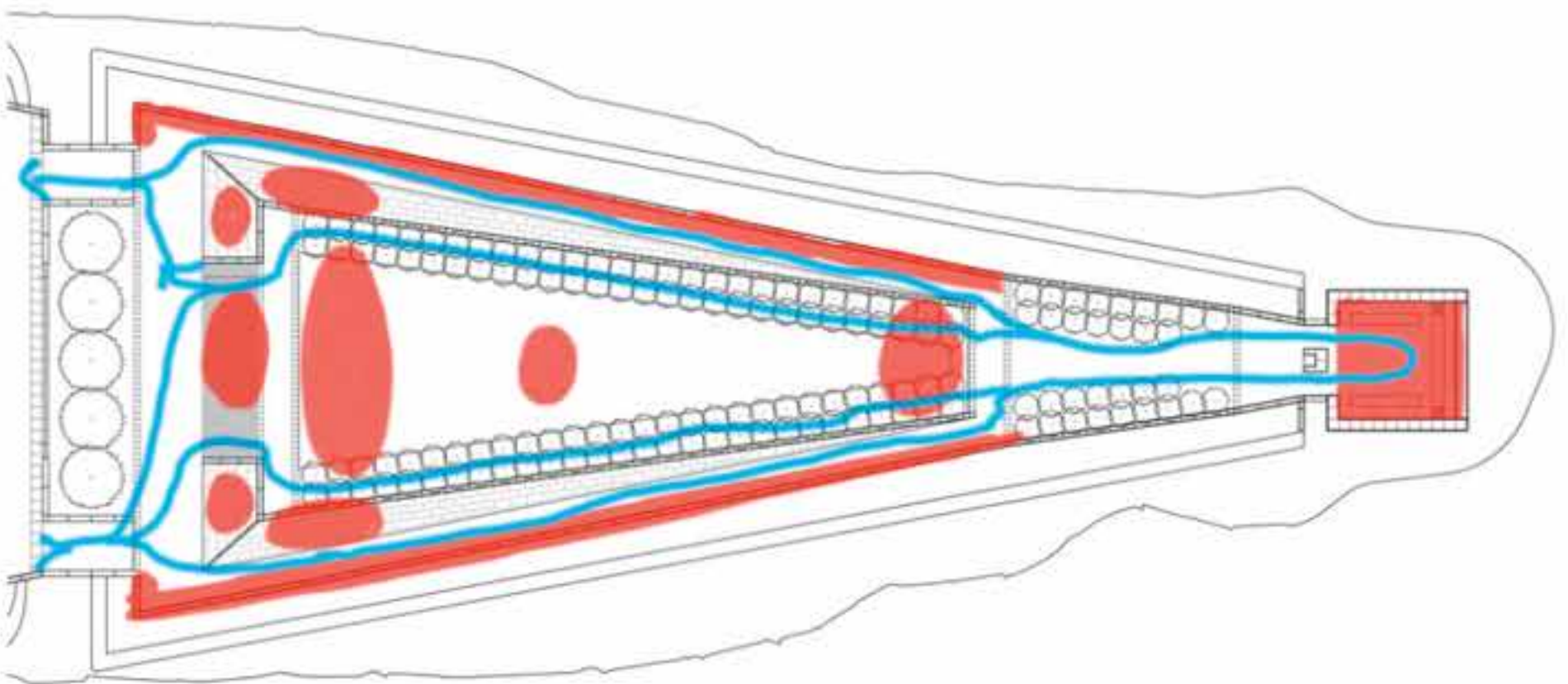
The promenade and the open-air room become the most used areas, and the park becomes more of a transit space rather than a staying point.

Sunny Weather.

As the weather is clear, the whole space "slows down". The garden is now used, where groups sit together, and children play, alone, together, or with their relatives. On the sides of the pathways, which remain circulation devised (though people will still stop and linger in these long stretches of path), the massive stone balustrade become seating for people. This double function recalls White's ideas about successful seating design in open-air public spaces. Corners also become prized points, and the Room is packed with people, sitting on the side benches or the "infinity steps".



Cloudy Weather.



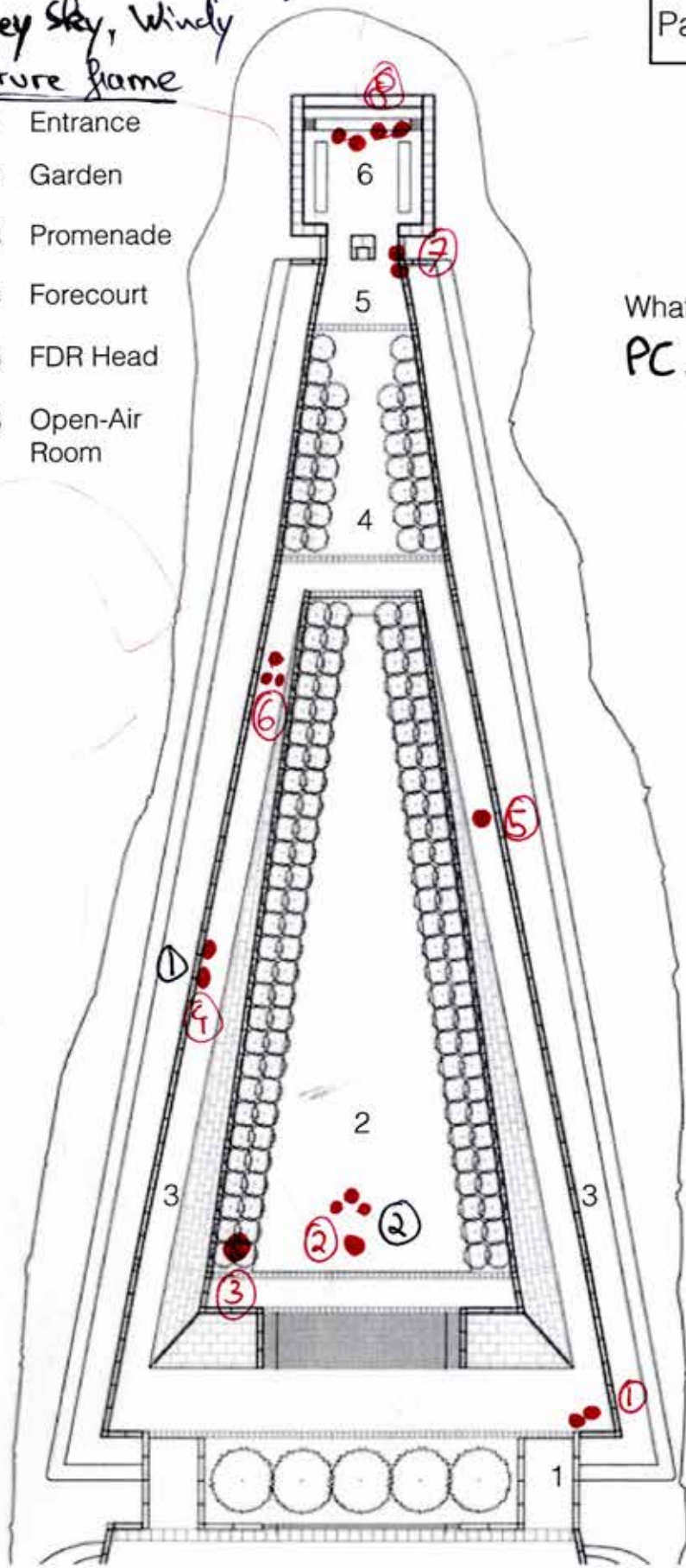
Sunny Weather.

13h15, Sunday May 4th
 Grey Sky, Windy
 Picture frame

Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedoms Park
 Arch. Louis Kahn

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Question 1:
 What do you prefer about the Freedoms Park?
 PC.

There is very few people in the park, which is extremely windy.
 Except for a couple (1) and a mother and her kids (2), who will stay for a while, people are moving quickly through the park.

Question 2:
 What is your favorite place/thing in the Park?

Draw on the map!

- Write/Draw a comment here if you want to
- 1 A couple
 - 2 A family
 - 3 A photographer
 - 4 A couple
 - 5 A single person
 - 6 A group of friends
 - 7 Security guards
 - 8 A group of tourists.

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

Grey Sky Map.

This plan shows how the usage is constrained to the extremities of the space. The central garden is barely occupied, and most people in the promenade are moving fast. In the Room, only a couple of people, and those who come in rarely stay more than a couple of minutes.

At the entrance point of the Room, two guards to the right stay put, and rarely move from that spot, offering them a view of almost all the park

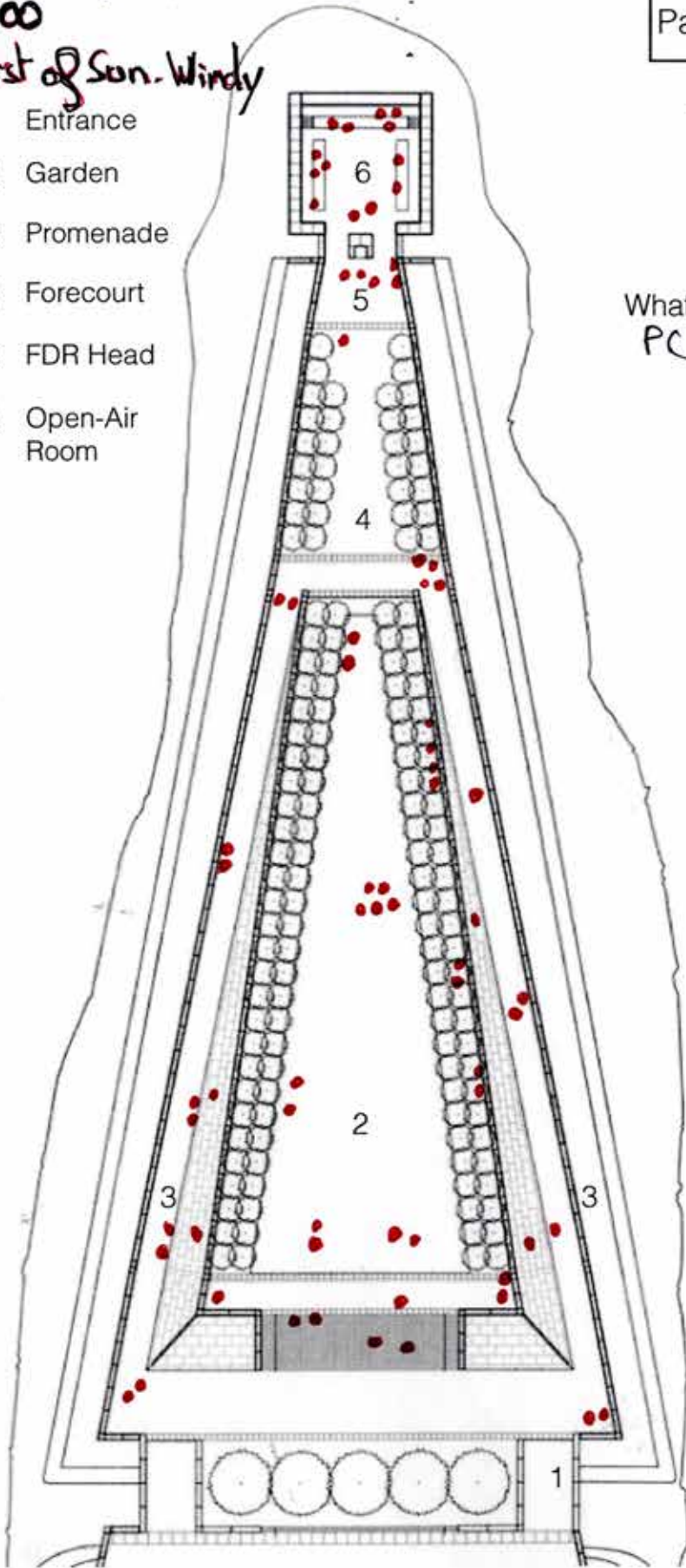


Sunday May 4th, Picture frame

15.00

Burst of Sun - Windy

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:

What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

PC

There are people everywhere,
playing in the park's garden
and sitting on the balustrades.

The steps, and slopes, are an
attraction for all.

Question 2:

What is your favorite place/thing
in the Park ?

Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

Sunny Map.

We can clearly see here how the park becomes activated. The garden is now filling with people, that are either sitting down on the grass, and playing. On the promenade, people have slowed their pace, and many will sit on the balustrades. The slopes have also been activated, and though it is forbidden, many young kids, but even grown-ups, attempt to walk up the slope at its tallest points. On the lower side, they become used for small sprints and jumps. The Room is also now fully used. People sit every they can, recline against the monolithic walls, inspect them, and read the inscription of Roosevelt's Memento Mori Block.

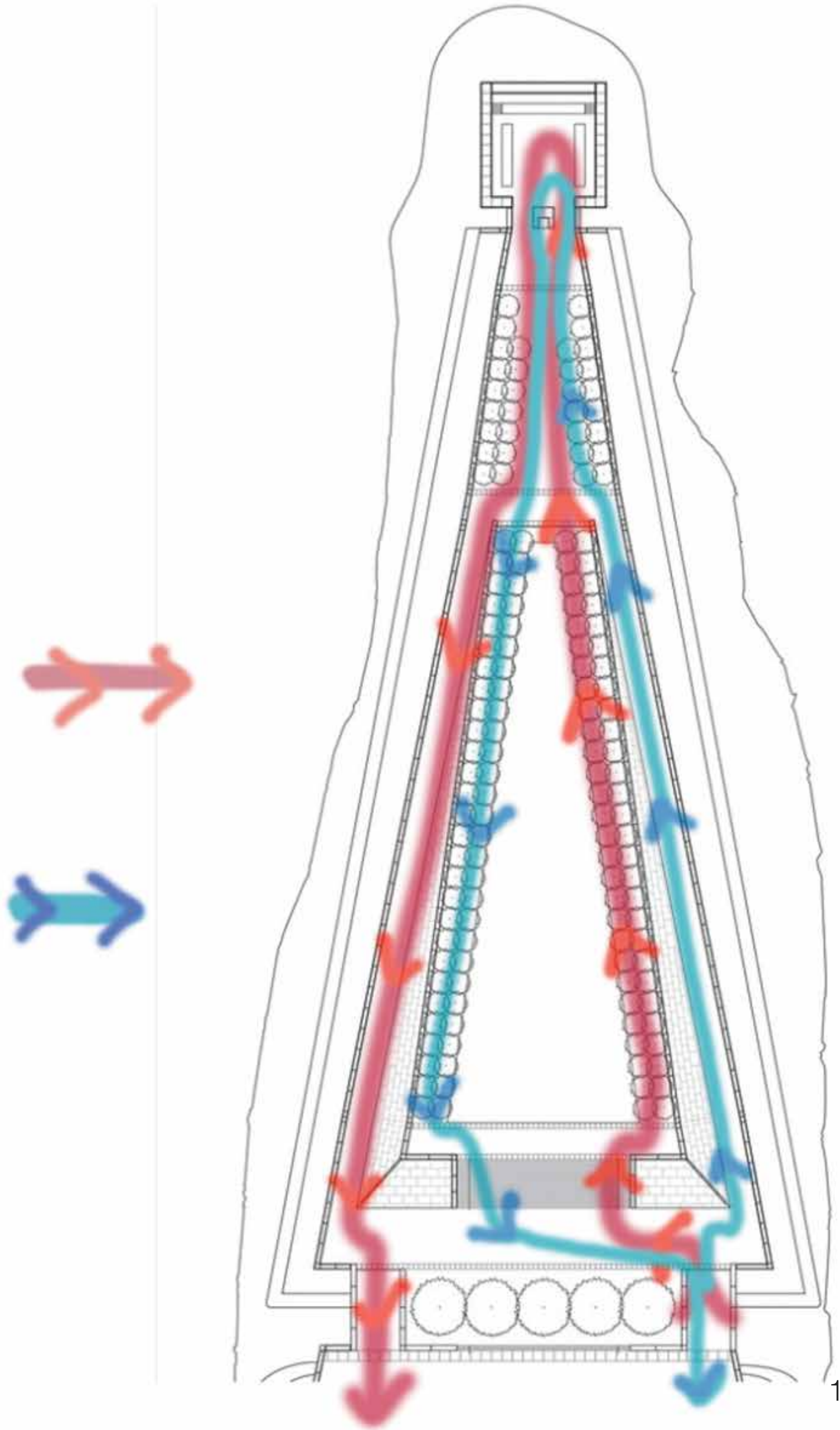




Groups in the Park.

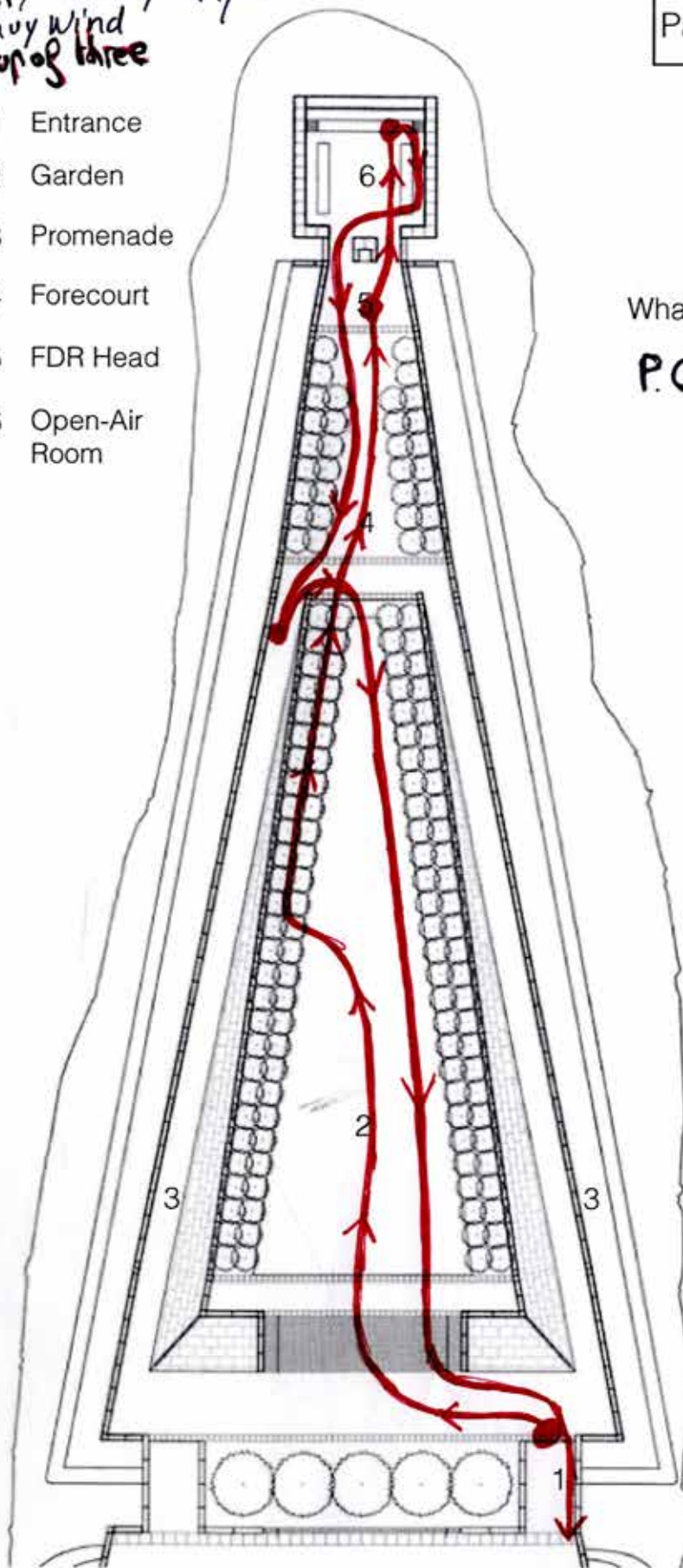
Usually ranging between three and six people, groups have their own way of moving through the space. If they usually stick together, they often circulate quickly through the park. And the bigger the group, the faster, except in the Room, in which they will tend to linger longer. In small groups or two or three, they usually take more time to appreciate the scenery, and observe and read the Franklin D. Roosevelt Stone. It is also more common for these small groups to take photographs and the major vantage points.

In general, I have also realized that groups tend to take the central garden paths at first, and end with the promenade, a contrary to individuals that have a tendency to do the opposite. Perhaps the narrowness of the path is less appealing than the mysterious garden, which is invisible at the promenade level, and called to by the massive staircase that leads to it.



14h, Sunday May 4th
 Heavy Wind
 Group of three

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
 Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:
 What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

P.C
 The group went fast and stop
 very shortly at each point, a
 couple of seconds only.

Question 2:
 What is your favorite place/thing
 in the Park?

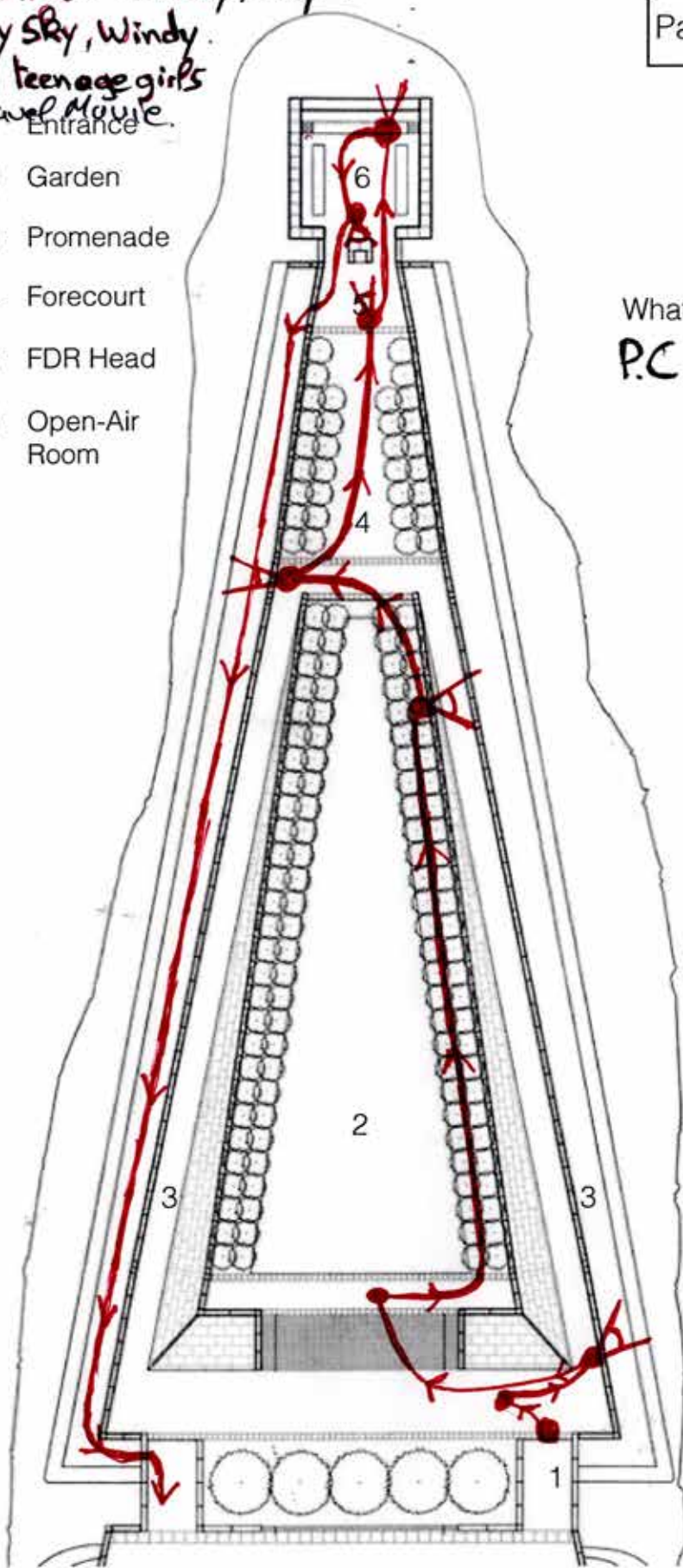
Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

13h40. Sunday, May 4th
 Grey Sky, Windy.
 Two teenage girls
 Travel Movie.

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
 Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:

What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

P.C.

- The various landscapes at different points of the park become the attraction.
- The stops "•" are sparse, and quick, often less than a couple of minutes.

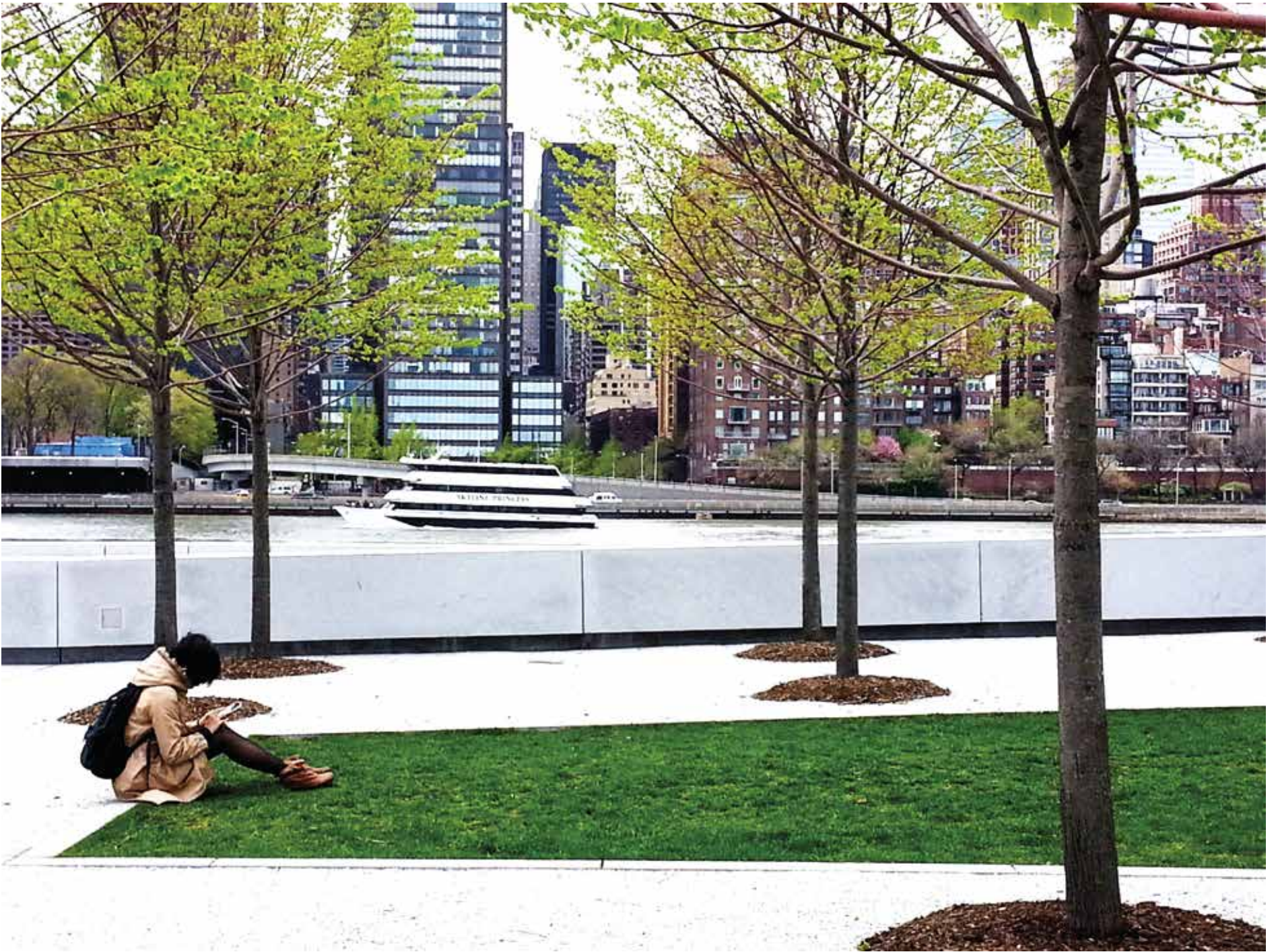
Question 2:

What is your favorite place/thing in the Park?

Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

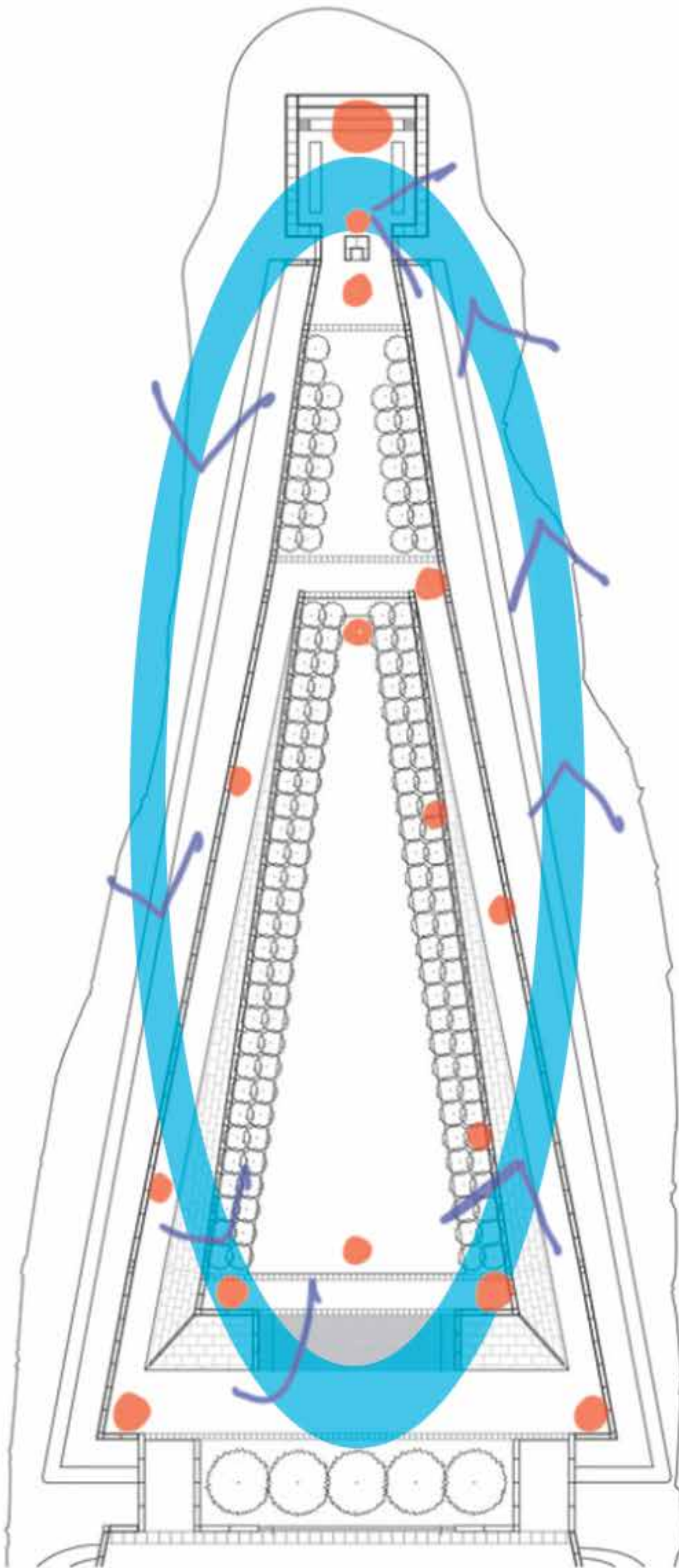
Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb



Individuals.

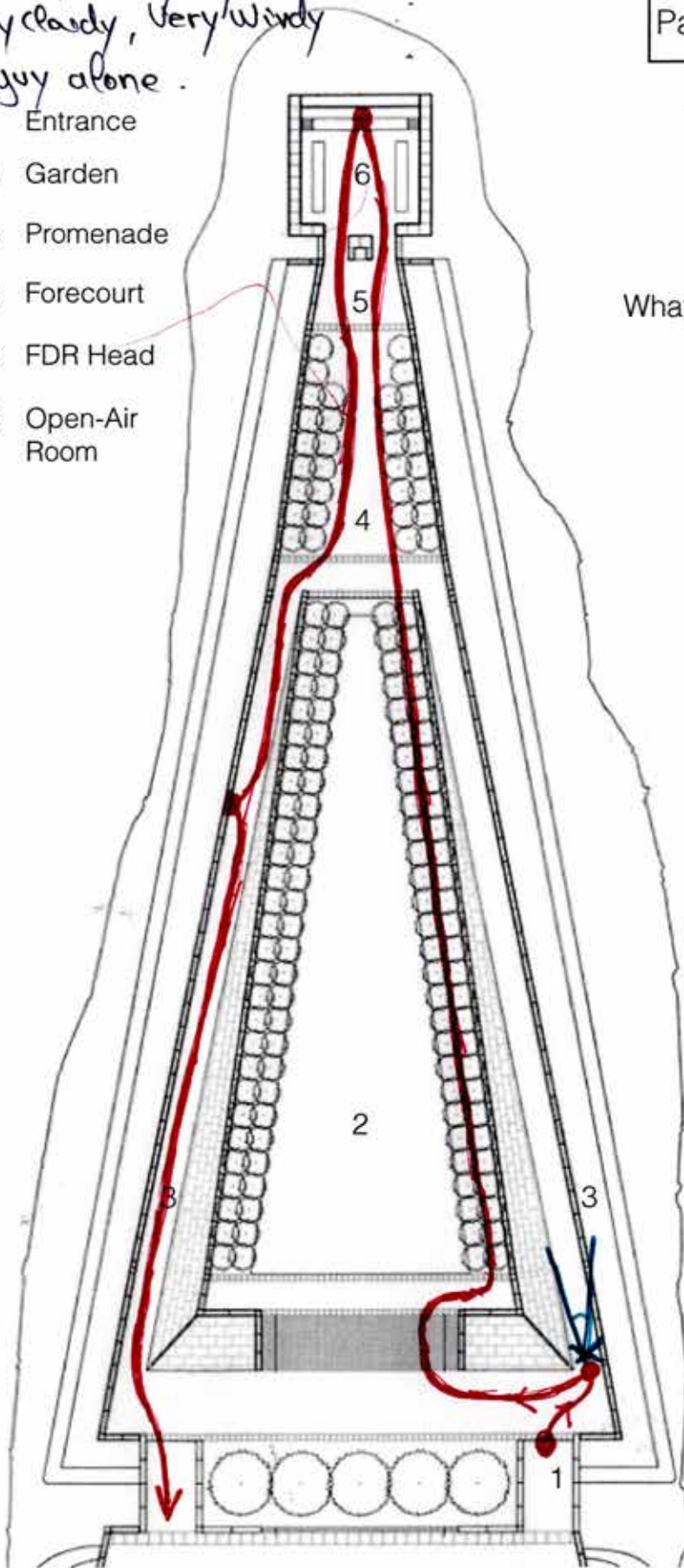
People walking through the space by themselves tend to be the quickest. Whatever the weather, they will quickly move from the entrance to the back Room, and back, in a short manner, stopping seldom and quickly to appreciate the views. Individuals taking pictures will also be faster in the photographic process, compared to tourists, groups, couples and friends.

One individual was the only one I managed to ask the question on my survey. To the first, about what he preferred about the Four Freedoms park, he simply but interestingly answered "the stones". Indeed, the stones are an important material of the space, and modernism, and especially Louis Kahn, is famous for their use of bare materials.



14h 10, Sunday May 4th
 Very cloudy, Very Windy
 A guy alone.

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
 Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:
 What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?


"Stones"

Question 2:
 What is your favorite place/thing
 in the Park ?

Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

"I stood there quickly
 and looked at the end of
 the island, and that was
 really nice; that vantage
 point..."

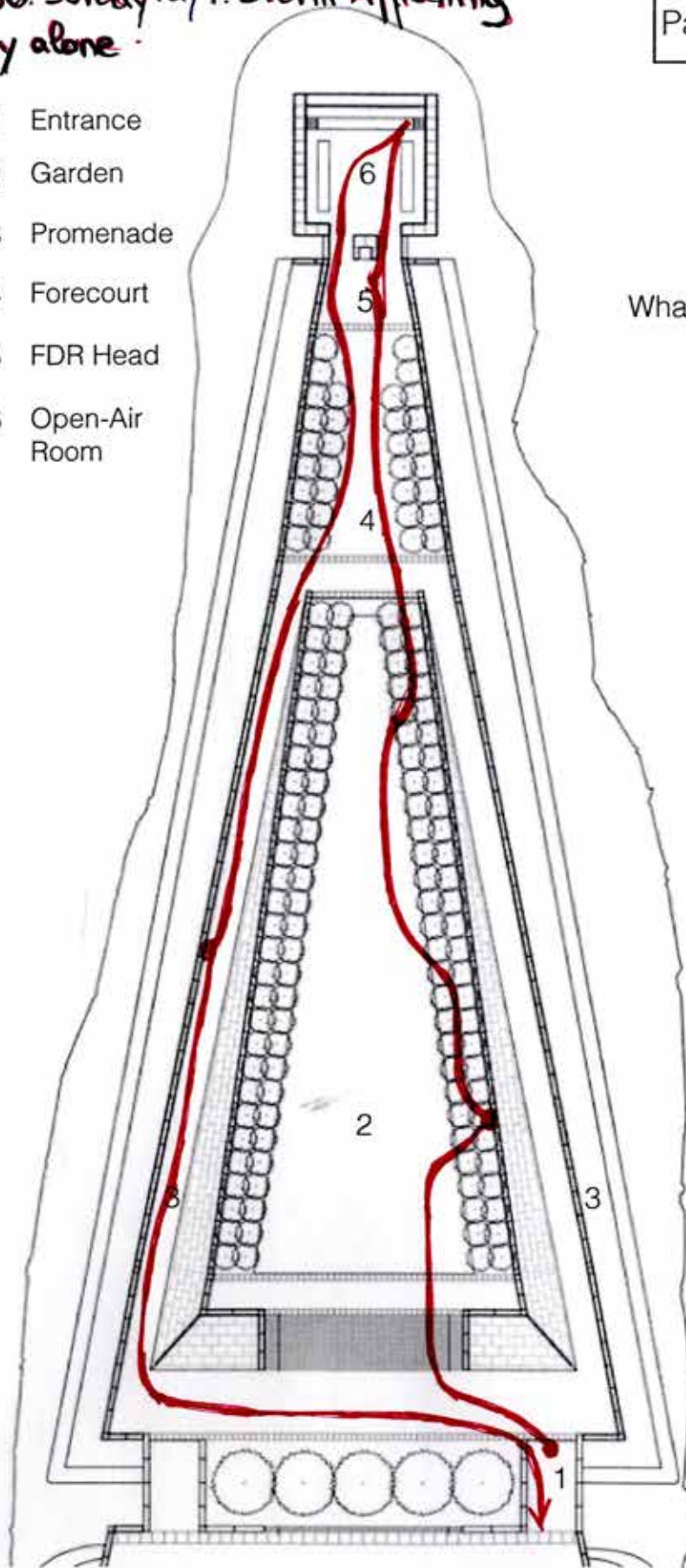


Mr. X

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

14.30. Sunday May 4th. Storm Approaching
A guy alone.

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:

What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

Question 2:

What is your favorite place/thing
in the Park ?

Draw on the map!

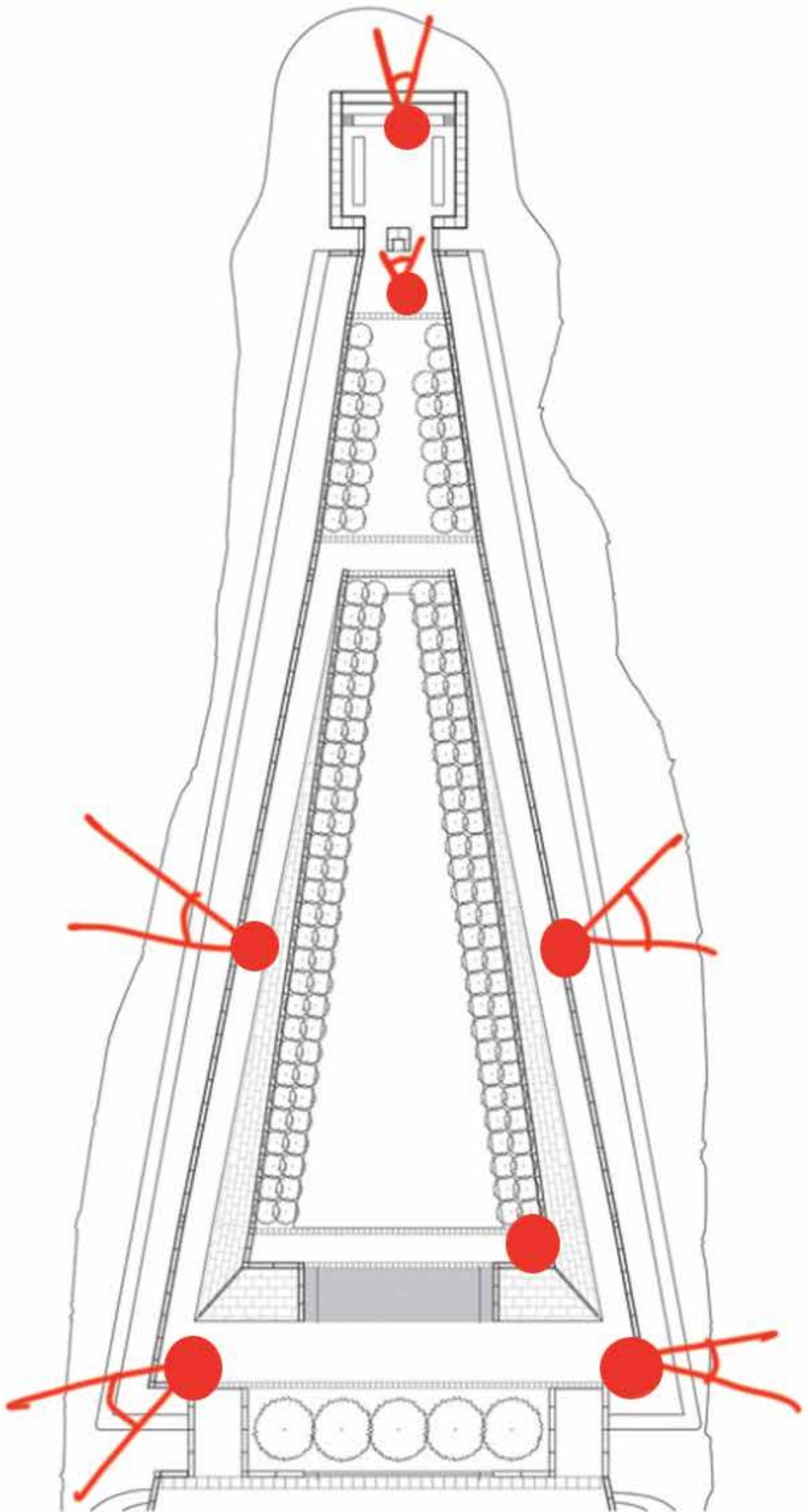
Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb



Couples.

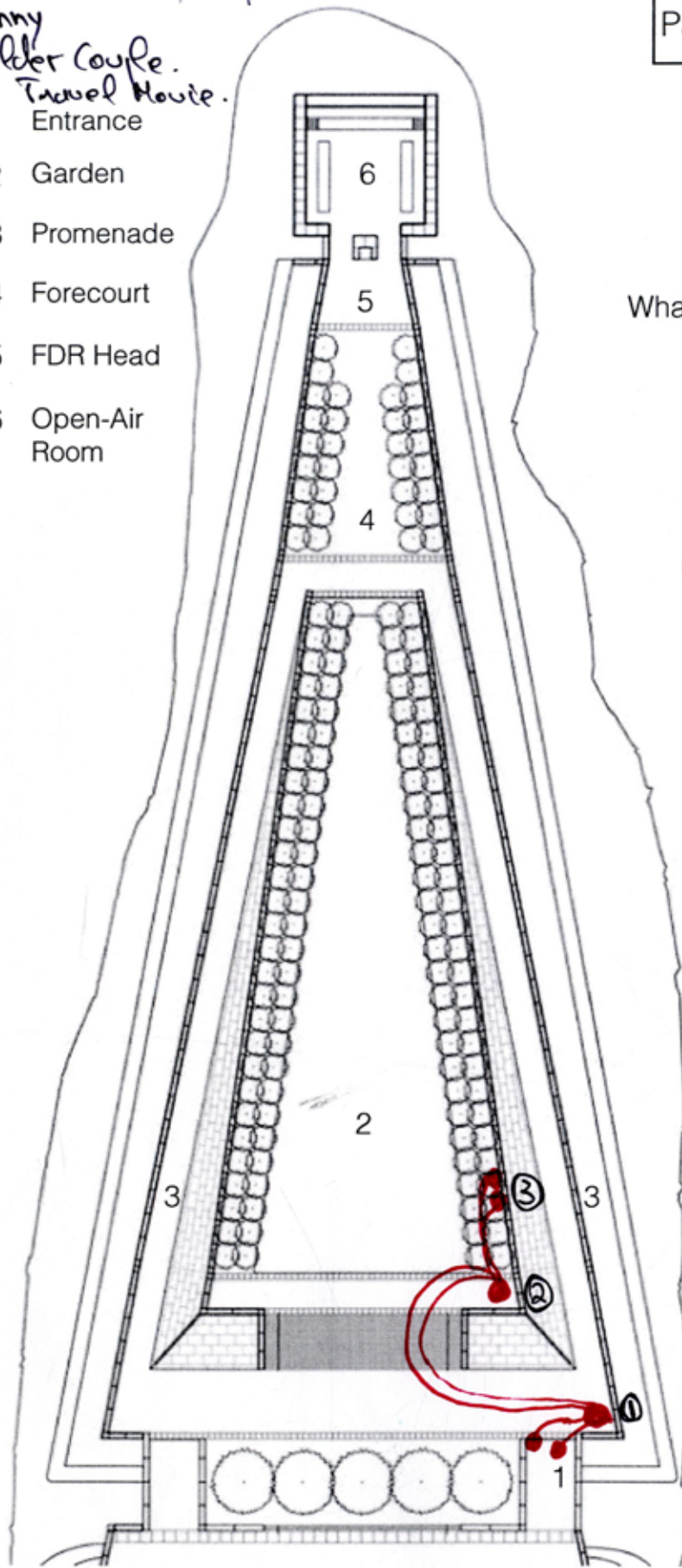
This group seems to be the slowest program in the park. They move in a reduced pace, and regularly stop to enjoy the scenery. With its romantic atmosphere, the Park also allows the couple to stop at a point and linger for a while, talking, kissing, and embracing each other.



15h40, Sunday May 4th

Sunny
An elder couple.
Travel Movie.

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:

What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

① The couple goes to the first essential view.

② They move above, in the garden, and kiss a bit.

③ Finally, they move a bit further, where they will stay for long, kissing and talking on the ledge.

Question 2:

What is your favorite place/thing in the Park?

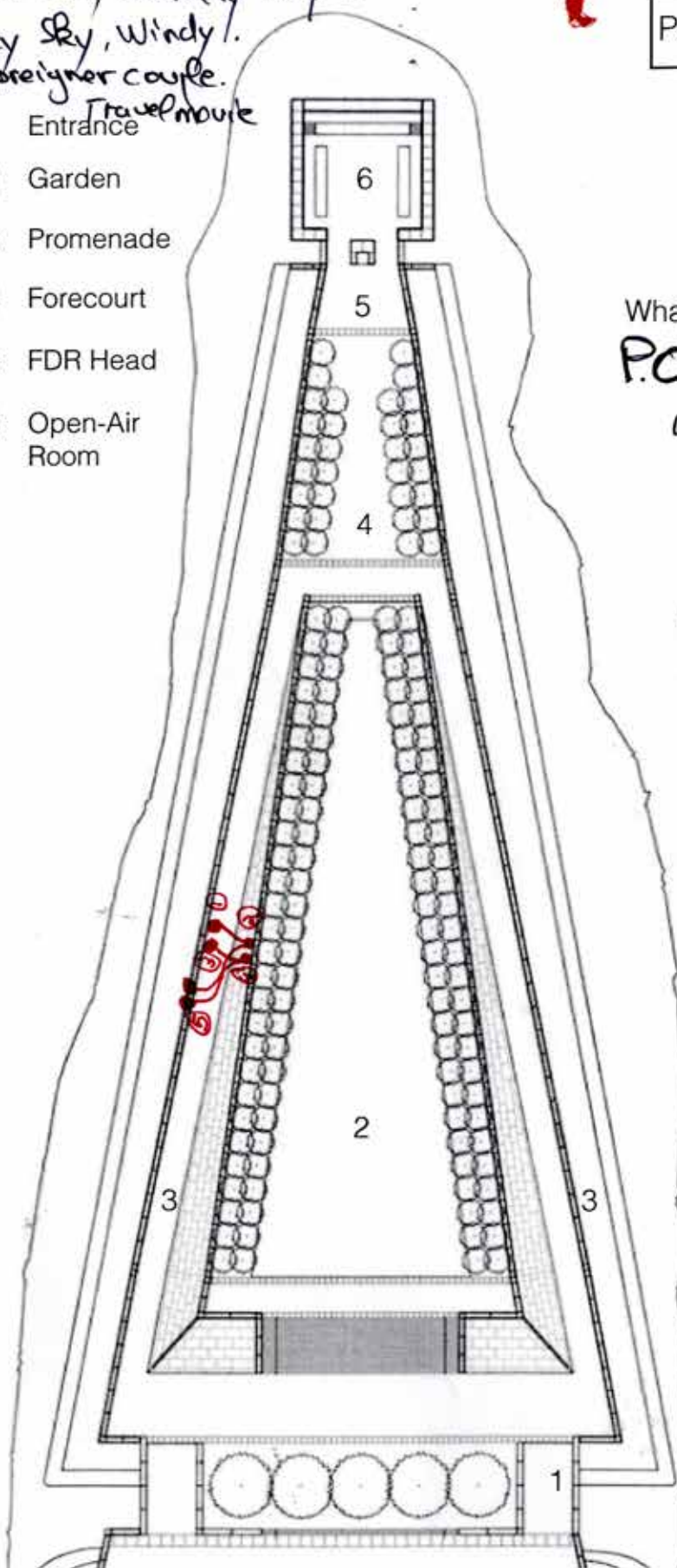
Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

13h 50, Sunday May 4th.
 Grey Sky, Windy!
 A foreigner couple.

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
 Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:

What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

P.C.

1 In ①, the couple have been sitting close by, talking and kissing for a while

② Suddenly, the woman runs up the stone slope and waves at her partner.

③ He then runs up to her, spend a couple of seconds up there (④)

⑤ They run down together, and stay close by, resuming their previous activity.

Question 2:

What is your favorite place/thing in the Park?

Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

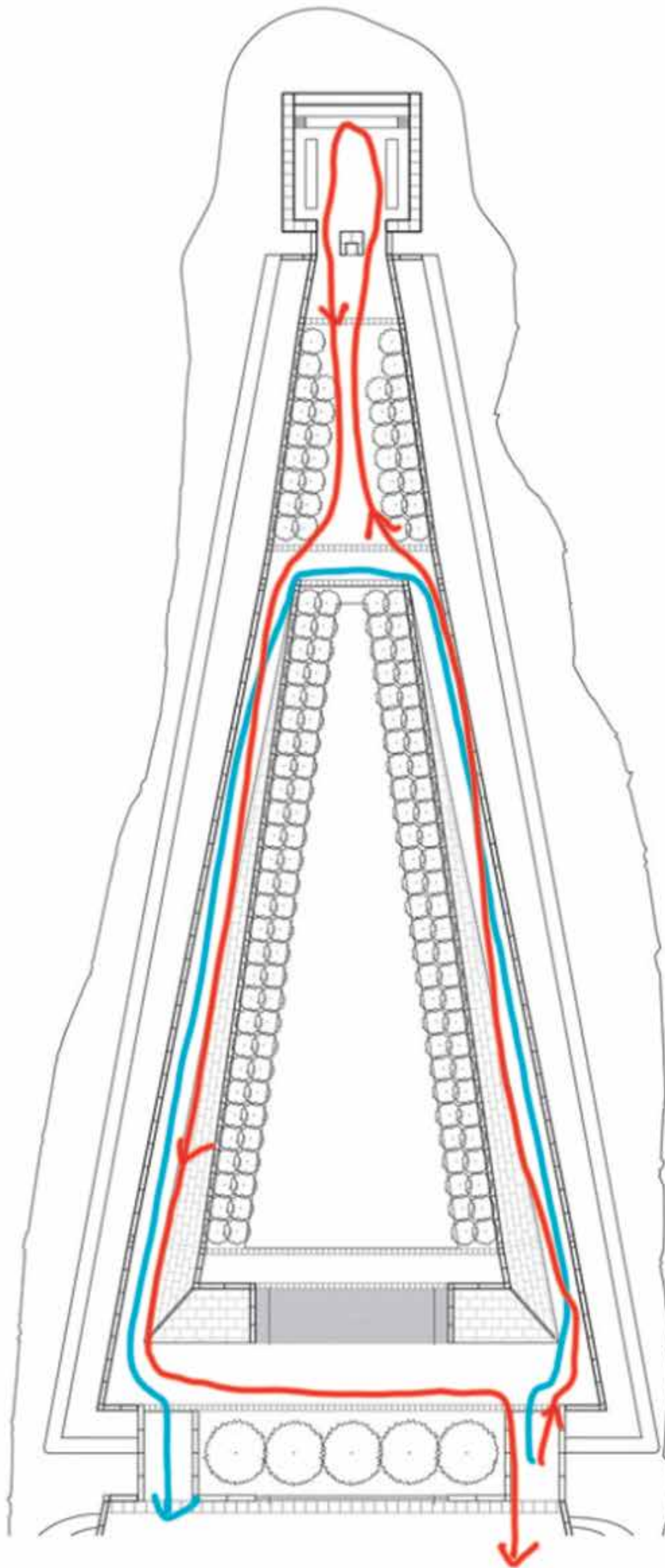
Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb



Joggers.

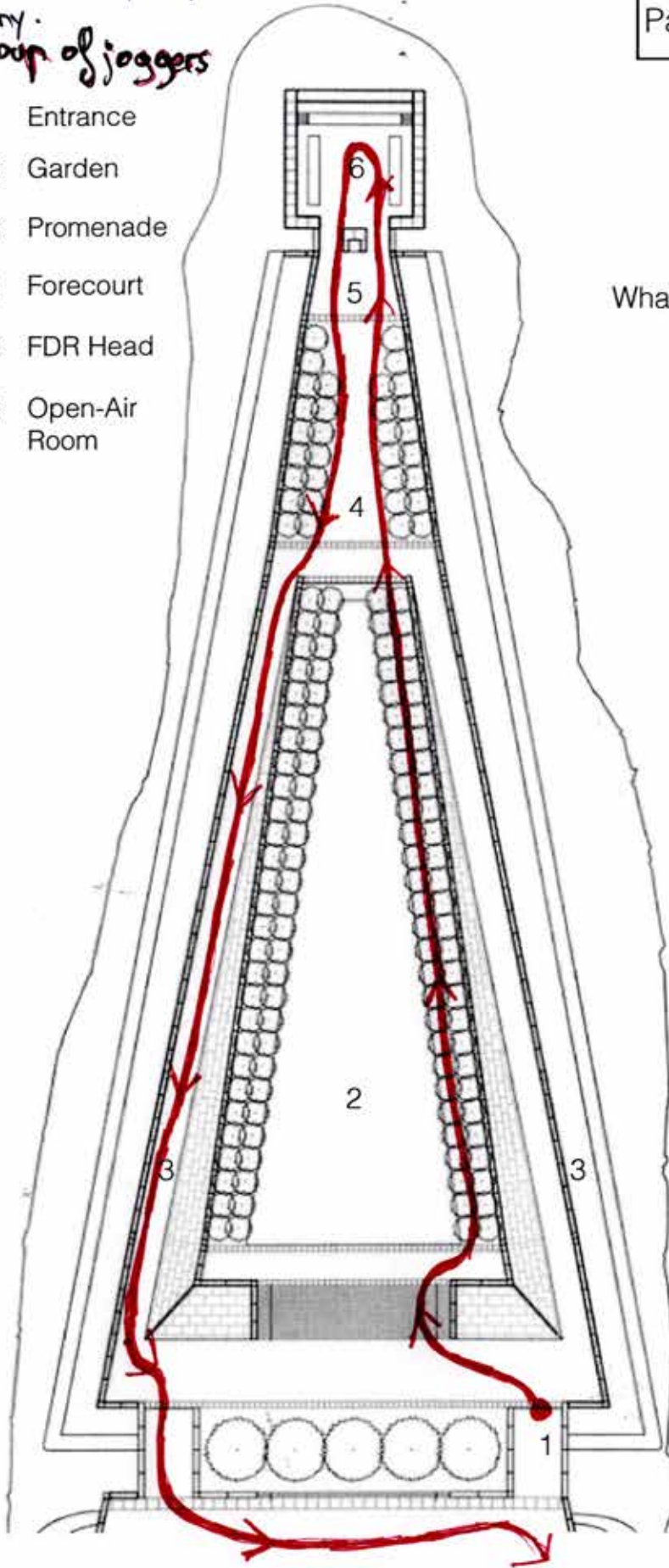
By definition, the joggers are the fastest group circulating through the park. Their circulation is very similar, most often starting from the right side of the park, making their way through the open-air toom, and coming back out through the left side.

They also tend to use the promenade, and seldomly go up to the garden for their run. Whether alone, in a pair, or in a group, these movements tend to be quite similar.



15h 10, Sunday May 4th
Sunny.
A group of joggers

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:
What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

Question 2:
What is your favorite place/thing
in the Park ?

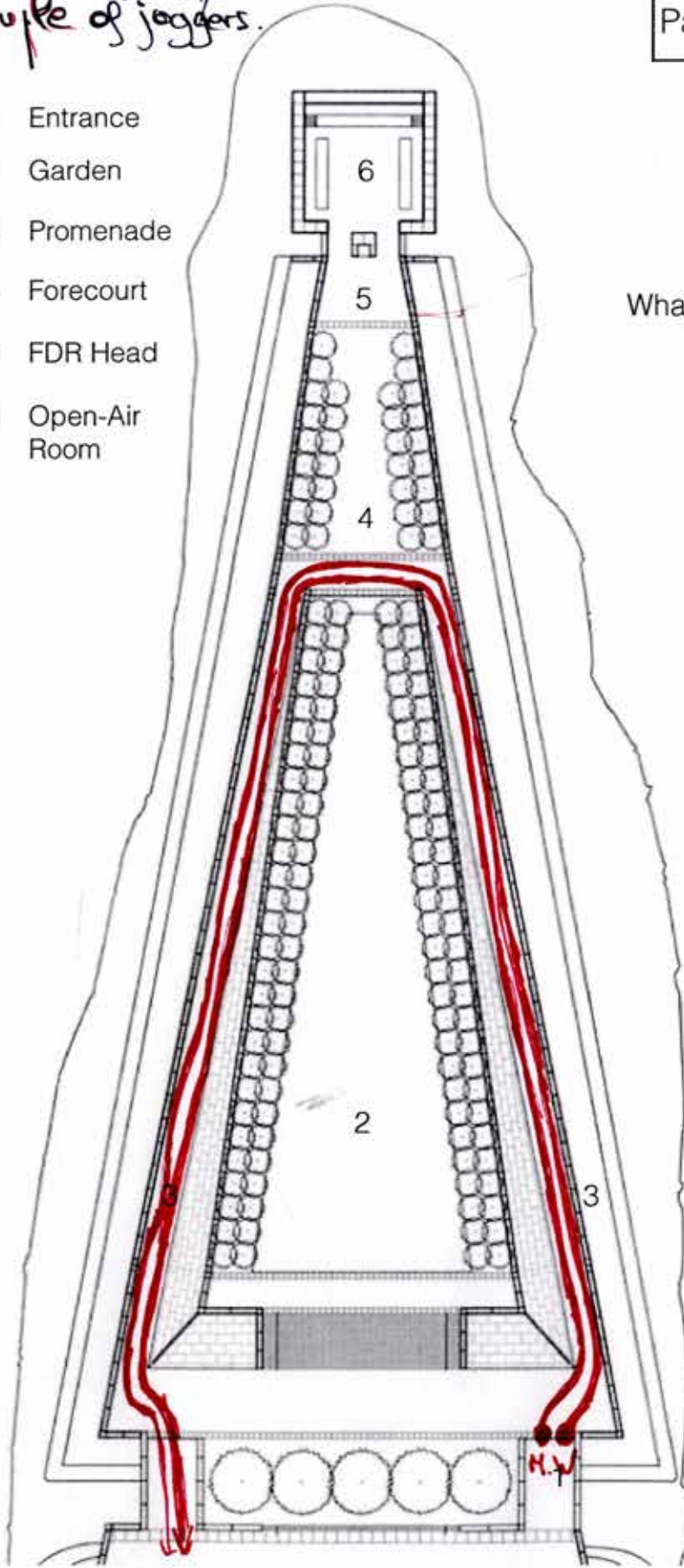
Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

15h30, Sunday May 6th
A couple of joggers.
Sunny!

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:

What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

Question 2:

What is your favorite place/thing in the Park?

Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

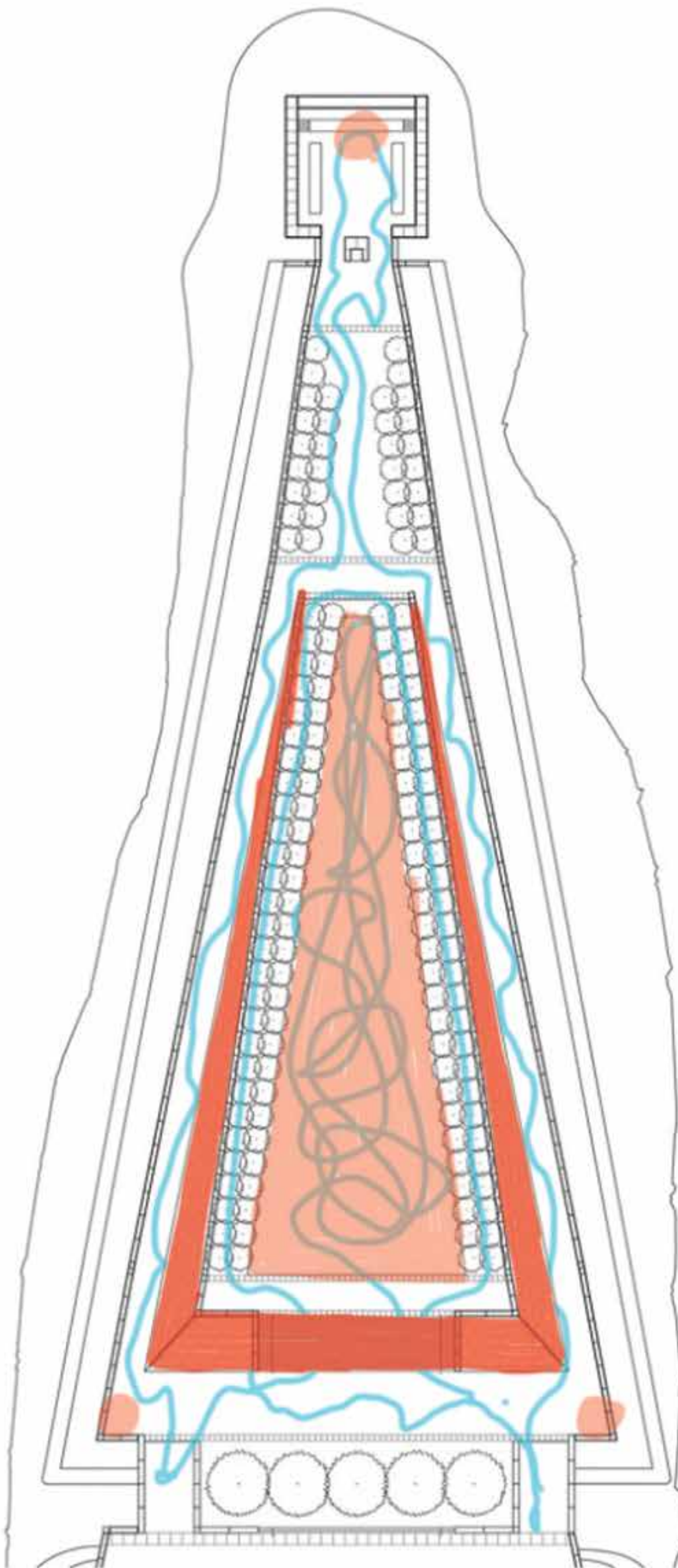


People with Kids.

Kids, are by nature the most busy programs. They run around, play, and like to discover unique ways of using the park. Hiding behind trees, climbing on the balustrades, running in the garden, or running up the stone slopes.

Of course, their gardiens keep them in eye weight, and the kids never go far away from them. As the adults move in very rigid and linear ways, the kids are all over the place, creating ecstatic circulation around the adults.

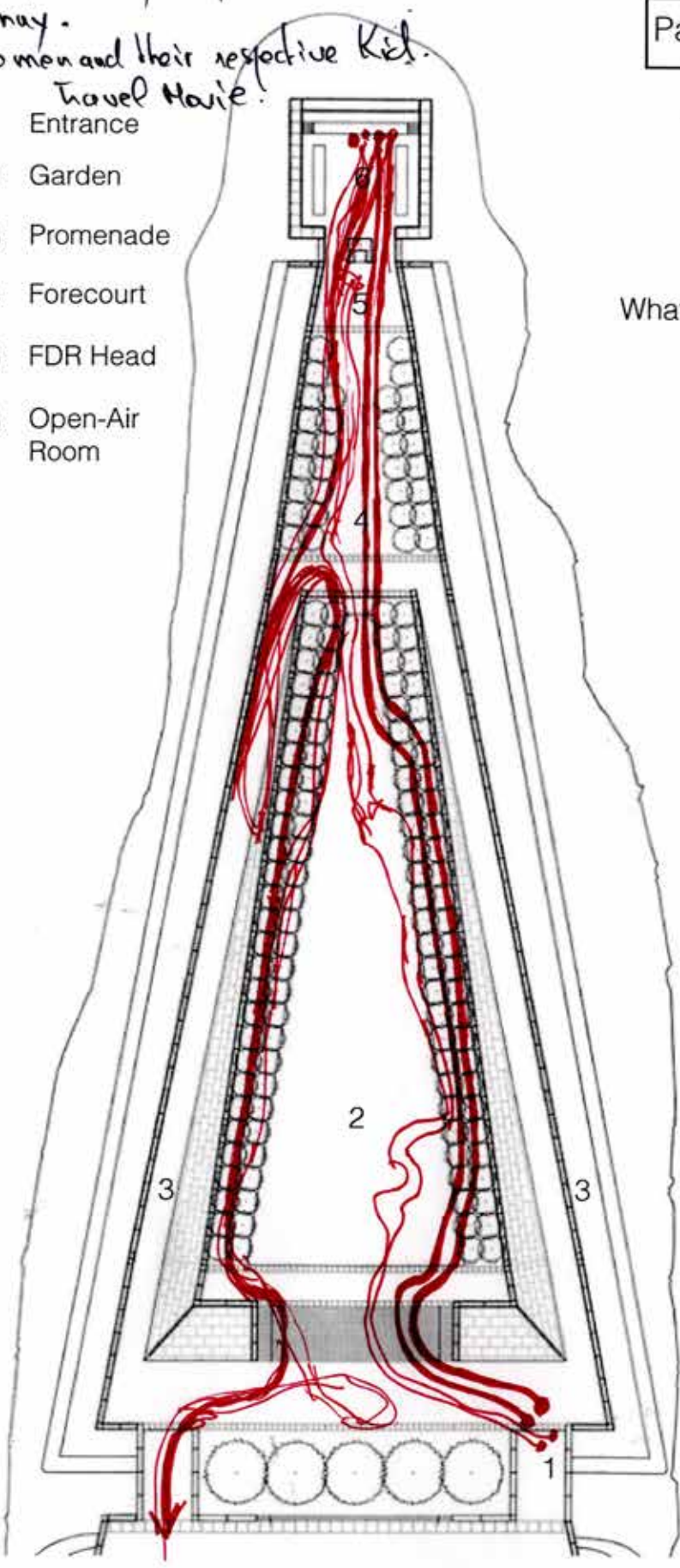
They are also the most fond of the elevated garden, in which they play a lot. The slopes to the side also become the best playground for them, where they love to run up and down.



16h, Sunday May 4th
Sunday.

Two men and their respective kids.
Travel Movie.

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:
What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

Still, the kids are excited,
but never go far away from
their parents.

Question 2:
What is your favorite place/thing
in the Park?

Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

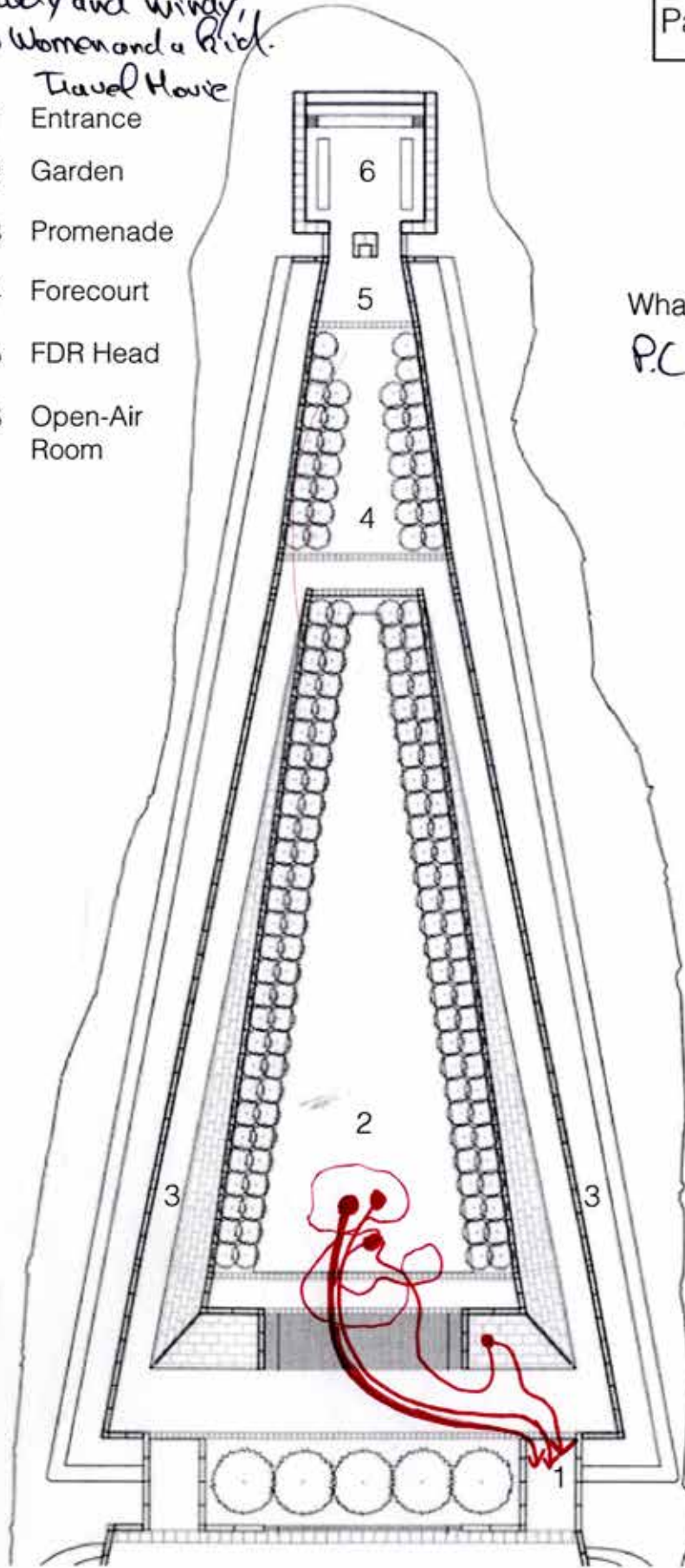
Dad to girl: "do you wanna
circle around or go through
the middle?"

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb

13h 20, Sunday May 4th.
 Breezy and windy,
 Two Women and a Kid.

Travel Movie

- 1 Entrance
- 2 Garden
- 3 Promenade
- 4 Forecourt
- 5 FDR Head
- 6 Open-Air Room



Park Survey for a Design Student

The FDR Freedom Park
 Arch. Louis Kahn

Question 1:

What do you prefer about the Freedom Park?

P.C

A lot of moving around
 from the kid, but always
 around the adults.
 Before leaving, the kid
 climbs the stone slope,
 of course.

Question 2:

What is your favorite place/thing
 in the Park?

Draw on the map!

Write/Draw a comment here if you want to

Thanks A Lot! Benjamin Rebb



Conclusion.

Throughout my quick investigations of the Four Freedoms Park, I was able to discover specific usages according to different program. If the occupancy of the park differs strongly between good and bad weather, certain circulatory aspects seem to remain the same.

Perhaps the most interesting element I found out was how the circulation most often starts on the right side, either on the promenade, or above in the garden's side-walk, and finishes at the other extremity, in the garden's left side-walk if the user had started on the right promenade, and on the left promenade if the user had started on the right garden's side-walk.

The presence of security yards, at the right of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Head, recalls this kind of underlying way of circulating in the space.

According to William Whyte's points of successful spaces, many are indeed present. Water, Trees, Seating, Streets, are successful aspects of the park. And this main idea of Triangulation, which is clearly visible as a formal aesthetic, allows for all sorts of activities to take place in this remarkable space.

