

Carl Krebs discusses the design and construction of the National September 11 Memorial & Museum.

The Speaker

Carl Krebs is a partner at Davis Brody Bond Aedas (DBBA), the associate architects for the 9/11 Memorial designed by Michael Arad and Peter Walker and Partners. DBBA is also the design architect for the below-grade 9/11 Memorial Museum. Krebs has been involved in the development and realization of these projects since 2004.

Review Questions

CHAPTER 1: *The early architectural design and planning stages of the site, the complexities involved, and how DBBA became involved in the project*

1. Why did DBBA have a specific interest in working on the Memorial?
2. Krebs mentions “complexities” in the project that required an architecture firm’s involvement. What were the complexities and why was DBBA well-positioned for the work?

CHAPTER 2: *Krebs’ experiences on and around 9/11, and how DBBA’s familiarity with the original towers informed their thinking about the new site*

1. Krebs states that the Museum was not intended to be a memorial to the towers themselves, but architectural elements from the original site have been incorporated into the design. Which elements have been included? Describe the process of their inclusion and the symbolism behind those elements.

CHAPTER 3: *How the desire to ensure authenticity guided the design of the Memorial and Museum*

1. How did the authentic architectural elements inform the design of the Museum?
2. Krebs describes how the Memorial pools were not initially centered on the original footprints of the towers. Why does Krebs think it’s important to have them centered? Do you think it’s important? Why or why not?

KEY REFERENCES

Box Column Remnants

Located at bedrock, these are the architectural remnants of steel columns that formed the exterior façade of the Twin Towers. They have been preserved, and will be an archaeological feature of the 9/11 Memorial Museum.

David Brody Bond Aedas (DBBA)

The associate architect for the 9/11 Memorial and the design architect for the below-grade 9/11 Memorial Museum.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)

LEED is an international system for certifying buildings designed to meet certain “green” standards. The National 9/11 Memorial is pursuing the highest LEED certification for the Memorial Plaza, making it one of the most environmentally sustainable parks ever built.

Michael Arad and Peter Walker

The two designers of the Memorial Plaza. Their submission, *Reflecting Absence*, was selected in a design competition out of 5,201 submissions from 63 countries.

Review Questions (continued)

CHAPTER 4: *A discussion of the Memorial plaza and the difficulties of designing the waterfall fountains*

1. What does Krebs mean when he notes that the Memorial is not “prescriptive”?
2. From an architectural standpoint, what were the challenges in creating the fountains? Why do you think the waterfalls were important to include, despite the difficulties?

CHAPTER 5: *Challenges during the rebuilding of the WTC site*

1. Krebs discusses the desire to have the entire Memorial and Museum LEED-certified. Research specific steps the designers have taken to achieve this goal.
2. What are the primary issues, according to Krebs, in the reconstruction of the entire WTC complex? Why didn't the original complex have these issues?

CHAPTER 6: *The construction of the Museum and Krebs' own reflections on the process*

1. Why does Krebs contrast the 9/11 Memorial Museum with the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao? What differences does he highlight, and why are those differences important?
2. How did the artifacts help guide the design of the Museum's spaces?

KEY REFERENCES (continued)

Tower Footprints

Approximately 200 feet on each side, these foundations mark the original location and perimeter of the North and South towers at the World Trade Center. They are outlined in the Museum by the box column remnants. The pools on the 9/11 Memorial plaza are centered within each footprint.

Tridents

These steel structures were part of the original façade of the Twin Towers. Recovered during the clean-up of the site, each forked trident stands above 80 feet tall and weighs over 100,000 pounds. They will be featured in the Museum Pavilion, and are the only artifacts visible from the Memorial Plaza. They were installed at the site in September 2010.

Questions for Further Discussion

Krebs discusses the importance of having the Memorial and Museum at the original site of the Twin Towers, and also maintaining the authenticity of the original archaeological elements of the site, such as the slurry wall and box column remnants. Not all memorials, though, exist at the locations where the memorialized event took place. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a memorial at the authentic site? Do you think the 9/11 Memorial could exist anywhere else? If so, where?

In the context of the 9/11 Memorial Museum, Krebs agrees with the notion of letting many of the artifacts “speak for themselves.” This is a choice that every museum must make when it creates an exhibition; questions around how much to say, and how to say it, are crucial to exhibition design. Pick three objects in your life that communicate something important about you, and create a mini-exhibit coupling your objects with explanatory labels. How do you convey your ideas to the audience? Do you let the artifacts speak for themselves or do you include descriptive text? Why did you make those choices?