Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs

2025, Volume 9, Number 2, pages 527–545

Original scientific paper

Landscape of Anonymity: Transforming the Retired COVID-19 Field Medical Facility into A Memorial Park

*[1] **Haotian Ma**, [2] **Siqing Chen**

[1] Department of Architecture, College of Architecture & Art, Taiyuan University of Technology, Taiyuan, China
[1] Department of Urban & Architecture, School of Sciences for the Habitat, University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China
[2] Melbourne School of Design, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia
[1] E-mail: mahaotian@tyut.edu.cn , [2] E-mail: chens@unimelb.edu.au

ARTICLE INFO:

Article History:
Received: 10 April 2025
Revised: 19 June 2025
Revised 2: 31 July 2025
Accepted: 16 August 2025
Available online: 3 September 2025

Keywords:
Anonymity Landscape,
Field Hospital Reuse,
Memorial Landscape Design,
Post-Pandemic Transformation,
Economic Savings,
Sustainable Civic Spaces.

ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 emergency, the escalating number of cases overwhelmed the admission capacity of operating hospitals in many cities. The pandemic thus prompted the rapid construction of temporary field hospitals in cities like Wuhan, China, to relieve pressure on existing health infrastructure. While their operational phase has been well-documented, the post-pandemic reuse of these facilities remains underexplored. This study proposes a novel design paradigm - Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design - to transform the retired Huoshenshan Field Hospital into a public memorial park. Drawing on counter-memorial theory and spatial translation methods, the project reimagines commemorative landscapes through abstraction, emotional disruption, and interactive experience, rather than conventional symbolism. The design unfolds in four stages aligned with the emotional arc of the pandemic: outbreak, lockdown, recovery, and reflection. Methodologically, the study integrates multi-source data analysis, theoretical modeling, and adaptive reuse strategies to address spatial, social, and economic dimensions. Findings demonstrate how this approach fosters inclusive memory-making while yielding 62.5% material recycling and approximately CNY 7.94 million (US$1.10million) in cost savings. The project contributes a replicable framework for converting ephemeral urban infrastructure into resilient civic spaces that blend memory, sustainability, and public use. These outcomes demonstrate how post-pandemic urban transformations can reduce resource waste, strengthen local economies, enhance spatial equity, and expand access to quality civic spaces – offering insightful perspectives to other COVID-19-affected cities on similar issues of contemporary urbanisation.

JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY URBAN AFFAIRS. (2025), **9**(2), 527–545.
https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2025.v9n2-10

www.ijcua.com

Highlights:

- Proposes a new design paradigm - Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design - for post-pandemic public spaces.
- Integrates three memorial theories to address symbolic, emotional, and spatial design challenges.
- Demonstrates 62.5% material reuse and CNY 7.94 million or US$1.10 million in construction cost savings.
- Shifts focus from monumentality to pluralistic, interactive memory ecosystems.
- Offers a transferable model for transforming crisis-response infrastructure into resilient civic landscapes.

Contribution to the field statement:

This study introduces the Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design paradigm, offering a novel theoretical and spatial approach to repurposing retired field hospitals. It integrates memory theory with adaptive reuse, providing both socio-cultural value and economic efficiency. The framework advances memorial landscape discourse and contributes to post-pandemic urban resilience planning.

* **Corresponding Author:** Siqing Chen
Melbourne School of Design, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne, Australia
Email address: chens@unimelb.edu.au

How to cite this article? (APA Style)
Ma, H. & Chen, S. (2025). Landscape of Anonymity: Transforming the Retired COVID-19 Field Medical Facility into A Memorial Park. *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs*, 9(2), 527–545. https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2025.v9n2-10

1. Introduction

1.1 Global urbanization and pandemic challenges

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 epidemic in Wuhan, China, in January 2020, the increasing number of confirmed and suspected cases quickly exceeded the admission capacity of designated hospitals in the city. This situation soon expanded to the global level. In response to this crisis, Professor Wang Chen designed a new field hospital concept, the Fangcang (literally 'Square Cabin') Shelter Hospital, in January-February 2020 (Chen et al., 2020). Accordingly, two speciality field hospitals, namely Huoshenshan Hospital and Leishenshan Hospital, were designed, built, and commissioned in record time (9-12 days) to address the outbreak (Luo et al., 2020), thereby saving precious time in providing high-quality medical treatment to over 5,000 patients. These facilities became emblematic of the rapid, large-scale infrastructure mobilisation possible under contemporary urbanisation pressures.

1.2 Post-pandemic dilemma of temporary infrastructure

On April 15, Huoshenshan and Leishenshan sent their final batch of patients to regular hospitals and were officially sealed off and "retired" (Ying et al., 2025). However, the heritage remains in the site according to Google Earth (Figure 1). A certain number of temporary field hospitals have been built in major countries and cities around the world after Wuhan. Typical examples include: Fiocruz Hospital Centre in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Golokhvastovo Modular Hospital in Moscow, Russia, and the regeneration of an abandoned hospital in Medellin, Colombia. These facilities are generally characterized by a spatial and temporal pattern of 'high-intensity use-rapid abandonment', creating a unique post-pandemic spatial heritage and posing urgent socio-economic challenges for cities, particularly in contexts of land scarcity, budget constraints, and uneven access to quality public spaces. In rapidly urbanising districts, these pressures intensify inequalities in health, recreation, and cultural participation, making it critical to develop reuse strategies that deliver tangible economic returns and spatial equity.

Figure 1. Site History Map of Study Area.

The field hospital approach was pivotal globally during the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly reduced the burden on overstretched healthcare systems. After the pandemic, many researchers have focused on the improvements, effects, and contributions of the field-hospitals (Chen et al., 2020; Alhmoud & Çağnan, 2023; Razzak et al., 2023; Costa et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2025; Ying et al., 2025). Some of them noticed the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of field hospitals during the pandemic (Bernardez-Pereira et al., 2025) and the refugee and military value after the pandemic (Gao et al., 2024). However, the strategic reuse of retired field hospitals has received far less scholarly attention, especially approaches that can deliver measurable socio-economic benefits—such as resource efficiency, cost savings, and new public amenities—while preserving cultural memory. From the

perspective of urban sustainability, this study will mainly explore the utilization of retired field hospitals in the post-pandemic period and transforming them into a memorial park.

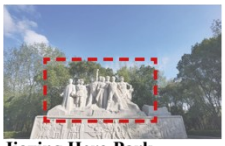
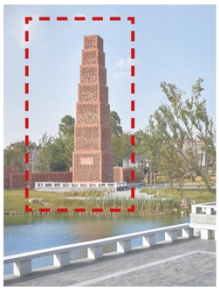
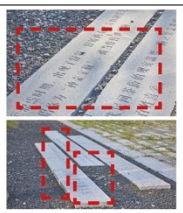
1.3 Literature Review & Research Question

Researchers have focused on the relationship between memory and place for decades. Starting from the French historian Pierre Nora (1989), who is interested in the constructed way of historical process and how they are endowed with meaning and causal power, his research programme is not to establish "what the past was really like," but rather to explore the utilisation of the past and its impact on contemporary present (Nora, 1989). According to James Young (1992) and SueAnne Ware (2008), memory and memorial design should be considered as a periodic process of reassessment and reconstruction in a changing context (Olin, 1995). Meanwhile, diverging from conventional commemorative design paradigms, Young's proposed anti-monumental expressions embody four defining characteristics: 1). articulating opposition to specific beliefs or historical events rather than affirming them; 2). deliberately eschewing traditional monumental forms to achieve near-invisibility through formal inversion; 3). facilitating intimate, multisensory engagement with viewers; and 4). rejecting didacticism to empower viewers to construct meaning for themselves (Stevens et al., 2012). Building on James Young's theory, Ware argues that the focus of memorial design should shift from heroic figures to victims, ordinary citizens, and society's marginalized, as traditional memorial design has limitations in remembering and problem-solving (Ware, 2008).

The counter-memorial theory of Wagoner and Brescó (2022) suggests that abstract and minimalist design engages more participation activities and leaves greater openness for experiencing and appropriating, and individuals perceive and interact with memorials in diverse ways, shaped by the unique personal connections and memories evoked during their exploration of the site. They also indicate that places of remembrance are spaces of shared memory that offer different possibilities for expressing and interpreting individual and collective loss. This process goes beyond mourning and helps individuals and societies to reinterpret the past and, in so doing, construct new directions for the future (Wagoner & Brescó, 2022). Likewise, Kuys et al. (2024) note that memorials must resonate with both the symbolic significance and the functional versatility of the environment in which they are situated, embracing the inherent freedom and diversity of the landscape. Furthermore, from a landscape architecture perspective, Al-azzawi et al. (2024) demonstrate that architectural environments integrating naturalistic beauty significantly enhance users' sense of place, while biophilic design elements foster stronger emotional connections. These theories and findings provide a robust theoretical foundation for developing commemorative landscape parks and enhancing visitor engagement with memorial spaces.

Despite these developments, Chinese monumental landscapes face three major limitations (Table 1): 1). symbolic violence (focusing on traditional monumental vertical structures, sculptures) (Jiaxing Hero Park, Yangtze River National Culture Park, Jizhou Kiln National Archaeological Park); 2). information overload (using tedious Images, documents, and testimonies to represent historical events and people) (The Yuanqiu Ruins park & Jizhou Kiln National Archaeological Park); and 3). affective detachment (Over-protection of heritage lacks interactivity) (Tangshan Earthquake Memorial Park & Erlitou Archaeological Site Park). Consequently, there are gaps in both theory and practice for a contemporary, multifunctional memorial design paradigm that integrates cultural meaning, public use, and socio-economic performance in the Chinese context.

Table 1: Major limitations in Chinese traditional monumental landscapes.

Limitations in the Chinese monumental landscapes	Expressions	Case Images
Symbolic Violence	Focusing on traditional monumental vertical structures, sculptures	 Jiaxing Hero Park  Yangtze River National Culture Park  Yangtze River National Culture Park  Jizhou kiln national archaeological park
Information Overload	Using tedious Images, documents, and testimonies to represent historical events and people	  Jizhou kiln national archaeological park   The Yuanqiu Ruins park
Affective Detachment	Over-protection of heritage lacks interactivity.	 Tangshan Earthquake Memorial Park  Erlitou Archaeological Site Park

This study addresses these gaps by advancing an approach that integrates cultural memory-making with measurable socio-economic benefits, focusing on expanding inclusive public space through urban transformations (by enabling cost-efficient, resource-conscious regeneration). The transformation of retired pandemic infrastructure into multifunctional civic landscapes demonstrates how memorial design can operate simultaneously as a cultural intervention and a socio-economic development strategy.

1.4 Objectives & Hypotheses

Previous studies indicate that Chinese citizens, particularly in Wuhan, now prefer open, spacious outdoor environments over traditional public spaces (Zhang et al., 2022; Ma, 2024). In a dense metropolitan region of over 12 million residents, abandoned field hospital sites represent valuable land assets that, if strategically repurposed, could meet evolving social needs while avoiding resource wastage. Additionally, until 2020, Wuhan has more than 12 million permanent population, and more than 550,000 people lived in the Caidian district (Li et al., 2023). More importantly, this global pandemic event must be remembered. Thus, amidst the convergence of high-density urban agglomeration and post-pandemic societal transformations, there is an urgent need to develop innovative landscape architecture solutions that address both socio-cultural healing and urban economic resilience.

This study proposes the Anonymity Memorial Landscape concept, rooted in Nora's (1989) *Lieux de mémoire*, Young's (1992) and Ware's (2008) anti-memorial theory, and Wagoner and Brescó's (2022) counter-memorial framework. The design aims to: 1) Provide inclusive public spaces that accommodate everyday recreation and reflection, 2) Preserve collective memory without imposing singular narratives, 3) Achieve economic savings by reusing existing materials and infrastructure, and 4) Enhance resilience through flexible, multifunctional design adaptable to future emergencies.

By demonstrating the adaptive reuse of Huoshenshan Field Hospital, this research illustrates how post-crisis spatial transformation can strengthen local economies, promote social cohesion, and reduce spatial and economic inequalities, directly contributing to the journal's focus on the socio-economic dimensions of contemporary urbanisation. The following sections are organised as shown below (Figure 2).

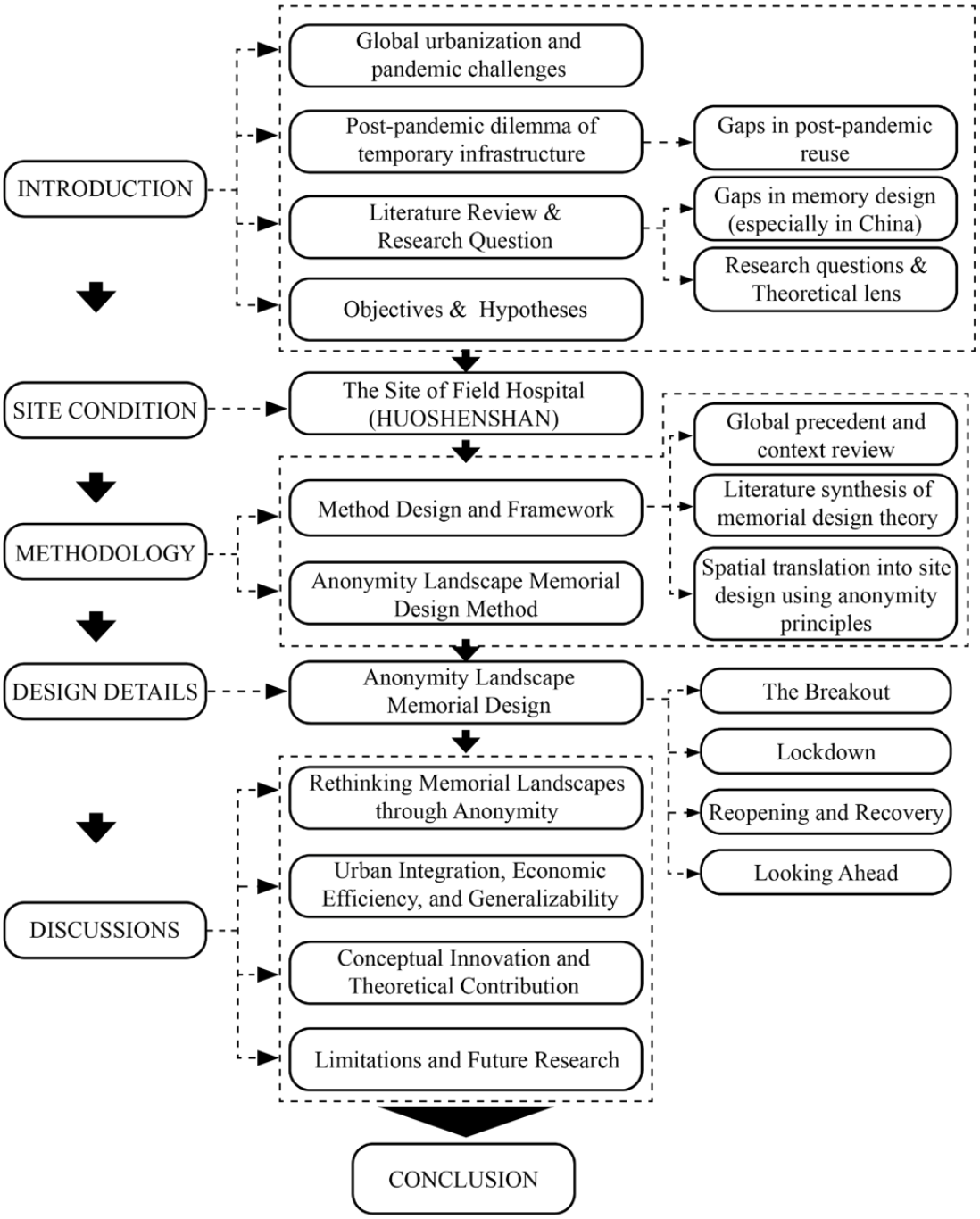


Figure 2. Structure of the Study.

2. The Site of Field Hospital (HUOSHENSHAN)

The 5-hectare Huoshenshan Hospital is located beside Zhiyin Lake in the Caidian District of Wuhan, China (Figure 3). It has been selected as a suitable site for building an emergent medical facility for COVID-19 as it is located in the leeward area of the CBD, thereby reducing the likelihood of the virus spreading due to wind (Chen et al. 2022). Moreover, the Caidian district features a low population density, thereby reducing the likelihood of virus transmission (Li et al., 2023). Additionally, a high-speed beltway (Zhiyin Lake Road) connects the site with the main city, and the relatively low and flat terrain provides suitable conditions for construction. Finally, as a positive influence on recovering patients, the nearby Zhiyin Lake affords good air quality and a pleasant environment (Chen et al. 2022). The site history map shows (Figure 1) that the site area was long-term green space from 1999-2019, the temporary field hospital was built in 2020, and the heritage still exists in 2025. The site condition photos (Figure 3) show that, except for the dominant field hospital preservation, there is a purification station, which is for the treatment of medical waste and the purification of medical sewage, located in the southwest of the site. A storage station, mainly for the storage of medical and living supplies, is built in the east corner of the field hospital site. In the southeast area is a healthcare center that provides living space for doctors and medical staff. Several groups of existing and constructing residential/housing areas are surrounded, and based on Chen et al. (2022) and the WUHAN Territorial Spatial Plan (2021-2035), more residential buildings will be constructed in this area.

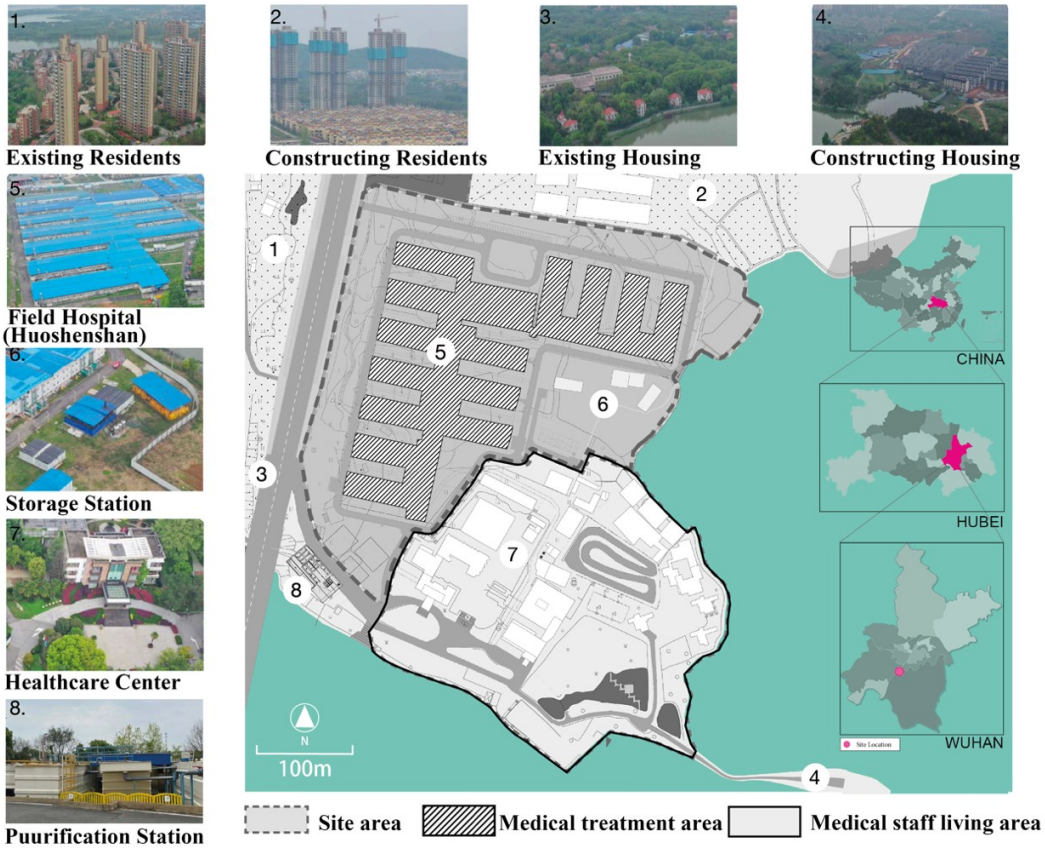


Figure 3. Detailed plan and condition photos of the site location(Drawn & photo by the Authors).

3. Methodology

3.1 Method Design and Framework

This study constructs a design-led qualitative method framework of 'Global precedent and context review, literature synthesis of memorial design theory, and Spatial translation into site design using anonymity principles' to form a monumental landscape design paradigm with spatial ethical value. The research is organised as follows (Figure 4).

First, we conduct a precedent and context review, and the global picture of the transformation of temporary medical facilities in the post-pandemic era is revealed through multi-source data mining and analysis. Since the establishment of the first field hospital in China, Wuhan Huoshenshan Hospital, a certain number of temporary field hospitals have been built in major countries and cities around the world. Typical examples include: Fiocruz Hospital Centre in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Golokhvastovo Modular Hospital in Moscow, Russia, and the regeneration of an abandoned hospital in Medellin, Colombia. These facilities are generally characterized by a spatial and temporal pattern of 'high-intensity use-rapid abandonment', creating a unique post-pandemic spatial heritage. According to the research from Zhang et al. (2022) and the site visit conclusion (Figure 3), there are a large number of residential construction areas around the Huoshenshan Hospital. Such a high density of residents needs to be supported by urban green space and public space. In addition, such a public safety event with a global impact has a memorial value. Therefore, the design of a memorial landscape park is selected as the theme of this research.

Next, we synthesize literature on memorial design theories; the literature analysis method is used to systematically deconstruct the research gap of the traditional monumental landscape. On this basis, this study innovatively integrates Pierre Nora's (1989) theory of 'Lieux de mémoire', James Young's (1992), SueAnne Ware's (2008) anti-memorial theory, and Wagoner and Brescó's (2022) framework of counter-memorial. We then propose a theoretical framework, 'Anonymity Landscape Memorial', to guide the design intervention.

Lastly, we apply the 'Anonymity Landscape Memorial' framework to translate the decommissioned field hospital site into a memorial park. Using anonymity principles, the theoretical model is transformed into an operable design system by using the methodology of spatial translation. The memorial space will be transformed from a static 'memory container' to a dynamic 'memory ecosystem'.

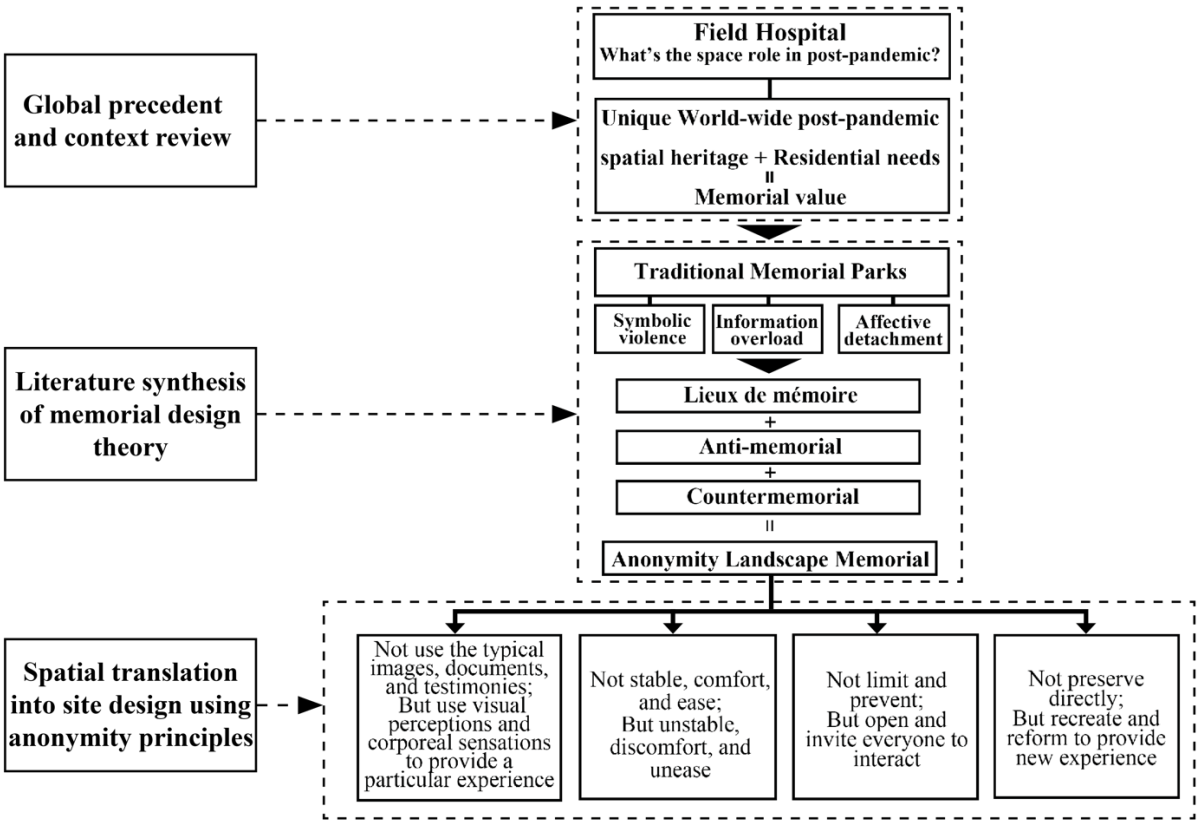


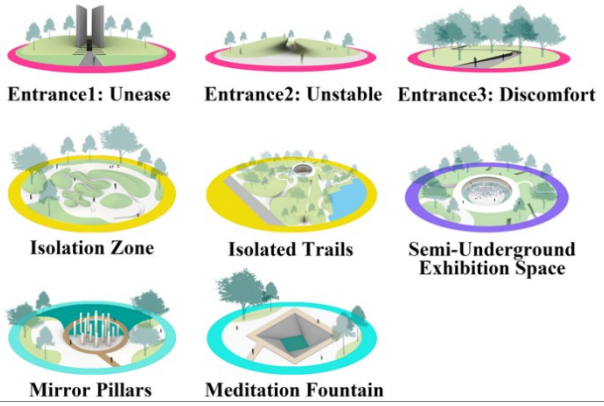
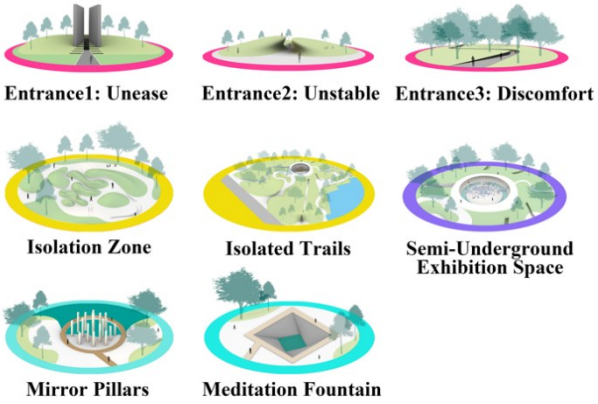
Figure 4. Methodology Framework.

3.2 Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design Method

To achieve the goal of the space of the field hospital transformation and reactivation, we conceptualized the transforming design around the ideas of anonymity. Rooted in James Young's (1992) and SueAnne Ware's (2008) anti-memorial theory, the theoretical framework and method of anonymity landscape memorial design mostly involve the following strategies (Table 2).

Firstly, the typical course of images, documents, and testimonies is sacrificed in favor of visual and corporeal sensations meant to bring about particular experiences. Most traditional memorial parks use monuments, images, documents, and testimonies to represent historical events and people, a practice that limits history and renders events more forgettable (Young, 1992; Olin, 1995). On the other hand, we intend to make use of landscape as a way of transitioning from staid memorials to unique and abstract visual and corporeal sensations. Hence, historical events can grow into specific experiences and feelings. The abstraction offered solutions that accommodate changing, more controversial, and uncertain attitudes toward history and its expression (Stevens & Franck, 2015). Secondly, the presentation of the memorial landscape should not feature stability, comfort, and ease but should evoke a sense of instability, discomfort, and unease, thus activating emotional interaction on the part of visitors, which in turn leads to deeper reflection. By means of a spatial strategy, the factual perspective of a historical event is to be diminished, while an unforgettable experience will be produced, and all these emotions and affections will potentially impact visitors' consciousness and imprint powerful messages upon their spirits (Giunta, 2014). Finally, traditional memorials represent the most essential elements in a great majority of classical memorial parks; however, to protect them, most are restricted and set off by a partition, whereby visitors are forbidden from touching, photographing, or even seeing the artefact at close quarters. In our design, visitors are invited to interact with designed landscapes rather than preventing them from making contact. Therefore, the original preservations in the anonymity memorial landscape necessitate a process by which they may be recreated and reformed, investing them with the capacity to provoke visitors' memories and emotions pertaining to the event, while also providing new experiences.

Table 2: The Theoretical Framework and Method of Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design.

Traditional Memorial Design Limitations	Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design Method	Design Scenarios
Not use the typical images, documents, and testimonies	But use visual perceptions and corporeal sensations to provide a particular experience	
Not stable, comfortable, or easy	But unstable, discomfort, and unease	
Not limit and prevent	But open and invite everyone to interact.	
Not preserve directly	But recreate and reform to provide a new experience.	

The next section will apply these strategies to detailed landscape designs by following the chronological progression of the pandemic.

4. Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design

Considering the fact that when the COVID-19 pandemic hits a country or city, governments have been prompted to order social distancing measures, quarantines, and lockdowns. Aiming for a fluid memorial experience for visitors, the design is informed by the following COVID-19 stages in Wuhan since January 2020.

4.1 The Breakout

This stage represents the fear of the unknown virus and health concerns. At the beginning of the pandemic, because of the rapidly spreading and high rate of infection and rate and the sudden lockdown of the city, a climate of fear took hold among the public.

Based on the anonymity landscape memorial design framework discussed earlier, the designated 3 entrances to the memorial park are meant to evoke this emotion. Each is designed by varying means in accordance with anonymity theory to trigger a sense of unease, instability, and discomfort (Figure 5).

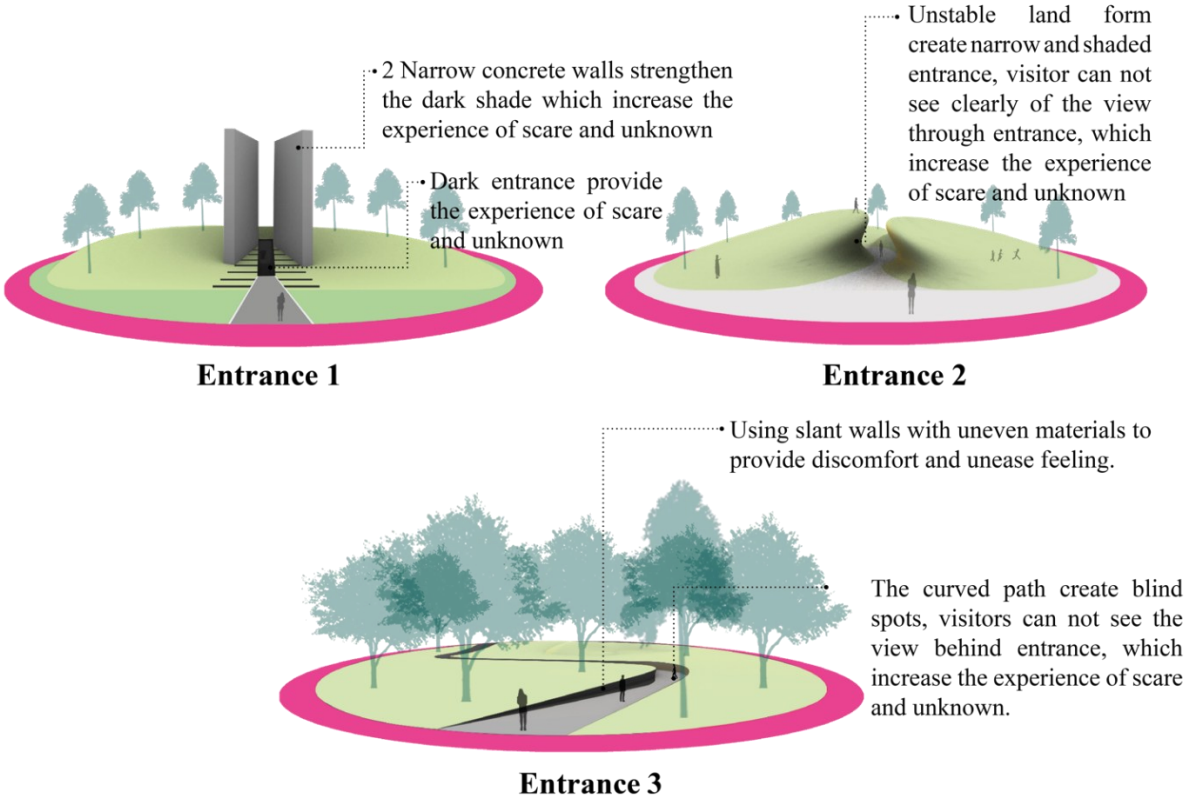


Figure 5. Design development for different entrances in Stage 1.

As a case in point, the entrance demonstrates how the anonymity theory is applied throughout the design project. For example, in designing Entrance 1 (Figure 6, left), the land area is raised to block the view and provide the feeling of the unknown. Thereafter, a dark entrance in the center increases the feeling of apprehension. Subsequently, the addition of two blocks of concrete increases the shady and dark atmosphere (Figure 6, right). The materials selected for this area will comprise concrete and raw stone, and the dominating colors will be grey and dark grey, congruent with fear and pessimism (Jonauskaite & Mohr, 2025), all elements contributing to an uneasy environment. When visitors come to this entrance, the high ridge of earth and concrete blocks will obstruct their view. As they pass through to the entrance, the concrete blocks will narrow their field of vision until they are engulfed in the dark underground space. During this process, the light will be gradually decreased, and visitors will be guided through a dark environment, invoking their fear of the unknown and of death.

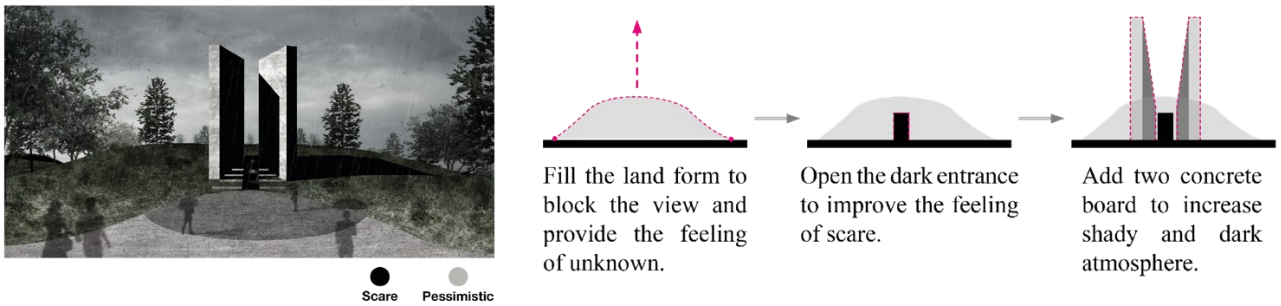


Figure 6. Perspective rendering of entrance 1 in Stage 1 (left) and Shaping diagram of entrance 1 in Stage 1 (right).

4.2 Lockdown

This stage represents the emotion associated with isolation. During this stage, not only those infected, but a great proportion of citizens experienced the isolation of differing degrees, which lasted for several months. Feelings of loneliness and helplessness arising from isolation were experienced during this stage.

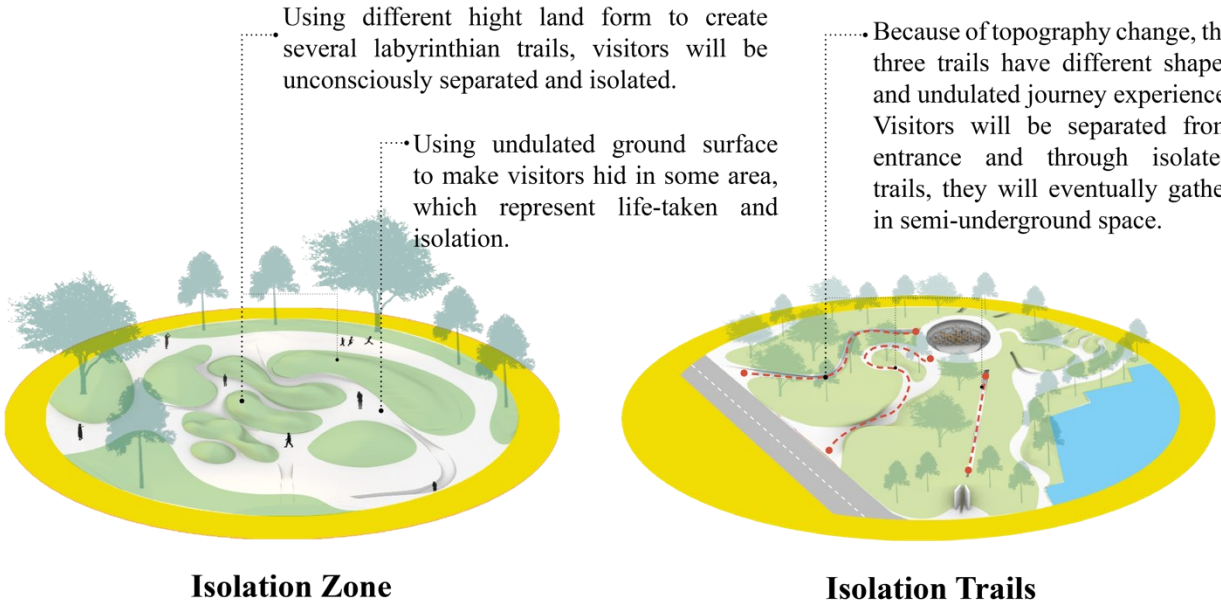


Figure 7. Design development for Stage 2: Isolation Zone and Isolation Trails.

In our design, we used an isolated trail and an isolation zone to represent the emotion associated with the lockdown stage (Figure 7). The isolation zone, as a representative example, is designed with multiple entrances, providing several options. During the conditioning process, the raised earth blocks the view, and then, raised earthworks at differing heights exacerbate the labyrinthine sense of being lost and isolated (Figure 8). In terms of materials, this area will be composed of raw concrete paths and stone and brick walls, providing a cold and labyrinthine feeling (Nakanishi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). According to Jonauskaite & Mohr (2025), purple and grey accord with lost and confusing feelings, and adding these two colors to stone, brick, and concrete will increase visitors' emotional resonance. As in human experiences, visitors choose different entrances at the beginning of their journey; however, the labyrinth will potentially separate them into various groups, which reinforces the feeling of loss and isolation. The different statues of the earthworks will separate other groups' visitors into areas featured from some other perspective, and this represents life taken during the pandemic. Because visitors will be potentially trapped in an isolation zone for an extended period, the stone brick labyrinth environment will not only provide the feeling of isolation but also encourage visitors to reflect.

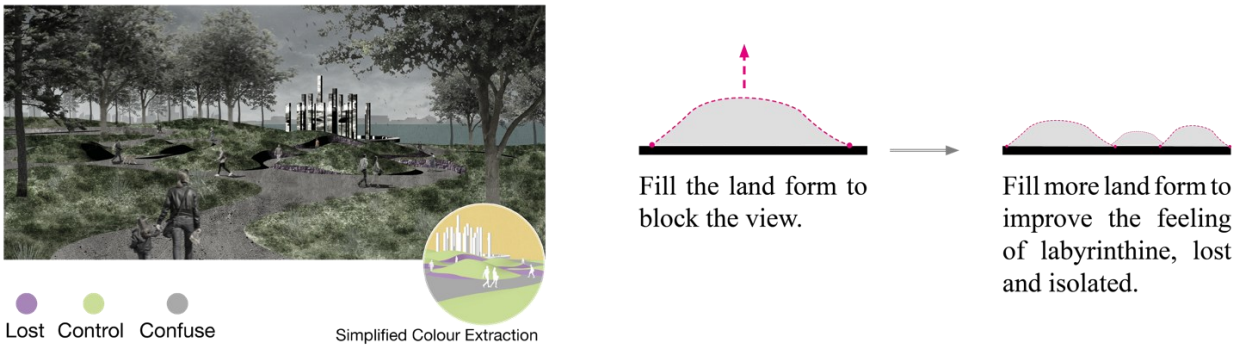


Figure 8. Perspective rendering of the isolated zone (left) and the shaping of the diagram of the isolated zone (right).

4.3 Reopening and Recovery

This stage represents the emotion that took hold as the city returned to the 'New Norm'. However, people were still living in the shadow of a pandemic. During this stage, the city had effectively managed its cases of infection, opened facilities, and allowed the public to return to their normal life, giving rise to a feeling of hope and faith. Nevertheless, with endless new confirmed cases in other cities, the emotion of fear still persists. The reopening-and-recovery concept will not be limited to representing ongoing emotions during the pandemic, but rather, it will present a circumstance that encourages visitors to respond individually, with diverse understandings of the entire space and the event.

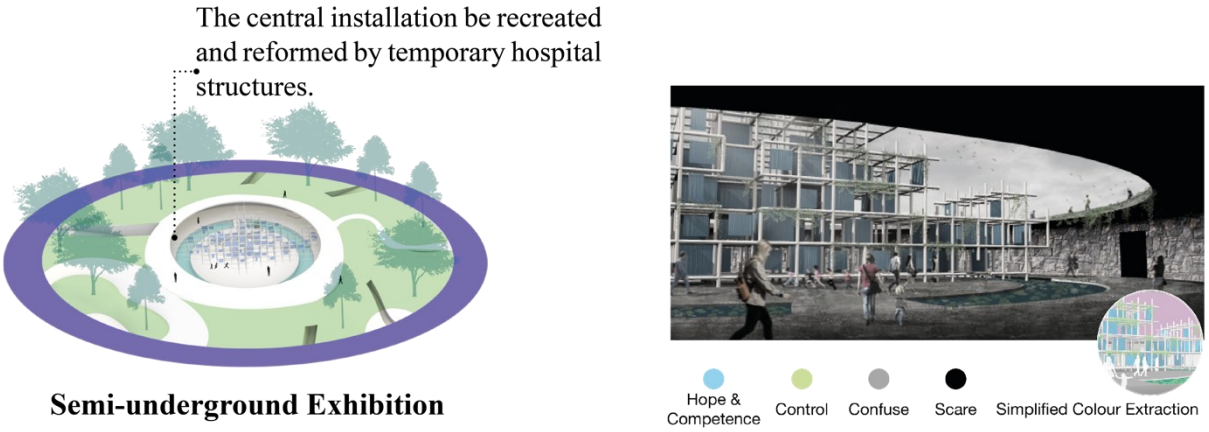


Figure 9. Design development for stage 3: Exhibition space diagram (left) and perspective rendering (right).

The design of this stage includes a semi-underground exhibition space (Figure 9, left). In the middle of this space, the recreated temporary hospital structure is discovered. While the hospital was not directly preserved, original materials (color-coated plates and metal columns) recreated a new infrastructure. Visitors will be invited to interact with this structure, provoking negative emotions experienced during pandemics and incurred by temporary hospitals. Meanwhile, an aperture at the top of the sculpture brings natural light into the underground space, a combination of structural elements and light that gives rise to hope and faith (Su et al., 2025) (Figure 9, right). In addition to the materials from the hospital, there are also raw concrete, stone, and brick, which lend a sense of discomfort, meditation, and fascination (Nakanishi et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). The blue color of the color-coated plate will lend visitors a feeling of safety and hope (Jonauskaite & Mohr, 2025). This space is located in the center of the entire park, which connects with all other areas. Every outer entrance will guide people to the underground space. When they come into the underground space, a dark channel will lead them to the middle sculpture area. During their interaction with the infrastructure, they will remember the difficult period of the pandemic until hope is restored by natural light from above. Still, the surrounding areas are relatively dark and shady, as a reminder that the pandemic is ongoing; while people can see the light at the end of the tunnel, they still live in the shadow of the pandemic. Additionally, the water pond in this AOI will connect with the existing purification station by underground pipe and storage system, which can not only reactively preserve the station but also provide a self-circulating water system for the whole park (Figure 10).

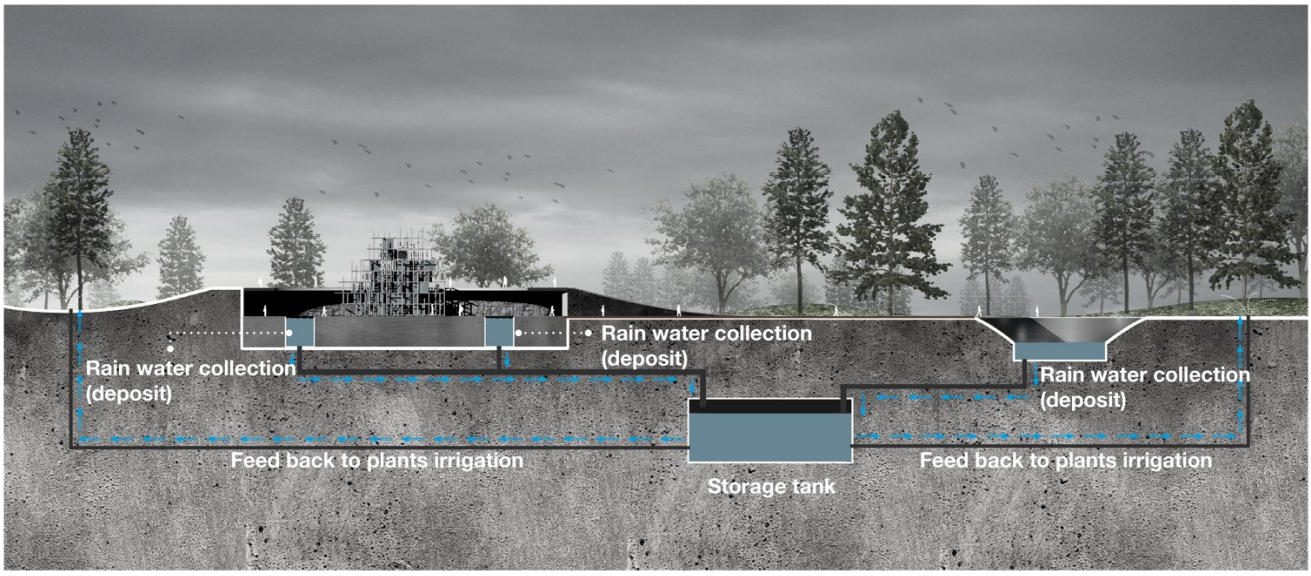


Figure 10. Diagram of the self-circulated water system.

4.4 Looking Ahead

This stage represents the feeling of mindfulness, hope, and expectations for the future. In the post-pandemic times, the public will be encouraged to reconsider the relationships represented by the terms life and death, devastation and salvation, while contemplating a new urban lifestyle. Ultimately, the project in its entirety aims to potentially encourage visitors' meditation and rumination.

The design of this stage includes two areas, mirror pillars and a meditation fountain (Figure 11). Taking the mirror pillars as an example, the whole area uses unlimited entrances to encourage entry from different directions (Figure 12). In the middle of this area, 19 pillars stand for the COVID-19 pandemic. The materials selected are mirrors and concrete, providing a meditative environment. When visitors come to this area, they will first see the mirror pillars, which reflect the back view of the temporary hospital installation, standing for the influence of the pandemic. Through the gap between pillars, visitors catch sight of a nice view of Zhiyin Lake, which represents positive expectations for the future. A concrete loop surrounding the pillars encourages interaction with the installation. As compared with regular paths, the loop provides a longer journey and upturns visitors' direction but immerses them in a quiet and mindful atmosphere. When visitors walk on the loop, they can simultaneously regard their own reflections along with that of the hospital installation, in addition to the natural lake, which encourages them to deeply consider the relationship between human and nature, human and pandemic, post-pandemic, and new urban lifestyle (Zhu et al., 2021).

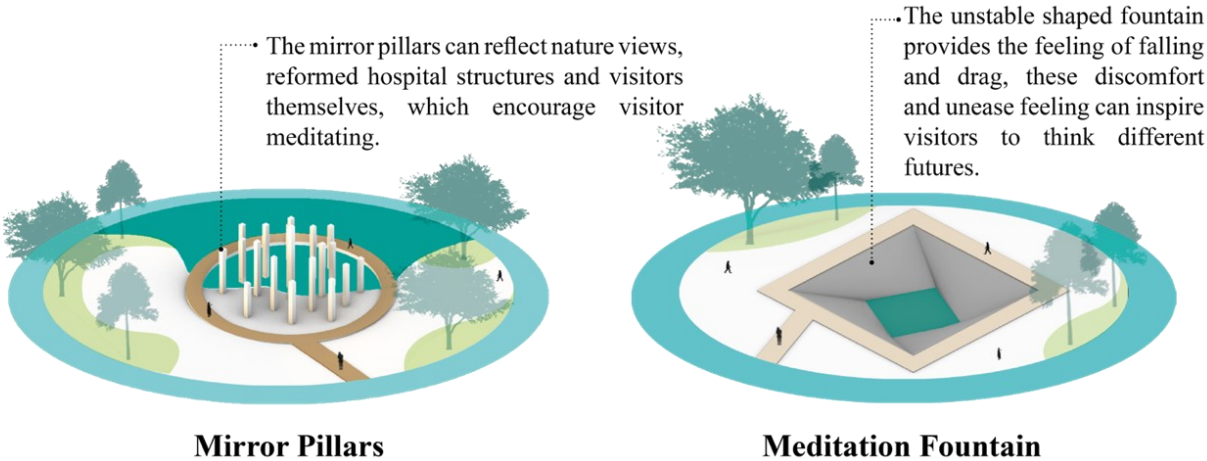


Figure 11. Design development for stage 4: Mirror Pillars and Meditation Fountain.

Figure 12. Perspective rendering of mirror pillars.

5. Discussions

5.1 Rethinking Memorial Landscapes through Anonymity

The transformation of the Huoshenshan Field Hospital into a memorial park demonstrates the potential of the anonymity landscape paradigm to reconceptualize how public spaces can evoke memory, emotion, and reflection in post-crisis contexts. This design intentionally diverges from traditional monumental practices by shifting away from prescriptive symbolism toward abstraction and experiential engagement. It decentralizes narrative authority, encouraging visitors to construct their own meanings through embodied, multi-sensory interaction.

This approach directly addresses the research aim of developing a new memorial design paradigm that aligns with post-pandemic social needs. By applying theories of *Lieux de mémoire*, anti-memorial, and counter-memorial design, the intervention supports pluralistic memory formation, prioritizing emotional resonance over representational clarity. Visitors encounter discomfort and instability—through narrow paths, enclosed spaces, or fragmented sightlines - which act as catalysts for emotional response and critical reflection.

However, while emotional discomfort may promote deeper reflection for some users, it may alienate others. Responses to ambiguous or affectively charged spaces are likely to vary by age, culture, and trauma experience. Future work should evaluate these differences through empirical methods, such as behavioral observation or post-occupancy surveys, to assess how different groups engage with and interpret the anonymity landscape.

5.2 Urban Integration, Economic Efficiency, and Generalizability

The design not only fulfils commemorative and symbolic purposes but also meets practical needs for urban integration and cost-effective land use. By retaining and reconfiguring existing site infrastructure, the project achieves a material recycling rate of 62.5% and approximately of CNY 7.94 million (US$ 1.10million) in cost savings (Table 3). These figures are not merely indicators of cost efficiency but represent a strategic contribution to urban economic resilience - reducing demand for new construction materials, lowering carbon and financial costs, and freeing municipal budgets for reinvestment in community services. By preserving the site's land value and transforming it into a productive public asset, the project demonstrates how post-crisis design can simultaneously address environmental sustainability and socio-economic stability in rapidly urbanising contexts.

Although rooted in Wuhan's context, the anonymity landscape framework possesses global applicability. Its guiding principles—adaptive reuse, abstraction, emotional provocation, and civic re-engagement—are relevant in other post-crisis contexts, including former disaster shelters, refugee camps, and abandoned emergency facilities. The model thus offers a replicable strategy for transforming sites of trauma into inclusive, healing public realms.

This approach also carries implications for urban policy and practice. It suggests that post-crisis infrastructure should not be demolished or abandoned, but strategically reimagined through spatial narratives that promote social cohesion, memory, and resilience—offering cities an ethically and economically grounded path toward recovery.

Table 3: Estimated Economic Savings in the Reuse of Huoshenshan Field Hospital.

Material Category (Luo et al., 2020; Tong, 2021; Gao et al., 2024)	**Specification/Application**	**Unit Consumption in Huoshenshan Hospital (Luo et al., 2020; Tong, 2021; Gao et al., 2024)**	**Unit Consumption in Anonymity-Landscape Infrastructure**	**Unit Price (2025)**	**Economic Savings (Guo et al., 2025)**
Steel Plate	Galvanized Steel Plate (e.g., Exhibition space in Figure 9, Mirror pillars in Figure 11), Steel doors can be adapted into storage and utility enclosures.	1500 tons	1024.16 /tons	¥4320/ton	¥ 4,424,371.2(CNY)
	Color-Coated Plate (e.g., Exhibition space in Figure 9)	300 tons	174.823 /tons	¥6800/ton	¥ 1,188,796.4(CNY)
Piping Materials	Square/Rectangular Steel Tube (e.g., Exhibition space in Figure 9, Mirror pillars in Figure 11)	420.75 tons	400.88 /tons	¥4000/ton	¥1,603,200(CNY)
	Galvanized Round Steel Tube (e.g., Exhibition space in Figure 9, Mirror pillars in Figure 11, Entrance 1: Unease in Figure 5, Safety rails near water features: Mirror pillars' platform and Meditation fountain in Figure 11).	62.1 tons	60.68 /tons	¥4650/ton	¥282,162(CNY)
Paving Blocks, Curbstones, Vinyl, Composite Panels, Tiles	Pathway surfacing, boundary demarcation (e.g., Isolated trails and isolation zone in Figure 7), Observation platforms near Zhiyin Lake (e.g., mirror pillars platform in Figure 11), and boardwalks (Isolated trails in Figure 7) through landscaped areas.	>5000m^2 (Indoor & Outdoor)	3467m^2	Mean ¥95/m^2	¥329,365(CNY)
Windows Doors	Glass panels could create transparent screening walls for wind protection in seating areas	1650 Glasses	500 Glasses' material (512.4m^2)	¥220/m^2	¥112,728(CNY)
					Total: ¥7,940,622.6(CNY) (US$ 1.10million)

5.3 Conceptual Innovation and Theoretical Contribution

This research makes a distinct theoretical contribution by proposing the Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design as a new memorial typology that uniquely integrates commemorative landscape design with strategies for urban economic regeneration. This linkage is rarely addressed in the current literature, where memorial design is often treated solely as a cultural or symbolic practice. By embedding adaptive reuse and resource efficiency into the memorial design process, the framework demonstrates how memory-making can be an active driver of socio-economic recovery, particularly in post-crisis urban contexts, especially in China.

The conceptual innovation lies in the synthesis of three theoretical traditions—lieux de mémoire, anti-memorial, and counter-memorial—and their translation into a spatial methodology applicable to post-crisis urban conditions. The study bridges the gap between landscape design theory and urban crisis response, offering a framework that is not only emotionally resonant but also operationalizable through specific spatial tactics.

This fusion of theory and practice contributes to the growing interdisciplinary field that intersects landscape architecture, urban resilience, and memory studies. It invites further inquiry into how effective design can operate as both civic infrastructure and cultural narrative. Moreover, the anonymity landscape paradigm may provide a model for other under-theorized areas of spatial reuse, such as temporary refugee camps, vacant industrial lands, or even post-conflict demilitarized zones.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

While the anonymity landscape approach emphasizes inclusivity and openness, it may also be critiqued as a conceptual design study; this project lacks empirical validation through participatory design, public feedback, or post-occupancy assessment. Emotional and spatial responses remain untested, and the absence of community co-design may limit acceptance or long-term usability. Future research should integrate public consultation into the design process and evaluate how visitors experience and interpret discomfort, abstraction, and interactivity on-site.

Additionally, cultural specificity must be considered. While the theoretical frameworks are broadly applicable, local traditions of mourning, memory, and civic use will shape how such spaces function elsewhere. Comparative international case studies will help assess the scalability and adaptability of the anonymity memorial landscape paradigm.

6. Conclusions

This study advances emerging scholarship on the repurposing of temporary field hospital sites and the reclamation of urban space in the post-pandemic era. It identifies key gaps in Chinese conventional monumental landscape design and proposes a novel theoretical and design paradigm: Anonymity Landscape Memorial Design, which is then applied to the Huoshenshan Field Hospital in Wuhan, China. The design transforms a site of crisis into a resilient, multifunctional civic space, demonstrating how this paradigm enables adaptive reuse, avoids demolition, and activates underutilized land. Economically, the approach achieves a 62.5% material recycling rate and approximately CNY 7.94 million (US$ 1.10million) in cost savings. Beyond material reuse, it offers a socio-cultural benefit by transforming a site of crisis into a resilient public realm.

The anonymity landscape memorial framework offers a replicable model for cities facing similar challenges, particularly those with temporary infrastructure generated during health emergencies or natural disasters. Its flexibility and experiential emphasis position it as a resilient design strategy for future civic space development. However, the conceptual nature of the project presents limitations. Empirical studies are needed to assess how such spaces are perceived, used, and remembered by the public. Future research should evaluate emotional, psychological, and behavioral impacts through post-occupancy analysis and participatory methods. Comparative studies across cultural contexts would further validate the model's transferability. Ultimately, this research bridges landscape architecture, memory studies, and urban planning to address socio-economic inequalities in rapidly urbanising cities. It responds to the urgent need for sustainable, inclusive, and emotionally responsive

public spaces in the aftermath of global crises - demonstrating how design can transform loss into shared civic value. Tthis approach offers a replicable model for delivering both socio-economic and cultural value, advancing more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable urban futures.

Acknowledgements
This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors. The authors thank Sidh Sintusingha, Matt Sykes, and Elly Russel for their constructive feedback in the early stage of the study.

Funding
This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Conflicts of Interest
The author(s) declare(s) no conflicts of interest.

Data availability statement
The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author/s.

Institutional Review Board Statement
Not applicable.

CRediT author statement
H.M.: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Resources; Software; Validation; Visualization; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing. S.C.: Conceptualization; Methodology; Project administration; Resources; Supervision; Writing – review & editing. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

References

Al-azzawi, S., İnalhan, G., & Al-azzawi, N. (2024). The Relationship Between Sense of Place and Nature-based Architectural Beauty: A Comparative Case Study. *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs, 8*(1), 102-119. https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2024.v8n1-6

Alhmoud, S. H., & Çağnan, Ç. (2023). Adapting Hospital Interior Architecture Process to Technological Advancement in the Management of Pandemic Cases in Jordan. *Buildings, 13*(10), 2602. https://doi.org/10.3390/buildings13102602

Bernardez-Pereira, S., Schettino, G. P. P., Marra, A. R., Parreira, K. C. J., Racy, F. C. J., Miranda, R. M., Codeço, A. M., Jaures, M., Pagliuso, J. G. D., Neto, M. C., Laselva, C. R., Klajner, S., Teich, V. D., Giliberti, D. N., Kobayashi, T., Edmond, M. B., & Malheiro, D. T. (2025). Cost-effectiveness analysis of implementing a field hospital in a soccer stadium during a pandemic. *Front. Public Health*, *13,* 1513709. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2025.1513709

Chen, S., Zhang, Z., Yang, J., Wang, J., Zhai, X., Bärnighausen, T., & Wang, C. (2020). Fangcang shelter hospitals: A novel concept for responding to public health emergencies. *The Lancet, 395*(10232), 1305–1314. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30744-3

Chen, Y., Lei, J., Li, J., Zhang, Z., Yu, Z., & Du, C. (2022). Design characteristics on the indoor and outdoor air environments of the COVID-19 emergency hospital. *Journal of Building Engineering, 45*, 103246. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jobe.2021.103246

Costa, R. da G.-R., Santos, R. S. da C., & Martire, G. E. (2024). Manguinhos hospitals: reflections on scientific politics and heritage, from tropical diseases to covid-19. *História, Ciências, Saúde-Manguinhos, 31* (Suppl 1), e2024054. https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-59702024000100054

Gao, M., Guo, Y., Hou, H., Wang, P., & Wang, S. (2024). Assembly process based on supply chain management of prefabricated houses using BIM. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers - Structures and Buildings, 177* (5), 385–396. https://doi.org/10.1680/jstbu.22.00153

Giunta, A. (2014). Feeling the Past: Display and the Art of Memory in Latin America. *Journal of Curatorial Studies, 3* (2-3), 320-345. https://doi.org/10.1386/jcs.3.2-3.320_1

Guo, Z., Luo, Y., Yi, T., Jing, X., & Ma, J. (2025). Harnessing the power of improved deep learning for precise building material price predictions. *Buildings 15*(6), 873. https://doi.org/10.3390/BUILDINGS15060873

Jonauskaite, D., & Mohr, C. (2025). Do we feel colours? A systematic review of 128 years of psychological research linking colours and emotions. *Psychonomic Bulletin & Review, 32*(4), 1457–1486. https://doi.org/10.3758/s13423-024-02615-z

Kuys, B., Given, L. M., Kuys, J., & Jackson, S. (2024). Co-designing inclusive war memorials for metaphoric symbolism. *Landscape Research, 50*(1), 168–188. https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2024.2387175

Li, F., Zhou, J., Wei, W., & Yin, L. (2023). Spatial Distribution Pattern and Evolution Characteristics of Elderly Population in Wuhan Based on Census Data. *Land, 12*(7), 1350. https://doi.org/10.3390/land12071350

Liu, M., Zhu, X., & Lian, J. (2025). A novel epidemic-logistics optimization model for Fangcang hospital allocation with fairness consideration. *Expert Systems with Applications, 276*, 127143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eswa.2025.127143

Luo, H., Liu, J., Li, C., Chen, K., & Zhang, M. (2020). Ultra-rapid delivery of specialty field hospitals to combat COVID-19: Lessons learned from the Leishenshan Hospital project in Wuhan. *Automation in Construction, 119*, 103345. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.autcon.2020.103345

Ma, F. (2024). Assessing immediate and lasting impacts of COVID-19-induced isolation on green space usage patterns. *GeoHealth, 8*(8), e2024GH001062. https://doi.org/10.1029/2024GH001062

Nakanishi, E. Y., Poulin, P., Blanchet, P., Dubuis, M.-E., Drouin, M., Rhéaume, C., & Goupil-Sormany, I. (2024). A systematic review of the implications of construction materials on occupants' physical and psychological health. *Building and Environment, 257*, 111527. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.buildenv.2024.111527

Nora, P. (1989). Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire. *Representations, 26*, 7–24. https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520

Olin, M.R. (1995). The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History. *Modernism/modernity 2*(3), 188-190. https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/mod.1995.0051.

Razzak, R. R., Pribadi, C. B., & Deviantari, U. W. (2023). GIS-Based Emergency Hospital Location Suitability Analysis (Case Study: Surabaya City). *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science, 1127*(1), 012045. https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1127/1/012045

Stevens, Q., Franck, K. A., & Fazakerley, R. (2012). Counter-monuments: the anti-monumental and the dialogic. *The Journal of Architecture, 17*(6), 951–972. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2012.746035

Stevens, Q., & Franck, K. A. (2015). *Memorials as spaces of engagement: Design, use and meaning*, 88-158. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315747002

Su, H., Wei, W., Liu, X., Wang, Q., & Yang, B. (2025). A pilot study exploring the impact of daylight gradient on occupant in underground space. *Developments in the Built Environment, 22*, 100658. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dibe.2025.100658

Tong, Y. (2021). Factors for optimizing time performance of Modular Construction: A review and evidence from Huoshenshan Hospital construction. *In 2021 IEEE 12th International Conference on Mechanical and Intelligent Manufacturing Technologies (ICMIMT*）, 45–48. https://doi.org/10.1109/ICMIMT52186.2021.9476172

Ware, S. A. (2008). Anti-memorials and the art of forgetting: Critical reflections on a memorial design practice. *Public History Review, 15*, 61-76. https://doi.org/10.5130/phrj.v15i0.632

Wagoner, B. & Brescó, I. (2022). Memorials as Healing Places: A Matrix for Bridging Material Design and Visitor Experience. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(11), 6711. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116711

Ying, W., Dai, X., & Shen, W. (2025). Rapid project delivery through bricolage and planning: A case study of the Huoshenshan Hospital project. *Journal of Construction Engineering and Management, 151*(8), 05025003. https://doi.org/10.1061/JCEMD4.COENG-15066

Young, J. E. (1992). The counter-monument: Memory against itself in Germany today. *Critical Inquiry, 18*(2), 267–296. https://doi.org/10.1086/448632

Zhang, N., Zhao, L., Shi, J., & Gao, W. (2024). Impact of visual and textural characteristics of street walls on stress recovery. *Scientific Reports, 14*, 15115. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-64618-z

Zhang, S., Yu, P., Chen, Y., Jing, Y., & Zeng, F. (2022). Accessibility of Park Green Space in Wuhan, China: Implications for Spatial Equity in the Post-COVID-19 Era. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(9), 5440. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19095440

Zhu, J. L., Schülke, R., Vatansever, D., Xi, D., Yan, J., Zhao, H., Xie, X., Feng, J., Chen, M. Y., Sahakian, B. J., & Wang, S. (2021). Mindfulness practice for protecting mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Translational Psychiatry, 11*(1), 329. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41398-021-01459-8

How to cite this article? (APA Style)

Ma, H. & Chen, S. (2025). Landscape of Anonymity: Transforming the Retired COVID-19 Field Medical Facility into A Memorial Park. *Journal of Contemporary Urban Affairs*, 9(2), 527–545. https://doi.org/10.25034/ijcua.2025.v9n2-10