

GILDING GALLIPOLI

WHEN ASKED TO DESIGN THE SITE FOR THE ANZAC DAWN SERVICE AT GALLIPOLI, DM TAYLOR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS FELT A MONUMENTAL APPROACH WAS INAPPROPRIATE BECAUSE OF THE PLETHORA OF MEMORIALS ALREADY THERE. BY MATHEW TAYLOR.

"Anzac stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat."
CEW Bean (official Australian war historian)



It can be said that Australia has two symbolic places of the heart, one being Uluru and the other Gallipoli. Gallipoli is the place where Australians first fought as a nation, showing courage, resourcefulness and mateship in extreme adversity. It is known as Australia's "baptism of fire". For these reasons, Gallipoli has long been a place of pilgrimage, with relations of soldiers who fought there making their journey to the peninsula from 1919 to the present day.

It is an area of national significance for Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. For the Turks this is where Kemal, later to become Ataturk, the first leader of the Republic of Turkey, was instrumental in the defeat of the Allies.

Prior to the campaign of 1915, Gallipoli had been a place of conflict, with close proximity to the city of Troy and subject to territorial struggles between Europe and Asia Minor over a number of centuries. As Les Carolyn notes in his book, *Gallipoli* (published in 2001), "Because it was fought so close to his old home ground, Homer might have seen this war on the Gallipoli Peninsula as an epic. Brief by his standards, but essentially heroic."

The casualties in the campaign amounted to over 40,000 Allied troops killed and 97,000 wounded; the effect on the populace in Australia and New Zealand was understandably shocking. The first commemoration of the campaign at Gallipoli occurred in Australia and New Zealand on April 25, 1916.

As a result of the dramatic events of WWI, and as partial atonement for the grief and guilt, there was a plethora of memorials built in the 1920s and '30s, both on the battlefields and throughout the countries engaged in the campaigns,

Top: The ANZAC Commemorative Site has enough space for 15,000 dawn service visitors.

Above: Gallipoli's rugged coastline.



Above: The interpretative wall is made from handcut sandstone from the Canakkale region with glass panels inserted throughout.

ruggedness of the landscape with its Mediterranean scrub and scree slopes, adding a deliberate poignancy to the scene and highlighting the foreign, but strangely familiar landscape to the Australian visitor.

In recent times, Gallipoli has been a focus to Australians and New Zealanders in particular in their search for both identity and meaning in a modern world. It is this questioning of values and the resultant search for meaning where Gallipoli and the legacy of the ANZAC tradition has been revisited, reaching a greater public acknowledgement. This has led to a substantial increase in numbers attending the dawn service that even 10 years ago could not have been envisaged. At Ari Burnu, the former location of the dawn service, the increasing numbers had started to affect the fabric of the cemetery with damage to the gravestones and surroundings.

It is within this historical framework that the ANZAC Commemorative Site was required to form a focal gathering place for both the dawn service of April 25th and day-to-day cultural visitation. Taylor Brammer Landscape

particularly Australia. On the battlefields, the memorials were centred on cemeteries and evolved into a series of more deliberate and dominant forms culminating in objects such as the *Memorial to the Missing* at Thiepval in the Somme in France, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.

Gallipoli has its share of cemeteries and memorials built in the same period. The most evocative memorials are the cemeteries with such names as Shrapnel Valley, Plugge Plateau, Ari Burnu (Bee's Nose in Turkish) and Beach Cemetery, located where the fallen were originally interred and thus having a strong association with the place. The form of the cemeteries with their straight rows of gravestones and informal planting of flowering perennials followed the guidelines as set out by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyl in their role as official designers of graves and memorials for the British Empire after WWI.

These areas of order contrast with the

Architects Pty Ltd (DM Taylor Landscape Architects Pty Ltd at the time) was introduced to the project through memorial work in France at the Australian Corps Memorial Park at Le Hamel (1998) and prior to that the Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway in Concord, NSW (1995). These projects had established the reputation of the company and on this basis it was asked to design and document the ANZAC Commemorative Site within a relatively short time frame for the opening on Anzac Day 2000. A number of site visits were made during construction, with particular construction issues managed by email and telephone.

The site is located between the escarpment and North Beach, 300 metres north of Ari Burnu Cemetery and ANZAC Cove.



Sphinx being the name given by the Australians and New Zealanders to the rocky escarpment behind the site. The glade is formed by the intersection of the parabolas and consists of a combination of native grasses and low shrubs accommodating the dawn service and day-to-day visitation.

The built elements of the site follow the shore of the Aegean Sea and consist of two long, low walls, one an interpretative wall to the road that bisects the site and the other a commemorative wall atop a vegetated bank adjacent to the sea. The interpretative wall is 3.5 metres at its maximum height, on which is located glass interpretative panels. The commemorative wall is 600 millimetres high on which is located the word ANZAC; this provides a focus to the path that leads to the seafront. From the road, two inclined pathways lead past the interpretative wall to a central walkway, leading to the commemorative wall. From this point, informal pathways lead to the beach and sea.

The material chosen was a durable local sandstone from the Canakkale region, with all the stone being handcut. Concrete walls and footings underlay the constructed items. The road is cobbled in a porphyry stone.

The site was unveiled in 2000 by the Prime Minister of Australia and the Prime Minister of New Zealand and attended by senior Turkish authorities.

The location was chosen because of the rugged topography of the area, the requirement of a space for 10,000 to 15,000 people for the dawn service combined with the limitations on pedestrian and vehicular access. Both North Beach and ANZAC Cove were the sites of the dawn landing on April 25, 1915.

One cannot pretend that a memorial is not a function of the prevailing sentiment of the time, and the ANZAC Commemorative Site is no different. Its form is a reflection of the ongoing evolving requirements of memorials and their places, the site identified by the concept of a broad glade defined by the dramatic surrounding landscape setting. This setting provides an almost overpowering curtilage to what is the end of a journey or pilgrimage for many visitors and participants to the site.

The design of the ANZAC Commemorative Site reflects this search for meaning by deliberately including the natural character and landscape setting that form an integral part of the memorial. By so doing, the site is not perceived as one of the memorials at Gallipoli but as a place for contemplation and to gain a further understanding of the campaign, particularly through the interpretative material on site. This is in deliberate contrast to the other existing memorials with their own messages and form.

For Australians and New Zealanders, coming from a far-off land by sea, landing on a foreign beach and moving up through the bush to the rearing escarpment behind, the concept of journey is integral to the meaning and form of the design. This sense of the original journey undertaken by the soldiers is facilitated by the design. This concept is a vital part of the place, a location that is heavy with meaning and national heritage.

A subtle but strong form of two intersecting parabolas marks the site, the major parabola orientated to The Sphinx and the sea, The

Top: The firm previously designed the Australian Corps Memorial Park at Le Hamel.

Above: The rocky escarpment behind the ANZAC memorial site was given the name The Sphinx by Australian and New Zealand soldiers.