

Freedom Park Pretoria



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1 Overview:

Freedom Park celebrates South Africa's heritage. It is a centre of knowledge aimed at deepening the understanding of the nation. It strives to accommodate all of the country's experiences and symbols to tell one coherent story.

Freedom Park is a national and international site that celebrates the ideals of liberty, diversity and human rights.

Freedom Park is a cultural institution housing a museum and a memorial dedicated to chronicling and honouring the many who contributed to South Africa's liberation. The museum aims to preserve and narrate the story of the African continent, and specifically South Africa, from the dawn of humanity, through pre-colonial, colonial and apartheid history and heritage, to the post-apartheid nation of today. It is a long walk, spanning some 3.6 billion years.

[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/overview.html>]

1.1 Vision:

To be a leading national and international icon of humanity and freedom.

[Taken from: "Freedom Park Revised Strategic Plan 2020/25" document and <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/overview.html>]

1.2 Mission:

To be a pioneering and empowering heritage destination that challenges visitors to reflect upon our past, improve our present and build on our future as a united nation.

[Taken from: "Freedom Park Revised Strategic Plan 2020/25" document (page 10) and <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/overview.html>]

1.3 Values:

In carrying out our mandate, we are committed to the following values that support the principles of Ubuntu:

- ✓ Respect of diversity
- ✓ Inclusivity
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Transparency and Accountability
- ✓ Patriotism
- ✓ Human dignity

[Taken from: "Freedom Park Revised Strategic Plan 2020/25" document (page 10)]

1.4 Mandate

Honour the heroes and heroines of the struggles for freedom and humanity by memorialisation and storytelling that narrates a story spanning a period of 3.6 billion years through the following seven epochs: Earth, Ancestors, Peopling, Resistance and Colonisation, Industrialisation and Urbanisation, Nationalism and Struggle, and Nation Building and Continent Building.

[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/overview/vision-mission-and-strategic-goals.html> and <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/overview.html>]

1.5 Freedom Park can be summarised in five themes:

1.5.1 Culture

- ✓ Freedom Park is a cultural centre dedicated to telling South Africa's diverse stories, from its architectural style to the sacred symbols scattered across its grounds.

1.5.2 Heritage

- ✓ The Park chronicles the African and South African stories, from Earth's early beginnings to humanity emerging; from African civilisations to colonialism and industrialisation; and from apartheid to democracy.

1.5.3 History

- ✓ Freedom Park is a memorial honouring those who sacrificed their lives to win freedom.

1.5.4 Indigenous knowledge

- ✓ The Park celebrates indigenous knowledge unique to South Africa's diverse cultures.

1.5.5 Spirituality

- ✓ Freedom Park acknowledges and honours the spirituality of all the continent's peoples as a force for reconciliation and healing.
- ✓ A visit to Freedom Park is a liberating, cleansing and inspirational experience, a pilgrimage back to wholeness. The Park invites local and international visitors to celebrate the diversity of the country's histories and personal stories, add their own stories, and pay tribute to the many South Africans who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for liberation and freedom.
- ✓ At heart, it is a reminder of where we come from, connecting our past to our present, and is a beacon to a future in which human rights, liberty and diversity are enshrined.

[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview.html>]

2 History of the park

The site of Freedom Park was carefully chosen, a 52-hectare undeveloped hill called Salvokop overlooking the city of Pretoria, situated to the south of the Pretoria CBD, between the M1 and Nelson Mandela Drive – a major gateway to the city from the South. It was here that the nation's heroes would be honoured and the complex story of South Africa and its people would be told.

Freedom Park is a memorial to honour those who sacrificed their lives to win freedom. It also celebrates and explores the country's diverse peoples, and our common humanity.

Freedom Park was established as one of the key Presidential Legacy Projects in the South African government's response to the need identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for symbolic reparations of past conflicts in the history of South Africa.

It gives expression to the words spoke by Nelson Mandela in 1999 who he said: "...the day should not be far off, when we shall have a people's shrine, a Freedom Park, where we shall honour with all the dignity they deserve, those who endured pain so we should experience the joy of freedom".

The development took into account the public's need for a memorial to fittingly honour those who sacrificed their lives for freedom. It celebrates and explores the country's diverse peoples, and our common humanity, through compelling stories, performances, exhibits and architecture.

The project was officially launched on 1 June 2000, and the Freedom Park Trust was established in 2001 to develop the heritage project. A Board of Trustees were appointed with Dr MW Serote chosen as the CEO of the Freedom Park Trust. [He was the chairman of *IIKSA (Indigenous Knowledge Systems of South Africa)* and *AROSA (African Renaissance Organisation of Southern Africa)*. He served as *Deputy Chair on SACAR (South African Chapter of African Renaissance)*].

Freedom Park was launched on 16 Jun 2002 on Youth Day by President Mbeki with a ceremony where he dedicated the hill as the site for Freedom Park. He unveiled a plaque reading: "Motho ke Motho Batho" Tswana for "A human is a human being through other human beings". During this event, an African Olive tree was planted by the President. It



has since been called the President's Tree. This olive tree is said to symbolise peace. Construction of the first phase began in July 2003 and was completed in March 2004.

During 2003, cleansing and symbolic reparation ceremonies, to acknowledge the major conflicts in South Africa's history, were conducted nationwide. Soil from the sites of each of the ceremonies, as well as trees representing each province, were collected for the Garden of Remembrance, a green belt surrounding the Freedom Park complex.

The Garden of Remembrance was officially handed over on 8 March 2004 by Thabo Mbeki, the president at the time, who said Freedom Park would not be a place of mourning, but a place of celebration and a tribute to humanity.

The Garden of Remembrance would be the final resting place of all those who gave their lives in the conflicts which shaped South Africa and acknowledges those who contributed to the freedom of the country. It is a tranquil space that invites reflection and prayer, interspersed as it is with monuments, statues and sculptures between the beautiful natural landscape of the Highveld.

The first phase of Freedom Park was completed in time for the 10th anniversary of democracy in South Africa on 27 April 2004 (Freedom Day) and it continues to be a choice location for key national events and celebrations.

In April 2009, the Freedom Park Trust was dissolved, and the Freedom Park Cultural Institution came into being.

Freedom Park was officially opened on the 22nd of April 2013, by then deputy President Kgalema Montlante as the //hapo museum was officially opened.

[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/overview/history-of-freedom-park.html> and <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/garden-of-remembrance.html> and <https://www.e-architect.com/africa/freedom-park> and <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview.html>]

3 What does Freedom Park promote?

3.1 Freedom Park promotes African heritage, reinterpretation of history, indigenous knowledge and the development of new identity.

- ✓ The purpose of the development was to narrate the story of South Africa and thereby to address the gaps, distortions and biases, of the past and provide a broad new outlook of South Africa's history and heritage.
- ✓ Freedom Park is purported to be an instrument for **nation building**; purposing to give rise to a **new national identity** that is **founded on African religious characteristics** of pre-colonial Africa.
- ✓ Freedom Park will offer all People: A sacred and spiritual space for reflection and commemoration; a symbol of indigenous culture and cultural values; A centre that will retell and acknowledge South Africa's true history to enable an accurate understanding of our past, the present and to prepare for the future.
 - A reservoir of knowledge about South Africa's and African historical, cultural and environmental heritage: Indigenous songs, spiritual ceremony for all humanity, performing arts, tales and fables; Indigenous healing plants and endangered flora and fauna. *[Taken from: Article: Celebrate Humanity, Freedom and Dignity (P. 11,12 Treasure our wealth magazine – Visitor's guide for the 5th World Parks Congress Exhibition held in Durban from 9-17 September 2003].*
- ✓ In its final act, Freedom Park will portray a vision of the future embedded in the **African Renaissance**. *[Taken from: (Page 12) Freedom Park Conceptual Framework Document provided to applicants for the Design Competition].*
- ✓ Freedom Park was conceived as a narrative, a 'journey to freedom' informed by traditional African culture and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) that have not been acknowledged through past knowledge or records. *[Taken from: <http://landezine.com/index.php/2012/09/the-freedom-park-by-greeninc/>].*
- ✓ The park therefore presents the opportunity to expose all the significant elements of what makes South Africa different from, but significant to, the rest of the world. Giving expression to a heritage from which South Africa must stand tall amongst all the nations of the world as a true symbol of the epitome of the struggle of humanity and the potential to triumph over adversity. *[Taken from: Article: SA's rich historical and cultural heritage, (Pages 16-18) Treasure our wealth magazine – Visitor's guide for the 5th World Parks Congress Exhibition held in Durban from 9-17 September 2003].*
- ✓ **Indigenous Knowledge** - In folklore, the wise person is always an old person. They hold all the knowledge of the tribe or village. Just as wisdom has a human archive, so it is stored at the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge. It is essential to preserve indigenous knowledge, deeply ingrained in our cultural roots, so that it can be transferred or adapted to the benefit of all. *[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/indigenous-knowledge.html>]*
- ✓ Freedom Park is primarily a cultural centre. The very morphology of the park, from its architectural style to the sacred symbols scattered across its grounds, has meaning in the South African cultural context, mirroring how history is told and preserved in Africa. This history is unpacked, and this culture is explored, in the many elements that make up the park. *[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/culture.html>]*
- ✓ This will be a place of **pilgrimage and inspiration** for South Africa, Africa and the world. It will provide an acknowledgement of South Africa's true history and its contribution to humanity, values and a **celebration of the triumph of humanity** realized with advent of democracy.
 - This will be place of historical wonderment, where all ignorance and hatred are crushed, where freedom symbolizes a milestone in the South African evolution. Freedom Park will be a **place of spiritual revival**, a place to celebrate South Africa's diversity and wealth of cultures, **symbolizing hope for all of humanity**. *[Taken from: Article: Celebrate Humanity, Freedom and Dignity (P. 11, Treasure*

3.2 The spiritual purpose of Freedom Park: promoting idolatry, honouring the dead and communing with the ancestors.

- ✓ **Spirituality** - Quiet contemplation is an essential element of all belief systems. Meditation, prayer and reflection, as well as rituals honouring the ancestors are all significant elements of Freedom Park, which is a sacred, multi-faith haven.
- ✓ Freedom Park respects all areas of faith in South Africa and is often the venue for multi-faith nation-building events. It acknowledges and honours the spirituality of all the continent's peoples as a force for reconciliation and healing.
- ✓ A visit to Freedom Park is a liberating, cleansing and inspirational experience: a pilgrimage back to wholeness. [Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/spirituality.html>]
- ✓ When architect Mphethi Morojele began designing Freedom Park in Pretoria, South Africa, 52-hectare memorial to lives lost in the struggle against the country's Apartheid regime, he took the unconventional step of **handing over the plans to a group of spiritual healers**. Work began nearly two decades ago, at which point these **healers gathered signals from the natural and supernatural realms to create a sort of "heat map or a spiritual map of the site,"** explained Morojele. "It's almost **like the Chinese would use Feng Shui**, where they feel the energies of the site and decide that this element must go here, this element must go there," he continued. "Then you start to lay out your design based on that as a kind of brief." [Taken from: <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/mphethi-morojele-south-african-architect/index.html>]
- ✓ The park is a haven for **contemplation and reflection**, with areas and features that provide a connection to history, the earth, and the visitors' own sense of spirituality.
 - **Sacred Isivivane** - many African traditions, every household has its own spiritual space. Isivivane is South Africa's sacred spiritual space and a resting place for those who played a part in the country's freedom and liberation. It is meant to reflect the continent's spirituality, evoked and amplified by Lesaka's enormous boulders and perpetual steam. [Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/spirituality.html>]
- ✓ **Fire to honour the dead** - Fire is a singular beacon of humanity's ability to change the environment; in many of the world's cultures it symbolises enlightenment, change, destruction, attaining purity, and energy. It is fitting, then, that the Eternal Flame at Freedom Park draws visitors to pay homage to those who have gone before to change our world, bringing the light of tolerance and knowledge to us.
 - **Water** plays a central role in cultures across the globe, and the reverence Africans have for water is evident at Freedom Park. The park has numerous water features signifying the element's importance in healing and cleansing ceremonies. [Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/culture.html>]
- ✓ **Honouring the ancestors** - Ancestors play a major role in the lives of many Africans; at Freedom Park respect for elders, and by extension, ancestors, is major theme and one explored fully at the //hapo interactive museum. Here, in Epoch 2: The Ancestors exhibit, artefacts help visitors understand the importance of ritualistic burial ceremonies to respectfully inter elders who will become ancestors, and how and why people ask ancestors to intercede with the powers-that-be.
 - For visitors wanting to commune with their ancestors, the Sanctuary is a meditative space conducive to introspection and quiet contemplation. Here, visitors can light a candle to honour their ancestors and remember the many South Africans who sacrificed their lives to ensure freedom for all. [Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/spirituality.html>]

- ✓ "... but also, today by this launch, we cast the same eye into the far distant past, to remember our ancestors, and to seek council from them so that what we do in the present in no way violates what they stood and fought for so that in these days, as today, we speak of Freedom freely without fear".
 - "In this Freedom Park, besides the Garden of remembrance which will consist of indigenous South African Flora and fauna, we will also create a South African spiritual space, by erecting a memorial, so that as a nation, we can come and pay our respects to those who are no more..." [Taken from: *The Speech by Dr. Mongane Wally Serote at the launch of Freedom Park, 16 Jun 2002*].
- ✓ Freedom Park will give all who visit her the possibility to understand the origins of earth and life, to position themselves as sojourners in a natural and human journey of countless millennia, and **to commune in reverence with the ancestors and the gods, both of which are as native and as various** as each who will visit the park. In the quiet voice of Freedom Park, all – with no regard to race and nationality – will find the instinctive peace internal to every human being, which affirms to each, his and her humanity. [Taken from: *The speech of Thabo Mbeki given at Freedom Park on the 26th of June 2008*].
- ✓ The choice of a hill on the outskirts of the national capital, Pretoria... with panoramic views of the capital of South Africa and important historic vistas to the Union Building, the seat of government, the **site aims to forge a commanding and inspirational position in the psyche of all South Africans. High ground such as this appeals to the spirituality of individuals and encourages introspection and contemplation. The "Hill in South Africa":** also has historical connotations which **suggest a meeting place, a venue for the gathering of clans and nations, a place of worship, a step closer to the heavens and to our humanity.** [Taken from: *Freedom Park Information page in Pretoria News - 28 April 2003*].
 - The slope between the base and the crest which is a transitional space where **the journey takes place from the public to the sacrosanct, from the real world to the spiritual world.** [Taken from: *Freedom Park – Architectural Competition Brief, p.16*].
- ✓ Freedom Park will incorporate **healing circles** founded on rocks in the Garden of Remembrance. Essentially, the rock is our home. In the beginning, African people lived in mountains. According to an elder in Sekhukune, people lived in caves. The notion of a rock as an object that possesses healing powers is **closely associated with the belief that some ancestors reside in the mountains.** African people have different **sacred places** near their homes where they go **to communicate with their ancestors.** Many of the powerful traditional kings and mighty healers have been buried in the mountains, with three rocks placed at the head of the graves.
- ✓ **These three rocks** represent **Atum** (the creative force who is the first ancestor) – **Ra** (the male principle) an **Ntu** (the female principle) combine to produce **Thau-Thau** which represents the wisdom created thereby bringing balance, stability, harmony and happiness. This resultant quality is the **foundation of 'ubuntu'** (supreme goodness), making man a living spirit. The three principles of Ntu, Ra and Thau-Thau are the components of God the Creator or Atum.
- ✓ An explanation for the circular design motifs that will be utilized for Freedom Park: **Circular dance** has always been used as an expression of a deep relationship with the earth. It helps us to form a link with where we come from, as well as define where we are going. **In tribal societies, dance is both spiritual and solar. It also represents the circular movement of planets around the earth as well as** the 12 zodiac signs around the sun.
 - For Africans, various dance forms used are an expression of spirituality and are performed in circles. Sangomas (shaman or traditional healers) use a circular dance and a circular drum to access their spirit. In the trance dance of the San people, women sit in a circle clapping and singing medicine songs that

assist the sangoma to access a trance state which is the passage to the power of healing. Fire is believed to be a divine creative energy that gives the light and life force that sustains the rituals, which is why most dances are performed around a fire. A circle is inclusive, unifying and all-encompassing. When people meet in a circle, everyone occupies a front seat, directing all their energy towards the heart of the circle, the egg of the cosmos. In a circle, the beginning is the end, and the end is the beginning – everything is interconnected. *[Taken from: P.21 Treasure our wealth magazine – Visitor's guide for the 5th World Parks Congress Exhibition held in Durban from 9-17 September 2003].*

- ✓ **Life-giving water for healing and cleansing.** Pools and streams of water flow throughout Freedom Park, lending an air of tranquillity and restoration. Additionally, the presence of water at the park is a testimony to the global belief in its power to cleanse, soothe, and heal. *[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/spirituality.html>]*

3.3 Freedom Park promoting humanism and evolution.

- ✓ “In this Freedom Park, besides the Garden of remembrance which will consist of indigenous South African Flora and fauna, we will also create a South African spiritual space, by erecting a memorial, so that as a nation, we can come and pay our respects to those who are no more, but also, so that we may have a place which we share with other human beings, where we can say to all to hear, that this which you hear, see, smell and feel, is us, the human race.” *[Taken from: The Speech by Dr. Mongane Wally Serote at the launch of Freedom Park, 16 Jun 2002].*
- ✓ Freedom Park will give all who visit her the possibility to understand the origins of earth and life, to position themselves as sojourners in a natural and human journey of countless millennia, and to commune in reverence with the ancestors and the gods, both of which are as native and as various as each who will visit the park. In the quiet voice of Freedom Park, all – with no regard to race and nationality – will find the instinctive peace internal to every human being, which affirms to each, his and her humanity. *[Taken from: The speech of Thabo Mbeki given at Freedom Park on the 26th of June 2008].*
- ✓ Freedom Park is a place of celebration, not of grieving. It is a tribute to and an honouring of our heroes. In doing this, it takes visitors on a meditative journey that begins with Africa as the cradle of humanity. Through interactive steps it takes the visitor through the next several billion years to the free world in which we find ourselves today. *[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/history.html>]*
- ✓ Freedom Park is a national heritage site envisioned to become an **international icon of humanity and freedom** *[Taken from: Article: Celebrate Humanity, Freedom and Dignity, P. 11, Treasure our wealth magazine – Visitor's guide for the 5th World Parks Congress Exhibition held in Durban from 9-17 September 2003].*
- ✓ This will be a place of **pilgrimage and inspiration** for South Africa, Africa and the world. It will provide an acknowledgement of South Africa's true history and its contribution to humanity, values and a **celebration of the triumph of humanity** realized with advent of democracy. *[Taken from: P. 11, Treasure our wealth magazine – Visitor's guide for the 5th World Parks Congress Exhibition held in Durban from 9-17 September 2003 and Article: Celebrate Humanity, Freedom and Dignity].*
- ✓ Freedom Park will acknowledge South Africa's role in the genesis of early life forms and later hominids, some of which eventually evolved into modern homo sapiens, tracing evidence of humanity's evolution in South Africa. *[Taken from: Freedom Park Information page in Pretoria News - 28 April 2003].*
- ✓ For too long there has been a lack of knowledge and recognition of the central role South Africa has played in the earth and humanity's early histories. South Africa is a cradle of the very earth upon which we walk, as well as home to one of the earliest life forms and pre-humans. Thus, the story of South Africa, narrated and displayed at Freedom Park, begins some 3.6 billion years ago when awesome geological events saw the birth of the earth. Few people know that South Africa also witnessed the

emergence of the earliest known life forms. Billions of years ago climatic changes here created ideal conditions for the emergence of single cellular life.

- South Africa possesses unique evidence of the evolution of modern humans, the significance of which is internationally recognized. Paleo-anthropological finds confirm that millions of years ago, hominids – the early ancestors of modern humans – were found here in sites such as Sterkfontein, Swartkrans, Mokopane's Cave, Taung and Kromdraai.
- In relation to South Africa's role in the evolution of humanity, the arrival of Europeans signified the beginning of the return of the human Diaspora to its prehistoric roots. *[Taken from: Freedom Park Information page in Pretoria News - 28 April 2003].*

4 Different Design elements of Freedom Park

4.1 //hapo – Freedom Park Museum

The great questions – who am I and why am I here; what comes before birth and after death – are explored at //hapo, which recounts the history of Africa. "//Hapo ge //hapo tama /hapo hasib dis tamas kai bo" goes the Khoi proverb, meaning "A dream is not a dream until it is shared by the entire community."

Starting with the story of creation, //hapo unravels the complex tale of Africa across both time and space.

Named in Khoi for the word "dream", the //hapo interpretative centre tells the story of Africa, and of South Africa specifically, in seven parts. Each part is a distinct element in the evolution of the great continent.

Also called the Freedom Park Museum, //hapo draws together the park's elements to build a coherent and arresting narrative – from an African perspective – through interactive displays, vivid audio-visual presentations, performances and storytelling.

The story starts 3.6 million years ago with African creation legends, and describes the continent's and South Africa's, rich and colourful history. It combines indigenous African knowledge and contemporary scientific thought to bring history to life. This story of the nation's rich and colourful history unfolds in seven eras.



4.1.1 The Seven Epochs:

Epoch 1: Earth

This era explores an African perspective on the origins of the universe, life on Earth and our role and responsibility towards the environment and each other. It uses a combination of science and storytelling. It starts back 3,6 billion years ago and showcases some of the oldest rocks and artefacts on earth. An African story of creation is displayed on a huge illuminating screen.



Epoch 2: Ancestors

This era explores how Africans deal with death and the afterlife and explains the concept of ancestors from the physical and spiritual perspectives. It also documents early technological innovations. The room shows the ways in which early Africans developed a sense of control over their environment. From the spiritual side visitors can see the importance this concept has when it comes to cultural practices and ceremonies.



Epoch 3: Peopling

This era showcases African innovations and the many vibrant civilisations. It focuses on the different cultures that have evolved and got established on the continent and in South Africa. African innovation throughout 4000 years is highlighted as well as developments in science, culture and spirituality.



Epoch 4: Resistance and Colonisations

This era shows how indigenous people used their own systems to resist the social, economic and political challenges of colonialism, and highlights how colonisation changed the relationship of African people to their land and cultures. It shows the different effects of colonisations, the reactions and subsequent struggles get showcased and how all of this contributed to the shaping of South Africa today.

Colonisation brought about forms of subjugation, separation, and exploitation. This gave rise to many conflicts, revolts and struggles.



Epoch 5: Industrialisation and Urbanisation

This era highlights how indigenous people resisted, and adapted to, the social and economic changes and challenges that colonial industrialisation – especially large-scale minerals exploitation – brought to their lives. The focus is also on how the workers adapted and struggled to survive the onslaughts of this era.



Epoch 6: Nationalisms and Struggle

This era looks at the struggle for democracy as a backdrop to the birth of the new South Africa. It charts the movement to establish inclusive nationalism as the preferred model for a unified nation. We see the contesting forces of white state formation, the struggle for a democratic society and how this played a role in the new South Africa, get demonstrated.



Epoch 7: National Building and Continent Building

This era begins in the last decade of the 20th century and explores South Africa's transition from the tyranny of apartheid to a constitutional democracy. It looks at how we create unity and promote development in South Africa and on the continent in general.

[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/hapo.html> and <https://showme.co.za/pretoria/tourism/freedom-park/>]



4.1.2 Centre for Indigenous Knowledge

At Freedom Park, the //hapo Museum's exhibits present extensive South African and African indigenous knowledge and indigenous knowledge systems. These



exhibits also fall under the Pan African Archives, which preserves such teachings for future generations. The exhibits comprise artefacts and information on how Africans lived, going back some 4 000 years, and showcases African innovations and achievements. [Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/indigenous-knowledge.html>]

4.2 Mveledzo - Spiral path

- ✓ **Mveledzo** is the Tshivenda name given to the spiral path that wends between S'khumbuto and Isivivane, itself named to bring to mind the Zulu and Xhosa practice of paying homage to the Earth for good luck. [Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/culture.html>]
- ✓ **The Contemplative Path** - The journey seeks to revisit and ultimately heal the wounds of the past through acknowledging and re-living the pains of past conflicts, **paying homage** to the victims and **cleansing their spirits through ritual enactment** (Article in the Record Newspaper – Feb 2005, titled “Monument Major attraction”).
- ✓ **Reconciliation Road** - On Reconciliation Day /16 December 2011, President Jacob Zuma opened what is called Reconciliation Road. This road links the Voortrekker Monument and Freedom Park in Pretoria and symbolises South Africans continuous attempts to reconcile its differences. As part of South Africa's 2013 Women's Month celebrations a 2 km chain of women of all races holding hands was formed along this road on 3 August 2013. [Taken from: <https://showme.co.za/pretoria/tourism/freedom-park/>]



4.3 Isivivane

Isivivane is the spiritual resting place of those who played a role in the freedom and liberation of South Africa. It houses the **Lesaka** and the **Lekgotla**.

The **Lesaka** is a burial ground dotted with boulders from each of the provinces. There are another two boulders that represent local government and the international community.

Near Lesaka, also on the terrace, a single tree is located in the curve of a stone bench as counterpoint to Lesaka. It is a *Senegalia galpinii* (Mologa or Monkey Thorn) symbolic of a marker for the '**Lekgotla**', a place where elders would traditionally gather to discuss important tribal matters. "At Isivivane, the lekgotla is a place where relatives, friends and loved ones of the freedom fighters who fell use the space for contemplation." The uMhlankosi trees were donated by each of South Africa's provinces.

Water plays a significant role in cleansing and healing in many belief systems, and visitors to the Garden of Remembrance are asked to wash their hands when they leave each area.

[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/garden-of-remembrance.html> and Isivivane, *Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa* an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 96)]



Other statements made about the Isivivane:

- ✓ The conceptualisation of the Isivivane by a consortium of architects and landscape architects originated through consultations with advisers and experts in the field of Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS). Their challenge was to introduce cultural sensibility through a narrative based on the abstract expression of African values, but also related to universal archetypes. *[Taken from: Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 96)]*
- ✓ The close referencing of IKS, introduced at Freedom Park with the conceptualisation of Isivivane, advanced the idea of an IKS-directed method to knowledge production. According to Serote, “Isivivane, which became the first element of the [Freedom] Park, ... is a direct result and manifestation of the consultative processes ... [and] the restructuring of the ruptured and fragmented African voice and belief systems based on IKS”.¹⁰ Serote further emphasises that “the design ... was informed by Harriet Ngubane’s writings on the subject, and oral research done in South Africa involving the variety of IKS practitioners, ... [and] borrowed from and also innovated IKS concepts as they were adapted to the construction [of Isivivane]”. The FPT later suggested that this approach “led to indigenous people taking control of the process away from the pervasive interpretation of indigenous knowledge through the gaze of non-indigenous people”, and that this knowledge must then be applied to its design. *[Taken from: Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 97)]*
- ✓ The landscape of South African cultural identity, the FPT commissioned research and engaged with the greater South African community. These included focus-group meetings with indigenous leaders, indigenous healers, IKS artists, and historians, among others, whose opinions were solicited as to what the Isivivane should become. This material was filtered by the creative team and FPT to, ultimately, derive a concept believed to be responsive to, and representative of South Africans’ expectations for a place of commemoration. This emphasis on indigenous knowledge, as the source of authentic African identity and meaning, had already found its way into the design and construction of the Isivivane, which was handed over to President Mbeki on 8 March 2004. Thus, Isivivane’s form, materiality, and

organising principles were based on ideas originating in traditional values, IKS, and African philosophy. [Taken from: *Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa* an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 97)]

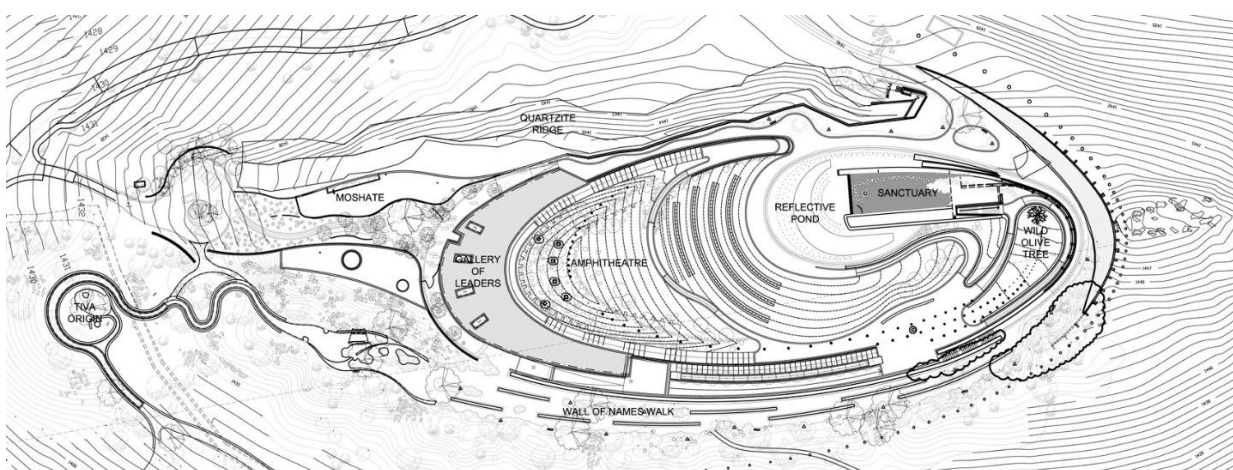
- ✓ The Isivivane's location was all-important and the design team, along with traditional healers, artists, and historians, debated this on numerous occasions when together on site. Ultimately, it was decided to locate Isivivane on the south-eastern slope of Salvokop, where it "would see the sunrise throughout the year no matter what season", because, according to the traditional healers, this was of critical importance from an African cultural perspective. [Taken from: *Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa* an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 98)]
- ✓ The fundamental concept for the layout of Isivivane is that of an African 'homestead' encompassing 'lesaka' (the burial place and shrine) and 'lekgotla' (the meeting place). Lesaka is a Setswana word, "which in African culture ... [is used to describe] a circular structure – often a cattle byre commonly found in South African villages where generation upon generation are buried". [Taken from: *Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa* an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 99)]
- ✓ Isivivane is built primarily of stone and comprises nine boulders, one from each province placed near the edge of a circle. Balancing these and completing the circle are two larger boulders representing the national government and the international community. Contained within the boulders circle are stones that have come from countries outside South Africa – symbolic of combatants and exiles that fell while they sought refuge in other countries. "The circular pattern is all-important. It is an archetypal symbol of unity and equality and the boulders being placed in a circle at the same level, engage in a 'dialogue', where none is more important than the other". Ngubane explains the importance of stone in African culture and particularly at burial sites. She mentions that placing a stone at a place is an act of leaving something behind that unites people with the "land and its people, spirits, flora and fauna". [Taken from: *Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa* an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 100)]
- ✓ The selection of plant species at Isivivane was intentional and referenced African cultural practices. The spiritual bond that formed between the Nguni people and the Buffalo Thorn trees inspired the choice of nine *Ziziphus mucronata* that create a soft green, vertical edge to the lower terrace at Isivivane. The concept of 'bringing the spirit home' is central to the purpose of Isivivane. Manqele and O'Donoghue state that the Nguni people coped with death through an intimate and spiritual relationship connected to the Buffalo Thorn tree, and that the hlahlankosi (Buffalo Thorn) is one of the Nguni 'chosen' trees. They suggest that, in earlier times, when a person died far away from home (often in battle), the elders of the family would send a party to "fetch the spirit". Branches from the tree were used in this ceremony. The party would carry a branch and, at the spot where the person had died, would call out the name of the dead person and announce that they had come to take his spirit home. Significant to the purpose of Isivivane, Manqele and O'Donoghue further explain that "the practice of bringing the spirit home is still often observed when people have died far from home ... and their bodies cannot be found." [Taken from: *Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid South Africa* an article by Graham Young and Piet Vosloo (page 100)]
- ✓ **'Isivivane'** situated on the eastern side of the hill – This is a **shrine**, the final symbolic **resting place of the spirits** of those who sacrificed their lives in the struggle for humanity and freedom.
 - An Isivivane is a heap of stones which has accumulated over generations from people who, when passing the place, leave a stone to signal peace and a sense

- of belonging.
- The word Isivivane comes from the word 'Viva' meaning a calm **concentration of energy** and commitment to solidarity and oneness in purpose.
 - ✓ Boulders, stones, rocks, and mountains are associated with the ancestors. People throw stones in the water as a symbol of appreciation and a sign of solidarity with the ancestral spirits. This unity and solidarity are exactly what Freedom Park aims to achieve.
 - ✓ **Religious leaders** from various faiths **imbued Isivivane with the deepest sense of spirituality** by performing a number of **sacred rituals** that laid to rest the spirits of those heroes and heroines who have fallen in the struggle for humanity and freedom.
 - ✓ This spot is viewed as a holy shrine where one can walk barefoot only. *[Taken from: Article in the Record Newspaper – Feb 2005, titled "Monument Major attraction].*
 - ✓ **'Lesaka'** is a structure, circular in formation, which is commonly found in southern African villages, where wealth such as cattle and sheep are kept. It is also a place where generation upon generation have been buried which is why it **could also be a sacred ancestral grave, where during crisis, people came together to enter into dialogue with ancestors.**
 - **Eleven** boulders were used to construct the centre of Isivivane, called **Lesaka**. This is the **symbolic burial ground** for our heroes and heroines. To emphasise the cleansing and purity, Lesaka is shrouded in **mist**. *[Taken from: Article: Celebrate Humanity, Freedom and Dignity. P. 12, 14 Treasure our wealth magazine – Visitor's guide for the 5th World Parks Congress Exhibition held in Durban from 9-17 September 2003].*
 - Steam (**mist**) in the centre of the holy shrine symbolises **Impepho** which means talking to the ancestors. Impepho is an isiZulu word for a plant very sacred to abaNguni and also burnt to communicate with abangasekho who are entities of influence or a broader term for all types of souls who have passed on, but continue to exert positive influence on the 'living'. *[Taken from: Article in the Record Newspaper – Feb 2005, titled "Monument Major attraction and Isivivane, Freedom Park: A critical analysis of the relationship between commemoration, meaning and landscape design in post-apartheid SA an article by G. Young and P. Vosloo].*



4.4 S'khumbuto

S'khumbuto bears testimony to the various conflicts that shaped present-day South Africa and remembers those who died during these struggles. S'khumbuto, the central memorial, is a siSwati word signifying a place of remembrance and one to invoke the ancestors' assistance. S'khumbuto also has the connotation of honouring, praising and celebrating.



It comprises six symbolic elements:

- ✓ The 697m long **Wall of Names**, which is inscribed with the names of those who played a significant part in the numerous conflicts that have taken place on South



African soil, from pre-colonial wars to the South African War (Anglo Boer War), World War I, World War II, and the liberation Struggle. The wall can accommodate 150 000 names.

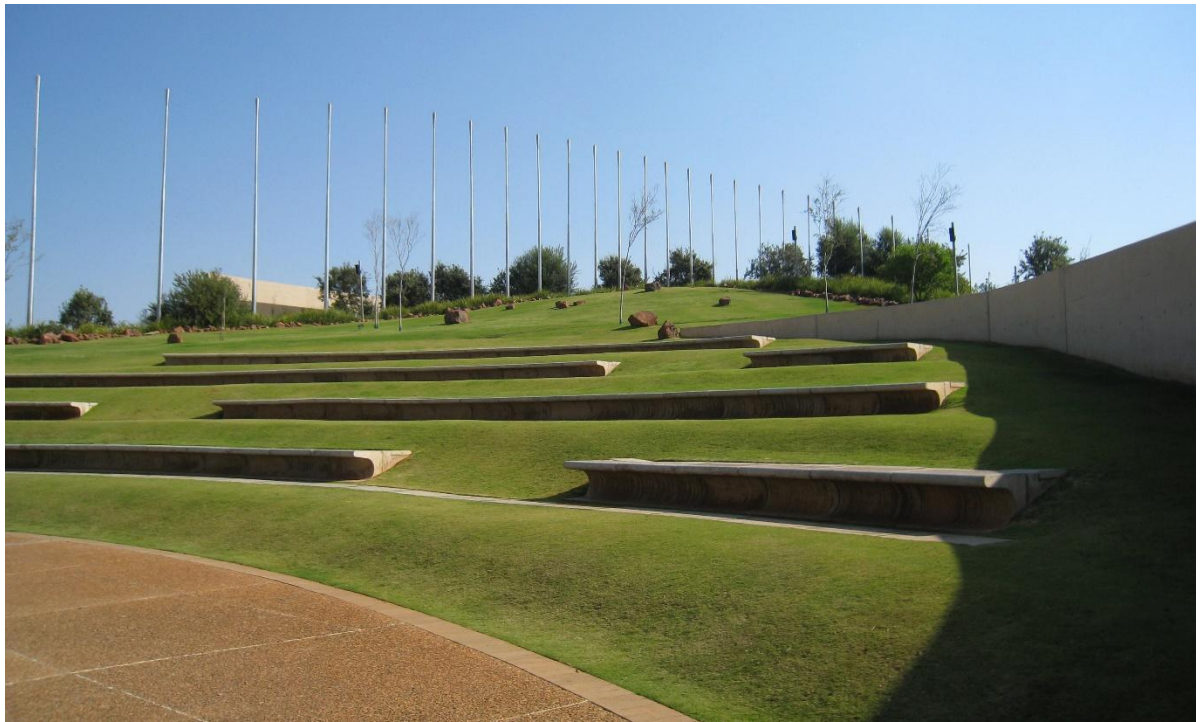


- ✓ The evocative **Gallery of Leaders**, which recognises historic international and local leaders who inspire everyday heroism.

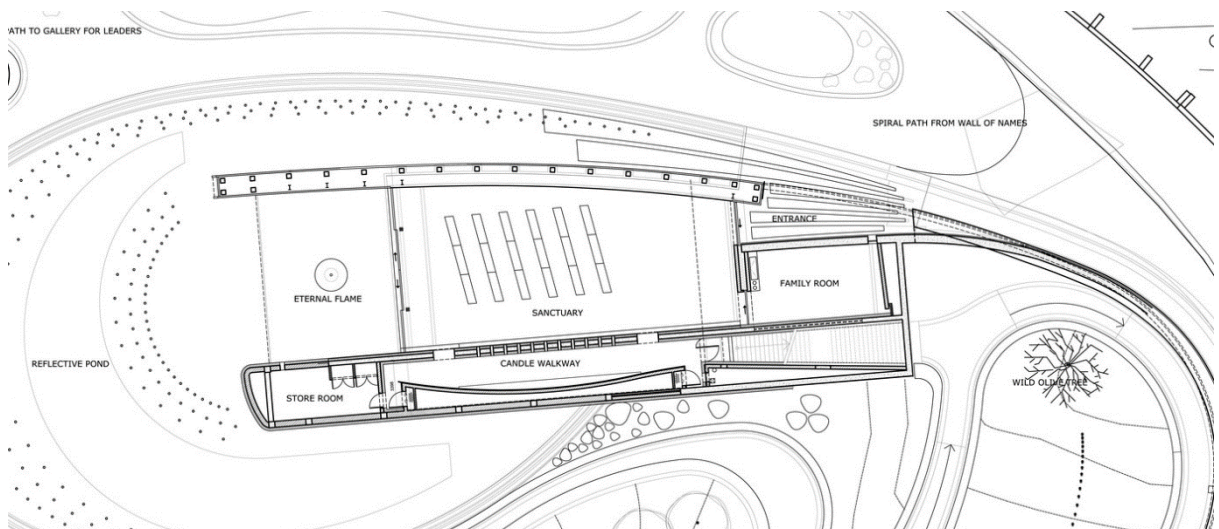


- ✓ The **2 000-seat Amphitheatre**, a terraced venue for major cultural celebrations and national events.

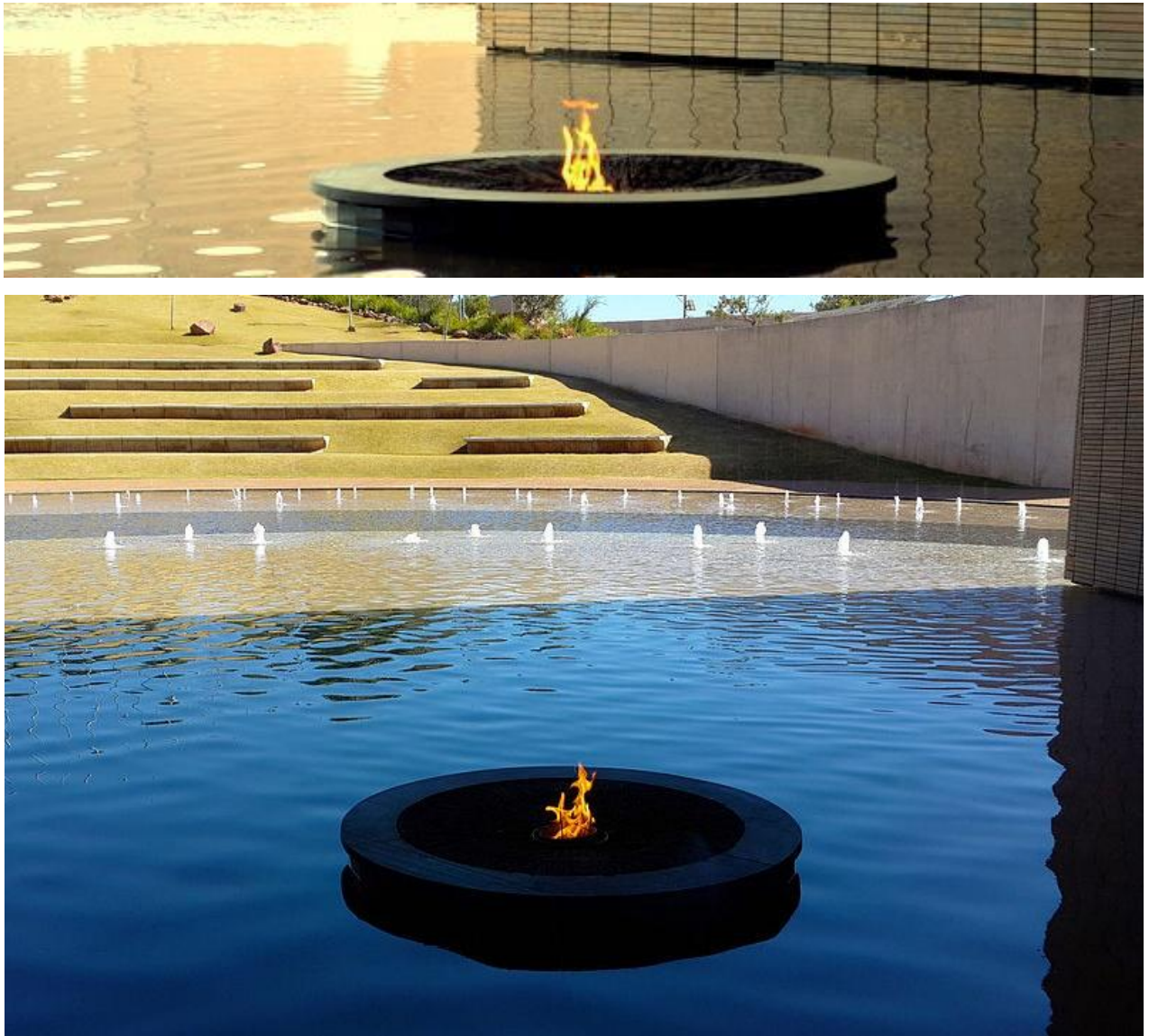




- ✓ The hushed **Sanctuary**, a serene space where visitors can pray, meditate, hold private ceremonies or light a candle for their loved ones.



- ✓ The bright **Eternal Flame**, surrounded by tranquil water, where visitors can remember and give thanks to the many heroes who played a role in shaping the country. The Eternal Flame symbolises eternity and burns to remind visitors that there are names that will never be known.



- ✓ The impressive **Reed sculpture**, which comprises almost 200 ascending metal reeds, some reaching up to 32m. It signifies the rebirth of the South African nation and is visible from across the capital.

- This sculpture was to mark Freedom Park from a distance as a noticeable vertical design element. The notion behind the element was derived from the African philosophy of creation that acknowledges reeds as the conduit to life. The idea of a rising line of reeds was embraced to give a sense of progress in the struggle for freedom and to celebrate hope for the future. Two inner arcs of reeds symbolize communication between earth and heaven. In African tradition, particularly in the Swazi and Zulu cultures, reeds are used to communicate with the deity through the ancestors.
- The reeds are a transparent element encircling the top of the hill and the Wall of Names, drawing a line against the horizon while maintaining the visual outline of the hilltop. The reeds are actually stainless steel 'masts' that range in height from 1 m to 34 m.
- The reeds are perhaps the element of the project that most epitomises the opportunity and restrictions inherent in the blurring of landscape, art and architecture. The reeds are the project's main iconic component.

[Taken from: <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/garden-of-remembrance.html> and <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the->

park/elements-overview/history.html and <https://www.freedompark.co.za/index.php/products-and-services/elements-of-the-park/elements-overview/culture.html> and <http://landezine.com/index.php/2012/09/the-freedom-park-by-greeninc/>



In the planning phase the following statements were made about the S'khumbuto:

- ✓ **S'khumbuto** is the **major memorial** element on the **crest** of Salvokop, constructed as a permanent space to celebrate and communicate the struggle for humanity and freedom. The concept of S'khumbuto is drawn from siSwati nomenclature and signifies not only a place of remembrance of those who have passed on but **also a place of invoking their assistance in current and future affairs**.
- ✓ **The memorial** is a space for reflection, the **spiritual inner-sanctum** of the entire Freedom Park precinct, expressing a national human experience of heroism, sacrifice, human suffering and loss. **This spirituality is universal and transcends all divisions**. [Taken from: *Guide for the 5th World Parks Congress Exhibition held in Durban from 9-17 September 2003*].
- ✓ **South African spiritual space – Provides a conducive atmosphere for spiritual rejuvenation and a space for reconciliation**...The memorial is a space for reflection. It will express a national human experience of heroism, sacrifice, human suffering and loss. This is a space for private reflection, acknowledgement, remembrance, mourning and inspiration. [Taken from: *Article: Celebrate Humanity, Freedom and Dignity (P. 12,14 Treasure our wealth magazine – Visitor's)*].

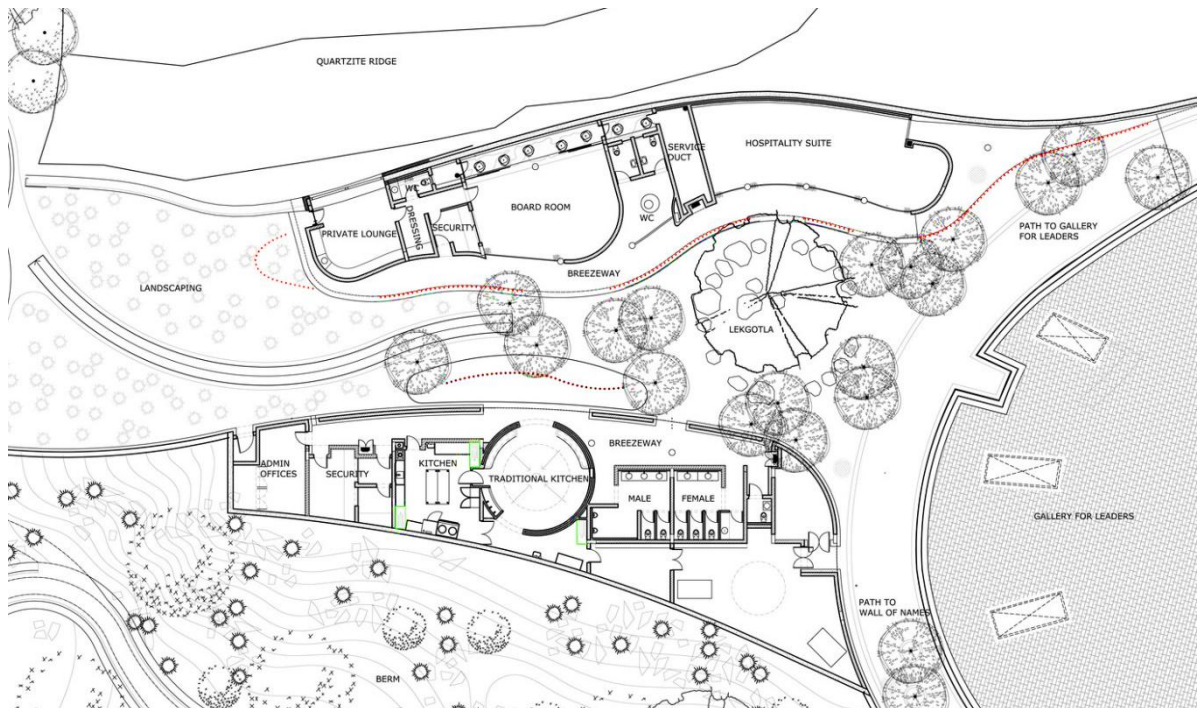
4.5 Moshate

- ✓ The Moshate (a Sotho word that means the residential place of the chief) is located at the western end of S'khumbuto where it forms an entrance for dignitaries. A 'forest' of majestic Aloes (*Aloe marlothii*), a plant often used at the main access points to traditional homesteads. It is a striking plant that emphasises the entrance of

Moshate.

- ✓ Moshate is symbolic of where African rulers convened with council to deal with community life and matters of state. It is also a place where dialogue or reflection takes place in communion with ancestors.
- ✓ It is also used as a high-level hospitality suite.

[Taken from: <http://landezine.com/index.php/2012/09/the-freedom-park-by-greeninc/>].



5 Rituals and ceremonies, that we found, that have already taken place at Freedom Park in order to establish and strengthen the national altar.

The **national day of reconciliation** (16 December) affords South Africans on a **yearly basis** to be reminded of the demons of racism, sexism, oppression and prejudice and to **symbolically exorcise the nation of these evils**. The **symbolic healing and cleansing as practiced and popularized by The Freedom Park** puts upfront the commitment to renew and restore the nation, while giving back dignity and humanity of those that suffered so dearly for South African freedom.

Chronological list of some activities that already took place at Freedom Park.

- 4 Nov 2000 - Freedom Park Trust created
- 1 Dec 2000 - Board of Trustees appointed; Dr MW Serote is appointed as CEO of the Freedom Park Trust. [He is also currently chairman of *IIKSA (Indigenous Knowledge Systems of South Africa)* and *AROSA (African Renaissance Organisation of Southern Africa)*. He serves as *Deputy Chair on SACAR (South African Chapter of African Renaissance)*]
- 15 Jun 2002 – In preparation for the next day's launching ceremony several sangomas ascend Salvokop to slaughter cattle to the ancestors and to pour out libations.
- 16 Jun 2002 - Youth Day: Launch ceremony. President Mbeki dedicated the hill as the site for the Freedom Park. He planted an African Olive tree and unveiled a plaque reading: "Motho ke Motho Batho" Tswana for "A human is a human being through other human beings".
- 12 June 2003 - Traditional cleansing and healing ceremonies in nine provinces and neighbouring states (photo right). Eleven boulders were sent to Salvokop from the nine provinces along with a boulder representing national government and a boulder representing the international community.
- 8 Jun 2003 - Nyangas and Sangomas celebrating the roll of Venus in African tradition with fire, water, dance and song at Freedom Park.
- 24 Jun 2003 - Dr Wally Serote handed over the site for construction to begin to Wilson Holmes Ovcon and Rainbow Construction.
- 16 Dec 2003 - Day of Reconciliation: Nation Building and Reconciliation Declaration signed by religious and political groups – not by the ACDP.
- 8 March 2004 - International Women's Day: Phase One, Garden of Remembrance (Isivivane), was handed over to President Mbeki. A cleansing ceremony was held: ancestors were asked to cleanse the garden from evil spirits and traditional herbs were burnt by sangomas and President Mbeki as part of the ritual. President Mbeki and Dr Wally Serote drank traditional sorghum beer to thank the ancestors.
- 16 Dec 2004 - Day of Reconciliation: President Mbeki and 500 guests attends a provincial commemoration where a ceremony to honour fallen freedom fighters were held.
- 9 May 2005 - The ambassadors designate to Russia, Poland and Czech Republic visit Freedom Park as part of an orientation programme with the idea of creating a deeper understanding of the country they will represent.
- 23 Jun 2005 - a tour of the site by African and other international ambassadors. This excursion was undertaken by ambassadors from Switzerland, Poland, India, Lisbon, Netherlands and Brazzaville.
- 5 Jul 2005 - South African National Defence Force held a wreath laying ceremony at the Freedom Park before the 49th World Military Boxing Championships held in Pretoria. As a precursor to such events, the organisers always pay homage to the host nation. Amongst the thirty-seven countries that will attend the ceremony and compete in the games are Algeria, Burkina Faso, Guinea Republic, Korea, Germany and the United States.

- 10 Jul 2005 - MK families and Bridget Mabandla laid the spirits of their heroes to rest in sacred ritual which included the burning of muti by traditional healers. Their remains were returned to their loved ones – their spirits enshrined in the Isivivane forever.
- 26 July 2005 - The Malaysian government took a trip of the Freedom Park. Patron of the Freedom Park, President Thabo Mbeki encouraged Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi to take an excursion of the Park. Laying a wreath in front of the international boulder at the site, Badawi sealed future relations between the two countries (photo right).
- 19 Sep 2005 - the Freedom Park launched a massive campaign to encourage schools in discovering the spirituality of the Freedom Park. This project was flighted to co-incide with Heritage Day on the 24 September. Learners from Dr W.F. Nkhomo Secondary School in Atteridgeville toured the Freedom Park (photo right).
- 18 Oct 2005 - Gerry Adams, President of the Irish Republican Army's Sinn Fein visited the Freedom Park to lay a wreath. He lit the eternal flame. The flame must remind visitors to honour the unknown hero's in their struggle for freedom and humanity
- 24 Nov 2005 - The Freedom Park and the National Religious Leaders Forum partnered with the Department of Correctional Services in hosting an inter-faith Prayer Day. The event, kicked off at the *Isivivane* from 06h00 the same day, and saw traditional healers performing a ritualistic prayer and *Ukuphahla* (intercession with the ancestors) to pray for a revival of a nation ravaged by various socio-economic problems.
- 29 Nov 2005 – The site is visited by Mr Bert Anciaux, Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture in accompanying him was Essop Pahad of the Presidency.
- 16 Dec 2005 - Day of Reconciliation: Provincial celebrations for reconciliation.
- 25 Jan 2006 - a tour of the *Isivivane* by the Foreign Affairs minister of Cuban, Mr Felipe Perez Roque. Forming part of his delegation are HE Excellency, the Ambassador to Cuba Senora Esther Amenteros and members of the Department of Foreign Affairs.
- 22 Feb 2006 - Local Division Judge Phineas Mojapelo (A former activist, with links to the defunct Umkhonto we Sizwe) visits Freedom Park.
- 22 Jun 2006 – Gen. Maj. Gert Opperman and Dr Wally Seroti signed the cooperation agreement between Voortrekker Monument en Erfenis stigting and Freedom Park Trust.
- 7 Aug 2006 - Ben Kruger the great grandson of Paul Kruger visited Freedom Park to pay tribute to the fallen heroes and heroines of the various South African conflicts.
- 4 Sept 2006 - Cuban Ambassador to South Africa, HE Ms Esther Armenteros, visited the Freedom park. A ceremony took place to honour the Cuban soldiers that died in Southern Africa fighting for freedom and humanity.
- 2 Oct 2006 - The Dominican Republic Secretary of External Affairs, Minster Carlos M. Troncoso, visited The Freedom Park for an official tour of the site. Other Dominican Republic delegates that attended the site tour include Ambassadors Bogaert, Dannenberg and Bunster.
- 16 Dec 2006 - Day of Reconciliation: Intermediate phase (museum and library) handed over to President Mbeki.
- 21 March 2007 - Human Rights Day: Public invited to visit Freedom Park to celebrate Human Rights Day.
- 26 June 2008 – Thabo Mbeki visits Freedom Park on behalf of the government, blessing the park after an unveiling ceremony at the president's tree.

We lack information from June 2008 to April 2015

- 7 Mrt 2013 – President Mugabe talks with Zuma at Freedom Park.

We lack information from June 2008 to April 2015

- 8 April 2015 – President Robert Mugabe visits Freedom Park.
- Oct 2015 – President of Mozambique visits Freedom Park.
- November 2015 - Hon. Minister Mr. Nathi Mthethwa met with 1000 high school learners from all over the country, mainly from Gauteng some from the Free State to share the importance of preserving our heritage and being patriotic to their country.
- January 2016 - Arts and Culture Minister Nathi Mthethwa and his Swedish counterpart, Alice Bah Kuhnke met at Freedom Park to discuss topics of mutual interest and reaffirm the importance of cultural co-operation between the two countries.
- June 2016 - Minister of Tourism, Mr Derick Hanekom, together with the CMO of South African Tourism, Ms Margie Whitehouse, teachers and learners has the opportunity to interact with the learners and teachers prior to a sit-down lunch at Freedom Park. Preceding their arrival at Freedom Park they were treated to a tour of the City.
- July 2016 - Mr Jean Bosco Hitimana, Burundi Minister of Culture and Mr Jean Nyenimijabo visit Freedom Park with Freedom Park CEO Jane Mufamadi.
- 7 July 2016 - The Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela hosted their 205th National Day celebrations in the Gallery of Leaders on the 7th of July 2016. Part of the evening's celebrations included the singing of national anthems, address by the Ambassador of Venezuela; as well as an address by the representative of the South African government Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources, Mr Godfrey Oliphant.
- 14 July 2016 - Honouring King Lewanika in an Inaugural Memorial Lecture. The Lecture was presented by Prince Akashambatwa Mbikusita-Lewanika who is the grandson of 'King Lewanika the First and a son of Litunga (King) Lewanika the Second, whose personal name was Mbikusita Lewanika. The presenter's father, apart from being the last son of King Lewanika on the Barotse throne, was also the Founder President General of the Northern Rhodesia African Congress in 1948.' This brings to the fore the varied and significant roles of one of several African kings whose leadership and impact underscores both the multi-national and traditional African roots of the southern African struggle. When the history of our struggle is written, it will tell a glorious tale of African solidarity, of African's adherence to principles. It will tell a moving story of the sacrifices that the peoples of our continent made to ensure that, that intolerable insult to human dignity, the apartheid crime against humanity, became a thing of the past.
- Aug 2016 - Exhibition & 90th Birthday Celebration of Fidel Castro. Fidel Castro, Cuba's longtime former president, turns 90. In celebrating this milestone, Freedom Park together with the Cuban Embassy invites you to an historic exhibition depicting the life and times of this iconic leader.
- 15 Mar 2017 – Nepal Ambassador Amrit Bahadur Rai visits Freedom Park.
- 25 Apr 2017 – Chinese Vice premier her excellency Liu Yandong visits Freedom Park.
- 11 Aug 2017 – State visit by H.E. Ms Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the republic of Liberia visits Freedom Park.
- 26 Sept 2017 - The Embassy of Cuba visited Freedom Park with their delegation to come and pay their tributes for their fallen heroes.
- 31 Oct 2017 – State visit by the chairperson of the African Union Commission - H.E. Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat.
- 25 Nov 2017 – Freedom Park hosts the Angolan President - Mr João Lourenço. Minister of Arts and Culture Mr Nathi Mthethwa and minister of International Relations and Cooperation International Ms Maite Nkoana -Mashabane as well as

Freedom Park CEO Ms Jane Mufamadi, received the Angolan delegation led by the Angolan president Mr João Lourenço. The main purpose for the visit to Freedom Park, was to lay a wreath at Isivivane, on the international boulder.

- 5 Dec 2017 - Freedom Park host Reconciliation Inter-faith Prayer & Human Peace Chain. A Human Chain representing peace, reconciliation and nation building at Freedom Park. As we commemorate the death anniversary of Madiba; we remember his legacy for a free, non-racial, non-sexist democratic South Africa.
 - 17 Feb 2018 - Family members of about 144 Life Esidimeni tragedy converged at Freedom Park Saturday 17 February 2017, for a healing session ceremony. White doves were released as a symbol of the release of pain, healing and forgiveness. Reverend Moerane led a team of Interfaith leader's in a prayer ceremony, wherein each one of them were afforded an opportunity to pray. The event was attended by Minister of Health Dr Aron Motswoaledi, Gauteng Province Premier Mr David Makhura, Gauteng MEC for Health Dr Gwen Ramokgopa, Gauteng Province MEC for Social Development Ms Nandi Mayathula-Khoza, Freedom Park CEO Ms Jane Mufamadi. Minister of Health Dr Motsoaledi, lit the candles and delivered a message of support. Premier Makhura delivered a message of hope to the families. MEC for Health Dr Ramokgopa rang the Green Bell.
 - 12 Apr 2018 -The Charlotte Maxeke Institute and Freedom Park honoured one of the greatest stalwarts of our time Nomzamo Winifred Madikizela Mandela in an intimate memorial.
 - 12 Jul 2018 – Freedom Park hosted the high-level Zambian delegation - Mr Samuel Mukupa, Advisor to the President of Zambia as well as the Chairman of the Ruling Party, Ms Chilufya Kapwepwe.
 - 30 Oct 2018 – Freedom Park hosted the Chinese Vice minister of culture and tourism.
 - 5 Dec 2018 - Reconciliation Peace Walk in honor of the late Tata Madiba. Walk between Freedom Park and Voortrekker Monument.
 - 7 March 2019 - Primary School from Tembisa visit Freedom Park.
 - 16 March 2019 – Remains handover ceremony held at Freedom Park. Justice Minister Michael Masutha handed over the exhumed remains of six anti-apartheid activists.
 - 7 May 2019 - Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for those who lost their lives during the WWII. The Embassy of Ukraine to the Republic of South Africa hosted a wreath-laying ceremony on the 7th of May 2019 at the Wall of Names in Freedom Park. Amongst the guests was the Ambassador of Ukraine, Mr Taras Kuzmych, Ambassador of Georgia, Mr Beka Dvali, representative of SANDF, diplomatic councillor - Embassy of Portugal, Military Attache of the Embassy of France, Military Attache of the Embassy of USA and Embassy of Poland.
 - 18 June 2019 – St. Engenas ZCC leader –Bishop Engenas Lekganyane on a guided tour from South Africa visited Freedom Park.
 - 29 Jun 2019 - The South African Maha Sabha in association with the centurion Hindu Society and Freedom Park, hosted the Mahatma Gandhi Freedom Walk at Freedom Park. The objectives of the event were, to observe the 150th birth anniversary of the Mahatma Gandhi and to foster unity and cohesiveness within our communities.
 - 21 Aug 2019 - Wreath laying Ceremony by the Russian Ambassador-Designate H.E. Mr Ilya Rogachev at the Freedom Park. H.E. Mr. Ilya Rogachev was recieved by Freedom Park CEO Ms. Jane Mufamadi.
 - 13 Dec 2019 - Russian Embassy Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Wall of Names
 - 16 Dec 2019 - Interfaith Prayer & Dialogue with Veterans
 - 15 Dec 2020 - Russian Embassy Honours Their Fallen Struggle Heroes with Floral Tribute Ceremony.
 - 16 Dec 2020 – Freedom Park hosts a reconciliation interfaith prayers and dialogue.
-