

PRE-PUBLICATION draft**EXCERPT from Section 4.2.1 Leisure settings***Princess Diana Memorial Fountain, London, UK*

The Princess Diana Memorial Fountain occupies an area of green landscaped ground sloping down towards the calm water of the Serpentine pool in Hyde Park. The design of the fountain is in marked contrast with many public monuments and memorials.¹ Rather than being an obtrusive feature imposed onto the landscape, the fountain's sculptural form integrates into the natural slope of the land.

The fountain is shaped as a large oval stream bed made of granite with water pumped to the top of the oval and allowed to flow down either side. On one side the water flows fairly smoothly to the downhill end of the oval. The other side consists of a variety of steps, curves, and other shapes so that the water plays in interesting ways as it flows down to the tranquil pool at the bottom. The two water flows are intended to represent two sides of Lady Diana's life: happy times and turmoil.²

At a cost of £3.6 million it was inaugurated in 2004. The memorial fountain met with some initial difficulties largely because parts of it were found to be unsafe for playing children. The granite stream bed is fairly shallow and has a varying width of three to six metres. There is a distance of about



eighty metres between the highest point of the oval, where the water is pumped out, and the tranquil pool at the lower end.³ People engage with the memorial in different ways. Many people sit on the granite edges of the tranquil pool at the lower end. Some lay on the grass within the oval or just outside it. Many watch the water as it flows down the granite stream bed.



Whether flowing or still, the water provides an excellent medium for children's play. People enjoy pleasant views of the Serpentine and of Hyde Park's lavish green landscaping as they walk around the memorial fountain, or are simply relaxing on the granite edges or the grass. The overall design makes clever use of water to create an ideal leisure setting.

¹ Princess Diana Memorial Fountain, design architects: Gustafson Porter + Bowman.

² Stevens, Q. (2009) Nothing More Than Feelings. *Architectural Theory Review*, 14:2, 156-172.

³ Archdaily (2017) Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fountain. *ArchDaily*, February 1st. Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/803509/diana-princess-of-wales-memorial-fountain-gustafson-porter-plus-bowman> (accessed 8 November 2020).