

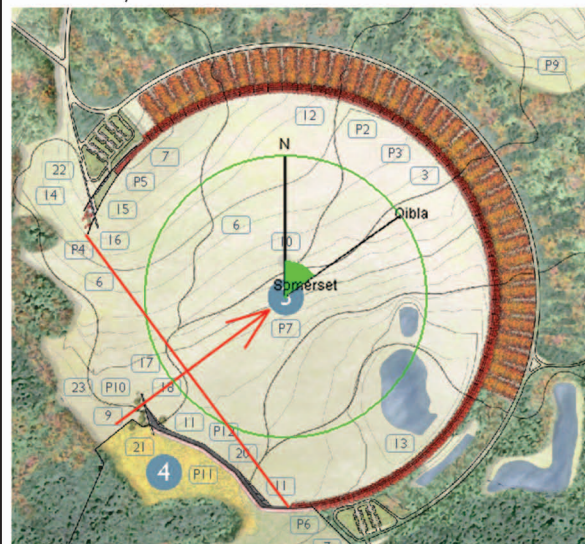
# The fraudulent Park Service investigation of Islamic symbolism in the Flight 93 memorial

Two days after the Crescent of Embrace was unveiled in September 2005, several bloggers discovered that a person facing into the giant crescent would be facing almost exactly at Mecca. That makes the crescent a mihrab: the central feature around which every mosque is built.

The simplest mihrab—and the one you might be familiar with—is an Islamic prayer rug, which Muslims lay out facing Mecca for prayer. The Crescent of Embrace is, in effect, a gigantic Muslim prayer rug.

The Mecca orientation of the giant crescent is trivially easy to verify. Just use the Mecca-direction calculator at [Islam.com](#) to generate a graphic of the great circle direction from Somerset to Mecca. Muslims define their direction for prayer (called the “qibla”), as the great circle direction to Mecca (also called the “shortest distance direction,” or the “straight line direction”).

Here is a graphic of the qibla for Somerset, superimposed on the crescent site plan. The bisector of the crescent (red arrow) points almost exactly to Mecca.



All the redesign did was add some trees to the rear of a person facing into the giant crescent. That is like planting some trees behind a mosque. It doesn't matter how many trees you plant around a mosque. It is still a mosque.

The Mecca orientation of the giant crescent should have long ago been headline news across the nation, and it would have been, if not for the extraordinary measures taken by the Memorial Project and the Park Service to cover up this explosive information. Project Superintendent Joanne Hanley denies the Mecca orientation of the crescent in public: “The only thing that orients the memorial is the crash site,” she told the *Post Gazette* (August 18, 2007). Yet in private, she acknowledges the Mecca orientation of the crescent, and makes excuses for it.

“It has to be exact,” Hanley told me in an April 2006 conference call, explaining why she was not concerned about the almost-exact Mecca orientation of the crescent: “That’s one we talked about: it has to be exact.” (The crescent points 1.8° north of Mecca,  $\pm 0.1^\circ$ .)

Patrick White, Vice President of Families of Flight 93, makes similar excuses, telling a colleague of mine last July that the almost exact Mecca orientation of the crescent cannot be intended as a tribute to Islam because the inexactness of it would be “disrespectful to Islam.”

That isn’t what he was telling the public. White told the press that my claims are untrue and “preposterous”: “We went through in detail all his original claims and came away with nothing.” (*Tribune Democrat*, July 15, 2007.) Nothing that is, but a bunch of bogus excuses for explosive information that they know to be factually accurate.

To make this willful blindness official, the Park Service found a trio of fraudulent academics to make blatantly dishonest excuses for the Mecca oriented crescent. One has been telling every reporter he can find that there is no such thing as the direction to Mecca:

Daniel Griffith, a geospatial information sciences professor at the University of Texas at Dallas, said anything can point toward Mecca, because the earth is round. (*Post Gazette*, August 18, 2007.)

This is not a misquote. Griffith said essentially the same thing to *Tribune Democrat* reporter Kirk Swuager, claiming that: “You can face anywhere to face Mecca.” One billion Muslims most certainly disagree.

The other two academics admit the giant Mecca oriented crescent and make the most ridiculous excuses for it. Kevin

Jaques, a professor of Islamic sharia law at Indiana University, notes the similarity between the Mecca oriented crescent and a traditional mihrab, but assures the Park Service that there is no need for concern, because no one has ever seen a mihrab this BIG before:

Thirdly, most mihrabs are small, rarely larger than the figure of a man, although some of the more ornamental ones can be larger, but nothing as large as the crescent found in the site design. It is unlikely that most Muslims would walk into the area of the circle/crescent and see a mihrab because it is well beyond their limit of experience. Again, just because it is similar does not make it the same.

The other academic fraud is a Syrian professor of Islamic architecture named Nasser Rabbat who tells the park service not to worry about the almost exact Mecca orientation of the giant crescent because it cannot serve as a proper mihrab unless it points *exactly* to Mecca:

Mihrab orientation is either correct or not. It cannot be off by some degrees.

That is a bald lie. Many traditional mihrabs are off in their Mecca-orientation by 10, 20 or 30 degrees. The most famous mihrab in the world, the mihrab at the Great Mosque in Cordoba Spain, is oriented more than 45° off Mecca.

None of these “experts” even pretends to be objective. They only list excuses not to be concerned, and do not even make a show of considering possible Islamic intent. So who are these guys? Rabbat is described as an independent scholar, but in fact is an old classmate of Paul Murdoch, both having received masters degrees in architecture from UCLA in 1984. This raises the possibility that Paul Murdoch himself was able to orchestrate the investigation into warnings about his own design.

Kevin Jaques is also a highly suspicious character, having written an article shortly after 9/11 where he insists that the American response to 9/11 should be formulated in accordance with Islamic sharia law. Not only that, but he whitewashes sharia law by pretending that it is spurned by Islamic terrorists. Nowhere does he acknowledge that the terrorists goal is impose sharia law on the entire world.

Jaques does not admit his religious affiliation, but it seems obvious that he must be a convert to Islam. Who else would call for

a sharia law response to 9/11? He would also seem to be on the side of the radical supremacists, describing “Islamic revivalism” (the general heading for Bin Ladinism, Khomeini-ism, and other aggressively supremacist strains of Islam) as “new and exciting.”

Thus it seems that the Park Service let two blatantly dishonest Muslims whitewash warnings of a radical Islamic plot. Not that the Park Service was duped. They were just as dishonest themselves, claiming that it isn’t possible to check the orientation of the crescent because: “none of the data or imagery used to develop the site plan has been geo-referenced.”

On the contrary, you can see to the left that the site plan is drawn on a topographical map. This topo map was provided by the Memorial Project itself to all of the design contestants. A topo map is the epitome of a geo-referenced map. North on a topo map is true north, which is all that is needed to calculate the orientation of the crescent.

They don’t even bother to notice that their so-called experts are contradicting each other. Griffith says you can face anywhere to face Mecca and Rabbat says that orientation on Mecca must be exact. The Park Service gladly embraces whatever mutually exclusive dishonesties are available. Any excuse to turn a blind eye to the undeniable Islamic and terrorist memorializing features of their chosen design.

The full of significance of Murdoch’s plot takes a whole book to explain. (Given the importance of getting this information out to the public now, a provisional draft of my *Crescent of Betrayal* book is temporarily available for free download at [Crescent of Betrayal.com](#). Updates are being posted on my *Error Theory* blog.)

Very briefly, there are a dozen typical mosque features. All are realized in Paul Murdoch’s design, all on the same epic scale as his half-mile wide mihrab. The planned memorial is a terrorist memorial mosque, and this hijacking is still on track to succeed.

The Memorial Project’s public meeting begins at 10 tomorrow at the Somerset Courthouse. There is usually an intermission at noon, so if you arrive by 12 you should be able to sign up to comment. -- Alec Rawls