The Embrace &
1965 Freedom Rally Memorial Plaza

April 28, 2020

Boston Landmarks Commission
King Boston Monument & 1965 Freedom Rally Memorial Plaza

Outline

0 Previous Site
   King Boston Competition

1 Site Update
   New Site Approach
   1965 Freedom Rally & the Boston Civil Rights Community
   New Design Concept: The "Garment of Destiny"

2 The Embrace
   Concept
   Materiality

3 What We Heard
Previous Site

King Boston Competition (2018)
Public Engagement

Community
14 Community Meetings to develop Request for Proposal
1015 public responses to 5 finalist renderings displayed
Public Engagement is ongoing

Media
“A Stunning New Boston Memorial Will Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King”

“The Embrace,” the winning entry by Hank Willis Thomas and MASS Design Group, performs an admirable balancing act. It’s mysterious, a gentle knot of arms and hands entwined in shimmering bronze. It’s subtle, oh so subtle, an intimate physical gesture evoking tenderness and care without being prescriptive or lionizing its subjects. And more than anything else, it’s human – instantly relatable, a gesture of connection and intimacy that every one of us craves.”

- Murray White, Globe

King Boston Memorial Feedback Method

8% Balloting
24% Boston Public Library
68% Online
The Embrace
“Civic Engagement through Radical Love”

Plaza
“A place to pause”

Amphitheater
“A place to gather”
“Love is such a powerful force. It’s there for everyone to embrace— that kind of unconditional love for all of humankind. That is the kind of love that impels people to go into the community and try to change conditions for others, to take risks for what they believe in.”

Coretta Scott King
The plaza original concept came from the understanding of quilts.

Within the African American context, they have been rumored to be used for codes and communication in the Underground Railroad. The patchwork of a quilt symbolize unity and of coming together as it identifies smaller pieces of fabric joining in order to create something bigger than itself.
Plaza - A place to pause
Amphitheater - A place to gather
Site Update

New Site Approach
The **Boston Common** can be read as a series of historic nodes interconnected in a network of paths.

Our goal is being contextual and responsive to both the **King Legacy**, and the **history and future of the Boston Common**.
1950s - Freedom Trail established and a temporary Visitor Information Center was located within the planned memorial site. Before then, the Park Rangers service station provided an informal visitor center on a seasonal basis.

1967 - Boston Visitor Center added at north edge of Parkman Plaza along the Lafayette Mall.

c. 1994 - The current Visitor Information Center expanded and refurbished the Ranger Station at this site, adding an 84-year-old “women’s comfort station” with the aid of $1.4 million in city capital funds and a year’s work. Provided public restrooms for the first time since 1966.
Site Update

Boston Common - The Visitor Center over Time

View of the Ranger Station that was expanded to create the current Visitor Center, left. Boston Visitor Information Center (1967), as seen in 1988, right.

The Ranger Station from the Parkman Plaza.

The existing Visitor Center acts as a wall across Lafayette Mall.
Site Update

1965  Freedom Rally & the Boston Civil Rights Community
Collective action is usually forgotten. This project is an exceptional opportunity to tell the story of the Boston people that in their fight for social rights marched with King during the 1965 Freedom Rally.
Site Update

1965 Freedom Rally

FREEDOM RALLY

On April 23, 1965, Martin Luther King, Jr., led one of Boston’s first freedom marches from Roxbury to Boston Common. Galvanized by his presence, 22,000 people gathered together to hear him speak in one of the city’s most enormous demonstrations for civil rights.
“Little did I imagine that such a day was possible when I walked through this same Boston Common as a student 10 years ago. This will go down as one of the greatest days that Boston has ever seen.”

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.
Site Update

1965 Freedom Rally

April 23th 1965
Site Update

1965 Freedom Rally

April 23th 1965
1965 Freedom Rally

April 23th 1965

KING BOSTON MEMORIAL | MASS + SONGHA & COMPANY
Michael E. Haynes, left, with Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. at the time of King's speech before the Massachusetts legislature on April 28, 1965.

- Pastor at Twelfth Baptist Church in Roxbury from 1964 to 2004.
- Served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1965 to 1968, representing Roxbury.
- During the 1960s and 1970s Haynes played an active role in the civil rights movement.
- In 1965, he helped plan Martin Luther King Jr.'s entrance into Boston when he came to speak on Boston Common that spring.
Reverend James Reeb

- Reeb was a white, Unitarian Universalist minister, pastor, and activist in the Civil rights movement in Washington, D.C. and Boston, Massachusetts.
- In 1965, Reeb traveled to Selma to answer Martin Luther King’s call for clergy to support the nonviolent protest movement for voting rights.
- Reeb died on March 11, 1965 while marching in Selma, Alabama, after being attacked by a group of white supremacists.
- Delivering Reeb’s eulogy, King called him “a shining example of manhood at its best” (King, 15 March 1965).
Reverend Virgil Wood

- During his Pastorate in Lynchburg, Virginia, he became actively involved with the Civil Rights movement, setting up Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s work there as the Lynchburg Improvement Association, a local unit of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC).
- From 1963 to 1970, Dr. Wood led the Blue Hill Christian Center in Boston's Roxbury community, and was the head of the Massachusetts Unit of the SCLC.
- He served with Dr. King, Jr. as a member of his National Executive Board of the SCLC for the last ten years of Dr. King, Jr.’s life and work, and coordinated the State of Virginia in the historic march on Washington, D.C., on April 28, 1963.
Reverend James P. Breeden and Noel Day

- Organized Boston’s 1963 Stay Out for Freedom campaign through their Citizens for Human Rights (CFHR) organization - organized thousands of Black Bostonians to engage in collective non-violent direct action to protest de facto segregation through the creation of the nation’s first Freedom School in 1963.
- In 1961, Reverend Breeden was among 15 Freedom Riders arrested in Jackson, Mississippi and charged with “actions likely to cause a riot.”
Ruth Batson

- Chairwoman of the Public Education Committee of the NAACP Boston Branch.
- June 11, 1963: Challenged the all-white Boston School Committee and the segregation of the Boston Public Schools by pointing out that schools with high black enrollments had poor funding and horrible school conditions.
- After serving as chairwoman of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination from 1963 to 1966, Ruth helped launched the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) voluntary desegregation program.
- She was the first black woman on the Democratic National Committee, and the first woman elected president of NAACP's New England Regional Conference.
Otto P. and Muriel S. Snowden, pictured c. 1950 in their first office at 151 Humboldt Ave.

- Social workers & founders of Freedom House, Inc. in 1949.
- Freedom House, Inc. grew out of their community organizing with the Council on Community Affairs of Upper Roxbury (1947-1949).
- The initial goal of Freedom House was to centralize community activism in the fight for neighborhood improvement, good schools, and harmony among racial, ethnic, and religious groups in Roxbury, Massachusetts.
- They were committed to working to ensure the stability of Roxbury as a middle-class, racially mixed neighborhood by linking the community to existing services and creating services where they were lacking.
Margaret Moseley presents Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. with a $200 check from Boston friends and well-wishers at a reception held for him in March of 1958.

- Margaret Moseley was a community, peace, and civil rights activist.
- She was a founding member of Cooperative Way, a consumers' cooperative in Boston in the 1940s, and served on the board of the Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts.
- She was a founding member of Freedom House in Roxbury, president of the Community Church in Boston, and Massachusetts legislative chair for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which established the Margaret Moseley Memorial Peace Education fund in her honor in 1989.
- In 1965, Moseley traveled to Selma, Ala., with six other women from WILPF to work on the voting rights campaign.
Reverend Walter C. Davis of the Charles Street African Methodist Episcopal Church, left at the Freedom House reception for Reverend Martin Luther King Jr., March 20, 1958.

- President of Charlame Park Homes, moderate-income housing constructed by Charlame Park Homes, Inc., sponsored by the Charles Street A.M.E. Church.
Reverend Vernon Carter, Pastor of All Saints Lutheran Church

- In 1965 Rev. Vernon Carter, minister of the All Saints Lutheran Church in Boston's South End throughout the 1950s and 1960s, conducted a personal 114-day vigil/march in front of the Boston School Committee Headquarters to protest racial imbalance in the Boston schools.
Sarah-Ann Shaw

- As leader of the Northern Student Movement (NSM), she initiated its program that combined “educational opportunities” for children and advocacy for “civic responsibilities” among parents, including canvassing and voter registration and engaged many women as “parent advocates and coordinators.”
- She was the first female African-American reporter in Boston.
- Known for her presence in civil rights movements and as a volunteer in education programs.
Site Update

The “Garment of Destiny”
New Design Concept
“In a real sense all life is interrelated. All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be...

This is the inter-related structure of reality.”

Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from the Birmingham Jail
The “Garment of Destiny”

Fabrication
“THE GARMENT OF DESTINY”

Function
THE PEACE WALK
Site Update

The “Garment of Destiny” Fabrication

Fabrication

“THE GARMENT OF DESTINY”

QUILTS - These garments are made collectively, contain historic narratives and symbolic meaning, and are intended to comfort the community.
African American quilting traditions are embedded with narratives of hope, healing, and history.

Many techniques are linked to African heritage, such as the use of strip construction, large-scale designs, contrasting colors and asymmetrical patterns.

"Story" quilts employ applique elaborate narratives. The diamond shape is symbolic of the cycles of life. Pattern breaks are intended to keep away evil spirits.

Quilts were often constructed collectively, and are meant to be shared - representing caring for the community.
Examples of **STAR QUILTS**: concentric geometry patterns
Site Update

The “Garment of Destiny” Fabrication
Site Update

The “Garment of Destiny” Fabrication
The LABYRINTH - an ancient form containing a single circuitous path that winds its way into the center. The labyrinth is a meditative journey: the path to the center is the same as the path out, and the path is always in full view.

“Events like this help us remember that we aren't alone.”
—Susan Deranian, event organizer.
"If you can't fly then run, if you can't run then walk, if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The labyrinth evokes the power of **marching with others**.

Marching is a collective act, meant to bring people together, and to **demand observation**.

Marching cultivates a sensory awareness of our connection to others. Performed and embodied togetherness. Centering oneself and preparing for action.

In Argentina, the Madres de Plaza de Mayo used their bodies as “walking billboards” for the pictures and names of their children who had been “disappeared” during the military dictatorship. It was forbidden to stand together in a group, so the mothers walked slowly in a circle in the Plaza de Mayo.
The FREEDOM TRAIL

The BLACK HERITAGE TRAIL

Site Update

The Peace Walk  Function
1965 Freedom Rally became one of the city's most enormous demonstrations for Civil Rights.
We see this new location allowing The King Boston Memorial to bring this ideas closer to the public scene of Boston and to have an identity on its own.
Site Update

The “Garment of Destiny” Axonometric

The PEACE WALK - FUNCTION

The EMBRACE - CALL TO ACTION

THE “GARMENT OF DESTINY” - FABRICATION
Site Update

Boston Common - Nodes
1. **EMBRACE**
   - Call to action and public attractor

2. **PLAZA**
   - Flexible and vibrant space for keynotes, performance or social gathering

3. **PEACE WALK**
   - Plaza access and Boston Civil Rights Community Memorial

4. **SEATING AREA**
   - Stepped seats oriented facing the artwork and the Bandstand (historic background). Capacity: 130 seats

5. **ACCESS PATHS**
   - Main ADA accesses to the plaza

6. **SOFTSCAPE**
   - Softer waved grassy area

7. **SOFTSCAPE - INFORMAL SEATING**
   - Pronounced waved grassy area for informal (laying down) gathering

8. **QUOTE WALL**
   - Low granite wall with Coretta’s quote embedded
The “Garment of Destiny” Sections
Site Update

**The “Garment of Destiny” Renderings**

**CORETTA SCOTT KING QUOTE**

**THE PEACE WALK**
Boston activists for Civil Rights who supported the 1965 Freedom Rail with their march will be remembered along the meditation-mazes accesses.
Site Update
The “Garment of Destiny” Renderings

CORETTA SCOTT KING
QUOTE

THE PEACE WALK
Boston activists for Civil Rights who supported the 1965 Freedom Rail with their march will be remembered along the meditation-mazes accesses.
The "Garment of Destiny" Renderings
Site Update

The "Garment of Destiny" Renderings
Which *material palette* are we thinking on?
### Existing Materials with the Boston Common

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Less desirable</th>
<th>More desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asphalt</td>
<td>Pathways</td>
<td>Pathways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble</td>
<td>Bandstand</td>
<td>Pavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>Lights, Plaques, Trash bins, Manhole Covers</td>
<td>Stone, Pavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick</td>
<td>Pathways</td>
<td>Benches, Curbs + Pavers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>Pavers</td>
<td>Granite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KING BOSTON MEMORIAL | MASS + SONGHA & COMPANY**
Site Update

**Suggested Materials** Stone
Site Update

Suggested Materials Polished Granite
The Embrace

Concept
“Love is such a powerful force. It’s there for everyone to embrace - that kind of unconditional love for all humankind. That is the kind of love that impels people to go into the community and try to change conditions for others, to take risks for what they believe in.”

Coretta Scott King
The Embrace

“Civic Engagement through Radical Love”
What does the Embrace look like?
Material Finish Precedents

PATINA
- a thin film of color created by the application of heat and chemicals to the surface of a bronze
- Color comes from the reaction of chemicals with the copper in bronze

DURABILITY AND MAINTENANCE
- Familiar application
- Wash as needed with non-ionic soap and water
- Waxing 2x per year; in spring and fall
The Embrace

Material Finish Samples

“DEEP BROWN” on BURNISHED BRONZE

“HONEYCOMB” on BRONZE

“RUSTIC BROWN” on BRONZE
How other patina finished sculptures look like?
Material Finish Precedents

"George Washington" Boston Public Garden

"Unity" Hank Willis Thomas
Material Finish Precedents

"The Shaw Memorial" Boston Commons
Material Finish Precedents

“Sojourner Truth” Florence, Massachusetts

Harriet Tubman Park, Boston
National Precedents

"The Spirit of Freedom" Washington DC, 1997 Bronze

"Ohio Holocaust and Liberators Memorial" Columbus, OH 2014 Bronze
WHAT WE HEARD

THE EMBRACE

● MATERIALITY  Patina more appropriated for the Common, more human, invites touching, tells visitors’ story.

● SCALE  Illustrate scale of proposal

LANDSCAPE - 1965 FREEDOM RALLY MEMORIAL PLAZA

● LOCATION & GRADING  Node approach (floating island) and smaller seating area (amphitheater) makes for good movement. Consider intensity of the labyrinths.

● MAINTENANCE  Develop detail for landscape features to ensure their viability and durability. Consider drainage details.

● ACCESSIBILITY  Clarify entry points and universal accessibility.

● MATERIALITY  Reduction in overall amount of paving from original proposal is a positive development

● FUNCTION  Ensure that large crowds can adequately be accommodated. Consider sightlines and lighting for security

● PLANTING  Study relationship to the existing tree canopy.