

# Wodiczko + Bonder / Maryann Thompson Architects, with Walter Hood

The Ripple Effects: Voice, Love, Non-Violence,  
Fellowship, Community, Justice, Action

The project has embraced the historic and unique task of creating a monument not to a single hero but to a partnership of two extraordinary people. It is designed as a living memorial that must be continually reanimated and repurposed by the people who engage with it. The proposal uses the Common to embed this dual monument in a deep history of activism, signaled by the memorial to Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, and to carry that meaning and purpose into the future.

The site organized by a mound on the east side and the Beacon Towers, on the west side. The Beacon Towers are designed to combine symbolism with action. They symbolize the continuing presence and inspiration and impact of the Kings' moral and social leadership, while at the same time — through the sounds of specially designed bells and the pulses of light-monitoring — they continually inform the visitors on the current state of the emancipation process, globally, nationally, and in Boston. In this way the two Beacon-Towers encourage and inspire experiences, resolutions, and actions of the people who visit it.

Emanating from the Beacon Towers, in the surface texture of the Memorial Ground, are ripples that evoke the “ripple effect” of the words, actions and leadership of The Kings. The Mound creates a journey “to the mountaintop” culminating in a deliberately empty and shaded platform conceived to bring into being a public community of engaged visitors. The amphitheater area at the edge of the Mound, along with other zones and the cyphers within the Memorial Ground, create a variety of scales and experiences for human interaction, fellowship and community.

An important part of the Memorial is the ‘bridge’ leading from the 54th Memorial across the Common past the Beacon Towers rising from below. The Bridge is inscribed with a chronology of emancipatory events beginning with abolitionism in the 19th century and leading to the struggles for justice and equality in the 21st century. In this way the Kings' lives are set into a larger story that remains unfinished. Below the bridge, a glass wall offers a more intimate and self-reflective encounter with written and spoken texts that teach and inspire. The reflective surface of the glass allows for the visitor to see themselves within the context of the inscribed words, and in the company of ‘others’.

This project proposes to both celebrate Martin Luther King & Coretta Scott King -their lives and accomplishments- as well as to invite present and future generations to see them as catalysts for an ongoing process of emancipation and transformation. This new public space and forum for engagement, nestled in the Boston Common, is created in order to inspire learning, dialogue, and activism now and later. It is not only a symbolic ground for public assembly, for civic celebrations, for cultural activity, individual and group reflection and discussion but also a socially engaging interactive environment, which -as an affirmation of life, love, fellowship and community- will embody a welcoming message, in and from Boston, for generations to come.

# DESIGN

## Site Plan







## DESIGN



View to The Memorial Ground, The Towers, The Mound and The Bridge, with State House in background

## DESIGN



View of Wall of Words and the Bridge above towards The Mound

The proposal reveals a 'hidden' ground beneath the surface of Common's designated site in order to anchor new memories into a city and national narrative, itself a fragment of a global historical formation.







## DESIGN



View from The Mound, looking back at The Towers

The proposal transforms the topography of the site in order to create a new ground for activism, a mound for contemplation and speech, and small grove of trees as symbolic reference to the cultivation of new life and memory.