

WHY ARE WE CREATING A MEMORIAL?

On May 7, 1860, sixteen enslaved peoples were sold by Wake Forest College to benefit the institution's endowment.

"Isaac to John Thompson \$525.00. Jim to John Hall \$495.00. Lucy to Peter White \$1,285.00. Caroline to J.H. Hall \$295.00. Pompie to Joseph Maddry \$1,305.00. Emma to John Thompson \$580.00." The money used from the sale of the enslaved peoples was used to benefit Wake Forest.

In **2021**, acting on findings from the Advisory Committee on Naming in 2020, the WFU Board of Trustees unanimously voted on a resolution to

create a campus memorial to remember and honor the humanity of the enslaved men, women and children who worked for or were sold to benefit the University.

To Stand With and For Humanity essays from the wake forest university slavery, race and memory project

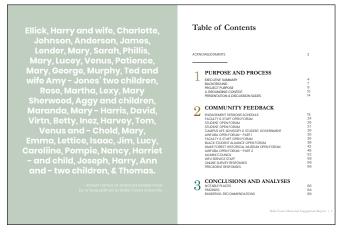
Visit https://srmp.wfu.edu/

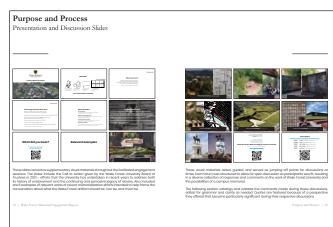
WHO HAVE WE TALKED WITH?

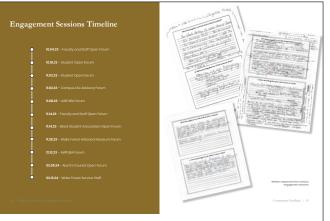
Dates and Gatherings

10.04.23	Faculty and Staff Open Forum
10.18.23	Student Open Forum
11.02.23	Student Open Forum
11.02.23	Campus Life Advisory Forum
11.08.23	AWFUBA Forum
11.14.23	Faculty and Staff Open Forum
11.14.23	Black Student Association Open Forum
11.28.23	Wake Forest Historical Museum Forum
12.13.23	AWFUBA Forum
02.05.24	Alumni Council Open Forum
02.13.24	Wake Forest Service Staff

Full Engagement Report

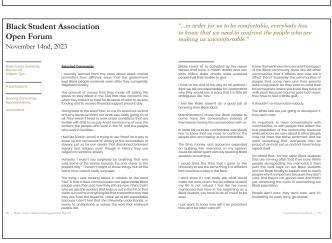












The full engagement report can be found at https://president.wfu.edu/committees/campus-memorialization-steering-committee/

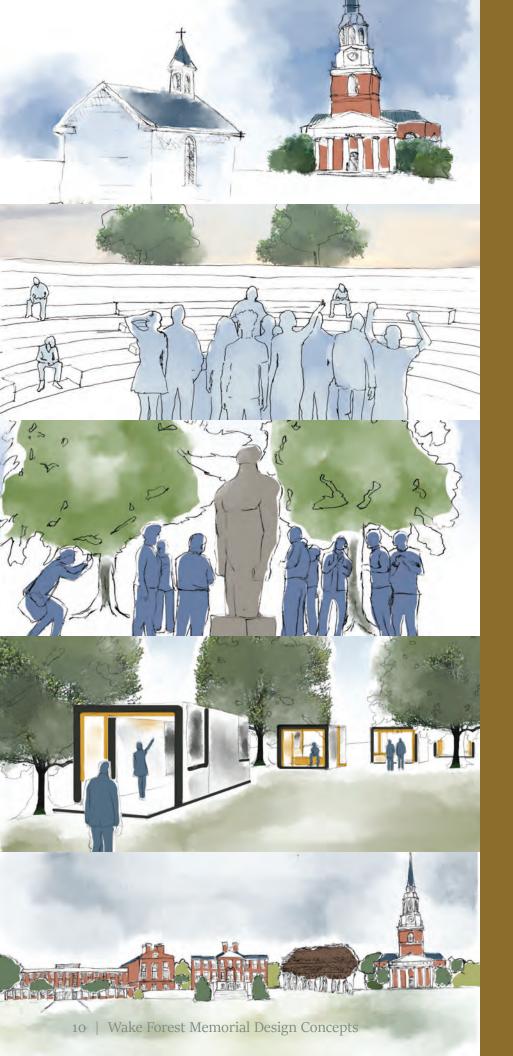
WHAT DID ALL OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS PRODUCE?

Based on input from over 100 participants, as documented in the engagement report produced in June 2024, the design team at Baskervill distilled five primary design goals.

Design Goals

- Tell the **honest story** of Wake Forest's history with enslavement.
- Relieve Black students, groups, staff, and faculty from the burden of educating others about the stories and traumas of Wake Forest's history with enslavement.
- Celebrate, honor, and commemorate the lives and contributions of enslaved people who were "hired" by or bequeathed to the University and subsequently sold for the benefit of the institution, as well as the lives of those left behind in the transition from the Town of Wake Forest to Winston-Salem.
- **Create meaningful connections** between the historic Town of Wake Forest and the Wake Forest University campus for students, faculty, staff, and town community members.
- Place the Memorial/Artifact in a prominent, noticeable, and unavoidable location, taking into consideration impact on student life and campus activities.





1. Chapel

Situated boldly on Hearn Plaza in front of Reynolda Hall, facing Wait Chapel, this chapel serves as a contemplative sanctuary and place of remembrance. The architecture emphasizes simplicity and a sense of personal spiritual reverence, honoring the resilience and contributions of those who were enslaved to benefit the University.

2. Amphitheater

This amphitheater is designed to bring those voices into the heart of campus life, under the open sky, spreading joy as far as the ear can hear. As the seasonal home for the Gospel Choir, the amphitheater symbolizes the recognition of all voices that were once silenced, offering a future where they can speak, sing, and be heard openly.

3. Garden

This concept draws inspiration from the hush arbors, the secret meeting places in the woods where enslaved people gathered to worship freely, protected by the trees. From those hidden groves, through Praise Houses and early African Baptist churches, a lineage connects to the modern Black Church. In this Garden, the secrecy is gone, but the protection and rootedness of the trees and forest remain. The presence of the ancestors, Black excellence, and strength endures.

4. Thresholds

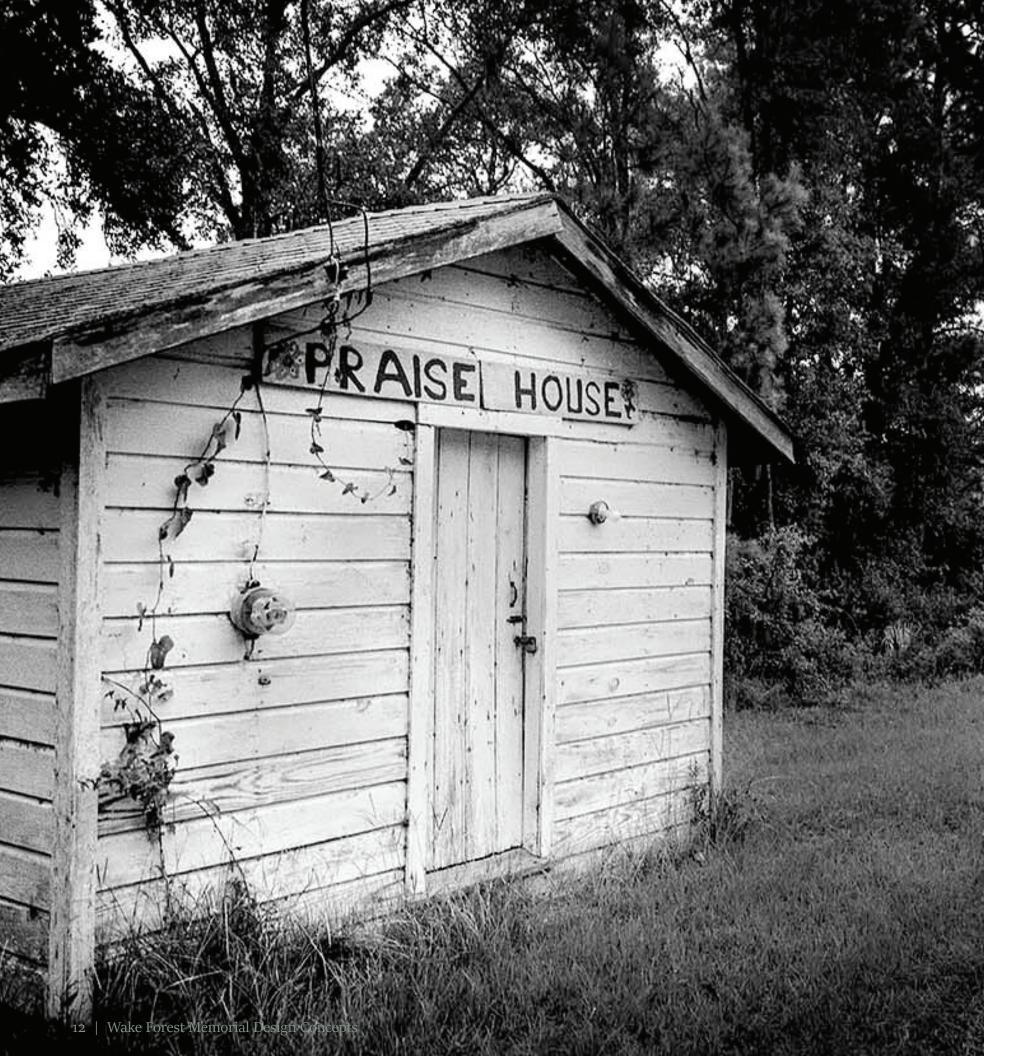
These moments, envisioned as thresholds or portals, will be spread across the Wake Forest campus. These artifacts will be unavoidable and prominent. Instead of a single, towering monument, the memorial stretches across campus and beyond, encouraging visitors to continually learn and reflect on this history. It invites them to sit with it, express themselves, and engage in ongoing reflection. By intertwining itself into the fabric of the campus, the memorial ensures that every member of the community will encounter it.

5. Toguna

This memorial stands in bold contrast to the modified Georgian architecture of the Wake Forest campus, often associated with colonialism and disconnected from the traditional architectures of the colonized. The striking design reflects community feedback, which expressed a desire for the memorial to be "prominent, unique, and unavoidable" rather than blending in.

PROPOSED CONCEPTS AND THEMES

These five ideas attempt to address sentiments and thoughts raised during the community forums and the design goals that came out of them. Each one may have aspects that you find appealing and you may think that a particular theme works best in a different location than proposed. We encourage you to share your creative thoughts in the link at the end of the document.



1. CHAPEL

"[In church,] We're half the people here. And we are gonna stand out because Black people in church, they make themselves known. So even in chapel, the ways that we would engage Blackness was very present, very welcome."

-Participant, Association of Wake Forest University Black Alumni

The design of this small outdoor Memorial Chapel is inspired by Praise Houses, early Baptist churches, and the tradition of chapels for the dead, all central to the Black Church's history. It aims to honor ancestors, acknowledge the painful legacy of slavery, and strengthen the Black student and alumni community at Wake Forest University.

The open-air chapel will offer views of Wait Chapel and its surroundings, creating a tranquil space for reflection. Sculptures will represent past worshipers, honoring the enslaved individuals whose lives contributed to the University's growth.

Historical elements will be integrated to educate visitors on the lives of enslaved people tied to the University, promoting truth-telling and dialogue. The chapel will also host gatherings, educational programs, and interfaith events, serving as a space for reflection on Wake Forest's historical ties to slavery and its ongoing commitment to confront that legacy.

Through its design, the chapel offers a sacred space for remembrance and renewal, paying tribute to the resilience and humanity of those enslaved individuals.

Praise Houses Various Vernacular Builders American South

1. CHAPEL

Zone

Situated boldly on Hearn Plaza in front of Reynolda Hall, facing Wait Chapel, this chapel serves as a contemplative sanctuary and place of remembrance. The architecture emphasizes simplicity and a sense of personal spiritual reverence, honoring the resilience and contributions of those who were enslaved to benefit the University.

Examples









Villaescusa de Haro, Spain

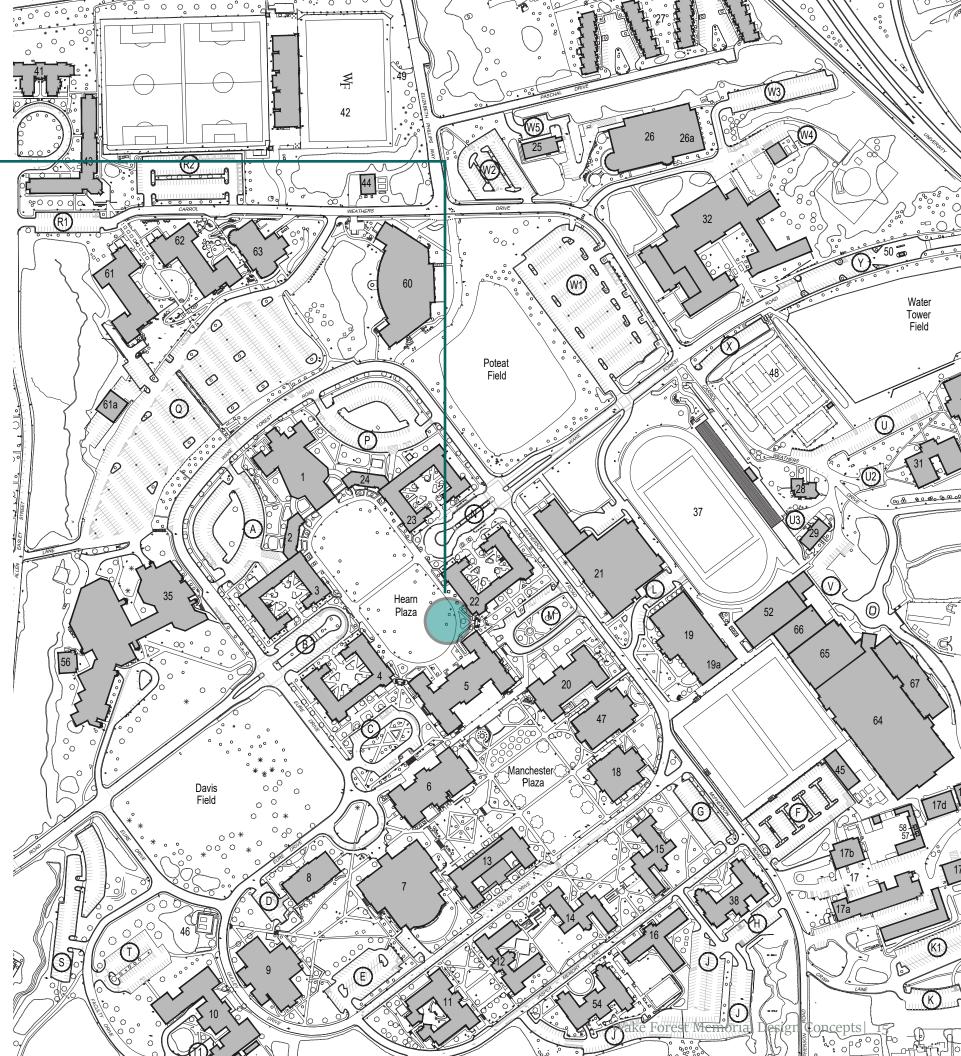


Cobar, Australia



Mechernich, Germany

- Open-air structure
- Space for contemplation and reflection
- Sculpture/Representation
- Integration of interpretive elements





2. AMPHITHEATER

"We cannot not celebrate the Gospel Choir for the largest, most impactful, and the oldest multi-cultural organization at Wake Forest Campus."

-Participant, Association of Wake Forest University Black Alumni

The Gospel Choir, one of the oldest multicultural student organizations at Wake Forest, has long been a refuge for Black students and students of color. This design concept draws from the Choir's rich legacy. Led by Oscar-winning composer Joshuah Brian Campbell, the group performs locally and nationally, records albums, and hosts other gospel artists. Their voices, filled with celebration and spiritual depth, often resonate from Wait Chapel.

Designed for speaking, singing, and being heard, the amphitheater amplifies the voices of the Gospel Choir, Black students, and ancestors, carrying their messages across campus and beyond.

When not used for concerts, the amphitheater will host informal gatherings such as lunches, student activities, and alumni events. It may also hold traditions like orientation and graduation, allowing students to begin and end their time at Wake Forest in this meaningful setting.

The amphitheater will also serve as a venue for peaceful assembly, reflecting the University's history of activism and supporting student advocacy, particularly for Black students and students of color, for generations to come.

This space honors the perseverance of the ancestors, many of whom were sold and enslaved by members of the Wake Forest community. Embedded into the landscape, it acknowledges the invaluable contributions of enslaved people who helped shape both the campus and the nation.

The OdeonEphesus, Turkey

2. AMPHITHEATER

Zone

The amphitheater will be sited in Manchester Plaza and will be centrally located amidst student academic life, making it a natural gathering spot. Positioned in the heart of campus, it will seamlessly integrate into the daily routines of students, hosting everything from informal gatherings to significant events like orientation and special commencement activities. Its presence in this high-traffic area ensures it becomes a vibrant part of student life, fostering connection, reflection, and advocacy. By amplifying student voices, particularly for Black students and students of color, the amphitheater becomes an essential space for both academic and social engagement.

Examples

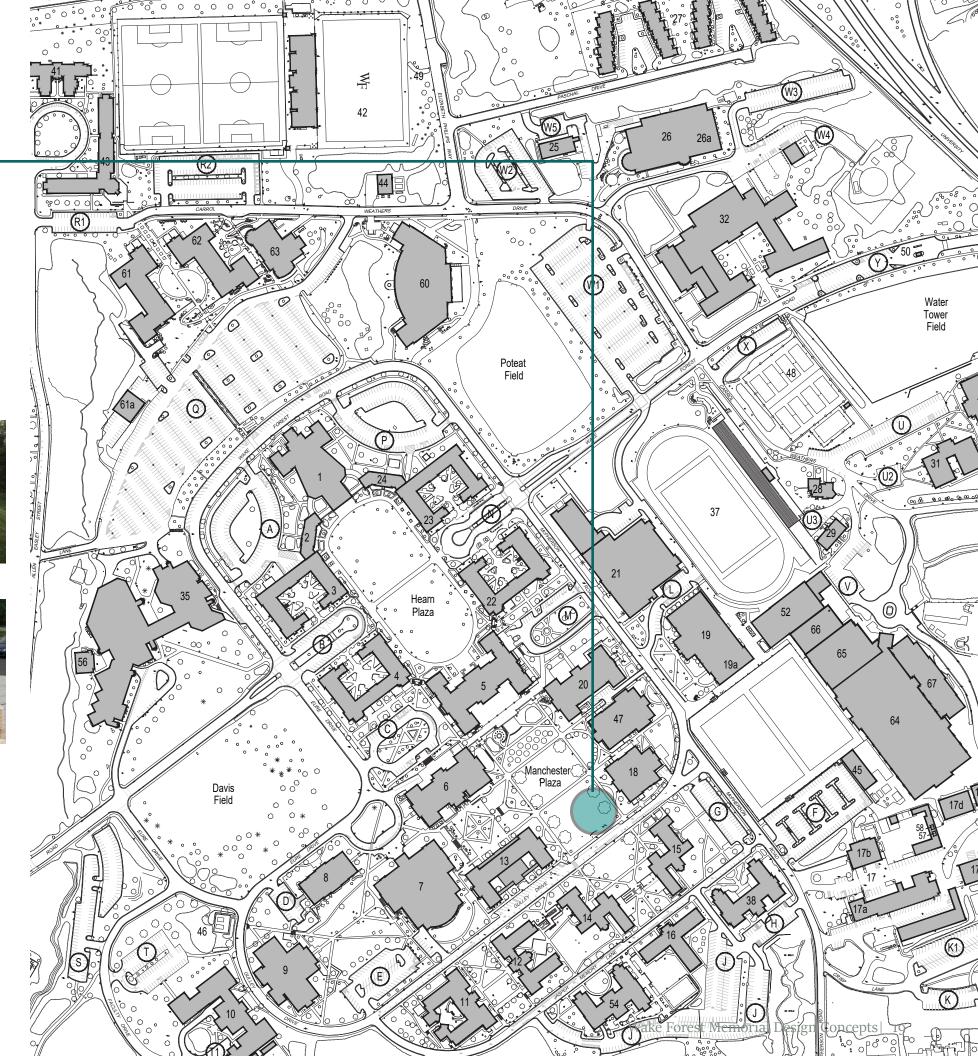


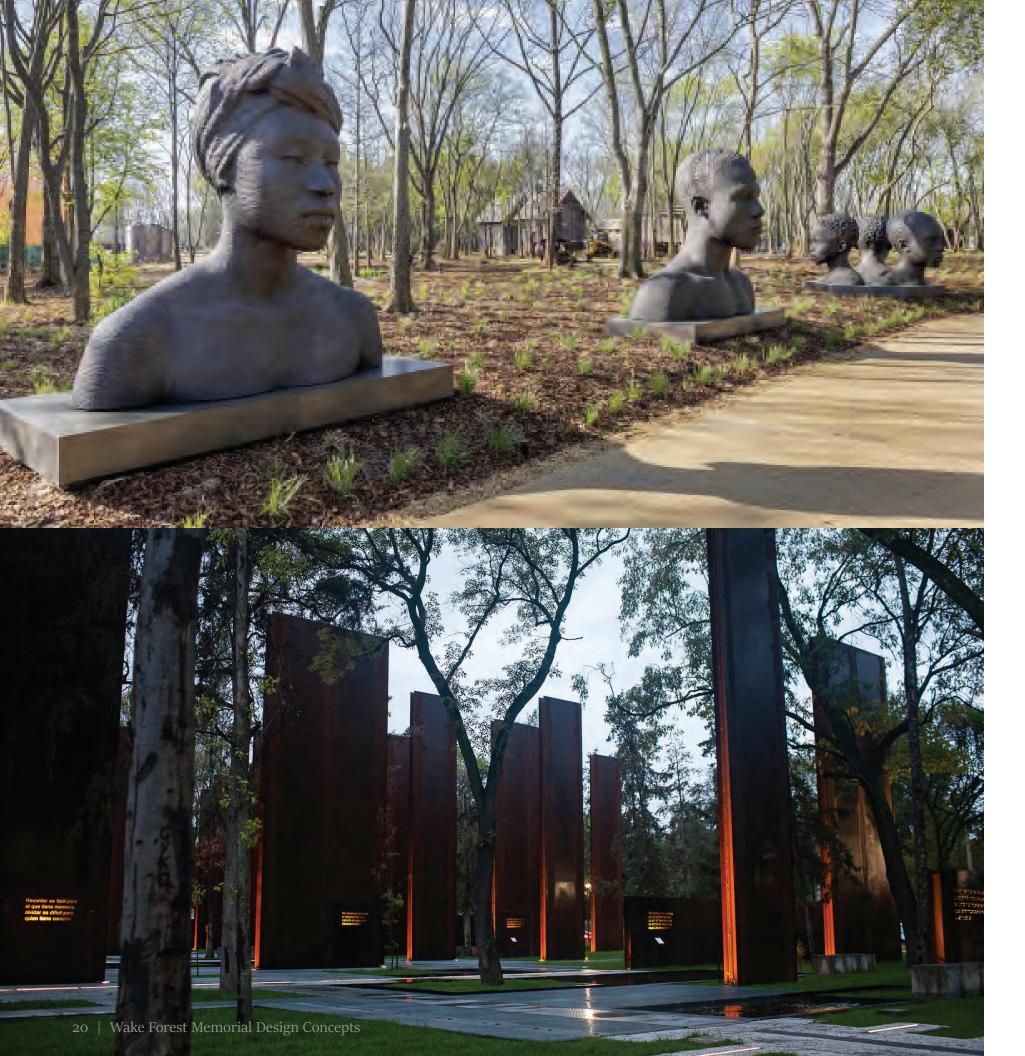






- · Carved into the landscape, reshaping and reclaiming space
- Space for listening and being heard
- Outdoor public space
- Place to establish and carry forward new and old student traditions





3. GARDEN

"[Hearth at William and Mary] represented a continuation and not "we have the memorial and this is the end." It represents something unfinished and something that needs work and needs reflection and needs research."

-Student Open Forum Participant

The Garden is envisioned as a large, semi-open arboretum grove, blending thoughtful landscape design with bold contemporary public art. It features a curated selection of trees and plantings, pedestrian-friendly architecture, and art installations that amplify stories of struggle, resistance, and triumph.

Walking paths weave through the Garden, punctuated by sculptures at key intersections that lead to a central "clearing." Along these paths, visitors can find moments of solitude and reflection or cross paths with others, all under the gaze of powerful works of art.

The legacies of those who labored for and were sold to benefit the University are conveyed through the landscape, architectural features, interpretive signage, and art. The Garden stands as a lasting tribute to dignity and resilience, fostering a deeper understanding of the University's past while inspiring a more inclusive future grounded in justice and compassion.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn." This reminds us that from the deep roots of the past grow the truths and changes needed for a just future.

Freedom Monument Sculpture Park Various Artists Montgomery, Alabama

Memorial to the Victims of Violence in Mexico Mexico City, Mexico

3. GARDEN

Zone

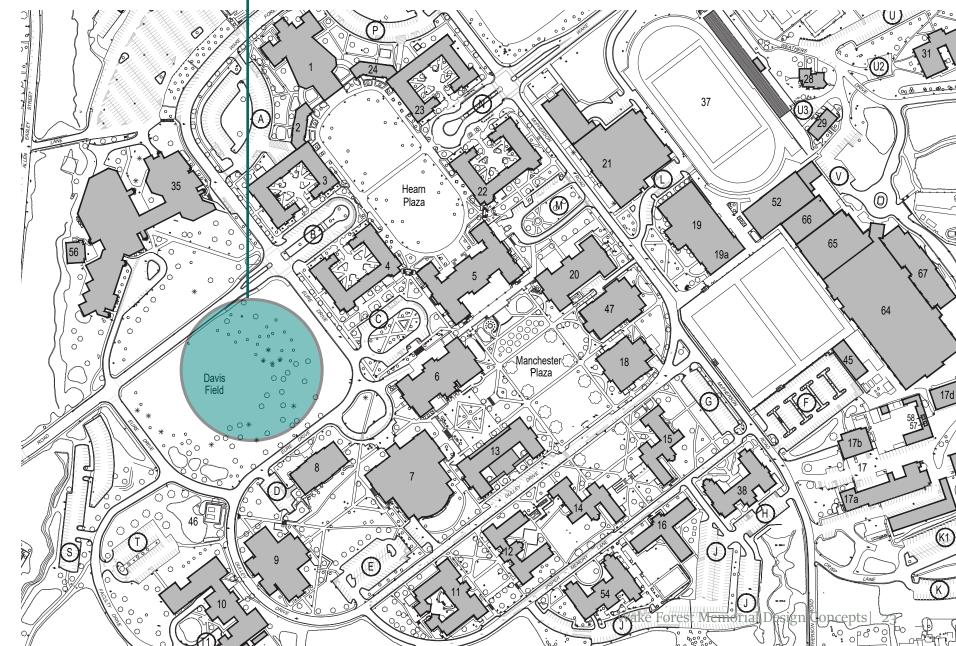
The Garden, located on Davis Field near the Scales Fine Arts Center, could serve to bring the Mark H. Reece Collection of Student-Acquired Contemporary Art into public view, transforming it into a living memorial. This initiative invites students to showcase the work of America's great Black artists, expanding the Memorial Sculpture Garden as an ongoing feature of the project. The collection, already rich with influential pieces, would continue to grow as part of this meaningful commitment.

Examples



- · Large semi-open grove with winding walking paths
- Bold, contemporary statements of public art
- Paths intersect to provide moments of coming together
- Moments for solitude and quiet reflection





4. THRESHOLDS

"From its beginning, Wake Forest College was deeply enmeshed in the southern culture of slavery."

"From the Forest of Wake to Wake Forest College," by Andrew McNeill Canady

Now is the time—indeed, it has long been time—for Wake Forest to engage in the work of liberation, atonement, and reconciliation. It is only fitting that this memorial be equally "enmeshed" in the University's landscape. Rather than a singular structure, the memorial is conceived as a network of moments and artifacts, reflecting the need for the work of dismantling the legacy of slavery to be as intentional, pervasive, and rigorous as the forces that once oppressed humanity.

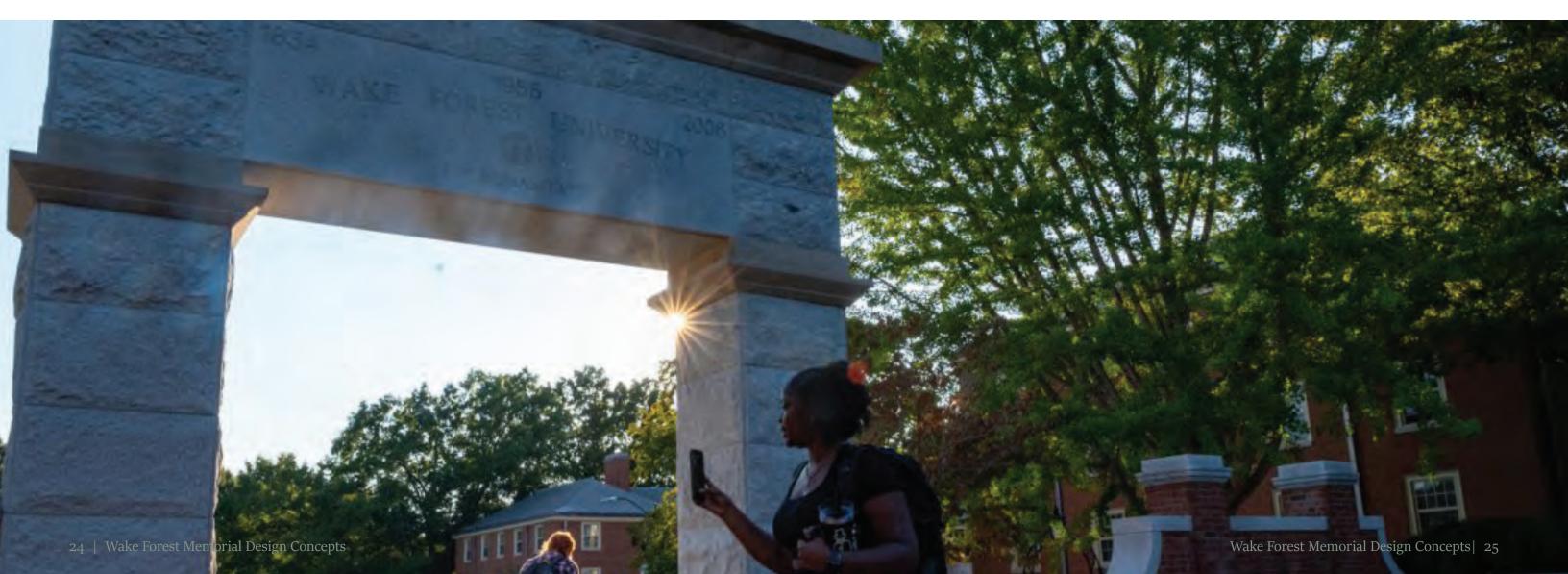
These moments form a collective of artifacts created by a collective of community members. By engaging writers, artists, and storytellers from the Wake Forest community, memorialization becomes a shared, community-driven effort. This initiative could

be supported by existing University art programs, such as the Student Union Art Acquisition Committee, by allocating funds to local artists to contribute to new thresholds.

These thresholds are designed to grow and evolve as more knowledge is uncovered, representing that this work is ongoing and far from complete. The memorial invites individuals to undertake an intellectual and emotional journey, now made physical. Memorialization becomes interactive—something to experience, not just observe. Each threshold offers a space to reflect, learn, mourn, express thoughts, or feel joy. No single space or moment is expected to do everything; instead, the memorial provides multiple opportunities across the community

to engage with history and the ongoing work of reconciliation.

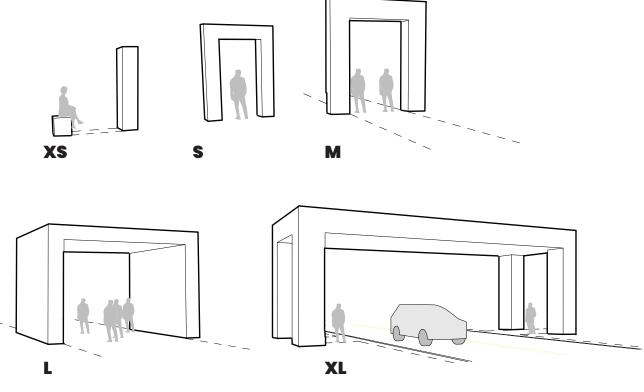
While many of these thresholds are envisioned as intimate spaces, some could be designed to accommodate communal gatherings and collective experiences. The materials, architectural details, and interactive features will be tailored to the story each threshold tells. Perhaps one threshold will serve as an epicenter, grounding all the others. In this way, memorialization—and by extension, atonement and reconciliation—becomes a process on individual, collective, and institutional levels. Through this memorial concept, the work of liberation and reconciliation is literally embedded in the fabric of the University.



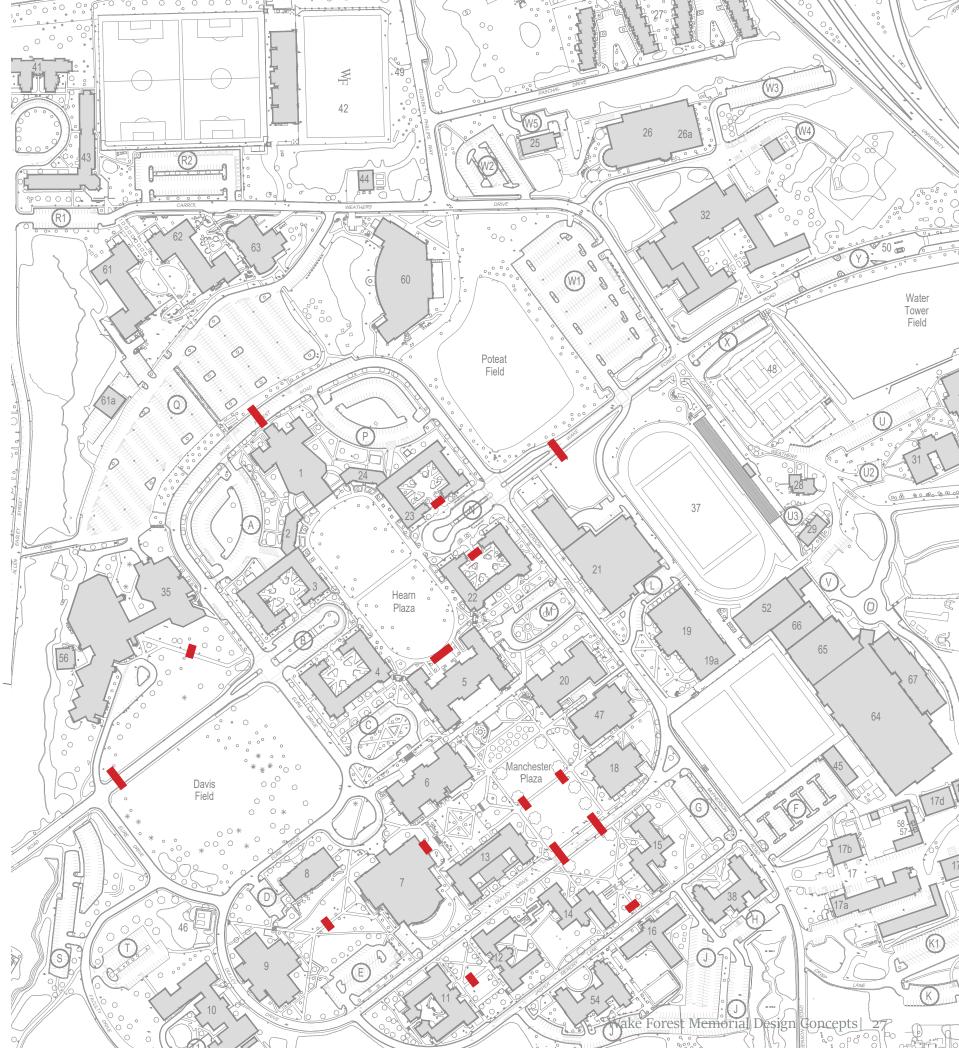
4. THRESHOLDS

Zones (Multiple)

In this way, history is no longer hidden or ignored; it is revealed across the campus. The memorial also takes on an educational role, with each artifact communicating a unique aspect of the University's and Wake Forest's history. The number of moments or thresholds depends on the stories the community wishes to tell, and it is discouraged to limit each artifact to represent a single individual. With over 50 enslaved individuals having contributed to the University's establishment, it would be reductive to limit the number of artifacts to a "reasonable" count.



- Outdoor covered spaces that communicate history
- Different scales allow for intimate, small group, and communal experiences
- Framework that can be expanded as more knowledge is uncovered



- Large, heavy roof represents the heaviness of the conversations had inside
- Central space underneath for seating
- Supported by pillars that represent the ancestors watching over and protecting
- In contrast with the architectural style of the campus

Toguna with mural base depicting Dogon cosmology Various Vernacular Builders Dogon Country, Mali





5. TOGUNA

"The story of this artifact that comes to mind for me is the togetherness and the importance of community and coming together for Black people, but also a challenge to lead the way on repentance for White people." -Participant, AWFUBA Engagement Session

The design for this memorial draws from the Toguna, a traditional structure in Dogon architecture from Mali, West Africa. In Dogon society, the Toguna serves as a communal space for dialogue, conflict resolution, and decisionmaking. Its large thatched roof symbolizes the weight of the discussions held within, and its low height ensures that participants remain seated, encouraging calm exchanges during tense moments. This design reflects the belief that memorials honoring people of West African descent should find meaning and form within their cultural heritage.

This intimate, welcoming pavilion offers space for quiet reflection or group discussions, inviting visitors into a "Sankofa moment"—to honor the past while envisioning a more just future.

The roof is supported by Y-shaped pillars, reminiscent of the structural supports of a traditional Toguna. These pillars represent the Nommo, the primordial ancestors who, in Dogon belief, protect and empower those within the space. Partially buried in the earth, the pillars embody the ancestors as sentinels, watching over the memorial and creating a sacred and empowering space for reflection and dialogue.

Whether imagined as a small, chapel-like structure taking its cues from the Toguna, a pavilion at the heart of a garden, or even a stage-like feature in an amphitheater, the form adapts while maintaining its cultural essence.

Cultural representation, whether in art or architecture, is crucial to honoring those whose cultural and generational identities have been nearly erased. Memorials like this restore dignity by grounding them in the rich traditions of their ancestry.







2. Amphitheater 1. Chapel 5. Toguna 3. Garden 4. Thresholds

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK.

These five ideas are our starting point to achieve a final design for a permanent artifact/memorial on the campus of Wake Forest University. We invite you to share your thoughts about these concepts. What works best and where. Are there elements of one idea that may work together with another to create a more complete narrative. Follow the link below or scan the QR code and use the form.

Thank You!



https://forms.gle/D7fnfXoPyHJyS8eVA

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