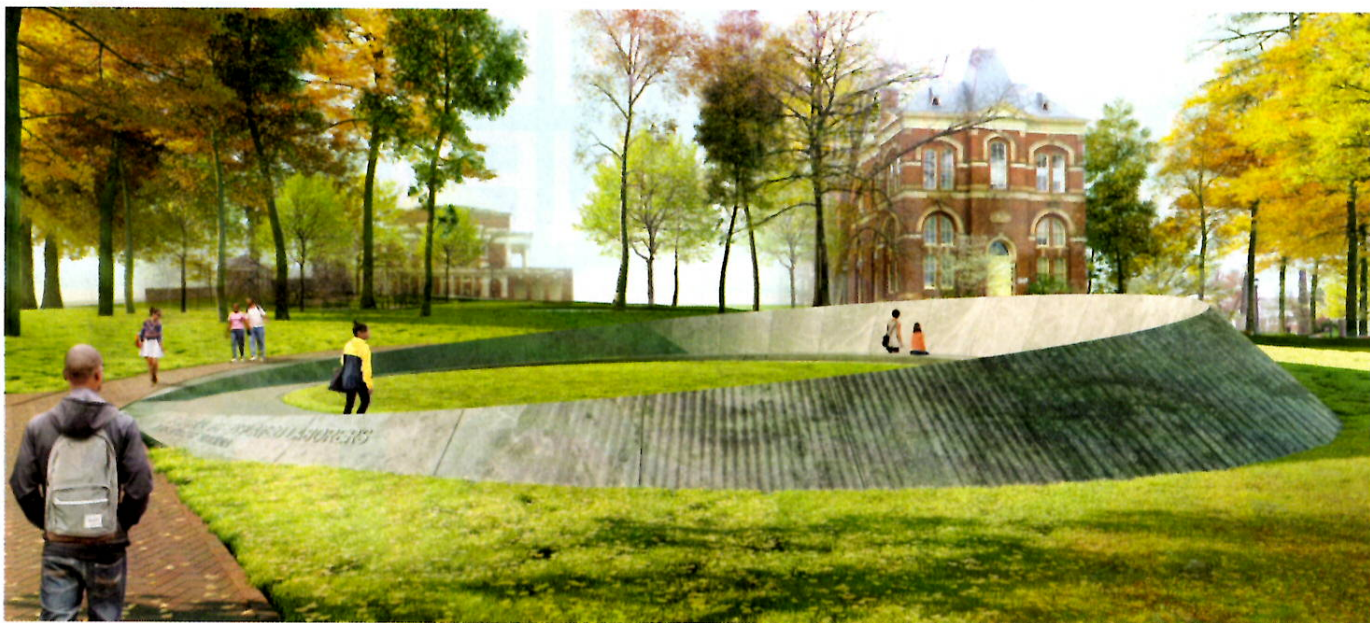


Editorial: A Fitting Memorial in Charlottesville

TEXT BY NED CRAMER



Faced with the terrible torch-lit images of white supremacists rallying in front of Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda at the University of Virginia (UVA) on Friday, Aug. 11, and the death of counterprotester Heather Heyer and injury of many others the following day, I can think of no more succinct architectural response than to share this rendering of the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers on the Charlottesville, Va., campus.

We must never forget: Black slaves—some 5,000 men, women, and children—built and maintained Jefferson's Academical Village, from the university's foundation in 1819 through the end of the Civil War. Jefferson himself owned slaves, and it was their forced labor that enabled him to become the principal author of the Declaration of Independence, America's third president, and the father of American architecture.

The Memorial to Enslaved Laborers was designed in a collaboration between Höweler + Yoon Architecture, Mabel O. Wilson of Studio &, Gregg Bleam Landscape Architect, and Frank Dukes, an environmentalist and founder of University & Community Action for Racial Equity at UVA. On June 9, the university's Board of Visitors Buildings and Grounds Committee approved the schematic design and placement on campus, in a green space within sight of the Rotunda.

The white supremacists claimed to be protesting the possible removal of a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee from a Charlottesville park. That their hate and violence occurred under such a pretext makes the construction of the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers even more essential, and fitting.