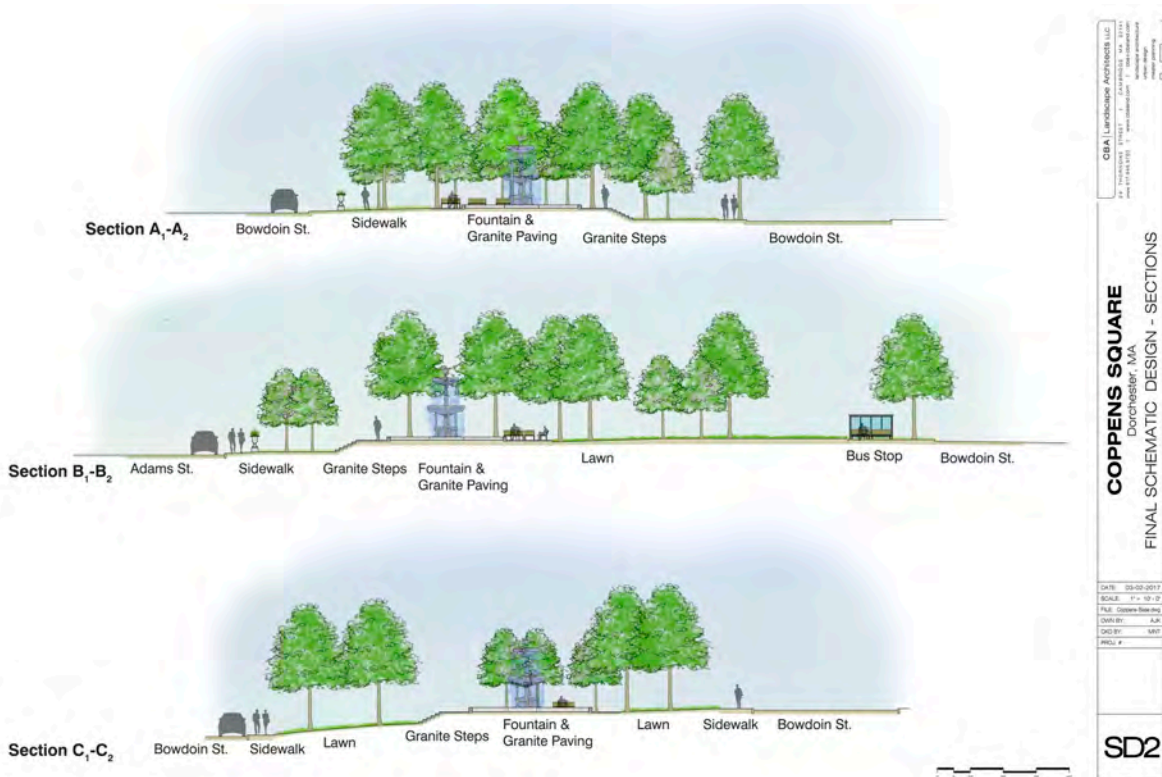


# Redesign of Coppens Square Park

Schematic Design by CBA Landscape Architects



## **Background**

Coppens Square Park, a City of Boston public park, is located centrally in the Meetinghouse Hill neighborhood of Dorchester. Formerly named Eaton Square, the park's main feature is a historic fountain. The two most prominent buildings in the vicinity are the massive granite church of St. Peter's Parish and the bright white exterior of First Parish Church in Dorchester. The park was renamed after Father Francis X. Coppens, a Catholic chaplain from the neighborhood killed in the Korean War.

### Lyman Fountain

The historic fountain in Coppens Square Park was dedicated on October 24, 1885 in celebration of Theodore Lyman Jr., Mayor of Boston from 1834-1835. A majestic fountain commemorates the mayor's initiation of the clean, public water system in Boston. The Monson granite bowl at the base, engraved with the mayor's dates, measures 33 feet in diameter. As originally installed the bronze fountain was 26 feet tall and embellished with four caryatids in the lower tier and cupids at the top (see image below). Designed and fabricated by M.D. Jones of Boston, it was dismantled in the late 1950s/early 1960s and replaced with the current small bronze fountain sitting in the original basin, which remains in place but is too large for the replacement. The substitute fountain has been inactive for over 40 years.

Coppens Square Park and its historic fountain need long-deferred maintenance and landscape improvements. The goal of the redesign project is to create a vibrant public gathering place for the community. CBA Landscape Architects has developed a new design for Coppens Square. The park's rejuvenation is spearheaded by the Friends of Coppens Square, a grassroots group committed to the care of this open space and activities therein. We are working to create a more welcoming and active park. Community involvement, open access to a wide range of social and community activities, and providing an attractive and safe venue are at the core of our mission. We promote economic diversity, opportunity and quality of life to benefit the residents and families in our ethnically diverse community, as reflected in the neighboring merchants and restaurants that offer a taste of African American, Cape Verdean, Caribbean, Latino and Vietnamese food, products and traditions.

## **Landscape Redesign Concept**

The fountain is understood as the central feature of Coppens Square, a triangular community park on Dorchester's Meetinghouse Hill measuring 4,500 square feet. A new, central plaza surrounding the fountain will become the main attraction where activity is intended to take place. Park users will reach the central fountain through three entrances that lead to the new central fountain plaza. Two of the entrances are handicapped accessible with the one at the western end, on the short side of the triangle, rising as a series of three steps to accommodate for the grade change of the site. Three pairs of urns will flank these three entrances to the park, which would be planted with robust grasses. Currently underused due to high traffic volume, the existing hardscape with picnic tables at the eastern corner would be removed to make room for additional greenspace.

The Coppens Square Park redesign envisions reusing the existing granite surround. The slabs including the text panel dedicated to Mayor Lyman would be turned into seating elements surrounding the new historic fountain. In addition, the granite slabs offer a canvas envisioned to be engraved with text that celebrates the community's diversity. The benches are placed along the perimeter of a 12-foot granite plaza band that surrounds the fountain base.

### Redesign Plan for Feature Fountain

The overall fountain concept is to focus on the celebration and importance of the public water supply to the City of Boston, while celebrating the diversity of the neighborhood and activating the park.

A redesigned fountain that approximates the original design will include:

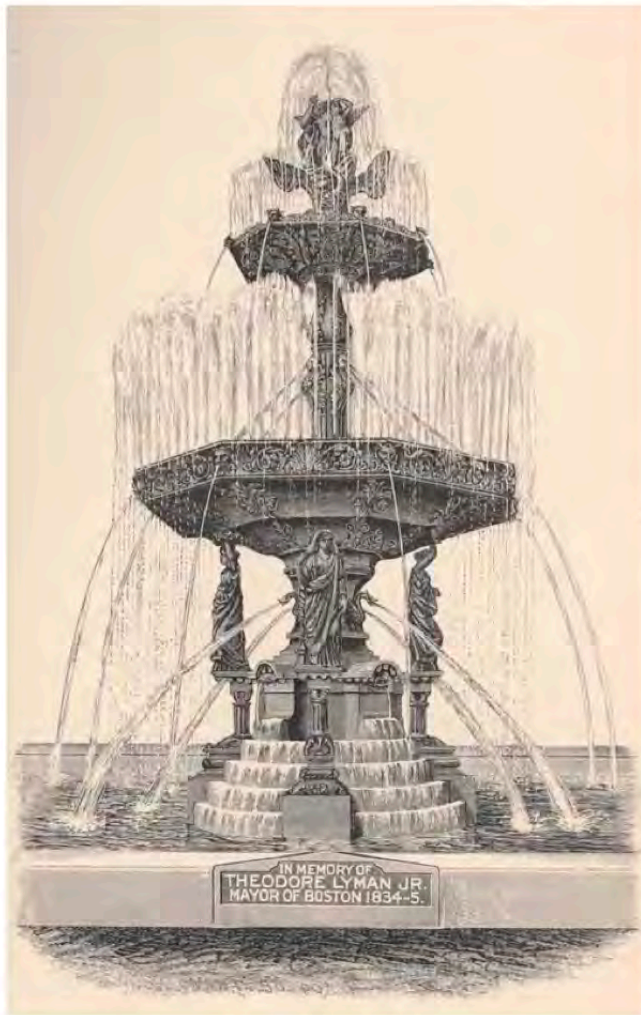
- The height of new fountain will be as tall as original fountain, which was approximately 26 feet.
- The new design will have a very shallow basin for safety's sake and to conserve water.
- The proposed mold to be used features two pans along its vertical axis. The water will fall from two pans into the basin.

## **TO DONATE OR TO GET INVOLVED**

Please contact the Friends of Coppens Square Inc., a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization, to contribute funds in support of our park renovation and activation. We are also seeking volunteers to get involved and to assist with fundraising.

Please email Ed Cook, President of the Friends, at [edwardmcook@comcast.net](mailto:edwardmcook@comcast.net) or [christina.lanzl@urbancultureinstitute.org](mailto:christina.lanzl@urbancultureinstitute.org). For additional information, please visit the Coppens Square Park [webpage](#).

## NEW FOUNTAIN: COMPARISON WITH ORIGINAL



Original Fountain



Sketch of Proposed Fountain

*Image Credit: (Left) Urban Culture Institute/Ed Cook, (Right) Robinson Ironworks*