

Press release: Holocaust survivors warn society against forgetting against lessons of history

Holocaust Memorial Design Film

Britain's Holocaust survivors are urging Britain to remember the lessons of history and understand what they mean for society now.

Survivors warned about the dangers of letting prejudice go unchecked in society as designs for the new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre go [on display at the V&A](#) (from 1 to 22 August). The Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will stand against all forms of hatred and extremism in the modern world, including the discrimination that underpins Antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism and homophobia today. British Holocaust survivors are also meeting and speaking directly to visitors to the Museum about their experiences as part of a 'living library' event.

The designs on display at the V&A are being exhibited by the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, a cross-party project, funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Inspired by the UK's last living Holocaust survivors, the project is currently undertaking an international design competition to create a new National Memorial and Learning Centre in London. The project will create a national space for remembrance and an educational experience that will challenge visitors to stand up against hatred and prejudice.

Visitors attending the display in the V&A's Raphael Gallery will be able to see the designs from ten shortlisted teams for the new Memorial and Learning Centre and give their feedback. The experience of British Holocaust survivors will be shared with the public in a variety of ways, including through events and short film excerpts from a new collection of more than 100 British Holocaust survivor testimonies which will have a permanent home in the Learning Centre.

Peter Lantos was in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a young boy and is one of the survivors who recorded his testimony as part of the project. He said:

Throughout my life I have seen the best and worst of human nature. It would be a comfort to think that we have learned everything from the past – but it would be naïve. Sadly the need to challenge hatred is constant. I hope that the new centre helps us to do that.

Joan Salter, was separated from her family and not reunited with them until 1947 when she discovered her parents had managed to survive the war and were living in the UK:

We live in dangerous times and tragically, a reminder of how fragile civilisation is, is more crucial now than ever. This is why the new Memorial and Learning Centre are essential.

Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chair of the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, said:

The stories of Holocaust survivors are incredibly powerful. They witnessed a breakdown in society, in its ethics and in our duties to one another. We can and must learn from their experiences to help us fight hatred in society today. These personal stories will have a permanent home in the new Learning Centre. I hope that as many people as possible can help us design it by giving their feedback.

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, said:

This new Memorial will stand as the everlasting reminder of what can happen if hatred is left unchecked and the foundations of a civilised, democratic society are undermined. We cannot forget the lessons of the past or the people who lived through it. I'd encourage everyone to visit the exhibition or go online to have their say on how Britain can best remember.

The new UK Holocaust Memorial, to be built next to the Houses of Parliament in Westminster, will honour the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust and all the other victims of Nazi persecution. The Learning Centre will provide a world-leading educational experience that explains the facts of the Holocaust and challenges visitors to think about their role in standing up to prejudice in society today.

Ninety-two international design and architecture teams, including top global names, competed to design the project. The competition is now entering its final stages, with designs from the ten shortlisted teams displayed for the public to feedback on as part of their visit.

Rt Hon Ed Balls, UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation Board Member said:

Our new Learning Centre will have the stories of those who survived at its heart and will challenge us all to think about what it means to be an empathetic and engaged citizen in society today. Everyone can look at the designs and have their say on how Britain can best honour the past and learn for the future.

Rt Hon Alex Salmond, UK Holocaust Foundation Memorial Board Member said:

As part of its wider educational work, this project will stretch across these islands for people to understand not just the appalling statistics, not just the magnitude of the criminality, but also the personal endurance of human beings. I'd urge people up and down the country to go online and give their feedback on the ten shortlisted designs.

Karen Pollock MBE, Chief Executive of the Holocaust Educational Trust, said:

The new National Memorial and Learning Centre will stand for generations to come as a symbol of this country's commitment to remembering the Holocaust. In a fragile world, it is more important than ever that we educate the next generation about the dangers of hatred and prejudice – that is what we do at the Holocaust Educational Trust every day and the Memorial and Learning centre will play a vital role in ensuring this message reaches far and wide.

The work to build a new Memorial and Learning Centre began after an independent Commission found widespread dissatisfaction with the current memorial in Hyde Park and worrying gaps in young people's knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, despite some clear examples of excellent education in some parts of the country.

The designs are displayed in the Raphael Gallery at the V&A from 1 to 22 August 2017. Entrance is free and the Museum is open 10.00 – 17.45 daily (10.00 – 22.00 on Fridays). People across the country can have their say on the designs online at: <https://www.gov.uk/holocaustmemorial/feedback>

About the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation

The UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation was created to implement the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Holocaust Commission report – Britain's Promise to Remember – in 2015, including the delivery of the new Memorial and Learning Centre and the recording of British Holocaust testimony.

The Foundation is an advisory board to the Department for Communities and Local Government. It has cross-party political support and is chaired by Sir Peter Bazalgette.

About the design competition

The international design competition sought to harness the very best architectural talent to create an emotionally powerful and sensitively designed memorial. 92 design teams expressed an interest in the project, with a shortlist of ten invited to submit concept designs, which are on display as part of this exhibition. The ten shortlisted teams are:

- Adjaye Associates

- Allied Works
- Anish Kapoor and Zaha Hadid Architects
- Caruso St John Architects
- Diamond Schmitt Architects
- Foster + Partners
- Heneghan Peng
- John McAslan + Partners
- Lahdelma Mahlamäki Architects
- Studio Libeskind

More information about the entries and images can be found here:

<https://competitions.malcolmreading.co.uk/holocaustmemorial/#shortlist>

Public feedback received as part of the consultation will be given to the independent Jury to consider before making its decision. The final decision for the schemes and winner will sit with the Jury.

The Jury includes:

- Sir Peter Bazalgette (Chair)
- Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Communities and Local Government Secretary
- Rt Hon Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London
- Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
- Samantha Cohen, Assistant Private Secretary to Her Majesty The Queen
- Charlotte Cohen, Holocaust Commission Youth Commissioner
- Alice Greenwald, President and CEO of 9/11 Memorial and Museum
- Ben Helfgott MBE, Holocaust survivor
- Natasha Kaplinsky OBE, Broadcaster
- The Lord Daniel Finkelstein OBE, Journalist
- Dame Julia Peyton-Jones DBE, Former Director of Serpentine Gallery
- Sarah Weir OBE, CEO of Design Council
- Paul Williams OBE, Stanton Williams Architects.

The opportunity for the public to feed in their view to the Jury was announced in January 2017 and a number of exhibitions have since taken place around the country. The Jury will meet to make its decision in September 2017 with a winner expected to be announced in October/November, subject to usual procurement processes.

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial International Design Competition is being run in accordance with EU procurement guidelines and the Public Contract Regulations 2015. This competition is being organised by Malcolm Reading Consultants and has been advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) on behalf of the United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial Foundation and the Department for Communities and Local Government.