

# Press release: Prime Minister leads unprecedented support for Holocaust Memorial as further £25m committed

The Prime Minister Theresa May has led cross-party support for the new Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, planned for Victoria Tower Gardens beside Parliament.

In an unprecedented move, the Prime Minister has been joined by the 4 living former Prime Ministers – Sir John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and David Cameron – to back the proposal to ensure we never forget one of the darkest chapters in human history.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

By putting our National Holocaust Memorial and Education Centre next to our Parliament, we make a solemn and eternal promise that Britain will never forget what happened in the Holocaust.

Seeing this through is a sacred, national mission. In the face of despicable Holocaust denial, this Memorial will stand to preserve the truth forever.

And this education centre will ensure that every generation understands the responsibility that we all share – to fight against hatred and prejudice in all its forms, wherever it is found.

A further £25 million has also been committed to the new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, Communities Secretary the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP confirmed today (7 May 2019).

Speaking this afternoon at the Wiener Library, Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said the additional funding will improve the visitor experience and maximise green space on the site, creating an enduring monument to the victims and survivors of the Holocaust and a learning centre that will educate generations to come.

The funding will be matched by a newly established charity headed up by member Gerald Ronson CBE and Lord Andrew Feldman to support the landmark proposal.

The further £25 million committed to the new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, is contingent on the securing of £25 million of match funding and on planning permission being obtained.

Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

I believe there can be no more powerful symbol of our commitment to remembering the men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust and in subsequent genocides than by placing the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, in the shadow of our Parliament at the heart of our democracy.

Education on the Holocaust and subsequent genocides is one of the most powerful tools we have in the fight against prejudice, intolerance and misinformation.

Located beside our Parliament, this Memorial will deliver this message, and stand as a permanent reminder that political decisions have far-reaching consequences.

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial is dedicated to the 6 million Jewish men, women and children murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of the Nazis and their collaborators.

The Learning Centre will focus on the Holocaust and subsequent genocides and will educate future generations on the importance of fighting prejudice and persecution in all its forms.

The proposals have been developed with great sensitivity to the existing context and character of Victoria Tower Gardens. The vast majority of the public space will be retained and views over Parliament and the River Thames will be improved with a range of accessible seating and a new boardwalk along the embankment.

In 2015 the government committed £50 million to the project to kick-start a society-wide fundraising effort.

A time capsule will also be buried at the proposed site to remind future generations that survivors fought long and hard for this memorial.

## **British Heroes of the Holocaust award**

Supportive video messages from Mrs May and her 4 predecessors were also played at a special ceremony held to honour 2 British Heroes of the Holocaust at the Wiener Library.

### [PM Holocaust message](#)

The British Heroes of the Holocaust award is a national award given by the UK Government in recognition of British citizens who assisted in rescuing victims of the Holocaust. It was first awarded on 9 March 2010 following a campaign by the Holocaust Educational Trust.

Speaking at the ceremony in the Wiener Library, London, the world's oldest Holocaust archive, the Communities Secretary praised the courage and humanity of the late Joan Stiebel MBE and the late Lady Rose L. Henriques CBE for their service to Britain. They are 40th and 41st recipients of the British Heroes of the Holocaust award.

Mr Brokenshire said:

We can draw real inspiration from the women awarded British Heroes of the Holocaust medals today.

They refused to turn away and leave it to others to do the right thing. Instead they took on personal responsibility and their courage and human compassion saved many lives.

I hope these medals will ensure their legacy is never forgotten and will inspire us all to confront injustice, bigotry and hatred.

Holocaust Educational Trust Chief Executive, Karen Pollock MBE, commented:

As the Holocaust moves further into history, this Memorial and Learning Centre positioned right next to Parliament will send a clear signal for generations to come of the important place that the Holocaust has in our nation's history and will stand as a warning of what happens when we let hate and prejudice go unchecked.

To hear from 4 former Prime Ministers and Prime Minister Theresa May together, demonstrates their strong commitment to remembering and will mean so much to Holocaust survivors and their families.

Today, as we honour those who took extraordinary steps to save Jewish lives, going above and beyond what others did, we pledge to redouble our efforts to ensure a long-lasting legacy.

Victoria Tower Gardens was chosen as the home for the new Memorial and Learning Centre because, in the shadow of Parliament, it will encourage visitors to learn about the challenging decisions our leaders had to make in the lead up to, during and in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

The additional £25 million will help to provide further funding for the revised entrance pavilion, the Memorial courtyard and surrounding landscaping and to take account of additional VAT incurred on the overall project costs.

Revised designs for the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre were unveiled, on 1 May 2019. This follows comprehensive consultation and discussion with local residents, Holocaust experts, survivors and other victim groups, Westminster City Council, Historic England, Royal Parks and statutory consultees.

The proposed design changes to the Entrance Pavilion and Memorial Courtyard are considered to enhance the scheme and improve views towards Victoria Tower and the Palace of Westminster, in particular from the southern end of Victoria Tower Gardens where a new view from the playground has been provided.

The proposals involve significant works of landscaping which would act to enhance the wider offer of Victoria Tower Gardens. The proposals will result in almost completely new gardens being provided back to the community with the following significant improvements to Victoria Tower Gardens provided by the proposed development that will deliver better quality open space and enhance the land as public open space.

See the [latest images of the new designs](#)

After an international competition, with 92 entries in total and 10 finalists, Adjaye Associates, Ron Arad Architects and Gustafson Porter + Bowman were selected unanimously as the winning team, by a jury including the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Mayor of London, the Chief Rabbi, experts from architecture, art and design, and both first and second-generation Holocaust survivors. The [announcement](#) was made on 24 October 2017.

At Budget 2018, the Chancellor announced £1.7 million funding for educational projects in schools to mark the upcoming 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camps in 2020, as part of our continuing commitment to remember the victims who perished and pay tribute to the survivors of the Holocaust.

The 2 recipients of the British Heroes of the Holocaust award are:

**Joan Stiebel MBE** (23 April 1911 – 25 January 2007): Joan Stiebel was responsible for making travel arrangements to bring 1,000 underage Jewish Nazi concentration camp orphans to the United Kingdom. The children came to be known in the press as the 'Boys', and her involvement with them continued throughout her lifetime.

**Lady Rose L. Henriques CBE**, née Loewe, (1889-1972): Henriques was the daughter of James Loewe, a community worker and scholar in the Stoke Newington area of London. The couple worked on a number of joint enterprises together. From 1914 until 1948, they were the joint wardens of the St George's Jewish Settlement in Stepney, later known as the Bernhard Baron St George's Jewish Settlement. When the war ended, Henriques went to Germany where she worked alongside a number of Jewish welfare groups at the former Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and then at the nearby displaced persons camp.