

Press release: UK Holocaust Memorial to reaffirm Britain's commitment to stand up against antisemitism, prejudice and hatred

Situated next to Parliament, the Memorial will stand as a permanent reminder of the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy to be vigilant and responsive whenever our values are threatened.

The [Mission Statement](#) for the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation vows that the national Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will reaffirm Britain's commitment to stand up against antisemitism, prejudice and hatred in all its forms.

Released alongside the [final designs for the Memorial and Learning Centre](#) proposed for alongside Parliament, the Mission Statement affirms that the Memorial will be a permanent reminder that political decisions have far-reaching consequences.

By setting history's worst example of the disintegration of democratic values against the greatest emblem of Britain's aspirations for democracy, it will stand as a permanent reminder of the responsibilities of citizens to be vigilant and responsive whenever and wherever those values are threatened.

The Memorial, proposed for Victoria Tower Gardens alongside the Houses of Parliament, will be 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 thematic exhibition will set the Holocaust within the British narrative: historically, politically and culturally. This narrative will be balanced, addressing the complexities of Britain's ambiguous responses to the Holocaust, avoiding simplistic judgements and encouraging visitors to critically reflect on whether more could have been done, both by policymakers and by society as a whole.

The Foundation is firmly committed to working with other institutions across the UK supporting Holocaust commemoration and education. Visitors will be encouraged to explore other resources, including Imperial War Museum London's new Holocaust Galleries which are due to open in 2021.

Opening alongside new Second War Galleries, IWM's reinterpreted Holocaust Galleries will present critical insights into the Holocaust as well as integrate the devastating events of the Holocaust into the broader history of the Second World War, revealing why this often overlooked dimension is so important.

UK Holocaust Memorial co-Chair the Rt Hon Ed Balls said:

The proposed Holocaust Memorial will stand as a national place of remembrance of the lives lost and the communities torn apart in the wake of decisions made in another parliament, not so far away in time or distance from our own.

There is no better place than Victoria Tower Gardens, just metres from our own Parliament, to remind ourselves of the value of democracy and the need to keep the lessons of history at the heart of our institutions and the decisions our elected politicians make every day.

Holocaust learning and education is absolutely fundamental if we are to create engaged and vigilant citizens to hold their elected representatives to account. The UKHMF is firmly committed to working closely with the Imperial War Museum and leading organisations across the country to deliver this vital work.

UK Holocaust Memorial co-Chair the Rt Hon the Lord Pickles said:

The Holocaust had a huge impact on Britain – we are the nation of Kindertransport and liberation; of post-war survival and reconciliation. However, it is important to ensure that our examination of the past is honest and unblinking. We will properly explore aspects of the Holocaust that are less flattering to the United Kingdom.

At the core of the proposed Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre is a commitment to learn from this darkest chapter in our history, to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to explore the universal lessons of the Holocaust as a reminder of where hatred, intolerance and prejudice can lead if left unchecked.

Complementing the many high-quality and committed institutions already engaged in Holocaust education and commemoration, the new Memorial and its exhibition will broaden and deepen understanding of the Holocaust across the whole nation.

Secretary of State for Communities the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre will stand in its exceptional and symbolic location as a national centre for remembrance and education at the very heart of our national life.

Our country stands together against the hatred, ignorance and

bigotry that led to the Holocaust and other genocides. By placing the greatest example of where democratic institutions elsewhere failed to protect its citizens next to our own Parliament, we are making a strong commitment to stand up whenever our shared values are threatened.

The design for the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre, proposed by a team led by architect Sir David Adjaye, with Ron Arad Architects as Memorial Architect, and Gustafson Porter + Bowman as Landscape Architect, has been developed over the past year in consultation with local residents, Holocaust survivors, communities of a range of faiths and backgrounds and key experts from landscape design to Holocaust education.

The final scheme as released today proposes a sensitive yet impactful memorial, well integrated into the green space of the Gardens, with a multipurpose courtyard space that leads to a unique underground space set aside for a world leading exhibition on the Holocaust and its impact on Britain.

In September 2018, the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation hosted a public exhibition. The second exhibition, taking place this week, outlines the design alterations and modifications made following extensive public consultation and stakeholder engagement ahead of the Memorial's formal planning submission in the coming weeks.

Following feedback from the first exhibition, more information has been provided on the following aspects of the scheme:

- Plans for the interior of the Learning Centre and a mission statement to outline plans for a world-leading and unique exhibition that will serve as a national centre of remembrance and education.
- Plans to improve the setting of the Buxton Memorial to the abolition of slavery while maintaining views of this important memorial, in addition to the landscape design that will link together the garden's existing memorials commemorating the efforts and effects of social injustice.
- Following public comments, plans to retain 100% of the children's play area and create a new café kiosk and consult the local community on new play equipment.
- More detail on ticketing travel and transport strategies including coach parking. The expectation being that through a pre-booked ticketing strategy in the first 2 years, there will be no queues to the memorial. Traffic will be carefully managed, with limits on coach drop off times and dedicated parking spaces beyond the immediate area.

- The measures taken to preserve the Victoria Tower Gardens for the use of all, including a strategy to boost tree health and to enhance and improve the gardens through sensitive landscaping and planting, befitting an historical and cherished London park.

Details of the design scheme

In 2016 Prime Minister Theresa May launched a design competition for a Memorial and underground Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens, adjacent to Parliament in Westminster.

The winning scheme was proposed by a team led by architects Adjaye Associates, with Ron Arad Architects as Memorial Architect and Gustafson Porter + Bowman as Landscape Architect. Their proposal set out to create “a living place, not just a monument to something of the past” and the desire to create an immersive journey for the visitor who would enter a memorial embedded in the landscape of the Gardens.

The jury found the proposal deftly resolved an essential challenge of the brief: being visually arresting (“highly visible from near and far”) yet showing sensitivity to its location and context (“a bold and sensitive collaboration between architecture, landscape, art and design”). The design was found to have clear potential to be developed into an iconic memorial and powerful educational experience, welcoming visitors from the UK and beyond to learn and reflect.

The final design for the Memorial and Learning Centre consists of 23 bronze fins to the southern end of the Gardens. Visitors will walk through an entrance pavilion, then across a courtyard where they will be confronted with views of Parliament’s Victoria Tower. The Learning Centre, accessed by pathways set between the fins, is an integral part of the Memorial. Visitors will leave with an improved understanding of the Holocaust and its impact on Britain.

The landscape design embeds the Memorial within the park and includes a new intervention – a subtle but distinct slope which creates a new vantage point to the River Thames, a renewed perspective and relationship to the Memorial, and a distinctive entry point for an underground Learning Centre. This subtle shift in the landscape also allows for all existing memorials within the gardens to remain visible whilst key views into Westminster are undisturbed.

Further information

The UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre’s exhibition will be open to the public from 12pm-7pm Wednesday 5 December to Friday 8 December and from 10am-4pm on Saturday 9 December.

See the UK Holocaust Memorial Commission’s report [Britain’s Promise to Remember](#).

UK Holocaust Memorial Mission Statement

The United Kingdom Holocaust Memorial is the UK's national establishment for remembrance of the Holocaust. It 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 Memorial will stand as a reminder of the horrors of the past and will encourage reflection on their implications for British government and society, both at the time and subsequently. The view of Parliament from the Memorial will serve as a permanent reminder that political decisions have far-reaching consequences. By setting history's worst example of the disintegration of democratic values against the greatest emblem of Britain's aspirations for democracy, it will stand as a permanent reminder of the responsibilities of citizens in a democracy to be vigilant and responsive whenever and wherever those values are threatened.

We seek to preserve the memory of the Holocaust whilst also considering its contemporary relevance. The Holocaust – the murder of Europe's Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators – remains unsurpassed as a historical event in its aims and extent, yet the questions it raises have many echoes in the modern world, including (but not restricted to) subsequent genocides and the persistence of antisemitism.

Deeper understanding of the Holocaust, and of Britain's responses to it, therefore prompts us to ask challenging questions about human behaviour and the world around us. The UK Holocaust Memorial will thus aim both to remember and to encourage reflection on the lessons of the past amongst all British citizens and visitors of all nationalities. In dedicating itself to this mission, Britain reaffirms its commitment to stand up against antisemitism, prejudice and hatred in all its forms

How we will deepen understanding of the Holocaust and Britain's response

We seek to combine a striking architectural monument with an engaging, reflective and powerful exhibition. This will be founded on academic research and judicious use of sources, combined with an experiential approach to immerse visitors in the historical content and provoke their critical thinking.

The display will confront the immense human calamity caused by the destruction of Europe's Jewish communities during the Holocaust, arousing a sincere commitment to mourn, remember and act. Victims will be remembered as individuals, not nameless statistics.

The thematic exhibition will set the Holocaust within the British narrative: historically, politically and culturally. This narrative will be balanced, addressing the complexities of Britain's ambiguous responses to the Holocaust, avoiding simplistic judgements and encouraging visitors to critically reflect on whether more could have been done, both by policymakers and by society as a whole.

We will work with other institutions across the UK supporting Holocaust commemoration and education. We will complement the permanent exhibition with online material, drawing on the same research and sources, making links to other relevant sites, and promoting a deeper understanding of the Holocaust among as wide an audience as possible.

Facing history honestly requires us to question the role of our own Parliament, government and society in the history of the Holocaust, and recurring genocides in its aftermath. The obligation to confront the contemporary rise of antisemitism will not be overlooked, in light of the recent rise of extremist views in Britain and many other countries.