Rabbi Jonathan Romain

25/09/20

Dear Helen Skinner

                    Ref: APP/X5990/V/19/3240661

I am writing to express my strong reservations about the Holocaust Memorial/Museum being sited at Victoria Tower Gardens,Westminster.

I am writing both as the rabbi of a large congregation (Maidenhead Synagogue) and as the son of a child refugee from Nazi Germany, who came to Britain in August 1939 and has always been grateful for British hospitality, especially via the kindertransport scheme

So I have a keen awareness of both the Holocaust and Britain’s role in combatting it.

My concern is manifold, but briefly

1. monuments do not combat antisemitism; it is education and role models (eg Holocaust Educational Trust: [www.het.org.uk](http://www.het.org.uk) and Anne Frank Day projects in schools: annefrank.org.uk

2. given this fact, the substantial costs of the proposed memorial (and its on-going maintenance, both physically and in terms of its programming and staff) could be better used

3. it is even more irrelevant given that we already have in London the Holocaust wing of the Imperial War Museum & the Hyde Park memorial. There might be a case for upgrading them, but certainly not for rivalling them.

4. the building will therefore unnecessarily denude locals of their park to a significant extent

5. Britain was not involved in the Holocaust and, unlike various European countries, has no guilt to expunge, so the need for such a project is debateable

I should say that I fully appreciate the sincerity of those proposing the building and, if none of the above applied, it would be a fine project; but given that the above do very much apply, it seems inappropriate, wasting resources that could be better spent on expanding existing sites and strengthening educational programmes. The proposed building should not proceed.

Rabbi Dr Jonathan Romain

Maidenhead Synagogue