

UNITED KINGDOM  
HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL  
AND LEARNING CENTRE

PROOF OF EVIDENCE SUMMARY  
September 2020

# INTRODUCTION

I am Sir David Adjaye, an Architect and Principal of Adjaye Associates, an international architectural firm with studios based in London, New York and Accra. In October 2017, Adjaye Associates, Ron Arad Architects and Gustafson Porter + Bowman were unanimously selected as the winning design team for the UK National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

My proof of evidence, will demonstrate that our proposals have been carefully created and crafted to ensure that the existing park and memorials, holistically unite and connect with the new UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre.

I will focus on the urban, architectural and placemaking qualities of the proposal. I will explain the architectural qualities of the scheme, which have been driven by a deep understanding of the local context and the project's national significance.

The scope of my evidence for this inquiry is as follows:

- I will summarise the importance of the context for the concept of the scheme, describe how the design concept for the scheme evolved, outline the development of the scheme and describe our approach. I will detail the way in which the design evolved in response to our assessments and consultations with the public, specialist consultants and key stakeholders.
- I will describe the proposal that was designed and submitted for detailed planning permission. I will respond to the judgments made in the Case Officer's Report and by other objectors regarding the design and the impact of the development. I will summarise the evidence provided in this proof to counter these judgements.
- I will demonstrate how our design is both bespoke and befitting only to Victoria Tower Gardens.
- To conclude, I will state that it is my firm professional opinion that planning permission should be granted for the proposals designed by myself, Ron Arad Architects and Gustafson Porter + Bowman.

# DESIGN

The overarching vision for the memorial and learning centre, is to retain Victoria Tower Gardens as a public park affecting minimal green space. Our proposal intervenes lightly, ensuring the park's existing uses can be retained and enhanced rather than replaced. We will preserve a large portion of the public space of Victoria Tower Gardens and make a wide range of improvements.

The design proposal emerged directly out of extensive research. Our team delved into the site history, features and surroundings, including comprehensive exploration of the garden's existing elements, uses, users and memorials, to ensure our design resonated with and continued the existing commemorative narrative of the park, with particular consideration given to its location and proximity to The Houses of Parliament. It is an integrated approach, in which the memorial is embedded within the landscape and the learning centre is embedded within the memorial.

The site sits within the park. Our design is grounded within the existing and surrounding landscape. Its concept is built with focus on the landscape to ensure the design rests lightly within the park. The learning centre is underground so as not to disturb the landscape above. The elements of the design that are visible above ground, are designed using materials found in the existing memorials within the park, such as bronze and iron. This ensures it is sensitively and respectfully in keeping with the existing surroundings. The memorial is also lower in height to enable a spatial level with the existing memorials.

Most visitors will arrive at the circular entrance space facing the Emmeline Pankhurst Memorial. They will encounter a new path which will curve diagonally through the park towards the dramatic perspective formed by the two rows of London plane trees. These trees will frame the lifted landform, hinting at the presence of the UK Holocaust Memorial. The path will take visitors on a journey through the gardens' sequence of existing memorials.

At the path' mid-point, the visitors view will be lifted above the Embankment wall to views of the Thames.

The entrance pavilion not only serves as a conscious construct to assist pedestrian flow, safety and security to the memorial and learning centre, but it has also been designed as a transitional space that desensitises the visitor from the 21st century bustle they leave behind, creating a clear beginning to the visitor's journey.

The memorial courtyard is a contemplative space that defines the relationship between the entrance pavilion and the memorial and learning centre - a garden within the Victoria Tower Gardens.

The memorial will honour the six million Jewish men, women and children who were murdered in the Holocaust and all other victims of Nazi persecution, including Roma, gay and disabled people.

Visitors will enter the learning centre through the series of narrow passages in the memorial, allowing them to effectively join the memorial and physically become part of it. These fins will form both the building entrance as well as puncture the ground 8m down, carving the centre's underground learning spaces.

At the southernmost end of the site you encounter the redesigned playground and café area, with the relocated Spicer Memorial as a background. This provides a physical separation to the UK Holocaust Memorial entrance beyond.

# OBJECTIONS – SUMMARY

The areas of concern with the masterplan and architecture highlighted by the objections cover the following areas. See CD List CD 5.11

- Increased visitor activity would result in the loss of public open space and would harm the function of the Victoria Tower Gardens
- The design is not in keeping with its surrounding
- The location, design and scale would extinguish monuments to matters which are of international importance
- The scale of the memorial relating to the Holocaust is not proportionate in comparison to the other memorials
- Location of project and tree root damage
- The addition of a learning centre to the proposal has significantly altered the character, scope and intent of the proposal
- The memorial and learning centre do not need to go together
- Playground area would be reduced in size and will be cut off from the main grass area so parents will not be able to watch their children play in the playground and on the grass at the same time

I have addressed each of the objections pertaining to my team's role on the project, to assure and confirm that the concerns have been addressed and solutions have been clarified.

I highlight our background research which explored all the park's current programmed activities, uses and identified its daily users. This information allows the project to accommodate all existing activities, enhances the environment from its existing state and provides updated and improved amenities to support and heighten the experience for current users. Our appointment of specialist consultants, Langdale Ticketing, supports a viable visitor's strategy and provides a detailed online ticketing strategy. When implemented, this is used to manage visitor movement by controlling the maximum number of visitors arriving for each time slot and ensure no queues would form at any time of the day.

I refer back to our Stage 3 proposal which was submitted for planning approval and was carried out following the recommendations of the Bartlett Tree Root Survey and Arboricultural Considerations, to ensure the minimal impact on the existing tree roots. The design team went into a greater level of detail to identify the potential impacts on the RPA of the trees and mitigate where possible through changes in the design.

I explain how the site sits within the park and that the design is grounded within the existing and surrounding landscape. Its concept is built with a focus on the landscape to ensure the design rests lightly within the park. The learning centre is underground so as not to disturb the landscape above. The elements of the design that are visible above ground, are designed using materials found in the existing memorials within the park, such as bronze and iron. This ensures it is sensitively and respectfully in keeping with the existing surroundings. The memorial is also lower in height to enable a spatial level with the existing memorials. The design has considered, maintained and given equal importance to all of the existing memorials within the gardens. Our curated journey through the park ensures every memorial is highlighted to the public. Our consideration of the existing memorials extends to the design decision to ensure the height of our memorial remains lower than the Buxton Memorial.

I explain that through research and studies of Holocaust memorials worldwide, the learning centre is a vital inclusion as it ensures The UK Holocaust memorial should not only remember those lost, but also educate people now and in future generations.

I confirm that even with the slight repositioning of the park and the Spicer Memorial the playground area will not be reduced in size. I illustrate how The Spicer Memorial has always acted as a division between Horseferry Playground and Victoria Tower Gardens. As such the changes proposed will have the same division element as the existing scheme. The café faces the playground and will have similar functions as the existing kiosk, with an additional covered seating area where parents can keep an eye on their children or enjoy the view to the gardens with Parliament in the background.

