UK NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL AND LEARNING CENTRE

PUBLIC INQUIRY

INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION

OCTOBER 06 2020

ORDER OF SPEAKERS

1, David Adjaye – Overview

2, Donncha O’Shea – Landscape

3, Asa Bruno – Memorial

4, Stephen Greenberg – Exhibition Content

1 – Title slide

Slide 2 - concept sketch

My name is Sir David Adjaye, I am the Founder & Principal of Adjaye Associates, an international architectural practice. 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. From the competition stage, our team has been driven by the conviction that this memorial & learning centre is a crucial civic asset for Britain’s future generations—that there is a paramount importance in a society acknowledging its mistakes. As reflected in our winning proposal, we are driven by the ambition to reveal the complex layers of the Holocaust story as it relates to British history so that future generations can reflect, mourn and learn.

Slide 3 - site today

With this ambition in mind, I believe wholeheartedly that the location of the Memorial and Learning Centre is profoundly appropriate. Sited in Victoria Tower Gardens in the shadow of Parliament, the project’s unique position is central to the history of London, the nation as well as the wider world. Sitting adjacent to the Palace of Westminster, it emphasizes its importance as a public space in dialogue with its cultural, political, and historic surroundings.

Slide 4 – Surrounding features

Furthermore, with its proximity to Parliament—the home of one of the world’s oldest democracies—the proposed site serves as a visual reminder of the dangers that arise when civil society and democracy is subverted. I believe the Memorial and Learning Centre’s relationship to parliament is therefore key to it becoming an enduring and powerful civic asset as well as a shared public reminder against intolerance, injustice and hatred.

Slide 5 – View of Proposed Site – Victoria Tower Gardens

A key goal for the Memorial and Learning Centre has been to retain Victoria Tower Gardens as a public park affecting minimal green space to ensure the community’s continued enjoyment of the existing public amenities. It is my opinion that the design proposal intervenes respectfully ensuring that the architecture retains and enhances the park’s existing uses. Our team’s research into current uses, visitor demographics, and the existing memorials served as integral navigation tools to ensure our design resonated with and continued the existing commemorative theme of the park.

Slide 6 – Victoria Tower Gardens Proposed Site Plan

Victoria Tower Gardens is stretched out along the Thames Embankment, so visitors are more likely to enter from the north and south of the park on a route between the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey and Tate Britain. Most visitors will arrive at the circular entrance space facing the Pankhurst Memorial where they will encounter a new path which will curve diagonally through the park. At the path’s mid-point, visitors will clearly see the side of the Buxton Memorial as they head towards the entrance gateway which provides access to the Holocaust Memorial

The path taken is a journey through the gardens’ sequence of memorials to past injustices, The Pankhurst Memorial’s commemorates universal suffrage; Rodin’s Burghers of Calais acknowledges self-sacrifice in defeat and subsequent pardoning by the victorious Edward III and the Buxton Memorial which signifies the emancipation of slaves in the British Empire in 1834 and the role of British parliamentarians in the abolition campaign.

Slide 7 Model

It is my belief that our design is a careful addition into Victoria Tower Gardens with the memorial embedded within the landscape, and the learning centre in turn embedded within the memorial.

Slide 8 & 9 – kiosk and playground

Visitors arriving at the southernmost entrance of the site coming from Lambeth Bridge will encounter the redesigned playground and café area, with the Spicer Memorial repositioned in the background. This provides a physical separation to the Holocaust Memorial entrance beyond and bestows a social atmosphere between the playground and the proposed memorial’s civic role.

Slide 10 – entrance pavilion

The entrance pavilion serves as a conscious construct to assist pedestrian flow, alleviate congestion and ensure safety and security to the memorial and learning centre. It is also a transitional space that delicately prepares the visitor to leave their 21st century realities behind to punctuate a clear beginning moment to their journey. The transitional quality of this space is achieved by the geometry of the pavilion which guides you from darkness of the

entrance into the light of the courtyard therefore the chosen materials are intended to be durable and convey a sense of permanence.

Slide 11 - material palette – entrance pavilion

The Holocaust Memorial comprises 3 primary materials – bronze, stainless steel, and stone. For the entrance pavilion, basalt stone blades are proposed for the exterior façade. It takes reference from the existing dark slate rooves of the buildings in the vicinity and the somber, weathered look of the surrounding stone buildings. The gravity of the memorial is expressed through its dark-toned materiality which allows Parliament to continue to shine as the predominant civic beacon.

Slide 12-Memorial Courtyard day

The memorial courtyard— a garden within the Victoria Tower Gardens— is a contemplative space defined by a sloped terrace that forges a relationship between the entrance pavilion, memorial and learning centre.

Slide 13 – Memorial Courtyard night

Its position and design create an environment where visitors can linger and offers a place of reflection before entering the memorial fins and starting the journey into the learning centre.

Slide 14 – descent

Upon arrival through the bronze fins, visitors enter the Threshold space where they are orientated and ready to embark upon the educational journey ahead.

Slide 15 – Threshold

This is marked by a suspended concrete blade wall that acts as a gateway into the exhibition spaces who’s the surface tonality oscillates between saturated greys and deep black as background for the information being presented.

Slide 16 – Learning Centre

Through a careful sequencing of highly sensorial spaces, our design for the learning centre will, envelop users in the physical, intellectual, and emotional experience of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides.

Slide 17- Aerial view

Ultimately, the Memorial and Learning Centre was informed and guided by the viewpoint that as a park, Victoria Tower Gardens embodies Britain’s national conscience. What I mean by this is that we see the Memorial and Learning Centre as the final link to completing the historical narrative woven by the existing nearby monuments on the path. As an ensemble, the Memorial and Learning Centre integrates delicately within its urban landscape. From the Pankhurst Memorial to Rodin’s Burghers of Calais to the Buxton Memorial, the park’s sequence of representative past injustices with the Holocaust Memorial cohesively weaves together to create a new national historic symbol.

LANDSCAPE

DONNCHA O SHEA – GUSTAFSON PORTER + BOWMAN

Slide 18 – Landscape Masterplan (Rendered Plan)

My name is Donncha O’Shea and I am a Partner at Gustafson Porter + Bowman

* The starting point for the landscape masterplan concept was the strength in the simplicity of Victoria Tower Gardens and the need to retain the essence of this character and its relationship to the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre to it.
* Victoria Tower Gardens is almost 2.0ha, larger in scale than Trafalgar Square (1.2ha) and comparable in size to Grosvenor Square. It benefits from being adjacent to the River Thames, and a ten minute walk to St James Park.
* As illustrated in the masterplan shown, we have maintained a predominantly soft landscape character through VTG, with an improved network of accessible routes and seating throughout to both support the strong commuter and visitor movement, while creating relaxing, separated spaces for all to pause and enjoy.
* The site specific and landscape focused design response was integral to the creation of a Memorial that identifies and personifies the weight and importance of the Holocaust. In our opinion the project is integrated within Victoria Tower Gardens, blending into its environment, while retaining the daily functions of the park for residents and visitors

Slide 19 – View from Victoria Tower (Aerial CGI)

* The design team recognizes the importance of the view out from the Palace of Westminster towards Victoria Tower Gardens
* The design intent is to maintain a green lawn view north, both conceptually and practically allowing the daily activities of the park to be continued within the central lawn area as well as around the peripheral park paths.
* The curved diagonal path introduces a new physical and conceptual link between all monuments and memorials, bringing visitors from the Pankhurst Memorial in the north through to the Spicer Memorial in the south.

Slide 20 – View south towards UK Holocaust Memorial (CGI)

* We feel it is important to maintain the openness of the view south while supporting new and inclusive activity in the heart of the lawn space. The proposed central path supports the enjoyment of this space by everyone.
* Space and distance is given to Rodin’s Burgher’s of Calais, and the central path brings the visitor towards the Buxton Memorial which remains in primary view throughout.
* The UK Holocaust Memorial emerges in the distance, its full elevation to be revealed only from the south with the Palace of Westminster in the background.

Slide 21 – View back towards the Palace of Westminster from the landform (CGI)

* The view back from the lawn area of the landform is unobstructed towards Rodin’s Burghers of Calais, the Palace of Westminster and Victoria Tower
* This new elevated position on a gentle slope from which to enjoy views across the park and out to the River Thames, forms an amphitheatre to view daily activities in the park, as well as a special viewing position for the annual outdoor cinema event.

Slide 22 – Landscape Section through length of VTG (Rendered Section)

* The long section through the park, describes the scale of Victoria Tower Garden, and how in my opinion the UKHMLC development sits comfortably both above and below ground.
* The arrangement of the landscape adjacent to Lambeth Bridge, supports the active functions of this end of the park, retaining the playground and relocating the café kiosk.
* Adjacent to the Spicer Memorial, the single storey Memorial Entrance Pavilion marks the threshold for visitors entering the Memorial Entrance courtyard. A heavily planted, calm and contemplative environment, the courtyard guides the visitor down towards the Holocaust Memorial, approximately 2m below adjacent ground levels.
* At this point, the bronze Memorial Fins rise almost 9m above adjacent ground levels, supporting and enveloped by the landform lawn. From this high point, the lawn slopes down towards to historic open area of the northern section of Victoria Tower Garden, meeting the existing levels adjacent to the Burgher’s of Calais.

Slide 23 – View of curved path through landform

* The diagonal path moves across the lawn creating an elevated route to enjoy the new views across the park, and out across the Embankment wall. Whether walking or sitting, the firm stone path and adjacent bench support this activity throughout the year
* The path guides the visitor directly to the Buxton Memorial, which is visible along the length of the route, and passes through the lower sections of the bronze memorial fins frame the path, engaging with it

Slide 24 –Tree Root Investigation Diagram

* Throughout the design process, we have been aware of the importance of the two lines of Plane trees which run either side of Victoria Tower Gardens, framing the space, and how the design proposals would respond to them.
* The team worked, together with specialists, to identify the potential extent and density of tree roots adjacent to the proposals, and review how to minimise the level of tree root pruning required.
* The final location and extent of development was informed by these studies, together with detailed proposals to mitigate any potential impact on the trees.

Slide 25 – Long view north along east side towards Buxton Memorial

* A major improvement proposed is to install permeable perimeter paths adjacent to the existing trees. As well as creating more level and wide routes for all users, the permeable paths will ensure improved growing conditions for the tree roots below the surface which the current tarmac paths do not allow.
* This view illustrates the layers of planting proposed adjacent to the Memorial Courtyard. It is intended to create new landscape interest for visitors, mediating the park landscape to the courtyard landscape. This natural approach in response to the proposed security railings, maintains the park like quality.
* The landscape masterplan proposed to increase the area of planting throughout Victoria Tower Gardens, for the enjoyment of visitors, and to improve the biodiversity of the park.

Slide 26 – Side view of UK Holocaust Memorial and Buxton

* We believe that this balance of open lawn area, and rich densely planted borders creates a memorable and engaging landscape that builds on the existing character of Victoria Tower Gardens.
* Both the UK Holocaust Memorial and its landform are lower than the adjacent Buxton Memorial, and the landscape is modelled to maintain clear sight lines of it from the main entrance by the Palace of Westminster and the view from Dean Stanley Street
* Overall, the setting is enhanced using a simple palette of materials, to create a variety of inclusive public spaces to enjoy, from the Embankment Boardwalk to the Perimeter path, from the central lawn to the sloping landform. Considered as a complete landscape masterplan we believe the proposals are appropriate to the context.

MEMORIAL

ASA BRUNO – RON ARAD ARCHITECTS

Slide 27 – concept sketch

• My name is Asa Bruno, and I am Director and co-founder of Ron Arad Architects, Memorial Architects.

The process of developing the proposal for the UK Holocaust Memorial has been a sensitive balancing act between creating an emotive experience befitting the weight of the subject matter, and a careful physical integration into Victoria Tower Gardens. The Memorial aims to strike the right balance between significance, and peaceful co-existence within its rich context, and the crucial juxtaposition of the Houses of Parliament as its backdrop.

Slide 28 – concept sketch

• When viewed from the northwest corner by the Palace of Westminster, the Memorial is first perceived as a gradually rising slope towards the south end of the Victoria Tower Gardens, adorned by a crescent of subtle bronze fragments.

Slide 29 – lie of the land

• The journey south along the memorial path leads along the embankment towards the Buxton Memorial after which the full scale of the Memorial is revealed.

Slide 30 – lie of the land

• The Memorial is conceived as an element both embedded in the ground and pushing it upwards. This almost geological typology, both hill and cliff, simultaneously gentle and dramatic creates an interplay and a tension which, if you like, echoes the dangers of the gradual insidious creep of hatred, intolerance, and persecution below the surface.

Slide 31 – view from the Thames

• The elevated landform reveals a fractured landscape, and is held aloft by 23 tall, bronze-clad walls. The overall articulated volume inscribed by the walls suggests an interplay between robustness and frailty; cohesiveness and fragmentation; community and individualism.

Slide 32 – memorial and fins daytime

• The walls create 22 ravine-like pathways, one for each country in which Jewish communities were destroyed during the Holocaust. These are spaced 1.2m apart, wide enough for visitors to safely pass in-between in single file, but too narrow for journeys not to be taken alone. A visit through it is therefore a singular, physical, possibly visceral experience to be had in relative isolation. The shared experience of the Memorial can be had from a distance, or upon past reflection.

• Most of the paths provide access, whether by stair, lift or ramp, to the Threshold space below – a place of contemplation and transition, but also a generous hall from which to experience the memorial from within, and the space of transition into the learning centre beyond.

• The passage in-between the walls, recalls several narratives, one of which is a key biblical reference – the Covenant of the Pieces: a pivotal event which symbolises God’s bond with the Patriarch Abraham (shared by all three monotheistic faiths) and his descendants, and the promise of deliverance following long-endured hardships.

Slide 33 – material palette

• The walls are to be built as hybrid concrete and steel structures, clad in thick, patinated bronze panels. The choice of bronze as the principal material for the Memorial is also symbolic: the use of bronze denotes its man-made history of over 5 millennia, which saw this copper alloy implemented in wide-ranging applications such as the minting of coins, the fabrication of weapons and the creation of musical instruments and sculptures. It bears evidence to some of humanity’s best and worst achievements.

• We believe the dialogue between this temporal characteristic of bronze, and the organic nature of the grass and plants within which the Memorial is set, will facilitate a particularly rich and effective integration of Memorial and gardens. The Memorial is not a sculpture on a plinth, but rather an experience set within part of a park.

Slide 34 – fins section

• Each of the Memorial’s fins measures only 20cm in thickness, which serves to accentuate the contrast between their perceived fragility and overall robustness, depending on the angle from which they are viewed. Within this modest thickness, we have integrated recessed handrails which are both part of the sculptural character of the Memorial, and enable safe access down the stairs, ramps or lift approach, to the Threshold below. We envisage the patina wearing away to a fine polish where visitors will touch the handrails and walls, while darkening to a rich shade where more exposed to the weather. The durable, weathering material is formed in such a way as to record and celebrate the passage of time and of people through the monument.

Slide 35– threshold towards memorial

• The National Holocaust Memorial honours victims and survivors of events now reaching the edge of living memory. It evokes shared experiences which defy abstraction or simplification, but must also be inclusive, relevant, and resonant with a broader and younger audience. It aims to establish a unique place, iconic in nature and subtle in variation, evocative of emotions and experiences without being literal or manipulative. It also aims to resonate universally and for years to come, with survivors and relatives of other atrocities.

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

STEPHEN GREENBERG - METAPHOR

**SLIDE 36**

My name is Stephen Greenberg and I am one of the Founding Directors of Metaphor, an international practice that masterplans and designs museums and galleries worldwide.

I joined the design team in 2018 to review the Visitor Experience and the below-ground Learning Centre masterplan. The Holocaust Education Trust was also brought on-board to support this process

As a result, the interior architecture and content are now integrated into one seamless Visitor Experience, from the Threshold, through the Exhibition, and back out again into the light and the Memorial Courtyard, a place of contemplation

The architectural components below ground are now integral to the sequencing and storyboarding of the visitor journey and the presentation of content.

The exhibition scenography is minimal and part of the interior architecture

In slide 36, the lower level begins with

**Fig. 11/12.**  as Visitors descend the 1.2 m wide Memorial staircases, they will glimpse fragments of words between bronze walls

**Fig 13.** As they then enter the Threshold, they see the word Holocaust in full, and a quotation that introduces the Exhibition.  These are read on a concrete curtain that is suspended in the space very low, down to about the height of a domestic door conveying a sense of compression and even foreboding.

A quotation, perhaps this one from Churchill locates us squarely in Westminster.

“There is no doubt this is probably the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the whole history of the world.”

(Winston Churchill to Antony Eden,11 July 1944, National Archives, Kew, KO 371/42809).

Visitors standing in the Threshold turn around and they see daylight disappearing up the bronze Fins

**Fig. 14.** They advance under the entrance curtain and in a long, narrow, and tall space, they look up and see a sequence of slowly changing images from the liberation of Bergen Belsen and hear the voice of Richard Dimbleby from his famous radio broadcast from the liberation.

**Fig. 15/16.** Visitors enter the Exhibition beneath the Bergen Belsen tableau. They then see and enter the tribunes of a parliament. They are also able to sit for the first time. They hear fragments of debates from Hansard, key speeches, and audio set against a visual presentation of the chronology of the Holocaust. This will also include what happened after the Holocaust, the Nuremberg trials, and the response to subsequent genocides. Extracts from debates in Parliament will also reflect this.

This is quite an entrance sequence:

• Arrival in the courtyard to descending though the fins

• Encountering the dominant word Holocaust and a Churchill quote

• Entering under a concrete port-cullis

• Seeing the Belsen images

* And sitting on tribunes in a ‘parliament’ where the role of Government in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides is heardFig.17/18

The curatorial narrative is shaped by the location in Westminster adjacent to Parliament.

The place where we remember defines what we remember and frames the lessons from history our visitors will take away.

Westminster is not Washington or Paris, but it is the locus of the British experience

The exhibition we are creating draws heavily on media sources, film, newsreel, newspapers, radio, Hansard and other documents that are still being assembled

It will be thematic and largely multi-media.

**Fig. 24.** It begins with a chapter on Government and ends with a chapter that explores The Void that genocides leave behind.

**SLIDE 37 storyboards the mezzanine level**

**Fig. 25 / 26** Visitors ascend from the lower-ground floor to the mezzanine through a powerful, top-lit curving staircase set within a drum, the only light in an experience defined largely by low light levels to accommodate audio-visual presentations. The stair surrounded by a gallery called The Void.

**Fig. 27**The Epilogue follows and begins the exit sequence on a Balcony Gallery overlooking the lower floor of the exhibition, a recapitulation, as visitors see one of the chapters again and can pause

Fig 28 Visitors then progress through a Long Gallery where we tentatively envision a commissioned Holocaust related work

**(Fig 29– Exit Sequence**  They proceed from the Long Gallery to the final part of the exit sequence that is a balcony that overlooks the Threshold where - if they pause, they see the Churchill quote again, and glimpse daylight up ahead through the Bronze Fins of the Memorial, that they will exit through.

**SLIDE 38 - Night time view of courtyard**

At the end of this sequence, visitors will exit through one of three of the bronze fins into the Memorial Courtyard.

The Visitor Journey ends where it begins: in the courtyard. Those who are leaving the exhibition pause, sit and as they exit also encounter those who are entering.

They leave inevitably in an altered state motivated to remember the Holocaust and stand up against genocide.

**SLIDE 39 – END OF PRESENTATION**