

UNITED KINGDOM HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL
AND LEARNING CENTRE

SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE -
MEMORIAL ARCHITECT

On behalf of UK Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government

Asa Bruno AAdipl RIBA on behalf of Ron Arad Architects Ltd.

4th September 2020

Ron Arad Architects

THE MEMORIAL

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1

This Proof of Evidence has been prepared by Asa Bruno of Ron Arad Architects Ltd for the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation (UKHMF). It is prepared in relation to the proposal to erect the UK Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre (UKHMLC) in Westminster.

1.2

I confirm that the evidence which I have prepared and provide for this call-in reference APP/X5990/V/19/3240661 in this proof of evidence is true, and I confirm that the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions. I am co-founder and Director of Ron Arad Architects Ltd, the architectural practice acting as Memorial Architect for the project, and I am leading the role of Memorial Architect on behalf of the practice.

2.0 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Personal

2.1.

I am Asa Bruno, AAdipl RIBA. I am an ARB-registered architect and member of RIBA, having studied for my diploma at the Architectural Association School of Architecture, and obtained my Certificate in Professional Practice and Management in Architecture (with distinction) from UCL Bartlett School of Architecture.

2.2.

I have prior experience as a carpenter and model-maker, have worked in several design and architecture practices throughout my studies and after graduation, until 2000, when I joined Ron Arad Studio where I have spent the last 20 years. I became Director in 2007, and a year later co-founded Ron Arad Architects Ltd. - the architectural arm of the multidisciplinary studio.

2.3.

During my directorship, the growing practice has completed award-winning projects such as ToHA tower in Tel Aviv, Mediacite retail centre in Liege, Belgium, the Design Museum Holon in Israel, the Watergate Hotel refurbishment in Washington DC, as well as public art commissions including the Curtain Call at the Roundhouse (London), and the Vortext sculpture in Seoul.

2.4.

The aforementioned projects have often involved careful architectural integration into sensitive civic environments, such as the Meuse riverfront in Liège, the two hectare ToHa landscaped site in the heart of Tel Aviv, the Grade I listed St. Pancras Station and the Grade II* listed Royal Academy in London (TOTOT and Spyre installations respectively, see images on p.4).

2.5.

I am currently leading teams engaged in cultural, commercial, healthcare and residential projects internationally, with several projects currently on site.



Fig. 1.0. Ron Arad RA (left); Asa Bruno (right)

THE MEMORIAL

Practice and Approach

2.6.

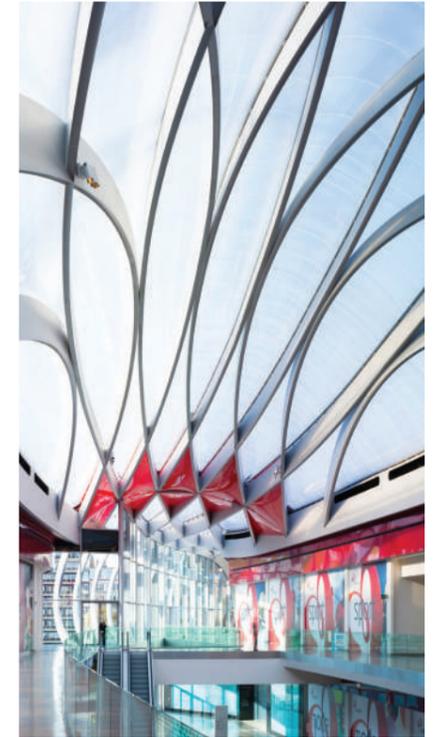
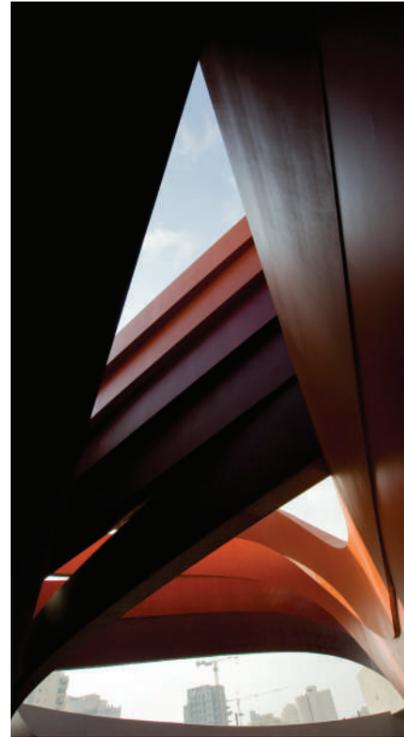
Ron Arad Architects Ltd continues the tradition established by Ron Arad in 1981, of utilising unconventional design and the inventive use and application of materials. The experimentation with larger built forms at the limits of construction engineering, combined with the integration of leading fabrication technology and innovative materials, are key to the output of the practice.

2.7.

The multidisciplinary practice is engaged in the design of one-off studio pieces, as well as product design for leading international companies, and public art installations including the recent TOTOT sculpture at St. Pancras International Station, Safe Hands in central Toronto, and Spyre at the RA in London.

2.8.

The studio's projects have been extensively exhibited in large retrospectives, including 'No Discipline' at the Pompidou Centre in Paris, and the MoMA in NYC, at the 'Restless' exhibition in the Barbican Centre in London, and more recently at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.



Selected Projects

2.9.

Images, clockwise from top left:

01 - Ron Arad Studio, London - 1991

02 - Design Museum Holon, Israel - 2010

03 - ToHA Towers Phase 1, Tel Aviv, Israel - 2019

04 - Médiacité Retail Centre, Liège, Belgium - 2009

05 - TOTOT, HS1 St. Pancras, 2016

06 - Spyre, Royal Academy Summer Exhibition, London - 2016

07 - Curtain Call / 720 Degrees, London - 2011; Jerusalem - 2012; Singapore - 2016

08 - The Watergate Hotel, Washington DC - 2016

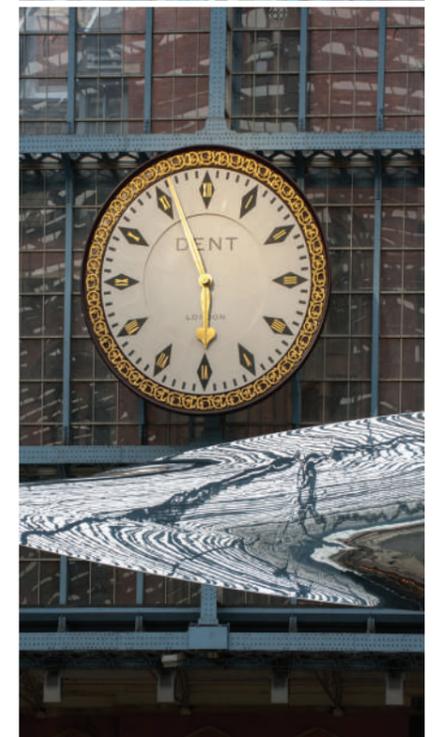
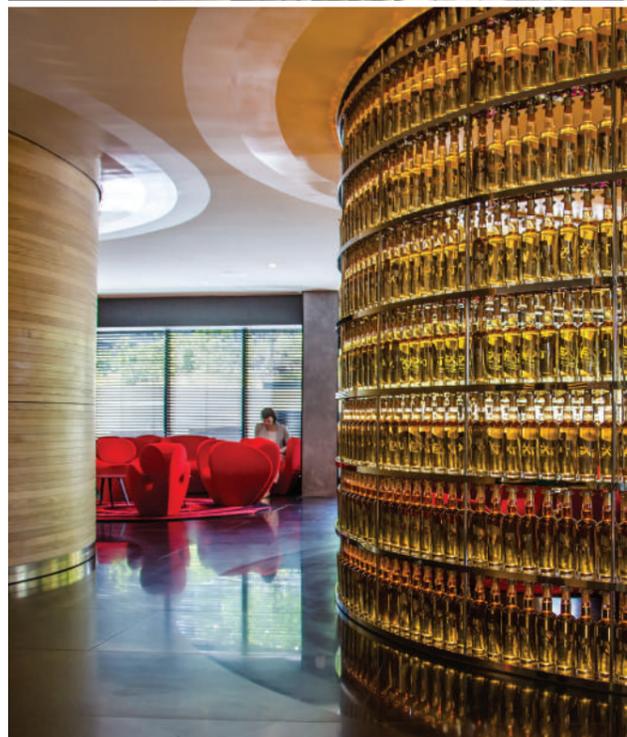


Fig. 2.0 Ron Arad Studio - Selected projects

Project Background

2.10.

When the UKHM competition was announced in September 2016, Ron Arad and I felt that this was an incredibly important moment. We also applauded the government's choice of site, in such close proximity to the Palace of Westminster – an admirable decision and a humbling task to rise to. A Memorial in the context of government is amplified, as it is also often forgotten that the Holocaust was enacted by a democratically elected government.

2.11.

As a project team, we felt that any proposal should be as respectful of the gardens and the local residents as possible, and this drove us to locate the Memorial as far south as possible. GP+B's notion of the meandering path, which strings the existing memorials in the gardens together, connected all three components, and all three teams: RAA's Memorial, AA's Learning Centre and GP+B's landscape.

2.12.

Since the announcement on 24th October 2017 that our team had won, the government and project team have since kept an open public engagement channel throughout the planning consultation process, and adjustments to some of the external features in the gardens were considered and made accordingly.

2.13.

One of the strongest aspects of the design is in its ability to affect people viscerally and emotionally. We conceived of the Memorial as an experience, not an object on a plinth. We have drawn upon many contextual and symbolic references in its conception, but these are discreetly integrated into the process, rather than demarcated by letters or emblems.

2.14.

This Memorial's role is to offer different readings, associations and references - it raises difficult questions - in the present, about the past. It needs to resonate with living survivors of the Holocaust and their relatives, and with a generation that has no living memory of the Holocaust. It needs to resonate universally, with survivors and relatives of other atrocities.

2.15.

We will have succeeded if even a fraction of future visitors to the Memorial and the Learning Centre leave with an enhanced sense of their individual responsibility as citizens.



Fig. 3.0 Proposed Memorial views, clockwise from left: 1. Aerial view in Victoria Tower Gardens; 2. View south and proximity to the Buxton Memorial; 3. East view from Millbank

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3.0 STRUCTURE OF EVIDENCE AND 4.0 VISION FOR THE SITE

Memorial Evidence by Asa Bruno

3.1.

In the coming sections I will set out the Applicant's Vision for the Site and the Brief (Section 4.0) and then the wider physical and historic context of Victoria Tower Gardens (Section 5.0). In Section 6.0 I will explain the development of the Memorial proposal through competition stage, and beyond. This will include supporting material relating to thematic, spatial and material considerations forming an integral part of the Memorial's development.

3.2.

In Section 7.0 I will explain how the Scheme addresses the careful balance between preserving the nature and character of a central London garden, and the impact and function of a significant Memorial of national and international importance. In Section 8.0 I will describe the comprehensive public benefits of the design as submitted for planning to WCC in December 2018 and respond to some of the concerns raised by the objecting parties.

4.1.

It is a daunting task to formulate a design proposal for a memorial to honour the victims and survivors of that most recognised of collective human travesties. The UKHMLC is a British monument honouring the victims and survivors of events which predominantly took place away from British soil, and which are now reaching the edge of living memory.

4.2.

There is thus an implied responsibility to both strongly anchor the memorial in the prominent site of Victoria Tower Gardens, and to make it inclusive, relevant and strongly resonant with any who visit it, and especially a younger and broader audience.

4.3.

The site occupies an elongated, largely flat and triangular garden along a north-south axis by the Thames river wall south of the Palace of Westminster. From inception, our vision for the Memorial went hand in hand with the desire to preserve as much of the site as intact as possible and retain much of its character and use as an urban garden. It aims to create a connotative experience of the dramatic contrast between the day-to-day routine of a safe life in a sound democracy, and the slow and insidious creep of intolerance, sedition and hatred and where those could lead.

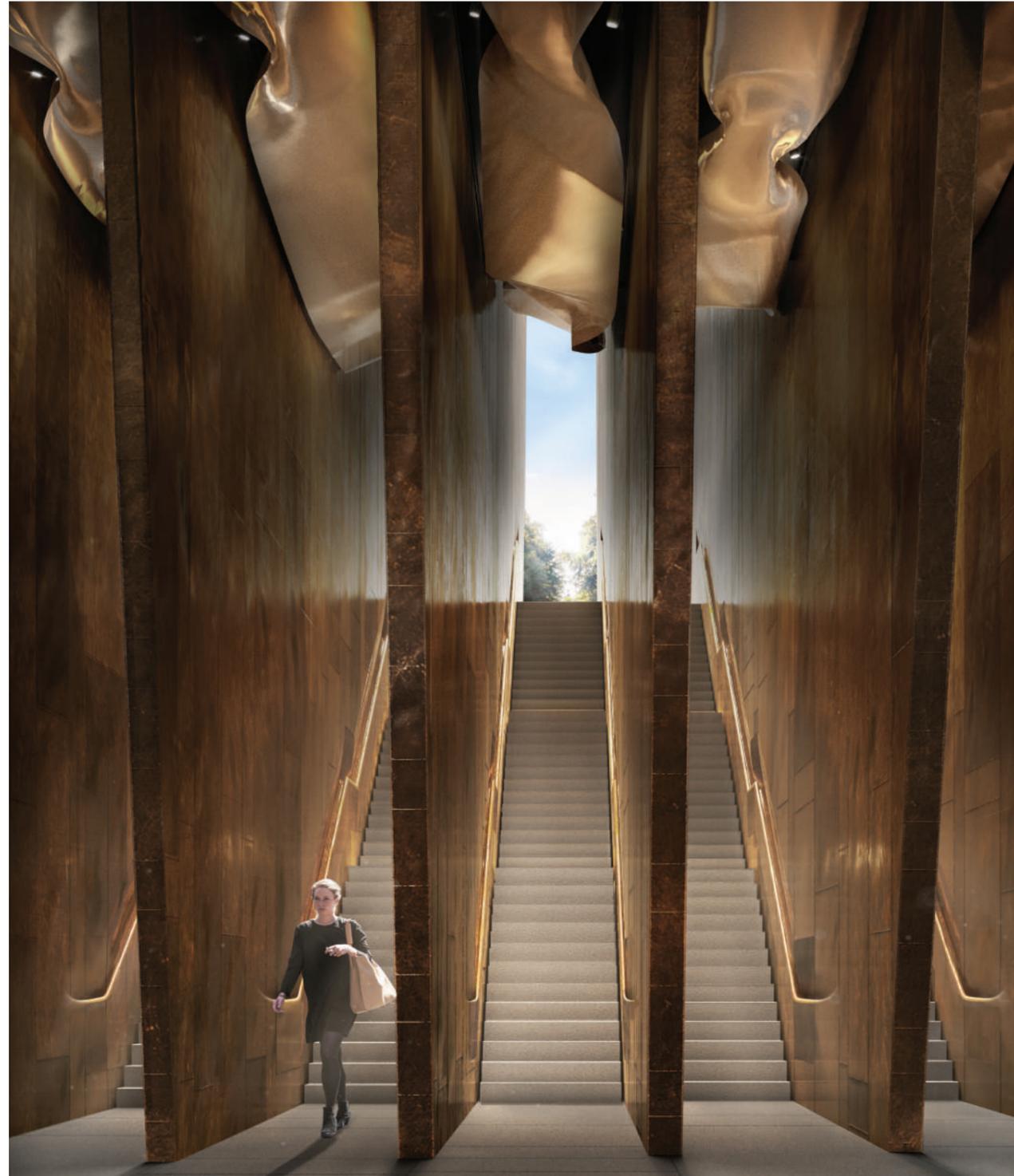


Fig. 4.0 Left: View from basement level Threshold space looking south through Memorial; Right: Victoria Tower Gardens, view of the Tower of Westminster, 2016

5.0 CONTEXT APPRAISAL

5.1.

The design team agreed during competition stage that the impact on the wider, open, well-lit and more frequently occupied parts of the garden to the north could be minimised by placing the Memorial to the south. It would also reduce the potential visual impact on far-reaching views of the Houses of Parliament, yet command a pivotal position, and provide a new vantage point from which members of the public could view the Houses of Parliament and the river Thames.

5.2.

The site's triangular layout helped shape the Memorial into a southward-pointing horseshoe arrangement, which allows all its component fins, and the paths in-between them to appear integral to the newly proposed site landform.

5.3.

The relationship between the Holocaust Memorial and the Buxton Memorial – its closest neighbour – has, since competition stage, been of utmost importance to the team, and careful thought was given to immediate context of the latter within the new proposed scheme. A radial indentation in the grassy landform forms a natural amphitheatre and was created in order to allow for peripheral lighting and a perimeter seating bench around the Buxton. It would thus also be given spatial significance within the park and a new setting which would provide a place of rest and reflection for visitors and outward views towards the Houses of Parliament and the Thames.



Fig. 5.0 The Buxton Memorial, Victoria Tower Gardens, 2016

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6.0 EVOLUTION OF THE SCHEME

Conceptual References and Materiality

6.1.

From the start of the design process, we felt that the key to making the Memorial relevant and resonant with a broader, younger audience, and its message more universal in reach, is through it being experiential. Alongside the physical experience, we have infused the Memorial with symbolic meaning beyond the number of fins and the gaps they inscribe, but without using overtly familiar pictographic symbols such as the Star of David, or Hebrew lettering.

6.2.

The passage in-between the walls, recalls several key references, such as the Biblical narrative of the Covenant of the Pieces: a pivotal event which symbolises God's bond with the Patriarch Abraham and his descendants, and the promise of deliverance following long-endured hardships.

6.3.

Another historic reference relates to The Western Wall ("Kotel" in Hebrew) tunnels beneath the Old City of Jerusalem. Politically and spiritually charged, the tunnels offer visitors close proximity yet no visual or physical contact with the holiest Jewish site, and some of the holiest sites of Christianity (Church of the Holy Sepulchre) and Islam (Haram esh-Sharif) too.

6.4.

The use of bronze as the principal material for the Memorial is also symbolic: 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.

6.5.

The choice of using a copper alloy for the Memorial was also led by the wish to employ a living material – one that changes through its lifetime and reacts to its surroundings as its patina weathers and marks the frequency and intensity with which visitors will interact with its surface.

6.6.

The undercroft in-between the bronze-clad fin walls and beneath the landform above, is to be clad in elongated panels of mirror-polished stainless steel. These are to be gently crumpled to create a distorted continuity of colour and material reflected from the bronze, stone and grass that surrounds them.

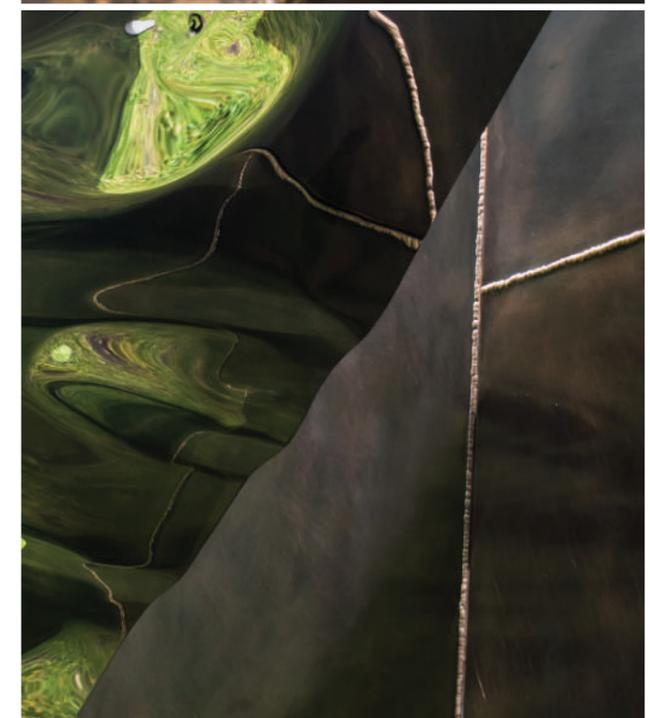
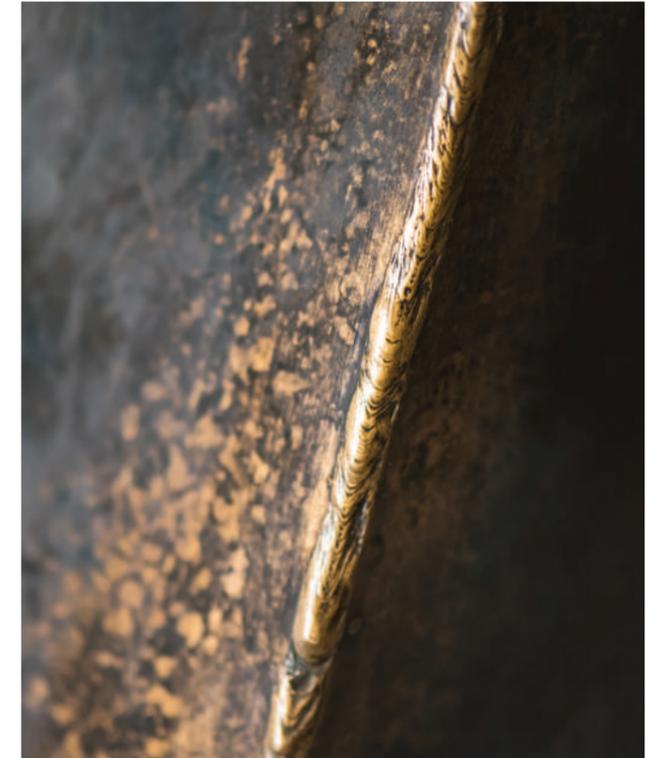
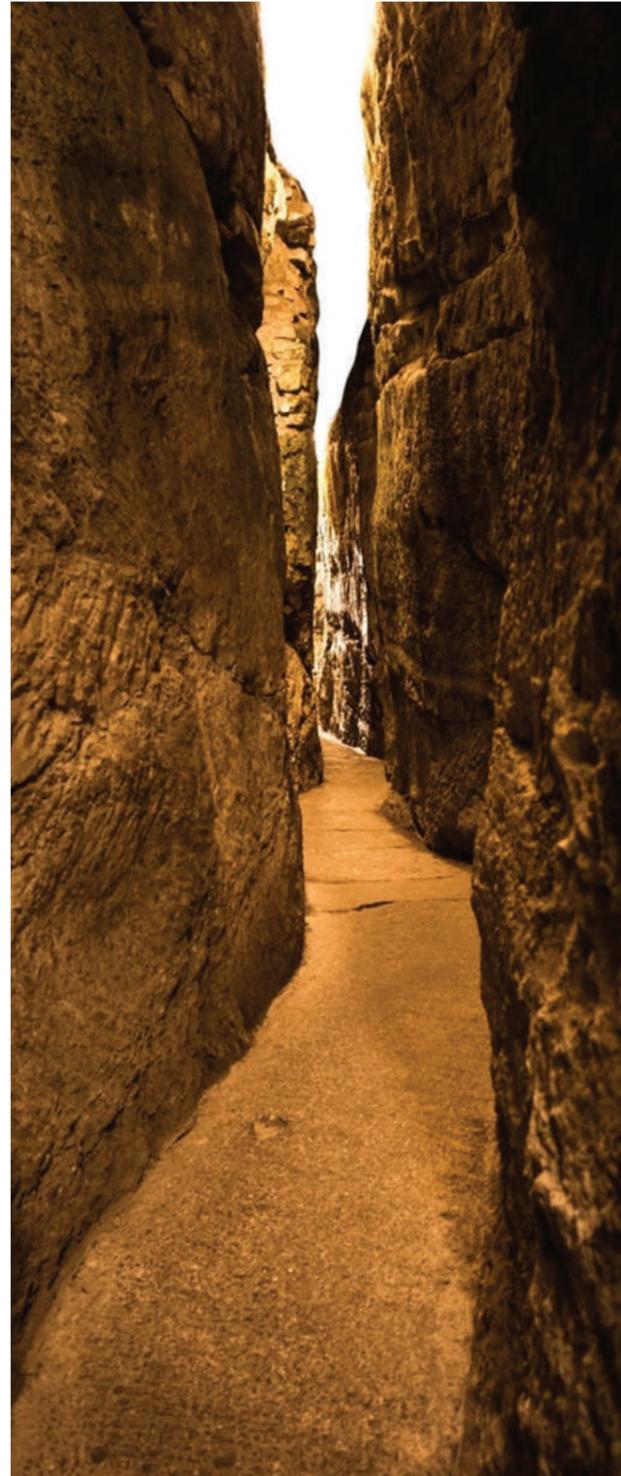


Fig. 6.0 I-r: The Covenant of the Pieces, from The Phillip Medhurst Picture; The Western Wall, Old City of Jerusalem; Sample photos - Bronze patination, weld types and polished steel soffit

Early Design Development

6.7.

Competition concept sketch by Ron Arad, 2016 – Proposal overview looking west along the Thames Embankment, showing the Houses of Parliament, the UKHMLC and the Buxton Memorial.



Figs. 7.0 Competition Stage Concept Sketch by Ron Arad, 2016

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Early Design Development continued

6.8.

Concept sketch by Ron Arad, 2016 – Design development of a typical Memorial fin and stair leading down towards the Threshold Space.

6.9.

Concept sketch by Ron Arad, 2016 - View of Memorial fin edges along the raised landform, viewed south from the Houses of Parliament.

6.10.

Concept sketch by Ron Arad, 2016 - View looking out through a single Memorial stair, in-between two bronze fin walls.

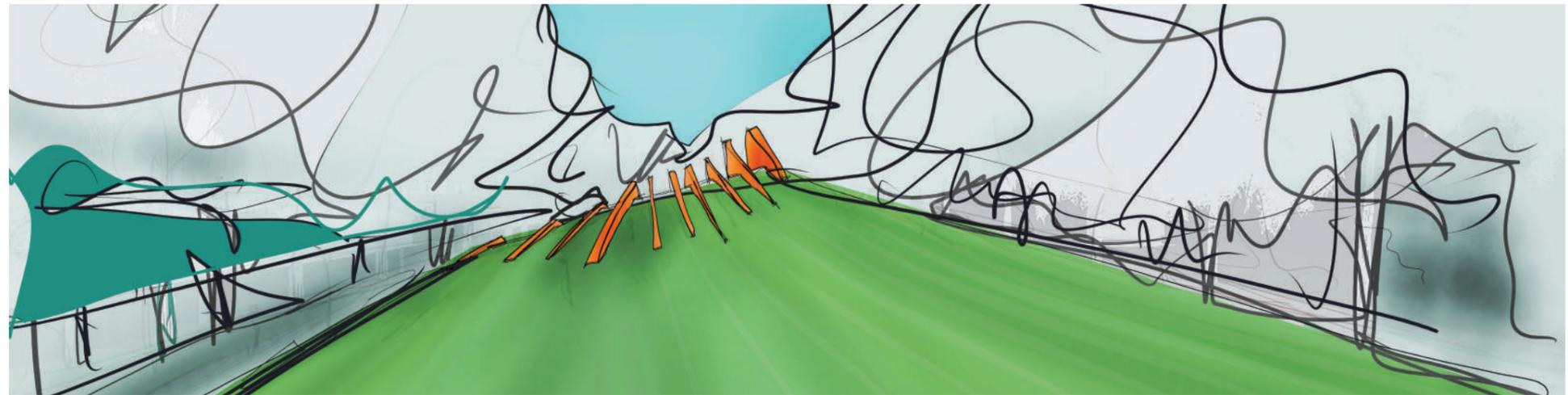
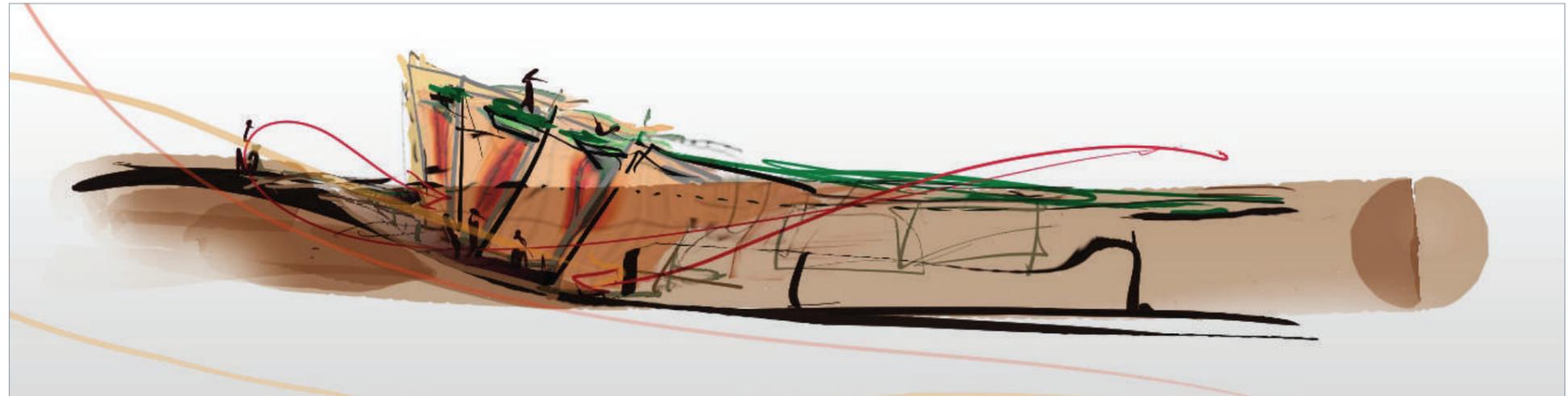


Fig. 8.0 Competition Stage Concept Sketches by Ron Arad, 2016

Formal Concept - Overview

6.11.

The journey towards the Memorial begins with a landscaped path - both a prominent access route to the memorial itself and a narrative journey which connects the Emmeline Pankhurst Memorial at the north-western corner of the site, Rodin's The Burghers of Calais, the Buxton Memorial, and the Spicer Memorial. When viewed from the northwest corner by the Palace of Westminster, the memorial is first perceived as a gradual rising hill towards the south end of the Victoria Tower Gardens. Along the journey south, the full scale of the memorial is revealed. The elevated land mass is both hill, and cliff-like landscape, and is held aloft by 23 tall, bronze-clad walls.



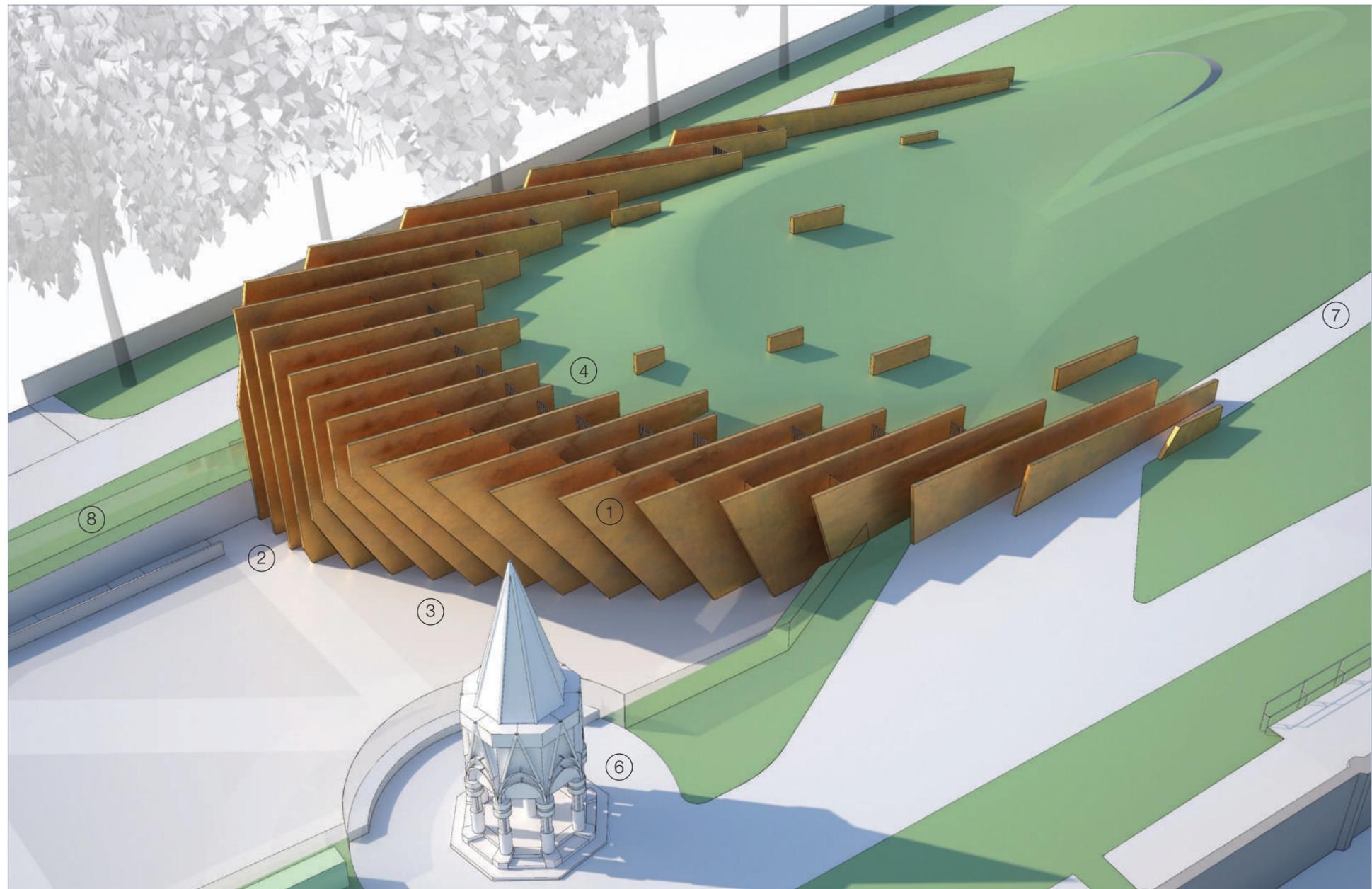
Fig. 9.0 Proposed view of Memorial Entrance

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Formal Concept - Overview continued

6.12.

The Memorial's 23 patinated bronze walls, inscribe 22 ravine-like pathways representing the number of countries in which Jewish communities were destroyed during the Holocaust. These are wide enough apart for visitors to pass in-between in single file – the passage taken is one each visitor takes alone. It is a shared experience only from a distance. All accessible paths culminate in the Threshold space which serves as a place of contemplation and transition into the Learning Centre, but also a generous hall from which to experience the Memorial from within.



- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| ① 23 No. Memorial Fins | ③ Courtyard - Memorial Entrances | ⑥ The Buxton Memorial | ⑧ Courtyard Perimeter Barrier |
| ② Courtyard - Memorial Exit | ④ Hill-top security barriers | ⑦ Memorial Path | |

Fig. 10.0 Northwest-facing Aerial View of Proposed Memorial

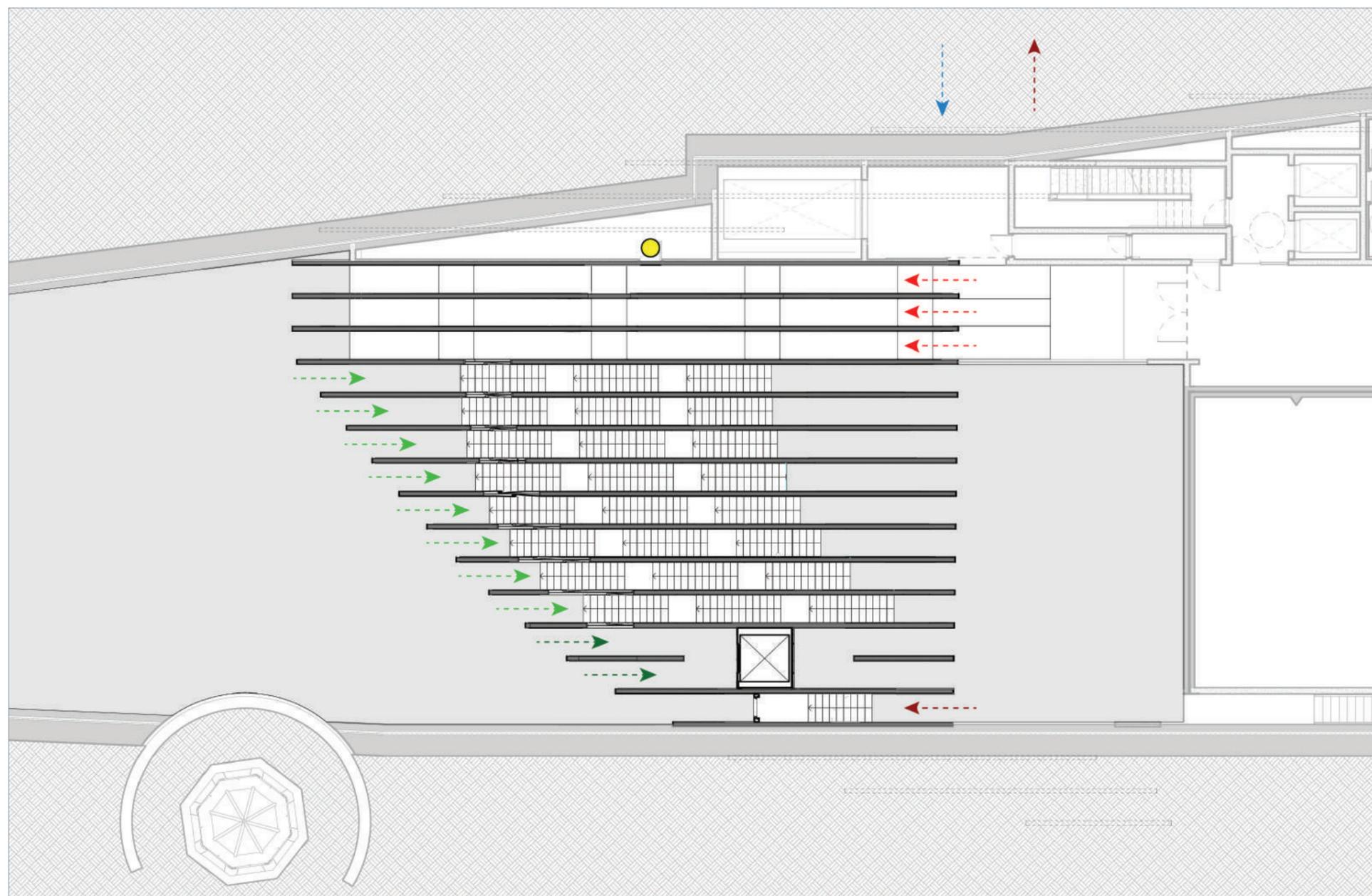
Formal Concept - Accessing the Memorial

6.13.

The Memorial has been designed to offer visitors of differing physical abilities the opportunity to experience it comfortably and safely. Most pathways through it are retained as staircases, some are allocated to a fully accessible lift route, three are retained for ramped egress from the Learning Centre below, and others for miscellaneous uses including auxiliary circulation within the gardens.

6.14.

Following receipt of the data from extensive tree root surveys it was decided to relocate the Memorial some 40m to the north to minimise the risk of impacting the trees on site.



- Entry - 8 Stairways
- Egress - Three ramped pathways
- Service access
- Entry - 2 Paths to Memorial lift
- Emergency exit
- Door to storage cupboard

Fig. 11.0 Memorial access diagram

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7.0 APPRAISAL OF THE SCHEME

7.1.

In this section, I set out the key design and architectural benefits of the Memorial scheme. Planning, heritage and townscape benefits are more widely discussed in other witnesses' proofs of evidence.

Architectural Layout

7.2.

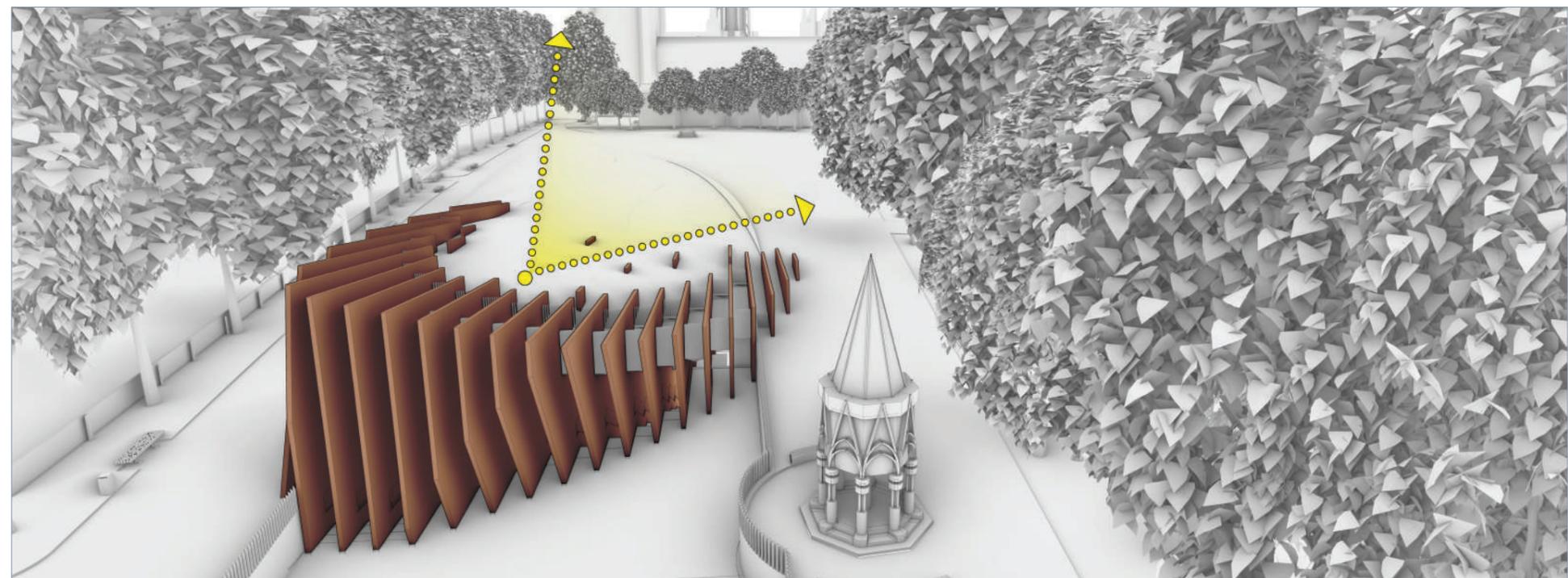
The use of a horseshoe-like catenary curve to generally guide the arrangement of Memorial fin walls across the site has enabled a smoother fit, better suited to the site's particular layout. The vertex, or tip of the curve faces south, into the narrower end of the site's generally triangular form. The highest point in the Memorial thus steers the farthest away from the Palace of Westminster, with all other fins tapering down in elevation as they reach northwards.

7.3.

The Memorial was designed to enable dynamic views of its sculptural form as one travels around it in any orientation or from every direction. The Memorial does not have a 'front' or a 'rear' but is rather multifaceted and intended to offer diverse impressions, both visually and experientially.

7.4.

Another key feature of the geometric sculpting of the Memorial is in its inclination from the highest tip of the fin walls, down along a north-easterly axis towards the Palace of Westminster and the Thames. This creates a gently sloping amphitheatrical appearance to the top of the Memorial and provides park visitors unprecedented views from an elevated position towards The Houses of Parliament, as well as views north over the high river wall towards the London Eye.



●●●● Enhanced views from the upper landform

●●●● Perceived 'cutter' line that defines the geometric inclination

Fig. 12.0 and 13.0 Memorial Form and Sculpting

7.5.

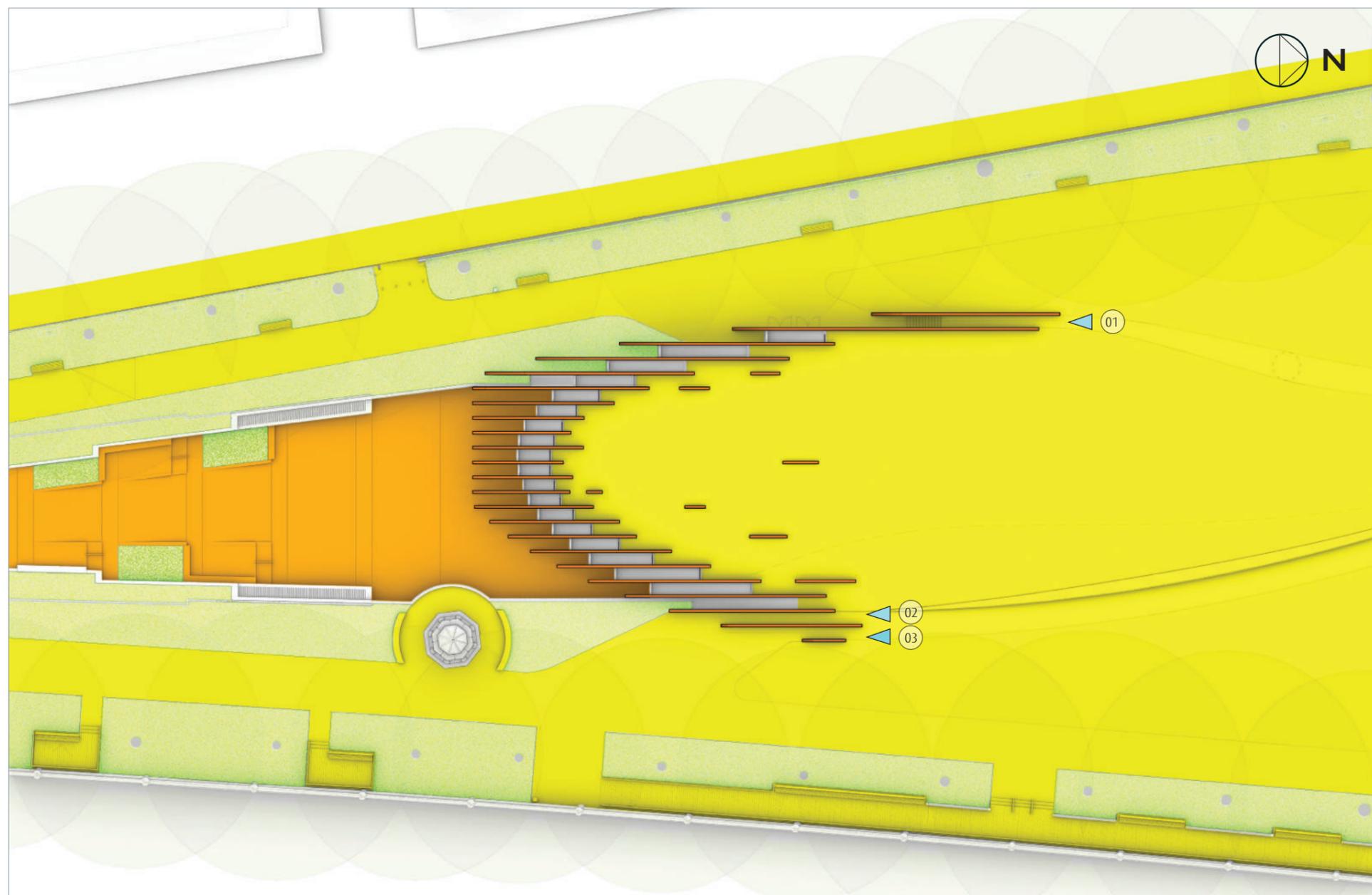
It was also felt that as much of the experience of the Memorial within the gardens needs to be shared, with some of the paths it contains 'liberated' to become part of the experience of a visit to the gardens and part of its routine. Approached from the north, all 23 fins are visible and reachable. The two paths inscribed by the 3 eastern fin walls along the river wall provide full level access for park visitors. The last 2 fin walls on the western side of the Memorial create a path which provides stepped access to and from Millbank.

7.6.

Some of the Memorial's fin walls are extended as visual punctuation further north along the elevated landform. These fragments help to visually embed the Memorial further in the gardens, and as they appear to rise from the grass as elevated blocks they can also be used as casual benches.

7.7.

Careful consideration was given to emphasise the Memorial's geological, rather than architectural character, rendering it part of a landscape, rather than an object on a plinth. The Memorial is mostly embedded in grass, with extensive areas of the secure perimeter fence around the Memorial Courtyard densely planted and treated in a manner which helps to embed it further within its context.



- Accessible zones for general public in and around Memorial (non-ticket holders)
- Ticket holder zone
- Proposed soft landscaped zones around park
- 00 Non-ticket holder public access through 3 no. outer Memorial pathways

Fig. 14.0 Diagram to show accessibility in and around Memorial

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Height and Massing

7.8.

In designing the Memorial, we have aimed to balance its height and massing in the context of Victoria Tower Gardens, using extensive 3D modelling tools and data from the consultant team.

7.9.

One of the key design factors relates to the dimensioning of its constituent elements. Each bronze fin was designed to measure only 20cm in width, yet some reach heights 40-50 times higher than they are wide. Seen from a distance, they seem inordinately thin, yet in-between two fins, a visitor may feel their undeniable robustness. When seen lengthways, or at an angle, the succession of fin walls renders the appearance of the Memorial as a striated, geological cliff-like mass; away from the conventional architectural language of stone-clad concrete structures and steel and glass facades, and into the world of landscape, land art or geology.

7.10.

The Memorial form appears to be indented into the ground, as if the full weight of the experience the place commemorates has affected the ground plane. This indentation means that the Memorial is perceived as being of a certain height above street or park level, but is in fact over 2 metres higher when viewed from the bottom of the Memorial Courtyard.

7.11.

At its highest point, the Memorial stands some 2 metres lower than the tip of the Buxton Memorial, and gently cascades downwards in elevation, sweeping towards the north. As shown in the adjacent diagram, the relative heights of key features and structures within Victoria Tower Gardens are proportionally retained.

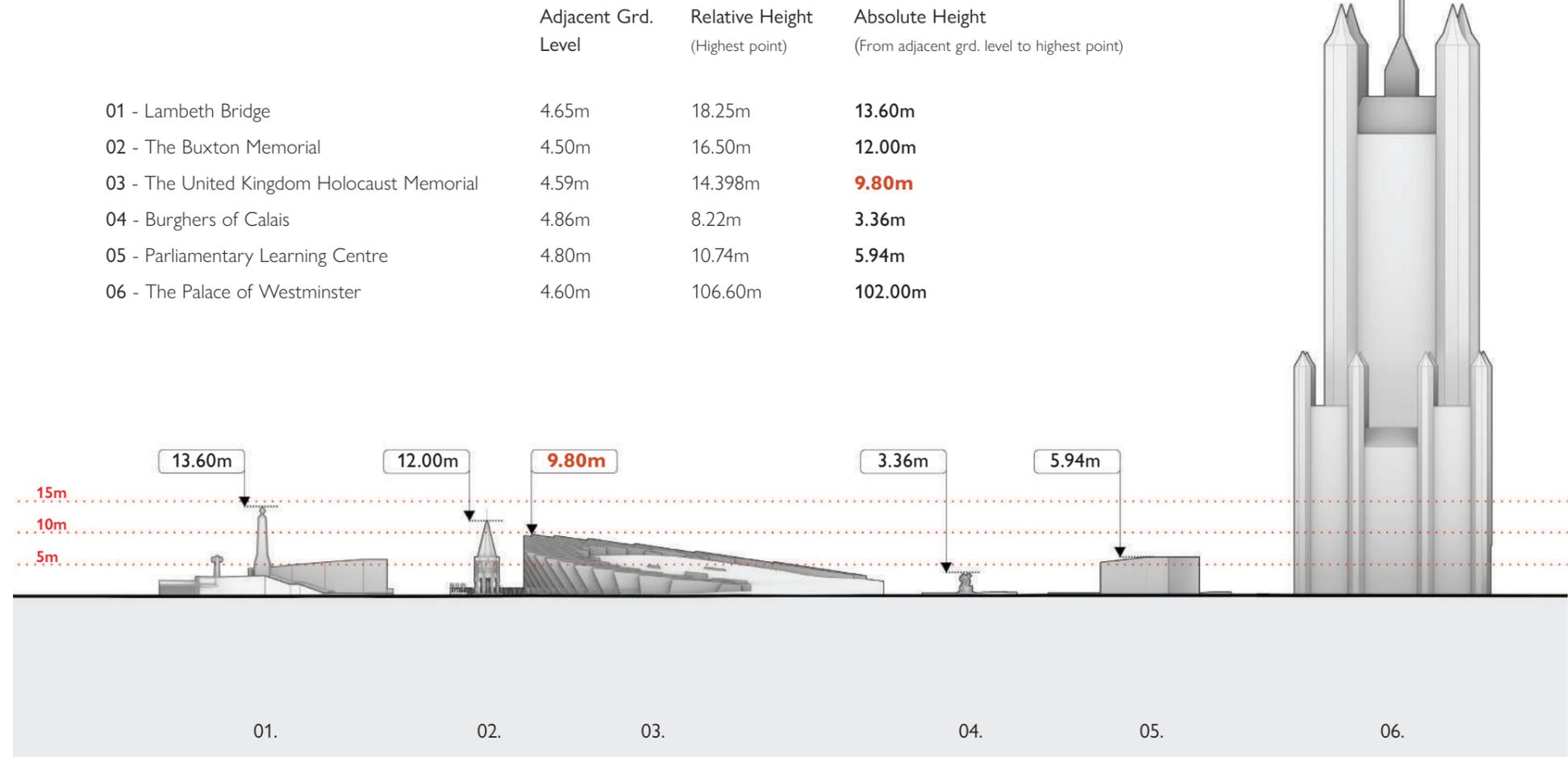


Fig. 15.0 Height comparison study

8.0 RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

In this section, I will respond to the reasons stated for objection to the proposed scheme, particularly criticisms of the physical arrangement, size and architectural qualities of the proposed Holocaust Memorial within the wider context of the gardens and beyond.

8.1.

I am aware that it has been alleged that “*there may be a place for a sixth holocaust memorial in the UK...*” and that “*...the new holocaust memorial would have to be seen to be meeting those objectives while the existing UK memorials do not*”. The other major ones are:

o Beth Shalom Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire

o The Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre, Huddersfield

o The Hyde Park Holocaust memorial, in Hyde Park, London.

o The Imperial War Museum Holocaust Exhibition in London

o The Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide... (See Section 4a, Core Document CD 5.26, opening statement).

In response I would state that only one of the above is in fact a memorial, and while that serves a particular purpose, does not meet that government’s brief for a British memorial of international importance and reach.

8.2.

It has also been alleged that “*Bearing in mind that holocaust memorials do not in themselves combat antisemitism and that proximity to government buildings has no discernible effect*” (See Section 4a, Core Document CD 5.26, page 2).

In response I would state that indeed holocaust memorials themselves do not combat antisemitism, in the same manner that war memorials (such as the cenotaph) do not prevent wars. Both act, however, as containers of a larger collective grief, and permanent reminders to the dangers embodied in hatred, intolerance, state-endorsed acts of violence and racial persecution. The great power of siting a holocaust memorial in proximity to government buildings cannot be more prominently manifest than in Berlin. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe is spread out with the backdrop of the Reichstag, and has become one of the most visited memorials in the world (3.5m visitors in its first year, and over 7.5m visitors to the adjacent learning centre since its opening in 2005).

8.3.

Baroness Deech also alleges that “*The architects entered an almost identical design for the competition to design a memorial in Ottawa,*

in a much larger site with few neighbouring buildings. [photos attached]. It was rejected. It has not been changed to blend with the London surroundings. The Canadian context both historical and geographical was entirely different and yet the same design notion was offered as appropriate for London” (See Section 4a, Core Document CD 5.26, Planning point 6, page 7).

In response I would state the following.

8.3.1.

The competition entry for the Canadian Holocaust Memorial in Ottawa was submitted in 2014. It was not ‘rejected’ as described, but rather, it did not win, as it had received the second highest number of votes by the jury; ultimately a design by Daniel Libeskind was selected to win.

8.3.2.

Ron Arad Architects (RAA) designed both the Ottawa memorial and the London proposal. The two proposals are substantially different from each other in material and form, yet share the same thematic underpinning. RAA have, from inception, sought to devise an architectural symbolism that is both experiential, and of wider, universal reach, which would somehow capture the horror of the scale of the Holocaust, without dressing it in a pictographic symbol. Hence the choice of the vast number of countries in which Jewish communities were decimated, represented through paths that visitors could experience.

8.3.3.

The use of culturally exclusive pictographic symbols such the Star of David, in fact led to Daniel Libeskind winning the Ottawa competition, with an extruded Star of David as the memorial’s structure. While this is a very recognisable symbol, it is a well-trodden motif in his work, and has served the plans of several of his buildings including the Jewish Museum in Berlin. These symbols, even for many in the Jewish community, carry limited emotional or transportative weight, and are certainly neither exclusive to the Holocaust, nor inclusive of non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution.

8.3.4.

There seems to be an impression that projects are born at or for a location in a vacuum, meaning every project is unique. The truth is that projects are based on an accumulation of thematic, architectural and material references from the creative stable of the architect, tempered by local site constraints. RAA conceived of the 22 paths as an architectural motif of choice, a motif which is present in the UKHMLC proposal.

8.3.5.

The two memorials differ in material (concrete (Ottawa) versus bronze (London)), form (rectangular leaves of a book (Ottawa) versus a cliff-face-like topography (London)), visitor experience (a flat, destination-less corridor (Ottawa), versus the stairs descending into the Threshold (London)), and many other details.

8.4.

Baroness Deech also alleges that “*It is more representative of the architects’ unique style than the memory: to the untutored eye such as mine Adjaye designs are characterised by stripes, horizontal and vertical, and this is another example*” (See Section 4a, Core Document CD 5.26, Planning point 6, page 8).

In response I would state the following.

Both Memorials were in fact designed by RAA and not by Adjaye Associates. The style she refers to can be found in many works by Ron Arad, typified by the volumetric intersection of a layered object with a ‘cutter’ (see examples small and large such as ToHa tower (Tel Aviv), or Oh Void series), however the main aesthetic driver in this proposal was the inherent symbolism, underpinned by the numeric symbol (the paths), yet interpreted in a site-specific manner, using a very different scale, materiality, and datum.

8.5.

I am aware that it has been alleged that “*the existing monuments do not form a coherent story either of British liberties or of the nation’s conscience and will not do so if a Holocaust Memorial is added.*” (See Section 14, Core Document CD 5.29, Point 12).

In response I would state that by weaving a new non-axial path through Victoria Tower Gardens, it is envisaged that a physical narrative journey could be made possible, linking disparate monuments forming a stance against injustice. Furthermore, this coherence is reinforced by the choice of bronze alloy for the Holocaust Memorial, the same material used for both the Emmeline Pankhurst Memorial and the Burghers of Calais sculpture.

8.6.

I am aware that it has been alleged that “*The protected views will be lost... Looking north, there is at present no distraction from the full-face view of the south front of the Houses of Parliament*” (See Section 7, Core Document CD 5.29, point 19). In response I would state that in responding to the government’s brief for the design competition, we have designed a memorial that is intended to be both iconic in character, visually recognisable, yet respectful of the site in which it is to be situated. The proposed overall highest

point of the tallest Memorial fin wall reaches a height of +9.8m above park level, approximately 2m lower than the top of the main body of the Buxton Memorial, and over 3m below its tip, or ‘Ridge Level’ at +13.5, as recorded in the measured survey.

8.7.

I am aware that it has been alleged that “*the HMLC will loom over the Buxton Memorial and disrupt its careful placing on the axis with St John’s Smith Square*” (See Section 7, Core Document CD 5.29, point 20).

The Holocaust Memorial is positioned a minimum distance of 8m away from the Buxton Memorial in such a way as to frame it and enhance its setting more dramatically. When viewed from the entrance pavilion looking north, the Buxton Memorial is seen with the layered backdrop of both the Holocaust Memorial and the Houses of Parliament beyond. Furthermore, the proposal allocates a new radial well-lit plinth from which to observe the Buxton Memorial as part of the enhanced park landscaping works.

8.8.

I am aware that it has been alleged that “*Visitors leaving the Learning Centre will be confronted by large residential and commercial blocks on Abingdon Street rather than the ‘Mother of Parliaments’*” (See Section 7, Core Document CD 5.29, point 22).

In response I would state that the backdrop of Parliament behind the Memorial is the first welcoming image of those visiting the Memorial and learning centre when arriving from the south facing north. Visitors leaving the learning centre will in fact be facing south, within the Memorial Courtyard, with a view of the perspectival rows of plane trees either side, and with very limited views of built context outside of VTG. They will certainly not be physically able to see Abingdon Street.

8.9.

The objection as noted in item 8.8. above, raises the notion that a visible and direct link to the subject matter should exist in the design of a Holocaust memorial. We take the view that over time, a memorial, even if only abstractly representative of the artist or architect’s interpretation of the subject matter, can become a very powerful and widely recognisable place for specific memorialisation. The Cenotaph in Whitehall is perhaps the best example of this. It is a fairly simple, austere block of stone in the middle of a busy road, yet it captures the collective grief and the attention of a whole nation, beyond living age of those who experienced the war. On the 11th November 2018, its reach extended further around the world on the centenary of World War I Armistice. It does so without overt symbolism, or ornamentation in the form of tanks, soldiers or other figurative elements people might associate with the war. It is rather a much more abstract container for those memories.

THE MEMORIAL

9.0 CONCLUSION

9.1.

As I stated in my introduction to this Proof of Evidence, 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 physical insertion into Victoria Tower Gardens. This aims to strike the right balance between significance, and peaceful co-existence within the rich context, and the crucial juxtaposition of Parliament as its backdrop.

9.2.

I strongly believe we have achieved this, through a careful and considered approach to the depth of the narrative which underpins the proposal, the thorough analysis and evaluation of the gardens themselves, including all natural and man-made assets within them, and the placement and arrangement of the Memorial within this context. This process has regularly been enriched and tempered by expert advice, public engagement, and regular questioning within the design team of every aspect of the proposal.

9.3.

I believe the scheme will be appreciated in its context when seen from afar or up close, from the north, south, east or west, and will come to be seen as an integral, atemporal presence in this unique site.

9.4.

I believe the design has achieved the goals set for it, and manages to establish a unique place, iconic in nature and subtle in variation, evocative of emotions and experiences without being literal or manipulative. I also believe it will achieve the highest challenge, that of successfully resonating universally for years to come, with survivors and relatives of other atrocities.



Fig. 16.0 South-facing view of proposed Memorial in context