

Architecture

UK chooses design for Holocaust memorial alongside parliament

Series of blades will slice through the earth and become a jagged row of flanges



The winning design for the Holocaust memorial

2 HOURS AGO by Edwin Heathcote in London

A competition to design the UK's [Holocaust memorial](#) beside the Palace of Westminster has been won by a team headed by architects Adjaye Associates with designer Ron Arad and landscape designers Gustafson **Porter** + Bowman.

The memorial and museum will be built in Victoria Tower Gardens, the riverside park frequently used for TV news reports.

The design sees the landscape at the western end of Victoria Gardens lifted up as if the lawn were a rug. A series of 23 bronze steel blades slice through the earth and become a jagged and irregular row of flanges. The gap between each of the dark metal verticals (representing the 22 countries where the Holocaust devastated Jewish communities) reveals a long, narrow stair that in turn leads down to the subterranean Holocaust Learning Centre. This underground chamber will feature exhibitions and filmed testimony from Holocaust survivors.

The brief had called for an integral learning centre to address concerns that as the last survivors of the Holocaust age and die, first-hand testimony will fade with them. Sir Peter Bazalgette, the chairman of the jury who selected the design, said “Remembering is not enough. The new memorial is also about today.”

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ARCHITECT SIR DAVID ADJAYE

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Sir David, who described the plans as “architecture as emotion”, has previous experience with the architecture of memory. His [Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) in Washington DC, which opened last year, won praise as a powerful combination of memorial, cultural attraction and celebration.

“Victoria Gardens was conceived as a representational space,” he told the FT, “but somewhere it lost that role and it is so under-used. It was intended to accommodate events and celebrations connected to parliament. This gives it back a public role and a sense of purpose.”

Ephraim Mirvis, chief rabbi, who was on the panel that selected the design, said: “As a result of today’s announcement we, the British people, will never forget what happened during the Holocaust.”

Sadiq Khan, London’s mayor, said: “This unique and immersive memorial is not just for Londoners but for the whole UK. It will ensure the horror of the Holocaust are never forgotten and will stand as a powerful reminder to future generations about the fragility of peace.”

The scheme also works to incorporate the site’s existing green space and memorials celebrating figures such as Emmeline Pankhurst and events including the abolition of slavery. Sir David said the gardens would be maintained as an important open public space and “a park of British conscience”.

The memorial is expected to open in 2021 and the government has pledged £50m towards its construction.

David Cameron launched the international design competition on Holocaust Memorial day in January 2016, and the eventual 10-design shortlist included submissions from Foster + Partners, Anish Kapoor, Rachel Whiteread and Daniel Libeskind.

Ron Arad, the Israel-born, London-based designer, said: “We knew we weren’t going to put an object on a pedestal but we wanted something that gives you a visceral experience.”

David Adjaye added: “We looked at Holocaust memorials around the world but this was part of a different ripple, not in one of the countries where the Holocaust actually happened. This is a British