

House of Commons UK

Designs for Holocaust memorial go on display at the V&A

Shortlist of 10 includes Norman Foster and Anish Kapoor with Zaha Hadid Architects



Adjaye Associates: design for the new National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London © Adjaye Associates

YESTERDAY by: Nell Lewis

Holocaust survivors warned of the continuing danger of racism and prejudice as shortlisted designs for a Holocaust memorial in Britain went on display at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

“In recent times we have seen the splintering of social cohesion,” said Joan Salter, 77, as she welcomed the £40m government-funded project for a National Holocaust Memorial and learning centre in Victoria Tower Gardens next to the Houses of Parliament in London.

“We live in dangerous times and, tragically, a reminder of how fragile our veneer of civilisation is, is more crucial now than ever in our recent history,” she added. Ms Salter was three months old when the Germans invaded Belgium in 1940 and was not reunited with her Polish-Jewish family until 1947.



Caruso St John Architects, Marcus Taylor and Rachel Whiteread © Caruso St John Architects

Peter Lantos, 78, who was captive in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp as a young boy, said the memorial must act as “a powerful reminder and warning for future generations. It is to warn people what can happen when xenophobia and intolerance can lead to genocide”.

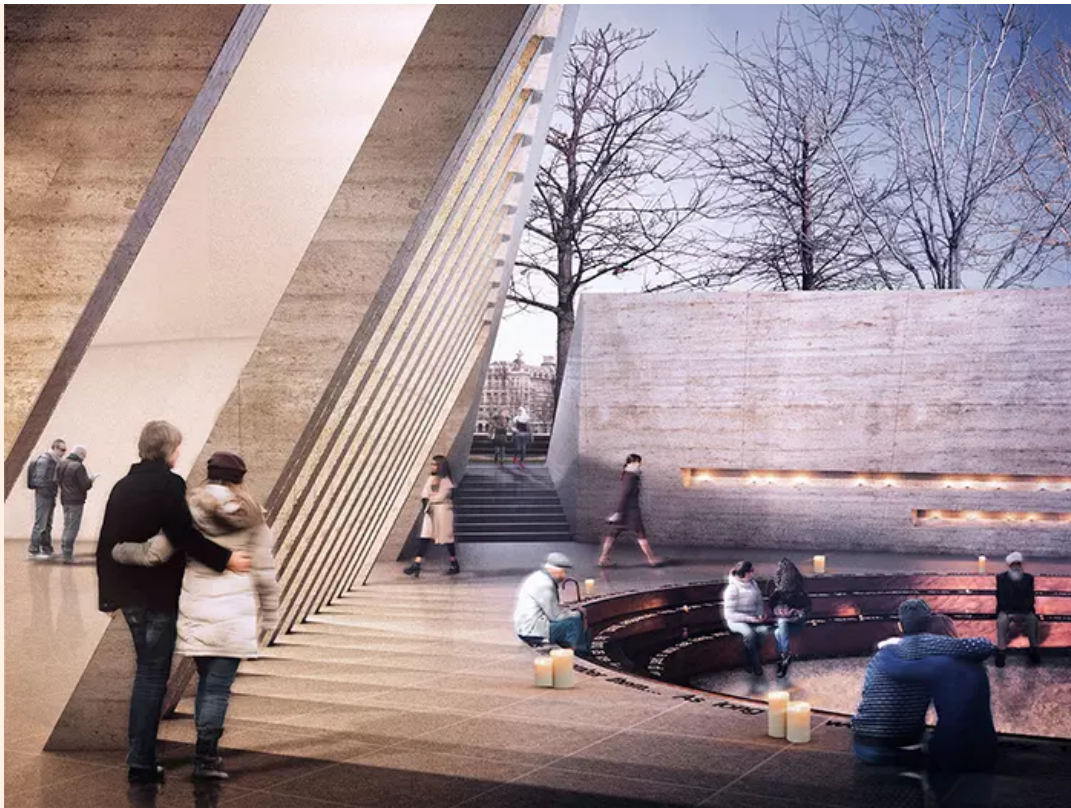
The plan for the memorial was announced in September 2016 and drew 92 entries. The shortlist of 10 designs includes Norman Foster and Anish Kapoor with Zaha Hadid Architects.



Anish Kapoor and Zaha Hadid Architect © Anish Kapoor and Zaha Hadid Architects

Mr Kapoor and Hadid's team proposed an avenue of cypresses leading to a memorial shaped like an enormous meteorite or rock embedded in the earth. Lord Foster's proposal features a ramp descending into the earth, recalling the brick corridors leading down to the gas chambers in Nazi concentration camps.

The exhibition at the V&A will run until August 22 and will invite feedback from visitors before a jury chooses the winning design in September.



John McAslan + Partners © John McAslan + Partners

The site of the memorial, which is planned for completion in 2021, stirred controversy in April as 40 MPs and peers wrote to members of the House of Lords urging them to fight the plans as the gardens “would cease to be an amenity for ordinary people”.



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But Peter Bazalgette, who chairs the UK Holocaust Memorial Foundation, said the location was appropriate because “it underlines what happens when society breaks down, when law, order, decency, tolerance, empathy disappear”.