

Holocaust Memorial Bill Select Committee

Amended Petition of Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC

1. In this petition I represent myself and the memory of my parents and sister. My parents are now deceased; but my older (half) sister is a child Holocaust survivor who was hidden in Poland throughout WWII. Sadly she is no longer of full capacity. Otherwise I know she would support what I say. Her name is Renata Calverley and she is the author of her memoir as a child of being a hidden Holocaust victim in Poland *Let me Tell You a Story*, published by Bloomsbury in 2014. Her mother died in Auschwitz in 1944. Renata and I have been profoundly affected by the effect of the Holocaust on our lives and concepts. We lost not only her mother, but our joint grandparents, aunts and uncles and first cousins. Not a day passes without reflection on the price they paid for just being Jews, and I am much affected by the way we remember them.
2. It is relevant too that I was the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation from 2001-11; that I have been consulted on counter-terrorism issues ever since; and that in my consultancy capacity give advice on such matters. I believe that I am up to date, and support the Government's refreshed CONTEST strategy.
3. I believe that the site proposed at Victoria Tower Gardens presents a very real terrorism risk. That risk will affect the way in which my murdered family is given accountability and respect.
4. I consider that the site would be iconic and tempting to both Islamist and right-wing extremists, given its proximity to the Palace of Westminster, the lack of any secure or meaningful existing or proposed perimeter, and its close proximity both to busy public highways and the river. I am astonished that this has not been seen to be a real problem, and believe that this warning should be taken seriously.
5. The horrific terrorism events in Israel now known as 7/10 and the consequences of that attack have ratcheted up the risk of terrorism around anything that could be seen to represent Jews and Jewishness. The opportunity to attack the Centre and at the same time to cause damage to parliament and parliamentarians will not be lost on potential terrorists, ranging from State actors to lone actors. There is extensive online activity and discussion concerning potential terrorist opportunities and their

impact. Also one should not forget the summer riots in London and other places as a warning of the undoubted potential for other extremist actions being enhanced by the presence of the Centre.

6. I have enjoyed the advantage of a security briefing kindly arranged by the Minister Lord Khan of Burnley. Described to me by a group of experts from various departments of government were intended extensive changes to traffic arrangements between Great Peter Street and Bridge Street. These would include closing two sides of Parliament Square, with two way traffic on the North and East sides of the Square. There would be no public traffic between Bridge Street and Great Peter Street. The only vehicular access to the palace of Westminster would be from the Lambeth Bridge roundabout via a special lane leading to Black Rod's Garden and also to the Carriage Gates.
7. The proposed arrangements would concentrate all vehicular access to the Palace in the same area as all arrivals at the proposed Centre.
8. I do not suggest that the effective increase in the curtilage of Parliament is caused only by the Centre. It is one of the factors contributing to the security problems.
9. I support the concerns about the proposed Learning Centre expressed by petitioners representing the Thorney Island Society, London Parks and Gardens Trust and the Buxton Society concerning the site, size, impact on park users, the environment, the cost, the contents, the risk of flooding and the risk of damage to trees.
10. I believe that the proposed Learning Centre is too big for the park and necessitates costly and risky excavation. It is also too small for the content that survivors would wish for, bearing in mind the opinion of the late Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks, that the Holocaust ought not to be studied in isolation but in context; and that any context in London is now absent because of the closure of the Jewish Museum in Camden. There are alternative sites close by, notably two potential sites in the City of London.
11. The siting of the proposed Learning Centre in Victoria Tower Gardens sends the wrong message, namely, that British democracy and values are the antidote to genocide (per Lord Pickles at the public inquiry). The site is preferred by the Holocaust Memorial Foundation leaders because it is free, and because the proposed

contents of the Learning Centre are to be used to further the British Values project, in which they were active.

12. I support the objective of a Holocaust Learning Centre in the right setting. Its objectives should be to educate, to warn, and to remember.
13. The remembrance aspect should be spacious enough to embrace personal histories and an extensive and accessible online library of those who survived and settled in the UK, and their families; and to examine the actions of the UK in relation to the Holocaust from the entry of the Nazis into government in Germany and elsewhere in Europe until the defeat of Germany.
14. The warning aspect should provide sufficient capacity to depict and analyse the contemporary sources that described what was happening in the Holocaust. This would require an exhibition area of some scale and also a cinema type space.
15. The education aspect should include the opportunity for onsite study from school to PhD level, hopefully to be supported by expert academic staff with adequate teaching facilities.
16. To achieve all this, in my view what is required is a spacious site, in or accessible from central London but not in an already security sensitive position.
17. I would cite as an excellent example the Warsaw Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Its site conveys regret, importance, and the three objectives set out in paragraph 8 above.
18. If the Learning Centre was sited elsewhere, then I would the placing off a suitable sculpture in VTG as a Holocaust Memorial as presenting a much reduced security risk. It would complement *The Burghers of Calais* sculpture already in VTG, which itself is conceptually related to freedom and sound political values.
19. I have had the advantage of reading the petition submitted by Baroness Deech. I support her detailed submissions concerning design, architect, site suitability, content and message.



Lord Carlile of Berriew CBE KC

22 November 2024

**Possible amendments to Holocaust Memorial Bill
(not checked with Public Bill Office)**

Subject to later discussion with the Public Bill Office, the following are possible amendments related to security.

After Clause 2, insert New Clause –

- (1) Within three months of the passing of this Act the Secretary of State will provide a report to both Houses of Parliament setting out the effects arising from the construction, presence and use of the Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre on the chosen site. Such report shall include:
 - (a) A list of those bodies and individuals consulted (subject to redaction of names where necessitated by national security);
 - (b) A summary of the advice provided by each body and individual consulted;
 - (c) A full description with visual depictions of all road and traffic changes, at and near to the chosen site, proposed to be made during construction and following completion of the Memorial and Learning Centre;
 - (d) Proposals for the continuing assessment of the security of the site and nearby buildings.
 - (e) Such other security information as the Secretary of State considers to be relevant.
- (2) The Secretary of State may delegate the preparation of the report referred to in subsection 1 of this section to the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation.
- (3) Prior to this Act coming into force the Secretary of State shall obtain a resolution from both Houses of Parliament approving the bringing of the Act into force following the report referred to in this section.

In Clause 3(2) –

Line 21 After 'beginning' delete 'with the day on which this Act is passed' and insert 'with the day on which both resolutions described in section 3 of this Act have been passed'.

Alex Carlile
Lord Carlile of CBE KC



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