

A statement from the London Parks and Gardens charity, LPG, on 24 January 2024.

‘A fitting Holocaust Memorial is now urgent’

London Parks & Gardens has today, 24/01/24, urged MPs to adopt a new plan to build a Holocaust memorial beside Parliament NOW, and secure space for a fitting learning centre nearby.

Since 2016 the [London Parks & Gardens](#) charity, LPG, and its supporters have brought and won multiple legal challenges in defence of the Victoria Tower Gardens public park next to Parliament. With broadly-based support including that of Holocaust survivors, LPG has urged the Government to find a site worthy of an expansive national Holocaust Learning Centre which does not require building on this small but protected historic open space.

Now, as a committee of MPs [consider a bill](#) which would remove Victoria Tower Gardens’ legal protections in order to build both a memorial and a learning centre together, [LPG witnesses](#) encouraged Parliament to deliver on their noble intent by adopting an amended plan. This would involve rapidly delivering a memorial next to parliament NOW, without the need to scrap legal protections for the park, and building a learning centre on a larger, more suitable site nearby.

The Prime Minister’s 2014 Holocaust Commission, tragically still unfulfilled after a decade, sought a Memorial and Learning Centre “close at hand” but never endorsed Victoria Tower Gardens as a location. Instead, eminent Commissioners chose three potential, more suitable sites including the Imperial War Museum (IWM) near Parliament, noting that any new centre “should include the IWM’s Holocaust Exhibition, upgraded and expanded.”

Since 2015, the government’s noble intentions have failed to deliver for Holocaust survivors because Ministers such as Chris Pincher insisted on squeezing a Learning Centre building into the protected Victoria Tower Gardens. HMG pressed ahead, despite warnings and a legal challenge by LPG on the grounds that building on this park was illegal. The High Court upheld LPG’s view and rejected HMG’s plan in 2022. The Government’s response was to introduce the bill now before MPs which abolishes the park’s protection.

Now, as time runs out to honour living Holocaust survivors, LPG, the charity which protects London parks have asked MPs to back a new, honourable way forward. It urges MPs to deliver on the will of Parliament, siting a fitting national Holocaust Memorial next to the seat of our democracy without further delay. This could be achieved rapidly without the need to repeal existing laws and in balance with the park’s existing Buxton Anti-Slavery memorial. Alongside this, a location able to do justice to a larger learning centre could be identified nearby.

An LPG spokesperson said:

“‘Never again’ is rightly often stated in relation to the Holocaust. In 2014 the UK’s Holocaust Commission noted that it took “14 long years” to deliver the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. The Commissioners stated:

“Nearly four decades later and with more and more survivors passing away, Britain simply cannot afford this kind of delay in delivery. “



Almost a decade later, Britain is still waiting for both a Memorial and a place of learning about these increasingly distant, but timelessly horrific events.

This new proposal can deliver on a decade-old promise to Holocaust survivors and enable future generations to learn the lessons of their suffering. It can also protect the principle that parks are places of freedom, reflection and relaxation for everyone, and not to be built on.”

24th January 2024