

Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission: Attendee feedback from 3-12 February 2020 community events

Introduction

Community representatives from the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission held their first round of community events from 3-12 February 2020. Six events were held; two dedicated events for bereaved family members and survivors; two for residents of the Lancaster West Estate; and two for residents from across North Kensington. The events were informal drop-ins at which the community could meet the community representatives, hear about what they have been doing so far – including their recent selection of co-chairs – and understand how they can be involved in the Commission’s work in the future.

The events were designed to provide information about the community representatives, and their work so far, in a simple and effective way. Information about the Commission, its members and future plans was explained on four large information boards that were placed at each event and in leaflets that could be taken away. A creche service and pastoral support were also available. The events were held in local venues including Kensington Leisure Centre and Kensington and Chelsea College (Wornington Road).

The events also gave community representatives an opportunity to hear about how the community want to be involved in the future, and initial ideas for memorialising the lives that were lost in 2017. Community representatives also heard feedback about the practicalities of the events themselves and suggestions for improving future communications. The ideas and comments received from attendees are below.

Ways to memorialise

- i. A quiet, reflective and beautiful space with plenty of greenery (such as a garden space with trees and/or wildflowers planted). The preference for a beautiful and respectful space was a popular idea.
- ii. A space in which greenery and public seating are carefully and thoughtfully designed (the High Line in New York was referenced).
- iii. An element of water and/or running water; for example, in the form of a fountain.
- iv. Retaining some aspect of the Tower’s structure as a reminder of what the memorial is for. For example, an elevated garden on the existing structure, or incorporating names in columns.
- v. A way of permanently including the names and potentially pictures of those lost (through a plaque or engraving in stones, for example).
- vi. A way of capturing the tributes, sentiments and questions from the early days of the tragedy in 2017.
- vii. Something that reflects the beliefs and faiths of everyone affected by the tragedy;
- viii. A dynamic space, potentially one that allows children to play.
- ix. Something that is useful (for example, a play area or a community space) to help longevity and keep it sustainable.
- x. Ensure the surrounding areas remain protected and in keeping with the memorial, and are not redeveloped for use as homes/any other use not in keeping with the memorial.
- xi. Incorporate the Grenfell Memorial Community Mosaic or a peace quilt in the space.

- xii. An area where the community can get together to, for example, have tea or plant flowers.
- xiii. A space where an annual memorial event can be held.
- xiv. A space safe, secure from harm and vandalism, that is respected.
- xv. Involving youth (through community groups and universities) in design, use and upkeep of the memorial.
- xvi. Ensure any sculptures that are included are attractive (not ugly).
- xvii. Potentially include peaceful music in the space.
- xviii. A visible memorial, not too discreet or hidden away.
- xix. A purpose-built museum or structure that captures the community's testimonies, a place of learning (for example, about local history), an art gallery or a culture centre that is fully accessible.
- xx. Some sort of exhibition away from the Tower site.
- xxi. Carefully consider the sustainability of the materials to be used for the memorial.
- xxii. Consider asking former residents of the Tower if they would like to donate any personal possessions to a museum.
- xxiii. The memorial site could be managed by a local charity.

The decision-making process

- i. Allow children and young people to get involved and have a say in decisions being made and in the design of the memorial, including through children-led design workshops, prizes at schools.
- ii. The next of kin should have a great say in decisions on the memorial.
- iii. The North Kensington community should have full involvement in decisions and co-design.
- iv. The residents living closest to the Tower should have a greater say.
- v. Residents' associations should be consulted regularly.
- vi. Lancaster West estate residents to be kept in the loop in decision making.
- vii. Get local businesses involved.
- viii. Ensure that the community continues to be listened to as decisions are made; and avoid community divisions. Thorough listening will help build ownership for the memorial as people start to see their ideas take shape.
- ix. Important that people can see their ideas reflected in the memorial design.
- x. Important to also ask what people don't want.
- xi. Learn from other memorials (such as 9/11), including on the long-term management and sustainability of the memorial. A management structure that could help people in the community (for example, through employment) would be useful.
- xii. Learn from the Princess Diana Memorial's use of space which allows for interaction and play.
- xiii. Use existing research by design practices and the Mayor of London's office on child-friendly public spaces.
- xiv. Consult the original architect and designers for the Lancaster West estate.
- xv. Use virtual reality to help the community visualise what they want to see as a fitting memorial.
- xvi. Find a way to involve older people, some of who have spent their whole lives in the community.
- xvii. Create opportunities for the community to help in a more hands-on way in the process, for example through volunteering at events.
- xviii. Consider setting up a mini Memorial Commission for young people, to hear directly from them what they want.
- xix. Use a mix of local and national artists, arts organisations, design enterprises, sculptors and landscape designers in the process, including as design workshop

facilitators. (The secretariat has kept a list of the individuals and organisations suggested and these are available on request.)

- xx. Use high-profile patrons to support and promote the Commission's work. Suggestions included TV and sports personalities, artists, singers, members of the Royal Family, and local film producers. (The secretariat has made a list of the individuals suggested and these are available on request.)

Practicalities of outreach events

- i. Outreach events should be advertised more widely and with more notice throughout the community including at creches, nurseries, schools, resident associations, local businesses, colleges, and at local gatherings (for example, the silent march).
- ii. Commission members and the secretariat should be seen more regularly at community spaces such as Baseline Studios (on the Lancaster West estate). There should be regular pop-up spaces for community consultation on the memorial.
- iii. Make the timings of events clearer on advertising.
- iv. Make the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission website more interactive.
- v. Create an app for the community to keep updated on all events, activities. Allow for quick feedback function, use social media (such as WhatsApp, Instagram and Twitter) to reach young people.

Other points raised

- i. A decision is needed about the future of properties in Grenfell Walk and they should be demolished.
- ii. The Memorial Commission should include a representative from the North Kensington community.
- iii. There are different opinions on whether to rename Latimer Road underground station: some felt it should be renamed (for example, to 'Grenfell Gardens') and some felt its name shouldn't change.
- iv. The school close to the site should be relocated.