

Remembering Grenfell: Recommendations and next steps to a memorial (November 2023)

*You can read a translation of this and the full report on our website:
www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk/report2023*

Report summary

Following the tragic events of 14 June 2017, the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission was created. Our objective was to bring into focus a truly community-led vision for a fitting memorial, to commemorate those who lost their lives and those whose lives were forever changed on that terrible night. We began this process in September 2019.

Since then, we have worked closely with the Grenfell community, by which we mean the bereaved families, survivors, Lancaster West Estate residents and the immediate community who live in close proximity to Grenfell Tower. We have sought to understand their hopes and wishes for a future memorial. In our May 2022 report, Remembering Grenfell: our journey so far, we presented what we had heard from the Grenfell community up to that point. This also gave us an opportunity to test our understanding of what we had heard.

This report goes much further. It is the culmination of nearly four years of work and sets out the Grenfell community's vision for the memorial, its future management and the ongoing process of remembering what our community has lost. We share what our community has said about what our memorial should be like. Where there is common ground in what people want, we say so. Where there is a lot of difference in views, or where people's wishes are less defined and less clear, we say so.

As a Commission we make four promises:

- Our first promise is to create a place of dignity and peace. A lasting place where those who had loved ones taken from them can cherish and feel close to their memory, and where our community can remember.
- Our second promise is to create a bold memorial that will help to make sure the tragic events at Grenfell Tower are never forgotten. Not now, not in years to come. We, and the rest of our Grenfell community, are all very clear about that.
- Our third promise is to help to put in place arrangements to guarantee the memorial will be looked after, and not allowed to fade or drift into disrepair.
- Our fourth promise is to ensure the voices and wishes of the Grenfell community are always at the heart of decision-making about the memorial.

In our journey, we have moved at the pace that our community needed. The Grenfell community is unique in many ways, and it is only right that our memorial is determined in a way that is specific to us.

As we move closer to the stage of designing and building the memorial, this report sets out the next stages for its creation. That includes discussion of practical issues such as legal ownership, and recommendations for how elements from Grenfell Tower might be conserved and kept safe for the future, in line with the wishes of those who lost the most.

We remind the government to honour its commitment to the memorial, and to fulfil its moral duty to deliver the Commission’s recommendations.

A timely, public response from the government and an agreement to work with the Commission going forward is vital, and must be in accordance with the timelines set out in this report.

In addition to our – the Commission’s – own personal commitment, external experts have helped us to collect views and ideas for the ‘form’ and ‘feel’ of the memorial from the Grenfell community.

This help, our direct and often deeply personal conversations with the Grenfell community, plus community conversations held by our co-chairs, have informed our recommendations. As a Commission, we have also taken advice from the families, teams and guardians involved in the memorials of other tragedies, both in the UK and across the world. Our recommendations bring all of this research together in service to our promise to honour the memory of those taken from us.

This report is an important milestone on the journey to making the community’s memorial vision a reality. Following the publication of this report, we will launch our search for a specialist and community-minded design team. We anticipate doing this next spring, and that the team will be selected in late 2024. We envisage the memorial design will have been developed with the community by late 2025, and that the memorial build could begin from late 2026. As we say later in this report, this exact timing will also come down to other dependent factors that are out of our hands, such as a government decision about the future of Grenfell Tower.

In summary: our recommendations for a memorial on the Grenfell Tower site

Based on what we have heard from the Grenfell community we recommend the following for the future memorial design.

1. The families bereaved by the tragedy, those who escaped on the night and lost their homes, and those living close to Grenfell Tower, must always remain at the centre of decisions about the memorial.
2. The memorial must be a sacred space designed and built to last, by which we mean it should be permanent.
3. The memorial must be a peaceful place for remembering and reflecting, both individually

and communally, on who and what we have lost.

4. The memorial must incorporate a garden; a green space whose planting conveys a sense of growth and renewal as an aid to remembrance.

5. The memorial must contain a dedicated space for the private expression of grief and mourning for the families who lost loved ones.

6. The memorial's design must reflect the rich mix of faiths and cultural backgrounds that makes up the Grenfell community, and to which those taken from us and those who survived belong.

7. Designs for the memorial should make sure the world can never forget what happened to our loved ones and our community. Memorial designs must include options for including the names of those taken from us (where families wish this), and must consider the appropriate height and visibility of the memorial.

8. The memorial must last for generations and must never be neglected. Appropriate arrangements must be put in place so that the memorial will be looked after and managed for the future and funds must be put in place so that this can happen.

9. Art has been an important part of the Grenfell community's path through loss towards hope. The memorial should include a monument (as well as a built structure or other architecture to protect visitors from the weather) and/or artwork that evoke community, love, hope, sadness and those who were taken from us.

10. Water and the use of light were important features mentioned by the Grenfell community. These should be considered in the process of developing the memorial.

11. The memorial must support the needs of families visiting with children. The Commission also recommends that the memorial finds a way to reflect the children we lost in the tragedy, and how our children and young people have endured so much.

12. Once the memorial is built, the legal title and day-to-day management of the memorial site should be vested in an appropriately qualified experienced entity operating at arms' length from both local and central government. The Royal Parks is an example of an organisation that we believe would be suitable, due to its experience stewarding numerous memorials of national significance. The Commission urges the government to explore the possibility of The Royal Parks, or similar organisations, having a role in the ongoing management and maintenance of the memorial after construction.

Our recommendations beyond the Grenfell Tower site

13. The Commission recommends the development of an archive, working with experts including the National Archive. Some elements of the archive would potentially only be accessible to bereaved family members and survivors.

14. The Commission recommends that a sensitive and reflective digital archive should also be curated with family members and survivors.

15. The Commission recommends a long-term public exhibition. Together with the archives, this will help make sure that current and future generations can learn about and remember the tragedy, the factors that contributed to it, and how the Grenfell community responded to it.

16. The Commission recommends that elements of (or from) Grenfell Tower – which cannot be retained as part of the memorial and are not to be conserved – must be safely and respectfully ‘laid to rest’ at a second, appropriate, accessible and sacred site. This site must be agreed with bereaved family members and survivors, and in consultation with local faith leaders. We ask the government to work with the mayor of London and local faith leaders to identify such a site.

Engagement with the Grenfell community

We knew from day one that our focus was to hear from the Grenfell community so that the future memorial would be based on the wishes of bereaved, survivors and local residents. This was never going to be an easy task, and it was made even harder by the Covid-19 pandemic; but we remained committed to the task and dedicated ourselves to achieving it no matter the challenges we faced.

We, in the Commission, have been directly affected by the tragedy ourselves. We acknowledge that our own trauma has had, and continues to have, an impact on our own deliberations. We want to be open about how we, ourselves, have also needed mutual understanding and patience.

Our approach to engaging with the Grenfell community has been grounded in the following key values:

Empathy and sensitivity

We understand the pain and trauma of the Grenfell community and knew that for many of us any conversation about the memorial would be incredibly painful. Throughout our engagement, we remained sensitive to this, supporting each other and the Grenfell community to engage and share their thoughts on their terms, and in the way that worked best for them. This included enabling people to share their views in any language or medium, whether individually or collectively as part of representative or family groups.

We recognised that not everyone would feel able or ready to have this conversation and that in such a culturally diverse community, families will grieve and mourn differently.

It was vital we kept feeding back what we had been hearing so that all members of the Grenfell community had the opportunity to understand what was happening. We said, from

the outset, that we would take as long as was needed, and would move at the pace of the Grenfell community. We did not want to rush the process, but we also knew that it was important that progress was made towards the future memorial.

Diversity and inclusion

We celebrate and value the amazing diversity of the Grenfell community, and we understood there needed to be a wide range of ways that people could share their views.

Over three years, people shared their hopes and ideas for the memorial, in meetings and discussions, in writing (including in the different languages of our community) and even through drawings and artwork.

Engagement with bereaved and survivors was primarily led by the bereaved and survivor representatives on the Commission. We also carried out more than 200 days of outreach in the local area, talking with community members to ensure we had heard from the full diversity of local residents.

Those undertaking this work included native speakers of a range of languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Diakanke, Farsi, French, Hindi, Italian, Malinke, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Sosso, Sylheti, Tigrinya and Urdu.

We listened to and valued every view, but particular weight was of course attached to the views of bereaved families.

Collaboration

The task we faced was immense and we knew that we would need to have an open and collaborative mindset, and to harness the incredible energy and talent from within the Grenfell community. We received a huge amount of support, help and guidance on our journey – from members of the Grenfell community, from bereaved families and survivors of other tragedies from across the world, from engagement and design specialists, and other experts who worked directly with the Memorial Commission.

What a future memorial should be like

The Grenfell Tower memorial vision statement:

*The Grenfell memorial will be at its heart a **peaceful** place. It will provide a space for **reflection** and remembrance of those that lost their lives, of **why** this tragedy happened and the need for **justice**.*

*The memorial will **reflect** the Grenfell **community** and the **love** within it, evoking a sense of **hope** and **positivity** that **remembers the past** and **looks forward to the future**.*

*It will be a place for bereaved, survivors and members of the local community to **come together**.*

A respectful, bold and lasting memorial that honours those that lost their lives and their families, the survivors of the fire and members of the local community.

The vision statement above describes what the memorial will do, created from all we have heard from people. It is the words our community have used to describe what the memorial should be like.

The vision for the memorial, and for our role as a commission, has been shaped and guided by what we have heard. When we first came together as a commission over four years ago, we started with a blank sheet of paper. Each step we have taken has come from the conversations we have had and what people have told us.

The Grenfell Tower memorial vision statement was composed after we had spoken with the Grenfell community and was updated as we continued to speak with and hear from the Grenfell community. In this final version of the vision statement, we have added that the memorial must be 'bold', as well as 'lasting'. As time has passed since the tragedy, the Grenfell community has demanded – and continues to demand – that it must never be allowed to be forgotten. The memorial must never fade into the background.

As a common ground began to emerge, we incorporated the vision statement into the questions that we asked people, always checking carefully along the way that the concept that was beginning to come into view, like a flower slowly opening to reveal its beauty, was one that felt right and true for people.

What is clear from our conversations is that the memorial must be a peaceful place to remember the beautiful souls taken from us.

It must not ignore justice, why the tragedy happened and how it could have been avoided. It must be a visible symbol of what happened and must never become forgotten or neglected. It must reflect the love and power of the Grenfell community and create hope and positivity for the future.

The memorial will last, speaking to generations to come in the same way that it will speak to our families, friends, and loved ones, from the day it is built. It must be a place of peace and respect that holds the memory of those we lost, forever, regardless of how the world changes around us. When we speak of the memorial being in perpetuity, we mean that it should be a lasting place of remembrance that will outlive us all.

All of the ideas and thoughts shared with us by the Grenfell community are important and precious even if we are unable to include them all. What happened at Grenfell was a national tragedy but above all, it was a personal tragedy for all those who lost loved ones. We have heard clearly that a special place and status needs to go to those who have lost loved ones.

In our conversations with Lancaster West Estate and other nearby parts of the community, there was also strong support for the voices of bereaved families having the greatest

weight. The overwhelming majority of the local community said that the future memorial should reflect the hope and vision of the bereaved families, while also being broadly supported by survivors and the local community.

While there were many ideas and wishes shared with us, there is agreement that the primary purpose of the memorial is to create a place where those who were taken from us can be remembered and where the tragedy that took place can be marked and kept in mind in perpetuity. That loss must be embodied in what is built.

Our previous report, *Remembering Grenfell: our journey so far*, shared the themes and ideas we had heard. We are confident that these have not shifted or changed, because we have continued to hear the same themes as we have spoken with and heard from more people.

The design process which we set out in this document will involve further work with the Grenfell community to shape the final design for the memorial. What we set out here represents the guidance from our community about what is most important for the memorial.

What will happen after the publication of this report?

By spring 2026, the Commission expects there will be a final design for the Grenfell Tower memorial.

To get to this point, a design brief will be created based on this report. Design teams will be invited to respond to that brief with their proposed approach to this important work. A shortlist of teams will then be invited to further develop their ideas.

The team judged best able to deliver the vision for the memorial that has been communicated in this report will then go forward to create the final design. The Grenfell community will be closely involved at every point of the process, with collaboration between the community and design teams happening where it makes the most difference. This will make sure that the final design translates the community's wishes into a physical memorial that lasts in perpetuity.

December 2023: finalising the design brief and selection process details.

We will use what we have heard from the Grenfell community, details about the site and expert advice to develop a design brief. This will clearly define the atmosphere and how the memorial should feel, the form it should take and the details requested by the bereaved, survivors and the Grenfell community. It will also define the type of team needed to design and develop the future memorial. This is likely to include architects, landscape architects or artists, and will capture the key elements that the design team should consider.

Spring 2024: finding the future design team

Launch of the memorial design team selection process. We will publish clear criteria and details about how interested teams can apply.

- Applicants will be asked to demonstrate their relevant experience, such as architectural and landscape professional expertise, and their experience of working collaboratively with communities.

- We won't be asking for designs at this stage, but we will want details of the proposed team, about how they intend to approach the design, and how they will work with the community.

- We will be looking for teams that are collaborative and who take a community-led approach. Teams with a strong community-focus will be very much encouraged to apply.

Summer 2024: shortlisting

- The Memorial Commission will review and shortlist the number of design team applicants to a maximum of five, on behalf of the Grenfell community and with the support of advisers.

Late 2024 and early 2025: design team selection

- We will ask the shortlisted teams to prepare the design approach they would take if appointed. That will need to include a proposed visual representation of what a part of the memorial might look like.

- This will be shared with the community, both in-person and online, to make sure that bereaved families, survivors and others in the Grenfell community remain at the heart of the memorial process. We will provide details nearer the time of the different ways the community can be involved and at the forefront of the process.

- The Commission will set clear criteria to assess the shortlisted teams on their proposals, including their team structure, design representations, and approach to working with the community. Teams will be expected to respond to community requirements, and technical and expert advice.

- The final team will then be selected and announced to the Grenfell community. The detailed memorial design will be developed, with the Grenfell community closely involved.

By late 2025: memorial design development

- The detailed memorial design will be developed, with the Grenfell community closely involved.

- We expect the planning application for the final memorial design to be submitted.

Spring 2026

- We expect to have planning permission approved for the memorial.

Late 2026

- The earliest point that the memorial build could begin. This is based on the earliest point that the Memorial Commission could be ready, with an agreed design, to start building preparations.

How to contact the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission:

- Email us at GTMCSecretariat@levellingup.gov.uk
 - Call us on [0303 444 4831](tel:03034444831)
 - Go to our contact page to send us your ideas, to directly contact the representatives or sign up to our newsletter: www.grenfelltowermemorial.co.uk/contact
 - Follow our regular updates on social media (@GrenfellTowerMC)