

GEDENKSTÄTTE FÜR DIE IN DER SHOAH ERMORDETEN
JÜDISCHEN KINDER, FRAUEN UND MÄNNER
AUS ÖSTERREICH

מצבת זכרון לקדושי יהודי אוסטריה

MEMORIAL TO THE JEWISH CHILDREN, WOMEN AND MEN
OF AUSTRIA
WHO WERE MURDERED IN THE SHOAH

Project Information

For the Republic of Austria, the Year of Remembrance 2018 provided an opportunity for a reckoning with the darkest chapters of its history. With the realization of the memorial for the Jewish children, women and men from Austria murdered in the Shoah, there now exists a visible sign of remembrance for the victims of National Socialism. The Shoah Wall of Names Memorial is intended to be a central and quiet place of reverence where people can remember the fates of the more than 65,000 murdered and commemorate their lives.

For years, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism has supported efforts to create a place where the victims could be remembered by name. On the initiative of the Austrian Holocaust survivor Kurt Yakov Tutter and the *Verein zur Errichtung einer Shoah Namensmauern Gedenkstätte* ("Association for the Creation of a Shoah Wall of Names Memorial"), work to realize this important remembrance project got underway in 2018.

It means a great deal to the association to be able to implement this remembrance project with the Federal Government, the Federal Provinces, the City of Vienna and the Austrian National Bank, under the patronage of the President of the National Council. The project was majority financed by the Federal Government following a commitment by former Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz in 2018. The Federal Provinces and the Federation of Austrian Industry (Fundraising Dinner) also made financial contributions towards the project.

The overall cost of around 5.3 million euros was borne by the mentioned entities as follows:

Contributors	Euro
Federal Chancellery – resolution by the Council of Ministers, March and November 2018 ¹	4,460,000
Provinces – resolution of the Conference of Provincial Governors, November 2018 ²	600,000
Donations from the Industrialists' Association Fundraising dinner, September 2018	230,000
Total amount	5,290,000

Wehofer Architekten ZT GmbH was responsible for the planning the design and realizing the memorial. The *Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft m.b.H.* (Federal Real Estate Company) was put

¹ 34/17 Speech before the Council of Ministers, GZ 351.000/0051-MRD/2018, GZ BMöDS 11220/0018-1/A/5/2018, accessible at https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:9ac0bcfb-79b4-40e3-9e9c-d28564b72601/34_17_mrv.pdf and 11/12 Speech before the Council of Ministers BKA-351.000/0014-MRD/2018, accessible at https://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/dam/jcr:4a83e7d2-c561-4ef8-a77d-23bef3d04591/11_12_mrv.pdf.

² In November 2019 the Vienna Municipal Council unanimously resolved to subsidize the construction of the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial in the amount of 100,000 Euro. Session report of the Vienna Municipal Council, 20th legislative period, 59th session of 19 November 2019, p. 4, <https://www.wien.gv.at/mdb/gr/2019/gr-059-s-2019-11-19.pdf>.

in charge of construction management and the National Fund of the Republic of Austria was entrusted with the fiscal administration including public subsidies, donations and expenses.

The memorial stands in the grounds of Ostarrichi Park in front of the Austrian National Bank. It takes the form of an ellipse comprising multiple stone walls engraved with the names of the over 64,000 Austrian Jews murdered in the Holocaust.

On 9 November 2018, a symbolic ceremony for the realization of the memorial was held in Ostarrichi Park Kurt Yakov Tutter. The significance of that moment was underscored by the presence of high-ranking Austrian officials, including then-Federal Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, National Council President Wolfgang Sobotka and Vienna City Councilor for Culture Veronica Kaup-Hasler.

A contractual basis for the technical and legal aspects of the project was agreed at the end of 2019. The competent authorities, the district and the residents were involved in the planning process, and all steps took place in consensus. The association and all of the parties involved are very satisfied with the Ostarrichi Park site.

While the contracts were being drawn up, in 2019 the submission planning was also finalized, work was carried out on the tenders and specialist planning was carried out on the site (statics, surveying and geotechnics). The tendering procedure for the stonemasonry and engraving work commenced in December 2019, the contract was awarded to the company *Breitwieser* at the beginning of 2020. The tender for the master builders was carried out in May 2020 and awarded to the company Mörtinger in June 2020. Construction work commenced in summer 2020. The COVID 19 pandemic caused isolated delays in the course of the project, but these were compensated for in the construction phase. At the beginning of 2021, work could begin on the engraving of the stone walls. On 25 March 2021, the first of around 160 stone walls engraved with names was moved on site. Over the course of the following weeks and months it was joined by further engraved walls. Construction was completed in October 2021. The opening ceremony will take place on 9 November 2021.

Given the historical significance of this memorial, the City of Vienna and the National Fund will assume joint responsibility for the upkeep and continuous operation of the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial.

Initiator Kurt Yakov Tutter and the Association

The initiator and founder of the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial is Kurt Yakov Tutter, who was born in Vienna in 1930. In 1939 he fled with his family to Belgium, where he and his younger sister Rita survived the Holocaust with the help of a Belgian family. In a video for the Federal Chancellery he described himself as a “real Viennese kid”.

In May 2000 Kurt Yakov Tutter founded an initiative advocating the realization of the Wall of Names Memorial project. In the years that followed, a number of prominent Austrians lent their support to the project. In May 2006, the “Association for the Creation of a Wall of Names Memorial to the Jewish children, women and men from Austria murdered in the Shoah” was founded together with the initiative.

The Association for the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial in Ostarrichi Park:

“The Nazis and their legions of supporters relentlessly persecuted many different victim groups and brutally murdered many people. These people fell victim to the crimes of the Nazis for, among others, political reasons, or because of their descent, religion, nationality or sexual orientation, due to a physical or mental handicap, or the accusation of so-called asociality.

This cenotaph is intended to keep alive the memory of the more than 64,000 Jewish children, women and men who once lived in Austria and perished in the Shoah, and to send a visible signal that Austrian society today – after many decades of repression and denial – acknowledges the darkest aspects of its history, the years of Nazi tyranny, and takes responsibility for the victims of this regime, which was also supported by many Austrians.

Self-critical remembrance work is an integral part of a liberal parliamentary democracy, and every generation needs to take part in this discursive process.”³

Design Concept

The architectural design concept for the memorial was created by Univ.-Prof. Dr. John Cirka in an elliptical form made of natural stones. The Viennese architect Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Wolfgang Wehofer further developed the final design of the memorial.⁴ The elliptical form was inserted into the existing Ostarrichi Park, in the form of a design derived from two interlocking hands. In the middle of the memorial there is a “green island”, which is planted with nine trees.

The memorial extends over a total area of about 2,500 m² and consists of natural stone walls with an arch length of about 187 running meters, in which the names of the Austrian Holocaust victims will be engraved. The memorial is accessed from the south via Alser Straße and from the north by the Austrian National Bank. The architectural design provides secluded location for private remembrance. Constant “through traffic” is prevented by the “green island” in the middle of the memorial.

Each wall segment consists of five walls, 101 cm in width. These segments are lined up at a distance of approx. 57 cm to form an ellipse. The walls are 235 cm high, which allows for an engraved surface of 190 cm. The distance from the edge is 5 cm from the upper, left and right side. In the lower area, engraving is possible from a height of 40 cm, measured from the floor covering. The vast number of individual letters and numbers (over 1 million characters) had a fundamental influence on the dimensions of the individual walls.

The memorial is embedded in the fabric of the inner city, in the middle of the Ostarrichi Park, above two underground car parks on a formerly unplanted green area.

Granite with a polished surface was chosen for the natural stone walls. The names of the Shoah victims were engraved with a font height of 14 mm using Computerized Numerical Control (CNC) milling. Using this method, it takes around 3-5 minutes to engrave one letter. The stone slabs each weigh around 780 kg/m.

The Data Source for the Names of the Shoah Victims

The data for the Wall of Names Memorial was gathered from the Shoah Victims Database of the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW). Within the framework of the project “List of Names of Austrian Holocaust Victims” initiated by the Israeli Yad Vashem Memorial, commissioned by the Austrian Ministry of Science and co-funded by the National Fund, from 1992 to 2001 the DÖW recorded the biographical data and circumstances of death of around 62,000 Austrian Holocaust victims. In the summer of 2020, a global appeal was made to review the names for the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial. On 17 September 2020, Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler received the Scientific Director of the Documentation Center of Austrian Resistance Gerhard Baumgartner at her offices, where he presented her with the list of names

³ Association for the Creation of a Shoah Wall of Names Memorial for the Jewish children, women and men from Austria murdered in the Shoah, Shoah Wall of Names Memorial in Ostarrichi Park, May 2020.

⁴ The following statements are in keeping with the presentation Shoah Wall of Names Memorial in Ostarrichi Park by *Wehofer Architekten ZT GmbH* as per 16 April 2020.

for the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial. Following years of intensive research, the DÖW's Shoah victims' database now contains data on circa 64,450 persons.

Additional Plaques – Remembering All of the Nazis' Victims

In addition to the stone walls with the names of the Shoah victims, an additional plaque commemorates all other victim groups and sufferers of persecution under the Nazi regime. In addition, the idea behind the memorial site and the story of how it came into being is also described on an additional plaque, where the project's supporters are also named.

The Location

In the original plans the memorial was to be erected on Schmerlingplatz in the 1st District of Vienna. After negotiations between the Federal Government, the City of Vienna and the association, the authorities involved agreed on the new location at Ostarrichi-Park in the 9th District of Vienna. The memorial is situated on a green area in front of the Austrian National Bank, which on 2 May 1996 was named by decision of the Municipal Committee for Culture after the oldest documented name for Austria – Ostarrîchi – which dates back to 1 November 996. The green area is bordered by the Austrian National Bank, the campus of the University of Vienna (“Altes AKH”), Alser Straße and the Vienna Provincial Court, and by Otto-Wagner-Platz, Haulerstraße and Frankhplatz.

The association commented on the new location as follows: “In order to do justice to the Shoah Wall of Names Memorial, it was necessary that it be erected at a significant location in Vienna's city center, where it is easily accessible to a broad public. But the location should also convey the tranquility that a place of reverence requires. The Ostarrichi Park excels in meeting these important requirements”.⁵

There are also other memorials commemorating the victims of National Socialism in the immediate vicinity of the memorial at Ostarrichi Park. On 21 April 2015, the memorial “369 Weeks” was unveiled at the Vienna Provincial Court, which commemorates those who fell victim to the Nazi judicial system and were executed by the Nazi regime at the Vienna Provincial Court.⁶ On the campus of the University of Vienna, the former Jewish prayer house, which was desecrated by the Nazis in 1938 and used as a transformer station after the war until 2000, was reopened on 20 October 2005 as a walk-in memorial “Marpe Lanefesch”. The name was chosen in close cooperation with the Jewish Community. In Hebrew, “Marpe Lanefesch” means “healing for the soul”. Since 2009 the “Memorial Book for the Victims of National Socialism at the University of Vienna 1938” has been kept there.⁷ In addition, numerous “stones of remembrance” have been laid in the streets in the immediate vicinity of the memorial.⁸

Project Organization

Contracting authority: Association for the Creation of a Shoah Wall of Names Memorial for the Jewish Children, Women and Men from Austria murdered in the Shoah

Landowners: City of Vienna, represented by Municipal Department 42; Austrian National Bank

Building committee: represented by the Association, the Federal Chancellery, the Office of the President of the National Council, the National Fund and the City of Vienna

⁵ <https://www.shoah-namensmauern-wien.at/der-schmerlingplatz/>.

⁶ https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/Denkmal_369_Wochen.

⁷ https://www.geschichtewiki.wien.gv.at/DENK-Mal_Marpe_Lanefesch.

⁸ <https://maps.nationalfonds.org/stgis>.

Construction project management: represented by the *Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft mbH* (BIG)

Project group: represented by the Association, BIG, National Fund and the City of Vienna

General planning: represented by *Wehofer Architekten ZT GmbH*

Landscape planning: represented by DI Karl Grimm

Local construction supervision: *Wehofer Architekten ZT GmbH*

Municipal departments: represented by the departments of the City of Vienna

Building trades: master builder (*Mörtinger Bau GmbH*), stonemason (*Breitwieser*), outdoor facilities (*Pittel & Brausewetter*), electrical installations (*Polst company* and *FacilityComfort company*), gardener (*Jakel company*)

HONORARY PATRON

Wolfgang Sobotka, President of the National Council of the Republic of Austria

THE PROPONENTS COMMITTEE

Dr. Erhard Busek, David Ellensohn, DI Dr. Franz Fischler, University Professor Dr. Eric R. Kandel, Abg. z. NR Kai Jan Krainer, Dr. Robert Menasse, Dr. Ernst Löschner, University Professor Dr. Anton Pelinka, Dr. Johanna Rachinger, Ari Rath (1925-2017), University Professor DDr. Oliver Rathkolb, University Professor Dr. Anton Zeilinger.