

## **Jewish Memorial Gardens (JMG)**

### **Revitalization Project**

#### **HISTORY**

A cemetery is a place of solitude, of reflection, of mourning and of eternal peace. The revitalization of the Jewish Memorial Gardens (JMG) will transform the Bank Street Cemetery into a more peaceful and respectful resting place for our loved ones, befitting the end of life's journey.

In the late 1800s, Ottawa's Jewish Community was still in its infancy. Organized community life was just beginning and at that time, we had no Jewish burial ground in Ottawa. The only choice our predecessors had was to send Jewish bodies to Montreal for burial.

In March 1892, farsighted leaders with a vision stepped forward from amongst the members of Adath Jeshurun Synagogue and established a burial ground for the Jewish community. John Dover z"l bought an acre of land on what was then called Metcalfe Road, now known as Bank Street.

Today, the Bank Street Cemetery has areas representing Beth Shalom, Agudath Israel, Machzikei Hadas and Beit Tikvah. In 2008, these four synagogues, together with Temple Israel and Young Israel, came together to transfer the cemetery land and its management to a single entity to be called the Jewish Memorial Gardens.

In 1976 leadership of Agudath Israel, Beth Shalom, Machzikei Hadas, Young Israel and Temple Israel purchased 58 acres of land in Osgoode on Herbert's Corner to ensure an additional supply of land for future generations. Currently 11 acres have been brought into use and utilized for burial of members of Agudath Israel, Young Israel and Temple Israel. Although the Jewish Memorial Gardens manages both the Osgoode and Bank Street cemeteries, the focus of this revitalization project is the Bank Street location.

The Bank Street Cemetery now covers 14 acres with more than 4,150 members of the Jewish community buried there. In fact, many families have three generations represented at the Bank Street location. With capacity for an additional 2,800 burial lots, it is likely that most of Ottawa's current Jewish community will be buried there someday, and will be visited by their children and grandchildren.

## **REVITALIZATION**

The Cemetery on Bank Street is showing its age. Renovations have been under discussion for many years, but other than minor repair work, this is the first time there has been a comprehensive perspective on the issue.

Conditions of the Cemetery today are not ideal. The entire site poses safety and parking challenges, some headstones have gone into disrepair, and much of the area shows a lack of investment. The pride we feel when we honour those who have died is not mirrored in the physical appearance and upkeep of the Cemetery.

We have a mitzvah of “Velemdeta Levanechah”, educating the next generation, by prioritizing the honour of past generations. We can accomplish this by having our Cemetery’s appearance and upkeep show that our generation has fulfilled its responsibilities to the Cemetery, and our beloved who came before us.

JMG’s maintenance budget is funded from operations and through several small endowments. While this budget provides a basic level of maintenance, it does not allow for any additional enhancements or capital improvements.

## **FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN**

Upon the death of Irving Taylor z”l in 2012, his family, led by his son Brent, decided that their legacy project would be the renovation of the Bank Street Cemetery, and stepped forward with a lead gift. This generous donation allowed for a thorough and comprehensive planning process that looked at both the current and future needs of the Bank Street Cemetery.

Brent Taylor chairs the campaign and committee members are Jonathan Freedman (president of the JMG), David Kardish, Michael Polowin, Jeff Polowin, Bill Holzman, Arthur Gordon and Jerry Corush (Landscape Architect). Sol Shabinsky, Norman Zagerman and Roger Greenberg are also active in the effort and have agreed to serve as the Honorary Chairs of this Campaign.

Although we are just now embarking on this revitalization project, many generous individuals have already come forward to support the initiative. They agree with Campaign leadership, that revitalizing the Jewish Memorial Gardens is the most appropriate way to honour our loved ones who are buried there and ensure the future stability of our Cemetery. We invite others to join with us to make this a reality.

## Vision for the Cemetery:

### Project 1:

New road system, parking lot and resurfacing of existing roads.



The Cemetery road system will be developed to allow funeral participants and visitors to drive into the Cemetery and find suitable parking for their visit. We have allowed for a parking allocation of 50 spaces plus parking along the road edge for large events.

This redesign allows us to remove all parking from Bank Street. The Bank Street parking issue has been fraught with issues of safety, accessibility and winter access. The removal of cars from Bank Street will be significant in making the Cemetery a safe enclave for all visitors.

It should be noted that the design of the internal road will allow for Kohanim to enter the site and move freely along the roadway to the Holocaust Memorial and the Reflective Garden.

**Project 2:**

A new entrance feature, way finding signage and administrative building with washroom facilities.



The new entrance at Bank Street formalizes and gives stature to the Cemetery. The entry road and gateway welcome the visitors and give a sense of place to the entire Cemetery.



The new entry road will allow for easy access and egress from the Cemetery. It will allow vehicles and pedestrians onto the Cemetery in a clear, concise and safe manner.

The facilities at the front entry will include a gateway feature, a way finding directory kiosk, a hand washing station, washroom facilities and a small administrative office. A lay-by will be provided for those wishing to stop for orientation or to use the washroom facilities. All facilities on site will be barrier free and handicapped accessible.

Potable water as well as sanitary services will be brought into the Cemetery from Bank Street. Lighting and appropriate security features will be implemented.

### Project 3: Holocaust Memorial



In its current location in the Cemetery, the Holocaust Memorial does not invite quiet contemplation of the terrible enduring legacy of the Holocaust.

This project will move the existing monument to a more peaceful and serene location, central in the Cemetery and away from Bank Street. The new site would allow visitors to reflect upon the horrific events of the Shoah, the innocent souls who perished and those who were so affected by one of the most devastating episodes of cruelty and horror in human history.

The new space is simple and yet exclusively devoted to honouring those we lost. It commemorates those who sacrificed and those of us who have lived on to carry the legacy of those brave men, women and children.



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL - Looking South



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL - Looking East

**Project 4:**

Reflective Garden



The Reflective Garden is a unique design, which serves a number of needs within the Cemetery. Firstly, it pays homage to those military men and women who lost their lives in service of Canada and Israel through a Military Monument.





Secondly, it provides space for ceremonial events, where families and friends can gather for memorial services and unveilings.



Thirdly, the design provides an outdoor area with shelter and relief from the elements. Arbours provide shade for hot sunny days; a covered canopy provides shelter from more inclement weather.

The space, as a large area, is subdivided with the use of planting, walls and arbours.



## Project 5:

### Historical Garden.



At the very south end of the Cemetery, there is a small existing historical archway that commemorates those who have passed away but for whom there is no formal plot or resting place in the Cemetery. The archway presently sits alone in a somewhat forlorn state that detracts from its meaning and intent.

The new concept leaves the arch in place but envelopes it with a more respectful and serene sense of space. The design endeavour is to turn this monument into a small garden, with sitting areas and flowerbeds giving this space the stature and respect it deserves.



## Project 6:

Deferred maintenance projects.



In this project, we will take care of several deferred issues that have not been dealt with for decades due to family attrition, lack of central management and lack of Cemetery funds. We will clean debris and prepare the land at the northwest sections and bring them to a level where they will be available immediately to be added to our inventory of cemetery plots. This should provide for an addition of approximately 2,800 plots, meaning many more years of service to the Bank Street Cemetery.

We will repair all of the fallen tombstones and level uneven ground where required. When this is completed, and we are back to a proper base line, we will then be able to put upright the tombstones that no longer have families to maintain them.

## **Honouring our Donors**

In keeping with our desire to recommit this sacred ground and restore its peaceful and gracious surroundings, donors will be honoured exclusively on a single large Donor Wall, so that the focus will be more on the Cemetery and the memories of those we honour there.

The main roadway of the Cemetery will be named the Irving and Ethel Taylor Pathway to Life, in honour of the Taylor family's legacy gift, which launched this revitalization project.

The Cemetery Donor Wall will be located at the entrance to the Cemetery, where it will be prominently located and easily viewed by all who enter the Cemetery. It will be designed to serve as a beautiful and permanent reminder of the committed people who made this project possible.

Donors will be honoured here at the following gift levels:

Visionaries: \$1 million and above

Founders: \$500,000 and above

Benefactors: \$250,000 and above

Leaders: \$100,000 and above

Patrons: \$50,000 and above

Friends: \$25,000 and above

## **Campaign budget**

|   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| Project 1: Infrastructure: roads, parking, resurfacing of existing roads: | \$1,500,000               |
| Project 2: Entrance, administration building, washrooms:                  | \$500,000                 |
| Project 3: Relocation of Holocaust Memorial:                              | \$250,000                 |
| Project 4: Reflective Garden:   | \$350,000                 |
| Project 5: Historical Garden:   | \$250,000                 |
| Project 6: Deferred maintenance projects:                                 | \$150,000                 |
| Creation of a permanent endowed Maintenance Fund:                         | \$1,000,000               |
|   | <b>Total: \$4 million</b> |

\*All aspects of the project will be competitively tendered.

\*Detailed plans and budget are available upon request.

## **Endowed Maintenance Fund:**

At present, the annual cost of maintenance of the Cemetery is approximately \$80,000. Funds are provided from the annual income from funeral services, some plot sales and income from private endowments.

It is anticipated that annual maintenance costs will increase by \$50,000 in order to maintain the new standard required, to ensure that landscaping and grass are maintained and surfaces are cleaned and groomed regularly.

The \$1 million endowment to support maintenance will be invested through the Ottawa Jewish Community Foundation and annual earnings will provide an additional \$50,000 to provide for these increased costs. This Maintenance Fund will also provide for future enhancements of the Cemetery.

## **Timeline:**

We plan to complete the fundraising campaign for this project by August 31, 2015. Construction is to commence July 2015 with the projected project completion date of December 2015.

## **Project Accounting**

Campaign donations and accounting will be managed through the Jewish Memorial Garden's office, and accounting will be overseen by Parker Prins Lebano Chartered Accountants, Ottawa. This firm will oversee the finances of the campaign and provide annual audited statements.

The charitable registration number is: 86118 7201 RR0001

Cheques can be made payable to The Jewish Memorial Gardens Revitalization Project. Share transfer arrangements are welcome.

Please contact Brent Taylor to discuss any details of how you can become a supporter of this important community initiative by phone 613-726-7323 or by email: [brent@brentcomrealty.com](mailto:brent@brentcomrealty.com).