

Jewish Memorial for Montabaur

The town of Montabaur will soon have a memorial dedicated to the Jewish victims that were murdered during the Nazi regime. The plan came about at the end of last year when the town council decided in favour of the conceptual design made by Hans Bernd Olleck, a sculptor and a resident of Niederelbert, and determined that the Großer Markt would serve as the location for the memorial.

The Decision

The decision made by the town council was a difficult one, as the memorial project was not only about producing something dignified and appropriate in remembrance of the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime, but producing a tastefully done piece of art as well. The question about choosing the right location also had to be factored in. A call for bids was put out by Dr. Regina Fiebich, director of the town archive, who wrote to a number of artists, and in the end received eight conceptual designs. A jury that included Judith Röder (artist), Dr. Markus Wild (art historian) and Paul Widner (former history teacher and former member of the town council) discussed the entries. The jury agreed on a limited number of entries, which were then submitted to the town council, with the names of the artists being removed. During multiple rounds of voting the council members finally chose the conceptual design by Hans Bernd Olleck, sculptor and resident of Niederelbert. Olleck wished to have his memorial project installed to the right side of the entrance of the old town hall. The town council agreed with that location. „In my opinion it is exactly the right place because this was in fact the point where the Jewish citizens were rounded up and from which they were deported by the Nazis.“ stated Klaus Mies, Montabaur’s mayor.

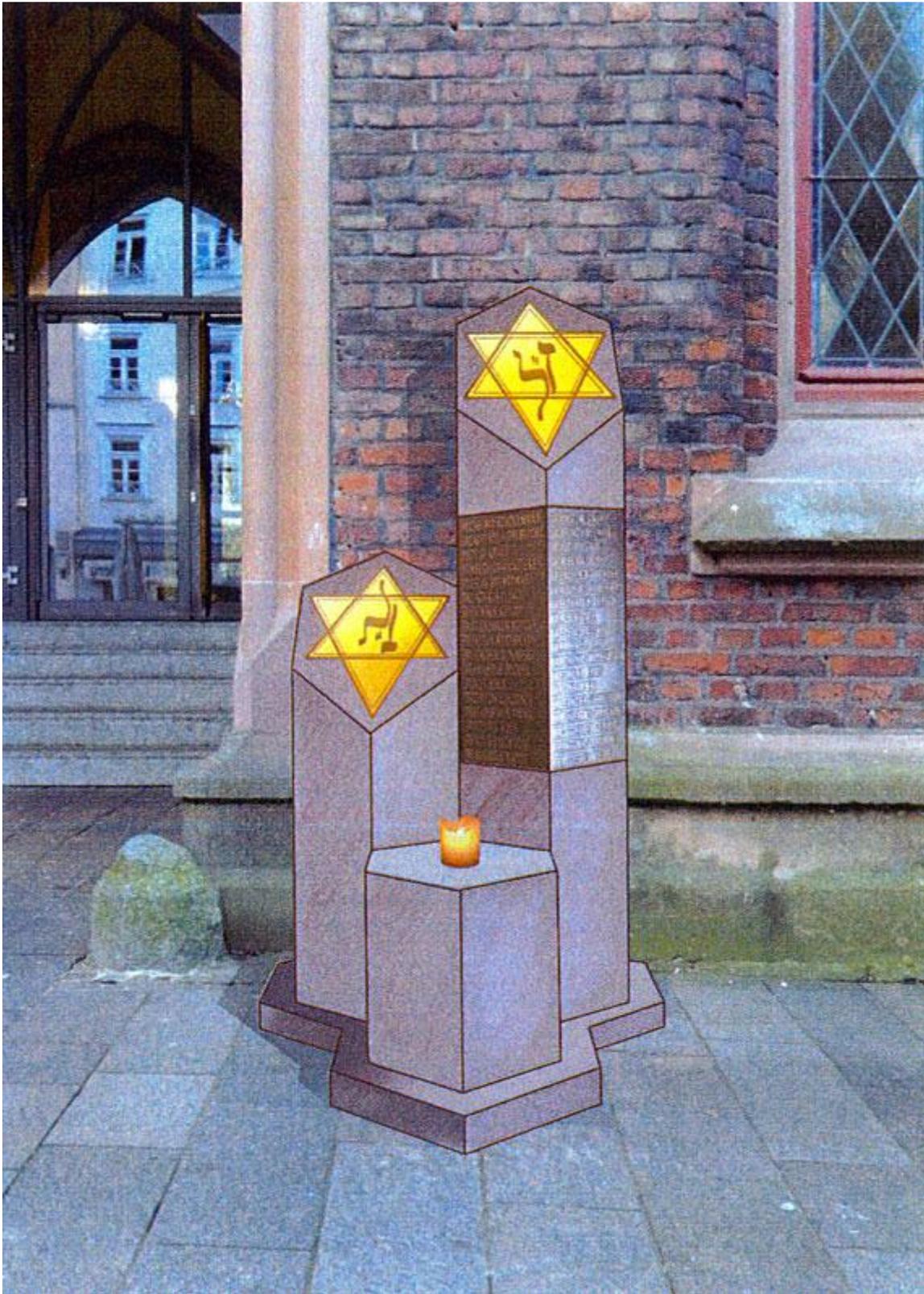
This followed a discussion about the question as to whether the inscription on the memorial should be broadened so that it would read "on behalf of all victims of the Nazi regime". However, a majority decision in principle was made by the town Council in December 2012 that the inscription will read "Memorial to the Murdered Jewish citizens of Montabaur". That decision was upheld.

The Concept

The design by Hans-Bernhard Olleck consists of three steles of varying heights, all of which are to be made from Weidenhahner trachyte stone. They are hexagonal, stand on a 10 inch high pedestal, and have heights of 42, 105 and 170 centimeters respectively. The two main pillars have beveled cut surfaces one which will be embossed with the bronze Star of David and the Hebrew inscription "Z" L" (= Zichrono Livracha, or blessed memory). The star and inscription on the mid-sized stele will be reversed and engraved into the stone, whereas both will be raised on the large stele and the writing will be right side up. "This creates content and forms something like an inner bond between the pieces because one could now

view both as one single stele that represents a timeline that was divided by a break or cut. It is as if a rod was broken. With this break I wish to demonstrate that the events of November 9th, 1938 broke up something that belonged together, "Olleck writes in his exposé. A bronze plaque displaying the names of the 25 Jewish victims of the Nazis will be installed on the corner of the largest stele. The top of the smallest stele is horizontal so that it candles, flowers or the like can be placed there. With the majority opting for Olleck's design, the proposals from the ceramic artist Martin Görg from Höhr-Grenzhausen and the project group "ZeitRaum" from Montabaur would no longer be considered, but they can be viewed here:

The monument will be erected in the fall, and will be dedicated on the 75th anniversary of the Kristallnacht, "Night of Broken Glass, on November 10th.



This photo montage shows what the memorial will look like after being installed in front of the old town hall.

