

Thursday, November 7, 2013

Construction beginning on Statehouse Holocaust memorial

By [Alan Johnson](#)

Even a brief look at the lengthy architectural resume of Daniel Libeskind raises the question: Why is this guy designing a \$2 million Holocaust memorial in Columbus, Ohio?

The answer is simple: He really, really wants to.

Libeskind — the Polish-born designer of the new World Trade Center master plan; Jewish Museum in Berlin; Grand Canal Theatre project in Dublin, Ireland; Fiera Milano Fairgrounds in Italy; and the Harmony Tower in Seoul, among many other high-profile projects — was in Columbus yesterday for the groundbreaking of a considerably smaller project, the Ohio Holocaust and Liberators Memorial.

“A project is not big because of its size. It’s big because of its aspiration,” Libeskind said in an interview after a rain-drenched ceremony on the planned site of the memorial on the Statehouse grounds across from the Ohio Theatre.

“I think people are going to be moved. It will change them once they see it,” he said.

“In my consciousness, this will rank very high. There’s no such thing like this anywhere in the world.”

Gov. John Kasich, who came up with the memorial idea two years ago, set the bar high for Libeskind. “This man is a genius and a visionary,” Kasich said. “We’re going to have a masterpiece right here.”

Libeskind and company will be under a tight construction schedule, with completion expected in April after a long Ohio winter.

The project faced immediate opposition from a formidable foe, former Ohio Senate President Richard H. Finan. The longtime chairman of the Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board resigned earlier this year, largely because of the debate over the memorial, which Finan felt was inappropriate and out of place adjacent to the Civil War-era Statehouse. He cast the only opposing vote in an 8-1 decision earlier this year to hire Libeskind.

The \$2 million project will be privately funded through Ohio Jewish Communities, with the exception of an additional \$300,000 in site work to be paid for by the state.

Joyce Garver Keller, executive director of Ohio Jewish Communities, said the project will memorialize “not just the history of the Holocaust, but the fact that today we must continue to stand against evil.”

Article continued here:

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/11/06/Holocaust-memorial-groundbreaking.html>

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