



**SAVING AND REBUILDING  
SCHINDLER'S ARK**



Help us save and rebuild The Ark

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**THE STORY OF  
SCHINDLER'S ARK**

Schindler's Ark was where Jews on Schindler's List were saved instead of going to Auschwitz and certain death. In the central scene in the film by Spielberg, if you were on the list, Jews were sent to this Ark in the home region of Oskar and Emilie Schindler.

The buildings form the only concentration camp, which saved rather than exterminated Jews. Who were Oskar and Emilie Schindler, why did they do what they did to save the Jews, would we respond like them now?

The buildings of Schindler's Ark are in disrepair and danger of collapse. The Low-Beer family owned the factory before they had to flee from the Nazis in 1938. In 2018, after eighty years, the Low-Beers have reunited with locals to create the Foundation ARKS to help save and rebuild Schindler's Ark for future school children and visitors. They are committed to save and make history together again.

**Aims and Priorities**

The foundation has two main aims:

1. *Save and develop a memorial to Schindler's Ark, Shoah and the Low-Beer factory for school children and visitors to experience the history and film where it occurred*
2. *Promote activities which benefit the people of Brno and the wider Moravian region and its promotion at the heart of Europe*

In addition, the Foundation will work

*In an independent, open and apolitical manner reflecting the spirit and continuing contribution of the Low-Beer family to the region*

This document presents initial plans and options for wider open and transparent consultation on how the buildings should be restored, used and supported.



- 1 Schindler's Ark
- 2 The European Building
- 3 Oskar and Emilie Schindler Building
- 4 Class and Reflection Room
- 5 Events and Activities Space
- 6 Restaurant and Facilities Building

## REBUILDING THE ARK

As we walk through the ruins, we imagine a visit to the rebuilt Schindler's Ark. How would visitors and school children respond? How can we bring alive the story, the people, and the history, in the places and buildings where they occurred?

In July 2022, we invited museum experts, historians, locals, Schindler's heirs and Low-Beers to walk through Schindler's Ark with us and imagine a rebuilt Ark. They suggested what an hour tour would look like.

More importantly we want your ideas on how to rebuild the Ark.



**Seeing the film where the events happened (30 minutes)** - visitor's will then walk through the original and evocative rooms where the Schindler Jews worked and lived.

*One central space will be left in the form it is before it was reconstructed*

*People then enter the surprisingly huge and evocative turbine room, which is used as the central film and seminar room.*

*The huge hall will maintain its beautiful turbine and factory features covered in glass below the floor, with a large screen and film and seminar seating.*

*Visitors will watch 30 minutes excerpts of the key scenes in the film (Schindler car to Krakow, celebrating with Nazis, Jews coming to work in Krakow factory, ghetto clearing viewed by Schindler, Concentration camp, Schindler's List making, Main square Krakow, Train scene, come to Brnec, when women come to Brnec, End of War in Brnec speech Oskar. Narration between scenes), watching Schindler's List in the original Schindler's Ark, together with an introduction and documentary material.*



**Meeting the Schindler Jews with multimedia (20 minutes)** - we then want visitors to personally encounter the Schindler Jews, and Oskar and Emilie Schindler, in their words, using extensive interview archives, brought alive with multi media. Why did Schindler and his wife save the Jews? How do the Schindler Jews tell the story? What became of them after the Second World War? Your suggestions are welcomed.

*The room to the side of the turbine room, will have a circuit of encounters with 6-8 of the Schindler Jews using multi media audio and visuals.*

*The centre of the room will have the same translucent white onyx like barrier, showing shadows and film of the events, and reflecting the Tugendhat House also linked to the Low-Beers*

**History through the Low-Beer factory (30 minutes)** - having seen the film, and the intense, personal stories, visitors will then have a more relaxed walk chronologically through history. They will walk through 150 years of history as seen in this factory. The factory has witnessed many European events of the last 150 years, from the Jews leaving the ghettos, the First and Second World Wars, Communism, the Velvet Revolution and post Communism. The path will be illustrated with documentary videos and materials from Oskar and Emilie Schindler's life, personal Low-Beer stories of life in the 1930s and stories of escape (from the book Arks) and of returning eighty years later. There will be a theme of documentary films, some commissioned for the museum.

We have described just the core visit. Imagine what you would like to see if you visited a rebuilt Schindler's Ark. Tell us your views.

## Additional facilities for saving and rebuilding over time:

**4. Events and Activities Space** - the cluster of buildings is completed with a huge and beautiful, open, factory floor. This site would be restored in its present form, as a large and flexible activities and events space.

*It would allow the museum to be interactive with film, textile and other activities, for example of school children making small YouTube documentaries of interviews of their experience.*

*It would also allow the museum to engage further with the present and future, in seminars (on related issues of European identity, Czechoslovakia, industry, migration, Jewish history), and present day events or concerts.*

*Similarly the space would be a resource to the village for its activities, to integrate the factory and its history back into local and regional life.*

**5. Glass and Reflection Room** - behind Schindler's Ark is a large framed building, open to the beautiful, surrounding countryside, which will be used as a resting, reading and meditative space. It provides a more meditative space to absorb the events and personal encounters with history.

**6. Restaurant and Facilities building** - around the main cluster of buildings, is a building that will be used as a restaurant and facilities building, open to the museum and to the village as a resource.



## WHO WILL VISIT THE MUSEUM

Schindler's Ark is one of the two or three most recognized stories and sites of the Second World War. As a factory it was also built with excellent access at the heart of Europe. It will attract day tourists and school children from Brno, Prague, Austria and Germany. Similar sites attract several hundred thousand visitors per year.

The focus will be:

**School children:** half day visit for school classes from the Czech Republic, Vienna, Austria and Germany, with additional activities around making a short film, sports and nature trails. Some limited, good value, group, overnight facilities in the top floor of Schindler's Ark where the Schindler Jews stayed.

**One hour core visit for tourists** on the main Prague, Brno and Vienna routes, and tourists interested in Jewish sites in Europe. These can be extended with an additional hour of activities and to full day or overnight stays when linked to local and regional tourist activities.

**Seminars and events:** two hour or evening visits to situate present day issues in this context, for Jewish memorial, European, business and cultural retreats which reflect on the past, present and future.

## WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

The Low-Beers and the Arks Foundation are committed to save and make history together again. They need your input and support.

- 1. Create Foundation 2019**, to integrate the buildings into an open, apolitical foundation, for consultation and input.
- 2. Consultation 2020 to 2021**, Co-design planning completed in Brno, Prague and Brnec community events in 2021 and 2022.
- 3. Saving the Ark, 2021 to 2023**
  - a. Securing the site - preventing it falling down, secure building roofs, basic wood and metal materials, cameras and security
  - b. Preparation of the site - architectural support, and environmental cleaning of the site given its recent use as a working textile factory
- 4. Rebuilding the Ark: 2023 to 2025 and beyond**
  - a. "Making a Museum" project to open the first museum and exhibition co-designed with school children from five countries by 2025 with EU funding
  - b. Progressive, Modular, development of the site - restoration of the historic buildings, the Glass Pavilion one new building, renewing of textile workshop and community housing so the project is sustainable. Partner of the New European Bauhaus so the site is sustainable, beautiful and brings people together locally and from across Europe.