

Architect Daniel Libeskind to design new Tree of Life synagogue

by [Yonat Shimron](#) in the [June 3, 2021](#) issue



(AP Photo / Andrew Medichini)

Pittsburgh's Tree of Life congregation has chosen internationally renowned architect Daniel Libeskind to design a new building for the site where 11 Jews were gunned down nearly three years ago in the deadliest antisemitic attack in American history.

Libeskind was the unanimous choice of the steering committee as well as of Tree of Life's board of trustees, and for reasons beyond his architectural qualifications: Libeskind was born to Holocaust survivors living in a homeless shelter in Lodz, Poland, after the war.

Since the massacre, the congregation has not reentered the building it had occupied since the early 1950s. Several other congregations that met in the synagogue have also found other homes.

“We are beyond thrilled that somebody of [Libeskind’s] reputation and caliber sought us out and applied to do this,” said Barb Feige, Tree of Life’s executive director. “His connection is personal, as are most of ours.”

Tree of Life expects to retain the portion of the 1953 concrete building where the main sanctuary, with its modern stained-glass windows, is located. The rest of the building will likely be torn down and a new space built to house the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, now located in the city’s Greenfield neighborhood. A small space dedicated to the study of hatred is also planned, as well as a place of remembrance for those killed in the 2018 attack.

Libeskind is known for his unconventional and angular structures, perhaps best exemplified by the Denver Art Museum. In 2003 he won the competition to design the World Trade Center site after the 9/11 attacks. —Religion News Service