



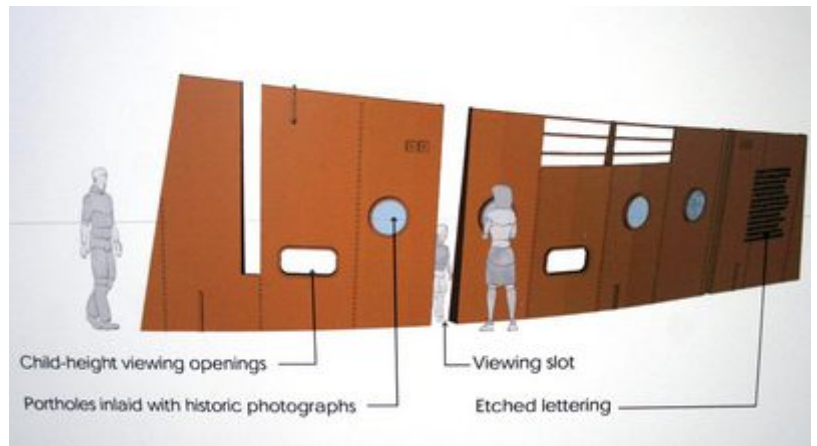
Ship memorial takes shape

Natalie Kaur Johal

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When the Komagata Maru first made its way to the coast of B.C. in 1914, newspaper headlines read "Boat Loads of Hindus on Way to Vancouver."

Now, almost 100 years after the ship set sail, the Vancouver Parks Board is working with the Khalsa Diwan Society to create a monument commemorating what many consider one of the darkest incidents in our province's history.



NATALIE KAUR JOHAL/For Metro

An artist's drawing of the proposed Komagata Maru memorial.

Jill Weaving, the board's arts and culture co-ordinator, unveiled early plans at the Coal Harbour Community Centre on Thursday.

The ship-like memorial, designed by Erik Lees and Lydia Mynott, will allow visitors to look through portholes out on Burrard Inlet and imagine the ill-fated vessel and its passengers.

The parks board requires that monument sites have a relationship to the event being commemorated and so, the proposed site provides a vantage point of the Komagata Maru's mooring place, explained Mynott.

"I think the monument is important. Even though the incident happened way before I was born, I feel that it's a part of my own personal history," said Ranjit Sandhu, at the open house Thursday.

The commemoration will also include a number of educational and historical elements.

While some people feel that the monument is redundant, since a plaque was placed at the Ross Street Sikh temple in 1989, Weaving said the incident has "only gradually come to the public understanding."

"There is fear that our memories of times that were unfair will divide people," she said. "But everyone wants not to see this happen again. Canadians and Vancouverites don't want this to happen again."

The monument, said Weaving, will allow visitors to reflect on the past and hope for a better future.

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