

EVALUATION REPORT

**'Jewish Country Houses: Objects, Networks, People',
'Teaching the Holocaust through the Jewish Country House'**

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‘Jewish Country Houses: Objects, Networks, People’

‘Teaching the Holocaust through the Jewish Country House’

The Jewish Country Houses project brings together European historians, Jewish historians, and curators based in heritage houses and museums across Europe to investigate a hitherto unidentified group of country houses – those built, acquired and renovated by Jews – and takes them as a starting point for exploring the world of the group we call the Jewish aristocracy. By focusing on Jewish elites away from centres of government and commerce, the project asks new questions about land, class, assimilation and belonging in both Jewish and European history. Significantly, the project extends to dealing with the history of Jewish country houses and properties in the years of the Holocaust and the Second World War. It deals with how that history has been erased as well as with the ways in which it can be recovered and remembered today. This is a ground-breaking pan-European study that sets out to establish 'Jewish' country houses as a focus for research, a site of European memory and a significant component of European Jewish heritage and material culture.

This evaluation will focus on the project’s impact beyond the academy and, specifically,

- its bearing on heritage practitioners and on staff and volunteers at heritage sites and
- its capacity to have an impact on the public’s knowledge and understanding of this history and its legacies.

Nevertheless, it will be helpful to provide an overview of the project’s academic objectives and achievement before turning to its wider impact.

Objectives and Aims

The JCH project has developed two research paths; one social and cultural (focusing on collecting), the other social and political (focusing on philanthropy). This wide-ranging research design offers rewards by generating connections and insights that would not otherwise be made. While acknowledging the place of the country house in the construction of nationhood and national heritage, the project has been innovative in its emphasis on the transnational and cosmopolitan world of the 'Jewish aristocracy', its relationships, its architecture and its material culture. In this way it has departed from paradigms that emphasize national distinctiveness which have dominated historical research on both Jewish elites and country houses.

The expansive chronological range – spanning the century from 1850 to 1950 – has provided an important foundation not only for the project’s contribution to scholarly knowledge and understanding but also to its impact beyond the academy. This is important because the project spans the rise and heyday of the ‘Jewish’ country house to the experience of

dispossession and expropriation that was part of the Holocaust. The impact and legacy of the Holocaust, especially over the last three decades, have shaped the ways 'Jewish' country houses have been repurposed as heritage sites, it is particularly important and welcome that the project attends to both their pre-war histories and post war legacies.

Within this framework the project has set itself five aims

1. *To establish 'Jewish' country houses – properties that were owned, built or renewed by Jews - as a focus for research, a site of European memory and a significant aspect of European Jewish heritage and material culture.*
2. *To challenge the nationally framed paradigms of continuity and rootedness that underpin country house studies in the UK and elsewhere in continental Europe by highlighting the parallels and connections between 'Jewish' country houses across Europe, and by developing a conception of the country house grounded not in national characteristics but in pan-European relationships.*
3. *To go beyond the conceptual framework that shapes existing work on Jewish elites, which focuses on their integration in the nation state and in specific urban centres, by illuminating, through a focus on their country houses, the international culture and networks of the "Jewish aristocracy" and the ways this intersected with national and imperial political, social and cultural contexts.*
4. *To establish what, if anything was distinctive - and by extension Jewish - about these properties, the tastes of their owners and the networks of dealers, decorators and designers who embellished them.*
5. *To bring new perspectives to bear on established disciplines such as the history of collecting, and modern Jewish history through significant publications and targeted conference activity. This will focus on the Jewish country house as an expression of familial, financial and intellectual relationships and as a repository for art collections, as well as on the equally neglected social and philanthropic role played by Jewish elites in the countryside.*

There is compelling evidence these aims have been achieved through publications, conferences, academic partnerships across Europe, collaborative awards, invited talks and keynote addresses, and successful bids for further funding, among other avenues. To date the project has generated 21 separate published works. However, it is fair to say that the most significant and substantial work is on its way to publication. This corpus includes Juliet Carey and Abigail Green (eds.), *Jewish Country Houses*; Tom Stammers and Silvia Davoli eds, *Jewish Dealers and the European Art Market c.1860-1940: Negotiating Cultural Modernity*; Tom Stammers and Sivia Davoli eds, *The Contours of Jewish Collecting: Art and in Europe, 1860-1940*; Jaclyn Granick, Sasha Goldstein-Sabbah and Rebecca Kobrin (eds.), *Jewish Business Dynasties: Family, Power, Vulnerability* (title tbc); and Tom Stammers' forthcoming

work on the construction of Jewish heritage in early twentieth-century Britain. Individually each of these works addresses more than one of the project's research aims and collectively they fulfil them all.

The JCH project has conducted seminars, workshops and conferences. Held in the UK and in Europe, these occasions have provided opportunities to communicate and generate research findings and to build a wide community of scholars. Conferences on Jewish Collectors and Patterns of Taste (Paris, 2022), Jewish Business Dynasties (Château de Seneffe, 2022), Jewish Country Houses and the Holocaust in History and Memory (Brno, 2023), Jewish Philanthropy (Oxford, Upton House, Waddesdon 2024) each attracted roughly 50 participants. These meetings have engaged in pioneering work. One participant at the conference held on 'Jewish Business Dynasties, 1850-1950: Family, Power, Vulnerability' at the Château de Seneffe commented, "By the time we concluded the final panel and our last dinner, I felt that a new field of enquiry across these disciplines was taking shape."

The project's national and international network of affiliated researchers embeds its aims and perspectives in British and European universities. Five Collaborative Doctoral Awards will help embed the project's mission and perspectives in the rising generation of researchers. The project's objective to establish Jewish Country Houses as a significant subject for research is registered in its success in attracting £215,020 of additional funding over the period of the project as a whole. In particular, this is evidenced by successful applications to the John Fell Fund for 'Beyond Jewish Country Houses'.

This report now turns to the two key goals which look outward from academic research to impact on heritage professionals and public understanding. Each goal will be dealt with separately. Work dealing with Jewish Country Houses and the Holocaust is treated in a standalone section.

A.

To transform practice in the heritage sector by developing an intellectual framework and practical resources to enable heritage professionals working in Jewish country house museums in the UK and continental Europe, often with little knowledge of Jewish history, to better engage the 'Jewishness' of their properties, their often-contested history, and their heritage dissonance.

The Jewish Country Houses Project has had a transformative impact on the ways that heritage houses and museums address and convey Jewish stories. This effect registers not only with regard to the project's impact on awareness of these stories at a senior level, most notably and extensively within the National Trust, but also with regard to the capacity of numerous staff and volunteers to curate, narrate and interpret Jewish stories and collections.

The bedrock of this achievement lies in the almost 40 active partnerships the JCH project has built with heritage houses and museums in the UK and Europe. At the same time the project has engaged with institutions of national and international significance such as the National

Trust, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Centre des Monuments Nationaux and the Methodical Center of Modern Architecture in Brno. It has also supported local heritage work at Highdown Gardens, Worth Park and the Salomons Estate. The project has worked to maximise these connections by encouraging engagement from the heritage sector in the JCH academic conferences. In part this has happened by holding conferences in heritage houses such as Domaine du Château de Seneffe (Jewish Business Dynasties) and Waddesdon and Upton House (Jewish philanthropy). Engagement in the conferences by individual heritage and museum professionals has helped transfer knowledge and understanding between academics and heritage and museum professionals and practitioners. The project has further embedded its impact through the participation of researchers in advisory boards and scientific committees at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the AEPJ.

The project has managed a programme of sustained direct engagement with heritage houses and museums and those who work in them. This has been achieved through a diverse range of interactions with professional staff and volunteers.

- In 2019, in collaboration with the National Trust, the JCH project organised a workshop for 50 heritage professionals: 'Jewish Stories and the National Heritage'.
- The project team created two Resource Packs for UK heritage practitioners, which can be downloaded from the JCH website: one focused on Jewish country houses, the other on Jewish country houses and the Holocaust.
- The project commissioned Marcus Roberts, Director of J-trails, to deliver volunteer training at 7 heritage houses: Strawberry Hill, Hughenden, Gunnersbury, Ightham Mote, Nymans, Upton and Waddesdon.
- Displays of the mobile exhibition 'Country Houses, Jewish Homes' has sometimes dovetailed with training sessions for staff and volunteers delivered by Marcus Roberts, Director of J-Trails.

We can get a sense of the impact of this activity from the feedback surveys conducted following training sessions and from testimony offered to the JCH by participants at their events from the heritage and museums sectors. The surveys demonstrate that attendees gained fresh perspectives and information about Jewish history and heritage and about their property's Jewish history specifically. At all 7 properties, between 75% and 100% of respondents reported that they had learned either 'A lot' or 'Quite a lot' about both of these aspects of the training. Nevertheless, it is striking that the number of volunteers who felt 'very confident' or 'quite confident' talking about Jewish history, heritage and identity was somewhat lower and ranged between 40% and just over 70%.

The value of the key partnerships with the National Trust and the Victoria and Albert Museum is confirmed by statements from senior figures within both organisations. Oliver Cox, the Head of Academic Partnerships at the V&A, attests to the impact of the project on his own practice, on the way the museum deals with antisemitism and how the museum relates to minorities more broadly. Nicola Froggatt, Research Manager at the National Trust, testifies not only to the wide range of Trust staff who have engaged with JCH but also the way the project has led the Trust to consider how it should convey histories of place in nuanced ways. There is evidence too that the Trust's learning from the project is becoming

embedded and has a sustainable legacy. Lucy Porten, a senior curator with the National Trust, notes that staff and volunteers from a number of sites with connections to Jewish heritage and culture are forming a group which supports and learning.

In some cases the impact at properties has been profound. At Waddesdon the curatorial team testify that the collaboration with JCH has ‘transformed’ its approach to the Jewish stories embedded in the house and its collections. Robert Bandy, the manager at Hughenden Manor, once the home of Benjamin Disraeli, states that involvement with JCH academics has led to a ‘a transformative consideration’ of both the place and its collection. He notes too that whereas volunteers once showed unease when dealing with Disraeli and his Jewishness they now have ‘genuine enthusiasm’ for the subject. At Ightham Mote the JCH project led to a recognition and exploration of the work one owner, Thomas Colyer-Fergusson in the field of Jewish genealogy. Amanda-Jane Doran, Collections and House Manager at the property, acknowledges that without the JCH project knowledge of this dimension of the property’s history would have remained ‘submerged’.

There has also been an impact in Europe. The project was a source of inspiration for Florian Medici at Domaine du Château Seneffe in Belgium to explore the connection of the house with Franz Philippson through a dedicated exhibition on Seneffe in the time of the Philipppsons. The project has also led to collaborations between heritage professionals that would otherwise have been unlikely. In 2024/5 an exhibition of a new body of photographic work by Hélène Binet, commissioned by the JCH project, will travel between five Jewish heritage houses in the Europe and the UK. Partnership with the AEPJ, ‘Palaces, Villas and Country Houses’ has produced significant results. The project’s online heritage route, which forms part of the AEPJ’s ‘European Routes of Jewish Culture, received almost 1,000 page views in 2023.

B.

To enhance public awareness and understanding of the ‘Jewish’ dimensions of individual country houses (especially those open to the public), while remaining sensitive to contemporary concerns about antisemitism, to the continued relevance of Holocaust memory, and to the fact that many Jewish country house owners chose to downplay – or even reject – being Jewish, perhaps particularly in their country lives. Heritage theory suggests that reclaiming marginalised and submerged narratives enhances social cohesion by reducing ignorance about minority religious and ethnic groups and raising awareness of the diversity both of national heritage, and of European culture more generally. This project will contribute to the process whereby missing, rejected or ‘alienated’ minority perspectives are entering the heritage canon, and become part of everyone’s heritage.

The project has worked creatively and consistently, through different media, to increase public awareness of the Jewish dimensions of country houses open to the public. The

project has also worked hard to document its achievements in a realm that is notoriously amorphous.

European Days of Culture

Over several years the project has participated in the European Day of Jewish Culture. The evidence is that this proved an effective means of extending public awareness of the project and its findings. These initiatives have included a physical exhibition at Strawberry Hill House and Garden; 40,000 people visited Hughenden Manor during the period of an exhibition on 'Disraeli the Other', 8,500 during the days of Jewish Heritage. Nymans and Upton House and Gardens have also participated in European Days of Jewish Culture during the lifetime of the project.

Creative and artistic initiatives

The project has used art as well as words to disseminate and share with a wider audience knowledge and understanding of Jewish Country Houses.

The leading architectural photographer, H  l  ne Binet, has worked with JCH to help establish a series of houses as sites of Jewish memory. First, she contributed to the project's landmark volume *Jewish Country Houses* (edited by Juliet Carey and Abigail Green, Profile Books/Brandeis University Press, 2024) for which she created photographic essays about nine houses, two mausoleums and a synagogue. Second, Binet has created a photographic exhibition which captures a group of houses, bought, built or renovated by Jews, some already celebrated as tourist destinations, others little known. The exhibition will be displayed at 2 venues in Britain and 3 in Europe: Strawberry Hill House, Twickenham (September 2024) Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire (March 2025) Villa Liebermann, Berlin (July 2025) Villa Tugendhat, Brno (Autumn 2025), Villa Winternitz (Winter 2025)

In 2022, the exhibition "Remembering Walter Rathenau", at Schloss Freienwalde near Berlin, marked 100 years since Walter Rathenau's assassination. In this site-specific artwork the British German painter Sophie von Hellermann presented scenes from Rathenau's life by painting directly on the wall of the Schloss. Around the period of the exhibition, the Walter Rathenau museum in Schloss Freienwalde received significant coverage in newspapers and around 2,000 visitors, a huge increase on normal footfall which was also accompanied by extensive press coverage.

Online

In partnership with The European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage (AEPJ) it has developed a new European Route of Jewish Heritage. 'Palaces, Villas and Country Houses' which can be found on the AEPJ website. The Route guides visitors to houses with Jewish stories which illuminate the transformative impact of Jewish emancipation on modern European politics, society and culture. It received 1,632 page views from 26 August 2021 to 14 January 2022. In 2022 it was among the 10 most visited pages on the AEPJ.

An online exhibition curated by Silvia Davoli explored the Jewish past of Strawberry Hill House. The exhibition was launched in mid-January 2021. In the first 12 months there were 7,678 page views and 5,506 unique page views. Press coverage included an interview with Silvia Davoli in This is Local London.

Press and lectures

The project extended its audience through 20 articles and interviews published in the press and 10 lectures and talks addressed to the public (ie non-academic) audiences. In some cases the press coverage has been local or communal but in other cases – such as interviews published in *The Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* – it has been extensive.

Mobile Exhibition

The 2022 exhibition 'Country Houses, Jewish Homes' displayed at Gunnersbury Park, west London, Crawley Museum, Ightham Mote (Kent), the Limmud Festival, and Hughenden Manor (Buckinghamshire). It illuminated what it meant to be British from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, and the changing place of both Jews and the country house in British life.

The project has collected feedback from two separate visitor samples. In one, which includes responses from across exhibition locations (minus Limmud) 85 per cent of respondents reported they had learnt 'a lot' about Jewish history and heritage'. In the second set of responses, collected at one site, Ightham Mote (National Trust), 92 per cent said their understanding of Jewish history and heritage had changed a result of viewing the exhibition. This stands as evidence of the way the project has promoted public awareness of the Jewish dimensions of country houses.

Some of the comments collected also suggest the JCH is fulfilling to some extent its ambition to have an impact on other aspects of public understanding. Above all, this seems to be the case with regard to raising awareness of the history of antisemitism in Britain and its continuing presence. There are also comments on the interaction of Jews with English society and culture in the countryside which suggest how the project has achieved its goals. An Indian visitor observed, it was 'really interesting to hear about how other cultures settled in Britain.'

The Jewish Country House and the Holocaust: Histories and Legacies

The impact of the Holocaust on Jewish heritage houses in Britain and in Europe, and 'Holocaust memory' have figured in the JCH project in all its phases. However, this work escalated and underwent a step change in 2023-4, and with the support of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the history, legacy and memory of the Holocaust moved to the centre of the project. Now the project addressed key questions: what was the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish Country Houses? How do (and can) Jewish Country Houses function as sites of Holocaust history and memory? How can they do so amid the large-scale erasure of that heritage in Eastern Europe? These are not only academic questions but also raise vital issues for curatorial policy and practice as well as for public understanding.

This section of my report will deal with the way the JCH project has impacted on curatorial perspectives and public understanding of the Holocaust and post-Holocaust issues over the

whole period of its existence. Necessarily, however, it will pay particular attention to 2023-24, the period when the project benefitted from additional support from the Claims Conference.

The project's flagship publication *Jewish Country Houses*, edited by Juliet Carey and Abigail Green, richly illustrated and containing 17 essays or chapters, and forthcoming later in 2024. Here Lucy Wasensteiner's chapter on Max Liebermann's villa at Lake Wansee provides an outstanding example of the way in which the Holocaust, its legacies, and the question of how these are to be remembered, have been integrated within the JCH project. The mobile exhibition 'Country Houses, Jewish Homes' (discussed above) provides a further illustration of the same process as it deals with the Holocaust and Holocaust memory into its work as one theme among others as it dealt with the changing place of both Jews and the country house in British life.

This integrative work stands alongside initiatives dedicated to the intersection of Jewish heritage houses with Holocaust history and memory. In 2021 the project gained seed-funding from the University of Oxford to support a partnership with the Holocaust Educational Trust and J-Trails. This collaboration delivered a pilot programme of dedicated study units for teachers which focused on Holocaust stories associated with the "Jewish country house". The aim was to empower teachers to engage with local stories in their classrooms. 21 teachers, school librarians and freelance educators attended the Zoom sessions for the 'Teaching the Holocaust through the Jewish Country House' project. 7 took part in the site visit to Nymans and 4 took part of the site visit to Waddesdon. 50% of teachers who attended the visits and filled out the evaluation survey said the visits had influenced how they might teach the Holocaust in their school to a great or significant extent.

The impact of this collaboration on public understanding has been amplified by the ways in which it has supported the wider work of the Holocaust Educational Trust. In a written testimonial, Dr Jenny Carson of the Holocaust Educational Trust explained: 'we joined hoping that it would enhance our knowledge of Anglo-Jewish history, it has certainly achieved that aim... As we look towards the 85th commemorations of the Kindertransport in 2023, we will also be using the knowledge gained from Marcus and the wider project to explore currently absent histories of Anglo-Jewish individual-and-collective philanthropy and rescue.' The partnership with the HET has enabled the research team to develop their impact in a new direction, with broader potential applicability to changing the ways teachers and schools engage both with historic houses and with Holocaust history/ the history of antisemitism.

The Educator Training grant awarded by the Claims Conference has enabled the JCH to scale up and extend its work on Holocaust history and post-Holocaust issues. The work was undertaken at six separate Jewish Country Houses as well as for a National Trust training session. Those participant evaluation surveys for these sessions which I have been able to consult provide impressive results. At Mottisfont 11 out of 15 participants learnt 'a lot' about Jewish heritage and the remaining 6 participants took away 'some knew knowledge'. At Ightham Mote 96 per cent took away 'a lot' or 'some' knowledge about Jewish history and heritage.

The centrepiece of this initiative was the conference held in Brno, Czech Republic in May 2023 on 'Jewish Country Houses and the Holocaust in History and Memory'. The event

provided a rich overview of the history of Jewish Country Houses through the prism of the Holocaust and its memory. The event showcased new academic research and new approaches in the European heritage sector, and provided space for educators to develop practical skills and ideas through a participatory object-based workshop. It was notable for its success in reaching heritage professionals and museums from across continental Europe, as well as in the UK: 17 participants from the European and UK heritage sector in Poland, Ukraine, Germany, Switzerland, the UK and Austria took part in the workshop. It was also attended by 15 academics from France, the UK, Israel, Italy, the US and the Netherlands, and by 9 researchers and heritage practitioners from local cultural organisations in Brno.

The conference also provided a forum for descendants to approach the theme of Jewish country houses and Holocaust memory through a personal lens, brokering sensitive and needed conversations between families, researchers and house museums. The impact on participants, including heritage practitioners and curators, was significant leading a number of curators to work towards rekindling links between families and their former properties. Delegates reported that participation had provided “connected contextualisation, insights, networking with co-professionals, and inspiration as to different ways to approach future interpretation.”

One National Trust curator described the Brno conference as “life-changing”. The feedback is impressive and it is worth quoting some examples.

I’ve learned that (former) Jewish country houses, independent from their changing ownership and purposes remain a living testimony of their original landlords and their homes. Considering the personal objects from family estates provide a singular opportunity for the revival of the memory and especially in the case of affluent families – of filling the void after the destruction of the Holocaust. It’s important to create frameworks for the local communities, independently from the country to participate and engage with the history of the homes and thus develop deeper understanding for the Jewish dimension of their own history as well as for the dimension of the Holocaust and its effects in the countryside. This work of sensibilisation (sp?) needs a profiled (?)strategic approach when relating with local and state politicians in order to secure purposeful transitions and preservation of memorial culture throughout the time in future.

This is everyone’s history, whether personally associated or not – how do we make everyone feel that and confident in telling them.

Interesting stories of many properties. I have a number of ideas how to present Kronenbergs’ history and how to integrate their story to the local community.

Inspires me to connect with other properties with similar stories. Has made me aware of the importance of connecting with the family today and drawing them into our project. Has made me aware of our Villa’s status as a Home – our responsibility to present this alongside special displays.

Ruth Ur, Director of Yad Vashem in the German Lands, was asked to repeat the presentation she gave at Brno to the entire National Trust curatorial cohort at the organisation’s annual curatorial conference, held in Bristol in November 2023.

The Brno conference was followed by a training day for the National Trust dedicated to “Teaching the Holocaust through Jewish Country Houses”. Held at the Wiener Holocaust

Library in November 2023, the day re-presented some of the content from Brno but now directed it specifically towards British heritage educators and the unique position of Britain in relation to the Holocaust. Heritage educator surveys and participation indicate that the opportunity for educators with so many different kinds of roles and backgrounds to discuss how to approach the Holocaust and Jewishness was very unusual and highly appreciated, and that they realize they have an important role to play in educating society at large about the Holocaust.

Comments collected following this training day illustrate how delegates reflected on their knowledge of the Holocaust, the challenge of how to explore it through existing collections and new interpretations, and their take-aways from the discussion ('don't be afraid to be uncomfortable'). Several remarked on the insight it gave them into intra-generational trauma, and the legacies of the Holocaust in contemporary life. The comments also fed back useful information on the areas which delegates would like to know more about:

Here are two examples of feedback which illustrate some of the ways in which the training day stimulated profound reflection from those who took part as delegates.

I have learned a lot today about the complexities of telling these stories which are layered with meaning and experience. These questions raise other questions about how the NT presents all its houses and collections. These I am going away to think about. Underlying all of it is the important connections with personal histories, which make all messages very powerful.

I think we need to be braver in our willingness to explore these highly emotive sensitive stories, but we need to think carefully about our aims. What are we trying to achieve in engaging our visitors with stories of Jews, Jewish houses, [?] and the Holocaust. It's difficult because of the need for careful contextualization—we can't assume our visitors have any knowledge/understanding of the Holocaust. What duty do we have as cultural institutions in relation to these histories? We need to do this properly so it is meaningful—think outside the box in engaging communities and pertinent stories—might we also seek advice/input from external organisations?

In the first instance this work has had an immediate impact on heritage professionals working in Jewish country houses and museums, as well as on educators. It is a reasonable expectation that in time this work will also have consequences for public knowledge, awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and antisemitism. This will not only happen as curators change their practice but also as some of the project's outputs reach a wide public. For example in 2023 the National Trust produced a podcast, 'The Cedar Children' – 23 Jewish refugees who were supported in Waddesdon. Marcus Roberts was asked to advise as a result of his work on the Jewish Country Houses project. Above all, the edited book on *Jewish Country Houses* is bound to generate significant interest in the subject as a whole and in the intersection of the Holocaust, memory and heritage in particular.

Recommendations

The JCH project has been a success. Aside from its impact on the academic field, which is not my chief concern, it has had an impact on knowledge and understanding more widely. In this regard two aspects of the project's work require special mention.

1. The project integration of heritage professionals has been exemplary. In particular, they have been included in the core project team and they have participated as equals – with their own expertise – in workshops, seminars and conferences. This has extended beyond the UK to the European dimensions of the project. It is a model which has proven highly successful and which other projects would do well to consider and emulate.
2. The project has had a documented impact on the awareness and appreciation of the Jewish dimensions of country houses among heritage and museum professionals. This has encompassed the social history of the houses, their material cultural, the impact of antisemitism and the Holocaust. There has also been a growing sensitivity to the ambivalence which has often been attached to the connection of these houses to Jewish history. First, this ambivalence was present among some of the owners. Second, it has been present, in different ways, in the way which the houses' connection to a Jewish past has been evaded in western Europe and erased in eastern Europe.

These are real achievements. They should be regarded as the essential basis for continuing work at this level by Jewish heritage houses and museums in partnership with academics.

It is notable that staff and volunteers at Jewish heritage houses were less confident and, in some cases, more resistant than senior professionals to the perspectives provided by JCH. This indicates one area where further educational work will be helpful.

It also suggests that there may be a gap between the progress made with curators and policy makers in the heritage and museum sector and the progress made advancing the knowledge and understanding of the public more broadly.

The project has aimed to enhance public awareness of the Jewishness of their heritage houses and museums and their Holocaust histories. It has attempted to do this by promoting major changes in curatorial practice and visitor experience. The impact on the ways in which heritage houses and museums think about Jewish history, antisemitism and the Holocaust is fully evidenced.

The project's exemplary record-keeping demonstrates its consistent effort to track its impact on public understanding. The project has tried to gauge impact where possible noting where audiences have 'reported changes in views, opinions, behaviour' or have led to 'requests for further information' or 'plans for future activity'. However, this sort of evidence paints with a broad brush. The project has done well to gather more substantive feedback from its mobile exhibitions and from conferences.

Nevertheless, the consequences of the project for public awareness are not always easy to see. This does not mean that they are not present. Rather, these changes, to some extent, need to be inferred from all the work presented to the public. This is a problem that besets all historical projects that aim to have an impact on public understanding. My final recommendation is to call for greater collaboration between these projects with the aim of sharing best practice.

David Feldman, October 2024