

Monday, June 5, 2017

Dear Members of Toronto and East York Community Council,

On Behalf of the Board of Ireland Park Foundation, I submit this letter as our expression of interest in working with the City of Toronto to create a hub for arts, culture and heritage in the former Executive Office Building of the Canada Malting Company, on Eireann Quay.

Established as a registered charitable foundation in May 2005, Ireland Park Foundation is dedicated to celebrating the story of the Irish in Canada. The Foundation is an arts, culture and heritage organization which believes that through these three lenses, the people of Canada and Ireland can enrich the mutual understanding of their interconnected identities. Our first project was the creation of the award-winning Ireland Park, located directly adjacent to the building. Ireland Park is an artistic commemoration of the Irish migrants who died upon or shortly after their arrival in Toronto in 1847.

We have, therefore, been invested in Eireann Quay since our inception and have been closely involved with all stages of its redevelopment through the Bathurst Quay Neighborhood Plan. Eireann Quay is a vibrant neighborhood, where residents are connected and share a strong sense of place. It is the desire of Ireland Park Foundation to open the building for multiple uses and to transform both the area directly south of the building and the area leading toward Ireland Park and the grain silos, into an open space for community use, weekend markets and events throughout the year.

Over the past three years, the Foundation has worked to develop year-round programming and to grow its audience. We now host events throughout the year, involving the visual arts, performing arts, history, poetry, journalism and documentary filmmaking. While we currently engage in these activities nomadically across the city, we believe strongly that a central location would allow us to expand the number of activities and grow our audience; bringing people from all over the Greater Toronto Area to Eireann Quay and the broader Bathurst Quay area.

Outside of our own programming, we work with potential partner organizations, such as the Myseum of Toronto, the Mercer Union, St. James Cathedral, The International Festival of Authors, Epic Ireland, and many

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*President of Ireland*

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Jonathan M. Kearns  
*Partner,  
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**Executive Director**

William B. Peat

**Historical Advisor**

Dr. Jason King  
*National University of Ireland,  
Galway*

**Archaeological Advisor**

Dr. Katherine Hull  
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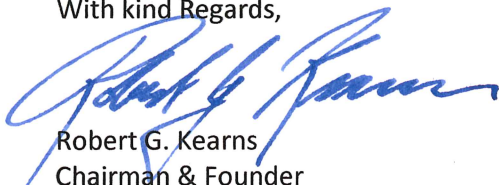
more, to grow our knowledge of the immensely interwoven cultural tapestry of Toronto. Home to the beating heart of the industrial history of the city, as well as the main point of arrival for many migrants until relatively recent times, we feel it most appropriate that the Toronto Waterfront plays host to a center for all cultures to tell their story. Envisioned as Toronto's Pier 21 (please see appendix), part of the building will house temporary exhibits on Irish heritage in Canada, as well as many other rotating exhibits.

Since the building directly abuts Ireland Park, we see a portion of the space housing an interpretive center and permanent exhibition around Toronto's Irish Famine story. Simultaneously the biggest health calamity and cause of the largest single-event of population growth. The influx of Irish migrants during 1847 is one of Toronto's darkest chapters and also one of its brightest. It was a time when Torontonians galvanized together to help both each other and the migrants who were disembarking every day, not far from where the building now stands. This incredibly important story deserves to be told and a center at the Executive Office Building is the perfect place to tell it.

The most important part of culture is fun. With that in mind, we propose to open facilities to allow people to come, meet in the building and enjoy the serene surrounds of Ireland Park, the historic grain silos, the Martin Goodman Trail, the lakeshore and the vista beyond. This is truly a spectacular area of the city, cut off from the noise of the busy traffic and yet easily accessible by public transport, local residential units and the trail. Even in advance of longer term redevelopment of the entire quay, the Foundation feels it can engage an adaptive reuse of the property to bring more people into this underrealized space.

In the immediate term, June this year, will mark the ten-year anniversary of the opening of Ireland Park, by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese. The Foundation is already planning a series of events over the course of the summer that will bring people to Eireann Quay. We are committed to Eireann Quay and to developing it into a world leading center for programming around culture and migration. Something which no city deserves more than Toronto and in no better place than its historic waterfront.

With kind Regards,



Robert G. Kearns  
Chairman & Founder  
Ireland Park Foundation

## Ireland Park Foundation

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*President of Ireland*

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## Appendix

### International Centers of Excellence

#### Pier 21, Halifax, Nova Scotia

[www.pier21.ca](http://www.pier21.ca)

Pier 21 is home to the Canadian Museum of Immigration. The Pier 21 Story exhibition shows visitors what it was like to immigrate through Pier 21 between 1928 and 1971. Visitors can open replica children's trunks to see what five immigrant children might have brought with them to Canada, walk through a replica of the colonist train cars that newly-arrived immigrants boarded for the next stage of their journey, and even dress up as some of the key staff and volunteers at Pier 21.

#### Epic Ireland, Dublin, Ireland

[www.epicchq.com](http://www.epicchq.com)

EPIC, The Irish Emigration Museum, is Dublin's newest museum and tourist attraction. The privately funded museum is both a commemoration and celebration of the story of Irish emigration. Epic Ireland's 21 galleries use integrative displays and film footage to explore why people have left Ireland, the influence they have had abroad in the arts, science, education, sport and politics, and where the Irish are now and what they are doing "in today's highly connected world". Each gallery has been designed with a different layout, with screens on the walls and floors and in audiovisual pods where visitors can swipe, click and touch to access information.

#### Irish Arts Centre, New York, USA

[www.irishartscenter.org](http://www.irishartscenter.org)

Founded in 1972, Irish Arts Center is a New York-based arts and cultural center dedicated to projecting a dynamic image of Ireland and Irish America for the 21st century, building community with artists and audiences of all backgrounds, forging and strengthening cross-cultural partnerships, and preserving the evolving stories and traditions of Irish culture for generations to come. Their multi-disciplinary programming is centered around three core areas: performance – including live music, dance, theatre, film, literature, and the humanities; exhibition – including visual arts presentations and cultural exhibitions that tell the evolving Irish story; and education – with dozens of classes per week in Irish language, history, music, and dance.

## **Toronto Centers**

### **Aga Khan Museum**

[www.agakhanmuseum.org](http://www.agakhanmuseum.org)

The Aga Khan Museum is a museum of Islamic art, Iranian (Persian) art and Muslim culture. The museum is an initiative of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network. The museum is dedicated to the acquisition, preservation, display and interpretation of artefacts relating to the intellectual, cultural, artistic and religious traditions of Muslim communities, past and present. Artefacts include ceramics, metalwork, and paintings covering all periods of Islamic history. It houses collections of Islamic art and heritage, including artefacts from the private collections of His Highness the Aga Khan, the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, and Prince and Princess Sadruddin Aga Khan, which showcase the artistic, intellectual and scientific contributions of Muslim civilizations.

### **Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre**

[www.jccc.on.ca](http://www.jccc.on.ca)

The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre (JCCC) represents the fulfillment of a long held community vision; celebrating the unique culture, history, and legacy of Japanese Canadians for the benefit of all Canadians. Since 1964, the JCCC has served as a home for the community and a place for Japanese Canadians to share their heritage with the greater population. The Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre is recognized across Canada as an important and vibrant community institution.

### **Fort York Visitors Center**

[www.fortyorkfoundation.ca](http://www.fortyorkfoundation.ca)

The Fort York Foundation is an independent, federally-registered charity that fundraises to revitalize Fort York National Historic Site. The Fort York Visitor Centre has a full programme of exhibits, including a new introductory film and an immersive experience of the Battle of York. Fort York's 43 acres, including Garrison Common, are a vital part of downtown Toronto's open green space.

## **Academic Affiliates**

### **Canadian Museum of History**

#### **VIRTUAL EXHIBITS INVESTMENT PROGRAM**

The Virtual Exhibits investment program helps Canadian museums and heritage organizations develop virtual exhibits and resources that engage online audiences in Canada's history, heritage and culture. Ireland Park Foundation has been awarded a grant under this program to produce the 'Irish Famine Stories in Ontario' exhibit. This will become the largest online resource of Irish Famine stories in Canada.

### **Strokestown Park, Strokestown**

[www.strokestownpark.ie](http://www.strokestownpark.ie)

The Famine Museum at Strokestown Park, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon, Ireland is twinned with Grosse Ile and the Irish Memorial National Historic Site, Grosse Ile, Quebec, Canada. Over 5,500 Irish people who emigrated during the famine of Ireland are buried in mass graves at Grosse Ile.

The Museum also has a strong educational focus and seeks to create a greater awareness of the horrors of contemporary famine by demonstrating the link between the causes of the Great Irish Famine of the 1840's and the ongoing spectacle of famine in the developing world today. The Famine Museum was opened in 1994 by the then President of Ireland, Mary Robinson, and she said 'More than anything else, this Famine Museum shows us that history is not about power or triumph nearly so often as it is about suffering and vulnerability'.

### **St. Michaels College at the University of Toronto, Toronto**

St Michael's has been a bastion for higher education and a beacon for the Irish-Canadian community in Toronto and southern Ontario, with others coming from all over the rest of Canada to attend the dominantly Irish school. Former Principal of St. Michael's, Mark McGowan, Professor & Senior Academic Advisor to the Dean, completed a revisionist work on the Irish Famine migration to Canada and a short award-winning book for the Ireland Park Foundation: Death or Canada: The Irish Famine Migration to Toronto, 1847 and Toronto.

## **Who we are**

Established as a registered charitable foundation in May 2005, Ireland Park Foundation is dedicated to celebrating the story of the Irish in Canada.

## **What we do**

Ireland Park Foundation is an arts, cultural and heritage organization. We believe that through these three lenses, the people of Canada and Ireland can enrich the mutual understanding of their interconnectedness.

The Foundation's first project was the creation of the award-winning Ireland Park ("the Park") in Toronto. Located on the Toronto Waterfront (a stone's throw from Billy Bishop Island Airport), Ireland Park is an artistic commemoration of the Irish migrants who died upon or shortly after their arrival in Canada in 1847. For this the Foundation raised approx \$3.6 million.

The Park was officially opened on June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 by the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, and Federal Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty. An audience of approximately 3,500 attended the opening ceremony and it was well received in both the Canadian and Irish press. A full list of our donors and supporters can be viewed on our website.

Ireland Park Foundation also encourages artistic connectivity, engages in original source academic research, and hosts public events, in order to help build a stronger sense of community between Ireland and Canada. In Ontario alone, some two million people claim Irish ancestry, which represents about 16.5% of the population.

The Foundation is currently engaged in building its second park, Dr. George Robert Grasett Park, to be opened on the 21st of June, 2017. This Park celebrates the Canadian response to the mass migration of Irish migrants in 1847, specifically its medical profession. After four years of negotiations with the City of Toronto, Ireland Park Foundation has secured a site measuring 80 x 20 feet, on the same plot of land as Toronto's first brick hospital, at Adelaide Street West and Widmer Street.

Dr. George Robert Grasett Park will commemorate the sacrifice of many remarkable individuals who died while tending to the sick and dying Irish migrants in Toronto during the summer of 1847. These gallant individuals played an important role in the medical history of the city as well as the history of migration and settlement of Toronto.

This parcel of land will allow the Foundation to commemorate the administrative response of the City; those first responders who walked toward danger.

At night the Park will be up-lit, creating a beautiful beacon of hope for the city.



## Lecture Series

Ireland Park Foundation is committed to educating the public about Irish history, culture and economics. Throughout the year we host a series of public talks from academics, journalists and thought leaders.

