

2019 Toronto Heritage Grant Award

Date: November 27, 2019

To: Toronto Preservation Board
Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: Ward 11

SUMMARY

This report recommends the approval of a grant totalling \$102,000.00 for the conservation of the Kiever Synagogue located at 28 Denison Square under the Toronto Heritage Grant Program as set out in this report. The eligible conservation work includes restoration of the original historic cupolas, as well as extensive window and stained glass conservation.

The Toronto Heritage Grant Program provides matching grant funds for eligible heritage conservation work to owners of tax exempt or residential properties in the City of Toronto designated under Part IV or V of the Ontario Heritage Act (OHA). Property owners may receive a grant once every five years for up to 50% of the cost of eligible conservation work. There is no maximum grant amount for owners of non-house form buildings such as places of worship.

In April 2019, Council approved 17 grant awards allocating \$214,600.00 of the approved \$317,000 in the City Planning 2019 Operating Budget and amended the grant eligibility requirements as set out in the Terms and Conditions so that any tax-exempt designated heritage properties including a house-form building may be eligible for a grant equivalent to 50% of the cost of eligible conservation work, with no limit.

The City Planning 2019 Operating Budget has a remaining balance of \$102,000.00 to be allocated before the end of the fiscal year. As such, City Planning (Heritage Preservation Services) initiated a second, special grant run in Q3 2019 for tax-exempt designated heritage properties including house-form buildings in conjunction with Toronto's inaugural Not-for-Profit Recognition Day on October 2, 2019, to celebrate the important contribution that non-profit community organizations make to our city and communities.

The application from the First Russian Congregation of Rodfesolium Ansekiev & Ontario Jewish Archives, owners of the Kiever Synagogue located in the Kensington Market is recommended for a grant award.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, recommends that:

1. City Council approve the grant award for the 2019 Toronto Heritage Grant Program for the Kiever Synagogue located at 28 Denison Square, to assist the property owner in funding the scope of conservation work generally described in this report.
2. City Council direct that the use of the grant award outlined in Recommendation 1 of this report be limited to only the conservation work approved by the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and that the issuing of the grant award be subject to the grant recipient satisfying all conditions as set out in the Letter of Understanding between the City and the grant recipient.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The Toronto Heritage Grant Program has a budget of \$317,000 in the City Planning 2019 Operating Budget which will fund the \$102,000.00 grant award recommended in this report. The eligible heritage grant for non-profit has no financial impact on the budget as the grants will be accommodated within the 2019 Approved City Planning Operating Budget.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

In April 2019, City Council approved the grant awards for the 2019 Toronto Heritage Grant Program for the following 17 designated properties, to assist property owners in funding the scope of conservation work totalling \$214,600.00.

2019.PH4.2 - 2019 Toronto Heritage Grant Awards

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.PH4.2>

On March 7, 2019, City Council adopted the 2019 Capital and Operating Budgets.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EX2.5>

COMMENTS

The Toronto Heritage Grant Program is administered by Heritage Preservation Services (HPS), City Planning. Grants shall be awarded for up to, but not more than, half of the eligible costs for the project. The grant shall be matched by an equal contribution from the recipient or any other available source excluding Provincial and Federal aid.

In April 2019, City Council approved 17 grant awards allocating \$214,600.00 of the approved \$317,000 in the City Planning 2019 Operating Budget and amended the grant eligibility requirements as set out in the Terms and Conditions so that any tax-exempt designated heritage properties including a house-form building may be eligible for a grant equivalent to 50% of the cost of eligible conservation work, with no limit.

The City Planning 2019 Operating Budget has a remaining balance of \$102,000.00 for the Toronto Heritage Grant Program, to be allocated before the end of the fiscal year. As such, City Planning (Heritage Preservation Services) initiated a second, special grant run in Q3 2019 that targeted tax-exempt properties and specifically house form tax-exempt properties owned and occupied by not-for-profit organizations. Two applications were submitted. Staff determined that one of the applications needed additional information to determine eligibility and it was recommended that the applicant resubmit all of the required material for review within the 2020 heritage grant program. The 2020 application deadline is January 31, 2020.

An independent Toronto Heritage Grant Selection Committee consisting of volunteer heritage professionals evaluates the applications and recommends grant awards. The Grant Selection Committee was made up of individuals chosen for their expertise in heritage conservation, including members of the Toronto Preservation Board:

Sandra Shaul, Toronto Preservation Board Chair
Robert Allsop, ARIBA / MRTPI / MCIP / RPP / FCSLA / OALA / MALA (Hon)

Prior to the application evaluation and meeting, members were surveyed for any conflicts of interest of which none were identified. The Committee convened for a meeting with City staff on November 18, 2019. The Committee reviewed one application submitted by the First Russian Congregation of Rodfesolium Ansekiev & Ontario Jewish Archives who own the Kiever Synagogue in Kensington Market.

The Kiever Synagogue, designed by local architect Benjamin Swartz, is located on the property at 28 Denison Square which was designated by City of Toronto Council (By-law 395-79) under the Ontario Heritage Act in 1979. The Reasons for Designation state "The Kiever Synagogue is designated on architectural and historic grounds. Erected in 1923-26 by the "Pursuers of Peace, Men of Kiev" the building was the first synagogue built by Ukrainian Jews who had escaped from Czarist Russia in 1913-14. The red brick building has a Middle Eastern character.

Remarkable features are the twin domes which top the pavilions on either side of a facade that features a decorative extended parapet and four different styles of arched windows. Interior furnishings include hand carved Holy Ark, benches and reader's platform, in addition to numerous brass ornaments and hand painted decorations. It is a landmark in this part of the City."

The property is also located within the Kensington Market Heritage Conservation District (HCD) Study area that City Planning is developing to conserve, maintain and enhance the cultural heritage value of the district under the Ontario Heritage Act. The Kiever Synagogue fronts onto Bellevue Square Park, signifying its visibility as a landmark in the neighbourhood. It is also one of the Character-Defining Elements of the Kensington

Market National Historic Site designated by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 2015.

The Kensington Market National Historic Site includes the 27-hectare neighbourhood that has been home to numerous successive waves of ethno cultural communities who have immigrated to Toronto since the beginning of the 20th century; it is a microcosm of Canada's ethnic mosaic, where many different ethno cultural communities, searching for an affordable home, have each added to the market's layers of cultural variety, maintained a dynamic, culturally diverse market, and contributed to a vibrant street life where cultural institutions such as the Kiever and Anshei Minsk synagogues collectively create a distinctive urban district.

The heritage grant application included a September, 2019 preliminary condition assessment prepared by E.R.A. and supporting quotations from three contractors. The condition report identified several building elements that are in need of repair, including the parapet, windows and cupolas, front stairs, general masonry and grading conditions around the foundation.

Recommended conservation work was reviewed and ranked on the basis of their state of disrepair and impact on overall building condition. The magnitude of required repairs warrants a phased approach, with the most urgent conservation works prioritized in the grant application.

The two areas of disrepair related to the heritage attributes of the property (a grant program requirement) which currently present significant impact on the building condition and are considered high priority for conservation are as follows:

1. Cupolas - The three cupolas, located at the southeast, southwest and northwest corners of the roof, are currently allowing water ingress, causing damage to the Synagogue's ceiling and window surrounds.
2. Stained Glass Windows - composed of stained-glass lancets and transoms and wood frames are in a state of significant deterioration. The level of their deterioration varies from the south elevation (worst) to the north elevation (best).

As a result of its deliberations, the Selection committee recommended a total of \$102,000.00 be awarded to the First Russian Congregation of Rodfesoium Ansekief for the restoration of the historic cupolas, extensive window and stained glass conservation. The project will generate approximately \$570,000 in investment for work that will conserve an irreplaceable heritage resource that contributes to the City's historic character and identity.

Today, as the Kiever Synagogue looks to sustain its religious services while broadening its community focus, and welcoming arts and cultural programming into its space, targeted restorations are once again required to ensure that the synagogue can continue to represent a robust history of diverse cultural communities and Jewish life in Kensington Market and throughout Toronto's downtown neighbourhoods.

CONTACT

Tamara Anson-Cartwright, Program Manager, Policy and Research, Heritage Planning, City Planning Division, Tel: 416-338-1083, Email: Tamara.Anon-Cartwright@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Gregg Lintern, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner and Executive Director
City Planning

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Photos of the Kiever Synagogue



Kiever Synagogue, south and west elevations, view from the west side of Bellevue Avenue.



Cupola (left) and south elevation window showing typical signs of deterioration.