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THE HISTORIC KIEVER SYNAGOGUE

November 28, 2019

Members of the Toronto Preservation Board:

Please accept this letter with supplemental information in support of our application for a Toronto Heritage Grant.

Our congregation, together with the Ontario Jewish Archives—a branch of UJA Federation and co-owners of the building—has an abiding commitment to the preservation of our historic heritage building in Kensington Market. In addition to attending to the weekly spiritual needs of our congregation (exemplified by our recent hire of Rabbi Eli Cohen), over the past several years we have invested renewed energy into expanding our programming for the wider community. For two years we have hosted concerts for the Kensington Market Jazz Festival; we welcomed 750 visitors during the 2019 Doors Open Toronto; and last May, under the leadership of the Ontario Jewish Archives, we hosted 3,000 TDSB students as part of the Jewish Heritage Month “Stories of Spadina” educational walking tours (<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/students-take-their-history-class-to-the-streets-for-a-real-life-multi-cultural-experience-1.4439781>, esp. from 1:43).

The prerequisite for all these activities and more is a building that is not only loved but also maintained properly. In 2017 we spent over \$40,000 to repair the main part of the roof. We knew that the cupolas would need their own repairs, and on September 15, 2019, we held a “Fiddlers for the Roof” fundraiser that raised \$80,000 toward that end (<https://torontosun.com/news/local-news/kiever>). We also engaged ERA Architects to provide a full assessment of the entire structure; their detailed report tells us exactly what we need to do to make the repairs we knew about and address other problems that were only visible to trained professionals. Such information will be vital in approaching donors to help us reach our preservation goals. One philanthropist has pledged an unrestricted gift of \$180,000 to the synagogue, spread over the next five years, and we will be working with UJA to identify additional donors. Toronto’s Jewish community sees the Kiever Synagogue as a living connection to the long and rich history of Jewish life in the city.

Thank you for considering our request. We are hopeful that, with your endorsement, the City of Toronto Council will help us in our community efforts to preserve a heritage landmark that the congregation feels fortunate to call home and wants to maintain for future generations.

Thank you sincerely for your consideration of our application.

Dr. Adam S. Cohen, President