

TECHNION - ISRAEL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND TOWN PLANNING

22 February, 2021

To: Azrieli Foundation

Re: Recommendation for Dr. Shira Wilkof for Azrieli Early Career Faculty Fellowships

**Brief Timeline:** Shira Wilkof completed her undergraduate studies in General History and Geography at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2008). She completed her master’s degree studies in the field of urban and regional planning at the Technion (2011). She completed both degrees with honors. She wrote her doctoral dissertation in the Department of Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley on the impact of global planning processes on the history of spatial planning and design in Israel (2017).

At the outset, I would like to point out that the breadth of Shira’s academic education and the range of disciplines she acquired during her studies are equal to those of most faculty members who are currently working in the fields of architecture and planning in Israel. There are not many architects / landscape architects working in the academic world with such a wide range of areas of knowledge that can be applied in their research.

Since Shira returned to Israel after completing her doctoral degree, I have had many academic meetings with her, which touched upon shared issues of interest and the transfer of significant knowledge and sources. The connection between us was immediate and natural, and led to the joint decision that she would continue her educational path with PhD studies under my supervision. She has also received recognition and support from the Lady Davis Fellowship Trust on behalf of the Technion.

In all our encounters, and no less as I read her published articles, I was highly impressed by her intellectual abilities, originality of thought, capabilities, exceptional level of conceptualization, tremendous passion for research, as well as her pleasant demeanor and proven ability to collaborate with her colleagues.

I now return to the range of knowledge that Shira has acquired, which, due to its inherent potential for future research, is in my opinion of crucial importance in terms of the considerations for accepting a new faculty member. These include geography, history, urban and regional planning, architecture and landscape architecture, and a thesis that dealt with theory, history, and criticism pertaining to the space between the global situation and that in Israel. She completed all of her academic degrees with honors at recognized universities, supervised by leading researchers in the field (Prof. Ronnie Ellenblum at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Prof. Alona Nitzan-Shiftan at the Technion, and Professors Nezar AlSayyad, Andrew Shanken, and Kerwin Klein at the University of California in Berkeley. Needless to say, a multidisciplinary approach is the hallmark of research in our time, and in this new world Shir has a distinct advantage over many other scholars.

Since completing her doctorate, Shir has been awarded an impressive number of scholarships and prizes. She has already published three articles in leading journals, a fourth article in a book along with various articles on urban planning between the two World Wars, and has submitted another article for publication. Shira is involved in research with strong momentum, and has multiple articles in various stages of preparation, which will soon result in additional publications. Shira was invited to give presentations from her research at a number of academic conferences in Israel and abroad. This is clearly a respectable output for a researcher who graduated in 2017 and does not yet have a steady position.

I will add a subversive remark: we all know young researchers who internalized the rules of the academic game and immediately began to write books and articles that were published in various forums, in a way that creates the impression of productivity. However, sometimes the academic weight of their publications is meagre and weak. Shira is the opposite: she avoids shortcuts and does not bend her research to the rules of “publish or perish”. She invests great effort in her publications, and each is scholarly, well-reasoned, and makes a significant contribution to the subject under study. In my opinion, she is the type of researcher who it is appropriate to promote in academia. Such an investment will bear fruit, not from one day to the next, but for years to come.

In light of all of the above, I warmly recommend awarding Dr. Shira Wilkof with the Azrieli Scholarship for researchers at the beginning of their academic journey, in order to help her to cultivate and realize her research potential. Shira is a young and promising researcher, among the best (and perhaps the best) I have met for many years, at the Technion or abroad. I have no doubt that the Technion will receive full compensation for its investment in her, and will be proud of the choice it makes.

Sincerely,

Nurit Lissovsky

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