

ICOMOS

International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage

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78 George Street
Redfern NSW 2016
AUSTRALIA

August 13, 2012

Mr Daisaku Kadokawa
Mayor of Kyoto City
Public Relations Section 604-8571,
488, Teramachi-Oike,
Nakagoyo-ku, Kyoto City, Kyoto, Japan

Dear Sir,

I write to express the concern the International Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage (ISC20C) of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) about the proposed alterations and addition to the Kyoto Kaikan, designed by Kunio Mayekawa. Constructed in 1960 inside Kyoto's Okazaki Park as a multi-purpose cultural complex, the Kyoto Kaikan is recognized as one of the most important works of modern architecture in Japan. Mayekawa worked under the world renowned architect Le Corbusier in Paris from 1928 to 1930 and brought important new ideas of modern architecture back to Japan, where he practiced for fifty years.

Mayekawa is widely recognized as one of the most important Japanese architects of the 20th Century and the Kyoto Kaikan one of his most significant works. In this project he was able to successfully create a new cultural institution that embodied the ideas of the Modern Movement while making it fit within the traditional historic context that was and is Kyoto. It is a wonderful work of architecture and a cultural heritage resource to be respected and conserved.

The ICOMOS ISC20C has reviewed the proposed new plans for the renovation, alteration, and addition to the Kyoto Kaikan and we are concerned that it will cause irreversible harm to this highly significant heritage complex. The size and form of the proposed design of the new theater will destroy the beauty and harmony created by Mayekawa's original design concept and detail.

Following a request for international action, I personally viewed the Kaikan complex in February and since then the ICOMOS ISC20C's international professional and public networks have been used to review the redevelopment proposal and its likely heritage impact. By using external experts in assessing local research and comparative heritage values, a rigorous independent assessment of the situation is achieved. Our concerns have confirmed concerns and resulted in the creation of a Heritage Alert that will be issued by the ICOMOS ISC20C.

The Heritage Alert will be used to draw international attention to the threat to the integrity of the Kyoto Kaikan and to stimulate further consideration of ways to achieve good conservation solutions. The Heritage Alert will be uploaded to the ISC20C website and distributed through the networks of ICOMOS. It will be updated as and when additional information is brought forward.

We most respectfully ask the City to reconsider the current plans for changing the existing Kyoto Kaikan and try to find a better design that retains the heritage values of the original building while accommodating the new programmatic needs of the theater.

Yours faithfully,



Sheridan Burke
President, ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage