



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
JAPAN ICOMOS NATIONAL COMMITTEE
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Yukio Nishimura
President
Japan ICOMOS National Committee (JINC)

September 10, 2012

Mr. Daisaku Kadokawa
Mayor of Kyoto City

Dear Mr. Mayor,
Statement of Intent and a List of Concerns

We understand that that a letter of concern addressed to you regarding Kyoto Kaikan's refurbishment project was sent on August 13 from Ms. Sheridan Burke, the president of International Scientific Committee of the 20th Century Heritage (ISC20C), International Council of Monument and Sites (ICOMOS). In that letter, she identified Kyoto Kaikan's cultural value as one of the masterpieces designed by internationally renowned architect, Kunio Mayekawa, and expressed the committee's concern that the present refurbishment project of Kyoto Kaikan will cause "irreversible harm to this highly significant heritage complex...and will destroy the beauty and harmony created by Mayekawa's original design concept and detail." She even mentioned in the same letter that they are ready to issue a Heritage Alert if necessary.

Japan ICOMOS National Committee, in the mean time, also received various opinions and concerns from individuals and organizations of different interests and positions. We, therefore, independently reviewed the project as well as interviewed a member of ISC20C and came up with the following statements and a list of concerns.

- 1) Although Kyoto Kaikan is not designated or registered as cultural property under Japanese Cultural Protection law, JINC realizes its cultural importance and it is considered as a valuable piece of architecture representing 20th century Japan.
- 2) Since the time of original construction, Kyoto Kaikan's functional issues centering No.1 Hall had been identified. These issues had not been mitigated but progressed as physical constraints were added over time.
- 3) JINC understands that Kyoto City has been trying to solve the aforementioned issues and making efforts sincerely over time.

However,

4) The basic design of the current Renovation and Reconstruction plan of Kyoto Kaikan lacks the rationality of how to retain the property's integrity under the course of renovation required by keeping the property's functionality as "living heritage" of the 20th century architecture, in other words keeping the building usable by the people.

5) Investigations and reconsideration on how to retain such integrity of the property under the current basic renovation project have not yet been sufficiently carried out.

6) The City has not yet properly answered the request to provide a new alternative approach to preserve and pass on the modern architecture that was addressed by the advisory committee concerning sustainability of architectural value of Kyoto Kaikan.

We think, if Kyoto City proceeds on the project plan for Kyoto Kaikan dismissing the points stated in above 1) and 2), it is necessary to answer the questions listed in above 4) through 6) adequately. Furthermore, the City should rationally explain their responses, including why they believe that their solution for Kyoto Kaikan is the minimum intervention to the problem.

JINC has been carefully observing the situation and offered its cooperation as necessary through formulation of the Fourteenth Subcommittee: examining issues pertaining to the conservation and preservation of Twentieth Century Architecture as living heritage (Issues concerning Renovation and Reconstruction Plan of Kyoto Kaikan) during the JINC board meeting on September 8th, 2012. We plan to make matters discussed in the Subcommittee transparent by reporting them to ISC20C.