

April 22, 2019

Cc: Chris Lee

Alderman Khalif J. Rainey
Zoning, Neighborhoods, and Development Committee
City of Milwaukee Common Council

Re: Marcus Center – Landmark designation of the Kiley grove

Dear Alderman Rainey,

Docomomo US and Docomomo US/Chicago write in support of the landmark designation for the horse chestnut landscape grove at the Marcus Center. Designed by Dan Kiley, one of the most important landscape architects of the 20th century, the grove is one of the most significant Modernist landscapes in the City of Milwaukee and part of a greater building and landscape ensemble by Harry Weese, a well-known modernist architect.

The grove was designed by Kiley at the beginning of his career, and it contains elements that would become hallmarks of his work: a carefully curated palette of durable materials, a simple plan that creates a rich spatial and social space, and a balanced dialogue with the surrounding architecture. But it is more than just an embodiment of his Modernist design principles - the grove is a remarkably enduring and intact work that offers visitors a sense of place. It is this very sense of place that demonstrates that the grove meets landmark criteria, particularly E-9, which recognizes the “unique location as a singular physical characteristic which represents an established and familiar visual feature of [...] the city.”

Other cities and cultural institutions have publicly demonstrated their commitment to preserving Kiley designed landscapes and we encourage Milwaukee to join this distinguished list that includes: the Art Institute of Chicago, the Gateway Arch National Park in St. Louis, Fountain Place in Dallas, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., among others. As the stewards of one of two Kiley-designed landscapes in Milwaukee, you and your fellow Council Members have an opportunity to safeguard this treasured public space for future generations. Protecting the grove against destruction is an essential first step. We urge you to uphold the City of Milwaukee Landmark designation to preserve the Kiley grove at the Marcus Center.

Sincerely,



Liz Waytkus
Executive Director
Docomomo US



Serge Ambrose
Chair
Docomomo US/Chicago

Docomomo US is a chapter of Docomomo, an international non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of modern architecture, landscapes and design. Through advocacy, education and documentation, we provide leadership and knowledge by demonstrating the importance of modern design principles including the social context, technical merits, aesthetics and settings of these important pieces of American history.