

Board of Directors

Theodore Prudon
PRESIDENT

Robert Meckfessel
VICE-PRESIDENT

Flora Chou
TREASURER

Jack Pyburn
SECRETARY

Jon Buono
Meredith Arms Bzdak
T. Gunny Harboe
Hélène Lipstadt
Jennifer Magnolfi
Robert Pullum
Robert Thomas
Monica Schaffer
Barry Solar
Bradford J. White
Hunter Palmer Wright
Barbara Yanni

Liz Waytkus
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Docomomo US Chapters

Chicago/Midwest
DC
Florida
Georgia
Hawaii
Michigan
Mid Tex Mod
Minnesota
New England
New Orleans/Louisiana
New York/Tri-State
Northern California
North Texas
Oregon
Philadelphia
Southern California
Western Washington

Friend Organizations

Houston Mod
Indiana Modern
Modern STL
North Carolina
Modernist Houses
Palm Springs Modernism
Week

November 30, 2015

The Honorable Meenakshi Srinivasan, Chair
The New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission
One Center Street, 9th Floor North
New York, NY 10007

Re: Edgar J. Kaufman Conference Center
809 United Nations Plaza

Dear Commissioner Srinivasan,

Docomomo US is a national organization dedicated to advocacy for and about modern architecture. We are the US affiliate of a broad international network with representations in over 60 countries located on all five continents.

Preserving postwar architecture remains challenging and particularly so where it concerns its interiors. However, the significance of some of these spaces is beyond question: the Edgar J. Kaufmann Conference Center, also known as the Aalto Room atop of the International Institute of Education (IIE), is a case in point. The IIE's own website describes the facility, appropriately, as an "architectural jewel". The project was an important collaboration between two significant individuals: Edgar Kaufmann Jr. (1910-1989) and Alvar Aalto (1898-1976), the client and the architect.

Alvar Aalto was a world renowned architect, who designed only four projects in the US, of which the Kaufmann Conference Center is one and the only one in New York City. His oeuvre has received worldwide recognition and the significance of that work is beyond dispute. Edgar Kaufmann Jr. had a broad impact with his advocacy for good design whether in the preservation of Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water, as a curator at the Museum of Modern Art or teaching at Columbia University.

While New York City continues to celebrate good design and encourages international and national talent, it is important at the same time to preserve and celebrate the design contributions of earlier generations.

We strongly urge the designation of the Aalto Rooms, an internationally significant interior, as a New York City Landmark.

Sincerely,



Dr. Theodore H. M. Prudon FAIA FAPT
President, Docomomo US