



Save Our Kiley Chestnut Grove

The Horse Chestnut Grove next to the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts is a unique natural oasis in downtown Milwaukee. The dense grove of trees in a sunken space was designed by internationally-renowned landscape architect Dan Kiley. It was modeled after the horse chestnut grove in the Tuileries Garden in Paris, which has been maintained for the enjoyment of residents and visitors for the last 300 years. Yet Marcus Center officials wants to tear down this grove and replace it with a lawn that can be used for private events. Help preserve this special public space.

The Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission recently voted to recommend the historic

designation of the Marcus Center, including the Horse Chestnut Grove.

Now the City's Zoning, Neighborhoods and Development Committee will vote on whether to recommend Historic Designation to the full Common Council. Come to the hearing on **Tuesday, April 30 at 9:00am**, in Room 301-B at City Hall. You may register your support there and briefly speak, if you like.

“Kiley was among the most important, influential, and idiosyncratic landscape architects of the 20th century.” – *Metropolis*

URGENT!

Contact members of the ZND Committee now, and your Common Council member before a full Common Council vote, which could be on May 7. Council members need to all hear from city residents who want to preserve this special public space. Designation will ensure that decisions about it will get a public hearing. Otherwise, our Kiley Grove is likely to be forever destroyed, possibly within several weeks.



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Also contact:
Mayor Tom Barrett to urge him to uphold Historic Designation.
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County Executive Chris Abele, who controls the Marcus Center's fate as the official Landlord. (414) 278-4212,
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13 reasons to save our Kiley Chestnut Grove



- 1** It's an iconic civic space. The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts is one of Downtown Milwaukee's **historically significant cultural landscapes**. Both building and grounds retain recognizable historic character.
- 2** Milwaukee was fortunate to have two nationally renowned Modernist masters collaborate on the project. Architect Harry Weese and landscape architect Dan Kiley designed the Marcus Center as a whole, which contributes to this place's "genius." Kiley drew inspiration for the grove of horse chestnut trees from gardens in Paris.
- 3** It meets four criteria for **historical designation**, according to City of Milwaukee preservation planners. It exemplifies "the development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage" of Milwaukee; embodies "distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type or specimen;" is the "work of an artist, architect, craftsman or master builder;" and is a recognizable visual landmark. Designation requires meeting just one criterion.
- 4** It embodies Milwaukee's mid-century optimism. Civic leaders selected a Downtown site for the Performing Arts Center and a modern building and landscape, symbolic of renewed commitment to the arts and a civic center.
- 5** Erasing Kiley's landscape would be like **painting over a grimy Georgia O'Keeffe canvas, rather than cleaning it**. Both artists received the National Medal of Arts, America's highest federal recognition of creative professionals.
- 6** Kiley's public grounds are an **exceptional example of landscape art—available to all**. And you don't need to know anything about its design or history to enjoy its specialness.
- 7** People appreciate Kiley's grove because they experience positive feelings there. This "natural cathedral" provides much-needed shade, respite, and contemplative space—in the heart of a busy city.
- 8** Downtown has little public green space, **nothing remotely like this grove**, and few mature trees. Urban-canopy studies indicate that Milwaukee needs more shade trees, and their environmental benefits.
- 9** The site's defining character **CAN be retained while INCREASING ADA accessibility**. The flexible grounds already accommodate successful programming and multiple options for revenue generation.
- 10** Demolition of distinctive public commons is short-sighted. It results in a throw-away, soul-less city lacking a sense of local character. **This is Milwaukee's only significant Modernist landscape**.
- 11** Preserving this heritage site will cost far less than **obliterating it**. Historic preservation also generates social and economic benefits. Heritage tourists stay longer and spend more money than other tourists. Preserved districts and buildings maintain their value over time and boost the value of their surroundings.
- 12** Destroying this irreplaceable landscape would be tragic, reminiscent of ill-considered "urban renewal" razing of historic places.
- 13** The public **MUST be involved** in decisions about renovations of taxpayer-owned-and-funded places. Maintaining the historical designation keeps the public involved in the process. **THIS IS YOUR PUBLIC SPACE!!!**