

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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Akio Harada
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JAPAN

November 9, 2006

RE: Preservation of buildings by Antonin Raymond at TWCU

Dear Akio Harada;

We are writing to urge you to reconsider the proposed demolition of the gymnasium and dormitory buildings designed by Antonin Raymond for the Tokyo Woman's Christian College in 1921.

Raymond, who many consider to be a "pioneer of modern architecture" in Japan, designed the gymnasium and dormitory buildings in the months following his departure from the office of Frank Lloyd Wright. The structures are significant—and early—examples of works built in Japan by Wright's apprentices, but also important as demonstrations of Raymond's independent approach to design—an approach that would have a lasting impact on the evolution of design in Japan in the twentieth century.

The master plan for the campus was conceived by Raymond as a set piece. Each individual building is a fragment integral to the overall spiritual well-being of the College's students. The beauty of the formal entry quadrangle, with the chapel, classroom buildings and library—a place of the mind, is the counterpoint of the informal peace of the residential area centered on the dormitory / gymnasium group—a place of the heart. Demolishing the dormitory and gymnasium irreversibly severs the link between what the architect envisioned as places of the mind and heart, an act that will greatly diminish the overall quality and impact of the campus.

As the greatest collection of extant structures by Raymond in Japan, the Tokyo Woman's Christian University will gain more by the preservation and reuse of these structures than by their demolition.

Yours sincerely,

William Whitaker, curator, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania
Kurt G.F Helfrich, Curator, University Art Museum, University of California, Santa Barbara
Ken Tadashi Oshima, assistant professor, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington
Mari Sakamoto Nakahara, collections manager, The Octagon Museum, Washington, D.C.
Christine Vendredi Auzanneau, assistant professor, Ecole Polytechnique Federale in Lausanne, Switzerland