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Nuha Ansari  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

July 1, 2024

Sarah Carroll, Chair  
NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission  
1 Centre Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair Carroll,

FRIENDS of the Upper East Side Historic Districts strongly supports the Request for Evaluation for Interior Landmark designation for The Whitney Museum of American Art building at 945 Madison Avenue submitted by Docomomo US and the Docomomo US New York/ Tri-State chapter. This iconic building, a seminal work of Bauhaus master Marcel Breuer, has served as one of New York City's most important cultural institutions since it opened its doors in 1966. The building's design, including both the exterior (already protected) and the interior, reflects Breuer's complete vision and deserves comprehensive landmark status.

While the exterior of the building is protected by its location within the Upper East Side Historic District, the interior spaces – equally crucial to Breuer's concept – lack such designation. The design intended to create a unified experience between exterior and interior. This is evident in the spatial flow from the street through the pedestrian bridge and into the building, with the meticulously designed lobby, staircases (including artist Charles Simonds' installations), lower levels, and gallery spaces all reinforcing this connection. As detailed in the Request for Evaluation by Docomomo US, these interior elements are integral to the building's architectural merit.

Since 1966, the public has enjoyed uninterrupted access to this remarkable space, which remains largely unaltered. FRIENDS, along with Docomomo US, believes these interiors hold significance not just locally, but nationally and internationally.

The potential sale of the Whitney Museum raises concerns. A change in ownership could threaten both public access and the building's integrity. FRIENDS respectfully requests the Landmarks Preservation Commission to promptly evaluate the Whitney Museum's unique interior spaces for landmark designation. This action is necessary to safeguard this architectural treasure before potential alterations by a future owner with different priorities.

Sincerely,

Nuha Ansari  
Executive Director