

ICOMOS



International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage

18 July 2013

M. Patrice Zagamé Président, Novartis France

Foncière Richelieu S.A.S.

BP 410

92845 RUEIL MALMAISON cedex

FRANCE

By Email: patrice.zagame@novartis.com; joe.jimenez@novartis.com

Ref: Reply regarding proposed redevelopment Novartis France headquarters, 14 Boulevard Richelieu, Rueil-Malmaison, France

Dear M Zagame,

Thank you for your letter of 15th July responding to the concerns expressed by the International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C) of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) about the proposal to demolish parts of the Novartis France office complex in Rueil-Malmaison.

As we initially indicated to you, the threat of demolition of this important building complex has been drawn to ICOMOS's attention by citizens of France and wider interests; with increasing voice in recent weeks. We wish to advise that the formal Heritage Alert by Docomomo France has now been assessed and approved by the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage. The Heritage Alert review of the Novartis France Office complex was undertaken by ISC20C members from Sweden, South Africa, the USA and Australia, who engaged with local citizens and have now reviewed the available documentary evidence. It has concluded that there would be serious adverse impacts on the Novartis France precinct and the modern heritage of France, should partial demolition proceed, and an International Heritage Alert has been issued today. It will be updated as further information comes to hand, and we would welcome input from Novartis.

ISC20C believes that it is practically possible to reconsider the current proposal, to eliminate its adverse heritage impacts by retaining and re-using the building, respecting the significance of the site and demonstrating the social responsiveness of the Novartis to the mounting national and international concern about threats to the architectural heritage of the twentieth century.

The ISC20C represents international heritage professionals who are engaged daily in the practical realities of living conservation, so we are very cognizant of an employers need to provide employees with optimal working environments and the need to adapt heritage buildings to meet code requirements. Indeed this is what Sandoz did in commissioning Zehrfuss, Burkhardt, Prouve and Vilmorin to adapt the historic Richelieu park land in 1962. A solution was found then to retain the significance of the park remains and to provide outstanding working environments in contemporary structures.

President: 78 George Street Redfern, NSW AUSTRALIA 2016 isc20c@icomos-isc20c.org



We believe that further consideration of how to integrate conservation objectives with Novartis current workplace and code requirements could resolve a better outcome for the modern heritage of France. We would respectfully ask if a meeting with representatives of the ICOMOS ISC20C and your architects M Berger, might be facilitated to discuss such possibilities?

The Novartis Board, could thus demonstrate responsive corporate responsibility to the heritage of France and indeed to modern architecture internationally.

In this way, a solution which achieves all objectives might again today make the Novartis office complex an exemplary lesson in contemporary architecture in an historically sensitive site. A film and archival documentation of it can never take the place of the real landmark.

The French representative of the ICOMOS ISC20C Ms Christiane Schmuckle Mollard and Ms Agnes Cailliau of Docomomo France would be pleased to have an opportunity to discuss this matter further with Novartis and Mr Berger. Such a meeting could explore the possibilities of Novartis achieving its aspirations “to contribute to the history and renewal of French architecture” by honouring the contribution of the old and the new.

Yours faithfully,

Sheridan
President, **International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage**

Burke

Copies to:

- M. Joseph Jimenez CEO Novartis AG
- M. Patrick Ollier Deputy-Mayor of Rueil-Malmaison
- Mme Aurélie Filippetti Ministère de la Culture
- Mr Gustavo Araoz, President ICOMOS
- Ms Kirsti Kovanen, Secretary General, ICOMOS
- Ms Gaia Jungleblodt, ICOMOS Secretariat
- M. Pierre Antoine Gatier, President ICOMOS France
- Ms Ana Tostões, President, DoCoMo Mo International
- M. Albert Dubler, President, International Union of Architects
- Ms Christiane Schmuckle Mollard, ISC20C