



ICOMOS FRANCE

The impending destruction of the Novartis - Sandoz headquarters, located 14 Boulevard Richelieu, in Rueil-Malmaison, West of Paris, will deprive us of a remarkable element of the architecture and landscape of the twentieth century. Built in 1968, it is barely 45 years old, and displays a stylish modernity remarkably designed and implemented by the architects Martin Burckhardt & Bernard Zehrfuss, assisted by the ingenious constructive thinking of Jean Prouvé (1901-1984). Conceived in order to respect the harmony of the wooden landscape and the pond, the extreme unweighting of the structure and the façade panels is a witness of the latest –and patented- improvements by Jean Prouvé in the implementation of curtain walls in aluminum and glass products.

Two 4-storey parallelepipeds offices and laboratories and a polygonal restaurant (interiors by Charlotte Perriand) were gently inserted into the remains of the old castle of Richelieu (17th century), rebuilt in the 19th century, in a landscape lightly remodeled by Vilmorin including a large pond involved in the supply of the river Seine.

A new project, totally incomprehensible regarding sustainable development, is supposed to start on the 10th of July 2013. It is motivated on the grounds of the obsolescence of the existing buildings and by the signature of a famous architect Patrick Berger.

This significant complex is an example of the creative genius of post-war boom French and Swiss architectural engineering and it justifies the dissemination of an international alert. The alert must be an instrument to ask the building owners, national and local authorities to do whatever needed to save this complex of high architectural value and representative of the 60's.

ICOMOS France supports the international alert aiming at safeguarding this outstanding site of universal value.

The following national and international organisations support our action: Docomomo international, Docomomo France, la Société pour la Protection des Paysages et de l'Esthétique de la France, Vieilles Maisons Françaises, Paris Historique, ICOMOS France.

Paris, July 4th, 2013

For ICOMOS France
Christian Mourisard
Vice-président

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ch. Mourisard'.