

# ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES  
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES  
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS  
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

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## Dobrovic's Generalstab, Letter of Concern

Dear President, Dear Ministers,

ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites) and its International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C) is concerned by reports of potential threats facing **Nikola Dobrovic's Generalstab** in Belgrade, Serbia - originally the General Staff Headquarters and Ministry of Defense of Yugoslavia. Set on a prominent urban site, the complex's twin-buildings Sutjeska I and II, clad in dark red and white stone, descend in a stepped manner in an evocation of the canyon of the Sutjeska River, setting of one of the most significant battles of World War II.

The complex represents a significant achievement of Serbian and Yugoslav architecture and is the only Belgrade work of Nikola Dobrović, one of the most prominent Yugoslav architects, theorists, and educators of the twentieth century—a member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts and the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Serving as military headquarters until 1999, the edifices were well-maintained until the NATO bombing that year caused significant structural damage to Building Sutjeska I (headquarters of the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army). However, only a small part of the square footage of Building Sutjeska II (Federal Ministry of Defense) was affected.

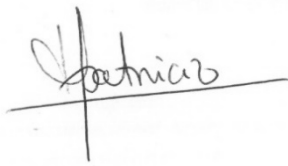
It is understood that the Generalstab has remained vacant since 1999 and was listed as a cultural monument by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2005, in recognition of the Generalstab's national cultural heritage significance (Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia No 115 (Decision on recognizing the General Staff Building and the Ministry of Defense for the Cultural Monument, 05 No 633-8111/2005, in Belgrade, December 22, 2005).

In recent weeks there were reports, also relayed in the Serbian press, on plans to delist and demolish the complex in favor of a hotel development. News has emerged today that the directors of the two Institutes for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of the Republic of Serbia and the City of Belgrade have chosen to resign rather than bow to pressure to sign the orders to remove the Generalstab from the list of protected monuments.

ICOMOS expresses its dismay at the pressure brought on these cultural heritage professionals and its strong opposition to this planned delisting and demolition, which sets a terrible precedent for cultural heritage as a whole in your country. We join the many Serbian cultural heritage organizations, such as the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Belgrade, the Society of Serbian Architects, ICOMOS Serbia, Docomomo Serbia, Serbia Nostra, the Society of Serbian Conservators etc. - who are calling to maintain the Generalstab's listed status and ensure its conservation and reuse.

The cultural heritage professionals in our International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century heritage stand ready to assist ICOMOS Serbia in developing strategies for conserving and reusing this important twentieth-century architectural complex.

Yours sincerely,



Teresa Patricio  
President of ICOMOS



Grethe Pontoppidan  
Co-president  
ICOMOS International Scientific  
Committee on Twentieth Century  
Heritage

**The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)** is a non-governmental, not for profit international organisation, committed to furthering the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of the world's cultural heritage. The ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C) focuses on promoting the conservation of twentieth-century places and advocating for sites that are at risk due to neglect, disfiguration and/or development pressure. [www.icomos.org](http://www.icomos.org)

cc

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