

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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Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla
Chairman
Governing Council
Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad
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Dear Mr. Birla

ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, is the preeminent organization representing professionals involved in conserving the world's heritage. With a membership of over 10,500 members from 153 countries, ICOMOS advocates for the preservation and conservation of buildings and sites of international significance and is an advisory body to the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC 20C) membership is comprised of experts from across the globe with special expertise in identifying, assessing, and appropriately treating heritage of the modern era.

To add to the already substantial international and national outpouring of alarm, ICOMOS is issuing a worldwide **Heritage Alert**, our most consequential expressional of concern, to amplify awareness of the threat to the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIMA) Old Campus and draw urgent attention to the eminent risk of loss of the internationally significant buildings that make up the cultural landscape designed by Louis I. Kahn with his team of Indian architects and engineers.

The IIMA is to be commended for the successful restoration of the Library Building and Dormitory D-15, for its decision to withdraw the tender notice for the demolition of the Old Campus dormitories and redevelopment of the dormitory site, and for its willingness to reevaluate the IIMA's approach to the future of the Kahn designed dormitories. The dormitory buildings are significant in their own right. However, they contribute to the equally significant collection of Kahn buildings that comprise the Old Campus. From a campus planning and architectural perspective, the IIMA Old Campus holds great international importance and significance, as for instance do Thomas Jefferson's University of Virginia Academic Village (1817-1828) in the USA, inscribed in the World Heritage List in 1987 as well as the modern World Heritage listed Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (1949-1952) in Mexico City inscribed in 2007.

All Kahn designed buildings on the IIMA Old Campus are inextricably interconnected. The dormitory buildings are architecturally outstanding. However, absent the context of the larger Kahn planned campus and buildings the significance of the dormitories is substantively diminished. Conversely, if the integrity of the dormitories as a group and individually is lost or diminished, the integrity of the Kahn campus plan, landscape and other Kahn buildings is likewise degraded. It is imperative the IIMA develop its approach to the future of the dormitories by undertaking a Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for the entire Kahn Old Campus – a plan that identifies and preserves the integrity of the individually significant structures and features and the whole of the cultural landscape defined as the Kahn planned campus.

The requirements for modern dormitories providing reasonable student comfort in the Old Campus, the pressures of additional housing to support Institute growth, the challenges of acquiring land for expansion and the responsibilities for the long-term maintenance of the Kahn buildings and other significant campus features are substantial, real and in fact not unusual pressures on the conservation of many historically significant properties. A Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan should not only address the conservation of the significant structures and features, but it should also address the current pragmatic issues identified above. Of critical importance is the approach to decision making regarding the future of the Old Campus. The IIMA is the steward of this unique asset, the Kahn Old Campus. To be proper stewards, the IIMA must place the identification, preservation, and conservation of the important attributes of the Old Campus as fundamental objective when establishing the long-term capacity, treatment, maintenance, and management of the Old Campus.

This approach requires a team with conservation firm in the lead and with the values, knowledge, and experience to sensitively and appropriately address the modern-day pressures that precipitated the tender request while retaining and preserving the integrity of the Old Campus plan and buildings.

This approach does not dictate that no changes are possible within the Kahn Old Campus. Rather, it establishes a use and design context and process for evaluating the scope and impact of possible and appropriate changes to meet Institute objectives within the historically significant Old Campus boundaries.

An original dormitory room in the University of Virginia Academic Village are today the residence of choice and a highest honor for a University of Virginia student. Not because the rooms are modern with all the features of a newly constructed dormitory but because of the intangible link to the values and heritage of the university that shapes a student's life like few other experiences. This quality cannot be purchased. The IIMA Old Campus shares these qualities with the Jefferson Academic Village. It was the vision and foresight of the IIMA founders, the international collaboration in its conception and the planning and architectural genius of Louis I Kahn and his Indian team of architects and engineers that make the IIMA Old Campus so unique and internationally cherished.

Thank you for your consideration of this plea. ICOMOS, through its International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage, offers its full scope of expertise in support of preserving your exceptional Old Campus, an international icon.

Respectfully,



Jack Pyburn, FAIA
President
ICOMOS International Scientific Committee
on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC 20C)



Mario Santana Quintero
Secretary General of ICOMOS

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