

14 September, 2009

Mr Sten Nordin
Mayor of Stockholm
Stockholms Stad, Stadhuset
SE – 10535 – Stockholm
SWEDEN

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Ref: Stockholm City Library – Concern over demolition / construction project

Dear Mr Mayor,

At its meeting held in Sydney, Australia on 7th July 2009, the International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage of ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, was most concerned to learn that the process of architectural competition and planning for the extension of the most outstanding and protected Stockholm City Library complex may be concluding with a proposal to demolish its annexes and replace them with new buildings, which are significantly out of scale with the original historic landmark ensemble.

The Sydney meeting enjoyed the presence of Gustavo Araoz, President of ICOMOS International, Maristella Casciato, President of Docomomo International, and Louise Cox, President of the International Union of Architects, UIA, who shared an equal concern.

We agreed to issue an international ICOMOS Heritage Alert regarding the project. The Heritage Alert process uses the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee's international professional and public networks to promote the conservation of Twentieth Century Heritage and draw attention to the threats which it confronts and to promote good conservation solutions.

The Stockholm City Library, a work by architect Gunnar Asplund, is an exceptional building and an internationally applauded landmark in the history of architecture in the Modern Age. It also forms a remarkable ensemble with its annexes and landscape which are also protected under Swedish heritage legislation. We note that Gunnar Asplund is the author of Stockholm's Woodland cemetery – *Skogskyrkogården* – one of Sweden's 14 sites listed under UNESCO's World Heritage Convention for their outstanding universal value.

The International Scientific Committee on 20th Century Heritage of ICOMOS is very concerned over the current proposal. Whilst appreciating the attention paid by your administration to improving the functionality of the library for contemporary society, we believe that implementing the current proposal would have serious adverse impacts on . this very important place of cultural heritage significance for Sweden and for the world. This loss through the demolition of the library's protected annexes and the dwarfing and marginalisation of the original library by this proposed new construction is not an acceptable solution in heritage terms.

Beside the architectural and heritage loss, this would be seen as a sign of failure of the widely acknowledged commitment of Stockholm and, indeed Swedish society and legislation for the protection and long-term conservation of its cultural heritage and historic sites of all periods, be they ancient or modern.

The world looks to Sweden for inspiration in modern architecture and excellence in heritage conservation practice. However, the undersigned international presidents of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), the International Union of Architects (UIA) the president of The Documentation and Conservation of Modern Movement (Docomomo) and the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage are unified in their concern about this proposal and urge the City of Stockholm to reconsider the current proposal to eliminate its adverse impacts and thus demonstrate its leadership in resolving appropriate conservation design solutions.

We urge the City of Stockholm to suspend the current proceeding of this proposal and to engage in a process to ensure that the goals of functional upgrades are met with due respect to the heritage significance and maximum retention of this outstanding landmark of 20th Century architecture and its setting. ICOMOS, its partners and members of its International Committee on 20th Century Heritage offer the City of Stockholm and the Swedish authorities their assistance in taking on this truly challenging approach, the only one to be considered for such a masterpiece of global influence.

Our representatives would be pleased to have an opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Yours faithfully,



Sheridan Burke
President, ICOMOS International Scientific Committee, Twentieth Century Heritage



Louise Cox
President, International Union of Architects, UIA



Maristella Casciato
President, Docomomo International