

For Immediate Release - November 20, 2020

**INTERNATIONAL HERITAGE ALERT LAUNCHED BY ICOMOS.
Regarding the Stadio Artemio Franchi by Pier Luigi Nervi, Florence, Italy**

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and its International Scientific Committee on Twentieth Century Heritage (ISC20C) in collaboration with Pier Luigi Nervi Project Association, has released an **International Heritage Alert** regarding the Stadio Artemio Franchi (1929-32) by Pier Luigi Nervi, Florence, Italy. The Heritage Alert is in reaction to the announcement on November 16, 2020, that the Fiorentina Football Club, with the support of the Municipality of Florence, has requested authorization from the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage to demolish in whole or in part the Stadio Artemio Franchi. We understand that this has been done pursuant to the recently passed law that specifically exempts sporting facilities from the strict requirements of the Italian Cultural Heritage Code.

Nervi's Stadio Franchi was the first of his structures to achieve international acclaim and it is representative of a key moment in his career as an engineer and builder. Constructed in two phases as the home for the Fiorentina football club, it was heralded for its dramatically-curved, cantilevered grandstand roof, its streamlined Torre Maratona, and its helicoidal staircases. It also featured advancements in concrete placement and moment framing that showed Nervi's fluency in construction and structural theory. It also marked the transition of his contracting firm into a fully integrated company that married design and construction. The significance of the building has been recognized by its being listed as an Italian National Heritage site in May 2020.

With the exception of a few minor additions made for the 1990 World Cup, the ninety year old stadium has been well-preserved. However, in the Fall of 2020 it was announced that Fiorentina, in conjunction with the city of Florence, were planning a new stadium on the site. Parallel legislation in the Italian Parliament, in September 2020, removed conservation and preservation protections for sports facilities ("Sbloccastadi," or "Stadium Unblocking"), and there are concerns that this legislation was intended, in part, to directly remove protections for the Stadio Franchi, which became a listed cultural site in May 2020. The city and team have cited structural and comfort issues as reasons for demolishing the stadium, however these have been disputed by the Pier Luigi Project Foundation, which believes the structure could readily be preserved and updated with minimal interventions.



External view of the Stadium shortly after its completion, © Ferdinando Barsotti, 1932.



The grandstand under construction, unknown photographer, 1930.

The Stadio Franchi is an acknowledged masterpiece of concrete construction and of modern structural design; its cantilevered roof and helical staircases are iconic examples of the developing school of structural architecture, published globally in journals at the time and in histories of modern architecture ever since.

ICOMOS appeals for the preservation of the Stadio Artemio Franchi, believing that it would be possible to both preserve the existing structure while providing the modern facilities desired by the team and city. The investment and the effort to preserve architectural masterpieces in concrete are widely supported and achieved in many places around the world.

ICOMOS appeals for immediate action to preserve the Stadio Artemio Franchi as an internationally outstanding work of integrated structural design that has continuing potential to host international sporting and cultural events.

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Press-ready images from the PLN Project are available from:

<https://bit.ly/333vJYo>