

IIM Ahmedabad

January 01, 2021

Dear Stakeholders of the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad,

Greetings!

Many of you have been writing in ever since the Expression of Interest was put up for the design of the student housing at the main campus of the institute. You have sought to remind us that the dormitories designed by Louis Kahn are a cultural legacy and that these buildings are to be seen as an integral part of the ensemble of buildings that constitute the campus. Thank you – we acknowledge your sentiments and appreciate the underlying passion you have for the institute. We are acutely cognizant of the place that the institute and its architecture occupy in the larger community, and of the responsibility that comes with being custodians of the legacy that Louis Kahn bestowed on us.

It is well known that the buildings have undergone dilapidation and structural deterioration with periodic detachments of parts of it in fragments. We learned that the bricks used were what is termed “second class bricks”, which have grown brittle and weak. Load bearing areas have become particularly vulnerable. The masonry has also been damaged by collection of water. The reinforcement bars are not protected by concrete casing. The earthquake in 2001 caused extensive damage. As the buildings got increasingly unsafe, the institute invited international restoration consultants Peter Inskip and Stephen Gee who advised that we should on an experimental basis first restore one building. Based on that experience, we could decide how best to take up further work in the other buildings. We engaged one of the best team of conservation architects – SNK (Somaya & Kalappa Consultants) – and restored Dorm 15 and the Library.

**On completion of the restoration experiment, an independent structural consultant opined that the restored dorm is unsafe.** The structural consultant of the conservation architect on the other hand opined that the dorm will resist moderate earthquakes with limited damage but there will be significant damage with severe earthquakes. The opinion with regard to the library was different where it was stated that it would withstand a severe earthquake with minor damage.

**Overall, the expert opinions we have received have not satisfactorily allayed our concerns about the long-term structural stability of the restored dorm. Meanwhile, the condition of the other dorms continues to deteriorate – there are slabs falling from the roof of the dorms with potentially damaging consequences for the safety of the residents.**

The institute recognizes that it has a cultural legacy to nurture. At the same time, there can be no compromise on the safety of the residents of the dorms. Taking into account expert opinions, consultations with a range of other stakeholders and balancing all considerations, a blended approach was considered appropriate. The core of the Louis Kahn buildings - the library, the faculty wings, and the class room complex – and the dorms on the periphery of the complex (Dorms 16-18) would be restored, while the other dorms would be reconstructed. Following this, the Expression of Interest was put out. The entire process has involved deep

deliberations at the Building Committee and Board of Governors over the last few years.

However, we are sensitive to the feedback from some stakeholders who are not in agreement with this approach. We are therefore withdrawing the Expression of Interest that was put out. We will deliberate on the feedback received, re-evaluate the options, consult the best global conservation and structural experts, and chart out a course of action, which the institute will communicate in due course. We seek your support as we try to find the best answer to the issues of how to cater to our responsibility to a significant legacy, the safety of those who utilize the buildings as well as being in tune with the needs of the future.

Thank You.

Chairman and Members of the Board of Governors of IIM Ahmedabad