

Lisbon, 8th January 2019

Subject: Heritage in Danger – Support Request
The Dome at Nautilus Motor Inn, 1953-1954, Richard Buckminster Fuller, Peter Floyd and William Wainwright, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, US

Docomomo International – the International Committee for Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighborhoods of the Modern Movement - wishes to draw your attention for the alarming future of the Dome at Nautilus Motor Inn, in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, a rare and delicate structure designed by Fuller. Built between 1953 and 1954, the Dome was conceived to serve as a dining room of the restaurant of the Nautilus Motor Inn.

Docomomo believes that the Dome possesses a great historical and cultural value, as it is the oldest surviving Fuller-designed geodesic dome in the world and the sole instance of such Dome constructed with wood framing members. It is also a unique example of a Fuller dome employing the rhombic system, as all subsequent domes employed triangular panel systems.

The Dome and its attached wing structures are important as an ensemble that enables the Dome to function. However, in the new land developer's proposed plan there is no room for the wings. The new development is too large for the site and too close to the Dome: the proposed structure will sit only 18 feet (5.4 meters) from the Dome and will tower over it, its scale is out of proportion with any of its surroundings. This, of course, compromises the importance of setting in defining the significance of an historic property.

These surroundings are most closely defined – as they have been for over fifty years – by a series of modest, mid-century modern hotels, including the Nautilus hotel, designed and developed by architect Gunnar Peterson who commissioned Fuller to design. The Nautilus has unfortunately been left to decay to ruin, but two other properties – the Tree House Lodge and the Sands of Time, remain.

Docomomo International urges all relevant institutions to take this issue very seriously, to join efforts towards the protection of this unique modern landmark and halt any irreversible works done on this delicate monument.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Docomomo International in case you need any guidance. Docomomo International is certain that the Dome at Woods Hole organization is skilled to undertake the necessary studies to achieve the best outcome regarding this outstanding and sensitive building. Looking forward for your best attention to this case.

Yours sincerely,



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