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April 27, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

We are writing to share our concern over the pending sale and demolition of the former Baxter International Headquarters. We understand through our chapter leaders at Docomomo US/Chicago that a developer is planning to remove these buildings from the site in order to build speculative warehouses. The complex and buildings designed by Skidmore Owings and Merrill are architecturally significant and were developed at a prominent time when corporate campuses were the focus of many of these internationally renowned firms. The Baxter campus retains an impressive amount of this original design, as well as a landscape, which in itself could be significant.

We believe that the demolition of these structures and landscape would be a significant loss to the community and the potential for reuse of this building, rather than warehouses, may not even be needed anymore in this changing economy. We would like to point out that the successful reuse of significant corporate campuses and buildings is taking place across the country.

Eero Saarinen's iconic Bell Labs Headquarters in New Jersey was reimaged as Bell Works in 2019 and is now on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to being converted into commercial space, the building and landscape include a new residential development, a local library branch, dining options and a forthcoming hotel.

Likewise, the Summit at Danbury in Connecticut is converting the former Union Carbide corporate office complex with more than two million square feet into a mixture of commercial and residential. Not only are they creatively reusing the building, but they are highlighting and attracting new tenants with the historic nature of this Kevin Roche John Dinkeloo design from 1982.

The former Armstrong Rubber/Pirelli building in New Haven, CT recently reopened as Hotel Marcel. The project is on track to become the first net-zero and first passive house hotel in the country in addition to now being listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The New York Times included New Haven as one of the 52 places to visit in 2023 in part because of the hotel. Our National Symposium this June will take place in New Haven and in 2020 our Symposium committee identified corporate office buildings in Deerfield as a potential tour offering. That event did not happen because of the pandemic but we welcome the opportunity to assist you with identifying the opportunities that reusing corporate office campuses can bring to the community.

We appreciate the planning commission's careful review of this project.

Sincerely,



Liz Waytkus
Executive Director



Todd Grover
Vice President Advocacy