

MEDIA RELEASE LES ARTS GSTAAD

PLANNING PERMISSION PROCESS, 2^{N D} PUBLICATION SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Board of the «Les Arts Gstaad» Foundation is delighted that progress is being made on finalising the project for a cultural centre in Gstaad: at the end of 2015 the project, revised in essential respects, will be sufficiently advanced for it to be made available for a second public inspection and an application for planning permission. This will allow the public to reconsider the «Les Arts Gstaad» project in 2016. The municipal assembly will then decide whether it should be implemented. New donors Dr. Stephan Schmidheiny and Aline Foriel-Destezet have given an undertaking to make substantial financial contributions. Three new well-known people have joined the patrons committee.

The Board of the «Les Arts Gstaad» (LAG) Foundation and the municipal authorities of Saanen have agreed that the development of the project for the cultural centre «Les Arts Gstaad» should be combined with the related infrastructure projects. The local population will be given a second opportunity to inspect the plans and consider the optimised project for the cultural centre before it is put to the vote at the municipal assembly.

2nd Publication Municipal Assembly

The Board of the «Les Arts Gstaad» Foundation and the municipal authorities have decided to make the development plan for the three separate structures with three different owners available for a second public inspection in spring 2016. This will be done after the projects have been assessed by the municipal and cantonal authorities. The various parts of the whole, i.e. access tunnel (owner: municipality of Saanen), railway project (owner: MOB) and cultural centre (owner: Les Arts Gstaad Foundation), will be assessed simultaneously in one combined planning application. Once this has been completed, objections raised have been dealt with and financing is guaranteed, the authorities will ask a municipal assembly to vote on the implementation of the project, the corresponding loans and the necessary contracts.

The improvements to the project made by the architect, Rudy Riciotti, and his team in recent months have brought the «Les Arts Gstaad» project to maturity. To be more specific, these changes which relate to the perimeter of the site, the arrangement of the various parts of the structure on the site and the spatial concept inside the building have considerably improved the

project. They allow for a space-saving construction method. All these changes should be interpreted as project amendments in response to initial objections. The first public inspection (Development plan 79: «Les Arts / Ried») allowed conflicts to be analysed and solutions sought. This shake-out process demonstrated where, in a second round, adjustments would be needed. Therefore, the local people are being given a second chance to consider the projectzeigte – and to express their concerns with respect to these adjustments by raising objections and making suggestions for improvements.

«Sensitivity towards surroundings and environment »

The foundation board emphasises the importance of the support which this project has received from local business people, the tourist sector, regional associations and politicians as well as voters. **J. Markus Kappeler, chairman** of the foundation board, states, «We have done our utmost to optimise «Les Arts Gstaad» as far as possible before it is put to the final vote. The concerns and objections of neighbouring residents provided the stimulus and – wherever possible – we have reduced costs. The quality of the project and of the building remains as high as ever, in spite of the more compact construction method.»

Rudy Ricciotti, architect, comments on the current situation : «It takes time to implement an exceptional project and adapt it in response to criticism. That is both good and positive. The building now sits more naturally in the slope and is more compact. This also makes it more economical.» LAG displays «great sensitivity for both surroundings and the environment. The cultural centre is not pretentious but blends well with the unspoiled landscape. It has been designed for Gstaad and Gstaad alone».

Substantial Financial Contributions from Well-Known People

Investments of roughly 120 million Swiss francs have been budgeted for the cultural centre. This sum includes the additional costs incurred during the last phase of the project: the temporary rise in the ground water level in May 2015 gives rise to additional costs of approx. 10 million francs. A further 10 million francs have been budgeted for additional incidental costs. The cost of traffic infrastructure within the building amounting to 15 million Swiss francs will be met by the municipality (car park, bus terminal and underpass).

So far, donors have either made available or pledged approx. 40 million Swiss francs towards the development of the project and the construction «Les Arts Gstaad».

In recent months the foundation board has presented the project to a number of interested parties and other potential donors. It has remained true to the principle of raising the necessary funds for the construction of «Les Arts Gstaad», from private individuals or corporate entities in addition to the financial contribution from the municipality for the traffic infrastructure. The foundation board is delighted that the family of well-known Swiss entrepreneur Dr. Stephan Schmidheiny will make a substantial financial contribution to the «Les Arts Gstaad» project. **Stephan Schmidheiny** states: «The Saanenland is a unique part of Switzerland. The beauty of its Alps, its rich cultural traditions and the open-mindedness of its people are the ideal breeding ground for a project such as «Les Arts Gstaad». The cultural centre will provide a venue for culture lovers, tourists and local people to experience extraordinary encounters with the arts. I am happy that my wife Viktoria – a Viennese and passionate music lover – and I can contribute to the realisation of this visionary undertaking.» Another well-known benefactor, Aline Foriel-Destezet, has also pledged to lend her financial and personal support to Les Arts Gstaad. **Aline Foriel-Destezet** states, «My family and I feel privileged to have a home in the Saanenland and it fills me with joy that I have been able to sponsor Menuhin Festival concerts for many years. The quality of the tent, however, is that of a temporary solution which neither artists nor audience can be expected to put up with for much longer. Rudy Ricciotti's wonderful project now deserves the support of all of us. Artists, visitors and local people should be able to meet at a beautiful and inspiring venue. I am delighted to make a commitment towards making LAG become a reality.»

Prominent New Members of the Patrons Committee

Viktoria Schmidheiny will help to support and spread information about the project as a new member of the Patrons Committee. Jonas Kaufmann, tenor from Munich, and Michael S. Bach, head of the Music School Saanenland-Obersimmental, Saanen have also both joined the Patrons Committee.

The Foundation Board

J. Markus Kappeler-Steffen (chairman), Marco Strahm (vice chairman), Stephan Jaggi, Hans Ulrich Märki, Jobst Wagner, Tetiana Bersheda.

Kurt Aellen heads the Building Committee and Hans-Ueli Tschanz is responsible for fundraising.

The Patrons Committee

Michael S. Bach, Cecilia Bartoli, Andreas Hurni, Jonas Kaufmann, Noëlle de Kostine, Bethli Küng, Aldo Kropf, Werner Luginbühl, Joachim Sartorius, Viktoria Schmidheiny, Rolf T. Schneider, Erich von Siebenthal, Christoph Vitali.

Les Arts Gstaad

The cultural centre Les Arts Gstaad is intended to be a venue for art exhibitions, concerts (a hall seating max. 1200 will replace the present Menuhin Festival concert tent) and other public events. The goal of Les Arts Gstaad is to consolidate the reputation of the Saanenland as a world famous destination and to make it more attractive all year round. In February 2010 the foundation board and an international jury chose the project designed by Rudy Ricciotti, holder of the French Grand Prix national d'architecture, as the winner of the competition. The cultural infrastructure of Les Arts Gstaad is to be privately financed; the public sector – provided the municipal assembly votes in favour of the project in 2016 – will finance the traffic infrastructure within the building. www.lesartsgstaad.com

Rudy Ricciotti

The architect's design allows the Les Arts Gstaad building to nestle in the slope in harmony with the landscape and the character of the village. By cladding the cubic volume with tree trunks he has succeeded in creating a striking visual point of reference. Ricciotti was responsible for designing the Pavillon Noir in Aix-en-Provence, the Musée Jean Cocteau in Menton, the new wing dedicated to Islamic art at the Louvre in Paris and the Musée national des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée in Marseille. He was also responsible for the remodelling of the Nikolai Concert Hall in Potsdam, Berlin. www.rudyricciotti.com

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