

THE JAMES BALDWIN CULTURAL CENTER IN SAINT-PAUL DE VENCE

PROSPECTUS
OCTOBER 2018



Photo Alain Cinquini

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This prospectus outlines a strategy for the creation of the Saint-Paul de Vence James Baldwin Cultural Center, to be located on the site of Baldwin’s former villa.

The current owner of the property, the luxury real estate development company la Socri, is experiencing significant difficulty in the construction phase of their planned apartment complex. The project has been the subject of local outrage since its inception for its historically inappropriate nature, and the company is now being held firmly accountable by local government for multiple and serious violations to its building permit.

La Socri is currently vulnerable to judicial action, further government oversight, and negative publicity, all of which together increases the likelihood of dampening future sales and putting the project’s financing at risk.

It is in this context that we will pursue negotiations toward the purchase of what remains of James Baldwin’s house and the 4 hectares upon which it sits.

Central to the success of this plan is the development of an acquisition fund, to be held in escrow contingent upon the outcome of negotiations. This prospectus includes an invitation to join a circle of founding donors who would pledge resources toward this fund.

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* confidential. available upon request



November 2017, preparing to pour the foundation

As soon as this fund is raised--or at least a few leadership donors come forward--we will propose talks between la Socri, the city of St. Paul de Vence, and the French Ministry of Culture, with the goal that the company sell the property at fair market value (a purchase price to be determined in negotiations) to the newly established Baldwin Center Foundation.*

Once the property is acquired, the Foundation would launch a capital campaign for renovation and restoration, ultimately creating The Saint-Paul de Vence James Baldwin Cultural Center, which would include an interactive museum, an academic and cultural conference center, and most importantly a residence for writers, as was Baldwin's wish.

Incorporated as a French nonprofit association (loi 1901) in May 2017, Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin began as a watchdog organization and has since expanded its mission to employ the arts to celebrate the life of James Baldwin in St. Paul de Vence. Les Amis proposes to manage a two-year start up phase that will result in the launch of the James Baldwin Cultural Center in the year 2020, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of Baldwin's arrival in Saint Paul de Vence.



* name pending legal review



November 2013, before the demoltion of Baldwin's wing

CURRENT STATUS OF THE BALDWIN PROPERTY



detail of interior fresco,
before destruction.

The terrain that was home to James Baldwin's house is currently a construction site at which work has been halted by the city of St. Paul de Vence, due to multiple and serious violations to the building permit. Construction is at an advanced stage, with the foundations poured and walls erected for three large apartment buildings that contain 18 units, with an asking price of 1 to 3 million Euros each.

On October 4, 2018, the city of St. Paul rejected a modified building permit submitted by the company, citing most notably an elevator shaft that extends two stories higher than authorized, a foundation poured nearly a meter too high, the new structure cemented to the historic bastide, and the destruction of legally protected frescoes.

The project, named "Le Jardin des Arts," remains in limbo. Its developer, the luxury real estate and hospitality company La Socri, owns multiple properties in France and elsewhere. Their sales agent is Sotheby's International.

Maison Baldwin : chantier arrêté, “trop d’irrégularités”

Le projet immobilier du Jardin des arts à Saint-Paul, conçu par la Socri, a fait l’objet d’un procès-verbal pour « de nombreuses violations du permis de construire ». Le parquet est saisi et les travaux stoppés

Le chantier du bastide des arts, à l’est de la ville de Saint-Paul-de-Vence, est toujours en cours. La maison qu’il s’agit de construire a été arrêtée à cause de « nombreuses violations du permis de construire ». C’est un nouveau développement dans la controverse entourant la maison bâtie par le célèbre écrivain américain James Baldwin, dont de nombreuses Saint-Paulaises souhaitent la restauration et qu’une association locale souhaite la rendre accessible au public et aux handicapés, en sa totalité.

« Visiblement, on s’est aperçu que ce ne sont pas les permis de construire », explique Jean-Pierre Canella, premier adjoint au maire et élu du groupe à l’urbanisme.

Clarté lancée par un voisin

« C’est un voisin qui a donné l’alerte. Les murs semblent trop hauts et une construction neuve avait été accolée à ce qui reste de la maison Baldwin », commente de son côté Hélène Biron, une autre voisine, cofondatrice de l’association Les amis de la maison Baldwin, créée en 2017.

« Retour au permis bâtie »

En guise de travail d’urbanisme, en présence de l’architecte des bâtiments de France, nous avons décidé de faire connaître le chantier. Nous avons une réunion de travail en septembre avec le promoteur pour remettre au permis initial.

Un permis de construire pour une maison neuve, et il faut respecter les règles de l’urbanisme. L’association a été créée en 2017. Le chantier devait être arrêté hier soir.

Dans le périmètre des vergers

« De chaque côté on doit de reculer des vergers arborés ».

Et l’écrivain Baldwin ? Et



À gauche, la bastide ancienne, dont une partie a bien été gardée. Mais « une construction neuve avait été accolée au bâtiment ancien » alors que le permis ne prévoyait qu’une pergola. Ce point litigieux semble avoir été presque totalement supprimé. Quant à celle du centre de cette photo, trop haute, elle a été rabattue.



Un projet de taille par rapport à ce qui reste de la bastide... (Photos Sébastien Bouteil)



...mais dont la faible hauteur et le projet paysager faciliteront l’intégration. (Cadrage d’architecture Canen)

« Une bonne nouvelle » La Socri : en vacances

«...», note Jean-Pierre Canella, « de son côté le bastide » a effectivement constaté Jean-Pierre Lemerle, un voisin. Le permis de construire accordé au promoteur ne prévoit qu’une pergola et des obligations très strictes. La Socri ne peut elle-même inscrire au dossier que l’historique historique », comment l’explique en 2016 le Service départemental d’urbanisme. Mais elle est dans le périmètre des 500 mètres des vergers de Saint-Paul qui, eux, sont protégés.

LAURENT GUILLOT laurentguillot@lefigaro.fr

«Inacceptable»

« Certaines des irrégularités sont régularisables par un permis modificatif. D’autres sont irrégulières et doivent être rectifiées, souligne de son côté Luc Serres, architecte de la commune. Le projet de l’architecte Philippe Canen était exemplaire, le promoteur était en train d’en faire quelque chose de générique, indigne de l’histoire de Saint-Paul ».

For years, the local newspaper Nice Matin has followed closely the developments at the Baldwin villa. Their coverage of our watchdog efforts has not only helped mobilize local outrage but has sparked media attention from Le Figaro, France Culture, the Guardian of London, Vanity Fair and the New York Times.

While a portion of the house remains--the original bastide, protected by historic preservation statues--the wing that contained James Baldwin’s office and living quarters was destroyed in 2016. However the existing structure remains important given that it contains the room in which Baldwin spent the final days of his life and where he passed away. The builder’s plans call for that space to be converted to a day spa and pool house. Already the entrance to an underground parking garage has been constructed upon the spot where James Baldwin’s desk once stood.

Restoration and renovation will require a major effort. Once the property is acquired, we will assemble an advisory council made up of investors, architects and historic preservationists, who will determine the extent and feasibility of any new construction and begin the architectural planning process. The renovation effort will be launched via an international capital campaign to be funded by individual philanthropists, private foundations and government support.

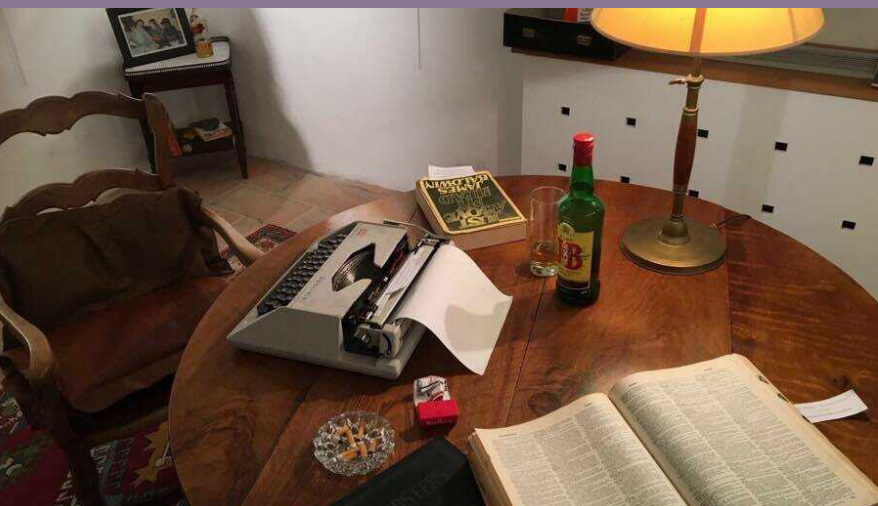
OUR VISION: THE JAMES BALDWIN CULTURAL CENTER

The organizational mission, vision and values of the James Baldwin Cultural Center are to be determined by its eventual board of directors, many of whom will also be its founding donors. For now, we envision elements on the site such as a welcome center, exhibition and performance spaces, and conference facilities.

Most importantly, we hope to fulfill Baldwin's dream that his home become a residency for writers, similar to The MacDowell Colony and Yaddo, artist colonies that hosted him upon multiple occasions and at which he wrote some of his most beloved and important books, such as *Giovanni's Room* and *The Fire Next Time*.

James Baldwin in his beloved
garden, mid 1980s





A recreation of Baldwin's writing table: his typewriter, Unabridged Webster's, author's copy of *Just Above My Head*, cigarettes & scotch

From the 30th Anniversary Retrospective
James Baldwin in St. Paul
December 1-10 2017
L'Espace Verdet, St. Paul de Vence

Many of the objects that were in Baldwin's home are still in St. Paul de Vence, safeguarded for these past 30 years by Jimmy's friends. Furniture, books, vinyl records, clothing, art and mementos have been kept in storage locally as treasured items. These include his unabridged Webster's, his favorite typewriter, his work table, and documents such as draft manuscripts. We envision the return of these objects to the site.

Moreover, in potential collaboration with an academic project already underway by Magdalena Zaborowska at the University of Michigan, working in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture, we envision a multimedia, virtual reality visitor experience that will not only spark a conversation about James Baldwin's revolutionary thought in this part of the world but will also will re-establish St. Paul de Vence as a place for innovation and creativity.



Baldwin Festival poster, 1998. Sponsored by the City of St. Paul, Baldwin's publisher and the Ministry of Culture

INSTITUTIONAL LOGISTICS & CURRENT PROGRAMS

Incorporated as a French nonprofit association (loi 1901) in May 2017, Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin began as a watchdog organization (see Appendix for media clips) and has since expanded its mission to employ the arts to celebrate the life of James Baldwin in the cote d'Azur region.

Les Amis proposes to manage a two-year start up phase that will result in the launch of the Baldwin Cultural Center the year 2020, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of his arrival in Saint Paul de Vence.

PORTRAITS DE JAMES BALDWIN

Artists from the cote d'Azur region loaned original portraits of James Baldwin for the show currently on exhibit at our Welcome Center in St. Paul de Vence.

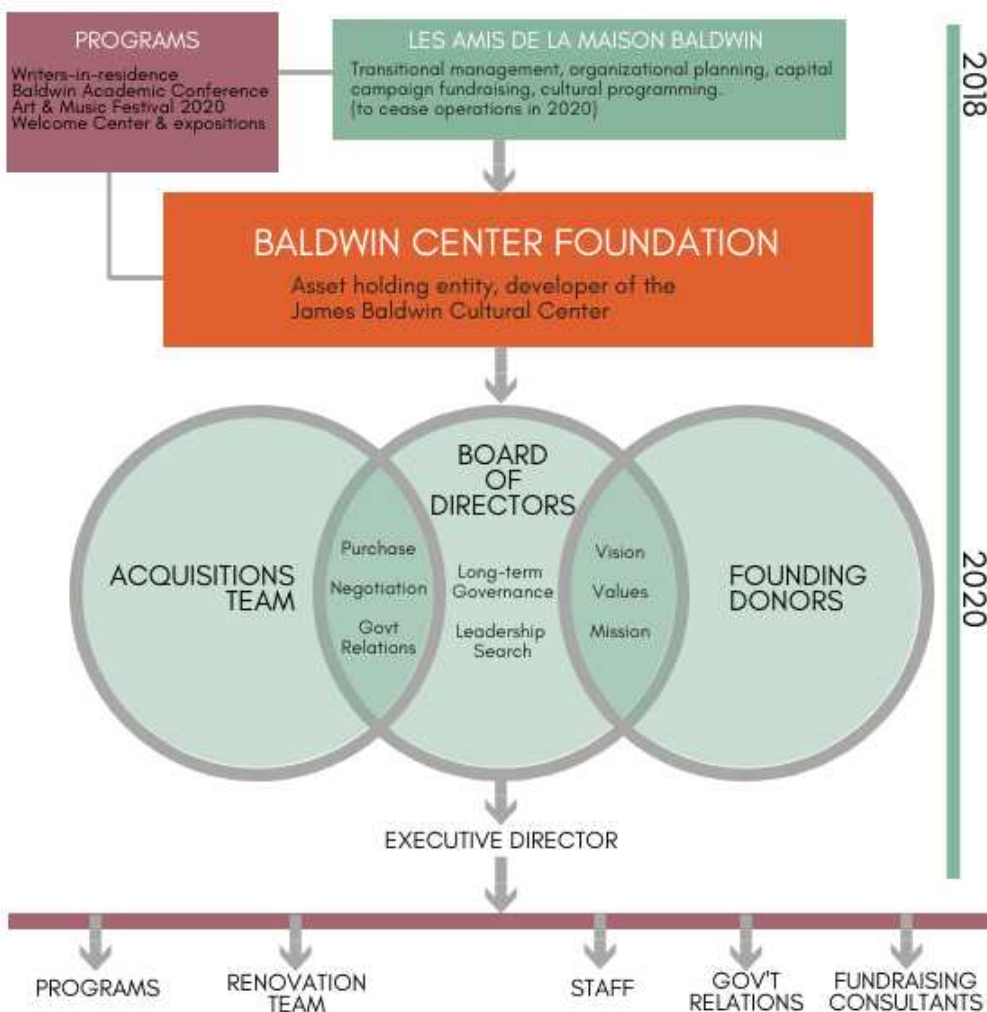
(clockwise from top: Alain Cinquini, Odin Pigelet, Pascal Heranval, Lucien Morrissey)



Les Amis will manage the creation of an organizational infrastructure for the Baldwin Center Foundation, developing and implementing processes for governance, planning, visioning and the establishment of guiding principles.

Until the Foundation is staffed, Les Amis will continue not just its programming but also its watchdog role, lobbying local and federal government for various recognitions and protections (historical markers; *Maison d'illustre* status; UNESCO site) and to seek public funding for restoration.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



WRITER IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM

Selected from an extraordinarily talented pool of nearly 150 applicants, each of these ten emerging writers has already been recognized with top honors, including fellowships from the Cave Canem Foundation, the Lannan Foundation, the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts, the Stegner program at Stanford University, and many more.

Programs

It is critical to the success of the start up phase that we not simply plan and prepare for the Baldwin Cultural Center, but that we offer current programming as well. Groundwork has already been laid for several initiatives. These include:

- 1) the Writer in Residence Program, which will bring 10 writers working in the spirit of James Baldwin to St. Paul for a month-long residency;
- 2) the 2020 James Baldwin Academic Conference, currently in the planning stages in partnership with the University of Manchester, Emory University, the University of Michigan;
- 3) the first annual St. Paul de Vence James Baldwin Art and Music Festival, reprising a similar event held here in 1998; and
- 4) ongoing arts exhibits and public education through our Maison Baldwin Welcome Center, which sees hundreds of visitors each week during the high season.



THE TEAM

Advisors



Helene Roux Jeandheur is the co-founder and vice president of Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin. She was born in Saint-Paul de Vence and grew up around James Baldwin. She is the daughter of Yvonne Roux, owner of the hotel La Colombe d'Or, who was one of Jimmy's closest friends. She was a professional ballet dancer in New York City where she lived for 15 years. She now lives next door to the Baldwin property.



Christopher N. Mbanefo describes himself as a humble seeker of wisdom on a multi-cultural path that embraces humanity. Qualified as an aerospace engineer and professional pilot, he is the Founder-CEO of YASAVA in Switzerland engaged in innovative solutions for aircraft interior design. Currently, with a global team of experts, he is preparing the launch of the OXİ-ZEN Program, which promises to be a major disruptor, by directly linking CO2 Emitters with Convertors on a platform using blockchain technology, thus offering an efficient, transparent and secure solution for CO2 absorption/conversions, while empowering owners and stakeholders of carbon sinks.

Legal Counsel

Cabinet Musso was founded in 1947 by Dominique Musso and is currently headed by his daughter, Maître Catherine Musso. The firm specializes in public land law, principally in expropriation and city planning and incidentally in questions relating to civil, construction, criminal and environmental law. The firm is often called upon to contest or defend public planning decisions. Concerning building permits, the firm has intervened most notably in cases involving the Luxembourg Gardens, the Porte d'Auteuil, the Bois de Boulogne and the Louis Vuitton Foundation. The firm has also represented community organizations defending the environment in the urban planning process for the city of Paris.

Architectural visioning

Matri-Archi is an intersectional collective that brings together African women of color for spatial education and for the empowerment and development of African cities.



historically protected frescoes inside the house; the room where James Baldwin passed away



Management

Shannon Cain is the co-founder and president of Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin. She is an award-winning fiction writer with a background in fundraising and nonprofit executive administration. During her ten-year career working with NGOs, activist groups, and the LGBT community, she founded a fundraising consulting firm that raised millions of dollars for nonprofit agencies and served on the boards of a dozen organizations. She was the executive director of Kore Press, an independent publisher of writing by women; the executive director of the Amazon Foundation, a private philanthropy for women and girls; and the executive director of the Women's Health Education Project, a Harlem-based nonprofit for homeless women.

Her writing has been awarded the Drue Heinz Literature Prize, the O. Henry Prize, two Pushcart Prizes, and a fellowship from the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts. She has taught creative writing at universities in the United States and Europe, and for the past decade has worked as a manuscript consultant and writing coach. She lives in France on a "skills and talents" visa in the arts, which was recently renewed on the basis of her work on the Baldwin house. Her graduate school work focused on Baldwin's short story masterpiece, "Sonny's Blues."

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THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Regulatory: government agencies holding their ground

In August 2018, the urban planning commission for the city of St. Paul de Vence shut down construction at the Baldwin villa, and on October 4 they rejected la Socri's modified building permit, due to the company's refusal to address the many fundamental problems found by inspectors. These include, among other serious infractions, a foundation in one of the three buildings that is 80 cm higher than authorized; a missing courtyard; an elevator shaft that continues two stories higher than plans call for; air conditioning units built into what was to have been a green roof; and serious divergences from the approved landscaping plan. In addition, the regional arts authority, a division of the Ministry of Culture, has cited the company for covering up historically protected frescoes and has ordered them restored.

La Socri is now faced with additional expensive construction delays—at a minimum they must remain shut down until the urban planning commission meets again—and should they choose to continue the project, they will be required to make very costly corrections.

Public Awareness: ready to mobilize our network

Over the past two and a half years, Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin has built relationships and made allies, including those in the Ministry of Culture, UNESCO, the French Consulate and among many private institutions and individuals of influence.



building permit notice posted at
the site, marked with graffiti: *City
hall is destroying our village!
Shame!*

Our social media presence is well established and the organization has more than 900 members on its mailing list, including Baldwin scholars and readers all over the world. We stand ready to mobilize this network for a public awareness campaign to push forward our vision.

Political: mayoral elections in 2020

Six days before the city's planning commission declined la Socri's modified building permit, Les Amis delivered a petition to the mayor's office with more than 200 handwritten signatures, gathered onsite at our Welcome Center in fewer than 3 weeks (see appendix). Our community organizing is demonstrating to local elected officials that they have the full support of voters in their efforts to hold la Socri accountable.

The mayor of St. Paul, an ally of La Socri since the outset of his term and the individual responsible for approving the initial building permit, will not be seeking reelection.



Baldwin in his study, which was demolished in 2015

INVITATION TO DONOR-INVESTORS

In search of angel investors

Our circle of founding donors will be invited to join the board of directors of the the Baldwin Center Foundation, to be part of the team that performs the critical founders' work of envisioning the future of the Saint Paul de Vence James Baldwin Cultural Center and of helping to establish the organization's mission and core values.

We ask founding investors to designate 5 percent of their gift toward start-up expenses (see budget below) as an immediate donation to Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin. The remaining 95 percent would go toward establishing assets to enable the incorporation of the Baldwin Center Foundation, and would be kept in escrow pending successful negotiations. Any amount left in the fund after acquisition costs would be directed toward a capital campaign for renovations.

Those who say it
cannot be done
are usually
interrupted by
others who are
doing it.

James Baldwin



Opening, Portraits of Baldwin exhibit
November 2017



Managing the Start-Up of the Baldwin Cultural Center

Les Amis de la Maison Baldwin began laying the groundwork in April 2016 to eventually arrive at this moment. Despite significant ups and downs—including a time during which we believed the cause was lost—we have persevered. The developer's building permit violations have opened a new door. Together with our legal advisors we are currently exploring avenues within the judicial system for fighting this development.

The relationships and connections we created over these past two and a half years, together with the expertise of the management and advisory team we've assembled, will give Les Amis a healthy head start on organizational development and fundraising for the Baldwin Cultural Center.

Renovation & Rehabilitation: A Capital Campaign

The cost of the renovation effort will be significant, and is of course impossible to estimate at this point. However for perspective on fundraising feasibility, it is useful to know that in United States, the median goal for a nonprofit capital campaign is \$25 million. The Smithsonian Institution's Museum for African American History and Culture (which features a prominent Baldwin exhibit) recently raised \$100 million to open its doors. We have assembled a list of 50 U.S.-based donors who have recently made gifts of \$1 million or more to Black culture in the U.S. and will approach them for leadership gifts once the campaign is launched. This campaign will be managed by a professional fundraising consulting firm.

Saint Paul de Vence has changed considerably since James Baldwin was a resident. A medieval walled city of remarkable charm, the village now sees 2 million tourists per year. Its storefronts are principally art galleries, restaurants and gift shops. Many locals mourn the loss of the boulangeries, grocers and artist ateliers of Baldwin's time, and understand that luxury apartments at his villa are part of a larger trend toward the unwelcome commodification of their village.

APPENDIX A: PETITION

Sign the Petition Online at change.org

FRANCE MUST SAVE JAMES BALDWIN'S HOME

WHEREAS the former home of the writer James Baldwin is currently undergoing conversion into a luxury apartment complex, a project that is opposed by the vast majority of the local populace and a multitude of James Baldwin admirers; and

WHEREAS James Baldwin was an emblematic figure of the American civil rights era, internationally recognized for his literary and political contributions to human rights and solidarity and awarded the Légion d'Honneur by Francois Mitterrand; and

WHEREAS James Baldwin hosted many important artists and writers at his home, key figures in the social and political movements of civil rights, including Nina Simone, Joséphine Baker, Miles Davis, Ray Charles, Toni Morrison, Yves Montand, Simone Signoret and Marguerite Yourcenar; and

WHEREAS were it not for L'Architecte des Bâtiments de France, the place where James Baldwin lived and died would have been razed to the ground; and

200 signatures collected on site in our welcome center were delivered to the mayor's office in St. Paul de Vence. Six days later their planning commission declined la Socri's modified building permit.

**SIGN THE
PETITION
TO SAVE
JAMES
BALDWIN'S
HOUSE**

Photo by Alain Cinquini

WHEREAS the City of Saint Paul de Vence has shut down the construction site, citing multiple and serious infractions to the building permit; and

WHEREAS la SOCRI, one of the largest real estate developers in France, has a history of blatant disregard for historical preservation and the environment and has proven itself unworthy of the public trust; and

WHEREAS Sotheby's, a highly regarded company with an otherwise admirable reputation for its respect for the legacy of artists, has affiliated itself with this project; and

WHEREAS we collectively mourn the lost opportunity for the enrichment of the patrimoine that would have resulted from the preservation of this important cultural site; and

WHEREAS we understand that if we do not draw the line here, rampant development of this beautiful medieval village is in our very near future:

WE ACKNOWLEDGE L'Architecte des Bâtiments des France for its important work and attention to detail;

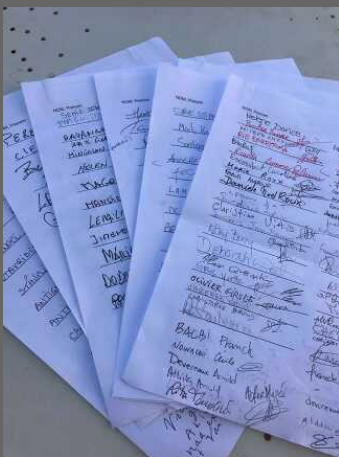
WE ACKNOWLEDGE the mayor's office in Saint Paul and notably its vice mayor for zoning for his strict enforcement of local building codes;

WE URGE both entities to continue to hold la SOCRI accountable;

We URGE Sotheby's to end its partnership with La SOCRI;

WE REMIND local elected officials that their voters are watching and will not tolerate future projects of this kind in Saint Paul de Vence; and most importantly

WE URGE the St-Paul de Vence mayor's office, l'Architecte des Bâtiments de France, the Ministry of Culture, UNESCO and the office of the President of the Republic to investigate creative solutions to reverse and rectify this tragic situation and instead envision an alternative future for James Baldwin's home that would benefit France's cultural heritage.



Our welcome center is ideally situated between city hall and the mayor's annex. St. Paul de Vence sees 2 million tourists per year. The petition bears signatures of visitors from around the world.

APPENDIX B: MEDIA LINKS

Nice Matin, Sept 7 2018

*Building Permit Violations: Development Stopped at the Former Home of
Writer James Baldwin*

Nice Matin, Jan 16, 2018

James Baldwin's House in Saint Paul Will Not Be Saved

Actualitté, Dec 4, 2017

James Baldwin's House in St Paul de Vence is Not Yet Lost

Nice Matin, Nov 16 2017

*2.5 million Euro apartments for sale on the site of the writer James
Baldwin's former home*

France-Amerique, Nov 30 2017

Last Chance to Save James Baldwin's Provençal Country House

NewsOne, Nov 28 2017

James Baldwin's Home in the South of France Set for Demolition

New York Times, Nov 27, 2017

James Baldwin's Former Home in France is Set to be Developed

Le Figaro, Nov 23, 2017

The Outrage Done to James Baldwin and his French Home

The New York Times, April 4, 2017

Battling to Save James Baldwin's Home in the South of France

VICE, Feb 24 2017

The Fight to Save the House of James Baldwin

The Guardian of London, Aug 16, 2016

The 10 million Euro Fight to Save James Baldwin's Home

Nice Matin July 2, 2016

Access Blocked at Baldwin House; Activist Made to Leave the Premises

Nice Matin June 30 2016

Activist Squats the Baldwin House in St Paul to Impede its Demolition

