

ICOMOS

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref.: TP/GJ/74

Paris, 25 June 2024

For the attention of:
The Hon Masahito Moriyama,
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology

Mr Shun'ichi Tokura,
Commissioner for Cultural Affairs

The Hon Seitaro Hattori,
Governor of Fukuoka Prefecture

Mr Masami Terasaki,
Superintendent of Education,
Fukuoka Prefecture

The Hon Kazuhisa Takeuchi,
Mayor of Kitakyushu City

Mr Tsuneo Tanaka,
Speaker of the
Kitakyushu Municipal Assembly

Ms Yumi Tashima,
Superintendent of Education,
Kitakyushu City

Subject: Expressing grave concern regarding the conservation of Archaeological Remains of the First Moji Railway Station Complex, Kitakyushu City, Japan

Dear Madam, Sir, Your Excellency,

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is the leading global organization representing professionals dedicated to cultural heritage conservation. With almost 11 000 members across 130 countries, ICOMOS fervently advocates for the conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage, serving as an advisory body to the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

In solidarity with the concerns voiced by ICOMOS Japan and in response to the urgent need for action, I express my grave concern as President of ICOMOS, about the imminent and irreversible threats facing the archaeological remains of the First Moji Railway Station Complex. Should the concerns of ICOMOS Japan and the Japanese cultural heritage community not be sufficiently taken into consideration - ICOMOS will have to take the step in the near future to issue an internationally publicized Heritage Alert.

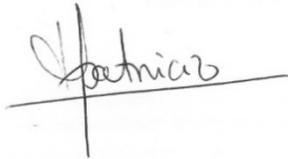
The city of Moji rose to prominence as one of Asia's pivotal cities in the late 19th century, following extensive development, including the establishment of a modern port and terminus railway station to facilitate the export of coal and other commodities. Recently uncovered remnants of the original Moji Railway Station Complex, constructed in 1891, have been assessed by numerous scholars as bearing witness to the city's origins. Notably, the remarkably well-preserved foundations of the engine shed serve as compelling physical evidence of the integration of modern Western architectural and engineering techniques with traditional Japanese pre-modern methods.

ICOMOS contends that the destruction of such nationally and internationally significant remnants, even following salvage excavation and documentation, runs counter to Japan's cultural heritage protection policies. Such actions set a regrettable precedent and jeopardize both national and international heritage preservation endeavours.

ICOMOS urgently calls upon the Kitakyushu City Government and Kitakyushu City Council to immediately suspend the decision to destruct the remains of the First Moji Station complex, reassess the development plan and prioritize the comprehensive conservation of the remaining sections of the First Moji Station Complex. In addition, we urge the relevant Japanese ministries to spare no effort in ensuring the conservation of this exceptionally important national and international heritage.

ICOMOS stands ready to offer its full expertise and support to the Kitakyushu municipal authorities and relevant ministries in their efforts to conserve this irreplaceable cultural heritage.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Patricio', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Teresa Patricio
President of ICOMOS