

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/157

Paris, 18 December 2024

The Hon Kazuhisa Takeuchi,
Mayor of Kitakyushu City

Mr Tsuneo Tanaka,
Speaker of the
Kitakyushu Municipal Assembly

Ms Hiromi Tashima,
Superintendent of Education,
Kitakyushu City

Subject: Strong Condemnation of Demolition Works and Renewed Appeal to Preserve the Heritage Values of the First Moji Railway Station Complex, Kitakyushu City, Japan

Dear Madam/Sir,

As President of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), I write to you once again with utmost urgency, but above all deep concern and regret, following reports that demolition of the remains of the First Moji Station in Kitakyushu, Japan has commenced.

The First Moji Station remains are a nationally significant and internationally recognized cultural heritage site, embodying Japan's transformative modernization during the Meiji era. The site's unique integration of railway and port infrastructure, combined with hybrid engineering techniques that blend Japanese and Western approaches, underscores its important heritage values. These remains are not only a testament to Japan's history but also a symbol of global exchange and technological innovation.

We are profoundly disheartened to learn that demolition of the site has commenced, despite the Heritage Alert issued by ICOMOS in September 2024, which drew your attention to its irreplaceable value and urged for its preservation. The current preservation plan, which includes limited on-site preservation and partial relocation, fails to adequately protect the core elements that define the site's historical and cultural significance.

Key components, such as the foundational structures of the First Moji Station and the critical interface between reclaimed land and natural terrain, are at imminent risk of destruction. The loss of these elements would irreversibly compromise the authenticity and integrity of the site, greatly undermining its heritage values.

ICOMOS strongly condemns the initiation of demolition works and urgently calls upon the Kitakyushu City authorities to:

- 1. Halt Demolition Works Immediately**
Cease all demolition and construction work at the site to prevent further irreversible damage.
- 2. Reassess Preservation Strategies**
Engage in an inclusive and transparent dialogue with ICOMOS Japan, local experts, citizens, and relevant stakeholders to develop a comprehensive preservation plan that safeguards the site's core heritage values.
- 3. Prioritize On-Site Preservation**
Focus on preserving the elements that embody the site's authenticity and integrity, particularly the station building's foundational structures and the interface between reclaimed and natural terrain.

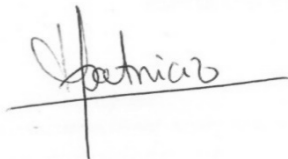
We again urge the Kitakyushu City municipal authorities to engage with ICOMOS Japan, local experts, citizens, and relevant stakeholders to ensure the remaining critical elements of the First Moji Station are preserved. ICOMOS stands ready to support ICOMOS Japan in these efforts by offering it international expertise and advocacy to strengthen the call for preservation.

The First Moji Station remains are not merely a local treasure; they form an integral part of our shared heritage. Their destruction would not only represent a major loss for Japan but for the entire international community.

We therefore urge the Kitakyushu City authorities to reconsider their actions and work collaboratively with ICOMOS Japan and the international heritage community to preserve what remains of this extraordinary site.

We call on all heritage organizations, experts, and concerned citizens to join us in advocating for the safeguarding of the First Moji Station remains, ensuring that their legacy endures for future generations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Patricio', written over a horizontal line.

Teresa Patricio
President of ICOMOS

Letter sent to:
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