

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

For the attention of:

The Honourable Fumio Kishida,
Prime Minister of Japan
The Honourable Tetsuo Saito,
Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transport
The Honourable Shinsuke Suematsu,
Minister of Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology
Mr Shun'ichi Tokura,
Commissioner for Cultural Affairs
Ms Yuriko Koike,
Governor of Tokyo Metropolitan Government
Mr Shigeki Miyake,
Speaker of the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly
Mr Yuji Fujita,
Superintendent of Education,
Tokyo Metropolitan Government
Mr Masaaki Takei,
Mayor of Minato City
Mr Kazuyuki Kiyohara,
Chairman of Minato City Assembly
Mr Mikio Urata,
Superintendent of Education, Minato City
Mr Yuji Fukasawa,
President, East Japan Railway Company

Our Ref.: MSQ/GJ/23

Paris, 28 January 2022

Subject: Heritage Alert - Takanawa Chikutei maritime railway track embankment

Dear Madam, Sir, Your Excellency,

ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, is the preeminent organization representing professionals involved in conserving cultural heritage worldwide. With a membership of over 10,500 members from 130 countries, ICOMOS advocates for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage places and is an advisory body to the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

To add to the already substantial national alarm, raised among others by ICOMOS Japan, ICOMOS is issuing a worldwide Heritage Alert, our most consequential expression of concern, to amplify awareness of the imminent and irreversible threats to the Takanawa Chikutei maritime railway track embankment in the form of its on-going, partial but substantial destruction after its rescue excavation and recording.

The Takanawa Chikutei maritime railway track embankment was a railway bed built on the sea between Shinbashi and Shinagawa as a part of the Shimbashi-Yokohama railway, the first railway in Japan. The Takanawa Chikutei marks the genesis of the history of railways in Japan, and the starting point of Japan's modernisation. It is the first nationally-owned railway in Asia to be strategically planned and financed by the Japanese, not by the colonisers. Technically, it is a hybrid structure, integrating foreign construction techniques from the UK with native Japanese construction techniques. Those factors, and its extremely good state of in situ preservation, make the Takanawa Chikutei maritime railway track embankment a heritage of highly significant national and international importance.

ICOMOS believes that the dismantling of these extremely well-preserved and significant remains and forcing construction work to proceed without sufficient public access to the site, not allowing the general public to appreciate and assess the importance of this heritage is of serious concern in terms of the national and metropolitan government's policy for the protection of cultural heritage. It will undoubtedly leave its mark as a most regrettable precedent at both the national and international level. .

ICOMOS calls upon the East Japan Railway Company, the entity responsible for the development, to immediately suspend its ongoing excavation-recording-destruction cycle of the Takanawa embankment and allow much wider public access than implemented so far. It further urges the Company to review its development plans, which are based on the destruction of large sections of the embankment, and to fully preserve the remaining sections of the embankment in their entirety in situ.

ICOMOS also calls upon the concerned national ministries, agencies and local governments and their sections to make the utmost effort to ensure the preservation of this heritage of high national and international significance and value, and offers both the Company and the authorities the full scope of its expertise to support them in doing so.

Yours sincerely,



Mario Santana
Secretary General of ICOMOS

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