

Stop the Jerusalem Cable Car

It has come to our attention that the government of Israel is advancing a plan to build a cable car from West Jerusalem to the Old City. The plan will completely alter the ancient city skyline and the character and landscape of the Old City walls.

According to the plan, the cable car will consist of four massive stations, at least two of which will be situated in front of the Old City Walls. In addition, the project will require the construction of 15 towering columns along the Old City walls and through the Ben Hinnom Valley, the last of the ancient valleys in the area to be untouched by modern construction. When working to capacity, the cable car line will feature 73 cars an hour.

The project is being promoted by powerful interest groups who put tourism and political agendas above responsibility for safeguarding Jerusalem's cultural treasures. No other important historic city has a cable car. It is a matter of international consensus that the choice of a cable car is not appropriate for ancient cities with a skyline preserved for hundreds or thousands of years. Cities like Rome and Athens with millions of visitors a year did not build a cable car. Jerusalem's ancient landscape is precious heritage to all of humankind. Its religious and cultural values must not be overruled by short-term interests.

We join the protest by our colleagues in Israelⁱ and call on the government to cancel this project. The Israeli government, as the custodian of the city, must do the utmost to keep a long-term historical and cultural perspective and to safeguard the historic skyline from economic or ideological agendas that threaten to compromise irreplaceable cultural assets.

We strongly urge the government to withdraw the plan to build a cable car, and instead promote a plan to safeguard and protect Jerusalem's ancient sites and monuments in accordance with contemporary standards for the preservation of historic cities.

ⁱ The Association of Architects and Town Planners in Israel and the Council for the Conservation of Heritage Sites unequivocally opposed to the plan. In October, a public letter against the cable car plan signed by seventy prominent academics, artists and heritage professionals was published.

Singnatories include:

Prof. Avermaete Tom, Chair for the History and Theory of Urban Design,
ETH Zurich

Prof. Aureli Pier Vittorio, The AA School of Architecture, London

Balbo Laura - Professor of Sociology Former Minister of Equal
Opportunities of the Italian Republic

Bandarin Francesco - Former Director, UNESCO World Heritage Centre
(2000-2010) Former Assistant Director-General for Culture, UNESCO

Prof.Barbera Lucio, Sapienza, University of Rome

Prof. Bressani Martin - Director of McGill's School of Architecture,

Prof. Ceccarelli Paolo - UNESCO Chair in Urban and Regional Planning
for Sustainable Local Development.

Prof. Cohen Jean- Louis - French architect and Architectural Historian

Prof. Dallari Fiorella, Studiorum University of Bologna Editor-in- Chief,
Almatourism,

Eisenman Peter, architect

Filler Martin, The New York Review of Books

Prof. Foster Hal, Princeton University

Frampton Kenneth, - Professor of Architecture at the Graduate School of Architecture , Columbia

Prof. Heynen Hide, University KU Leuven

Leatherbarrow David - Professor of theory and design at the Polytechnic of Central London and Cambridge University,

Prof. Lepik Andres - History of Architecture and Curatorial Practice - Technische Universität München

Prof. Magnago Villorio, Lampugnani, ETH, Zurich

Mcleod Mary, Professor of Architecture, Columbia University

Prof. Occhialini Etra University of Ferrara

Olmo Carlo, professor Emeritus in History of Architecture, Politecnico di Torino

Picon Antoine - professor of the History of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design

Poggi Gianfranco - Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Virginia

Safdie Moshe, Architect

Prof. Treib Marc, University of California, Berkeley