

### Stop the Jerusalem Cable Car

It has come to my 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.

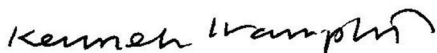
According to the plan, the cable car will consist of four massive stations, at least two of which will be situated in front of the Old City Walls. In addition, the project will require the construction of 15 towering columns along the Old City walls and through the Ben Hinnom Valley, the last of the 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 significance. 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 have not seen it fit to introduce cable cars for the movement of tourists *en masse*. Jerusalem's ancient landscape is precious heritage to all of humankind. Its religious and cultural values must not be overruled by short-term interests.

I support the protest by our colleagues in Israel<sup>i</sup> 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.

I 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.

Yours Sincerely,



Kenneth Frampton  
Ware Professor of Architecture

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<sup>i</sup> 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.