

TICCIH



THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMITTEE FOR THE
CONSERVATION OF THE
INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

Madame Fleur Pellerin
Ministre de la Culture et de la Communication
3, rue de Valois
75033 Paris Cedex 01
FRANCE

March 20, 2015

Dear Madame Pellerin,

I write today to advocate unequivocally for the protection and preservation of the Colbert Bridge in Dieppe. In my capacity as President of the International Committee for the Conservation of the Industrial Heritage, I am often called upon to make arguments in favor of such concerns, and I am pleased to do so on behalf of this marvelous engineering monument.

You will, of course, have been made aware of the historical and engineering details of this structure, so I will only summarize some key points at this moment. This is the last operating hydraulic bridge of its type in Europe, and the longest, as well. It is unique in other ways, including the ingenious use of pumped water to manage the operation. It stands at this time in good condition, needing only routine maintenance to continue operations. In fact, I understand that it has been the focus of an engineering assessment by the French railway engineering department that declares it worthy of a financially economic rehabilitation that will insure decades of continued operation.

As important and interesting as the technical details may be, certainly it is the social implications of removal that are more important to consider. This technical landmark has graced the landscape of Dieppe for more than a century and is deeply embedded in the community's identity. Commemorated in a stamp and many other popular images, preservation of the bridge has also been the focus of popular public opinion and a committee that has rallied in favor of retaining it in place. While it is sometimes not obvious that technological monuments touch the hearts of the public in the way that works of art and architecture might, this structure, with a connection to Eiffel, has clearly accomplished that impression.

I urge you to do what you can to preserve the Colbert Bridge and see it serve successfully as a critical element of the community. If I can offer any further service, please do not hesitate to call on me.

Sincerely,

Patrick Martin
Professor of Archaeology and Department Chair
TICCIH President