

WORLD MONUMENTS FUND ANNOUNCES 2012 WATCH,
ENCOMPASSING 67 THREATENED CULTURAL-HERITAGE SITES
ACROSS THE GLOBE

Founding Sponsor American Express Grants \$5 Million to Support Program For Next Five Years.

For Immediate Release—New York, NY, October 5, 2011... At a press conference held at World Monuments Fund's Empire State Building headquarters today, **WMF President Bonnie Burnham** announced the **2012 World Monuments Watch**. Since 1996, the biennial Watch has drawn international attention to cultural-heritage sites in need of assistance, helping to save some of the world's most treasured places. The 2012 Watch includes 67 sites, representing 41 countries and territories. *(See attached list.)*

Ranging from the famous (**Nasca lines and geoglyphs, Peru**) to the little-known (**Cour Royale at Tiébélé, Burkina Faso**); from the urban (**Charleston, South Carolina**) to the rural (**floating fishing villages of Hà Long Bay, Viet Nam**), the 2012 Watch tells compelling stories of human aspiration, imagination, and



COUR ROYALE DE TIÉBÉLÉ, BURKINA FASO

adaptation. The 67 sites vividly illustrate the ever-more pressing need to create a balance between heritage concerns and the social, economic, and environmental interests of communities around the world. Moreover, in addition to promoting community cohesion and pride, heritage preservation can have an especially positive impact on local populations in times of economic distress, for example through employment and the development of well-managed tourism.

Ms. Burnham stated, "The World Monuments Watch is a call to action on behalf of endangered cultural-

heritage sites across the globe. And while these sites are historic, they are also very much of the present—integral parts of the lives of the people who come into contact with them every day. Indeed, the Watch reminds us of our collective role as stewards of the earth and of its human heritage.

"I am enormously pleased to announce that **American Express, founding sponsor of the World Monuments Watch**, has made a **generous new grant of \$5 million** in support of the program over the next five years. World Monuments Fund is deeply grateful for this new grant, and for the company's steadfast support of more than twenty years."



CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

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“American Express has a longstanding and far reaching commitment to preservation,” said Timothy J. McClimon, President of the American Express Foundation. “We are proud to support the World Monuments Watch, and to partner with WMF to ensure that living monuments to cultural heritage remain safe and accessible to the public.”

2012 Watch Sites—Highlights

Found in every type of environment, from the Central Asian steppe to New York City, the 2012 sites range from prehistoric to modern, and include religious structures, cemeteries, houses, palaces, bridges, cultural landscapes, archaeological remains, gardens, train stations, and entire villages and neighborhoods. In some cases the Watch supports an existing plan to address challenges, in others it advocates for the development of one. Some highlights of the 2012 Watch are described below; more detailed descriptions of all 67 sites may be found at www.wmf.org/watch.

Poorly managed tourism threatens many of the places on the 2012 Watch.

- **Charleston, South Carolina, U.S.**, was founded in the seventeenth century and is often considered a birthplace of the preservation movement in the United States. Meticulous planning and strong preservation values have made Charleston a desirable place to live and a highly prized tourism destination. However, in the last decade, like many other port towns, Charleston has experienced an increase in the number of cruise ships that arrive in its harbor, threatening to undermine the very character that entices visitors to come to the town in the first place. The ships themselves, which have grown in size over the last several years, obstruct views both of the harbor and the town, while the potential for hundreds of thousands of passengers to disembark in the town every year is upsetting the balance between commercial development and the residential areas that make the city livable. It is hoped that inclusion of Charleston on the 2012 Watch will support implementation of a balanced and sustainable plan that will enable both tourism—including by cruise ship—and the Historic District to thrive.
- **The ancient Nasca lines and geoglyphs, in the desert of southern Peru**, were drawn between 500 BC and 500 AD. They represent one of the most important—and enigmatic—archaeological remains in a country that is rich in ancient sites. Declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994, the lines and geoglyphs have since become an important tourist destination. Conservation challenges, including tourism management, have necessitated the development of a master plan to ensure long-term preservation and stewardship, while also providing tourism infrastructure and enhancement. Implementation of the plan, through institutional collaboration and community engagement, will be a next critical step, uniting the site’s various stakeholders in efforts to conserve this awe-inspiring place.



NASCA LINES AND GEOGLYPHS, PERU

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Sometimes, the **potential for well-managed tourism** provides an opportunity for historic sites to thrive.

- The site of the **palace and garden of China's Nanyue Kingdom** dates from the time of the emperor who built the terra cotta warriors in the second century BC. It is one of the most important archaeological discoveries in modern China, uncovered in 1996, but is not well known internationally. Located beneath Guangzhou, a city of over 13 million, the spectacular site was continuously rebuilt by successive dynasties. Today, there are 15 strata, containing relics from 13 dynasties. The Chinese government has built a museum devoted to artifacts uncovered on the site, but the site itself needs a sustainable plan for visitor access, interpretation, and enjoyment by local residents, many of whom live immediately adjacent to the archaeological zone.

The need for improved stewardship of heritage sites cuts across geographic, chronological, and typological divisions.

- After the **Cathedral Church of St Michael, in Coventry, England** (commonly known as Coventry Cathedral), was largely destroyed by bombs during World War II, a new cathedral was built. The sandstone ruins of the tower, apse, and outer walls of the former Cathedral, which dated from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, were left in place to serve as a gathering place and site of reflection, coexisting with the excavated remains of the priory that once occupied the site (1043–1539). Yet their condition has suffered through lack of resources, and exposure to the elements has eroded the ruins over time. Significant water infiltration and structural deterioration call for immediate action if this important reminder of the ravages of war is to survive.



CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF ST MICHAEL, COVENTRY, ENGLAND

- The **First Cemetery of Athens, Greece**, is the oldest cemetery in the city, and contains the graves of major figures in Greek public life from the last two centuries. It also contains a superb collection of nineteenth- and twentieth-century outdoor sculpture, in the form of neoclassical funerary monuments, virtually all of which are in urgent need of conservation due to neglect. Plans to integrate the cemetery into the life of the city as open space and a cultural resource are representative of similar efforts on behalf of cemeteries in many other locations.
- The eighteenth-century **Balaji Ghat, in Varanasi, India**, is an important example of the buildings constructed along the Ganges to serve pilgrims worshipping at the holy river. Varanasi is one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities, and a major Hindu pilgrimage destination. The collapse of the main building of Balaji Ghat, likely from the decay of the wood, points to inadequate conservation and maintenance measures and, in turn, to inadequate heritage protection. Inclusion in the Watch will support a plan to restore the building for use as a cultural center and help to continue an ancient tradition of pilgrimage and enlightenment.

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Adapting ancient traditions to modern life is of increasing concern in the field of cultural-heritage conservation as populations shift and tourism increases worldwide.

- In Viet Nam, the **floating fishing villages along Hả Long Bay** have long been recognized as a site of spectacular natural as well as cultural significance. Today, they struggle to adapt to changing environmental conditions and to the pressures of increasing tourism, which challenge the long-term continuity of both the natural and cultural aspects of the area. The engagement of local communities in conservation and management of the site is critical to ensuring the future of the Bay and its people.
- The **Cour Royale at Tiébélé, in Burkino Faso, Africa**, is another heritage site whose preservation is linked to a living tradition. Once the official residence of the chief of Tiébélé, the site continues to play a central role in the civic and spiritual lives of the Kassena people. Moreover, Cour Royale contains some of the very finest examples of decorated earthen architecture in the region. It is thus an invaluable record of a sophisticated form of cultural and artistic expression. Damaged by flooding and heavy rains, this site faces an urgent need for improved drainage, as well as maintenance. At the same time, the tourism potential is creating new challenges for balancing protection and the traditions of its people with opportunities for development.



HẢ LONG BAY, VIET NAM

For sites that no longer serve their original purpose, the best opportunity for continued vitality may be a plan for adaptive reuse.



HAYDARPAŞA RAILWAY STATION, TURKEY

- **Haydarpaşa Railway Station, in Istanbul, Turkey**, has been an iconic fixture on the city's skyline for over a century. Architecturally and historically significant—and much-loved by the public—it now faces an uncertain future. The building, which was recently damaged by fire, and a large tract of adjacent rail yard, are the subject of a major redevelopment plan, and there is strong community support for adaptive reuse of the Station. This site is emblematic of the challenges facing municipalities as once-grand transportation centers become obsolete, but remain nonetheless important features of the cityscape. The building provides an opportunity to develop an exemplary plan for ensuring its continued integration in the life of Istanbul.

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The 2012 Watch includes several examples of **modern architecture**, which continues to be at risk internationally.

- **Three outstanding modernist sites**—in Preston, Birmingham, and London, England—are grouped under the umbrella of “**British Brutalism**.” The **Preston Bus Station** was once the world’s largest bus station and is now slated for demolition as part of a redevelopment scheme. **Birmingham Central Library** is the largest non-national library in Europe and is also threatened with demolition for redevelopment purposes. Upon its completion in 1976, London’s **South Bank Centre** was viewed as a visionary combination of performance spaces and an art gallery, but it continues to be denied heritage status. These and other buildings like them date from an era in which government had the resources and the will to create major civic buildings. Their reputation suffered during the post-modernist 1980s, and in the very different climate of today they are too often seen as impediments to private-sector redevelopment.
- In **New York City**, the adaptive reuse of the former **Manufacturers Trust Company Building, at 510 Fifth Avenue**, raises questions about the legality of recent alterations and the capacity of the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to enforce protective regulations. Local advocates filed a lawsuit, and a temporary restraining order on further alterations has been issued. While the case seeks to preserve an icon of American modernism, it also serves as an important touchstone for the effectiveness of preservation legislation and policies in the United States, and of the government agencies charged with their enforcement.



510 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

The World Monuments Watch has always included sites affected by **natural disasters**, and 2012 is no exception.



EARTHQUAKE DAMAGE, JAPAN

- The **March 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan** resulted in severe damage to large swaths of the eastern part of the country. In addition to the tragedy of lives lost, an enormous number of heritage sites were damaged, in areas ranging from fishing villages, to historic towns, to agricultural regions. Centuries of intangible cultural heritage and history, including religious rituals, festivals, and traditional craftsmanship, are threatened. The affected areas are thus in need of help in rebuilding both their physical and cultural infrastructures.
- Other 2012 Watch sites affected by natural disasters include the **Gothic Revival government buildings in Christchurch, New Zealand**, heavily damaged by earthquakes in September 2010 and February 2011, and the **historic town of Jacmel, Haiti**, notable for its turn-of-the-twentieth-century cast-iron and brick architecture, which suffered substantial damage in the catastrophic January 2010 earthquake.

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While many threats to heritage sites—conflict, neglect, population shifts—are as old as human culture, some are distinctly modern. One of these is the impact of **efforts to meet the challenges of climate change**.

- The **historic town of Trujillo, Spain**, dates its origins to the eleventh century. Large walls built and rebuilt around Trujillo reflect the region's medieval and Moorish past. The historic *berrocal* of Trujillo, a 36-square-kilometer landscape just outside the western rampart, is an integral element of the historic town and its view shed. However, it is under threat by plans to expand a solar farm that has already installed panels in this landscape. Although solar power is a much-needed alternative to fossil fuels, solar farms consume land and can engender sprawl, affecting cultural heritage and quality of life. Developing a dialogue about the potential conflicts between environmental sustainability and heritage concerns could begin to build the foundation for a shared agenda.

While the descriptions above associate individual sites with such specific threats as poorly managed tourism or a lack of stewardship, in fact, most sites on the World Monuments Watch face a diversity of challenges to their continued vitality. One site, in Gaza, exemplifies extraordinary efforts of stewardship in an area torn by conflict.

- Discovered in 1999, the archaeological site of **Tell Umm el-` Amr, or Hilarion Monastery, in Gaza**, contains the largest monastery in Palestine and one of the most important in the Middle East. The remains of the site, which date from the early fourth to the late eighth century, provide valuable information on the evolution of construction techniques of the period. Beyond its historic and technical significance, Tell Umm el-` Amr is of great importance for its role in the local community, to which it has the potential to offer opportunities for education, employment, and income from tourism. The current political situation in the region presents obstacles to maintaining the site. An international group has developed a comprehensive plan that includes preservation, interpretation, and site access, and hopes the Watch will assist in gaining recognition in support of their efforts.



TELL UMM EL-'AMR, PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

American Express

American Express is a global services company, providing customers with access to products, insights, and experiences that enrich lives and build business success. As founding sponsor of the World Monuments Watch, American Express has provided more than \$12 million since 1996 in support of the conservation of more than 150 heritage sites around the world. With a long history of philanthropy, American Express is deeply committed to increasing public awareness of the importance of preserving global historic and cultural landmarks and strengthening local communities through preservation efforts.

Learn more at www.americanexpress.com and connect with us on www.facebook.com/americanexpress, www.foursquare.com/americanexpress, www.linkedin.com/companies/american-express, www.twitter.com/americanexpress, and www.youtube.com/americanexpress.

World Monuments Watch

Launched in 1996 and issued every two years, the World Monuments Watch calls international attention to threatened cultural-heritage sites around the world. Watch listing provides an opportunity for sites and their nominators to raise public awareness, foster local participation, advance innovation and collaboration, and demonstrate effective solutions. The process also serves as a vehicle for requesting WMF assistance for select projects.

The list is assembled by an international panel of experts in archaeology, architecture, art history, and preservation (*see accompanying list of 2012 panel members*). For many historic sites, inclusion on the Watch is the best, and sometimes the only, hope for survival.

Since the program's inception, 686 sites in 132 countries and territories have been included on the nine Watch cycles. The international attention given to Watch sites provides a vital tool with which local entities may leverage funding from a variety of sources, including municipal, regional, and national governments; foundations; corporate sponsors; international aid organizations; and private donors. While WMF has contributed to date \$2.7 million to projects at 2010 Watch sites, nearly \$27 million has been allocated to the 2010 group by other entities.

World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's treasured places. For over 45 years, working in more than 90 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural-heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York City, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. www.wmf.org, www.twitter.com/worldmonuments, and www.facebook.com/worldmonuments.

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Press Contacts

For information on the World Monuments Watch: Jeanne Collins or Libby Mark, at Jeanne Collins & Associates, LLC, +1-646-486-7050, info@jcollinsassociates.com.

For information on World Monuments Fund: Ben Haley, World Monuments Fund, +1-646-424-9582, bhaley@wmf.org.