

**WORLD MONUMENTS FUND ANNOUNCES 2014 WORLD MONUMENTS WATCH,  
IDENTIFYING CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES AT RISK**

**List Includes 67 Sites in 41 Countries and Territories on Five Continents**

*For Immediate Release—New York, NY, October 8, 2013...* At a press conference today, **World Monuments Fund (WMF) President Bonnie Burnham** announced the **2014 World Monuments Watch**, presenting a diverse group of cultural heritage sites at risk from the forces of nature and the impact of social, political, and economic change. The 2014 Watch features **67 sites in 41 countries and territories** (*see below and attached*), dating from prehistory to the twentieth century. It includes both the famous (Venice, Italy) and the little-known (Pokfulam Village, Hong Kong (SAR), China); the urban (Yangon Historic Center, Myanmar) and the remote (Gran Pajatén, in Peru); the ancient (Ancient Irrigated Terraces of Battir, in the Occupied Palestinian Territories) and the modern (the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, in St. Louis, Missouri).



**VENICE, ITALY**

The 2014 list reflects a number of distinct preservation challenges, including **conflict and catastrophe, lack of resources, development pressures (urban, rural, tourism), and loss of cultural traditions**. While these are longstanding issues, their persistence is an ever-growing cause for concern. The 2014 Watch serves as a call to action, bringing the fragility of

the sites and the dangers they face to international attention. It also identifies opportunities for local communities to work together with the larger preservation community, government organizations, corporate sponsors, and others to help ensure their future. For some sites, inclusion on the Watch presents the best hope for their survival.

**Ms. Burnham stated**, “The 2014 Watch presents a selection of monuments from around the world in need of both new economic resources and innovative ideas about how to preserve them for future generations. These sites—and countless others like them—recount our human history and highlight our achievements. It takes vigilance to keep them active in the world; yet it is often the case that the very places that provide rich character and texture to our lives need more assistance and attention than they are given.

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“We remain deeply grateful to **American Express, founding sponsor of the World Monuments Watch**, for its ongoing support of World Monuments Fund and the Watch program. For more than twenty years, the company’s grants have made a critical difference to the preservation of more than 150 individual heritage sites.”

**Timothy J. McClimon, president of the American Express Foundation**, said, “We’re delighted to promote and enable the preservation of these endangered treasures, and have contributed \$15 million to World Monuments Fund since 1996. Historic preservation is something that we are very passionate about at American Express. We have traveled the globe with our customers over the past 160 years, and we want to ensure our world’s incredibly rich history can be experienced for many years to come.”

### 2014 Watch Sites—Highlights

The need for better stewardship of heritage sites cuts across geography, time, and types of places. Drawn from five continents, the 2014 sites range from cultural landscapes and archaeological remains to historic city centers and religious structures. A number of highlights are described below; more detailed descriptions of all 67 sites may be found in the press kit and at [www.wmf.org/watch](http://www.wmf.org/watch).

## CONFLICT

Despite greater awareness through vehicles such as the Hague Convention, protection of cultural heritage in times of conflict has deteriorated since World War II, and recent and ongoing **cultural losses from destruction and looting in Syria** have been notable for their severity. Escalating violence since 2011 has had devastating effects on some of its most significant and symbolic sites, including Aleppo, the Crac des Chevaliers, and the fortress of Qa’lat al-Mudique. This has prompted WMF to include the cultural heritage of the entire country on the 2014 Watch. Inclusion is meant to raise awareness of the threats to our shared heritage in times of war and conflict, as well as to galvanize the technical skills and resources of the international community in anticipation of a time when it is safe to return.



**CITADEL OF ALEPPO, SYRIA**

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## ECONOMICS

Public authorities often make decisions about investment in heritage sites based on local economics rather than on the intrinsic value of these resources and their long-term survival. For several sites, inclusion on the Watch is intended to encourage public agencies to increase their investment in preserving key landmarks, or to reconsider policies that are having a serious negative impact on them.

**Venice, Italy**, provides a dramatic example. Many heritage professionals believe that the advent in the last decade of large-scale cruise-ship tourism is pushing Venice to an environmental tipping point and undermining the quality of life for its citizens. Such tourism has increased in the city by 400% in the past five years alone, with some 20,000 visitors per day during the peak season. Venice is included on the 2014 Watch in the hope of inspiring a more penetrating analysis of the economic value of the large-scale cruise industry for the community, in relation to the negative impact that these outside vessels have on the city's environment.

## VALUING HERITAGE

Often, the true value of heritage resources is either not fully understood or taken into account in the continual process of building and designing public spaces to meet current needs. **Yangon, Myanmar**, provides an excellent example. It was once one of the leading trade cities of Asia and a unique cultural melting pot. Its rich history

is reflected in its wide variety of religious structures and the largest collection of late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century colonial buildings in Southeast Asia. At present, a sudden rush to meet demands for commercial and residential real estate is resulting in the destruction of century-old buildings that could destroy the aura of the colonial city center and result



**YANGON, MYANMAR**

in the demolition of its historic landmarks. Inclusion on the Watch seeks to promote a thoughtful and well-balanced integration of cultural resources and new development.

The historic city of **Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**, is at a similar turning point. And in **Berlin, Germany**, an appeal for preservation of the city's tens of thousands of traditional gas lamps argues that the economics of replacing them with new, unattractive lighting may not have the solid economic basis that planners believe.

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## VIGILANCE

The intrusion of large-scale industrial complexes and operations into pristine, protected areas diminishes both their heritage value and public enjoyment for the immediate site and the heritage assets surrounding it. Even sites that are much-loved and do not appear to have conservation problems require continued vigilance and investment in order to ensure their future.

The scenic **Hudson River Palisades** are one of the most dramatic geologic features in the New York City area. Their protection has long been a matter of concern, and they were designated a National Landmark in 1983. At present, high-rise construction is planned immediately behind the Palisades, where zoning has until now supported the concept that the tree line should define the height of surrounding buildings. Such construction would seriously affect one of the most unspoiled areas of the Hudson River, including treasured views from the Cloisters Museum and Gardens, and also have a negative environmental impact on the region.

It is hoped that inclusion on the Watch will support efforts to limit the height of such construction.

The **Jefferson National Expansion Memorial**, often called simply “the St. Louis Arch,” is a national landmark requiring a different kind of vigilance. A mid-century modern icon that stands as a symbol of westward expansion in the United States, its future—to the surprise of many—is presently affected by encroaching corrosion. Its unusual shape and extreme height have proven challenging to its preservation, as has a general decrease in government funding for the stewardship of national monuments. The goal of Watch-listing is to encourage development of a public-private partnership to assess these challenges, and to come up with the best solution for the landmark’s safeguarding.



**ST. LOUIS ARCH, MISSOURI**

## MANAGING CHANGE

Many long-established communities and the cultural customs embedded in them are threatened by the rapid changes taking place around them. However, with careful planning, such places can be preserved in the context of new development, becoming strong drivers for local economies and providing opportunities for skills training and magnets for tourism.

While virtually unknown, the village of **Pokfulam**, a unique collection of modest traditional buildings on narrow lanes and alleys in the heart of **Hong Kong**, provides a fascinating juxtaposition to the dense urban area around it. Its nominators hope that Watch-listing will underscore its cultural value to the community and build support for its preservation.

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**BATTERSEA POWER STATION, LONDON, ENGLAND**

A number of other sites on the 2014 Watch face similar challenges: In the United Kingdom, three former industrial sites—**Grimsby Ice Factory**, **Battersea Power Station**, and **Deptford Dockyard**—indicate the potential to utilize obsolete industrial buildings as magnets for cultural and community development. In Monterrey, Mexico, the former industrial **Fundidora Park** was successfully converted into a public space, but its education center, **horno3**, previously a blast furnace, faces a lack of funds for maintenance and conservation. Other compelling examples

include a collection of **wooden churches in Romania**, which are being preserved as a form of rural community stabilization; the **Peruvian church of Kuchuhuasi**, whose community hopes it will be included in the government's Andean Baroque Route; and the **Ancient Irrigated Terraces of Battir, outside Bethlehem, on the West Bank**, which both Palestine and Israel value for their traditional cultures and where both hope to stop the construction of a wall across the landscape.

## THE RECENT PAST

A recurring theme of the Watch has been the need to recognize the importance and special issues of the architecture of the recent past. A number of sites on the 2014 Watch fall into this category, including sculptor Donald Judd's buildings at **The Chinati Foundation**, Marfa, Texas; Frank Lloyd Wright's home, **Taliesin**, in Spring Green, Wisconsin; woodworker **George Nakashima's house and workshop**, in New Hope, Pennsylvania; Eero Saarinen's **St. Louis Arch**, in Missouri; **Ciudad Universitaria de Caracas**, Venezuela; and **Casa Klumb**, San Juan, Puerto Rico. Saving modern heritage sites begins with recognition of their significance, and also requires an innovative approach to conservation work, dealing with materials that were unconventional and innovative themselves at the time of the buildings' construction.



**GEORGE NAKASHIMA WOODWORKER COMPLEX, PENNSYLVANIA**

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## **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 a panel of international heritage experts in the fields of archaeology, architecture, art history, and preservation. For many historic sites, inclusion on the Watch is the best, and sometimes the only, hope for survival.

Since the program's inception, more than 740 sites in 133 countries and territories—including those on the 2014 Watch—have been included. 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. Since 1996, WMF has contributed \$90 million to date; while almost \$200 million has been allocated to the sites by other entities. The social impact of the Watch is also significant, especially through Watch Day, a component of the program established in 2012 that aims to reconnect communities to their heritage through public events.

**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 \$15 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 [americanexpress.com](http://americanexpress.com) and connect with us on [facebook.com/americanexpress](https://facebook.com/americanexpress), [foursquare.com/americanexpress](https://foursquare.com/americanexpress), [linkedin.com/companies/american-express](https://linkedin.com/companies/american-express), [twitter.com/americanexpress](https://twitter.com/americanexpress), and [youtube.com/americanexpress](https://youtube.com/americanexpress).

**World Monuments Fund** is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's treasured places. For nearly 50 years, working in 100 countries, its 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, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide. [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org), [www.twitter.com/worldmonuments](https://www.twitter.com/worldmonuments), and [www.facebook.com/worldmonuments](https://www.facebook.com/worldmonuments).

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