



**WORLD MONUMENTS FUND ANNOUNCES 2012 WATCH,
ENCOMPASSING 67 THREATENED CULTURAL-HERITAGE SITES
ACROSS THE GLOBE AND 7 KEY SITES ACROSS THE UK**

London's Southbank Centre, Coventry Cathedral and Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire were today named amongst 67 threatened cultural heritage sites from around the globe. The UK features heavily in the 2012 World Monuments Watch list of sites in need of assistance with seven prominent locations up and down the country. Birmingham Central Library, Preston Bus Station, Quarr Abbey (Isle of Wight) and the island of Saint Helena also command a place in the influential list from the World Monuments Fund which seeks to draw international attention as well as local community support for some of the world's most treasured locations.

Dr Jonathan Foyle, Chief Executive of WMF Britain said: "For a decade and a half, the Watch has reminded us that no country is immune to man-made and natural disasters, and the casual degradations of its built environment. We can never afford to take for granted our irreplaceable and enriching cultural inheritance, but in an age of greater austerity this Watch further reminds to be vigilant, look after and enjoy historic places, many of which we could not afford to build today."

Ruins of the Former Cathedral Church of St. Michael, Coventry, West Midlands (Coventry Cathedral)

After Coventry Cathedral was gutted by incendiary bombs during World War II- the only English cathedral to be destroyed as an act of war- a conscious and collective decision was taken to build a new cathedral and to preserve the ruins as a constant reminder of conflict, the need for reconciliation, and the enduring search for peace.

Today, the recently excavated remains of the priory and the post-war cathedral, coexist alongside the ruins of St Michael, linking past to present, though there is limited interpretation of the former cathedral and all it represents. It is still used as a gathering place and site of reflection, its fine steeple surviving alongside the weathered medieval sandstone of the ruined apse and outer walls, framing an open air space. However, exposure to the elements over time has eroded the ruins, and significant water infiltration problems and

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structural deterioration require immediate action. Stabilizing the ruins will be a first step in preserving this important landmark and renewing this sacred site.

Newstead Abbey, Ravenshead, Nottinghamshire

Newstead Abbey is best known today as the ancestral home of Lord Byron (1788–1824). The original Newstead Abbey was founded by Henry II as an Augustinian priory in the twelfth century. In 1540, following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the property was offered to the Byron family by Henry VIII and converted into a residence. The estate grew over time, but a large proportion of the original medieval fabric survived, including the west front, constructed in 1274, and the fifteenth-century cloisters. Later extensions were built out of stone quarried from the main church building.

Though the surrounding parklands and gardens are well visited, opening hours for the house museum have been limited due to insufficient resources. Newstead Abbey has suffered significant deterioration, and a strategy for its conservation and long-term maintenance is greatly needed. Restoration and renewed interpretation would benefit the local community and other visitors and could reinforce the historical connections to one of the world's greatest poets.

British Brutalism – South Bank Centre, Birmingham City Library and Preston Bus Station

The inclusion of three twentieth-century British buildings on the Watch underscores the risk to modern architecture around the world, especially those in what is commonly referred to as the brutalist style, derived from the French term “betón brut,” meaning “raw concrete.” Characterized by bold geometries, the exposure of structural materials, and functional spatial design, brutalist architecture was also an expression of social progressivism.

The Preston Bus Station is a bold concrete structure providing an integrated car parking, bus, and taxi facility. Upon its completion in 1969, it was the world's largest bus station. It is now slated for demolition as part of a redevelopment scheme. Birmingham Central Library is a monumental concrete structure in the civic center of the city. It consists of two linked elements: a seven-story reference library, square in plan, and a lending library in a curving three story wing. It is the largest non-national library in Europe. It, too, is threatened with demolition for redevelopment purposes. Upon its completion in 1976, London's South Bank

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Centre was deemed a visionary combination of performance spaces and an art gallery, but it continues to be denied heritage status.

Despite recommendations by English Heritage for national listing, none of the three has achieved protective status. With two scheduled for demolition, there is an urgent need to raise awareness, appreciation, and local pride in the significance of brutalist architecture in general.

Quarr Abbey, Ryde, Isle of Wight

The ancient, now-ruined Cistercian Abbey of St. Mary's at Quarr was founded by Baldwin de Redvers in 1132 a.d. on the windswept cliffs and ancient woodland of the Isle of Wight. The monastery survived as both a religious institution and defensive structure, until its destruction in the sixteenth century during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The modern Quarr Abbey was constructed in the early twentieth century by architect Dom Paul Bellot after the arrival an order of French Benedictine monks. The monastic buildings, considered some of the most important twentieth-century religious structures in the United Kingdom, were constructed from Belgian brick in a medieval style combining French and Moorish architectural elements.

The medieval ruins are in need of repair, as are the monastic buildings and surrounding infrastructure. Increased awareness about the significance of the monastic complex and the surviving spiritual life within its walls will hopefully help to garner support for the repair, maintenance, and management of the structures, as well as improve visitor facilities and public engagement.

St Helena

The jagged cliffs of Saint Helena rise out of the Atlantic Ocean between the continents of Africa and South America, some 1,200 miles from the nearest landmass. The once strategic and commercially important island was discovered by the Portuguese in 1502 and occupied by the British from the middle of the seventeenth century. Saint Helena served as a colonial staging post for the East India Company and was later used as a resupply point for the British seaborne fleet. The Emperor Napoleon, its most famous resident, was exiled here in 1815. The architecture reflects the island's storied past, with British, French, Boer/South African, and African influences. Many of Saint Helena's heavy fortifications still dominate the coastline, and current inhabitants continue to use and adapt the company houses, stores, and forts to their daily lives.

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Saint Helena's built heritage, including Banks Battery and High Knoll, increasingly has suffered from deterioration and partial collapse as a lack of investment, government support, and legislative protection have made it difficult to maintain or improve the condition of many sites. Saint Helena is not eligible for most conservation funding available in the United Kingdom, even though it is a British Territory. Indeed, Saint Helena is representative of several overseas British territories with little access to government resources for heritage stewardship. If more resources were made available to the island, the conserved built heritage could be used to bolster the economy through tourism development, especially after the construction of a planned airport.

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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 an international panel of experts in 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, 688 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 \$2.2 million to projects at 2010 Watch sites, more than \$25 million has been allocated to the 2010 group by other entities.

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World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organisation 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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Please refer to the WMF global press release for more information on other sites around the world.