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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**AMERICAN EXPRESS AND WORLD MONUMENTS FUND  
LAUNCH INITIATIVE TO SUSTAIN HISTORIC SITES**

*Four Sites — Historic Route 66, USA; St Paul’s Cathedral, London, England; Historic Center of Mexico City, Mexico; and Delhi Heritage City, India — to receive Partners in Preservation Grants to Protect Historic Landmarks from Modern Pressures*

NEW YORK (November 7, 2007) – American Express and the World Monuments Fund today announced a new initiative that rewards and encourages the responsible stewardship of historic sites by supporting projects that address the issue of sustainable tourism. This initiative, which is part of the American Express Partners in Preservation initiative launched in 2006, is focused on sustaining historic sites in the face of increased visitor activities and environmental impacts, and preserving them for future generations to enjoy.

As part of the initiative, \$4 million will be granted over four years to support a variety of projects that integrate historic preservation, sustainable tourism management and visitor education. The initial four projects to receive grant funding are Route 66, the historic corridor that runs between Chicago and Los Angeles in the United States; St Paul’s Cathedral, London, England; Mexico City Historic Center, Mexico; and Delhi Heritage City, India.

“American Express has been committed to historic preservation for over a decade,” said Ed Gilligan, vice chairman, American Express. “The extension of our efforts to focus on the sustainable tourism aspect of historic locations is a logical evolution of the Partners in Preservation program. Tourism is the lifeblood of many iconic sites around the world, so enhancing the visitor experience while finding effective ways to protect and preserve these sites is critical for their survival.”

“As members of a global community, we need to understand the impact that our collective footprint has on the wear and tear of heritage sites. Preservation and public education go hand-in-hand,” said Bonnie Burnham, president of the World Monuments Fund. “We are delighted to be working with our longtime partner American Express, and helping, through the Partners in Preservation program, not only to preserve these sites but also to educate both tourists and the local communities about the role they can play in conserving their irreplaceable heritage.”

“For over 80 years, Route 66, which passes through eight states from Chicago to Los Angeles, has been a route for thousands of travelers from all over the world. Now recognized as an iconic symbol of American heritage, it immortalizes America’s fascination with the automobile through diners, motels and gas stations along the predominately two-lane route,” said Michael Romero Taylor, Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program Manager, National Park Service. “We are grateful for the opportunity to assist communities in preservation and tourism management initiatives, and look forward to exposing even more people in the future to Route 66 and its unique landscape.”

While the four sites selected for grants in 2007 have varied preservation needs, each will receive a significant grant towards sustainable tourism plans designed to stimulate culturally and ecologically sensitive tourism. The sites were chosen because they demonstrated their ability to integrate historic preservation, sustainable tourism management practices and visitor education into their conservation programs. The grant distribution is as follows:

**Historic Route 66, cities, towns and villages between Chicago and Los Angeles** – \$150,000 for an in-depth economic study of this long-distance historic corridor. The study will provide information for communities that can be used to stimulate heritage tourism at local, state and national levels in the effort to preserve the corridor in its entirety and ensure its long-term sustainability. Funding will also contribute to a comprehensive survey of the many different buildings and attractions that make up this unique landscape and the impact that environmental factors and modern travel have had on them. This effort will include a conservation assessment of the historic Santo Domingo Trading Post site on Route 66 in New Mexico. Once a trading center for Native American arts and crafts and a popular stopping point for travelers, the Trading Post was damaged by fire in the early 2000’s and is now left vacant. The project will make recommendations on the building’s restoration and future use. Route 66 was placed on World Monuments Fund’s Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites in 2008.

**St Paul’s Cathedral** - \$500,000 grant distributed over two years to help towards relieving crowding and lessening the impact of tourism on the church’s nave, which suffers from heavy foot traffic, abrasion and fluctuations in humidity. The funds will contribute to the long-term plan to open up an additional major area inside the Cathedral and make some hitherto rarely seen aspects of the building, such as the triforium where the collections will be displayed, and Wren’s Great Model in the Trophy Room, accessible to visitors. Also, the Cathedral, which now receives almost 2 million visitors a year, will improve visitor routes to enhance the experience of entering Sir Christopher Wren’s restored interior while, at the same time, reducing future damage. With these improvements, the Cathedral will be better positioned to present the full 300 year history of the Cathedral site in an engaging and informative way.

**Mexico City Historic Center** - \$200,000 grant to support the creation of interactive educational content for the city’s planned visitor center which will be the focal point for

visitors to Mexico City's downtown historic district. Incorporating natural light and energy-efficient technologies in its design, the visitor center will feature interactive displays, virtual tours and physical models that will inform visitors about individual historic sites, architectural history, sustainability challenges and proposed urban green spaces. Mexico City's Historic Center was placed on World Monuments Fund's Watch List of 100 Most Endangered Sites in 2006.

**Delhi Heritage City** - \$200,000 grant to support a project led by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage that will pilot a new heritage route that connects some of Delhi's most extraordinary monuments. The heritage route will begin at the monumental Humayun's Tomb and end at the Red Fort, a Mughal palace that was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 2007. This heritage route project, which eventually will be expanded to include a number of heritage districts and sites in Delhi, will feature clean-energy shuttle buses with hop on/hop off service to ease the flow of visitors and reduce congestion, educational centers, and other visitor amenities such as sidewalk furniture and environmentally-friendly lighting.

More information about the Partners in Preservation initiative and the four global sites can be found at [www.americanexpress.com/corp/philanthropy](http://www.americanexpress.com/corp/philanthropy).

#### **About American Express and Historic Preservation**

American Express Company ([www.americanexpress.com](http://www.americanexpress.com)) is a leading global payments, network and travel company founded in 1850.

Historic preservation has long been the hallmark of American Express' involvement in the community, reflecting its recognition of the contribution of sites and monuments to a sense of national and local identity and the role that their preservation can play in attracting visitors and revitalizing neighborhoods. As early as 1983, American Express launched a cause-related marketing effort that raised \$1.7 million for the preservation of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. As founding sponsor of the World Monuments Watch program in 1995, American Express has been an unwavering supporter of the World Monuments Fund and its mission to safeguard the most treasured landmarks around the globe. During the first ten years of the Watch program, American Express contributed more than \$10 million to help preserve 126 historic sites in 62 countries from the World Monuments Watch List of the 100 Most Endangered Sites. In June 2006, the company announced the American Express Partners in Preservation initiative with the World Monuments Fund and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Partners in Preservation aims to increase public awareness of the importance of historic and environmental conservation, preserve global historic and cultural landmarks, educate visitors on sustainable tourism and strengthen local communities through preservation efforts.

#### **About the World Monuments Fund**

Founded in 1965, the World Monuments Fund (WMF) has achieved an unmatched record of successful conservation at more than 450 projects in more than 90 countries. From its headquarters in New York City — and offices affiliates in Paris, London, Madrid, and Lisbon — World Monuments Fund works with local partners and communities to identify and save important heritage through innovative programs of project planning, fieldwork, advocacy, grant-making, education, and on-site training. Every two years, World Monuments Fund issues its list of 100 Most Endangered Sites, a global call to action on behalf of sites in need of immediate intervention. For additional information about World Monuments Fund and its programs, please visit [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org).