



World Monuments Fund (WMF) Collaborates on Design for Mosul Cultural Museum Rehabilitation

Sets Stage for Museum's Revival Following Destruction by ISIS

October 12, 2021, New York, NY –The project to rehabilitate the Mosul Cultural Museum has entered a new phase, transitioning from stabilization of the building to planning the Museum's future as a vibrant gathering place that will aid in the city's post-conflict recovery. Thanks to support from the International alliance for the protection of heritage in conflict areas (ALIPH), WMF is working closely with Museum officials on a design for the building and landscape that honors the original vision of iconic Iraqi modernist architect Mohamed Makiya (1914 – 2015) with upgrades to the visitor experience. Taking a community-driven approach that engages local experts and residents in the design process, the resulting vision for the museum's rehabilitation is a critical step toward reestablishing a living center for culture and education after its destruction by ISIS on February 26, 2015. This effort is part of a broader initiative led by the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage (SBAH), the Musée du Louvre, the Smithsonian Institution, WMF, and ALIPH to bring the museum back to life.

"The task ahead entails much more than repairing and reopening the Museum. It is a critical opportunity to support the healing process of residents from recent years of conflict and insecurity," said Bénédicte de Montlaur, President and CEO of WMF. "By helping revive a significant Iraqi landmark, we hope to uplift the spirit of communities who can find strength and solace in returning to the Mosul Cultural Museum once again."

"The rehabilitation of the Mosul Museum is an emblematic project for ALIPH: it is a sign of life and hope, a gesture of solidarity between international and local actors, and a magnificent human adventure, which brings together professionals from different backgrounds who are driven by the same ambition," said Valéry Freland, Executive Director of ALIPH.

"Donald Insall Associates are honoured to be working with the WMF on the restoration and rehabilitation of the Mosul Cultural Museum - a spectacular building by Mohamed Makiya constructed to display cultural objects of great significance. The restoration of the museum and its gardens will once again reiterate the importance of Mosul as a centre of modern and ancient architecture – and reconnect its people with their past," said Tanvir Hasan, Deputy Chairman, Donald Insall Associates.

Completed in 1974, the Mosul Cultural Museum is an iconic example of modernist Iraqi architecture exemplifying Makiya's sophisticated integration of regional forms for which he is acclaimed. Born in Baghdad and educated in the UK, Makiya was a pivotal figure in establishing the architecture profession in Iraq. In 1946, he founded Makiya Associates in Baghdad, later expanding the firm to Bahrain, Oman, London, Kuwait, and Doha. In 1959, he became a founding member of Baghdad University's Department of Architecture, where he helped teach the first generation of trained architects in the country.

In addition to addressing severe damage to the Assyrian hall caused by a bomb explosion, the project aims to honor Makiya's original design while modernizing visitor accommodations, interpretative displays, and education facilities with the long-term sustainability of the museum's operations as a top priority. The surroundings of the building will also be treated as an integral part of the project to underscore the Mosul Cultural Museum's place within the historic urban landscape of the city. Taking a holistic approach that considers both the building and setting as part of this larger urban context, the immediate landscape and unused exterior spaces will be redesigned to link with Al-Shuhadaa Park and Al-Baladia Square, creating much needed greenspace in the city of Mosul.

Overseen by Alessandra Peruzzetto, WMF Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa, the project assembles a team of local Iraqi professionals and international experts specializing in architecture, engineering, community engagement, alongside the teams and leaders of the Musée du Louvre and the Smithsonian Institution who are working on separate aspects of the overall museum rehabilitation. Information on the ongoing work led by the Musée du Louvre and the Smithsonian with the Iraqi teams can be found [here](#).

At the end of September, the project team met for the first time in Mosul and conducted a site visit, gathering additional information for concept drawings and refining the shared vision for the future of the Museum.

WMF in Iraq

WMF's work in Iraq began nearly two decades ago with the outbreak of the Iraq War in 2003, bringing instability to the region and exacerbating existing challenges to the preservation of cultural heritage sites. In response, WMF launched a joint initiative with the Getty Conservation Institute in 2004 that would create a long-term framework for stewarding cultural sites within Iraq. A workshop series for Iraqi archaeologists and conservators in Jordan helped rebuild capacity by providing training in the latest conservation and management practices. In 2006, Iraq's cultural heritage was collectively included on the World Monuments Watch, raising awareness and calling for action for its protection. These early efforts evolved into major projects, including a decade-long project at Babylon that resulted in the site's inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2019. Today, WMF is engaged in numerous projects throughout the country, among them the preservation of Ishtar Gate and the Ninmakh Temple of Babylon; conservation of key buildings at Erbil Citadel; and the reconstruction of the Mam Rasha Yazidi shrine in Mt. Sinjar.

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About World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund (WMF) is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich people's lives and build mutual understanding across cultures and communities. The organization is headquartered in New York City with offices and affiliates in Cambodia, India, Peru, Portugal, Spain, and the UK. Since 1965, our global team of experts has preserved the world's diverse cultural heritage using the highest international standards at more than 700 sites in 112 countries. Partnering with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF draws on heritage to address some of today's most pressing challenges: climate change, underrepresentation, imbalanced tourism, and post-crisis recovery. With a commitment to the people

who bring places to life, WMF embraces the potential of the past to create a more resilient and inclusive society.

About ALIPH

Founded in March 2017 in response to the massive destruction of cultural heritage in recent years, ALIPH provides support for the protection and rehabilitation of tangible or intangible heritage in conflict or post-conflict areas. Based in Geneva, ALIPH is a public-private partnership and a Swiss foundation with the status of an international organization. To date, it has committed 45 million USD to 110 projects in 22 countries across 4 continents. In Iraq, ALIPH has supported 28 projects since 2018 with an overall commitment of more than 9.2 million USD for initiatives in this country alone. aliph-foundation.org

About Donald Insall Associates

Donald Insall Associates is a leading UK-based architectural practice and historic buildings consultancy with over 60 years' experience managing change in the historic environment. It has won more than 200 awards for design and craftsmanship, including 15 Europa Nostra Awards. The practice is 100% employee-owned, with a team of 120 working from nine offices to care for and repair historic buildings while using conservation as a catalyst for regeneration and new opportunities in sensitive settings. They have been entrusted with some of the UK's most important buildings, leading on the post-fire restoration of Windsor Castle and acting as the ongoing building advisors at the Palace of Westminster.

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