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HIGHLIGHTS OF 2006 WORLD MONUMENTS WATCH LIST OF 100 MOST ENDANGERED SITES

Following are examples of the range of sites on the 2006 Watch list and the issues they confront.

CONFLICT AND CATASTROPHE

Several sites on the 2006 Watch list have been threatened by conflict. Some have survived years of devastating wars; others are in the midst of combat. Among these sites are:

- **Cultural Heritage Sites of Iraq, Country-wide (Prehistory to Modern)**—Ten thousand years ago, the foundations of human civilization were laid in the fertile floodplain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, in what was Mesopotamia and is now the modern nation of Iraq. Within its borders are an estimated 10,000 sites that chronicle thousands of years of human history, including many of its greatest cultural achievements. It was in this ancient land that the Sumerians wrote humanity's first words and planned its first cities and the Babylonian king Hammurabi enacted the first-known code of law. In the millennia that followed, Roman, Arab, Ottoman, and even modern architects and engineers and urban planners each left their mark on this extraordinary landscape, in the form of temples, public works, and townscapes.

Decades of political isolation, a protracted war with Iran, and, more recently, the invasion and occupation that began in 2003, have put this extraordinary heritage at risk. Today, such famous sites as the Assyrian capital of Nineveh, the ziggurat at Ur, the temple precinct at Babylon, and a ninth-century spiral minaret at Samarra have been scarred by violence, while equally important ancient sites, particularly in the southern provinces, are being ravaged by looters who work day and night to fuel an international art market hungry for antiquities. Historic districts in urban areas have also suffered from vandalism, looting, and artillery fire.

- **Massawa Historic Town, Massawa, Eritrea (1872–1875)**—Renowned for its deep anchorage, the ancient port town of Massawa on the Red Sea served countless traders over the centuries during which it was ruled by the Ottomans, Egypt, and, more recently, Italy. The city's long and complex history is evident in its numerous historic buildings, including Ottoman-period fortifications, the sixteenth-century Sheik Hamal Mosque, and a governor's palace commissioned by the Egyptian consul Werner Munzinger in 1872.

Following the ousting of Italy from the region in 1941, the Governor's Palace was used as a residence by Ethiopian officials, who annexed Eritrea in 1952, using Massawa as Ethiopia's primary entry-point. The Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie maintained a residence in the Governor's Palace until his regime fell during the Civil War of 1976, which exacted a substantial toll on the city. Massawa's buildings sustained still further damage during the Eritrean War of Independence in 1991, during which time the city was bombed. Since the end of hostilities, little has been done to restore the city's historic buildings.

PRESERVING MODERN BUILDINGS

The greatest threat to modern buildings is public apathy, a lack of understanding or confidence that buildings of our own time may be important enough to be preserved for the future. Modern structures, particularly those of the postwar period, are increasingly vulnerable to the cyclical nature of style. Initially recognized for their innovative designs, the following buildings are now threatened by demolition or irreversible modification by government agencies charged with their care.

- **Cyclorama Center, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, United States (1958–1961)**—Opened in 1963, in time for the centennial of the Battle of Gettysburg, the Cyclorama Center was built as part of “Mission 66,” an ambitious postwar government initiative aimed at improving America’s national parks with the construction of visitor centers—a new building type—and memorials by well-known architects. For the high-profile Gettysburg project, the National Park Service chose internationally renowned architect Richard Neutra (1892–1970), an early proponent of International Style architecture in the United States. Considered among his most important public commissions, the Cyclorama Center takes its name from a large-scale, 360-degree panoramic painting by French artist Paul Philippoteaux, which depicts Pickett’s Charge, the famous last battle of Gettysburg. To house the painting, Neutra designed a cylindrical drum, 109 meters in circumference and eight meters high. Accessed by a monumental ramp, the roof of the Cyclorama Center, which sits on part of the site of Pickett’s Charge, overlooks the battlefield.

The Cyclorama Center, which suffers from years of deferred maintenance, is slated for demolition under the National Park Service’s General Management Plan for the Gettysburg National Military Park in order to recreate the 1863 battlefield landscape, a decision endorsed in 1999 by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. The Cyclorama Center has not been listed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, although in 1998 it was “determined eligible.” The Cyclorama Center is one of three postwar modern buildings on the 2006 World Monuments Watch list threatened by demolition or substantial alteration. The other sites are 2 Columbus Circle, in New York City (1960–1964), designed by Edward Durrell Stone, and the International Fairground at Tripoli, Lebanon (1963–1974), designed by Oscar Niemeyer.

- **Narkomfin Apartment Building, Moscow, Russia (1928–1930)**—Behind the Narkomfin Apartment Building’s austere bands of double-height windows unfolds a six-story blueprint for communal living that is as ingenious as it is humane. Built between 1928 and 1930 by a team of architects and engineers led by Moisei Ginzburg, a member of the Post-revolutionary Association of Contemporary Architects (OSA), the apartments range from small dwellings—a living room with kitchen and bath “cabins” and a split-level bedroom above—to spacious duplex apartments with imposing, double height rooms. The building also contains communal facilities, including an open terrace on the second floor, a solarium and garden on the building’s flat roof, and a common kitchen, library, recreation room, and day nursery. These facilities made the complex a successful “house-commune,” unique in Russia and in the world, intended to divide the household chores among the inhabitants while preserving privacy. Narkomfin is a nationally listed monument in Russia and continues to inspire architects around the world.

The Narkomfin apartment building has severely deteriorated from years of neglect. Although it was placed on the 2004 World Monuments Watch list, recent reports indicate that the building has been slated for demolition by the government of Moscow, owner of the property. This situation is an increasing concern in Moscow as property values rise. Since 1992, some 400 of the city’s historic structures, many recognized landmarks, have been destroyed to make way for new development. The City’s modern architectural heritage seems particularly vulnerable. Another modern site in Moscow—the Konstantin Melnikov House and Studio, an icon of Constructivist architecture built by its owner between 1927 and 1929—is also on the 2006 World Monuments Watch list.

ANTIQUITY IN THE MODERN WORLD

Many ancient sites have survived for hundreds and even thousands of years, only to be faced with the extraordinarily powerful threats of our modern era: pollution; roadway and railroad construction; uncontrolled development; and more. Among the ancient sites on the 2006 Watch list are:

- **Segovia Aqueduct, Segovia, Spain (A.D. 50–early 20th century)**—The Segovia aqueduct is one of the best preserved Roman aqueducts in Europe. A masterpiece of ancient engineering, it provided water to this Spanish city into the twentieth century and remains the city’s most prominent symbol. The workings of the Segovia Aqueduct extend for 14 kilometers under the town, which in 1985 was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site. Above ground, 120 pillars supporting the aqueduct’s two-story arcade are preserved. Of these, 14 were rebuilt between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Despite its high profile and Segovia’s inscription as a World Heritage Site, the aqueduct, which has stood for almost 2,000 years, has experienced dramatically accelerated deterioration in the last 150 years, since the onset of the industrial age. Watch listing underscores the need to evaluate its current condition and implement ongoing conservation management.

- **West Bank, Luxor, Egypt (Paleolithic to Modern, Main Period: New Kingdom, 1540–1075 B.C.)**—The West Bank of the Nile at Luxor ranks among the richest and most important archaeological zones in the world. Within its nine square kilometers are the Valley of the Kings and Valley of the Queens, the burial places of Egypt’s New Kingdom rulers (ca. 1540–1075 B.C.); the village of Dier al-Madinah, home to the artisans who created so many of the monuments; the palace-city of Malqata; more than 5,000 nobles’ tombs; countless shrines; Palaeolithic workstations; and some 40 temples.

The monuments of the Theban Necropolis are threatened by theft and vandalism, uncontrolled tourism, neglect, and development pressures. Yet the most urgent problem is that of rising groundwater in the wake of the construction of the Aswan Dam four decades ago, which has damaged ancient buildings and sculptures lying on the ground and has invited agricultural encroachment onto newly fertile lands in and around the ancient monuments.

LOSING SACRED SITES

An increasingly common threat faced by many religious sites around the world, both rural and urban, is the loss of their congregations, along with the ensuing lack of funds needed to undertake conservation work and perform routine maintenance. Examples of these sites include:

- **Guru Lhakhang and Sumda Chung Temples, Sumda Chung, India (11th–14th centuries)**—This early period of Buddhist monastic architecture in the Western Himalayan region, characterized by close links between Tibet and India, was formative in the evolution of Tibetan Buddhism. Rinchen Tsangpo, the eleventh-century Tibetan translator of Buddhist texts, is traditionally credited with helping to revive Buddhism in the western Himalayas and laying the foundations of 108 temples in the region. Of the original temples of the “Great Translator,” perhaps fewer than five survive. Among them are Sumda Chung and Guru Lhakhang, both of which continue to be used for worship today.

These early temples were built of mud brick and timber on a rectangular plan and were sometimes protected with a wooden porch. Interiors were characterized by elaborate wall paintings and colossal stucco sculptures. Sumda Chung is considered one of the most significant early temples of Ladakh. Of the large monastery, which once extended over an entire hill, only the assembly hall and adjoining side chapels have survived. Additional structures collapsed during heavy rains in 1997. The small temple of Guru Lhakhang in Phiyang consists of a single chambered temple with exquisite wall paintings. Climate change, which has brought increased rainfall, poses the primary threat to the early-period temples of Ladakh, which were built for an arid environment.

- **Saint Mary’s Stow Church, Stow, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom (A.D. 975, 11th-15th centuries)**—The Minster Church of Saint Mary’s Stow is one of Britain’s first parish-churches. The building as it exists today is the result of alterations made over a 500-year period, and its architecture is a visual history of the various styles used in the construction of English parish churches. Founded on the site of the Roman settlement of Sidnacester, the Church’s cruciform plan and portions of the crossing and south transept were constructed in A.D 975. The nave and chancel were rebuilt in the mid-eleventh and twelfth centuries, respectively. Supported by Gothic arches, the central tower was reconstructed in the early fifteenth century. Rare among the thousands of surviving parish churches, Saint Mary’s retains a substantial portion of its Anglo-Saxon elements. It is a Grade I listed monument in Britain, and English Heritage has designated Saint Mary’s as a “Scheduled Ancient Monument.”

Exemplifying the situation at many of Britain’s rural parish churches, the Church of Saint Mary’s is threatened by the loss of parishioners resulting from the area’s declining population, and it lacks the necessary funds to undertake conservation work and perform routine maintenance. The rector, wardens, and parishioners of the Church of Saint Mary’s, endorsed by the non-profit advocacy group Historic Churches Preservation Trust, propose a comprehensive restoration initiative beginning with a conservation master plan. Watch listing is intended to call attention to the critical state of Saint Mary’s and to the plight of parish churches throughout Britain, which through population loss are being shuttered and falling into disrepair.

- **Dutch Reformed Church, Newburgh, New York, United States (1835–1837)**—The Dutch Reformed Church of Newburgh was designed by one of America’s most distinguished nineteenth-century architects, Alexander Jackson Davis (1803–1892). An accomplished draftsman and artist, Davis displayed an informed interest in the distillation and celebration of the architecture of ancient Greece and, along with others, promoted the Greek Revival style as one that most appropriately represented the democratic ideals of the United States. Newburgh’s Dutch Reformed Church is an early and influential example of this Style. Davis modeled the church on Athenian temples, especially the Erechtheion on the Acropolis, borrowing from the ancient building’s form and proportions but using simplified ornamentation. Newburgh was a critical Revolutionary War outpost that later became a thriving city fueled by commerce along the Hudson River. Davis sited the church, with its imposing portico of Ionic columns, on a bluff facing the River. Although the original dome was removed in 1843 and the building was expanded with transepts in the 1860s, the Dutch Reformed Church remains true to Davis’s original vision.

Partly as a result of the socio-economic decline of Newburgh in the mid-to-late twentieth century, the Dutch Reformed Church was abandoned by its congregation in 1967; years of neglect have left the building in poor condition.

DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

As cities around the world expand beyond their original boundaries and as more and more tourists venture abroad, cultural landscapes—both urban and rural—are increasingly threatened by all kinds of development. Among the sites facing these threats are:

- **Qikou Town, Shanxi Province, China, Mid 18th century**—For more than two centuries the town of Qikou, a unique terraced townscape carved into a steep hillside on the banks of the Yellow River, served as a vital trading point marking the eastern terminus for river-bound freight. From Qikou, goods would be transferred to camel caravans heading to points north and east. The replacement of water freight by rail transport in the 1930s spelled the demise of the town. The significance of the site stems from the architectural ingenuity used to integrate a challenging terrain with traditional Chinese architectural forms to support the economic life of the community. The result is a dramatic landscape of buildings and nature composed of a series of cave-dwellings in a traditional townscape with satellite villages.

Limited access to the site and the economic decline after the introduction of rail transport prompted Qikou's inhabitants to eventually leave the town. This spared the site from overdevelopment, allowing much of the original fabric of Qikou to remain intact, although it has been weakened by neglect, poor maintenance, abandonment, and age. Sporadic attempts to modernize façades and upgrade infrastructure have marred some of the historic landscape. The recent "rediscovery" of Qikou by China's tourism industry has opened the door to potentially harmful forms of cultural and eco-tourism. Rapid economic development in China has brought the threats of superhighway access to Qikou, and a proposed riverfront highway would sever its historic access to the waterfront.

- **Mexico City Historic Center , Mexico City, Mexico (1524 – present)** — Founded in 1524 atop the ancient Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, which had been sited on a suite of islands amid the waters of Lake Texcoco, the Historic Center of Mexico City boasts some of the finest colonial architecture the New World has known. Within the 680 square blocks that comprise the Historic Center are more than a thousand extraordinary buildings, the most important embracing the Zócolo, or main plaza, which is anchored at its northern end by Metropolitan Cathedral. Built between 1573 and 1810, the cathedral is the largest church in Latin America. On the western edge of the Zócolo is the Palacio Nacional, erected in the late seventeenth century on the site of the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II's palace. More recently built treasures include the Palacio de Bellas Artes, an Art Nouveau wonder on Alameda Park, eight blocks west of the Zócolo.

Beyond its sheer grandeur, Mexico City presents one of the world's greatest conservation challenges, having been built on the ever-shifting silts and clays of a former lake-bed in an area of unrelenting seismic activity. Since the 1950s, these issues have been compounded by air pollution, population stress, failed economic policies, a soaring crime rate, and the continued depletion of the city's freshwater aquifer to hydrate a population that recently topped 24 million. The aquifer depletion has caused the city to drop nearly ten meters in the past century alone. Decades of economic decline parlayed into urban decay in the Historic Center, resulting in many of its edifices becoming dilapidated tenements. In September 1985, a devastating earthquake measuring 8.1 on the Richter scale struck a major blow to the metropolis, leaving in its wake 10,000 dead and an estimated \$5 billion in damage.

Some have credited the earthquake with prompting a renewal of the city that continues to this day, as one by one the city's most important buildings are being reclaimed and restored. For all this progress, however, the Historic Center remains at risk, not only from seismic instability, but due to the continued sinking caused by the depletion of the aquifer, which continues unabated. Urban planners and environmentalists have concluded that the only way to save Mexico City is to solve the water-supply problem, and it is for this reason this World Heritage Site is on WMF 2006 list of 100 Most Endangered Sites.

- **Bluegrass Cultural Landscape of Kentucky, Central Kentucky, United States (Late 18th – Early 19th centuries)**—Over 3,000 square kilometers in size, the inner Bluegrass Region of Kentucky is one of North America's most distinctive cultural and agricultural landscapes. Named for the color of the indigenous calcium- and phosphate-enriched grass, the Bluegrass Region was permanently settled in the 1780s by European Americans migrating from Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas. By the mid-nineteenth century, the landscape was distinguished by a number of specialized agrarian-based industries, including tobacco farming and bourbon distillation. However, the historic landscape of the Bluegrass has been most closely associated with the breeding, raising, training, and racing of prized horses. It is the activity of the horse industry, coupled with the region's rolling topography, that create a strong sense of place: farms with specially designed horse barns and manicured paddocks defined by dry-stone and wood-plank fences; training and racing tracks with grandstands and stables; and tree-lined turnpikes connecting farms to one another and to the region's numerous county seats.

Over the past decade, the Bluegrass Region has been threatened by aggressive development, primarily rapid suburbanization. There are no region-wide planning or zoning measures for protecting the cultural landscape while managing development, and between 1997 and 2002, approximately 328 square kilometers of agricultural land were converted to other uses. The result is substantial loss of rural farmland, compromising sense of place, undermining traditional industries such as horse breeding, and endangering historic structures.

REMOTENESS

The World Monuments Watch lists contain a number of unusual and intriguing sites; this list is no exception. Among these fascinating and often mysterious sites are:

- **Hanging Flume, Montrose County, Colorado, United States (Late 19th century)**—Among the more remarkable remnants of America’s nineteenth-century gold rush is the Hanging Flume, a 21-kilometer pathway built along the walls of Colorado’s Dolores River Canyon that was used to transport more than 30 million liters of water a day for use in hydraulic gold mining. Begun in 1887 for the Montrose Placer Mining Company, the construction of the Hanging Flume demanded innovative solutions for traversing a variety of terrain. Trestles were built over ditches while sections suspended over the river were attached to the sheer rock faces with the aid of cantilevered iron placements.

The Flume—an extraordinary example of nineteenth-century industrial engineering—was abandoned shortly after the Montrose Placer Mining Company went bankrupt, in the 1890s. Over the years, local miners and scavengers have carried away its wooden elements for use in other projects, creating large gaps in the length of the structure. Stretches that have survived have been damaged by biological growth and erosion of the sandstone cliff face. Until recently, few people have even been aware of the Flume’s existence, much less its conservation problems. The Colorado Bureau of Land Management has requested Watch listing with the hope of conserving the structure and presenting it to cultural and eco-tourists.

- **Stone Towers of Southwest China, Various Locations, China (Dates Unknown)**—Some 250 mysterious monumental freestanding towers dot the landscape of five geographic regions in China’s Sichuan Province and the Tibet Autonomous Region. The brick, timber, and masonry towers, located in areas populated by a number of minority (non-Han) populations, are not well understood because there are no known written records describing their origin, construction, or use. They are now commonly referred to as Tibetan or Qiang Towers, after the Qiang ethnic group of western Sichuan Province. Chinese and Tibetan scholars speculate that the towers range from 600 to 1,800 years old. They are square, polygonal, or star-shaped (with 5, 6, 10, 12, or 13 points). While their purpose is unknown, the towers may have been used for defense, for storage, as status symbols, or as beacons. Many have survived hundreds of earthquakes over the years, most likely because of their method of construction, which intersperses masonry with wood planks or beams—an anti-seismic technique specific to this region of China and still employed today.

Lack of public awareness about the importance of the towers has resulted in inappropriate reuse (some have been truncated and used as houses) and vandalism. A number of towers are threatened with collapse due to inadequate maintenance or inappropriate prior work, and seismic activity has taken a toll.

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