

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Endangered Historic Places (2011–2013)

The “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” are compiled annually by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and are meant to illustrate the plight of many other sites throughout the United States. The National Trust is a major partner organization of US/ICOMOS. Here is a selection of sites from the years 2011–2013.

2011

Bear Butte, Meade County, South Dakota

Bear Butte, the 4,426-foot mountain called Mato Paha by the Lakota in the Black Hills of South Dakota, is sacred ground for as many as 17 American Indian tribes. Believed to be the spot

where the creator communicates with his people through vision and prayer, the mountain earned its nickname because of its resemblance to a bear sleeping on its side. For thousands of years, American Indian tribes, including the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, Arikara, Hidatsa and Mandan have traveled to Bear Butte to perform annual prayer ceremonies. They, along with visitors from around the world, make annual pilgrimages for spiritual renewal and sustenance to this sacred site, which is part of Bear Butte State Park. It was here, from the expansive summit of Bear Butte, that the Lakota Sioux held their Oyate Kiwsiyaya, the Great Reunion of the People, where Crazy Horse pledged to resist further “white” encroachment into the Black Hills in 1857.

Despite its cultural and religious significance, this National Historic Landmark is threatened by proposed energy development. In November 2010, the South Dakota Board of Minerals and Environment approved a plan to establish a 960-acre oil field adjacent to Bear Butte. Based on tribal opposition and recom-

Bear Butte, Meade County, South Dakota (photo: courtesy of National Trust for Historic Preservation)



mendations made by the National Trust and the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, the board agreed that no wells would be located within the NHL boundary, and adopted other restrictions to reduce the project's impact. However, in addition to the well proposal, a wind power installation, to be placed roughly five miles away from the mountain, is currently under consideration.

The National Trust recognizes the need for energy development. However, such projects need to include the appropriate siting of energy infrastructure that minimizes physical and visual impacts to significant cultural resources. Because the placement of any oil wells or other energy development near Bear Butte could negatively impact the sacred site and further degrade the cultural landscape, future development proposals should be required to undergo a review process that includes meaningful tribal input and full consideration of impacts to cultural resources. The most effective way to achieve this result would be through strengthened state and local protections.

Fort Gaines, Dauphin Island, Alabama

A place of spectacular beauty and stirring history, Dauphin Island is home to Fort Gaines, a fortress pivotal to the Civil War Battle of Mobile Bay. On August 5, 1864, Confederate troops holding Fort Gaines rained down cannon fire on Union Admiral David Farragut's fleet. With French fortifications existing on the island as early as 1707, the massive brick fort was completed in 1861

and with slight exception, the fort structure is almost exactly like it was during the Civil War. The fort has original cannons used in battle, a restored blacksmith shop and kitchens used for living history demonstrations, as well as a tunnel system leading to corner bastions with vaulted brick ceilings.

Now Fort Gaines faces an even more formidable adversary: the relentless erosion of its Gulf of Mexico shoreline. Four hundred feet of historic battlefield have already been lost, and the eastern end, where Fort Gaines is located, is eroding at a rate of approximately nine feet per year. This is the result of more frequent and intense storms, climate change-related sea-level rise and dredging of the Mobile Ship Channel. All of this has been compounded by the effects of the Gulf of Mexico Deepwater Horizon oil spill response. Eventually, Fort Gaines could wash away, destroying a vital piece of our nation's historical and architectural heritage, and an important monument to the brave soldiers who fought, sacrificed and died in the American Civil War.

A comprehensive engineering feasibility/design study concluded that shoreline stabilization and beach nourishment will alleviate shoreline erosion and stabilize the island. Such intervention, however, carries significant costs.

Greater Chaco Landscape, New Mexico

Across a swath of northwestern New Mexico are hundreds of sites that help unlock the mysteries of the Chacoan people, pre-historic farmers who inhabited this area for six centuries start-

Fort Gaines, Dauphin Island, Alabama (photo: courtesy of Dauphin Island Park & Beach Board)





Greater Chaco Landscape, New Mexico
(photo: courtesy of National Trust for Historic Preservation)

ing in 700 A.D. Today these great innovators are represented by descendant Pueblo and other Native American groups. The architecture and engineering prowess of the Chacoan people suggest a highly developed culture, known for magnificent multi-storied buildings. Using masonry techniques unique for their time, the Chacoan people constructed massive stone buildings – or Great Houses – often containing hundreds of rooms. Although some of the Chacoan sites are now in ruins, many others are remarkably intact. The legacy of the Chacoan people includes thousands of ancient pueblos and shrines, along with an extensive road network that provided a physical and cultural link for people across the region.

Sites within Chaco Canyon itself and some on nearby mesas are protected as part of the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, which is managed by the National Park Service. The international significance of this region, which includes Aztec Ruins National Monument and Salmon Ruins, is exemplified by the designation of the Park as a World Heritage property, which is one of only 20 in the United States. It is the natural and cultural landscape as a whole, and not just individual sites, that make this Chacoan region worthy of protection and yet, most Chacoan sites and roads located on federal lands outside the Park and World Heritage boundaries are at risk from a variety of human activities including, most significantly, energy development. Many of these sites and roads rival those located within the Park. For example, the recently mapped culturally significant Great North Road, which runs dozens of miles towards the New Mexico–Colorado border, remains vulnerable to development and other land-disturbing activities.

Prentice Women's Hospital, Chicago, Illinois

A concrete, cloverleaf-shaped icon, Prentice Women's Hospital has added drama and interest to the Chicago skyline for nearly four decades. Progressive and cutting edge, the highly engineered and sculpted building was designed by famed Chicago architect Bertrand Goldberg. The late architect, best known for the design of Chicago's Marina City, argued that imaginative and bold hospital planning could lead to a higher standard of patient care. Prentice Women's Hospital is his tour de force. Believing



Prentice Women's Hospital, Chicago, Illinois
(photo: courtesy of Landmarks Illinois)

that the modernist boxes typical of the 1970s were dehumanizing and insensitive to their surroundings, Goldberg designed an open-floor plan that created four circular villages of care on each floor, facilitating interaction between patients and staff while improving patient experience.

Originally constructed to house the Chicago Maternity Hospital and the Northwestern Institute of Psychiatry, Prentice Women's Hospital's modern design brought the building national and international acclaim when it opened in 1974.

When Prentice Women's Hospital relocated to a new facility in 2007, the tower portion of the building was left vacant, and the tenant who occupies the building's base will leave this September. The building's owner, Northwestern University, has announced plans to raze the hospital in late 2011 in favor of a new research facility. The Commission on Chicago Landmarks placed the hospital on its June 2nd meeting agenda, but at the request of Northwestern University, the commission deferred consideration of Prentice Women's Hospital until its July hearing. Northwestern University has agreed not to apply for a demolition permit during this deferral period. Like many of Goldberg's architectural wonders in Chicago, the hospital still has no formal protection from demolition.

2012

Historic Post Office Buildings

In 2011, the U.S. Postal Service identified nearly 4,400 post offices – large and small – that it plans to study for closure. Unfortunately, city officials and local preservationists who identified new buyers or uses for endangered post offices often find themselves frustrated by a lack of information and guidance from the U.S. Postal Service. In Geneva, developers interested in purchasing and rehabbing the downtown post office gave up because they could not get timely or clear answers from officials.

Although the U.S. Postal Service has announced that it will seek to cut costs through reduced hours of operation rather than closures, many post offices are currently shuttered and many more face uncertain futures. The U.S. Postal Service needs to



Historic Post Office Building in La Jolla
(photo: courtesy of National Trust for Historic Preservation)

define and implement a clear process that will protect the historic buildings in its inventory.

Local post office buildings have traditionally played an essential role in the lives of millions of Americans. Many are architecturally distinctive, prominently located, and cherished as civic icons in communities across the country. Unless the U.S. Postal Service establishes a clear, consistent process that follows federal preservation law when considering disposal of these buildings, a significant part of the nation's architectural heritage will be at risk.

Joe Frazier's Gym, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Inside this modest, three-story brick building, Joe Frazier – a gold medal winner at the 1964 Olympics and later Heavyweight Champion of the World – trained for his victorious bout against

Joe Frazier's Gym, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (photo: Ben Leech)



Muhammad Ali. Today, the converted warehouse where Smokin' Joe perfected his punch is home to a discount furniture store and two floors of vacant space. Despite growing interest in commemorating Frazier's life (he died in 2011), the gym is unprotected; it enjoys no formal historic designation at the local or national level.

Winning historic designation at the local level for the building Frazier owned and operated will demonstrate the power of communities to protect the places that tell their diverse stories. Similarly, inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places will promote the value of diversity within this roster of our country's most important historic resources.

Princeton Battlefield, Princeton, New Jersey

On these New Jersey fields, George Washington rallied his forces to defeat British troops, a crucial turning point in the Revolutionary War. A portion of the battle site, however, faces significant threats, including a 15-unit housing development for faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study. As proposed, the project would radically alter the integrity of a rare, intact battlefield.

Waged 235 years ago, the battle at Princeton transformed prospects for the American Revolution. Not only did Washington's success inspire countless soldiers to renew their commissions, it reinvigorated support for the sometimes desperate Colonial effort. The story of our country's fight for independence is incomplete without a fully preserved Princeton Battlefield (see inside back cover).



The Village of Zoar, Ohio (photo: Andy Donaldson)

The Village of Zoar, Ohio

The historic Village of Zoar, home to nearly 200 residents, is protected from flooding by a levee built in the 1930s. Record floods in 2005, however, raised concern about the levee's integrity. Now, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has started a three-year study to assess the levee's future. One of many alternatives under consideration is removing it entirely, which could require the relocation or demolition of 80% of this remarkable historic village.

The Village of Zoar was founded in 1817 by a group of separatists who fled Germany in search of religious freedom. Not only does Zoar help to tell the story of immigration to the United

States, it illustrates the history of settlement throughout this region. As part of a multi-year study of alternatives for solving the Zoar levee problem, the Army Corps is following a review process that requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their activities on historic properties. Through the process, the Army Corps should seek alternatives that will protect Zoar.

2013

Astrodome in Houston, Texas

As the world's first domed, indoor, air-conditioned stadium, the 18-story multi-purpose Houston Astrodome was deemed the "Eighth Wonder of the World" when it opened in 1965. It is a



The Astrodome in Houston, Texas (photo: Ed Schipul)

marvel of modern engineering, and was designed to embody Houston's innovative, entrepreneurial and space-age development as a major U.S. city. The Astrodome was home to Major League Baseball's Houston Astros and the National Football League's Houston Oilers for many years, and also played host to numerous other notable events, from the "Battle of the Sexes" tennis match between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs in 1973, to the Republican National Convention in 1992. Without a viable reuse plan, the Astrodome will likely succumb to calls for demolition.

Mountain View Black Officer's Club, Fort Huachuca, Arizona

Mountain View Black Officers' Club was built in 1942 and remains one of the most significant examples of a World War II-era military service club in the United States built specifically for African-American officers. The military, in response to "separate but equal" laws of the early 20th century, began a large-scale effort at Fort Huachuca army base to build barracks, hospitals, maintenance structures, offices, warehouses and recreational facilities, all of which were segregated and in many cases built in duplicate. During its operation the Mountain View Black Officers' club hosted top performers and dignitaries such as Lena Horne, Dinah Shore and Joe Louis. Today, The Mountain View Black Officer's Club faces demolition by the U.S. Army, which has threatened to place it on an active disposal list.



Mountain View Black Officer's Club, Fort Huachuca, Arizona (photo: courtesy of Ft. Huachuca Archives)

Village of Mariemont, Mariemont, Ohio

One of America's most picturesque communities, the Village of Mariemont is a National Historic Landmark designed between 1921 and 1925 by renowned landscape architect and community planner John Nolen. Considered one of America's most important examples of town planning, it was named a "Top 10 Great Neighborhood in America" by the American Planning Association in 2008, and its elegant layout continues to inspire planners and designers to this day.



The village of Mariemont, Mariemont, Ohio (photo: Steve Spooner)

Now, the Ohio Department of Transportation is proposing a major transportation project that would significantly impact the Village, including a possible elevated highway through its southern border. In addition to disrupting Mariemont's design, the proposed transportation project would also impact other natural and cultural resources, including the nationally designated Wild and

Scenic Little Miami River valley, a freshwater aquifer, and Native American archaeological sites.

Worldport Terminal at JFK Airport, New York

Opened in 1960, Worldport Terminal at JFK Airport, known for its flying-saucer shape, symbolizes America's entry into the Jet Age and has been featured in several Hollywood films. The first commercial flights of the Boeing 707, the first "modern" jetliner,

departed from the Terminal. In May 2013, Delta Airlines ceased operations from the Worldport Terminal, since renamed Terminal Three, and current plans of the Port Authority of New York/New Jersey call for the demolition of the iconic structure.

Alternatives to demolishing the Worldport include demolishing the south concourse instead and using Worldport as a connecting facility between Terminals Two and Four, as a dedicated or premier terminal or as an independent building open to the public containing a museum, restaurants, shops, aircraft observation space, airport employee daycare or other purposes.



Worldport Terminal at JFK Airport, New York
(photo: Jon Proctor)