

HISTORIC PRESERVATION DEFENSE FUND



National Trust *for*
Historic Preservation®

Support the movement to protect our nation's civic and cultural inheritance

The State of Play

This is an urgent, pivotal moment for historic preservation. Right now, in our nation's capital, the White House's East Wing has been demolished to make way for a 90,000 sq. ft. ballroom—without the legally required approval of Congress. Nearby, the **Kennedy Center** is the focal point of a fierce legal and political fight, with the building abruptly closed and now under threat of demolition. And just across Memorial Bridge, a proposed Triumphal Arch would intrude on the historic sightline between Arlington National Cemetery and the Lincoln Memorial, disrupting a landscape created to honor the sacrifice of the veterans who rest there and showing shocking disregard for its solemn purpose.

But the threats are not limited to Washington, DC.

Across the country, in big cities and small communities, on Main Streets and in National Parks, federal protections that have safeguarded our national treasures are in jeopardy. Proposed changes to the regulations for implementing the National Historic Preservation Act would leave historic places vulnerable and weaken, or even silence, the public's voice in decisions about their use or very existence.

These are not isolated actions. The foundational stories of our nation and the fabric of our society are under a generational threat.



About the Historic Preservation Defense Fund

Recognizing the magnitude of this crisis—and the bold, coordinated action it demands—the National Trust is establishing the Historic Preservation Defense Fund (HPDF): an effort to raise an initial \$10 million to protect our nation's historic places, and the laws and principles that safeguard them from irreparable harm, ensuring future generations can continue to honor our shared civic and cultural inheritance.

Resourced by the HPDF, the National Trust will work alongside new and existing partners to build a united preservation movement and mount a shared defense against the current and emerging threats.

The scope of what the HPDF will support is intentionally broad: from national historic landmarks in

our nation's capital to the many kinds of historic places across the country, from individual threats to the full range of rules, regulations, and statutes that need defending. The Fund will support the strategies each fight demands.

From the White House to the Grand Canyon, from the Statue of Liberty to the Golden Gate Bridge, the Historic Preservation Defense Fund will provide resources for legal defense, public advocacy, and community action whenever historic places and the laws that protect them are under threat. This moment requires preservation organizations, law firms, journalists, concerned citizens, and communities across the country to act together. The Historic Preservation Defense Fund will give this movement the resources to sustain the fight.



Photo Courtesy of Tuxyso/Wikimedia Commons

Our Nation's History Is at Stake

Historic places carry identities, cultures, and memories that belong to us all, not just those who live in or near them. A neighborhood block. A sacred site. A memorial to a moment in history. Each holds the power to build community, create opportunity, and help us see ourselves in the stories of our past.

But their value runs deeper. Understanding the fullness of our triumphs and failures, struggles and progress, helps us recognize the values we share: opportunity, justice, liberty, community, and the belief that America can always build on its strengths to become better than it was before. Historic places give those values a tangible anchor. They help us understand one another and imagine the future we can build together.

Why the National Trust

The National Trust is the nation's historic preservation leader. Congressionally chartered in 1949 to ensure the public has a voice in decisions about the places that define our shared history, we have always used legal and public advocacy to save historic places and to defend preservation laws.

This is not a role we claimed. It's why we were created.

Building on over 75 years of national advocacy and action, we are equipped to tackle multiple aspects of preservation work and advocacy at once. But we have never done this work alone. The National Trust brings together a network of preservation organizations and partners, our own legal expertise, and the American public to safeguard our nation's historic places through litigation, public policy, advocacy, government relations, grantmaking, public affairs, cross-sector partnerships, and community outreach.



Join Us

The goal is not simply to defend what we have. It is to build a stronger, more inclusive future—one where all Americans can see themselves reflected in our national story. Your support is crucial to help make that future possible. Join us to ensure that our history remains something we can know, share, and celebrate together.