

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION NAMES
THE STATLER HILTON HOTEL IN DALLAS, TEXAS TO ITS 2008 LIST OF
AMERICA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES**

***Crown Jewel of Hilton Hotels Vulnerable to Encroaching Development
Pressure***

Washington, D.C. (May 20, 2008) – Today, the **National Trust for Historic Preservation** named The **Statler Hilton Hotel** in **Dallas, Texas** to its **2008** list of **America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places**. This annual list highlights important examples of the nation's architectural, cultural and natural heritage that are at risk for destruction or irreparable damage.

When the Statler Hilton opened in downtown Dallas in 1956, it was hailed as the most modern hotel in the country. Its sheer size, bold form and innovative architectural features soon made it an icon of mid-20th-century design. Today, the building, once considered the crown jewel of the Hilton hotels, sits vacant. Located on an increasingly attractive piece of real estate, the Statler Hilton faces an uncertain future as encroaching development pressure heightens the threat of demolition.

Spared from demolition in 2003, the Statler Hilton is located across the street from the future site of the city park Main Street Gardens, and adjacent to several large-scale developments. As part of a major revitalization effort for downtown Dallas, construction on the park began a few months ago when an entire city block was cleared, including the parking garage for the hotel.

The property is no longer owned by the Hilton Hotels Corporation. Many other hotel operators have explored the possibility of renovating the hotel, but with no adjacent parking, low ceiling heights and environmental costs, the building remains a challenge. Recognizing that the lack of parking could deter potential buyers, the city's Parks and Recreation Department designed the western half of the new park to accommodate underground parking. The city has publicly stated they would delay construction of the park until funds for an underground lot could be made available. However, a contract with the developers of an adjacent property, precludes any such delay.

The Statler Hilton is emblematic of a number of mid-century modern buildings in large urban areas that are now languishing. Unlike a colonial governor's home or storied battlefield, structures of relatively recent vintage have not engendered similar levels of appreciation. In an effort to protect the Statler Hilton, preservation activists are working to secure its inclusion in the designation of a potential historic district. In addition, Preservation Dallas has drafted a nomination to identify the Statler Hilton as a local landmark. Providing financial incentives such as Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits to potential buyers is also being explored.

"The Statler Hilton Hotel is a reminder that landmarks of modernism and the recent past play an important role in telling the story of the 20th century," says Richard Moe, president of the National

Trust for Historic Preservation. “It would be tragic to lose places that were designed and built during our own lifetime just as we’re beginning to acknowledge their importance as part of our history.”

Completed in 1956 at a cost of \$16 million, the Statler Hilton was the first major hotel built in Dallas in nearly three decades and the largest convention facility in the South. The hotel, with 1,000 guest rooms and a ballroom fit for 2,200 people, boasted unheard of luxuries such as elevator music, a roof-top swimming pool and custom 21” Westinghouse TVs in every room. Designed by New York architect William Tabler, it was the first glass-and-metal hotel in the nation. The Y-shaped building employed a flat-slab structural system, the first full application of its kind, which reduced the number of columns and footers needed. Tabler was also one of the first in the country to use a thin-skinned curtain wall design consisting of 1 3/8” panels made of glass and porcelain coated metal. Its innovative features made it a significant contributor to the Modern movement in Dallas, and for the state of Texas.

The 2008 list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places (in alphabetical order):

Boyd Theatre, Philadelphia, Pa. - Philadelphia’s last surviving downtown movie palace—a masterpiece of Art Deco design—faces an uncertain future as it sits vacant and remains vulnerable to demolition. It awaits a preservation-minded buyer to return the vintage venue to its original grandeur.

California’s State Parks - California’s state park system, the largest park system in the U.S., encompasses a vast array of historic and cultural resources that chronicle the state’s rich and storied heritage. It also has suffered greatly from years of chronic underfunding and has \$1.2 billion in deferred maintenance. Proposed budget cuts, which would have led to the closure of 48 state parks, have been staved off. The underlying problem remains. Current funds only cover 40% of actual maintenance and operations needs, which means irreplaceable historic and cultural resources remain endangered.

Charity Hospital and the adjacent neighborhood, New Orleans, La. – While Charity Hospital sits abandoned, plans call for the demolition of nearly 200 homes in the adjacent Mid-City neighborhood to accommodate construction of two new hospitals. Alternate locations for the new hospitals are available, and Charity Hospital, a National Register-eligible building that closed after Hurricane Katrina, could be rehabilitated to once again serve the community.

Great Falls Portage, Great Falls, Mont. – This National Historic Landmark, one of the best preserved landscapes along the Lewis and Clark Trail, is slated to get a massive coal-fired power plant in its front yard. Development abutting the Great Falls Portage, an undeveloped rural area under panoramic blue Montana skies, will irreparably harm the cultural and visual landscape.

Hangar One, Moffett Field, Santa Clara County, Calif. – The hangar, a local icon built in 1932 to house U.S. Navy dirigibles, is a cavernous, 200 foot tall dome-shaped structure covering more than 8 acres of land. A 2003 inspection revealed PCBs leaking from the hangar’s metallic exterior. Although the Navy transferred Hangar One to NASA in 1992, the Navy is responsible for environmental remediation, but has no mandate to replace the exterior and preserve the building.

The Lower East Side, New York City - The Lower East Side embodies the history of immigration, one of the central themes of American history in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, yet development threatens to erase the surviving historic structures. This includes houses of worship, historic theaters, schools and the tenement, a unique architectural type which, by the sheer numbers who lived in such a building, had an impact on more Americans than any other form of urban housing. A New York City landmark designation and contextual zone changes within the neighborhood would preserve the physical character of the neighborhood.

Michigan Avenue Streetwall, Chicago, Ill. - This 12-block stretch of historic buildings—dating back to the 1880s—is a virtual encyclopedia of the work of the city’s best architects, including Daniel Burnham and Louis Sullivan. Although this “streetwall” was designated a Chicago Landmark in 2002, its historic character is now

being threatened by the inappropriate addition of large-scale towers that retain only small portions of the original buildings or their facades.

Peace Bridge Neighborhood, Buffalo, N.Y. - The neighborhood and the site, with homes and buildings dating to the 1850s on two National Register Olmsted parks, is an iconic section of the City of Buffalo. The Public Bridge Authority (PBA) proposes to expand Peace Bridge and include a 45 acre plaza that will eliminate over 100 homes and businesses (dozens of which are eligible to the National Register) and diminish the Olmsted parks. Suitable alternate sites exist, but PBA refuses to properly consider them.

The Statler Hilton Hotel, Dallas, Texas - When the Statler Hilton opened in downtown Dallas in 1956, it was hailed as the most modern hotel in the country. Today, the building sits vacant. Located on an increasingly attractive piece of real estate, the Statler Hilton faces an uncertain future as encroaching development pressure heightens the threat of demolition. Current regulations restrict alternate uses, so a sympathetic developer is needed to restore and reopen the Statler as a hotel.

Sumner Elementary School, Topeka, Kan. - The school, a National Historic Landmark, helped launch the nation's Civil Rights Movement as the centerpiece of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. Currently vacant, the school suffers from deferred maintenance and has sustained significant damage from water infiltration and vandalism. Though the city of Topeka owns the school and is required to maintain and protect it, the City Council has authorized its demolition. A sympathetic developer is needed to save and restore this icon.

Vizcaya and the Bonnet House, Fla. - Pending development of out-of-scale buildings and corresponding zoning changes will permanently ruin the vistas surrounding Vizcaya Museum & Gardens (Miami) and Bonnet House Museum & Gardens (Ft. Lauderdale) and threatens to set a precedent for future high-rise structures.

America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places has identified 200 threatened one-of-a-kind historic treasures since 1988. While a listing does not ensure the protection of a site or guarantee funding, the designation has been a powerful tool for raising awareness and rallying resources to save endangered sites from every region of the country. Whether these sites are urban districts or rural landscapes, Native American landmarks or 20th-century sports arenas, entire communities or single buildings, the list spotlights historic places across America that are threatened by neglect, insufficient funds, inappropriate development or insensitive public policy. At times, that attention has garnered public support to quickly rescue a treasured landmark, while in other instances, it has been the impetus of a long battle to save an important piece of our history.

To download high resolution images of this year's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places, please visit
<http://press.nationaltrust.org>.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, 9 regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories. For more information, visit www.PreservationNation.org.

###