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ACO thrilled with Ontario Place's inclusion on World Monuments Fund 2020 Watch

Architectural Conservancy Ontario (ACO) is thrilled that Ontario Place has been selected for inclusion in the World Monuments Fund 2020 Watch. "Not only does the inclusion bring international attention to the site, it also opens the door to a share of US\$1.6 million in funding for conservation initiatives," said Bill Greaves, the ACO Board member who led the nomination process earlier this year.

The provincial government is currently seeking a long-term lease for Ontario Place, calling for private development of the landmark public site. It has placed virtually no restrictions on development. ACO is extremely concerned that all of the site's recognized heritage could be at risk: the buildings, the landscape, as well as Trillium Park.

Ontario Place's heritage value has been recognized at the highest level within Canada. In 2017 The National Trust of Canada awarded it the Prix du XXe Siecle, noting "The Cinesphere and the Pods realize, in tangible physical form, some of the most ambitious Utopian architectural ideas from Europe and the United States of the 1960s." In 2014 the Ontario Government recognized the importance of the site in a Statement of Cultural Heritage Value. Earlier this year, the City of Toronto designated the site on its Heritage Register, noting the cultural significance of the masterwork buildings by Canadian architect Eb Zeidler, the surrounding parkland by landscape architect Michael Hough, and the more recent Trillium Park.

The World Monuments Fund nomination is only one of several ACO actions to protect Ontario Place. The ACO Toronto branch hosted a sold-out forum in early February with the Toronto Society of Architects entitled Ontario Place: Building on Our Legacy, and sponsored a [video](#) which had over 60,000 hits on social media channels. In February 2019, former ACO Chair Leslie Thompson met with then-Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport Michael Tibollo to request that any proposed Ontario Place plans incorporate the features recognized in the Ontario Government's Statement of Cultural Heritage Value.

Redevelopment proposals have been received but contents have not been made public. ACO is concerned that a deal could be announced before the government and local organizations are able to take advantage of the opportunities that inclusion on the Watch will bring.

The World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's treasured places. The Watch is a biennial selection of at-risk cultural heritage sites that combine great historical significance with contemporary social impact. Over 250 nominations were received; only 25 sites were selected. Other sites on the 2020 Watch include Notre-Dame in Paris and the sacred Valley of the Incas in Peru.

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Information: Bill Greaves 416 835 5982 wsgreaves@yahoo.com

Will Coukell, COO, Architectural Conservancy Ontario 416-367-8075