



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
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News Release

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Site of America's First Capitol Building Named a National Treasure *Community engagement campaign and preservation grant from American Express to introduce Federal Hall site to new audiences*

New York, N.Y. (December 2, 2015) – The National Trust for Historic Preservation today announced a new partnership with the National Park Service, the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy and American Express to preserve and celebrate Federal Hall National Memorial and designate the site as one of [America's National Treasures](#).

“Federal Hall matters to our history, our culture, our understanding of our country, and to the past, present and future of Wall Street,” said Stephanie K. Meeks, president and CEO, National Trust for Historic Preservation. “The timeless democratic principles and capitalist economic ideals rooted in Federal Hall’s rich history are as fervently debated and resonant today as ever before.”

Despite its rich history, the site has not been without its challenges in recent years. Federal Hall has been threatened by serious preservation concerns—such as water infiltration, deteriorating facade elements, and poor lighting—that have slowly taken a detrimental toll on this iconic structure. Yet each year, a stunning 15 million New Yorkers and tourists alike pass by—or sit on—the steps of Federal Hall, many taking photos or selfies. But many don’t venture inside the building to learn more about its rich history—or consider it a tourist destination.

This partnership is meant to raise awareness of Federal Hall through a large-scale preservation project—and engage the community by jumpstarting the site’s visibility on a local and national level.

As the Presenting Partner of the National Treasures program, American Express has pledged more than \$7 million to help promote and enable the preservation of these sites, including buildings, neighborhoods, communities and landscapes that stand at risk across the country. The company’s commitment to historic preservation includes a \$300,000 grant, to restore and repoint Federal Hall’s deteriorated steps.

“American Express is committed to preserving historic treasures and ensuring their relevance for future generations,” said Timothy J. McClimon, president, American Express Foundation. “Federal Hall is the home of many key American milestones and represents a significant era for downtown Manhattan. American Express was founded on the same street as Federal Hall, 165 years ago, and we are proud to support the restoration of a monument that is valuable to the history of our city and country.”

“In George Washington's inaugural address to the Senate, delivered at Federal Hall, he

spoke of the ‘preservation of the sacred fire of liberty,’” said Joshua Laird, commissioner of National Parks of New York Harbor. “This fire continues to burn in the hearts of our citizens, in part, because the National Park Service preserves sites such as Federal Hall National Memorial, which tell the ongoing story of our nation. The NPS wishes to express its gratitude to the National Trust for Historic Preservation for recognizing that Federal Hall is a national treasure, to American Express for its commitment to historic preservation and to the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy for its dedication to keeping the fire burning.”

“Natural treasures need constant care and vigilance against deterioration,” said Marie Salerno, President of the Harbor Conservancy. “Indeed, two decades have passed since any major restoration here. With the support of partners like the National Trust and American Express, we can begin to restore Federal Hall, uplifting it as a place that should matter to more New Yorkers and Americans.”

About Federal Hall

Federal Hall, once dubbed “America’s front door,” is located on Wall Street in the heart of New York City’s Financial District. It is the site of our nation’s first Capitol—and is where George Washington was inaugurated as president in 1789. The iconic statue of George Washington and its steps memorialize America’s early efforts toward a democratic government and capitalist society. Federal Hall is one of only 30 national memorials designated by the U.S. Congress, a select group that includes the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, the Vietnam Memorial and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, also known as the Gateway Arch.

The original structure on this site was completed in 1704 as New York City Hall and later became the nation’s first capitol. The Bill of Rights was adopted here, and for 18 months, it was the site of the first Federal Congress. The original building was razed in 1812, with the opening of a relocated New York City Hall. The current building, completed in 1842, served as the country’s first U.S. Customs House and then as a U.S. Sub-Treasury.

More information can be found at: www.savingplaces.org/federalhall and www.nps.gov/index.htm

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Suggested tweet: Preservation campaign to celebrate rich history and bright future at Federal Hall #thisplacematters www.savingplaces.org/federalhall

About the National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded nonprofit organization, works to save America’s historic places. www.savingplaces.org

About the National Park Service

The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world. www.nps.gov/index.htm

About the National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy

The National Parks of New York Harbor Conservancy, the primary nonprofit partner of the national parks in New York City, improves access to parks, expands visitor experiences and preserves treasured landscapes and historic sites. Learn more about our initiative for Federal Hall at www.federalhall.org.

About American Express

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