

The National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize our communities.

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11 Most Endangered Places

Natchez

Location: **Natchez, Mississippi**

Current Status: **Threatened**

In its heyday, Natchez was one of the wealthiest towns in the antebellum South. The legacy of that era is the treasure-trove of great architecture that draws a quarter-million tourists annually, many of them flocking to the famed Pilgrimage, a seven-week extravaganza of house and garden tours. After riverboat gambling was legalized in Natchez in 1990, city leaders wisely adopted a plan to control gaming-related development that might occur. But in the 1990s, disregarding that plan, they gave preliminary approval to construction of a massive 10-story structure, comprising a hotel and 850-car parking garage, that loom over the riverfront Under-the-Hill Historic District and would have spoiled the view of the Mississippi River bluffs atop which the city stands. Residents fear that this will be just the beginning, and that additional inappropriate development will accomplish what wars, floods and economic hard times were never able to do: scar the beautiful face of historic Natchez.



The threatened riverbank area (Photo: Mark Coffey)

UPDATE: As a result of the Trust's 11 Most listing, the developer pulled out of the project. But development pressure on the city's water front has intensified. The mayor and city council have hired a consultant to develop a retail plan that is focused on the water front. In addition, the city has developed a second landing site within the city for the gambling boat, Mississippi Queen.

Last Updated: 1/2003

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