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conservation

**Preserving Cultural
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PRESS RELEASE

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Fire at the Notre-Dame Cathedral

WASHINGTON, DC—The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) extends sympathy and support to their conservation colleagues in Paris following the devastating fire at the Notre-Dame Cathedral.

The fire began on the evening of Monday, April 15, 2019, causing extensive damage to the 850-year-old iconic building. The cathedral had been undergoing renovations due to structural concerns.

Because of these renovations, several significant objects were not on site: sixteen copper statues from the roof were removed last week. The spire of the cathedral and a major portion of the roof seem to have been destroyed by the fire.

“We mourn for the catastrophic damage suffered by one of the world’s greatest historic, artistic, religious, and cultural treasures,” said AIC President Margaret Holben Ellis. “As horrifying details emerge, we empathize with the dedicated stewards of France’s cultural heritage and stand in solemn allegiance to their preservation efforts.”

Initial reports indicate that the overall structure of the building remains intact; many architectural features—including the stained glass rose windows—likewise survive. Important religious objects were also saved during the fire. Emergency recovery efforts benefitted from training exercises performed last year by local firefighters which focused on preserving the artworks and relics in the cathedral.

Officials have stated that preservation professionals cannot begin their work yet. AIC staff will monitor damage assessments and provide updated information to the membership about opportunities to offer assistance in ongoing recovery efforts.

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The American Institute for Conservation (AIC) is the leading membership association for current and aspiring conservators and allied professionals who preserve cultural heritage. AIC represents more than 3,500 individuals working in the domains of science, art, and history through treatment, research, collections care, education, and more. By informing, empowering, and connecting conservation professionals, AIC ensures our cultural heritage is not lost or forgotten.