ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Preserving the York Minster Cultural Heritage Site: an in Depth Look at the Complex Issues that are Threatening to Undermine Historical Preservation in York, England Today
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ABSTRACT: In recent years, heritage sites all over the world have come under threat of destruction. From Afghanistan's Bamiyan Buddhas to Cornwall's 15th-century church, St. Stephen-by-Saltash, few heritage sites seem to be immune to the turmoil of our world. As a result of this sad fact, communities worldwide are facing the loss of cultural history brought about by the destruction of sites that have united them for years behind a shared sense of pride, identity, and belonging. My research focuses on one such threatened site, York Minster, a Norman age gothic cathedral located in York, England, that is suffering everything from acid rain erosion of its limestone structure to severe cuts to the funding for restoration. To prevent further deterioration of this site, local citizens have, ironically, been forced to resort to "salvage" methods that may be even more destructive than the passage of time. For example, a fundraiser called the York Minster Stone Auction recently took place, where original stones from the Minster were sold in order to raise money for preservation efforts. In order to understand why such desperate measures have been taken, I examine through library research, online consultation of websites, and email queries placed to museum personnel, various causes behind the negative preservation environment that is plaguing York Minster, ranging from the global and the national to the very local. By focusing on York Minster I hope to not only reach a better understanding regarding the factors negatively affecting that iconic site, but also to provide a resource for those who wish to help prevent the destruction of other heritage sites around the world.