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科学及文化组织

UNESCO
Asia-Pacific Awards for
*Cultural Heritage
Conservation*

PRESS RELEASE

2015 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards Winners Announced

*India's Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple wins Award of Excellence in 2015 cycle;
Lao PDR honored for first time*

BANGKOK, 1 September 2015 — The Conservation of the **Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple in Kerala, India** has received the Award of Excellence in this year's UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation. Xieng Thong Temple in Luang Prabang won the Award of Merit and became the first project in Lao PDR to receive the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Award.

A total of 12 winning projects from five countries, – India, China, Lao PDR, Australia and Thailand – have been recognized in this year's Heritage Awards. A panel of international conservation experts met in June to review 36 entries from across the Asia-Pacific region.

Tim Curtis, Chair of the Jury and Chief of UNESCO Bangkok's Culture Unit, said he was impressed with the quality of the entries received this year as well as the geographical expanse they covered, showing that the awards' message of the importance of cultural preservation is gaining momentum in the region.

"The Jury were very pleased with this year's submissions, which included fascinating projects from across Asia-Pacific. This reflects a continuing trend over the years where we are seeing a broader diversity of typologies being submitted to the Awards coming from a wider geographical spread," said Dr. Curtis.

He added that he was pleased with the significant increase in the number of entries in the New Design in Heritage Contexts category – awarded this year to Port Arthur Penitentiary in Tasmania, Australia – which he said shows "how design innovation can support conservation efforts and enhance the heritage value of a place."

The Award of Excellence for the Conservation of **Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple, Thrissur in Kerala, India** recognizes the remarkable conservation effort undertaken at the sacred site which employed age-old rituals and conservation techniques drawn from *vastu shastra*, an Indian traditional science focusing on architecture and construction. As such, the tangible attributes of the temple are inextricably linked with its intangible heritage which dates back generations, thus ensuring that "spirit of place" resonates throughout the site.

Other Awardees included:

Awards of Distinction:

- **Salt pans of Yim Tin Tsai**, Hong Kong SAR, China
- **J.N. Petit Institute**, Mumbai, India

Awards of Merit:

- **Cangdong Heritage Education Centre**, Kaiping City, Guangdong Province, China
- **Pingyao Courtyard House**, Shanxi Province, China
- **Xieng Thong Temple**, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR
- **Baan Luang Rajamaitri**, Muang District, Chantaburi, Thailand

Honourable Mention:

- **Wanslea Cancer Wellness Centre**, Cottesloe, Western Australia, Australia
- **Sanfang Qixiang**, Fuzhou, Fujian, China

- **Parvati Nandan Ganapati Temple**, Pune, Maharashtra, India
- **YHA Mei Ho House Youth Hostel**, Hong Kong SAR, China

Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts:

- **Port Arthur Penitentiary**, Tasmania, Australia

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation programme recognizes the efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region. By recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic properties the awards aim to encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships.

The winners were selected based on how the projects reflected a clear understanding and application of various criteria, such as the articulation of the spirit of place, technical achievement, appropriate use or adaptation, and the project's contribution to the surrounding environment as well as the local community's cultural and historical continuity.

Eligible projects must be more than 50 years old and the restoration must have been completed within the past 10 years. Buildings with a new use must have also been in viable use for at least one year from the date of the awards announcement.

The 2014 and 2015 cycles of the Heritage Awards are generously supported by the Sino-Ocean Charity Foundation (Beijing, People's Republic of China): <http://www.sinooceanland.com>

Further information about the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation and this year's winning entries can be found at:

<http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritage/awards/>

The Call for Entries for the 2016 UNESCO Heritage Awards shall be made in October 2015, and further details will be available on the awards website.

Photo Albums:

- High-resolution images of 2015 award recipients are available here: <https://www.hightail.com/download/bXBibUpUVEh6NEIYRHNUQw>
- Print-sized images of all award recipients from Australia (2000-2015): <https://www.hightail.com/download/bXBibUpheFhCTWxjR05Vag>
- Print-sized images of all award recipients from China (2000-2015): <https://www.hightail.com/download/bXBibUpheFhFd2RBSXNUQw>
- Print-sized images of all award recipients from India (2000-2015): <https://www.hightail.com/download/bXBibUpheFhLVldKUmNUQw>
- Print-sized images of all award recipients from Thailand (2000-2015): <https://www.hightail.com/download/bXBibUpheFhubVd4djlVag>

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Project profiles for 2015 UNESCO Heritage Award winners

Award of Excellence

Project name: Sree Vadakkunnathan Temple

Location: Kerala, India



The holistic restoration of the Sree Vadakkunnathan temple represents a milestone achievement in reviving a living religious heritage site using a combination of indigenous knowledge of vernacular building techniques, strict adherence to elaborate ritual protocols and contemporary conservation practice. After a century of exposure to monsoon rains and inappropriate minor repairs, the project skillfully stabilized the wooden complex for on-going use by local devotees and restored significant decorative works including murals. Three hundred artisans worked for a decade, guided by the principles encoded in the *vastu shastra*, the Indian traditional science of architecture. Through the exemplary initiative of the temple stakeholders and with commendable support from relevant authorities and the private sector, the project has preserved a significant archetype of Kerala temple architecture while safeguarding the continuity of age-old practices of veneration.

Award of Distinction

Project name: Saltpans of Yim Tin Tsai

Location: Hong Kong SAR, China



The revitalization of the salt pans of Yim Tin Tsai Island in a rural area of Hong Kong SAR celebrates an overlooked form of industrial heritage and contributes to expanding the envelope of conservation practice. The project overcame the lack of historical records by using a field-based methodology of *in situ* investigation to inform the conservation process. The conservation work employed simple local building materials and techniques to return the salt pans to functioning condition. The salt pans now serve as an educational hub for students and as an eco-tourism destination for a growing number of visitors. Coordinated by the members of the Chan clan who originally built the salt pans, the project has rekindled an interest in the history of Hong Kong's early development and sets an innovative approach to the conservation of industrial heritage landscapes.

Project name: J.N. Petit Institute

Location: Fort, Mumbai, India



The restoration of the J.N. Petit Institute has successfully extended the life of one of Mumbai's major Neo-Gothic landmarks and well-loved public institutions. The meticulously executed restoration work has rescued the building from a state of serious decay, returning it to its original glory with the reinstatement of period decorative works, notably stained glass windows, carpentry and masonry ornamentation. The project ensures that generations of Mumbaikars will continue to enjoy the institute's enhanced facilities, in particular, the splendid Reading Room, in years to come. At an urban scale, the restored building enriches the character of Fort District's most distinctive heritage streetscape. Acting as a catalyst for change, the project sets a new bar for other property owners in Mumbai in using a conservation approach to bring renewed vitality to historic neighborhoods.

Award of Merit

Project name: Ping Yao Courtyard Houses

Location: Shanxi Province, China



The pilot restoration of 53 courtyard houses in the Ancient City of Ping Yao World Heritage property serves as a noteworthy model for the conservation of privately-owned vernacular buildings which are increasingly vulnerable across the region. Through a wide-ranging partnership involving local authorities, national experts and international heritage organizations, the project provided technical advice and funding subsidies to enable homeowners to restore their dilapidated residences. The work was carried out by experienced craftspeople using traditional construction techniques and materials, thus retaining material authenticity while sustaining local building traditions. Technical manuals were developed to ensure these high standards are applied in future restoration, adaptation and maintenance efforts. Through a combination of demonstration projects, technical capacity building and new financing models, the initiative makes a significant contribution to the long-term viability of Ping Yao courtyard houses.

Project name: Cangdong Heritage Education Centre

Location: Guangdong Province, China



Using a multi-pronged approach, the project to establish the Cangdong Heritage Education Centre has helped to reverse the gradual abandonment of this once-prosperous farming community in Guangdong Province. Located near the Kaiping Diaolou and Villages World Heritage property, the village contains noteworthy architectural typologies dating to the Ming Dynasty which the project has selected for conservation, resulting in the sensitive restoration of two ancestral halls, a defensive watchtower and the Furen Temple. By designing an outreach programme targeting youth, the project has helped to raise awareness and concern about local heritage among the younger generation. The commendable efforts of community members, patrons and conservationists have realized an ambitious new vision for the revitalization of the village.

Project name: Xieng Thong Temple

Location: Luang Prabang, Lao PDR



The conservation of the exceptionally ornate Xieng Thong Temple has safeguarded the jewel of Luang Prabang architecture and the historic kingdom's most significant landmark. Undertaken within the framework of technical standards set by the Luang Prabang Department of World Heritage, the project is to be commended for its systematic conservation planning and execution. The involvement of trained monk artisans in producing the traditional decorative works represents a noteworthy revival of an age-old practice of sustaining Buddhist temples. The major initiative has arrested the temple complex's slow physical decay and reversed previous inappropriate conservation efforts, improving the condition of both the ritual buildings and the monks' quarters. By combining grassroots efforts with donor support, the project epitomizes the spirit of World Heritage in promoting international cooperation for protecting the world's most iconic heritage places.

Project name: Baan Luang Rajamaitri
Location: Chantaburi, Thailand



The adaptation of the former residence of local aristocrat Luang Rajamaitri into a heritage inn and museum sparked an awareness about heritage conservation among a wide range of stakeholders in Chantaboon and catalyzed a larger movement to revitalize the once-declining 150 year-old riverfront town. The enlistment of over 500 shareholders to invest in the transformation of the house created an innovative new social enterprise model of urban heritage conservation. The well-executed restoration and adaptive reuse of the Sino-Portuguese building has turned it into the linchpin of an increasingly popular cultural tourism destination. The project sets an example for other old communities in Thailand of successful community-based conservation practice now known as the “Chantaboon Model”.

Honourable Mention

Project name: Wanslea Cancer Wellness Centre
Location: Cottesloe, Western Australia



The restoration of the historic Wanslea property to house various cancer support and assistance groups is notable for its sensitive approach to embracing and articulating the multi-layered history of the site. The project has retained and rejuvenated all the existing buildings in the compound dating back to 1905 using a thoughtful conservation process. The un-intrusive incorporation of modern structures and utilities allows the centre to optimize its functionality in a manner that respects the historic fabric while meeting required building codes and user needs. The implementation of the building conservation work as part of a comprehensive master plan for the site that addresses the integrity of the overall landscape and the financial viability of the centre ensures the overall sustainability of this important community facility for generations to come.

Project name: Sanfang Qixiang

Location: Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China



The revitalization of Sanfang Qixiang has saved this traditional urban settlement from imminent redevelopment and promoted widespread recognition of the historically significant “Three Lanes and Seven Alleys” district. The project demonstrates a meticulous and comprehensive approach to conservation planning at the scale of both individual buildings and the larger landscape, drawing upon extensive archival research, *in situ* investigation and international conservation principles. The once deteriorated buildings were restored in an authentic manner using traditional building techniques and materials. The well-organized tourism strategy and appropriate land use control measures have maintained the serenity of this historic neighborhood. The culmination of this ten-year project directly contributed to the revival of community life and led Sanfang Qixiang to become a model for many historical areas in China.

Project name: YHA Mei Ho House Youth Hostel

Location: Hong Kong SAR, China



The transformation of the abandoned Mei Ho House into a youth hostel and heritage museum has successfully extended the life of the territory’s first public housing complex. The conservation work is commendable for its nuanced approach to retaining the hallmarks of period architecture while sensitively inserting contemporary amenities catering to the building’s new function. The impressive efforts to reach out to former residents and record oral histories have enriched the site interpretation and created the vibrant Mei Ho House Alumni Network. The project has a catalytic impact in the larger renewal of Shek Kip Mei as one of the city’s new cultural hubs. The restoration of the Mei Ho House has preserved an important chapter in the social history of Hong Kong and demonstrates the enduring value of the Modern typology of social housing.

Project name: Parvathi Nandan Ganapati Temple

Location: Pune, India



The restoration of Parvathi Nandan Ganapati Temple has given a new-found prominence and vitality to a local religious site in Pune devoted to the elephant god. The good cooperation of wide-ranging stakeholders including devotees, local builders and specialists ensured that the project fulfills the needs of worshippers while abiding by accepted conservation standards. The project is to be commended for its detailed archival research, careful design, and sensitive rectification work in reversing inappropriate previous interventions. The use of traditional carpentry and masonry building techniques and materials to preserve dilapidated elements and replace earlier repairs has enhanced the temple's authentic character. As part of a holistic conservation approach, the discreet landscaping of the complex provides a fitting backdrop to the attractively restored shrine and assembly hall.

Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts

Project name: Port Arthur Penitentiary

Location: Tasmania, Australia



The innovative engineering scheme at Port Arthur Penitentiary sets a benchmark for symbiotic new design helping to sustain fragile historical places. Carried out under challenging circumstances in the sensitive context of a World Heritage property that is one of Australia's most visited destinations, the project has successfully stabilized the structurally unsound masonry ruins to extend the life of the globally-significant site and allow for safe visitor access. Extensive archaeological investigations and engineering simulations informed a design that achieves a quiet equilibrium between new intervention and existing fabric. The elegantly minimalist steel structures provide an architectonic counterpoint to the red-brick walls, with the design vocabulary being clearly of its own time yet deferential to the iconic historic building.