Project profiles for 2012 UNESCO Heritage Award winners

**Award of Excellence**

**Project name:** Mbaru Niang, Wae Rebo Village, Flores Island  
**Location:** East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia

The community-led rebuilding project, initiated by the voluntary effort of Indonesia’s Rumah Asuh Foundation, is exceptional for the way that it successfully engaged with a broad range of conservation issues at the local level. Located high in the mountains of west Flores, the remote village of Wae Rebo is architecturally remarkable for its towering conical traditional houses known as mbaru niang. Through commendable cooperation between the villagers and the architects, the original formation of seven structures was reinstated by using vernacular construction methods. The project exhibits excellence in the complementary safeguarding of both tangible and intangible heritage values in a unique and endangered environmental context. Through the valorization of traditional knowledge embodied in continuing architectural form and construction practices, the project has re-established sustainability of the local built environment and has promoted the pride and spirit of the community.
Award of Distinction

**Project name:** Historic Water System of Hampi  
**Location:** Hampi, Karnataka, India

The holistic approach to historic site interpretation and the rehabilitation of a culturally significant water system for contemporary use are features that set this project apart. The fact that this occurs within a living cultural landscape make it exemplary and standard-setting. This ambitious project has resulted in the restoration not only of the many historic water bodies of the expansive Hampi World Heritage site; it has also re-established connectivity between the site’s natural elements and built heritage components. At the same time the project addresses the modern-day requirements of the local communities living within this relic archaeological landscape. Furthermore, the project demonstrates the productive outcome of a positive engagement between multiple public and private stakeholders at the national and local levels in using historical knowledge to resolve a range of important planning issues.

**Project name:** Sethna Buildings  
**Location:** Mumbai, India

The repair and renovation of the early 20th century residential buildings in Wadia Street, Mumbai, India, represents an outstanding model for protecting and extending the use and life of historically-significant social housing under threat of demolition from urban renewal and development. The complexity and cultural significance of the project is shown through the manner in which the project has successfully demonstrated, both in economic and social terms, the importance of the retention of the social character of this valuable part of Mumbai’s urban landscape. The project is a celebration of an often unloved and under-appreciated, yet socially significant, part of a nation’s heritage and should be seen as an exemplar to encourage and stimulate a continuation of the rehabilitation of social housing projects across the Asia-Pacific region.
Award of Merit

Project name: Chandramauleshwar Temple
Location: Hampi, India

The stabilization work carried out at the ruined site of the 16th century Chandramauleshwar Temple in Hampi sets a benchmark for conservation practice at archaeological sites in India. The project was guided by meticulous technical and archaeological investigations of the stratigraphy of the site, with a sensitively executed consolidation of the soil and stone embankments. The decision by the project team to prioritize stabilization works before undertaking the aesthetic restoration of the temple is highly commendable, ensuring that future work on the temple structure itself may be accomplished successfully. The project success owes much to the partnership established between the local government and the Hampi Foundation with financial assistance from the Global Heritage Fund, which establishes a worthy model for future conservation work.

Project name: Royal Bombay Opera House
Location: Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan

Constructed four centuries ago, Khilingrong Mosque, situated in the isolated mountainous region of the Shigar Valley, was in an advanced state of deterioration when the Aga Khan Cultural Service of Pakistan (AKCSP) began much needed restoration work. The philosophy of ‘minimum intervention and maximum retention’ guided the conservation project with the only major restoration work undertaken being the repair of the roof, which had suffered from the extreme weather conditions of northern Pakistan. The community-based conservation approach adopted by the AKCSP has now revived traditional construction and craft techniques through a specialized skills development programme to train the local community and artisans. Not only has the project reinstated the religious function of the building, it has also reinvigorated an important public space for day-to-day social interactions among the community.
Project name: Zhizhusi Complex
Location: Beijing, China

The comprehensive restoration of the architecturally significant late 17th century Zhizhusi temple complex in Beijing has enabled the rich layers of its history to be revealed, enhanced and celebrated. Prior to the restoration, the historic buildings on the complex were in a ruinous condition, lost among incompatible newly-added structures. The ambitious scale of this private-sector initiative is particularly noteworthy for its determination to respect the authenticity of the various dimensions of historical and architectural significance. The technical competency of the participating artisans and painting restorers is demonstrated in the high quality of the restoration work carried out on the 180 exquisitely-painted wooden ceiling panels. The temple complex has now been restored, interpreted and returned once again to the public with a new function as a venue for cultural events and activities.
Honourable Mention

Project name: Hal Raj Ji Mahal
Location: Rajasthan, India

Responding to the threat posed by the progressive decay of the fabled 17th century Hal Raj Ji Mahal, which had suffered from the ravages of time in an unforgiving desert environment, the project has heroically rescued and restored the oldest and most majestic palace of the imposing Jaisalmer Fort. The work is exemplary for the advanced engineering work employed to stabilize the building foundations, which was the main priority of conservation. Funding and execution for a project of this magnitude was made possible through a joint effort from the owner, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, the Girdhar Smarak Trust, Jaisalmer in Jeopardy, and the World Monuments Fund, all of whose long-term commitment to the project is commendable. The restored palace is now used for social and cultural events thus ensuring a viable and sustainable function of the space while maintaining its historical authenticity.

Project name: William Street Precinct
Location: Perth, Western Australia, Australia

The revitalization of the heritage-listed William Street Precinct in Perth has transformed an area where a majority of the buildings had either been neglected or under-utilized. The redevelopment of this area, which was catalyzed by an innovative public-private partnership scheme led by the Western Australia State Government, has injected a new lease of life into this historic precinct. By analyzing and interpreting the area’s heritage values and creatively balancing conservation and investment opportunities, the project serves as a noteworthy model for other urban heritage districts. The success of the project can be attributed to the partnerships created between government authorities and various stakeholders, including property financiers, heritage experts, local architects and prospective tenants.
Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts

Project name: Reading Room for the Portuguese School of Macau
Location: Macao SAR, China

Inserted into the courtyard of the Portuguese School of Macau, the new Reading Room has provided an understated contemporary addition to this aesthetically noteworthy 1963 modernist complex. The new steel and glass pavilion is seamlessly integrated with the original buildings, responding sensitively to their scale and architectural language. By demonstrating an elegant approach to extending the school’s usable space in a highly dense urban context that faces redevelopment pressure, the new Reading Room contributes an additional layer of architectural significance to a modern heritage landmark and enhances the continued functionality of this icon of the Macanese Portuguese community.