Project profiles for 2016 UNESCO Heritage Award winners

Award of Excellence

Project name: Sanro-Den Hall at Sukunahikona Shrine, Ozu City
Location: Ehime Prefecture, Japan

Dramatically perched on a steep slope, the Sanro-Den prayer hall of the highly sacred Sukunahikona Shrine was resurrected in an exemplary act of grassroots mobilization. A rare example of the Kakezukuri architectural style, the building was rescued after two decades of abandonment and has been reintegrated back into the life of the community. With sponsorship from an international foundation, the highest level of quality and authenticity in the conservation work was achieved through the revival of age-old building practices, strict adherence to traditional construction materials and state-of-the-art technical analysis. Advocacy and outreach efforts successfully broadened awareness of the building’s importance among Ozu residents, generating renewed commitment to sustain the shrine for future generations to come. The outpouring of local support from enthusiastic volunteers, experts and skillful artisans serves as a testament to the success of community stewardship in safeguarding vulnerable heritage buildings and fostering cultural continuity.
Award of Distinction

Project name: Taoping Qiang Village
Location: Sichuan Province, China

The restoration of the ancient Taoping Village following the massive 2008 Wenchuan earthquake showcases a holistic approach to community rehabilitation in the wake of a natural disaster. The engagement of ethnic group villagers alongside government agencies, experts and craftspeople throughout the conservation process ensured sensitivity to their Qiang culture in the recovery of the distinctive Diaolou towers, other vernacular architecture, public infrastructure and landscape. Following training in traditional construction skills, local residents received employment in the hands-on repair activities in lieu of relief subsidies, providing a notable alternative for emergency support while also assuring long-term maintenance. By successfully reviving the spirits of both people and place in this historic settlement, the project serves as an inspiration for future post-disaster response efforts.

Project name: St. Olav’s Church
Location: Serampore, West Bengal, India

A significant colonial-era architectural landmark, St. Olav’s Church was successfully recovered through meticulously executed conservation work. Once the focal point of the historic Danish trading port of Serampore in West Bengal, the church was renewed from a state of extensive decay after centuries of weathering and years of disuse. The project elevated local standards of conservation practice at every stage of the process, starting with careful investigation and documentation. Under the professional guidance of Indian and Danish conservation architects, artisans carefully carried out restoration work using traditional materials and repair techniques. Following re-sanctification, the church has regained its function as a social, educational and religious hub for the local community.
Award of Merit

Project name: Cama Building
Location: Mumbai Central, Mumbai, India

The restoration of the Cama Building highlights a private commitment to support the viability of Mumbai’s distinctive but vulnerable Zoroastrian community. Surrounded by urban re-development projects, this is the first of twenty-four structures within the century-old Murzban Colony to be uplifted from a state of serious deterioration. The project employed a sensitive approach, salvaging much original fabric and retaining the building’s original architectural character and configuration, which has helped to sustain everyday interactions and a sense of community among its residents. Financed by the Garib Zarathostiona Reththan Fund without any cost to the long-time tenants, the project is a noteworthy model for preserving the city’ social fabric through the preservation of affordable housing built for its ordinary citizens.

Project name: Walls and Bastions of Mahidpur Fort,
Location: Madhya Pradesh, India

The consolidation of 18th-century archaeological remains at Mahidpur Fort has safeguarded a much-neglected historic asset housing a living multi-cultural community. Executed with international sponsorship under an innovative partnership scheme with the state government, the project reversed major deterioration from repeated flooding, haphazard construction and intermittent vandalism. Following careful documentation and analysis, the fort’s walls and bastions were strengthened through an approach of minimal intervention, thereby preserving their historic patina. The involvement of local youth and other residents in the conservation work has promoted a new sense of pride and custodianship, creating a self-sustaining mechanism for protecting this unlisted monument in the long term.
Undertaken with a high degree of technical proficiency, the restoration of Shahi Hammam has safeguarded a unique example of the monumental 17th-century Mughal public bathhouse. The team of international and local experts and artisans adeptly addressed significant structural damage and loss of fabric as a result of inappropriate alterations, poor conservation and encroachment. Careful investigation and analysis informed the conservation effort, including architectural consolidation and the preservation of frescos and other decorative elements. Visitors gain a vivid understanding of the hammam’s historic function through the display of excavated underground structures, partial reinstatement of bathhouse features, and an educational exhibition. The project has returned the ornate Shahi Hammam to its former prominence within the Walled City of Lahore while giving further encouragement to other private conservation initiatives in the future.
Honourable Mention

Project name: Wu Changshuo Residence Archaeological Site
Location: Zhejiang Province, China

The restoration of the Wu Changshuo Residence Archeological Site is notable for its meticulous planning and sensitive approach to the preservation of the site's multi-layered history, ranging from including sub-surface evidence of 14th-century occupation to later 19th-century structures. As the birthplace of prominent Chinese artist Wu Changshuo, the site had suffered gradual deterioration as a result of insensitive repairs and the addition of incompatible structures over the years. Conducted in stages, the ambitious project applied international conservation guidelines and deployed traditional building materials and techniques to safeguard the overall character of the historic buildings and their rural village setting. Well-managed tourism guidelines allow the local community to gain economic benefits from visitation to the site.

Project name: Fudewan Miner’s Village
Location: Zhejiang Province, China

The revitalization of Fudewan Miner’s Village is commendable for its comprehensive and culturally sensitive programme of conservation and adaptive use. The joint effort by the local people, a non-government organization and two government institutions has successfully retained the majority of historic dwellings with adherence to conservation guidelines. Industrial facilities such as the weathering pool were restored for public use or tourist facilities. With provisions for ongoing maintenance and community participation, the project provides a model for other former industrial towns in China which represent a significant stage in the country’s modern development and should be recognized for their heritage value.
Project name: Liu Ancestral Hall
Location: Guizhou province, China

The preservation of Liu Ancestral Hall is notable for the application of a rigorous scientific approach. Dating to the Qing Dynasty with further embellishment during the time of the Republic of China, the hall had declined into poor structural condition with damage to its surfaces, including its renowned decorative stucco façade. The project’s proponents successfully carried out non-intrusive investigation of the building fabric, systematic testing of possible solutions and meticulous conservation interventions. In reviving a significant historic building for on-going use by Dong ethnic group villagers and to attract outside visitors, the project contributes to a larger initiative to protect and promote Guizhou’s diverse cultural and natural heritage.

Project name: Old Tai Po Police Station
Location: Hong Kong SAR, China

The transformation of Old Tai Po Police Station from a deserted relic into a vibrant venue for learning about sustainable development is notable for revealing layers of cultural history embedded in its buildings while maintaining the site’s distinctive ecosystem. Informed by extensive historical research and a thorough understanding of the area’s rich biodiversity, the project retained much of the complex’s original architectural fabric and natural setting, giving little impression of the degree of intervention. Instilling new life into the oldest colonial property in the New Territories, the center provides an oasis in the midst of Hong Kong’s highly urbanized environment.
The restoration of the Doon School Main Building exhibits notable technical accomplishment in preserving the character of a renowned historic institution, while incorporating modern educational technologies in an unobtrusive manner. Focused on both minimal and reversible interventions, the restoration included structural reinforcement, the removal of damaging ivy and protection against rainwater. A thorough assessment and analysis on the root cause of the decay led to a strategic design solution and intervention along the lines of Edwardian style, followed by a comprehensive maintenance plan. Through sensitive retention of historic assets, practical skills training, and sustaining knowledge of traditional construction techniques, the project sets a benchmark for comprehensive conservation practice by an educational institution.

The conservation of Darugheh House has reinstated a significant component of the historic townscape of Mashad. Based on in-depth historical research, verified through archaeological excavation, the project preserved the original building’s scale and footprint with a focus on the retention of original materials and reuse of materials from demolished adjacent buildings. Local artisans specializing in traditional architectural decoration carried out the work and new features were carefully identified in keeping with established conservation practice. Amidst the rapid pace of development now transforming Mashad, the restored Darugheh House provides validation for the continuing relevance of traditional spaces in contemporary urban life.
Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts

Project name: The Brewery Yard
Location: Chippendale, Australia

The striking transformation of the Brewery Yard in Chippendale into an efficient tri-generation plant evocatively reinterprets a century-old industrial building type for contemporary use. Clad in a shimmering metallic mesh, the sculptural new roof mass hovers above the historic brick factory, creating an iconic new addition to the city’s skyline. By juxtaposing twenty-first century industrial aesthetics against a twentieth-century industrial building vocabulary, the design provides a clever solution to conceal the new cooling towers while paying homage to the soaring original smokestack. Anchoring a revitalized new urban hub, the project is a prototype for repurposing industrial heritage in a sustainable forward-looking manner.