Project profiles for 2017 UNESCO Heritage Award winners

Award of Excellence

Project name: Blue House Cluster
Location: Hong Kong SAR, China

The revitalization of the Blue House cluster provides triumphant validation for a truly inclusive approach to urban conservation. A broad alliance spanning from tenants to social workers and preservationists waged a grassroots advocacy campaign to save the last remaining working-class community in the fast-gentrifying enclave of Wan Chai, which was threatened by demolition and wholesale redevelopment. Succeeding against all odds, their impassioned efforts and innovative participatory programmes have safeguarded not only the architecture, but also the living history and culture of a neighbourhood which is rooted in a formative chapter of Hong Kong’s past. The three dilapidated 20th-century shophouse blocks were deftly restored for contemporary use and upgraded with modern facilities. At the heart of the project were the residents, who stayed on-site for the duration of the construction activities by special arrangement, ensuring minimum disruption to their lives as well as their full involvement throughout the process. This unprecedented civic effort to protect marginalized local heritage in one of the world’s most high-pressure real estate markets is an inspiration for other embattled urban districts in the region and beyond.
Award of Distinction

Project name: Brookman and Moir Streets Precinct
Location: Perth, Australia

The restoration of late 19th-century workers’ cottages along Brookman and Moir Streets has thoughtfully revived a modest but historically significant housing district dating back to the Western Australian gold boom. Individual homeowners undertook the loving refurbishment of the simple Federation Queen Anne semi-detached dwellings which had suffered from years of unsympathetic change and dilapidation. With financial support from the City of Vincent and the local Heritage Council and technical guidance from conservation professionals, the original architectural character and material palette of each red brick building was carefully recovered. Catalysed by the renovation of a single house which then inspired other nearby residents, the project has revitalized the streetscape and returned a sense of community to the area. The revival of the Brookman-Moir precinct underscores the importance of recognizing and safeguarding everyday urban fabric as part of a holistic strategy in sustaining historic urban landscapes.

Project name: Holy Trinity Cathedral
Location: Shanghai, China

The exceptionally accurate and technically proficient restoration of the Holy Trinity Cathedral has revived the oldest Anglican Church in China and successfully re-established one of Shanghai’s most iconic historic landmarks. Extensive repairs and the judicious removal of unsightly modern accretions recovered the original dignity and grandeur of the Gothic Revival monument designed by prominent 19th-century architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott. Meticulous craftsmanship was applied to restoring the structure and lost decorative works, notably the stained glass windows. The rebuilding of the clock tower re-establishes a distinctive icon that once anchored the city’s historic skyline. The reinstatement of its soaring interiors and distinctive polychrome brickwork provides a fitting backdrop for sacred use of the cathedral by a modern-day congregation.
Award of Merit

Project name: Christ Church
Location: Mumbai, India

The conservation of the 19th-century Christ Church has recaptured the original character of a fine and rare example of Neo-classical churches in Mumbai. One of the city’s oldest public buildings, the church had suffered from earlier inappropriate repair works that disguised and diminished its cultural value. Following careful investigations, past interventions were selectively reversed and the continuing function of the church was enhanced. Artisan skills were revived during the renewal of the elegant interior with its gilded columns, memorial stained glass windows and lath and plaster ceiling. Funded by the Christ Church Trust, the restoration of this church highlights the architectural history of the neighbourhood and serves as a model to encourage further conservation of Mumbai’s built heritage.

Project name: Royal Bombay Opera House
Location: Mumbai, India

Under generous private patronage, the heroic rescue of the Royal Bombay Opera House from the verge of collapse has revived the beloved cultural venue as a gift to the city of Mumbai. Once hailed as “the finest theatre in the East”, the century-old building had been subjected to a series of unsympathetic renovations during its stint as a cinema before its eventual closure and abandonment. With guidance from dedicated specialists, the project demonstrates great technical competence in overcoming severe structural distress, restoring decorative features and improving acoustics, all the while maintaining spatial integrity and authenticity. The comprehensive restoration, undertaken with meticulous research and quality workmanship, successfully revived not only the theatre’s magnificent Neo-Baroque architecture but also the spirit of place of the only surviving opera house in India, which now once again can reclaim the proud title of being one of the “finest theatres in the East.”
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<tr>
<th>Project name:</th>
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Undertaken through a major public-private initiative, the conservation of the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple has revived the extensive religious complex at the core of Srirangam temple town. The project has revealed the original fabric of the shrines, water bodies and landscape within the temple’s four inner enclosures, which were once obscured under layers of inappropriate modern additions and tons of debris. Employing traditional construction materials and techniques, the restoration work was carried out in an authentic manner by local craftspeople in accordance with ancient building principles and rites. The technical team effectively overcame the perennial flooding problem through the re-establishment of the historic water harvesting and drainage system. The temple today attracts great attention among its devotees and supporters, whose renewed sense of pride and custodianship will ensure its long-term sustainability.

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<th>Project name:</th>
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<tbody>
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The restoration of the Great Hall and Clock Tower of the Arts Centre in the heart of Christchurch celebrates a memorable step towards the city’s recovery following the devastating earthquakes of 2010 and 2011. Suffering major damage, the Gothic Revival masonry structures underwent a sophisticated regime of seismic strengthening and retrofitting, along with painstaking reconstruction of significant heritage features such as the turret and stained glass windows. Modern facilities and services were discreetly inserted to enhance the contemporary functionality of the buildings. The resurrection of the Great Hall and Clock Tower has returned a major historic landmark back to the public, which now continues to serve as a social, educational and cultural hub in the community.
Honourable Mention

Project name: Bomonjee Hormarjee Wadia Fountain and Clock Tower
Location: Mumbai, India

Located at an important node of the city, the restored Bomonjee Hormarjee Wadia Fountain and Clock demonstrates the success of a pioneering public-private partnership to valorise public amenities in Mumbai. Associated with the local Zoroastrian community, this unique architectural landmark was saved from the verge of collapse by the timely efforts of the city government with support from the Kala Ghoda Association. Using a non-invasive approach, the project undertook structural strengthening, repair of decorative features and returned the vandalized clock to working order. This remarkable 19th-century drinking water fountain and clock tower once again stands as a proud symbol of civic pride.

Project name: Gateways of Gohad Fort
Location: Gohad, India

The conservation of Hathai Paur (Elephant Gate) and Sankal Darwaja (Chain Gate) has reinstated a significant feature of the 15th-century Gohad Fort and enhanced the surrounding townscape. Still in daily use by the local residents, the partially collapsed east and west gateways were repaired on an emergency basis in a modest and technically competent manner. Detailed documentation and analysis informed the recreation of the arches and the consolidation of the severely deteriorated brick and stonework. The productive public-private collaboration involving the heritage authorities and local government has enhanced the heritage value and functionality of a historic asset of local significance.
### Haveli Dharampura
**Location:** Delhi, India

The conservation of Haveli Dharampura rescued an extraordinary 19th-century residence in old Delhi from years of unsuitable interventions and adapted it for contemporary use as a luxe boutique hotel. The *haveli*’s original spatial configuration was re-established and ornate architectural elements were carefully restored, returning the building to its former splendour. High-quality workmanship ensured the authentic preservation of the Moghul-era architecture, with dozens of dedicated craftspeople employing traditional materials and construction techniques alongside sensitive modern interventions. A solely private initiative of the Heritage India Foundation, this successful project serves as an inspiration for restoring other historic *havelis* in the old city, thus contributing to its patron’s long-term vision to revitalize Shahajahanabad in all dimensions.

### Wellington Fountain
**Location:** Mumbai, India

The restoration of the Wellington Fountain demonstrates the importance of extending heritage protection efforts to the public realm. Employing the same rigorous methodology and scientific technology applied to the restoration of monumental buildings, the project has competently preserved the city’s only functional ornamental water fountain by stripping away later additions. Prominently located in the Fort precinct, the historic structure contributes significantly to enhancing the 19th-century urban landscape of Mumbai. The project is a notable step forward in strengthening the understanding and commitment for appropriate management of municipality’s civic heritage.

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**Project name:** Aftab Cultural House  
**Location:** Isfahan, Iran

The project has dramatically transformed a deserted Qajar-dynasty house used to shelter sheep into a popular cultural hub. Through private initiative, the project closely engaged the community throughout the conservation process. Traditional materials were used to repair the deteriorated adobe structure, with the visual highlight being the colourful mosaic of hand-made tiles adorning the roof and courtyard. Under an all-female management council, the building today houses a library, cafe and cultural venue. Modest in scale but with significant local impact, the Aftab Cultural House imaginatively demonstrates the viability of adapting heritage buildings to sustain and enhance cultural continuity.

**Project name:** Cathedral of the Good Shepherd and Rectory Building  
**Location:** Singapore

The restoration of the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd and Rectory Building embraces and enhances the historic character of the oldest Roman Catholic Church in Singapore while upgrading its functionality to meet contemporary requirements. Demonstrating meticulous conservation planning and thorough community consultation processes, the well-executed interventions involved underpinning the weakened foundation, repairing historic finishes and decorations, installing non-intrusive modern services and construction of additional facilities. Largely undertaken through a private fundraising effort, the project successfully conserved a significant heritage building for the Catholic population of Singapore, while generating a heightened appreciation for heritage among the public at large.
Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts

**Project name:** Jingdezhen Ceramic Industry Museum  
**Location:** Jingdezhen, China

The transformation of the 1950s Cosmic Porcelain Factory into a museum and mixed-use facility showcases Jingdezhen’s fame as a world-renowned ceramic production centre and opens up the former factory space for broad public use. Based on the principle of minimal intervention, the choice of a streamlined modern industrial aesthetic responds to the mid-twentieth century industrial architecture of the historic factory building, providing a muted backdrop that allows the kiln remains to take the spotlight. The contemporary materials palette creates a dramatic counterpoint to the original brick structures. The new design respects the form and scale of the former factory and creates innovative opportunities to interact with the famous ceramic production facilities.

**Project name:** Macha Village  
**Location:** Gansu Province, China

The Macha Village project valorises vernacular rammed-earth building technologies and validates their continuing appropriateness for current-day use. The construction of 28 prototype dwellings and a community centre built by local residents in cooperation with volunteers has very effectively overcome concerns about the image, comfort and durability of the vernacular buildings. By adapting traditional techniques of construction to meet modern standards of building performance and seismic safety, the quality of life of the villagers has been enhanced. The project is a model for rural dwelling construction, which is affordable, sustainable and ecologically friendly.
The new Faculty of Art & Architecture building of the Persian Gulf University responds to an urban design challenge with a contextual solution that demonstrates a sound understanding of the vernacular architectural typology. Located at the edge of the historic district of Bushehr, the new building maintains continuity with the existing urban morphology, with its compatible scale, façade treatment and selection of materials. By configuring the building around landscaped courtyards, the project creates an oasis for the university community using traditional environmental management techniques. The new design maintains a distinctive but respectful presence vis-à-vis the restored historic “Nozari House” and other adjacent buildings. The project offers a noteworthy model for contemporary architecture that embodies the regional *genius loci.*