

UNESCO
Asia-Pacific Awards for
*Cultural Heritage
Conservation*

- 2022 -

Winners Profiles

Award of Excellence

Project name : Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum
Location : Mumbai, India



The heroic restoration of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya Museum on its centenary has relit the spotlight on a major civic institution in the historic city of Mumbai. Impressive in its scale, the project addressed extensive deterioration through well-informed architectural and engineering solutions, overcoming major challenges during the pandemic. The conservation approach deftly incorporated both traditional craftsmanship and rigorous techniques for stabilizing twentieth-century materials like reinforced concrete. The comprehensive upgrade of the galleries and functional spaces will enhance the museum's public services as it advances into its second century. Executed to the highest level of technical excellence, the project sets a standard for the conservation of World Heritage monuments in India and beyond.

Award of Distinction

Project name: Stepwells of Golconda
Location: Hyderabad, India



The restoration of the stepwells of Golconda has realized an ambitious, long-term vision for renewing the extensive complex of architectural and social spaces within the sixteenth-century Qutb Shahi necropolis. In recovering the stepwells and associated aqueducts from a state of neglect and partial ruins, the project has revived the function of the historic waterworks of irrigating the surrounding orchards and forests, thus enabling the holistic restoration of the historic landscape. The conservation work was based on thorough research and understanding of the original engineering technology and was carried out with careful attention to the appropriate use of traditional materials and techniques. The conservation project at Golconda creates a renewed appreciation for the continued relevance of heritage-based solutions for sustainability.

Project name: Zarch Qanat
Location: Yazd, Iran



The project in the historic city of Yazd is a major initiative to restore one of Iran's most significant *qanat* ancient water systems, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage List. The conservation approach entailed extensive studies to recover the historic geo-hydrological engineering works that were long neglected, fragmented and misused. Based on a sound understanding of the hydraulic technology, the technical operation of the *qanat* was reinstated, along with auxiliary functions serving the community. Undertaken with the active local involvement of experienced traditional builders and teams of young volunteers, the project has revived the Zarch Qanat within its larger living cultural landscape context. The project highlights the importance and potential of heritage infrastructure in present-day urban settlements.

Project name: Neilson Hays Library
Location: Bangkok, Thailand



Built in 1922, the Nielson Hays Library has been renewed as a civic hub and a neo-classical architectural gem in the historic central business district. Under female leadership since its founding by the Bangkok Ladies' Library Association, the library has been restored through a true community-led effort. The restoration demonstrates a nuanced understanding of the spirit of place, which is well-respected and enhanced through careful research and investigation. Inappropriate previous repairs and modern interventions were removed and the upgraded facilities enhance the library's functionality. The technically proficient project has successfully resolved perennial issues with moisture in line with the architect's original design using passive ventilation aided by new technology. The project sets a welcome benchmark for the restoration of early twentieth-century buildings of western architectural design in humid tropical environments.

Award of Merit

Project name: Topdara Stupa
Location: Charikar, Afghanistan



The restoration of the Topdara Stupa reversed centuries of weathering and deterioration, reinstating the original scale and form of the ancient Buddhist monument. The documentation, stabilization and conservation of the stupa as well as the reconstruction of the main platform were performed skilfully with reference to historical records and through the employment of local materials and artisans. The project contributed to training a new generation of Afghan craftspeople in stone masonry and has enhanced the livelihoods of rural households through a new means of income generation. Spearheaded by the Afghan Cultural Heritage Consulting Organization with support from the authorities and the community, the conservation efforts of the Topdara Stupa in rural Aghanistan represent a significant step towards the protection of diverse endangered religious heritage in the country and beyond.

Project name: Nantian Buddhist Temple
Location: Fujian Province, China



The meticulous conservation work carried out at the Nantian Buddhist Temple has given new life to the historic complex, enabling its continued use for religious worship and social gathering. Home to important artifacts dating to the Southern Song Dynasty, this place of worship had suffered extensive damage over the years. Following thorough documentation and research, the project team restored the building's structural stability and architectural components. Using a light touch, decorative works, notably the collection of mural paintings, were restored with commendable technical competence. The project is notable for its rigorous conservation decision-making process, which resulted in maintaining a high degree of authenticity in the restoration of this significant building embodying a living religious tradition in China.

Project name: Domakonda Fort
Location: Telangana, India



Initiated through private efforts, the Domakonda Fort project has been successfully revived as a cultural space for the community through modest physical intervention and with significant social impact. The project applied original construction techniques and authentic materials and trained local artisans in traditional building skills. The involvement of villagers during the restoration process and in the operations of the fort ensures direct benefit for the community. The project has not only generated greater appreciation for a once neglected fort of high historic significance but has also promoted a sense of community pride and custodianship for the heritage property.

Project name: Byculla Station
Location: Mumbai, India



By saving India's first railway station from impending demolition, the project is a notable case of community-initiated public-private partnership for preserving a significant part of Mumbai's recent history. The project removed inappropriate additions that had accrued from the past, revealing original architectural details that were carefully restored. Upgraded to meet modern-day needs through sensitive new interventions, the historic property is now able to continue its function as a railway station that is deeply connected to the everyday life of thousands of passengers. The commendable effort of the project team to rescue Asia's oldest railway station provides a prototype for restoring and utilizing historic railway heritage across the region.

Project name: Sadoughi House
Location: Yazd, Iran



The conservation and adaptive reuse of the Sadoughi House has enhanced public appreciation and accessibility to a heritage site by carefully uncovering the original character of the nineteenth-century luxury mansion while upgrading it to meet contemporary needs. The project demonstrates a sound understanding of historical and architectural values. Undertaken with private sponsorship, the project was implemented by a team of local heritage professionals through extensive consultation with experienced master architects and skilled traditional artisans. On-the-job training for the local workforce provides a solid basis for the continued safeguarding, maintenance and operation of this historic property. The project, located in the buffer zone of the Historic City of Yazd World Heritage property, is a model of success in repurposing a historic house for public use in a viable manner.

Project name: 25 Chivas in Kathmandu
Location: Nepal



The joint effort of two nonprofit organizations to restore 25 *chivas* in traditional settlements around the Kathmandu Valley showcases how conservation of traditional heritage features can serve to bring communities together. The shrines had sustained damage as a result of neglect, fading social practices, earthquakes and encroaching urbanization. The project has not only preserved the physical artefacts, but equally importantly, has also safeguarded local intangible cultural values in the context of a living cultural landscape. The project's effort to revive spiritual processes alongside scientific documentation and technical restoration work is commendable. This pilot project is expected to have a multiplier effect within Nepal in giving renewed attention to often overlooked but locally significant communal heritage.

Special Recognition for Sustainable Development

Project name: West Guizhou Lilong Neighborhood
Location: Shanghai, China



The West Guizhou Lilong project is commended for applying thoughtful contemporary design to strengthen the social and urban fabric of a historic district in Shanghai. The project adopted a bottom-up approach to understand the needs of local residents before conceptualizing subtle new architectural and streetscape proposals for upgrading communal facilities. The micro-interventions in the dense neighborhood contribute to placemaking that successfully improves the well-being of the community. The use of nature-based solutions such as green canopies demonstrates an eco-friendly approach to contemporary urban infrastructure design in historic environments. The low-cost, high-impact project provides inspiration for sustaining historic neighborhoods in the face of major urbanization and gentrification pressures through contextual new design schemes.

New Design in Heritage Contexts

Project name: M30 Integrated Infrastructure for Power Supply and Waste Collection
Location: Macao SAR, China



The M30 infrastructure building adroitly navigates a challenging setting on a tight urban lot in the buffer zone of the Historic Centre of Macao World Heritage site. Using a stacked design, the new structure cleverly accommodates a waste collection station and a transformer room commissioned by two different municipal agencies. The dynamic architectural massing creates an interplay with the neighboring houses and public space. The material palette combines vernacular brickwork that echoes the adjacent older buildings with weathered steel and stainless-steel detailing that provides a textural contrast. With an impact beyond its modest size, the project exemplifies innovative new design in a heritage context.

Project name: Xiaoxihu Block
Location: Nanjing, China



The Xiaoxihu Block initiative is a transformative public-private-people partnership project demonstrating a multi-pronged approach to revitalizing a historic district in Nanjing. The project deployed a range of financing and design tools to improve urban infrastructure, housing and the public realm in a manner that responded to the varying circumstances among the local stakeholders. A unified design vocabulary employing both sleek contemporary construction and traditionally-inspired architecture gives the project a distinctive signature while harmonizing with the existing built environment. The project offers important lessons for replicability in terms of social and technical innovation for enhancing the livability of historic districts in a holistic and integrated manner.