



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization

Organisation  
des Nations Unies  
pour l'éducation,  
la science et la culture

Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
науки и культуры

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

**UNESCO Bangkok**  
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Regional Unit for Culture in Asia and the Pacific  
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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Herat Old City in Afghanistan and Stadium Merdeka in Malaysia win  
the two Awards of Excellence in the  
2008 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards.**

Bangkok, 1 September 2008 — **Herat Old City** in Afghanistan and **Stadium Merdeka** in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia have been honoured with the **Awards of Excellence** in the 2008 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

A total of 45 entries, from 13 countries in the region, were submitted for consideration. The conservation project entries include hotels, offices, cultural institutions, educational institutions, religious sites, memorials, public institutions, residential buildings and urban districts.

The three **Awards of Distinction** went to the **National Pass** in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales, Australia, the **Fujian Earth Buildings** in Fujian Province, China and **Suffolk House** in Penang, Malaysia.

The three **Awards of Merit** include **Vysial Street** in Pondicherry, India, the **Shigar Historic Settlements and Bazaar Area** in the Northern Areas, Pakistan and **Wat Pongsanuk** in Lampang, Thailand.

Six **Honourable Mentions** were also announced. They are **Béthanie** in Hong Kong SAR, China, the **Archiepiscopal Palace** in Goa, India, the **Craigie Burn Bungalow** in Matheran, India, **Bach 38** in Rangitoto Island, Auckland, New Zealand, the **Amphawa Canal Community** in Amphawa District, Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand and the **Crown Property Bureau Building** in Chachoengsao Province, Thailand.



*Herat Old City (Afghanistan) wins the Award of Excellence in the 2008 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation*



*Stadium Merdeka (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) wins the Award of Excellence in the 2008 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation*

The 2008 **Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation** was awarded to **733 Mountbatten Road** (Singapore). The Jury Commendation recognizes newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding standards for contemporary architectural design which are well integrated into historic contexts. The 2008 Jury Commendation submissions include five projects (a commercial building, residential buildings and an educational institution) from four countries in the region.



*733 Mountbatten Road (Singapore) wins the Jury Commendation for Innovation Award of Excellence in the 2008 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation*

The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards recognize the efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully restored and conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.

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

UNESCO believes that recognizing private efforts to restore and adapt historic structures will encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within the community, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships. A panel of international conservation experts in architecture, urban planning, heritage conservation and landscape design conducted the selection process. The jury panel noted that the range of proposals received this year point to the increasing momentum and level of conservation in the Asia-Pacific region. All winning entries demonstrated sound understanding of the issues of conservation in relation to the cultural, social, historical,

and architectural significance of the building or complex. In addition, all award-winning entries had an important impact in terms of stimulating further conservation works and all made a contribution to cultural continuity in their respective communities.

### Profiles of 2008 Heritage Awards Winners



The first Award of Excellence winner, **Herat Old City**, Afghanistan, has demonstrated the important role of cultural revitalization as an integral part of the process towards establishing normalcy in a post-conflict situation. The restoration works display a high level of craftsmanship and a commitment to the use of traditional materials, leading to a positive impact in reviving the traditional construction system as well as local building trades. The community-led project has clarified the reading of the historic cityscape, strengthened the social fabric, and renewed Herat's spirit of place.



The second Award of Excellence winner, **Stadium Merdeka**, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, has saved a national heritage building and recovered a nation's collective memory. The project has demonstrated a thorough understanding and respect for the significance of the stadium at a specific moment in history and recognition of the heritage value of modern architecture. The privately-funded rescue effort spearheaded by Permodalan Nasional Berhad, with professional assistance from Badan Warisan Malaysia, serves as a stirring inspiration for civil society around the region in safeguarding heritage sites as part of a shared social and political responsibility.



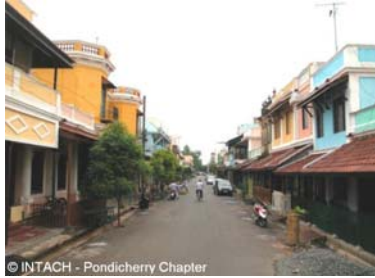
The first Award of Distinction winner, the **National Pass** in the Blue Mountains, NSW, Australia, has successfully restored a significant man-made element of the landscape of the Blue Mountains World Heritage site. Unique solutions were evolved for each land form, each material used and each on-site challenge. The consolidation and reconstruction of steps, bridges and staircases using local materials and traditional building techniques demonstrate excellent craftsmanship, ensured the historic continuity of the walking track and reconfirmed the relationship between nature and humankind.



The second Award of Distinction winner, the **Fujian Earth Buildings**, Fujian Province, China, has safeguarded a unique building typology and acknowledges their on-going relevance in a modern era. As part of the restoration strategy, inappropriate later additions were removed and the necessary modern utilities were installed in an unobtrusive manner to clarify the articulation of the historic structures and to accommodate on-going contemporary occupation by the residents.



**Suffolk House**, Penang, Malaysia, received an Award of Distinction. The project has returned one of the most important colonial heritage landmarks in Penang to its former state of grandeur after years of neglect. The restoration works were carried out to a high level of technical competence and demonstrate standard-setting excellence in craftsmanship. The public-private partnership in undertaking the project has renewed the building's historic role and serves as a worthy model for future restoration initiatives in the Penang World Heritage site.



**Vysial Street**, Pondicherry, India, received an Award of Merit. The project has set a notable example for urban streetscape conservation in Pondicherry and other historic quarters in India and the region through the Asia Urbs programme. The project has successfully elicited the cooperation of municipal government, conservation experts and, most importantly, local residents. The restoration work has revived the historic Franco-Tamil character of the street and urban quarter and has reinvigorated a sense of pride among the community.



The **Shigar Historic Settlements and Bazaar Area**, in Baltistan, Pakistan, received an Award of Merit. The project has been restored through a grass-roots approach that has successfully rehabilitated both the physical and social fabric of the community. The project has achieved an overall urban upgrade of services and infrastructure that sensitively addresses the holistic needs of the community and sensitively fits in with the traditional setting. Key historic buildings have been restored and now anchor the traditional townscape, kindling pride of place in both older and younger generations alike.



**Wat Pongsanuk**, Lampang, Thailand received an Award of Merit. The restoration works have provided an inspirational model of community-led conservation in saving a unique Lanna temple. The project showcases the collective achievements of the monks and the local residents working in close cooperation with traditional craftsmen, local authorities and academic advisors. The restoration works have been sensitively carried out, with the revival of traditional building and decorative techniques. The project has also achieved educational aims in teaching local history, as seen in the thoughtful on-site exhibits and the subtle notations of the earlier building footprint.



**Béthanie**, Hong Kong SAR, China has received an Honourable Mention. The project has safeguarded a significant religious landmark in Hong SAR. The persistence and dedication of the project team resulted in the transformation of the space to serve a modern use as a performing arts centre, thereby allowing it to have an on-going life in the community. In order to sustain the historic meaning of the building, an interpretation programme will ensure that the long history of the site and all the associated elements will be accessible to the public in the future.



The second Honourable Mention winner, the **Archbishopal Palace**, Goa, India has undertaken technically competent restoration works and addressed a number of inappropriate previous repairs and additions. The historic building fabric and original technology of the building have been respected and retained, including the natural climate control techniques. The project stands as a noteworthy model for safeguarding other vulnerable historic religious buildings in the Goa World Heritage site.



The **Craigie Burn Bungalow**, Matheran, India has received an Honourable Mention. The project adopted a minimalist approach that respects the traditional materials and historic design of the building. The private owners are to be commended for their commitment to preserving an important local building typology that has been largely neglected up to this point. The project represents a significant first step towards the potential future conservation of other historic bungalows in the colonial hill station.



**Bach 38**, Rangitoto Island, Auckland, New Zealand received an Honourable Mention. The restoration work has conserved a unique historic building typology. The conservation works were carried out in a modest and effective manner, allowing for continuity in the building's function within the community. The building has been appropriately adapted into a museum and information center that serves a valuable public education purpose. The community grassroots effort in accomplishing the project is to be praised.



The fifth Honourable Mention winner, the **Amphawa Canal Community**, Amphawa District, Samut Songkhram Province, Thailand, has successfully achieved public-private cooperation in the safeguarding of heritage structures in Thailand. With co-funding from the local government and Denmark, the project has benefited from the active support of the local residents and homeowners and the guidance of Chulalongkorn University. The project demonstrates recognition of the cultural significance of Amphawa and an appreciation of both the architectural and living heritage of the historic canal community.



The **Crown Property Bureau Building**, Chachoengsao Province, Thailand has received an Honourable Mention. The restoration works have given new life to an important heritage building that had been extensively damaged by fire. In the reconstruction and conservation work, careful attention was paid to the historic character of the building, both interior and exterior. The project has bolstered local pride and led to the larger revitalization of the historic urban district of Chachoengsao and the Bangpakong waterfront.

## Profile of 2008 Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation



**733 Mountbatten Road**, Singapore received the 2008 Jury Commendation for Innovation. The project has successfully added needed floor space while retaining and conserving the original building. This project, which demonstrates good conservation practice in combination with innovative solutions for providing additional space, sets a worthy model for reuse of heritage buildings in Singapore.

Further information about the Heritage Awards and this year's winning entries can be found at the following website:

<http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/heritageawards>

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