



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
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education**

Regional Unit for Social and Human Sciences in Asia and the Pacific
Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific
Advisor for Communication and Information in Asia
Regional Advisor for the UNESCO Institute for Statistics

PRESS RELEASE

**Maitreya Temples (Ladakh, India) Win Award of Excellence in the
2007 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards**

**Whitfield Barracks (Hong Kong SAR, China) Win Jury Commendation
for Innovation in the 2007 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards**

Bangkok, 16 August 2007 — The **Maitreya Temples (Ladakh, India)** have been honoured with the **Award of Excellence** in the 2007 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

The three **Awards of Distinction** went to the **Convocation Hall (Mumbai, India)**, the **Altit Settlement (Gilgit, Pakistan)** and the **Galle Fort Hotel (Galle, Sri Lanka)**.

The four **Awards of Merit** include **Bonython Hall (Adelaide, Australia)**, **Lijiang Ancient Town (Yunnan, China)**, **Little Hong Kong (Hong Kong SAR, China)** and the **Astana of Syed Yahya (Skardu, Pakistan)**.

Two **Honourable Mention** prizes were also announced. They are the **Liu Family Civil Residence (Shanxi, China)** and the **Old St. Andrew's School (Singapore)**.



© Basgo Welfare Committee

Maitreya Temples (Ladakh, India) wins the Award of Excellence in the 2007 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation

A total of 25 entries have been received for the 2007 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation. The conservation project submissions include hotels, offices, cultural institutions, educational institutions, religious sites, memorials, public institutions, residential buildings and urban districts from 10 countries in the region.

The 2007 **Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation** was awarded to **Whitfield Barracks (Hong Kong SAR, China)**. The Jury Commendation recognizes newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding standards for contemporary architectural design which are well integrated into historic contexts. The 2007 Jury Commendation submissions include five projects (hotels, religious site and a public institution) from three countries in the region.



Whitfield Barracks (Hong Kong SAR, China) wins the Jury Commendation for Innovation Award of Excellence in the 2007 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 2007 Heritage Awards Winners



The Award of Excellence winner, **the Maitreya Temples complex in Ladakh, India**, sets a regional standard for conservation that combines grass-roots advocacy with the highest levels of technical excellence. The sustained efforts by the Basgo Welfare Committee to underpin development with heritage conservation have placed culture at the centre of community revitalization; while the contributions of the local community, in terms of both skills and resources, have allowed for the safeguarding of an iconic, but endangered part of the heritage of the Himalayan region.



The first Award of Distinction winner, **the Convocation Hall of the University of Mumbai, India** has demonstrated superb, interdisciplinary technical achievement that has elegantly renewed one of the city's finest Victorian buildings. This architectural jewel now stands beautifully restored at the centre of historic Mumbai as an example to be followed in other municipal projects and as model to be studied by the many future generations of students who will have the privilege of utilizing this inspiring space.



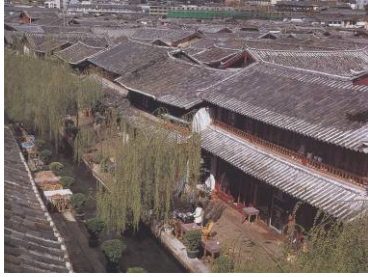
The second Award of Distinction winner, **the Altit Settlement in Gilgit, Pakistan**, displays an exemplary approach to integrated heritage conservation that has ensured the safeguarding of the historic village setting along with the improvement of the quality of life of local residents. The project has convincingly demonstrated the viability of vernacular buildings and settlements and revived the knowledge of traditional construction techniques, thereby allowing for the project's long-term sustainability.



The third Award of Distinction winner, **the Galle Fort Hotel**, was praised for transforming an abandoned historic residential compound into a stylish luxury boutique hotel has evocatively captured the spirit of place of the colonial World Heritage fortified town of Galle, Sri Lanka. The temporary adaptation of the hotel into an emergency shelter in the aftermath of the 2005 tsunami, and the subsequent contribution of the hotel to recovery of Galle through cultural tourism, have demonstrated the potential of such commercial ventures to contribute to community development in a historic urban heritage context.



The restoration of the **Bonython Hall of the University of Adelaide, Australia** received an Award of Merit. The jury praised the project for its excellence in standard-setting technical achievement. The university landmark has been given a new life through the consolidation of its Collegiate Gothic features and the unobtrusive upgrade of its building services, thereby ensuring its continued prominence in campus life and its iconic value throughout South Australia.



The second Award of Merit winner, the conservation of 174 traditional houses in the World Heritage site of **Lijiang Ancient Town**, marks a significant step forward in public-private efforts to safeguard vernacular heritage. The partnership between the residents, management authorities, external conservation experts and donors allows for a broad-based and participatory conservation approach within the framework of the overall World Heritage site conservation management plan.



The third Award of Merit winner, **Little Hong Kong in Hong Kong SAR, China**, once the Central Ordnance Munitions Depot, has saved a valuable, but almost forgotten chapter in Hong Kong's history. The project has brought to light the city's military heritage, and signals the strong potential of collectively bringing other such previously overlooked sites to public attention.



The **Astana of Syed Mir Yahya, Skardu, Pakistan** received an Award of Merit. The project was praised for rescuing an important local religious landmark on the brink of ruin in a modest and culturally appropriate manner. Through the voluntary efforts of the villagers and the use of traditional building techniques to realign and stabilize the structure, the tomb has been returned to its former status as the central cultural symbol of the village.



The **Liu Family Civil Residence, Shanxi, China** has received an Honourable Mention. The restoration has safeguarded a significant historic complex. The comprehensive conservation approach has ensured the protection of not only the core buildings, but also the surrounding built and natural context.



The **Old St. Andrew's School, Singapore** has received an Honourable Mention. The project was praised for maintaining the integrity and character of the austere missionary school by adhering to a policy of maximum retention of the original building fabric and features. The project has demonstrated an understanding of the technical issues affecting the building and has undertaken the necessary work to strengthen the building and adapt it for contemporary reuse in a restrained manner.

Profile of 2007 Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation



The **Whitfield Barracks, Hong Kong SAR, China** has received the 2007 Jury Commendation for Innovation. This contemporary intervention to the former Whitfield Barracks has successfully reconfigured the historic military complex into the Heritage Discovery Centre. The new lightweight structure forms the core of the complex, thereby acting as a central circulation node linking all spaces. The addition provides a fitting counterpoint to the 90-year old barracks and integrates seamlessly into the surrounding park context.

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>

Media contact:

Ms Montira Horayangura Unakul

Programme Specialist

Office of the Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific

UNESCO Bangkok

Tel: +66 (0)2391 0577 ext 509, 503; Fax: +66-2-391-0866

Email: h.montira@unescobkk.org or culture@unescobkk.org

###