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PRESS RELEASE

Sangiin Dalai Monastery in Mongolia wins the Award of Excellence in the 2009 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards

Bangkok, 28 August 2009 — **Sangiin Dalai Monastery** in South Gobi Aimaq, Republic of Mongolia has been honoured with the **Award of Excellence** in the 2009 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

A total of 48 entries, from 14 countries in the region, were submitted for consideration. The conservation project entries include hotels, offices, cultural institutions, educational institutions, religious sites, public institutions, residential buildings and urban districts.

The three **Awards of Distinction** went to the **M24 Midget Submarine Wreck** in Sydney, Australia; the **Ali Gohar House** in Hunza, Pakistan and **Hanok Regeneration in Bukchon** in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

The four **Awards of Merit** include the **Huai Hai Lu 796** in Shanghai, China; the **YMCA Students Branch** in Mumbai, India; the **Waterworks Building** in Auckland, New Zealand and the **Samchuk Community and Old Market District** in Suphanburi, Thailand.

Four **Honourable Mentions** were also announced. They are the **Academy of Visual Arts (Former Royal Air Force Officers' Mess)** at Hong Kong Baptist University in Hong Kong SAR, China; the **Heritage Buildings in Cicheng Historic Town** in Zhejiang Province, China; the **YWCA Lady Willingdon Hostel** in Mumbai, India and the **Tang Family Chapel** in Hoi An, Viet Nam.



Sangiin Dalai Monastery (Mongolia) wins the Award of Excellence in the 2009 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation

The 2009 **Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation** was awarded to the **Maosi Ecological Demonstration Primary School** (China). The Jury Commendation recognizes newly-built structures which demonstrate outstanding standards for contemporary architectural design which are well integrated into historic contexts. The 2009 Jury Commendation submissions include four projects (an educational institution, a mausoleum, an urban district and a residential development) from three countries in the region.



Maosi Ecological Demonstration Primary School (China) wins the Jury Commendation for Innovation in the 2009 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 2009 Heritage Awards Winners



The Award of Excellence winner, **Sangiin Dalai Monastery** in South Gobi Aimaq, Republic of Mongolia, has restored an important 18th-century Buddhist monastery. The project has revived an important Mongolian cultural center in the south Gobi desert and rekindled a tradition of vernacular craftsmanship. The newly-consecrated monastery stands as a compelling testament to the dedication and determination of the residents of Nomgon Sum in revitalizing their traditional cultural heritage.



The first Award of Distinction winner, the **M24 Midget Submarine Wreck** site in Sydney Harbour, Australia, presents an exemplary model for in-situ conservation of underwater cultural heritage in the Asia-Pacific region. The physical remains of the largely-intact submarine have been protected by a sophisticated, non-invasive management system appropriate to the underwater environment. The project is to be commended for demonstrating best practice in the application of UNESCO's guidelines for the protection of underwater cultural heritage.



The second Award of Distinction, the **Ali Gohar House** in Hunza, Pakistan, has transformed the former house of the village lord into a center showcasing the living heritage of the historic settlement of Ganish. Spearheaded by the Ganish Khun Heritage Care and Social Welfare Society and undertaken with the active involvement of the villagers, the project has had a catalytic impact on the growing movement favouring community-led conservation of local heritage in northern Pakistan.



The **Hanok Regeneration in Bukchon** in Seoul, Republic of Korea has also been recognized with an Award of Distinction. Initiated by the Seoul Metropolitan Government, the project has brought about a striking change in people's attitudes to the city's traditional residential quarters. With successful collaboration among the municipality, community members, academics and civil society, the large-scale project has raised awareness about the heritage value of the *hanok*, preserved an important traditional Korean architectural legacy and inspired other cities around the country.



Huai Hai Lu 796 in Shanghai, China has been recognized with an Award of Merit. The restoration of the twin neoclassical villas has created a heritage oasis along one of Shanghai's main commercial thoroughfares. The high-quality 1920s architecture has been restored through a respectful approach, with excellent technical execution by local craftsmen and international conservation specialists.



The **YMCA Students Branch in Mumbai**, India has been recognized with an Award of Merit. The restoration of the YMCA Students Branch has revived the heritage character of the noteworthy 1910 Neoclassical landmark and uplifted the entire historic streetscape. Undertaken with support from the US Ambassador's Cultural Preservation Fund, the project has maintained the spirit of place of this well-loved community institution and given the building a new lease on life.



The **Waterworks Building**, Auckland, New Zealand has been recognized with an Award of Merit. The meticulous restoration project is a celebration of Victorian engineering technology and the history of early Auckland. With support from dedicated volunteers, the beam engine has been returned to its fully functional state, and today is the centerpiece of the Museum of Transport and Technology.



The **Samchuk Community and Old Market District** in Suphanburi, Thailand has been recognized with an Award of Merit. Once in serious socio-economic decline, the historic district has been successfully revitalized through the far-sighted vision and cooperation of the local residents. The project will have a major impact in raising awareness about grassroots heritage conservation and is an important model for empowering other historic communities in Thailand.



The **Academy of Visual Arts (Former Royal Air Force Officers' Mess)** at the Hong Kong Baptist University in Hong Kong SAR, China has received an Honorable Mention. The project has transformed an abandoned colonial heritage landmark into a vibrant university space, making optimal use of the spacious interior spaces and enlivening them with student activities. The project sets a noteworthy model for recycling obsolete public buildings and demonstrates the viability of reusing historic military structures in a modern institutional context.



The restoration of the **Heritage Buildings in Cicheng Historic Town** in Zhejiang Province, China has received an Honorable Mention. Amid the rapid development of Ningbo, the conservation of key heritage buildings in Cicheng serves as a successful pilot for future restoration work in the historic urban core and in other towns around China. The continuing use of public buildings demonstrates their ongoing significance to the local community, while the commercial adaptation of other buildings proves as their functional viability within a modern context.



The **YWCA Lady Willingdon Hostel** in Mumbai, India has received an Honorable Mention. The project has recovered the Neoclassical dignity of an important Victorian-era building in the heritage Fort precinct of Mumbai. The judicious upgrade of building services allows this gracious edifice to continue to carry out its public mandate well into the future.



The **Tang Family Chapel** in Hoi An, Viet Nam has received an Honorable Mention. The restoration project demonstrates the commendable commitment of private individuals to cooperate with local authorities in the conservation of a World Heritage property. As one of the key landmarks in Hoi An, the newly-refurbished chapel now stands out as a living landmark in the heritage town, serving clan members, the local population and visitors alike.

Profile of 2009 Heritage Awards Jury Commendation for Innovation



The **Maosi Ecological Demonstration Primary School** in Gansu, China has been singled out for the Jury Commendation for Innovation. The design of the school offers an attractive modern and locally-suitable alternative to the existing cave schools. It maintains continuity with long-standing local building traditions, in particular, by adapting the environmentally-sustainable aspects of vernacular earthen architecture. Built in cooperation with the local villagers themselves, the project sends a strong message about the relevance of applying traditional wisdom to build in an ecological and socially sustainable manner.

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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