ICOMOS Conference dinner raffle to support proposed “Streetwise Asia” conservation project in the Philippines

Streetwise Asia has committed funding to support a second project - following completion of its first conservation project in Champasak, Lao PDR late in 2008.

A school classroom building at Kuguita Elementary School on the Island of Camiguin in Southern Philippines has been selected, and documentation for a program of conservation is now in preparation.

The project has been identified for Streetwise via Sydney architect Bruce Dawbin who has volunteered his expertise to work with Melvin Patawaran, a director of the Philippines Heritage Conservation Society (HCS), an influential heritage resource and lobby group in the Philippines. The Philippines ICOMOS chapter is also supporting the project represented by renowned heritage architect, Augusto Villalon. The school building is one of the “Gabaldon Schools”, now widely recognised in the Philippines as an important group of approximately 3000 school buildings erected during the American period (1898 – 1946). Bruce has just returned (in late April 2009) from Kuguita after confirming the project with the school community.

Camiguin Island is a picturesque volcanic island located off the north coast of the island of Mindanao. The school name, Kuguita means “Octopus”. It is an area with a poor local community with limited educational opportunities. The school is not included in any maintenance program by the severely under-resourced Department of Education and no other source of funding is available for the conservation of this building.

This original classroom building is a characteristic example of a Gabaldon School of the 1920’s. The innovative structural system is typical of the Gabaldon prototype, and the building is of architectural interest as it reflects Moorish influences of the cultural heritage of the Mindanao region. The exterior fabric is rapidly deteriorating in the severe climate of the area, urgently requiring re-roofing, structural stabilisation of concrete elements, and upgrading of services and finishes. It is also proposed to reconstruct some of the distinctive architectural details including the remarkable pivotted joinery screens which provide ventilation and diffused light to the interior through a mosaic of capiz shells. The building is unsafe for occupation in its present condition and will comprise three classrooms and essential facilities for the school following conservation.

Documentation and management of the project
Documentation for the conservation and upgrading will be provided by architects in Manila coordinated by HCS. Bruce Dawbin, on behalf of Streetwise will be responsible for preparing a concise conservation plan for the building to guide the works, with periodic inspections to ensure that high standards of building conservation are achieved.

Additional funding being sought
The proposed Streetwise contribution of $11,000 is insufficient to undertake the extensive works required. The ICOMOS conference dinner raffle aims to raise additional funds to allocate to this worthwhile project, which requires more than $60,000 to upgrade the building. Funding has also been sought from AusAID through the Australian Embassy in Manila, and if successful, may allow the full project to proceed. This will be a very exciting outcome if successful, as it will have achieved one of the key Streetwise objectives – to partner with other funding agencies and be the catalyst for a conservation project to occur which otherwise would not have been achievable.

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Photographs of the Site

Overall view of the school building

Details of the building

Some typical structural problems of the building

Rear elevation

(Photos by Bruce Dawbin  April 2009)
APPENDIX 1: Background to the Streetwise Asia Fund

STREETWISE ASIA FUND
For heritage conservation
INFORMATION SHEET

STREETWISE ASIA FUND OBJECTIVES

The Streetwise Asia Fund for Heritage Conservation has been established with the support of the UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacific. The fund aims to provide culturally appropriate education facilities and heritage programs for children in urban and rural areas in Asia, and seeks to increase the financial sustainability of Asia’s unique heritage, for present and future generations. The fund assists with the conservation of traditional educational buildings in ways which promote a diversity of heritage traditions. It establishes a framework for local communities to obtain additional funds from government, donor organisations and the private sector.

The first project is now completed and has involved the conservation of the Community Library and Learning Resource Centre, in Champasak, Lao PDR – Streetwise funds were used to facilitate the re roofing of the building with traditional roofing tiles. Future projects will include upgrading of traditional educational buildings in a way that will improve school facilities for children at the same time as establishing appropriate conservation standards for the building.

SOURCES OF FUNDS – STREETWISE ASIA PUBLICATION

The Streetwise Asia Fund for Heritage Conservation evolved from the publication of Streetwise Asia: A Practical Guide for the Conservation and Revitalisation of Heritage Cities and Towns in Asia (August 2005) by Australian conservation architect Elizabeth Vines, an Adjunct Professor at Deakin University. The book was published jointly by UNESCO and the World Bank with support of Deakin University’s Cultural Heritage Centre for Asia and the Pacific. Every dollar from book sales is donated to the fund as printing costs were met by UNESCO and the World Bank and the author has waived her royalties. More than A$11,000 of seed capital has been raised in this way.

The Streetwise Asia: A Practical Guide for the Conservation and Revitalisation of Heritage Cities and Towns in Asia can be purchased from Australia ICOMOS Secretariat, Email: austicomos@deakin.edu.au or from the author Elizabeth Vines, McDougall & Vines Conservation and Heritage Consultants Email: liz@mcdougallvines.com.au

An order form is attached at the end of this document.

The cost of the book is A$29.29 OR $US 25.00 (plus handling costs A$3.00 for Australian orders, or US$5.00 for orders from outside of Australia)

The book has 60 pages with over 220 colour photographs, and provides practical guidance on all aspects of heritage conservation and management in Asia.

It is a companion publication to Streetwise: A Practical Guide for the Revitalisation of Commercial Heritage Precincts and Traditional Main Streets in Australian Cities & Towns by the same author. The latter book was published in Australia in 1996 and deals with heritage management issues in Australia.
SMALL SCALE PROJECTS WITH POSITIVE OUTCOMES

In the course of preparing the material for her Streetwise Asia book, it became apparent to Elizabeth Vines that there were limited opportunities for communities and individuals in Asia to obtain small incentive grants for conservation works. This is a practice now well established in Australia, where the use of small grants and low interest loans has facilitated dramatic improvements in country towns and cities. While in Melaka on a UNESCO monitoring mission in 2002, she prepared a report that recommended the conservation of a simple shop house. UNESCO’s endorsement resulted in a group of local conservation architects and advocates obtaining funds from the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation Fund and the Ford Foundation. Within twelve months, the shop house had been restored. The Streetwise Asia Fund has been created to achieve similar results by supporting local education and conservation projects with modest funding.

AUSTRALIND TO ASSIST WITH ADMINISTRATION OF THE FUND

The Streetwise Asia Fund is administered through the Australind Children’s Fund Inc, a non-government Australian registered charity that has been supporting projects in India, East Timor and many other countries over the past 25 years. It has raised over $500,000 for international aid projects and continues to support community-based aid programs in a number of countries. All funds donated are allocated to projects – there are no administration costs as all administration officers are voluntary.

EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR THE STREETWISE ASIA FUND

All Streetwise Asia projects will be evaluated and monitored by a committee of advisors from Australind, UNESCO, and Deakin University in order to assure the responsible allocation of funding to appropriate community educational conservation projects. There will be complete transparency of project execution with all donors being informed regularly about the activities of the fund.

HOW TO DONATE TO THE FUND

Information on how to donate to the fund can be made by contacting the Fund Coordinator, Elizabeth Vines at liz@mcdougallvines.com.au  ALL DONATIONS OVER $2 ARE TAX DEDUCTABLE