Wat Pongsanuk, the Amphawa Canal and the Crown Property Bureau Building have won the 2008 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation.

Wat Pongsanuk in Lampang received the Award of Merit while Amphawa Canal Community in Amphawa District, Samut Songkhram and the Crown Property Bureau Building in Chachoengsao won Honourable Mention Awards.

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

The restoration of Wat Pongsanuk provides 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 craftspersons, local authorities and academic advisors.

The restoration of the traditional Amphawa Canal Community has successfully achieved public-private cooperation in safeguarding heritage structures in Thailand. The project has conserved numerous historic buildings of local significance and retained the traditional canal-side urban morphology, which is under threat around the country.

Restoration of the Crown Property Bureau Building in Chachoengsao Province has given new life to an important heritage site that was extensively damaged by fire. During 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 revitalisation of the historic urban district of Chachoengsao and the Bangpakong waterfront.

Sheldon Shaeffer, the Director of UNESCO Bangkok, will present an award plaque to Dr Chirayu Isarangkun Na Ayutthaya, the Director of the Crown Property Bureau Office at a ceremony to be held on October 27 at Laddawan Palace.

Thailand has actively participated in the awards programme through a series of outstanding conservation practices. Three other projects from Thailand have obtained UNESCO Heritage Awards: Tamnak Yai, Devavesm Palace (Honourable Mention 2005); Phra Racha Wang Derm (Award of Merit 2004), and; Wat Sratong Temple (Award of Merit 2002).
Eligible projects must be over 50 years old and the restoration work must have been completed within the past 10 years. Buildings must also have been in viable use for at least one year from the date of the awards announcement.