Introduction to Heritage Conservation

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The Conservation Crises

Star Ferry Pier

Demolition of the Star Ferry Pier, Central in December 2006
Outline of Presentation

• ArchSD’s Role in Heritage Conservation

• International Principles on Conservation

• Case Studies
  Repair works – Kun Ting Study Hall
  Restoration – King Law Ka Shuk
  Stone repair – Former LegCo Chamber Building
  Adaptive reuse – Heritage Discovery Centre
ArchSD’s Roles on Heritage Conservation

• PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, e.g. preservation & adaptive re-use government-owned buildings,

• ROUTINE MAINTENANCE of government-owned historic buildings, e.g. monument and graded historic building,

• TECHNICAL ADVICE to Bureaux / Departments on heritage conservation, e.g. prepare Technical Feasibility Study & development-related heritage.
Selected examples of Architectural Services Department’s involvement

1984
Sheung Yiu Folk Museum (Rs)

1985
Supreme Court > LEGCO Building (Ar)

1985
Tai Po Railway Station > HK Railway Museum (Ar)

1988
Tai Fu Tai (Rs)

1991
Kun Ting Study Hall (Rs)

1993
Yamen Building, Kowloon Walled City Park (Rs)
1995
Former French Mission Building >
Court of Final Appeal (Ar)

1997
Old Wanchai Post Office >
Environmental Resource Centre (Ar)

1998
Kowloon Park Barracks >
Health Resource Centre (Ar)

2000
Lei Yue Mun Redoubt >
HK Museum of Coastal Defence (Ar)

2001
King Law Ka Shuk (Rs)
2001
Old Mental Hospital >
Sai Ying Pun Community Complex (Ar)

2005
Kowloon Park Barracks >
Heritage Discovery Centre (Ar)

2006
Kom Tong Hall >
Dr Sun yat-sen Museum (Ar)

2007
Ping Shan Old Police Station >
Ping Shan Tang Clan Gallery (Ar)

2007
Lei Yue Mun Barracks >
Holiday Village (Ar)
2007
Blake Pier Central : Re-location from Morse Park, Kowloon > Blake Pier, Stanley (Rs)

2008
Gate Lodge, The Peak > Exhibition Gallery (Rs)

2008 - 2011
Yaumatei Theatre & The Red Brick House > Xiqu Activity Centre (Ar)
Projects in progress ...

2010 - 2012
The Former Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club >
A Community & Public Art Centre (Ar)

2010 - 2013
Hollywood Road Police Married Quarters >
A Creative Industry Hub (Ar)

2009 - 2015
LegCo Building>
Court of Final Appeal (Ar)

2011 - 2014
The former Central Government Offices, Main & East Wing >
Department of Justice(Ar)
How do we Conserve?
Renaissance Periods

- Restoration remained as experimental and empirical activities
- Instruments and materials selected at random…
- Pursued with little or no historical or critical understanding
- Cure was worst than the cured
How do we Conserve?
Viollet-le-Duc (1817 – 1898)

• “Stylistic Restoration”
• Dictionnaire raisonne de l’architecture francaise (Paris 1854-68)
• To restore a building is to re-establish it to a completed state which may never have existed at any particular time
• Unite de Style
• In the style which is proper to it
John Ruskin (1818-1900)
Lamps of Memory Aphorism 31

• Restoration, so called, is the worst manner of destruction…
• The steps to ‘restoration’ he saw were to dash the original old work to pieces and to put up the cheapest and barest imitation which can escape detection with conjectural supplements
• Restoration…is always a lie…It means the most total destruction which a building can suffer…
• It is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead…
William Morris (1834-1846)
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) 1875

• “Conservative Repair”
• Its original structure and appearance must not be altered or falsified
• Oppose speculative restoration
• Patina of Age
• The great buildings of the past do not belong to us only; they have belonged to our forefathers and will belong to our descendents unless we play them false
• They do not in any sense be our property, to do as we like with them
• We are only trustees for those who come after us.
How do we Conserve?
International Principles & Charters

• 1931 – Athens Charter
• 1964 – Venice Charter (ICOMOS)
• 1975 – European Charter of the Architectural Heritage (ICOMOS)
• 1979 – Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS)
• 1994 – The Nara Document on Authenticity (ICOMOS)
• 2002 – ICOMOS China Principles

* ICOMOS : International Council on Monuments and Sites
How do we Conserve?

Venice Charter

• The concept of an historic monument is defined to embrace ‘not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event.’
How do we Conserve?

Venice Charter

• The aim of conservation is to retain and safeguard the cultural significance of a place with unswerving respect of the existing fabric

• Existing fabric:
  » Aesthetic
  » Historical
  » Physical integrity of the cultural property
How do we Conserve?
Venice Charter

Documentation

• Careful documentation: -
  » (a) The condition of the building before any intervention, and
  » (b) All methods and materials used during treatment
How do we Conserve?

Venice Charter

Degree of Intervention

• Any intervention must be: -
  » (a) minimum necessary;
  » (b) reversible; and
  » (c) technically possible.
How do we Conserve?

Venice Charter

Evolution of Changes

- The valid contributions of all periods to the building of a monument must be respected.
- Unity of style is not the aim of conservation.
How do we Conserve?

Venice Charter

Replacements and New Additions

• Replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole

• At the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the artistic or historic evidence.
How do we Conserve?
The Conservation Plan

Stage I - Understanding the place
Gathering evidence (documentary and physical)
Co-ordinating and analysis evidence
Assessing and stating significance

Stage II - Conservation policy and its implementation
Gathering information for the development of conservation

- Requirements for retention of significance
- Physical condition
- External requirements
- Client’s requirements or feasible uses

Developing a conservation policy
Stating conservation policy and evolving strategies and options for its implementation

Extracted from “The Conservation Plan”, by James Sempler Kerr
Stage 1 - Understanding the Place
Gathering Evidence
Stage 1 - Understanding the Place
Gathering Evidence

Dating of construction or previous renovations from honorific plaques
Stage 1 - Understanding the Place
Co-ordinating and Analysis Evidence

1950's 1912 1883

[Images of building and floor plans]
Stage 1 - Understanding the Place
Assessing and Stating Significance

• History of the Place
• Archaeological Significance
• Associations with Events or Persons
• Aesthetic, Designs and Styles
• Techniques and Processes
• Landmark, Memory and Symbolic Value
• Scientific
• Social, Cultural, Traditions and Customs
• Environment and Context
• Uniqueness and Rarity
Stage 2 - Conservation Policy & Implementation

Requirements for Retention of Significance

• Clear Understanding of the Values
• Set Out the Requirements to Retain, Reveal and Enhance the Significance
• The greater the level of significance, the greater care
Stage 2 - Conservation Policy & Implementation

Physical Condition

- Understand the Physical Condition and Structural Integrity of the Place
- Degree of Deterioration and Defects
- Loss of Fabric
- Life Cycle of Material
- Compatibility of the Previous Alterations and Interventions
Stage 2 - Conservation Policy & Implementation

External Requirements

- Planning Control
- Buildings Ordinance
- Fire Services Requirements
- Structural Requirements
- Environmental Impact Assessment
- Health and Safety
- Utilities Supply Rules
- Access for Disabled
- Other Regulations & Codes
Stage 2 - Conservation Policy & Implementation

Client’s Requirements or Feasible Uses

- Users’ Brief
- Schedule of Accommodation
- Compatibility of the Intended Use to the Significance of the Place
- Compatibility of the Building Services Requirements to the Use
- Community Attitudes and Expectations
How do we Conserve?

Level of Intervention

High Intervention
(High negative impact on heritage character)

Replica
Relocate
Partially Retention
Restore
Replace
Repair
Consolidate
Do Nothing

Low Intervention
(Low negative impact on heritage character)
Repair Works
Kun Ting Study Hall 覲廷書室

- Situated in Ping Shan, built in 1870,
- It provided facilities for both ancestral worship and education,
- A two-hall building with a courtyard,
- Accorded as Grade I Historic Building (1981).

(Architects Regional Council Asia Award 1994)
Archives and Research
Condition and Deterioration
Salvaging Historic Building Components
Piecing New into Old
Piecing New into Old
Valid Contribution of the Past
Restoration Works

King Law Ka Shuk 敬羅家塾

- Traditional three-hall type ancestral hall built in 18th Century by the Tang Clan,
- Partly reconstructed in 1932 and 1970s with modern materials, i.e. reinforced concrete,
- The project was to restore the hall into the architectural style of Qing Dynasty,

(UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation 2001)
Condition & Restoration
Restoration with traditional skill
Ceremony
Stone Repair

Legco Chamber Building
Stone Repair

Legco Chamber Building

Previous Plastic Repairs
Stone Repair

Legco Chamber Building

Cutting out of Previous Repairs
Stone Repair

Legco Chamber Building

Dentistry Stone Repairs

Remark:
- May be using a bigger lie to cover up a smaller lie.
- Would it be better if doing nothing for first instance?
Adaptive Reuse
Heritage Discovery Centre

Historic research

1910s Whitfield Park 1980s Kowloon Park
Strengthen the link between the Centre and the Park
Bring the Park into the Interiors

Two old trees were carefully retained in the courtyard to blend beautifully with the greenery of the Kowloon Park.
• The colonnade on Ground floor is re-instated reflecting the original design.

• Daylight and natural ventilation are introduced to the circulation area
On Upper Ground floor, infill panels are substituted with metal windows giving daylight & additional floor space to offices & exhibition galleries
The main building of the former Museum of History is retained minimizing construction waste.

Daylight is introduced to the main circulation area by means of a new glass façade with sun shading fenestration.

A pair of bronze gate from the old HSBC Headquarters is re-used.
Indoor Environment Quality

- Variable Refrigerant Volume (VRV) system
  - To prevent condensation inside the ceiling space

- Fan coil units

- New windows, insulation are added to improve building’s OTTV value and air tightness,

- Zoning of air conditioning systems for occupants & exhibits,

- 50% central air-cooled chillers with heat recovery function to supply heated water for humidity control in exhibition galleries.
Heritage Conservation Works

• Historic research
• Investigating the physical condition
• Stating the significances
• Repair is always preferred than replacement
• Reconstruction with respect to authenticity of design, workmanship and material
• Practice minimum intervention, “Do as much as necessary, and do as little as possible” extracted from the *Burra Charter*,
• Use local skill and building materials,
• Multi-disciplinary approach to solve technical problems,
Food for thoughts

“The great buildings of the past do not belong to us only; they have belonged to our forefathers and will belong to our descendents unless we play them false.”

William Morris (1834-1896)
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings 1875

“The Earth is not given to us by our parents, it is lent to us by our children.”

Kenyon Proverb
More…

No one sews a piece of unshrunken cloth on an old cloak; Otherwise, the patch pulls away from it, The new from the old, And a worse tear is made. And no one puts new winer into old wineskins; Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, And the wine is lost, And so are the skins; But one puts new wine into fresh wineskins.

Mark 2:21-22