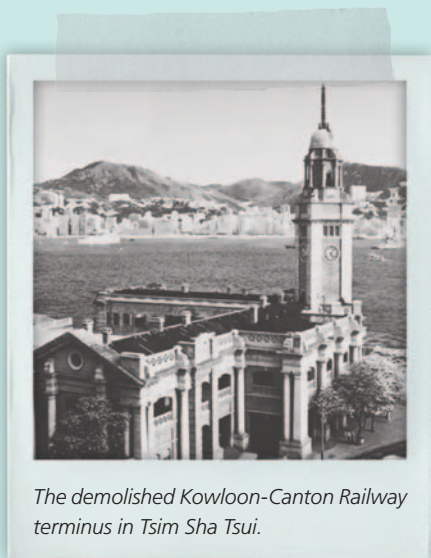




Chapter 1:

Historic Buildings @ Heritage.Conservation



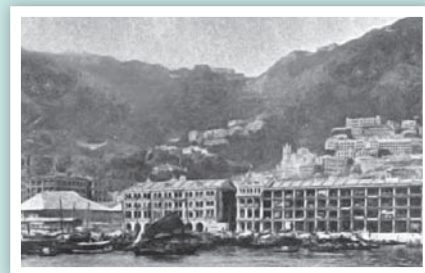
The demolished Kowloon-Canton Railway terminus in Tsim Sha Tsui.

(Source: Public Records Office)



The demolished General Post Office in Central.

(Source: Public Records Office)



View of Victoria Harbour around 1908.
(Source: Public Records Office)

Introduction

From its beginning as a small city to its present status as an international financial center, Hong Kong has experienced countless transformations in its urban landscape. In the 1950s and 1960s, Hong Kong's rapid increase in population led to a shortage in land supply and accelerated the pace of urban development. As neither the Government nor the people of Hong Kong had any aspirations for heritage conservation at that time, they tended to measure the quality of life in economic and material terms. Under these circumstances, many buildings with historic value and character – such as the former General Post Office in Central and the Kowloon-Canton Railway Terminus in Tsim Sha Tsui – were demolished. Moreover, land has always been an important commodity in Hong Kong and its prices have always been high. These factors have hindered the conservation of historic buildings.

In recent years, the people have been increasingly aware of the issue of the demolition and redevelopment of historic buildings. Heritage conservation has become a hot topic. The purchase of Kom Tong Hall by the Government, the preservation of the Central Police Station Compound and the call for the protection of the Star Ferry pier and Queen's Pier, reflect a growing concern of the public in this area, as well as a concern for the relationship between buildings and community sentiments and local identity. Today, the people of Hong Kong are not only concerned about economic results, but also demand for a city life of quality and thus long for the preservation of these historic buildings.

In response to the growing concern for the conservation of historic buildings, the Hong Kong Government set up the Commissioner for Heritage's Office under the Development Bureau in 2008 to coordinate and promote Hong Kong's conservation and revitalisation work, with the aim of turning Hong Kong into a quality city.

Glossary of Terms

What is conservation?

Conservation means all the processes of looking after a place so as to retain its cultural significance. It includes maintenance and may according to circumstances include preservation, restoration, reconstruction and adaptation and will be commonly a combination of more than one of these.

Reference 

The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (1999)
http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/BURRA_CHARTER.pdf

What are declared monuments?

In accordance with the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance, the Antiquities Authority may, after consultation with the Antiquities Advisory Board and with the approval of the Chief Executive, by notice in the Gazette, declare a place, building, site or structure as a monument. The Antiquities Authority is then empowered to prevent alterations, or to impose conditions upon any proposed alterations as she/he thinks fit, in order to protect the monument. As at November 2010, there are a total of 98 declared monuments in Hong Kong.

Reference 

Antiquities and Monuments Office: Declared Monuments in Hong Kong
<http://www.amo.gov.hk/en/monuments.php>

What is historic buildings grading?

The current grading system categorises historic buildings into Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3:

Grade 1 Buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible.

Grade 2 Buildings of special merit; efforts should be made to selectively preserve.

Grade 3 Buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable.

Reference 

Definitions of the various grades of historic buildings
<http://www.amo.gov.hk/en/built3.php>

What are the criteria for grading historic buildings?

Grading is done by the Antiquities Advisory Board. All the buildings are graded on the basis of historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, authenticity and rarity.

Reference 

Antiquities and Monuments Office- Historic building assessment form
http://www.amo.gov.hk/form/AAB_Paper133_historic_building_annexb_e.pdf

Proposal for **Teaching** and **Learning**

Learning Theme

Hong Kong Today: Quality of Life

Objectives

- 1.To understand the value of historic buildings
- 2.To consider the reasons and benefits for conserving historic buildings

Generic Skills

1. Communication skills
2. Critical thinking skills

Contemplating Issues from Multiple Perspectives

- 1.In recent years, what expectations have the people of Hong Kong had for heritage conservation?
- 2.How do the people of Hong Kong interpret the value of historic buildings?
- 3.Why do you believe historic buildings should be conserved?

Values and Attitudes

1. Responsibility
2. Culture and civilization

Proposed Teaching Flow

Knowledge Framework

- 1.The teacher will make reference to the introduction and use current examples or videos to discuss with students the recent changes in public attitude towards the conservation of historic buildings. Then analyse the values behind these changes.
- 2.Using Kom Tong Hall as an example, teachers and students will explore the value of historic buildings and the reasons for their conservation.



Teaching Activity

- Field study/group reporting: My neighbourhood and historic buildings
- Refer to Worksheet



Extended Activities 1&2



Enter Chapter 2

Policy Measures @ Heritage. Conservation

Knowledge Framework

The conservation of historic buildings generates much concern and is worthy of exploration as a Liberal Studies (LS) subject. Teachers can make use of heritage conservation as a subject matter when exploring the topic “What directions might be chosen to maintain and improve Hong Kong residents’ quality of life?” in the LS course in the New Senior Secondary Curriculum and make reference to the following tips:

Hong Kong people seek quality of life

- Teachers can make use of the Archives for Still and Moving Images in the archival records of the Public Records Office (http://www.grs.gov.hk/ws/online/moving_still/tc/index.htm) to look for suitable photos or videos of Hong Kong’s urban landscape for producing a presentation, so that students can understand the changes that have taken place in Hong Kong’s cityscape.
- Teachers can play excerpts from the video《吾土吾情》〈皇后之後〉(2007) (RTHK TV programmes archives <http://www.rthk.org.hk/channel/tv/tvarchivecatalog/>), and discuss with students the messages behind the protection of historic buildings. Teachers can then guide students to consider and discuss the elements that the people of Hong Kong seek in their pursuit of a quality urban life.

Integrated explanations:

- Teachers can analyse with the students the changes in attitude of the people towards conserving historic buildings, and point out that this reflects the changes in people’s values.
- In the past, the people of Hong Kong, in general, thought that the quality of life was primarily measured in material and economic terms. Today, the people of Hong Kong think that their quality of life includes other factors, such as the aesthetics of the urban landscape and the reflection of the historical and cultural ambience.

Value of historic buildings

- Making use of the news about the restoration of Lo Pan Temple, the declaration of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Heritage Museum in Yau Ma Tei as a declared monument, or news about historic buildings, e.g. Tung Wah Coffin Home being awarded a UNESCO Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards for Culture Heritage Conservation, guide students to discuss the following:
 - What are historic buildings?
 - What are their values?
 - Why should they be conserved?
- Teachers can play parts of the video《吾土吾情》〈舊城演義〉(2007) or《吾土吾情》〈再建香港〉(RTHK TV programmes archives <http://www.rthk.org.hk/channel/tv/tvarchivecatalog/>) to inspire students to reflect on the importance of heritage conservation in the process of urban development.
- Teachers can use the following framework, derived from the grading criteria for historic buildings used by the Antiquities Advisory Board, to guide students in understanding in-depth the heritage value of historic buildings.

Integrated explanations:

- Historic buildings embody historical, architectural, aesthetic and social values, reflecting the living conditions and culture of the people of Hong Kong in different times.
- Historic buildings are important landmarks.
- The conservation of historic buildings contributes to Hong Kong becoming a quality city.

In class, teachers should enable the students to understand and reflect on the value and meaning of historic buildings. The following are the criteria used by the Antiquities Advisory Board for grading historic buildings. This may form the framework for teachers to guide students in reflecting on the value of historic buildings:

Value of historic buildings

1. Historical Interest

- a. Relationship between the building and important historical incidents, periods or events
- b. Relationship between the building and important historical characters
- c. Importance of the building to Hong Kong's historical development
- d. Age of the building

2. Architectural Merit

- a. As an important example of a certain architectural style or type
- b. The architectural style, grid, decoration, artwork, technology and materials of the building have great value to the location concerned
- c. The appearance of the building enhances the beauty of the neighbourhood

3. Group Value

- a. Importance in a building cluster in a harmonious architectural design and style or as an integral component of an historical complex
- b. Importance in a building cluster showing common cultural value(s) or belonging to the same phase of historical development of Hong Kong.

4. Social Value and Local Interest

- a. As an important landmark which has commonly recognised symbolic or visual significance
- b. Has significance in terms of exhibiting "cultural identity" and / or in terms of extending the "collective memory" of the community

5. Authenticity

- a. If the building has undergone any alterations, the impact of the alterations on the historical significance and architectural integrity of the building
- b. Whether any alterations to the building have modified the cultural setting and the associated cultural landscapes.

6. Rarity

- a. Whether the building is rare due to its historical interest, architectural merit, group value, social value and local interest, and/or authenticity.

Teaching Case Study:

- The teacher and students should together browse the website of the Dr Sun Yat-Sen Museum: <http://hk.drsunyatsen.museum/b5/index.php>
- Then make use of the following information to introduce the background and characteristics of Kom Tong Hall:

Background information:

- Situated on Castle Street, Central, and built in 1914
- Built by Ho Kom Tong, younger brother of Hong Kong tycoon Robert Ho Tung
- The building changed hands many times. Prior to its acquisition by the Government, it was owned by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- In November 2010, it was declared as monument
- In 2002, the Government acquired Kom Tong Hall at the price of \$53 million to prevent the building from being demolished
- Now the building has been revitalised as the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum, exhibiting the life of Dr Sun Yat-sen and his relationship with Hong Kong

Architectural style:

- The 4-storey building displays the Classical architectural style of the Edwardian era. The external wall is made of red bricks and granite. The arc-shaped balcony on the 1/F and 2/F is supported by giant Greek style pillars
- The internal furnishings are well preserved

Facilities after revitalisation:

- Two permanent exhibitions on “Dr Sun Yat-sen and Modern China” and “Hong Kong in Dr Sun Yat-sen’s time”.
- A lecture hall
- A reading room, two video rooms and an activity room
- An interactive study room, which introduces the achievements of Dr Sun Yat-sen and the 1911 Revolution through interactive computer games.



(Source: Commissioner for Heritage's Office, Development Bureau)

Teachers can use Kom Tong Hall as an example to discuss with students:

1. Kom Tong Hall was built in 1914. How is it related to the important historical incidents and characters of that time?
2. What are the architectural features of Kom Tong Hall? Compared with other buildings of the same period, what is unique about Kom Tong Hall's architectural style?
3. How many owners has Kom Tong Hall had? How has the change of ownership affected the historical significance and architectural integrity of the building?
4. Apart from Kom Tong Hall, does Hong Kong have other historic buildings of similar architectural style? Considering its historical and architectural values, is Kom Tong Hall a rarity?
5. Is the value of the building highlighted through Kom Tong Hall's revitalisation into the Dr Sun Yat-sen Museum?

Teaching Activity

My neighbourhood and historic buildings

Introduction to the activity:

Through a field study, students are encouraged to find out about the historic buildings in their own neighbourhood and to explore the overall value of those buildings.

Teaching objectives:

- To understand more about heritage by listing the historic buildings in each students' own neighbourhood
- To inspire students to care about the historic buildings, history and culture of their neighbourhood through understanding their community heritage
- To cultivate in the students a sense of responsibility to protect the historic buildings in their neighbourhood

Format of the activity: Field study / group presentation (2 sessions)

Proposed procedures:

- Each student will identify an historic building in his / her neighbourhood, write down its features and take photos for the record (the building should not be a declared monument)
- The student will collect information on the chosen building
- Divide the students into groups and ask them to share their findings and introduce the overall value of their chosen historic building
- After the group discussion, each group will nominate one representative to introduce to all of the students the overall value of one of the chosen buildings
- The teacher will guide the students to grade the buildings presented by each group, using the criteria for grading historic buildings
- The teacher will guide the students in announcing the grading and composing a short comment
- The teacher will then analyse the grading and comments given by the students and make a conclusion

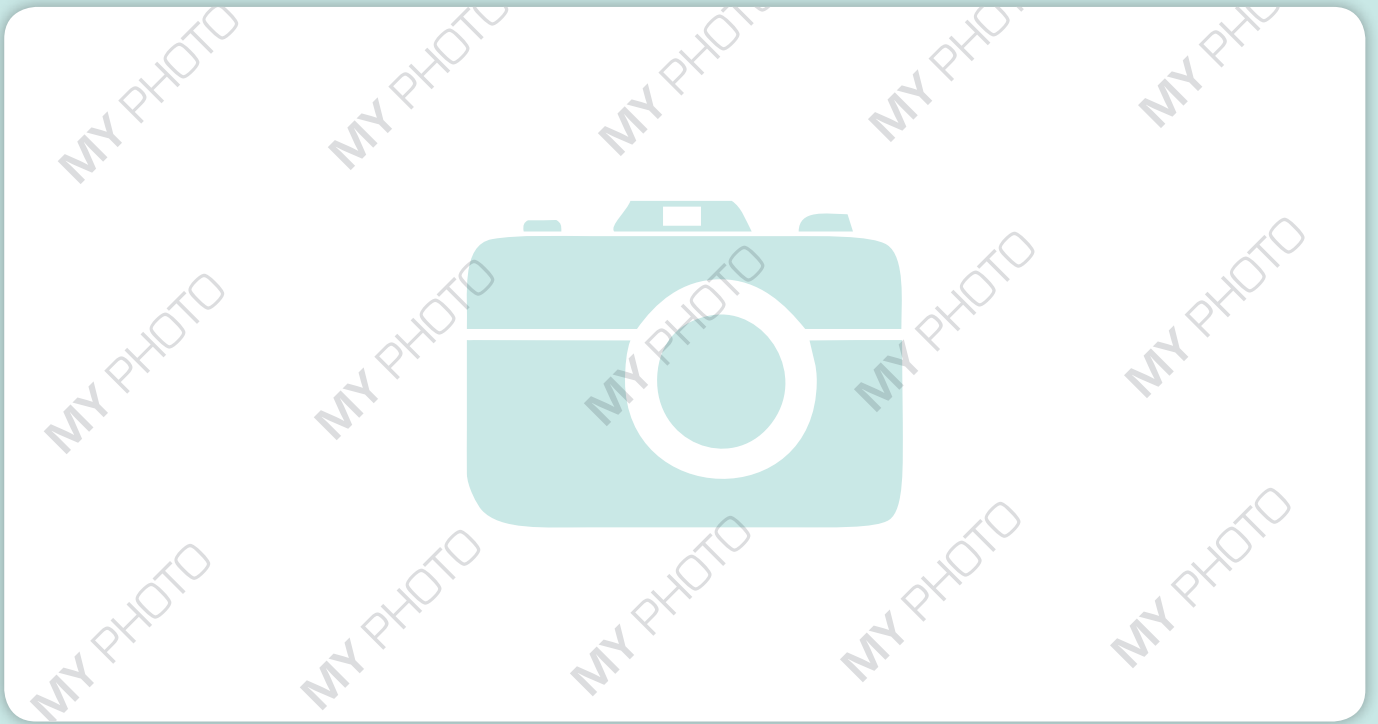
Teaching tips:

This teaching activity aims to encourage students to learn independently. Teachers should encourage students to complete this activity in three stages – set the topic, collect information (at least include the two methods of field study and web search) and analyse the information. This technique will be beneficial to the students to conduct independent research in the future.

Worksheet: My Neighbourhood and Historic Buildings

Name: _____ Class: _____ ()

1. The photo below shows an historic building that I have identified in my neighbourhood (from the perspective of its heritage value, or the meaning it holds):



2. From my observation, this historic building has the following features (e.g. material, architectural style, spatial configuration, size, etc.):

a. _____

b. _____

3. The change of use of the historic building from its beginning to the present: _____

4. Fill in the criteria for grading historic buildings in the empty boxes, and use these criteria to assess the overall value of the chosen building:

	<		>	Authenticity
Group Value	<		>	
	<		>	

Grading Table for Historic Buildings

Name of historic building		Grading criteria						Proposed grade (Please select the grade you think is appropriate, and add a ✓ beside it)	Short comment
		Historic value	Architectural value	Group value	Social value	Degree of authenticity ¹	Degree of rarity		
1.		/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
2.		/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
3.		/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
4.		/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
5.		/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	
6.		/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	/10	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	

¹ 'Authenticity' and 'integrity' are important concepts in conservation. For more information on the concepts, please see paragraph 79-95 and Annex 4 of the *Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention*, which can be downloaded from <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines>.

Extended Activities

1. Teachers will select some of the historic buildings presented by the students in the previous activity, guide them in organising the information about those buildings and organise a small-scale exhibition.
2. Teachers will guide the students to revisit the neighbourhood concerned and conduct interviews with local residents and record their oral history, so as to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between the building and its neighbourhood. The records should be shared with all of the students in the class.

References:

Conserve and Revitalise Hong Kong Heritage.
<http://www.heritage.gov.hk>

Antiquities and Monuments Office.
<http://www.amo.gov.hk/>

Legislative Council Papers (Please refer to the Panel on Development documents about the policies and measures related to heritage conservation).
<http://www.legco.gov.hk/chinese/index.htm>

Summary of Legislative Council reference materials – heritage conservation policies (10/2007).
http://www.heritage.gov.hk/en/doc/LC_Brief_Heritage_Conservation.pdf

龍炳頤：《香港古今建築》。香港：三聯，1992。

蕭國健：《香港的歷史與文物》。香港：明報，1997。

丁新豹主編：《香港歷史散步》。香港：商務印書館(香港)有限公司，2008。

