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Hong Kong Institute of Architectural Conservationists
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BEYOND HERITAGE VALUES: WHY HERITAGE VIABILITY MATTERS



Credits: Ms. Verity Ramsden

Date: 30 November 2026 (Monday)

Time: 19:00 to 20:30

Speaker: Ms. Verity Ramsden

Venue: Online via Zoom

CPD Points: 1.5 CPD credit hours

Language: English

Fee: HK$120 for HKICON Members (Professional, Associate and Retired Members), HK$60 for HKICON Student Members, HK$135 for HKICON Friends, and HK$150 for non-HKICON members. Corporate Members are offered free place(s) according to its banding. Please visit the HKICON website for registration: https://member.hkicon.org/events/20261130

About the CPD

Heritage conservation is often framed around the identification, assessment and protection of architectural, historic and cultural significance. But understanding why a building is important is only half the challenge. How do we ensure that it can actually survive? Historic buildings exist within a real estate market, where ownership, land values, development pressures, investment returns, repair liabilities and the availability of viable new uses all have a significant influence on their future. A building may be immensely important from a heritage perspective, but if nobody can afford to repair it, maintain it or find a sustainable use for it, its long-term survival may be far from assured.

This lecture explores the often-overlooked relationship between heritage conservation and property economics, examining how financial value, development viability and real estate considerations influence decisions about the future of historic buildings, and how heritage can both enhance and constrain value. It will consider the different meanings of value, and how heritage can contribute to the wider economy, while also considering the commercial realities faced by owners, developers and investors when contemplating the acquisition, repair and adaptive reuse of historic properties. Through practical examples, the lecture will consider the challenges of finding viable new uses for heritage buildings, it will explore why apparently worthwhile projects can struggle to stack up financially, and examine how different forms of funding, intervention and partnership can help bridge the gap between the cost of conservation and the commercial or operational value of a completed project.

Heritage significance and commercial viability have long been seen as opposing objectives. The challenge is to understand how they can be made to work together, and to recognise that the long-term conservation of historic buildings depends not only on understanding their value, but also on finding ways to make their future viable.

About the Speaker

Ms. Verity Ramsden

Verity is a Chartered Surveyor and heritage professional specialising in viability, adaptive reuse and regeneration of historic buildings and urban centres. She will be moving to Hong Kong in February 2027.

In August 2025 she relocated to Saudi Arabia, leaving her role with Historic England where for the last five years she had been advising public bodies, developers and building owners on how to balance heritage significance, planning policy, and financial viability to deliver sustainable outcomes. Throughout her career she has been recognised for her ability to bridge the gap between the heritage and real estate sectors, translating conservation requirements into commercially-deliverable solutions. Before joining Historic England, Verity worked for a heritage trust in Uganda, promoting the preservation and reuse of historical sites, and as a RICS Registered Valuer at real estate advisory firms in Myanmar and the UK.

Verity has particular expertise in commissioning, shaping, and scrutinising options appraisals and feasibility studies to ensure robust, decision-ready evidence when bringing heritage assets back into use. Acting as a trusted bridge between conservation, planning, and real estate professionals, she helps clients to deliver world-class, economically resilient heritage places.

Verity is a member of the RICS's Building Conservation Advisory Group, which promotes heritage conservation issues and upholds standards of good practice within the surveying profession. She is also a member of the ICOMOS-UK World Heritage Committee and Cultural Tourism Committee. She has been a visiting lecturer for the University of Reading, and Birmingham City University, and a speaker at the RICS UK Valuation conference and several RICS Global Conservation Conferences.

A pragmatic, informed, heritage and surveying professional, Verity is able to grasp context speedily and accurately, look for the kind of balanced solutions which are critical to finding sustainable new uses for the historic environment, and able to communicate these issues across a widely ranging audience.