

CCPL Evening Lecture

Appointment *ad personam*, confidentiality and secret operation of statutory bodies – the Antiquities Advisory Board as example

Mr. William Meacham

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WEDNESDAY 3RD FEBRUARY 2016, 18:00 –19:30
ACADEMIC CONFERENCE ROOM,
11/F CHENG YU TUNG TOWER, CENTENNIAL CAMPUS
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Audience members will receive a free copy of the speaker's e-book *The Struggle for Hong Kong's Heritage*.

The Hong Kong Government maintains that its appointment of individuals, the confidentiality requirement and various restrictions on statutory bodies is beneficial to proper discussion and resolution of issues. The speaker's experience with the Antiquities Advisory Board indicates otherwise on each count. He will cite examples from his work as an archaeologist and heritage activist dealing with the Board, and as a Board member for two years. During that stint an egregious case of deception was uncovered through a leak by a concerned civil servant. It showed deliberate misrepresentation of the Attorney General's advice concerning the possible preservation of the Ohel Leah Synagogue. Other examples are cited, including resistance to input from experts in the community, with damaging effect.

This lecture is particularly timely and relevant to the University of Hong Kong in light of recently leaked recordings of the HKU Council proceedings. Discussions have consequently revolved around balancing the necessity for confidentiality in such proceedings with transparency and accountability in the university's decision-making processes.



William Meacham is an archaeologist who has studied Hong Kong and adjacent regions. Author or editor of 10 books on archaeology including *The Archaeology of Hong Kong* (HKU Press, 2008), he conducted major excavations at Sham Wan, Lamma 1973-5 and Chek Lap Kok 1991-2. Last year he discovered and excavated a Civil War burial ground in Kentucky. Meacham was educated at Tulane University in New Orleans, the Sorbonne in Paris and the Gregorian University of Rome. From 1980 to 2012 he was Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre of Asian Studies, HKU. He was Chairman of the HK Archaeological Society 1985-96 and Executive Secretary of the HK Heritage Society 1982-84. His recently published e-book describes the history of local heritage efforts.

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