



## Threads of Conservation

Social fabric • Fabric and place • Conserving fabric

Australia ICOMOS Conference  
5-8 November 2015  
Adelaide Australia



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Catherine Forbes is an architect with extensive experience in heritage conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage buildings. She is currently Built Heritage Advisor with GML Heritage, but when this project was undertaken Catherine was Senior Associate with Design 5—Architects Pty Ltd. Catherine is a member of the Australian Institute of Architects, Australia ICOMOS and the ICOMOS National Scientific Committee on Energy Efficiency and Sustainability. Catherine has taught Design for Sustainability at NSW TAFE (The Design Centre, Enmore).

### From Roller Skates to Super Heroes: The many lives of the Trocadero

#### Paper Abstract

The Trocadero was built in the late 1880s as a highly fashionable indoor roller-skating rink. However, as fashions change quickly, the building soon became redundant. Since the 1890s the building has been adapted and reused many times over, sometimes as a place of entertainment and at other times as a factory or storage facility. More recently, after many years of neglect, the building was adapted as a state of the art visual effects and animation studio for film.

Throughout its history, each new owner valued the building in a different way and those values are reflected in the ways in which the building was treated, modified and maintained. Some of those values are intrinsic to the building itself: its high Victorian aesthetic, spatial qualities, functionality, flexibility and quality of light. Other values are associated more with its location, its economic value as a source of livelihood or potential redevelopment. And yet others are not the values of the property owners, but those of society generally, such as recognition of its cultural heritage values: its historic, aesthetic, social and technological values and its rarity. But, when considering sustainable futures for historic buildings another layer of values should be added to these—those relating to sustainability, including the recognition of buildings as a valuable resource and the minimization of consumption and waste production.

Using the Trocadero as an example, this paper explores the values attached to buildings by their owners and society, both tangible and intangible, and the influence that these values have on the way our heritage buildings are either used or wasted. It examines whether greater understanding of a building's history, design intent and intrinsic properties can assist owners in revaluing and respecting their buildings, and in making fewer and more strategic interventions that will lead to more sustainable outcomes.