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Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2023**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

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Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A: We should replace old buildings with new, better ones

Many older buildings, including some of our homes, schools and offices, were designed and constructed for very different generations, with completely different expectations in terms of lifestyle, comfort, connectivity and energy efficiency.

Empty historic buildings that were once local landmarks now get in the way of new projects (such as repurposing of the land for parks, shops and recreational space) that might offer more benefit to the community. If a building looks old and abandoned and you can't find any good reason to keep it, then you should consider demolishing and replacing it.

Buildings often outlive their original purposes. Even when still in use, the enormous cost of repairing some very old buildings can be prohibitive, so they become shabby and unsightly. Some older buildings may still look good on the outside, but have underlying problems such as poor ventilation, outdated wiring and problems with the plumbing. Old buildings also tend to develop weaker foundations, thanks to the materials used in their construction degrading to the point that the structure becomes unstable or unsafe.

Constructing new, environmentally friendly 'green' buildings, which can be designed for flexibility of purpose, is the obvious answer. Green buildings use as little energy as possible, generate their own power, recycle water and can heat or cool themselves without the need for air-conditioning or central heating. They also take account of how they affect the people living and working in them.

'The goal is to build more buildings that are more physically healthy for people,' says award-winning architect, Joy Yang. 'Numerous studies show how a "healthy building" can reduce illness and absenteeism among workers, increase worker productivity, raise test scores among students and lead to greater workplace satisfaction.'

Modern software enables architects and engineers to visualise and calculate increasingly complex shapes, so building designs are no longer limited by practicalities. Weird and wonderful modern buildings in natural shapes are springing up, driven by cities' desire to outdo each other: a football stadium in the shape of a giant flower and an office development shaped like a mountain range.

'We're trying to change how people think about buildings,' Yang says. 'We must recognise that our cities are not museums, but living and evolving centres of commerce and culture.'

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Text B: Recycling old buildings

Internationally, old buildings are considered valuable resources. They add charm and human scale to our cities and towns, attracting tourists and businesses and connecting us to our past. They should be protected.

As populations grow, and cities around the world become increasingly built-up, interchangeable and bland, saving not just iconic or famous buildings, but those we have grown up with around us, is critical. They are living history. History we can feel and touch.

Some people argue that it is better for the climate to demolish an old energy-hungry building and build a well-insulated, sustainable replacement. Others argue that we should try to find new life in old buildings. 'Adaptive reuse' is a process that 'recycles' old buildings for new uses while retaining many of their historic features, but older buildings have a far more enduring importance to society as educational examples than they do as modern dwellings or workplaces.

Admittedly, through adaptive reuse, exciting new spaces have been created in unlikely old buildings, such as former factories, sewage silos and power-stations. However, sometimes this is achieved by traditional restoration of just the building's exterior, and the interior is gutted to create room for the sort of amenities people expect in a new property. Whether this is relevant or possible depends on the history, significance and structure of the building itself, as well as where it is. Some buildings must be entirely restored and repaired sensitively, at considerable expense, before any upgrading for contemporary use is possible.

The most successful projects are those that respect and retain the building's heritage but add contemporary features that provide value for the future. We see former warehouses transformed into attractive workplace environments, with green living roofs of plants and grasses, and disused theatres repurposed as open office spaces with their grand staircases retained to encourage physical activity. Sometimes, adaptive reuse is the only way that the building's fabric will be properly cared for, while making better use of the building itself.

When properly renovated to incorporate modern, green technologies, old buildings can even use less energy than flashy new buildings that may take decades to save more emissions than were created during their construction.

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