

**Heritage Appraisal of Eliot Hall,  
The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam, Hong Kong**

Eliot Hall was the second student residential hall under the direct management of The University of Hong Kong (the “University”)<sup>1</sup>. It was opened in 1914 and named after Sir Charles Eliot (儀禮), the first Vice-Chancellor of the University (1912-1918).

*Historical  
Interest*

Sir Frederick Lugard (盧嘉), the first Chancellor of the University (1911-1912) and the 14<sup>th</sup> Governor of Hong Kong (1907-1912), recognised that in addition to the transmission of knowledge, the personal development and moral qualities of the University’s students were equally important. This could be achieved by compulsory residence either in approved colleges or hostels, or in the University itself, and by the careful selection of the professorial staff.

However, when the University opened on 11 March 1912, its own student residential halls had not yet been built. Sir Frederick Lugard then sought the help from religious organisations whose interest in supporting education and promoting good moral character was in line with the mission of the University. The Church Missionary Society was the first to respond and established St. John’s Hall on Bonham Road to provide accommodation in 1912, in time of the University’s opening.

In 1913, Lugard Hall, the first student residential hall under the direct management of the University, was opened. It set a model for the construction of Eliot Hall and May Hall which were constructed on higher terraces in almost identical style. Eliot Hall and May Hall were planned with assistance from the Department of Public Works and constructed at a cost of \$185,840.

Eliot Hall was designed to house around 60 students and

---

<sup>1</sup> The first student residential hall under the direct management of the University was Lugard Hall which was opened in 1913, and named after the first Chancellor of the University and the Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Frederick Lugard (1907-1912).

with quarters for an English professor and a Chinese assistant in residence in order to provide close supervision to the students. Students' rooms were located on the first and second floors. Refectory, common rooms, servants' quarters and bathrooms were on the ground floor. In 1920, the ground floor at the western end was converted to accommodate students, so that Eliot Hall could accommodate 72 students.

During the Second World War, Lugard Hall and Eliot Hall became the relief hospital to provide additional support to Queen Mary Hospital when the Main Building of the University which had been used as the relief hospital was damaged. Eliot Hall soon reopened in 1946 after the war. It was closed and turned into a gymnasium in 1956. Most of the students moved to Lugard Hall and the newly opened University Hall at No. 144 Pok Fu Lam Road. In 1963, Eliot Hall was renovated and resumed as student residential hall for men, which could accommodate 74 students.

In June 1966, an inexhaustible torrential rain caused a large-scale landslide at the slope adjacent to the Eliot Hall and May Hall, which led to an immediate evacuation of the two halls for extensive repairs. The students of the halls were temporary moved to Lugard Hall and other halls. Two wardens' quarters at the east end of Eliot Hall and May Hall had to be demolished. The University took this opportunity to combine Lugard Hall, Eliot Hall and May Hall into one large residential unit named Old Halls which was opened in 1969 with three wings, i.e. Lugard Wing, Eliot Wing and May Wing. The three buildings were linked together by covered stairways and could accommodate around 200 students. In the same year, the long established compulsory residence implemented since the University's opening in 1912 was lifted and residence in hostel became voluntary. Most of the residents in the Old Halls were Medical or Engineering students. There were also overseas residence and those in Eliot Hall were mainly from Malaysia and Indonesia.

Eliot Wing and May Wing were reverted to its old names (i.e. Eliot Hall and May Hall) when Lugard Wing was demolished in 1992 to cope with the development policy of the University.

Nowadays, Eliot Hall has been converted into administrative offices of departments of the University.

Eliot Hall is a three-storey structure designed by local Hong Kong Architects, Denison, Ram and Gibbs. Red brick is the main material and they were laid in “Flemish Bond”. The elegant façades feature a rich variety of architectural elements, including curved pediments (hoods) over the entrance doorways, rusticated columns, Doric capitals, window cills, cornices and balustrades. The visual richness of the architecture is widely adopted in the Edwardian period in England. Chinese-style ceramic grilles are also found on the façade to contrast with the red brick wall. The pitched and double-tiled Chinese roofs are a local adaption.

***Architectural Merit***

Internally, original decorative details to the walls and ceilings are basically intact, such as the mouldings and cornices, in spite of the alterations and renovations carried out over the years. Some fireplaces are still in excellent condition. The open verandas to the front elevation remain in good condition, particularly the coloured floor tiles which are very typical of the period.

Although successive major internal renovations have substantially altered the internal layout, some original features remain, such as the patterned floor tiles and ceiling mouldings. Exterior of the building is largely intact, although the east end of the building has been reconstructed with concrete buttresses added due to the major landslide damage in 1966. Also, part of the verandah on the ground floor has been enclosed to meet the current use but could be reversible when required.

***Authenticity***

Eliot Hall is one of the oldest structures on the University campus. Also, it is the earliest purpose-built university student residential hall built in Western style and blended with Chinese features that still remains in Hong Kong, reflecting the vision of the University.

***Rarity***

As one of the purpose-built and the oldest student residential halls of the University, Eliot Hall served as an imperative venue to provide informal education to students and to cultivate the renowned hall culture of the University. Its social value is enhanced due to the change of its usage from a student residential hall to a gymnasium which more students and staff of the University would have more connection to it. Besides, being one of the historic buildings with rich variety of architectural elements on the University campus, Eliot Hall has long been the well-known landmark which attracts visitors for appreciation.

***Social Value &  
Local Interest***

Eliot Hall, together with the other historic buildings situated in the University, such as the Main Building (本部大樓) (the exterior of which is declared monument), University Hall (大學堂) (the exterior of which is declared monument), Hung Hing Ying Building (孔慶熒樓) (the exterior of which is declared monument), Tang Chi Ngong Building (鄧志昂樓) (the exterior of which is declared monument), May Hall (梅堂) (Grade 1) and Fung Ping Shan Building (馮平山樓) (Grade 1), undoubtedly form a strong cultural environment providing an academic ambience. Other historic buildings in the vicinity, such as King's College (英皇書院) (declared monument), Bungalow of West Point Filters (西環濾水廠平房) (Grade 1), Senior Staff Quarters of Elliot Pumping Station and Filters (抽水站及濾水廠高級職員宿舍) (Grade 2), etc., also depict the historical and socio-cultural development of the territory.

***Group Value***

## REFERENCES

### Document Records at the Land Registry, Hong Kong

Property and Owner Particulars of Inland Lot No. 8482

### Books, Articles, and Other Sources

Gould, et al. *HKU Memories from the Archives*. 2013.

Cunich, Peter. *A History of the University of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012.

Mellor, Bernard. *The University of Hong Kong: an Informal History*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1980.

Mellor, Bernard. *L. Lugard in Hong Kong – Empires, Education and a Governor at Work 1907-1912*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1992.

Hornell, William Woodward. *The University of Hong Kong: Its Origin & Growth*. Hong Kong: Ye Olde Printerie, Ltd., 1925.

Matthews, Clifford N., and Oswald. Cheung. *Dispersal and Renewal: Hong Kong University during the War Years*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1998.

Harrison, Brian. *University of Hong Kong: the First 50 Years, 1911-1961*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1962.

*The Owl*. Hong Kong: Eliot Hall, University of Hong Kong, 1914.

林亦英., et al. *Past Visions of the Future: Some Perspectives on the History of the University of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: University Museum and Art Gallery, The University of Hong Kong, 2001.

吳智明：《珍惜擁有：明原惜別紀念特刊》，香港大學明原堂 1992 年。

香港大學明原堂：《明原堂十週年紀念特刊》，香港大學明原堂

1979 年。

鄧廣義：《香港大學明原堂二十週年紀念特刊》，香港大學明原堂 1990 年。