

**HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN RESPECT OF
THE REVITALISATION OF THE WATERVALE HOUSE,
FORMER GORDON HARD CAMP**

BACKGROUND

Under Batch V of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme (the “Revitalisation Scheme”), the Secretary for Development granted approval-in-principle in 2018 for the proposed conservation and adaptive re-use of Watervale House, Former Gordon Hard Camp in Tuen Mun (please refer to Figure 1 for the location plan) as “Tuen Mun Soul Oasis” submitted by The Tuen Mun Soul Oasis Foundation Limited.

2. The main block of Watervale House (“Main Block”) is a single-storey dwelling house constructed in 1933. A double-storey L-shaped building extension (“Extension”) at its north and east was built in around 1983 to 1984. Main Block was accorded a Grade 2 status in March 2016 by the Antiquities Advisory Board. Watervale House will be converted and revitalised to comprise A) a heritage interpretation area, B) function rooms, C) a restaurant, D) public open spaces (English style healing garden and Zen garden) and E) back-of-house facilities (please refer to Figure 2 for the overview photos of Watervale House).

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

A. Historic Significance

3. Watervale House is one of the early built houses in Western style in Tuen Mun, (So Kwun Wat area). It also witnesses the resort development along the coast by the rich Chinese merchants, such as Dragon Garden (龍園) in Tsing Lung Tau (青龍頭).

4. Watervale House is the only remaining building of Former Gordon Hard Camp, which records the services of British military troops and Gurkha servicemen

in Hong Kong.

B. Architectural Significance

5. Main Block is a typical example of the bungalow style houses built in New Territories after the First World War.

6. The external of Main Block is visible when coming up from the main entrance (south and west elevation) which is highly decorative with symmetrical design. There are external pilasters with base, shaft, cap, and vertical groove on the shaft, the wall frieze with the cornice and sculpted geometric decoration, and sculpted geometric decoration at the projecting roof eaves soffit.

7. The setting of the main entrance of Main Block including the timber double leaf entrance doors with fanlight, the door surround in Shanghai plaster finish, and the whole entrance stair, which includes the steps, landings, parapet wall and capping, and the light fitting etc. demonstrates a cozy residential ambience.

C. Social Significance

8. Watervale House being important as the Hong Kong residence of an agriculturalist turned politician, Mr. Feng Rui (馮銳), the second owner, who set up China's first modern sugar mills in Guangzhou in the 1930s which had such lasting results, laid the foundation for a major industrial and economic asset for China.

9. The third owner, Mr. Kuo-chu Hsieh (謝國柱), contributed to the development of food industry in Hong Kong.

10. Watervale House was a former British military officers' mess which displayed the "mess culture" of the military.

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11. In accordance with Development Bureau Technical Circular (Works) No. 6/2009, a Heritage Impact Assessment (“HIA”) has been carried out with the objective of drawing up a Conservation Management Plan and assessing the heritage impact of the proposed project scope and design. Based on Antiquities and Monument Office (“AMO”)’s Conservation Guidelines contained in the Resource Kit of the Revitalisation Scheme, the HIA sets out the mitigation measures to avoid adverse impact on the historic building in the course of revitalisation works and outlines the future interpretation, maintenance and management strategies.

A. Project Proposal

12. Under the Consolidated Project Proposal submitted by The Tuen Mun Soul Oasis Foundation Limited, Watervale House will be revitalised into Tuen Mun Soul Oasis for people to relax and enjoy at leisure and promote a positive lifestyle to the public through a variety of classes, course and workshops on positive thinking and spiritual development. The following revitalisation works and programmes are proposed:

- (a) The entire Main Block will become a history interpretation area;
- (b) The original Ante Hall, Lounge and Bar in Main Block will become the Oasis Restaurant and open to the public, with the interior showcase the atmosphere of the original residence and military mess;
- (c) Two exhibition rooms – Showroom 1 and 2, connected with Oasis Restaurant will become a reference room / reading room focusing on the history of the area;
- (d) The interpretation includes:
 - (i) historic values and cultural significance of the building and the process of conservation and restoration;

Annex A

- (ii) the stories of the first owner – Mr. Octavius Arthur Smith, second owner Mr. Feng Rui, and third owner Mr. Kuo-chu Hsieh;
 - (iii) different periods and levels of history in Tuen Mun District;
 - (iv) history of the British Military and the Gurkha Engineers; and
 - (v) thematic exhibitions provided in line with guided tours.
- (e) The two main rooms of Extension will become new activity rooms – Function room 1 and 2;
- (f) Lectures and workshops on conservation and revitalisation of historic buildings will be organized with local built heritage scholars;
- (g) “Caring (「關愛」)”, “Wisdom (「智慧」)”, “Perseverance (「堅毅」)” and “Action (「行動」)” workshops will be organised for parents and children with Hong Kong Children Happiness Index expert.

B. Conservation Principles

13. According to the HIA report, the Conservation Policies to conserve and interpret Watervale House are as follows:

(a) Building Use

The new use of Watervale House should be compatible with its original use. The new use should not jeopardise the image of the historic building. Unnecessary interventions to the historic building should be avoided.

(b) Setting

- (i) The setting of Watervale House should be respected and preserved; and
- (ii) New structure(s) to be added should be compatible with and distinguishable from the historic fabric.

(c) Preservation of the Building Fabric

Authenticity of the heritage of Watervale House and its architectural merits should be maintained with minimal intervention. The Character Defining Elements (“CDEs”) should be repaired as necessary and preserved in-situ as far as practicable such as:

(i) Main Block – exterior

- Form of the building;
- Flat roof with chimney;
- Architectural features on the external wall (south and west elevation) – the external pilasters with their bases, shafts, caps, and the vertical groove on their shafts, the wall frieze with the cornice and sculpted geometric decoration, and all sculpted geometric decoration at the projecting eaves soffit;
- Main entrance setting including the whole entrance stair, which includes the steps, landings, parapet wall and capping;
- Steel windows;
- Timber paneled main entrance doors and the pair of timber French windows with sidelights that opens to the terrace; and
- Rectangular cross section concrete rainwater downpipe.

(ii) Main Block – interior

- The archways;
- The top and bottom double slab-rib beam roof;
- Ceiling cornice including the crown moulding;
- Interior pilasters;
- Timber parquet flooring in herringbone pattern and skirting;
- The fireplace and chimney breast; and
- The internal timber paneled doors.

(iii) Extension – exterior

- The building façade on south side;
- The façades around the stairwell at north-west corner;
- Covered verandah at east side; and
- Flat roof and the roof vents on the roof.

(iv) Extension – interior

- Timber parquet flooring in original ground floor Dining Room; and
- The stairwell and the staircase, including the three window openings, the adjustable glass louvres with metal frame and the terrazzo finishes on the staircase tread and riser, landing and dado wall.

(v) External area

- The terrace on the south side of Main Block and Extension including the low rubble curb and steps from driveway; and
- The general topography, existing soft landscape and driveway leading from main entrance to Main Block.

(d) Documentation

Cartographic and photographic surveys to properly record the historic building will be conducted before and after the alteration works.

(e) Interpretation

Interpretation in the form of guided tours and displays should be provided to promote the cultural significance of Watervale House to the general public.

C. Key Design Proposal

14. The key proposed works for the revitalisation project are listed below:

(a) Overall site approach

- The project is intended to renovate and adaptively re-use the existing building as Tuen Mun Soul Oasis, with heritage interpretation area, function rooms and a restaurant to present the food and beverages culture of the old British military officers in a new way;
- The existing landscaping will be improved including improvement to the existing trees and vegetation at west side with barrier free access ramp added, converting the existing trees and vegetation at south side into English style healing garden, and the addition of a new Zen garden at east side (adjoining the verandah of Extension); and
- A new sprinkler water tank and plant room will be constructed at the open space at west side of Main Block.

(b) Conservation and conversion works for transforming Watervale House into Tuen Mun Soul Oasis:

(i) Main Block – exterior

- No major works will be carried out on the façades, except the following:
 - Re-roofing of the whole flat roof;
 - Open up the four single casement windows blocked up by plywood;
 - Repair the steel windows, and replace those beyond repair;
 - Restore the three-high level aluminium windows at east façade (existing toilet) with steel window to the period style;
 - Remove existing PVC rainwater downpipe on west façade;

- Replace existing PVC rainwater downpipes with new cast iron rainwater downpipes; and
 - Replace the two missing ball-shape white glass light sheds on the capping of the parapet wall at main entrance.
- Enhancement works for complying with the statutory requirements or other modern day requirements:
 - Form an opening on the north elevation as barrier free access entrance to the interior;
 - Add exhaust fan at the top glass pane of the four single casement steel windows for ventilation purpose;
 - Add fall arrest system on the roof;
 - Install two air-conditioning out-door units on the north-east corner of the roof with plinth; and
 - Add cat ladder at north-east corner of the roof.
- (ii) Main Block – interior
- The layout and setting of the interior will be retained, except the following:
 - Reinstate the load bearing brickwall with two archways in Oasis Restaurant (original Ante Hall) which were previously removed;
 - Remove the later-added steel portal frame structure;
 - Repair the opened up part of the reinforced concrete ceiling (bottom slab of the slab-rib beam system roof) by glass-fiber reinforced concrete (GRC) panel suspended with hanger system;
 - Repair the defective concrete in the reinforced concrete bottom slab of the slab-rib beam system roof as necessary;
 - Remove partition in Room 1 to convert the room to Showroom 2; and

- Convert the toilet into a small room of the restaurant.
 - Enhancement works for complying with the statutory requirements or other modern day requirements:
 - Widen three existing door openings for the barrier free access entrance to Showroom 1 and 2, and small restaurant room;
 - Add dropped false ceiling with recess perimeter to expose the existing ceiling cornice for concealing the building services pipe work and duct; and
 - Building services installation such as electrical system, fire services system, air-conditioning system, plumbing and drainage system, lightning protection, security system, tele-communication system, etc.
- (iii) Extension – exterior
- No major works will be carried out on the façades, except the following:
 - Re-roofing of the main roof and upper roof;
 - Remove all railing on the roof;
 - Open up the blocked up windows on south elevation, and replace all windows with new aluminium window;
 - Replace existing aluminium windows and French windows with new aluminium windows and French windows;
 - Form opening on south elevation for double door as side entrance to terrace on south side;
 - Enlarge window openings to form door openings at east and west elevations;
 - Form / relocate door open to suit the new use;
 - Remove the steel staircase at west side open corridor between Main Block;
 - Add skylight on west side to cover the open corridor

between Main Block and Extension with the skylight structure attached to the structure of Extension;

- Replace the existing 100 x 100 mm quarry floor tile at east side verandah with wooden pattern ceramic floor tile;
 - Replace existing PVC rainwater downpipes with new cast iron rainwater downpipes; and
 - Repair the ornamental light fitting fixed on external wall, and replacement of the missing and broken lamp shed.
- Enhancement works for complying with the statutory requirements or other modern day requirements:
 - Add ramp at west elevation outside entrance door and widen the entrance opening as the barrier free access entrance to the building;
 - Add ramp outside the new formed double door opening on south elevation for access to the terrace on south side;
 - Add cat ladder at the north-east of the façade at ground floor;
 - Add fall arrest system on the main roof and upper roof;
 - Relocate the fire services water inlet cabinet outside entrance at west elevation to the north-west corner;
 - Install three breakwater tanks with plinth on the main roof;
 - Repair the water tank on upper roof; and
 - Connect exhaust duct to two roof vents on flat roof.
- (iv) Extension – interior
- The layout and setting of the interior will be retained, except the following:
 - Convert the small rooms beside the original Dining

Room into female and male toilet;

- Add dropped false ceiling with recess perimeter to expose the existing ceiling cornice for conceal the building services pipe works and ducts in original Dining Room and Larder Preparation Room (new Function Room 1 and 2);
 - Form / relocate door openings to suit new use; and
 - Raise the floor level of the covered corridor near the west end entrance and form ramp for the barrier free access route to the interior.
- Enhancement works for complying with the statutory requirements or other modern day requirements:
 - Building services installation such as electrical system, fire services system, air-conditioning system, plumbing and drainage system, lightning protection, security system, tele-communication system, etc.;
 - Convert the existing small toilet into accessible toilet; and
 - Convert existing Office 2, Room 3 and 4 into kitchen for serving the restaurant.
- (v) External area
- Enhancement works for complying with the statutory requirements or other modern day requirements:
 - Construct a 3 metres long by 1 metre high new water in-let cabinet at site entrance;
 - Construct a new 37 cubic metres capacity underground reinforced concrete water tank for sprinkler system, and an underground sprinkler pump room at the external open space on west side of Main Block;
 - Add mass concrete strengthening wall at underside of terrace outside south part of Main Block and

behind the existing granite block retaining wall;

- Adopt management approach to restrict public access to the edge of the terrace and is subject to Building Authority's approval. Otherwise, add protective barrier railing to the terrace (where level difference is over 600mm);
- Replace the existing concrete floor tile in terrace with granite tile;
- Add barrier free access ramp at the landscape area at west and south side with handrail on both sides of the ramp;
- Improve the landscape area at west side as "reflective wood garden";
- Convert the landscape area at south side into "English style healing garden";
- Add a new Zen garden at east side (adjoining the verandah of Extension) with wooden pattern ceramic floor tile;
- Add "flowering entrance square" (on-grade planters) at west side of Main Block;
- Add outdoor lighting and irrigation system at landscape area;
- Replace the chain link fence at boundary of site by new fence;
- Replace the entrance gate; and
- Add "Tuen Mun Soul Oasis" signage at entrance.

D. Mitigation Measures for the Conversion Works

15. For areas where impact of the conversion works could not be avoided, the following mitigation measures are to be implemented based on the conservation principles stated above:

(a) **Main Block**

- (i) The restoration of two brick archways which were previously removed in Main Block should follow the original profile and match with existing archways construction details. The later-added steel portion frame structure to be removed;
- (ii) The wooden floor affected by the restoration of archways should be salvaged and reused as far as possible;
- (iii) The repair of the opened-up, if necessary, part of the existing reinforced concrete ceiling bottom slab of the roof slab-rib beam of Main Block by cover up with glass-fiber reinforced concrete (“GRC”) panel suspended with hanger system should not change the profile and height of the ceiling;
- (iv) The new dropped false ceiling to house the building services installation in Showroom 1 and 2 in Main Block should be simple and the existing ceiling cornice should be visible;
- (v) The two timber paneled doors in Main Block to be taken down because of widening of the door opening as the barrier free access route should be salvaged, and to replace the other defective door in Main Block. The design of the new doors should match existing and the period of style;
- (vi) The top glass panes of the four single casement steel windows in Main Block to be modified for installation of exhaust fans, members of the casement windows should not be removed, and the exhaust fans to be installed in the position of the glass panes only;
- (vii) The design and material of the three new steel windows to replace the high level aluminium windows at Main Block east elevation

(existing toilet) should match the existing steel window;

- (viii) The new two air-conditioning out-door units installed on the north-east corner of the roof of Main Block should be set back from the façade and should not be visible from the south and west side of site;
- (ix) The new cat ladder added on the north-east corner Main Block at the roof should be the set back from the façade, and should not be visible from the south and west side of Main Block; and
- (x) The new fall arrest system on roof should be fixed to the existing structural grid of the flat roof and should not be visible from south and west side of the site.

(b) Extension

- (i) The new skylight to be added to cover the open corridor between Main Block and Extension should not be visible from the south side of Main Block and Extension, and the fixing to the structure of Extension should not affect the historic building fabric;
- (ii) The width of the new form wall opening on the north elevation of Extension as barrier free access entrance to the interior should be kept to a minimum, and open at the position where there is an existing opening for the window type air-conditioning unit;
- (iii) The connection of exhaust ducts to the two roof vents on flat roof of Extension should be connected to the existing opening of the roof vent, i.e. the opening size of the opening should not be changed;
- (iv) The new dropped false ceiling in Showroom 1 and 2 in Main Block and Function Room 1 and 2 in Extension should be simple

and the existing ceiling cornice should be visible;

- (v) The raise of the floor level of the covered corridor near the west end entrance and form ramp for the barrier free access route would cover the existing floor finishes and skirting, the existing floor finishes and skirting to be re-constructed on the ramp;
- (vi) The new fall arrest system on roof should be fixed to the existing structural grid of the main roof and upper roof and should not be visible from south and west side of the site;
- (vii) The new three waterbreak tanks on the roof of Extension should be set back from the façade and should not be visible from the south and west side of site;
- (viii) The new cat ladder added on the north-east corner of Extension at ground floor should be set back from the façade, and should not be visible from the south and west side of Main Block; and
- (ix) The new fire services water inlet cabinet at north-west corner of Extension should be kept to minimum size, simple and the design should be compatible to the historic building;

(c) Others

- (i) The new 37 cubic metres capacity underground reinforced concrete water tank for sprinkler system, and the underground sprinkler pump room to be constructed at the external open space on west side of Main Block, the general topography of the slope should be maintained as far as possible, and the external finishes to be compatible with the landscape features and to be covered with climbing plants;
- (ii) The weep holes for the new mass concrete strengthening wall

at underside of terrace outside south part of Main Block and behind the existing granite block retaining wall should tie in with the existing weep holes of the granite block retaining wall;

- (iii) The new “flowering entrance square” (on-grade planters) at west elevation of Main Block should not obstruct the west elevation and the installation design should not jeopardise the structure of the building foundation;
- (iv) The new protective barrier railing to the terrace, if any, should be simple, compatible and distinguishable with the historic building and not obstruct the view to the original curb on the edges of the terrace;
- (v) The new handrails of the accessible ramp at the landscape area at west side should be simple, compatible and distinguishable with the historic building;
- (vi) The new 3 metres long by 1 metre high new water in-let cabinet near site entrance should be off-set from the entrance, i.e. should not install directly at the side of the entrance;
- (vii) Cartographic and photographic surveys to record Watervale House will be conducted before the commencement of conversion works, and a set of record drawings and photo records will be prepared and submitted to AMO after completion of the conversion works;
- (viii) Provision for the protection of CDEs to be incorporated into the contract documents for the construction works, followed by regular monitoring of the protection measures by site supervisory staff during the construction period; and
- (ix) Any renovation, alteration and maintenance works during the

conversion and future operation of the building should follow the principles set out in the HIA.

CONCLUSION

16. The HIA has concluded that the impact of the proposed revitalisation works at Watervale House is considered acceptable and manageable with the proposed mitigation measures. The Tuen Mun Soul Oasis Limited will ensure that all works carried out for heritage conservation strictly comply with the requirements stipulated in the HIA as endorsed by AMO.

The Tuen Mun Soul Oasis Foundation Limited
December 2020

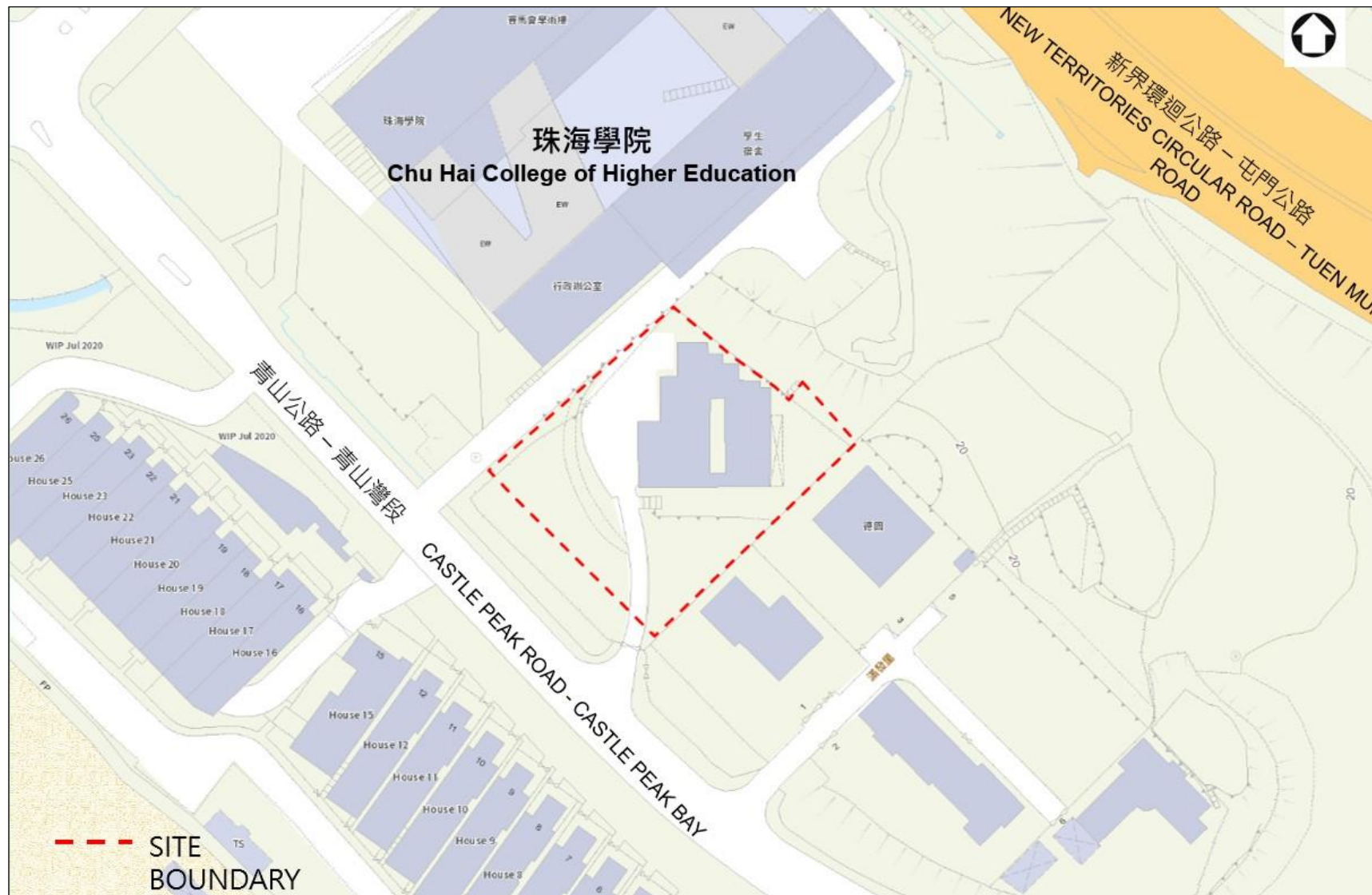


Figure 1: Location plan



Aerial view of Main Block and Extension from rear side



View of the Main Block and Extension from entrance gate



View of the front part (south-west corner) of Main Block



View of the main entrance to Main Block

Figure 2: Overview photos of Watervale House



Figure 3: Master layout plan



Figure 4: Proposed landscape master plan

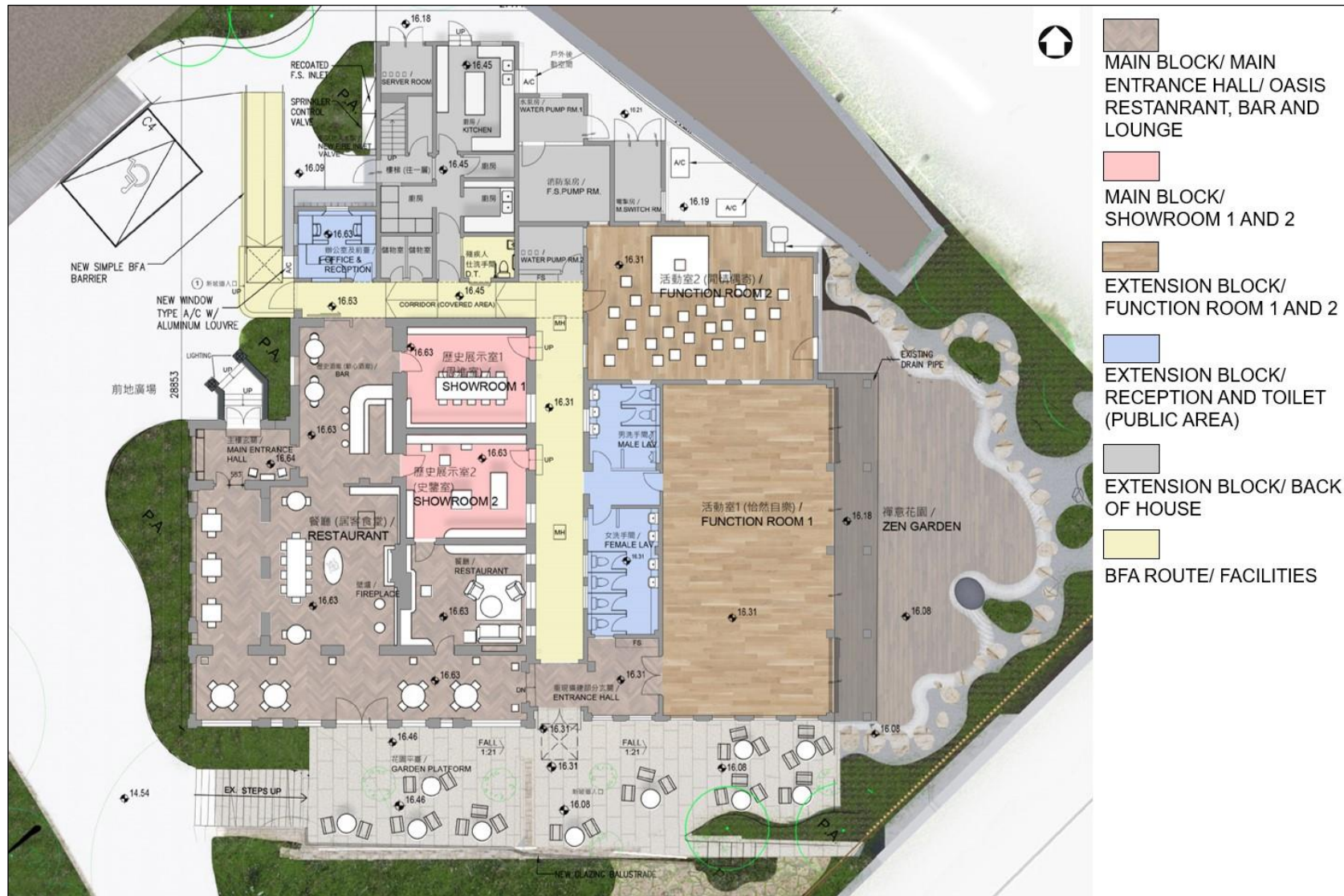


Figure 5: Proposed ground floor plan

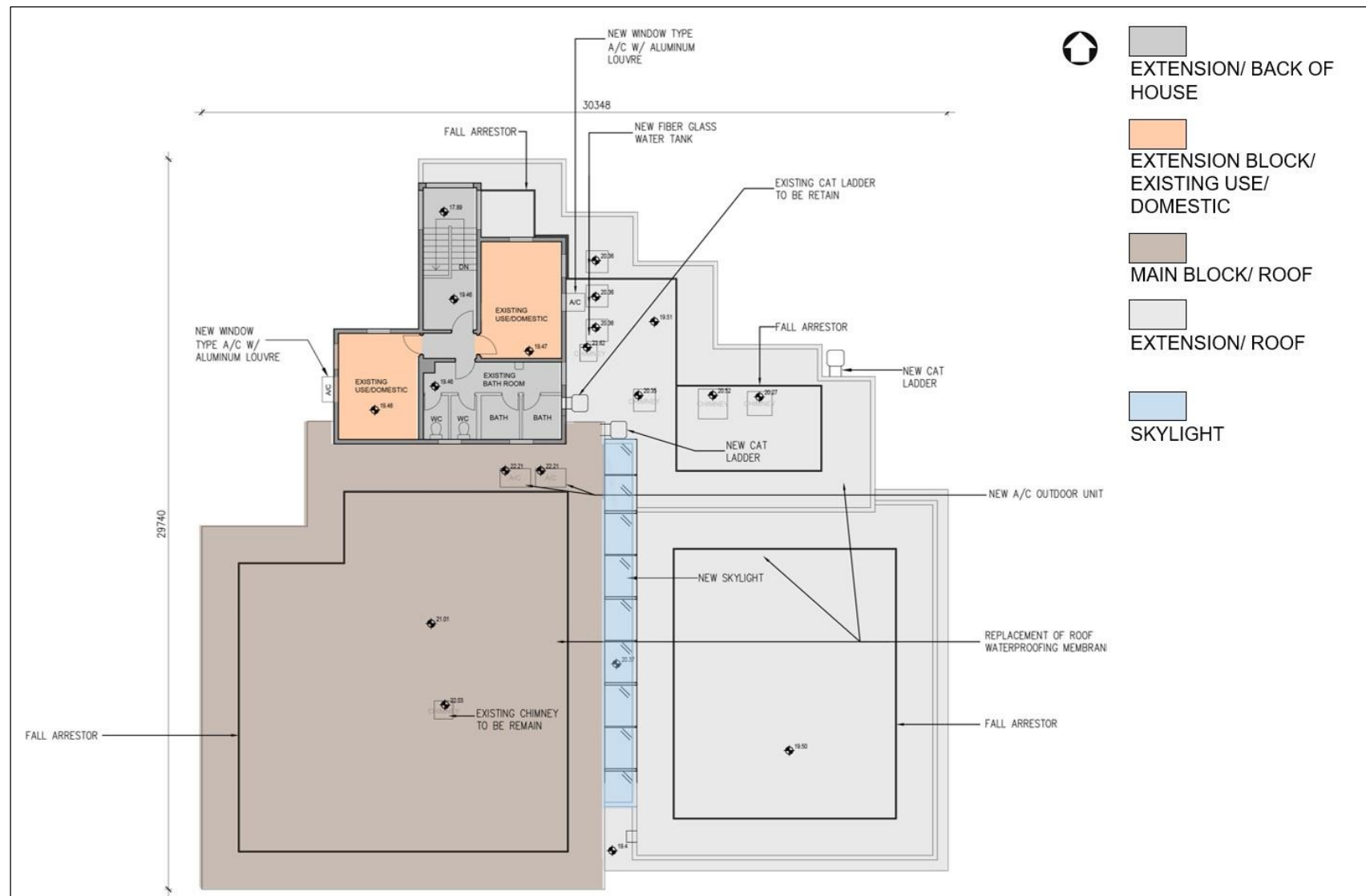


Figure 6: Proposed first floor plan

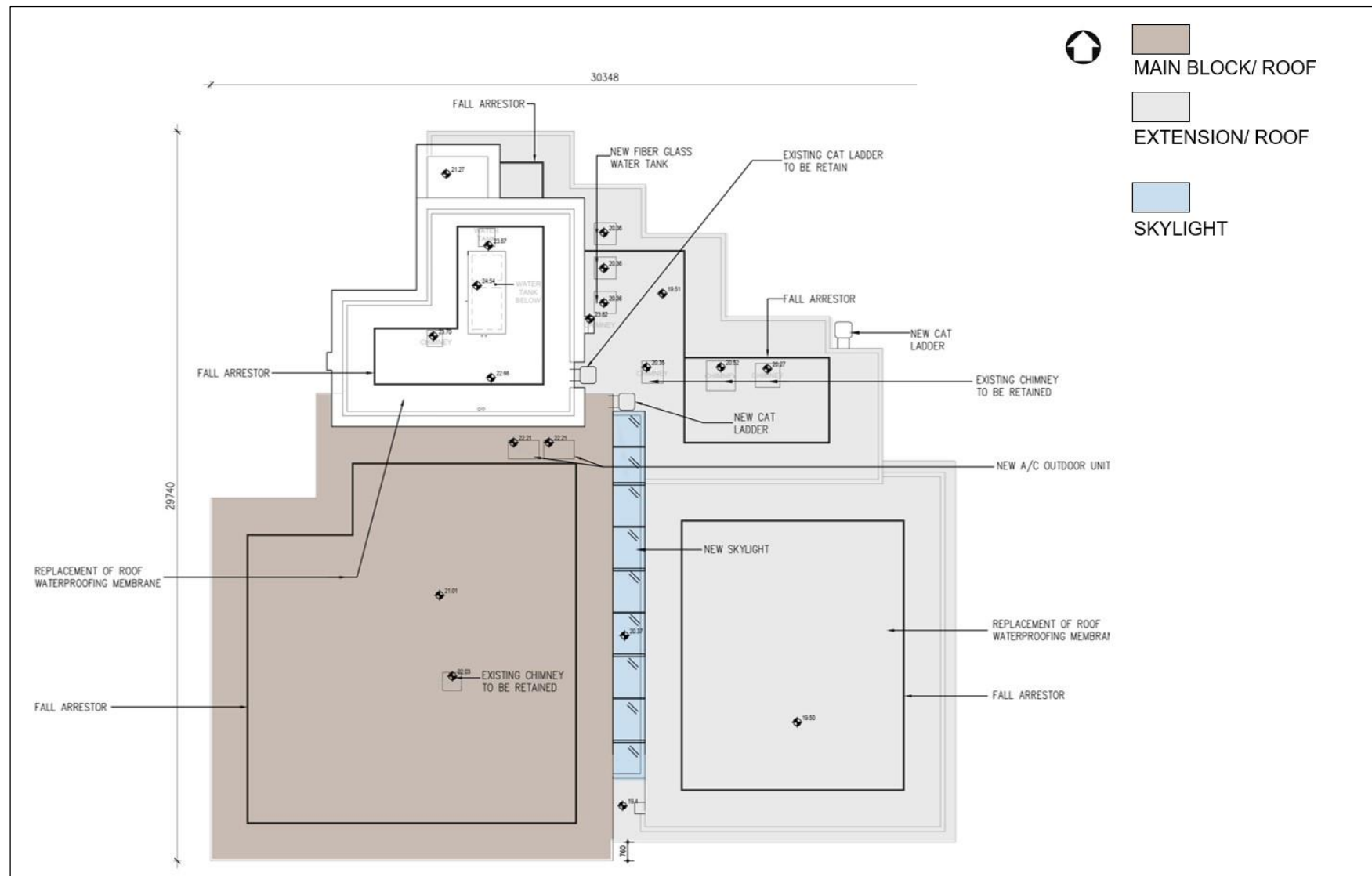


Figure 7: Proposed main roof and upper roof plan



Figure 8 – Proposed south elevation (Main Block and Extension)



Figure 9 – Proposed west elevation (Main Block and Extension)



Figure 10 – Proposed east elevation (Extension)



Figure 11 – Proposed north elevation (Main Block and Extension)



Figure 12 – Aerial view from south-east corner



Figure 13 – Main Block, perspective view from south-west corner



Figure 14 – Main Block and Extension, perspective view from north-west corner



Figure 15 – Extension, perspective view from north-east corner towards east elevation



Figure 16 – Perspective view of Oasis Restaurant in Main Block



Figure 17 – Perspective view of Lounge in Main Block



Figure 18 – Perspective view of Function Room 1 in Extension



Figure 19 – Perspective view of Function Room 2 in Extension