

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Old Victoria Barracks, Wavell Block,**  
**Cotton Tree Drive, Hong Kong Park, Central, H. K.**

Old Victoria Barracks was one of the first British military compounds in Hong Kong. There were once over thirty military buildings in the Barracks. The buildings which still exist; for example, Cassels Block (卡素樓), Montgomery Block (蒙哥瑪莉樓), Roberts Block (羅拔時樓), Rawlinson House (羅連信樓) and Wavell Block (華福樓) – together with the declared monument Flagstaff House (前三軍司令官邸) – used to serve as residences and dormitories. During the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), the buildings were used by the Japanese. In 1979, Victoria Barracks was handed back to the Hong Kong Government, and part of it was converted into the Hong Kong Park. Today, the buildings are individually converted into a visual arts centre, offices, and museum respectively.

*Historical  
Interest*

**Wavell Block** was built in the early 1900s and was originally known as ‘Warrant Officers’ Quarters 3 & 4’. It was named after the Second World War after Field Marshal **Archibald Percival Wavell** (1883-1950). Since 1991, it has been converted into the Hong Kong Park Aviary Support Centre (**Education Centre**) mainly for primary school pupils to study birds.

Wavell Block (or Wavell House to give it its correct name) consists of two handed wings on either side of a central entrance and balustraded flight of steps. The building is two-storeys high raised off the ground on low arches (now blocked up). Originally there were open verandahs on the ground floor and first floor, but they have been enclosed with windows. The urn-shaped classical balustrading still survives. The architectural style is **Edwardian Classical Revival**. Besides the balustrading there are other classical features including a moulded string course, moulded capitals to columns, moulded cornices, a triangular central pediment and a panel-and-post parapet wall.

*Architectural  
Merit*

Due to conversion works, the authenticity of the building has been impaired by enclosure of the verandahs and colour scheme painted on to the walls. Originally the brickwork would have been exposed with architectural features painted white like Roberts Block. This building is rare and has built heritage value.

*Rarity,  
Built Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity*

As army married quarters, Wavell Block had limited social value to the local community, but as the Aviary Support Centre it now provides educational and veterinary services. As one of the surviving blocks of the old Victoria

*Social Value  
& Local  
Interest*

Barracks it has historical and local interest.

Wavell Block, together with other blocks of the Old Victoria Barracks, the Flagstaff House (舊三軍司令官邸) and the Former Explosives Magazine (舊域多利軍營軍火庫) in the vicinity form an integral part of the historic compound of the old Victoria Barracks. They are also physically close to declared monuments and items graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board such as St. Joseph's College (聖若瑟書院), Government House (香港禮賓府), St. Paul's Co-educational College (聖保羅男女中學) and First Church of Christ Scientist (基督科學教會香港第一分會). **Group Value**

The present adaptive re-use would have been more acceptable from a conservation point of view if the front elevation had been restored instead of converted. **Adaptive Re-use**