

Historic Building Appraisal
Victoria Peak Radio Station
Mount Austin Road, The Peak, Hong Kong

Victoria Peak Radio Station is believed to have been established in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the subsequent decades, the station was expanded and equipped with more sophisticated instruments. It was used by various government units, including the Royal Air Force, the Royal Observatory and the Department of Civil Aviation. And, the Government had a twenty-five pair cable between the city and the Peak Radio Station.

*Historical
Interest*

The Station was badly damaged during World War II, rendering the equipment unusable. New radio technology began to emerge in civil communications around 1947. This technology required a greater space for installing aerial systems and Victoria Peak was particularly scarce in space. In consequence, the station at Victoria Peak abandoned the reception of high frequency (HF) work and converted solely to very high frequency (VHF) commitments in 1950, and a new HF receiving station was built on Mount Butler (畢拿山).

A major reconstruction took place in between 1956 to 1968. In 1969, to facilitate the Satellite Earth Station in Stanley, the Microwave Repeater Station and the Microwave Tower were erected on Victoria Peak and new roads were constructed to connect the new facilities accordingly. Today, the building is mostly shared by government units including the Police Force, the Fire Services Department, the Observatory, the Marine Department and the ICAC, but parts of the building are used by the Pacific Century Cyber Works (PCCW 電訊盈科) and the People Liberation Army (PLA).

The building as seen today is a two-storey rectangular structure with projections on the northeast and southwest corners. The walls are rendered and painted and the roof is flat with the roof slab extended beyond the face of the wall to form a projecting eaves. There is a projecting string course halfway up the building. Windows are steel framed casements, some fitted with guard bars and some fitted with window mounted air conditioners. Doors are steel doors fitted with louvred panels. The building has a conglomeration of installations fixed to the roof and walls including satellite dishes, aerials, masts, cable trays, conduit, cat ladders and other equipment. The building can be classified as **Utilitarian** of **Modernist** design.

*Architectural
Merit*

The building is not a particularly rare type, but it would seem to have historical value if not built heritage value. The original 19th century building

*Rarity,
Built Heritage*

was badly damaged in the Second World War and was largely reconstructed in the post-war years. *Value & Authenticity*

The social value of the building lies in the role it has played in the development of communications throughout the last 130 years. It is doubtful whether it arouses much local interest, although it is undoubtedly a very important building. *Social Value & Local Interest*

There are a number of military structures remaining inside and around the former Victoria Peak Radio Station including two bunkers and a tunnel portal on the lower level. Moreover, there is a ruin of a residence of 1897 at a short distance beside the station's entrance. Furthermore, considering the larger area on the Peak, there are many other historic buildings that include the Old Peak Café, Peak Police Station, Peak Depot and the Peak Tramway Office. *Group Value*

As it is very unlikely that the radio station will close down, the question of adaptive re-use does not really arise. *Adaptive Re-use*