

Historic Building Appraisal
Old Victoria Barracks, Rawlinson House
Cotton Tree Drive, Hong Kong Park, Central, Hong Kong

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*

Rawlinson House was built in the early 1900s and was originally known as ‘Warrant Officers’ Quarters 1 & 2’. It was named after the Second World War possibly after General Sir **Henry Rawlinson** (1864-1925). Once the residence of **Brigadier D.T. Crabtree**, the Deputy Commander British Forces Hong Kong in the 1970s, it is now used as **Cotton Tree Drive Marriage Registry**.

Rawlinson House was built originally as two handed wings which were two separate quarters later converted into a single residence. The front façade is very similar to Wavell House with enclosed balustraded verandahs, moulded string courses, column capitals, cornices and a parapet wall. Like Wavell House, the building is two storeys high raised off the ground on low arches (now blocked up). The architectural style is **Edwardian Classical Revival**. It underwent two conversions, the first in 1961 when it was converted from two army quarters into a single residence, and the second conversion into a marriage registry in the 1980s. Alterations were made in these conversions including replacement of doors and windows and the addition of an entrance porch.

*Architectural
Merit*

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

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

As army married quarters, Rawlinson House had limited social value to the local community, but as a marriage registry it now provides an essential social service. As one of the surviving blocks of old Victoria Barracks it has historical and local interest.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Rawlinson House, 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***