

Historic Building Appraisal
Kowloon Byewash Reservoir
(Dam & Valve House)
Kam Shan Country Park, Sha Tin, New Territories

The Kowloon Group of Reservoirs is located in Kam Shan Country Park, north of Kowloon. They include: Kowloon Reservoir (九龍水塘), Kowloon Byewash Reservoir (九龍副水塘), Shek Lei Pui Reservoir (石梨貝水塘), and Shek Lei Pui Reception Reservoir (石梨貝接收水塘) which is also known as Kowloon Reception Reservoir (九龍接收水塘). *Historical Interest*

Kowloon Byewash Reservoir was designed and built by the Hong Kong Excavation Pile Driving and Construction Company (香港建築工程公司) in 1929-1931. The Reservoir received the surplus water from Kowloon Reservoir and Kowloon Reception Reservoir. Its net capacity is 185.5 million gallons, and the area of direct catchment area is 90 acres. If it was full, the water would go to Mei Foo (美孚) and flow to the sea. It impounded water and connected the 18 diameters pipe to the Kowloon Filter Beds; now known as Tai Po Road Treatment Works.

During the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong in the 1941, Shing Mun Redoubt (城門碉堡) played an important role to confront the Japanese troops. Golden Hill (also known as Kam Shan 金山) was also a resistance point led by the British troops. War ruins can still be found in Kam Shan Country Park near Kowloon Byewash Reservoir. The main dam of the Kowloon Reservoir was also part of the route for the withdrawal of British troops and the invasion of Japanese troops.

The **Dam** (水壩) of **Kowloon Byewash Reservoir** is a concrete gravity structure 41.1 metres high from lowest foundation level. The road built on top of the dam is 3.05 metres wide and 106 metres long. The upstream face of the dam is vertical but the downstream face is inclined at a gradient. Both faces are clad with masonry. The downstream face has a series of tall narrow elegant masonry arches over the spillway which discharges water into the stilling basin below. The parapets on either side of the road on the crest of the dam are formed of simple balustraded panels between granite posts. *Architectural Merit*

The **Valve House** (水掣房) is constructed on the upstream face of the dam and projects into the reservoir. It is situated in the centre of the dam, the lower part of the structure built of coursed ashlar blocks and the upper part built coursed ashlar blocks dressed in vermiculated style. The Valve House has a doorway on the road side but the window openings have been blocked up. The roof is flat with a plain parapet and a projecting moulded cornice all around the building. The balustrading of the dam parapet is extended on two sides of the Valve House

with a steel cat walk on the side facing the dam. The architectural style of the Dam and Valve House is **Utilitarian** with **Italianate Renaissance** influence.

The Dam is an impressive engineering structure with unique architectural features as not all Hong Kong's dams were built to the same design. It has retained its authentic appearance and should be regarded as having considerable built heritage value.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The Kowloon Byewash Reservoir's social value lies in its contribution to the development of Hong Kong's water supply system. It is now a part of the local landscape and attracts visitors, hikers and fishermen.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

Kowloon Byewash Reservoir is one of several reservoirs in Kowloon which are all inter-related. After flowing through this network of reservoirs, the water from mainland China or local rainfall is finally treated either in Shek Lei Pui Treatment Works, Tai Po Road Treatment Works or Shatin Treatment Works, and thereafter discharged into public mains for ready supply.

Group Value

As utilitarian waterworks structures, the Dam and Valve House cannot be adapted for re-use unless they were demolished and the masonry salvaged for other purposes. This is unlikely to happen.

*Adaptive
Re-use*