Historic Building Appraisal

Senior Staff Quarters
Elliot Pumping Station & Filters
Pok Fu Lam Road, Hong Kong

Historical Interest

Water supply on Hong Kong Island relied solely on wells and streams prior to 1860. The first ever reservoir in the territory was completed in 1863 in Pok Fu Lam to meet the needs in the City of Victoria. In the following decades, to cater for the ever increasing demands, much larger reservoirs and more complex water supplies systems, including ancillary pumping stations and distribution mains to convey augmented water supply to higher levels, were constructed. In order to uphold the quality of water, the Government gradually filtered all reservoir water.

The Elliot Pumping Station and Filters (西區抽水站及濾水廠) were first built in the 1910s to meet the increased demand for water in the Western District of Hong Kong Island. This Senior Staff Quarters was built between 1923 and 1924. The Elliot Pumping Station and Filters later became the auxiliary waterworks of the Aberdeen Reservoir (the fourth reservoir, built in 1931) for filtering and channelling water to the western part of Hong Kong Island in the 1930s. Water was transferred from the Aberdeen Upper Reservoir, through Wanchai Gap Road to Island Road, Victoria Road and via Sandy Bay to the filters situated in the Elliot Pumping Station. With the development of advanced technology, the premises were closed down in 1993.

Architectural Merit

The Senior Staff Quarters is quite a large building located at the northeast corner of the Elliot Pumping Station compound. It consists of two parts: a two-storey block comprising the senior staff quarters and a narrow two-storey annex comprising the servants' quarters. The walls are mainly built of granite ashlar blocks, but the verandahs are rendered and painted white. The roofs are pitched and hipped, covered with Chinese tiles, with several granite chimney stacks projecting above the roof. The front porch and first floor balcony to the senior staff quarters have their own individual roofs of Chinese tiles with "curling ends" to the hips. Windows are steel framed and wood casements regularly spaced, some fitted with shutters. The servants' annex has an external staircase and front verandah with cast iron posts. Internally, original features are still retained such as the wooden staircase, boarded floors, glazed and panelled doors, skirting, cornices and fireplaces. The senior staff quarters consist of two separate flats, one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. The architectural style of the building is Colonial Eclectic as it combines Western style with Arts and Crafts and local vernacular elements.

The building, which looks a bit like an old rambling English country house, is quite unique and should be regarded as a rare piece of architecture with built heritage value. A verandah on the east elevation appears to have been blocked and there have been minor changes internally, but other than that the building appears to have retained much of its original appearance.

Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

Having provided services for some 70 years, the Elliot Pumping Station and Filters were closed down in 1993. The Senior Staff Quarters now houses the Hong Kong University Press.

Social Value & Local Interest

The Elliot Pumping Station & Filters are quite important as a component of a significant architectural and historical complex. The Senior Staff Quarters (Grade 2), together with its Workmen's Quarters (Grade 3) and Treatment Works Building (Grade 3), is quite close to the Bungalow (Grade 1) and two Workmen's Quarters (Grade 2) of the West Point Filters (西環濾水廠) and The University of Hong Kong where declared monuments, namely Main Building (香港大學本部大樓), Hung Hing Ying Building (孔慶熒樓), Tang Chi Ngong Building (鄧志昂樓), Fung Ping Shan Building (馮平山樓), May Hall (梅堂) and Eliot Hall (儀禮堂) stand. Other buildings in the surroundings include the declared monument, King's College (皇仁書院), and Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Kau Yan Church (救恩堂) (Grade 1).

Group Value