

Historic Building Appraisal
Former Wong Nai Chung Reservoir
(Dam, Valve House, Weir & Workmen's Quarters)
Tai Tam Reservoir Road, Wong Nai Chung, Hong Kong

The construction of the Former Wong Nai Chung Reservoir (前黃泥涌水塘) was completed in 1899 at the cost of \$8,200, with a storage capacity of 27 million gallons – 38% of that of Pokfulam Reservoir. It was the third reservoir built in Hong Kong. As other larger reservoirs were constructed, the Wong Nai Chung Reservoir gradually became superfluous, and in 1982 it was allocated to the then Urban Services Department (USD) for conversion into Wong Nai Chung Reservoir Park – a country park with boating, fishing and other recreational facilities like picnic and barbecue areas, refreshment kiosks and children's play areas. The Park is now managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, whilst the Water Supplies Department (WSD) remains responsible for all aspects of reservoir maintenance.

*Historical
Interest*

There are four structures at the reservoir which are considered to have historical and architectural merit. They are the **Dam**, the **Valve House**, the **Weir** and the **Workmen's Quarters** now still used by WSD.

*Architectural
Merit*

The **Dam** is built at the northeast corner of the reservoir across a small valley. It is 50ft. high and 270ft. long with a boomerang shape. It is constructed of large granite blocks laid to courses with a walkway along the top of the Dam.

The **Valve House** (水制房) is situated halfway along the Dam. It is a small square structure built of rusticated masonry with dressed ashlar stones around the door and window openings. The construction year of the reservoir, 1899, is inscribed on the lintel above the entrance. The original hipped roof was replaced by a concrete flat roof in 1979.

The **Weir** (水塘導流壩) is incorporated into the Dam to channel off excess water. It is formed of masonry, stepped and curved, connected to a bevelled channel to join the natural watercourse downstream of the Dam. As engineering structures, the Dam, Valve House and Weir do not really fall into any architectural style, but the heavily rusticated stonework is reminiscent of the monumentality of **Florentine** architecture.

The **Workmen's Quarters** (工人宿舍) is a single-storey building with a U-shaped plan enclosing a small courtyard at the centre. The walls are rendered and painted and the windows have heavy projecting cills and lintels. The roof is pitched and covered with asbestos sheeting. The gable ends at the front are finished at the top with neat flat copings. The architectural style of the building can be classified as **Utilitarian**.

Although neither rare nor unique, the reservoir structures have built heritage value. The Valve House and the Quarters have undergone some alterations, but nevertheless retain much of their original appearance.

***Rarity, Built
Heritage Value
& Authenticity***

The social value of the reservoir and its associated structures lies in the role they played in providing a water supply to Hong Kong residents, and latterly in providing a place of recreation. The reservoir is located at the start of the Wilson Trail Stage One and is frequently visited by hikers.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Located at the start of the Wilson Trail Stage One (衛奕信徑第一段), Former Wong Nai Chung Reservoir is frequently visited by hikers. The Reservoir blends in nicely with the greenery of the valley. It is close to Tai Tam Reservoir (大潭水塘), which is the largest and the second oldest reservoir on Hong Kong Island.

Group Value

The question of adaptive re-use does not really arise for the dam structures as they could not be used for anything else. The Quarters, which are divided into three flats, could probably be adapted for some other use, but are probably best as residential accommodation.

***Adaptive
Re-use***