

Historic Building Appraisal

Pok Fu Lam Reservoir

(Watchman's Lodge, Masonry Bridges, Dam Embankment, Filter Beds, Air Vents)

Pok Fu Lam Reservoir Road, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong

Pok Fu Lam Reservoir is the oldest reservoir in Hong Kong. The construction of the reservoir commenced in 1860 and it was completed in 1871. It was connected by an aqueduct along Conduit Road to two tanks above Tai Ping Shan to provide a supply of water to Central and Western districts. The storage capacity of the reservoir was enlarged several times since it was built. Prior to the erection of Tai Tam Reservoir, Pok Fu Lam Reservoir was the only reservoir providing fresh water supply to the Central and Western districts.

*Historical
Interest*

The old **Watchman's Lodge**, now used as a country park management centre (管理中心), is single-storey building. It is constructed in **Neo-Classical** style featuring white painted walls, triangular pediments and a pitched roof of Chinese tiles. There is a small open verandah in front with granite columns. The original windows (probably wooden casements) have been replaced with modern aluminum windows.

*Architectural
Merit*

The four **Masonry Bridges** (石橋) are situated at the east end of the Reservoir and along the Pok Fu Lam Reservoir Road along the north side of the Reservoir. The bridges span the mouths of four feeder streams which run off the hillsides. The four bridges are constructed of granite with semi-circular or segmental arches. Two of the smaller bridges have granite copings with the ends of the stones neatly finished with chamfered margins and reticulated or vermiculated surfaces in **Italianate Renaissance** style. The two larger stone bridges have mass concrete copings and splayed concrete abutments, sometimes known as wings.

The **Dam Embankment** (土堤) is an earth embankment with a puddled clay core surfaced with rip-rap (civil engineering mixture of small stones and sand). Grass and vegetation grow on the embankment which has a fenced concrete road running along it. Features along the dam include a small railed jetty giving access to a water level gauge, a small pump house, a **Box Culvert** (方形暗渠) and an overflow spillweir with coursed granite side walls.

The **Filter Beds** (濾水池) are situated below the dam. The structure is an elongated pit with coursed granite walls, a semi-circular end and a drainage culvert at the other end with rock-faced rusticated voussoirs in the **Italianate Renaissance** style. The structure also features perforated and stepped concrete walls across the pit, tubular steel guard rails, and raised rectangular tanks with coursed granite walls.

The **Air Vents** (配水庫通風口) at the Service Reservoir (covered) consist

of twelve cast iron ventilators situated on top of the small covered reservoir which is situated on a hilltop at the west end of the main reservoir and reached by a flight of steps behind the Management Office. The ventilators are a standard design seen on other reservoirs and simply consist of an iron pipe with slots in the side and a domed top. Their purpose is to release compressed air and vapours from the covered reservoir below.

As Pok Fu Lam Reservoir is the oldest reservoir in Hong Kong, the engineering structures have built heritage value as well as being rare examples of Victorian civil engineering. There have been obvious alterations to some of the structures, but their basic authenticity remains.

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

The social value of the Reservoir and its structures lies in the historical role it played in supplying water to Western and Central districts. Now within a Country Park and on the Hong Kong Trail, the Reservoir is well known and visited by hikers, morning walkers and anglers.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The Reservoir area is near to several other historic sites. Looking from the dam in the middle distance, one can see Bethanie (伯達尼修院). Down on the Pok Fu Lam Road is the University Hall (香港大學大學堂宿舍, Declared Monument). Other historic sites nearby include Jessville, Alberose (玫瑰村) and Chiu Yuen Cemetery (昭遠墳場) which is interred with many prominent early Eurasians.

Group Value

The old Watchman's Lodge is now converted into the Country Park Management Office, but the civil engineering structures are utilitarian and cannot be adapted for other uses.

***Adaptive
Re-use***