

Historic Building Appraisal
Chung Hom Kok Battery
Chung Hom Kok, Stanley, Hong Kong

Chung Hom Kok Battery was built around 1938 as part of the *Historical Interest* reorganization and modernization of Hong Kong's armaments in the 1930s. It was under the control of the Eastern Fire Command of the British Force and defended the southern coastline of the Hong Kong Island. It defended the southern part of Hong Kong Island together with Stanley Fort and Bokhara Battery (博加拉炮台).

Chung Hom Battery originally had two levels, each of which was equipped with a six-inch cannon with a searchlight. During the Japanese Invasion in 1941, the Battery was destroyed by the British Army to avoid Japanese capture. After the Japanese Occupation, the upper emplacement was demolished and rebuilt into Cheshire Home for the elderly, while the lower one featuring a half-dome cover and two searchlight positions was preserved.

There are quite a lot of historic structures still remaining on the site *Architectural Merit* including a gun emplacement, an observation post, some bunkers, accommodation blocks, a guardhouse and two searchlight emplacements. The gun emplacement is a circular sunken base with a half dome projecting shelter built of reinforced concrete. The shell of the dome is strengthened by curved ribs or beams on the upper surface. All the other structures appear to be built of reinforced concrete and are set into the side of the hill wherever possible. Most are fitted with steel doors and window shutters. The accommodation blocks have open verandahs in front for shade and ventilation. Wartime "dazzle" pattern camouflage paint can still be seen on many of them. For the purposes of classification the architectural style of the battery structures can be categorized as **Military**.

Although a number of the battery structures have been demolished due to the Cheshire Home development and geotechnical works, quite a lot remain to enable us to build up a picture of the Battery in its heyday. As part of Hong Kong's military defences the Battery has historical as well as built heritage *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity* value. Some of the bunkers have been converted into stores used by the Cheshire Home, and the gun emplacement has been converted into a picnic area, otherwise the structures remain largely unaltered retaining their authentic appearance.

The social value of the Battery structures lies in the part they played in the *Social Value*

coastal defensive system of Hong Kong. They are of historical local interest to military enthusiasts and historians in particular. ***& Local Interest***

Interestingly, the British Army was probably not the first user of the site of Chung Hom Kok Battery. Just along the coast immediately below Chung Hom Kok Battery is a narrow cave called Cheung Po Tsai Cave (張保仔洞). Rumour has it that in Qing Dynasty (清朝) (1644-1912), the infamous pirate Chueng Po Tsai used it as his shelter.

Group Value

Chung Hom Kok Battery is important as an integral component of Stanley. Stanley Fort is found nearby. Other items in the region include the Old Stanley Police Station (舊赤柱警署, Declared Monument), St. Stephen's College (聖士提反書院), St. Stephen's College Preparatory School (聖士提反書院附屬小學), Stanley Public Dispensary (赤柱公立醫局), Stanley Prison (赤柱監獄), Carmelite Monastery (嘉爾默羅聖衣會隱修院) and Maryknoll House (瑪利諾會) are historically and architecturally interesting.

Part of the site as already mentioned has been converted into a public park and part of the site developed into the Cheshire Home. The accommodation blocks are empty and abandoned now. The lack of main drainage in the area is a problem that would have to be resolved if an adaptive re-use was to be found for them. Originally, drainage was to septic tanks but this is no longer acceptable to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. ***Adaptive Re-use***