

Historic Building Appraisal
Old Tai O Police Station
Shek Tsai Po Street, Tai O, Lantau Island

Old Tai O Police Station (舊大澳警署) was built in **1902** and its main role was combating piracy and smuggling which were prevalent in the neighbouring waters. At the beginning only six or seven policemen were stationed at the police station but by the year 1983 the number of police officers had increased to over 180. Due to the low crime rate in Tai O, and operational changes in 1996, Tai O Police Station was downgraded to a patrol post.

***Historical
Interest***

The police station consists of two 2-storey blocks comprising the main block and the outhouse block linked by a footbridge at first floor level. The main block with its Chinese pan-and-roll tiled roof, projecting eaves and arched verandahs has an **Italianate Renaissance** appearance. It is 2 storeys high, containing a charge-room, two cells, separate dormitories, bathrooms and a store. A separate wing, the outhouse block, is a latter addition built in the 1960s. It contains kitchens, drying-room, store and bathroom, an interpreter's room and some accommodation for servants. The outhouse block displays features of the **Arts and Crafts** architectural style. Windows are fitted with steel grilles or shutters for defensive purposes and there is a circular watchtower on the roof at one end.

***Architectural
Merit***

Old Tai O Police Station is one of the few pre-war police stations surviving nowadays in the New Territories and therefore has a rare built heritage value. Although alterations have been made over the years for operational and security reasons the authenticity of the police station is apparent.

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

Due to its historical role in establishing a British presence in this remote corner and bringing law and order, the police station has social value and local interest as a landmark and an early colonial building.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The police station is situated at the south-western tip of Tai O, which can be considered the very west part within Hong Kong. This special location enables the police station to enjoy an excellent sea view of 270° and a very peaceful environment.

Group Value

Due to the remote area an adaptive re-use may be difficult to find, but with the current initiative by locals to boost Tai O as a tourist spot some suitable future use may be found for it.

***Adaptive
Re-use***