

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Former Peak School (Victoria Peak Fire Station)**  
**No. 7 Gough Hill Path, The Peak, Hong Kong**

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sir Henry Arthur Blake (卜力爵士), Governor of Hong Kong from 1898-1903, recommended separate schools for European British children who required education in the medium of English. The demand for a school for British children was met by the opening of the Kowloon British School (九龍英童學校) at Nathan Road (彌敦道) in 1902. *Historical Interest*

The preparation for a school in the Peak area was made in 1914, and a permanent premises known as the Peak School (now Former Peak School) in No.7 Gough Hill Path (歌賦山里) was built in 1915 by the Public Works Department. Enrolment figures started at 39, and reached 158 in 1947. Apart from the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945) it was in use as a school continuously until 1966 when it was vacated. It was taken over by the Fire Services Department in 1967 and commissioned as the Victoria Peak Fire Station. It has remained as a fire station ever since.

The school was built in the popular **Arts and Crafts** architectural style of the Edwardian period. Its unusual ‘sun-trap’ butterfly plan was a feature beloved by Arts and Crafts architects. Other features of this style of architecture are the red brick half roughcast rendered walls, semi-circular door and window openings with their ‘sun-ray’ decoration, and bull’s-eye windows. The Chinese tiled roof is a local adaptation. Internally there are two typical tiled fireplace surrounds of the period. *Architectural Merit*

Apart from minor alterations and the addition of three covered carports the building has not been extensively altered and remains fairly authentic. It is a rare surviving example of Arts and Crafts architecture and of obvious built heritage value. The Former Peak School is one of the few surviving examples of Arts and Crafts architecture in Hong Kong. Other good examples of this architectural style include the Former Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club (前皇家遊艇會) in North Point and the Old Dairy Farm Depot (舊牛奶公司倉庫) in Central. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

The social value of the building lies in its past use as a school and the high educational achievements of its pupils who were the children of residents on the Peak. Its conversion to a fire station in 1967 also fulfilled a need in the district. With the building’s continued service to the community and its distinctive architecture it is of considerable local interest and a landmark in the area. For most of the residents nearby the building has sentimental associations. *Social Value & Local Interest*

The immediate surroundings of the Former Peak School are mostly villas. The quiet environment follows the Arts and Crafts’ association with nature. The building is *Group Value*

also physically close to a number of historic buildings the Former Chatham English School (前漆咸英文學校) in No.1 Chatham Path, Matilda Hospital (明德醫院) in No.41 Mount Kellett Road, the Peak Café (山頂餐廳) in No.121 Peak Road, The Peak Tramway Office (山頂纜車辦事處) in No.1 Lugard Road, the Peak Depot (山頂倉庫) in No.102 Old Peak Road, Ho Tung Gardens (曉閣園) in No.75 Peak Road, the Peak Police Station (山頂警署) in No.92 Peak Road.

As far as is known there are no plans for the Fire Services Department to give up the building and the question of adaptive re-use does not therefore arise at present. *Adaptive Re-use*