

Historic Building Appraisal
Matilda and War Memorial Hospital
No. 41 Mount Kellett Road, The Peak, Hong Kong

Matilda and War Memorial Hospital (originally named “Matilda Hospital” 明德醫院) is one of the earliest non-government hospitals in Hong Kong. It was established in **1906** by the Trustees of the Estate of **Granville Sharp**, who provided in his will for a hospital to be erected in memory of his wife, **Matilda Lincolne** (明德女士). The Hospital in its early days provided medical services free of charge according to Sharp’s will. It was used briefly towards the end of the 1940s as a military hospital. In 1951 it was amalgamated with the War Memorial Nursing Home (built in 1923 in memory of those killed during the First World War) resulting in the present Matilda and War Memorial Hospital. It was reopened in 1951 with a new policy of charging all patients.

*Historical
Interest*

The front elevation or façade of the **Main Building** is composed of two storeys of arched windows set in rectangular recesses united by projecting horizontal string courses. The main entrance is not picked out or featured in any way. A weak attempt at a pediment in the centre of the parapet is topped by a flagpole in 1930s **Art Deco** style so may not be original. Part of its original Beaux Arts plan, heavy masonry structure and arched corridors are still surviving and the elevations are simplified into a common Neo-Georgian style. Side elevations and ancillary blocks such as Sharp House and Granville House are in similar insipid style. Internally, most of the Neo-Georgian interior works are still surviving: classical arches, columns, cornices and coved and panelled ceilings are a reminder of what once the building used to be.

*Architectural
Merit*

The two story **Granville House** was built in the mid-1920s. The single story Neo-Georgian style **Old Maternity Block** (now named as Sharp House) was built **prior to 1952**. The Modern style **Old Chinese Nurses’ Hostel** (now named as Lincolne House) was built in **1951**. They are having similar style that match with the surviving parts in the whole hospital complex.

The Matilda Hospital is of course very well known and a unique part of Hong Kong’s built heritage.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

Over the years, the Hospital underwent many expansion works such as renovation, enlargement and modernization in order to provide modern facilities while retaining the character of the original building wherever possible. Certain alterations made to the hospital included: pitch roof changed to flat, column head ornaments removed, entrance portal simplified, mouldings

and ornaments around arched windows removed or hidden and original fine brickwork, granite and white stone arches plastered. Much of the architectural essence of Beaux Arts style was lost and resulted in the surviving entrance block's common Neo-Georgian style. Due to irreversible demolitions and alterations the original hospital block has now been reduced to an unremarkable stucco building of **Neo-Classical** or **Neo- Georgian** Style.

Its social value lies in its role in the development of medical care and services as a non-government and non-profit making hospital. Although it has struggled through financial difficulties, it has endeavored to maintain a high standard of medical and nursing care for nearly a century. It is a well known local landmark on the Peak, part of local social development history, and a favorite tourist spot.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The location of Matilda Hospital, The Peak, as an area of tourist visiting and high grade residences including some buildings of similar age, full of greenery and having a perfect sea view, matches with the heritage quality of the hospital.

It is likely to remain a hospital for many years to come.

***Adaptive
Re-use***