Historic Building Appraisal

West Point Filters
(Bungalow & Workmen's Quarters)
No. 50 Kotewall Road, Mid-levels, Hong Kong

Historical Interest

Water supply on Hong Kong Island relied solely on wells and streams prior to 1860. The first ever reservoir in the territory was completed in 1863 in Pokfulam to meet the needs in the City of Victoria. In the following decades, to cater for the ever increasing demands, much larger reservoirs and more complex water supplies systems, including ancillary pumping stations, distribution mains to convey augmented water supply to higher levels, were constructed. In order to uphold the quality of water, the Government gradually filtered all reservoir water.

The West Point Filters (西環濾水廠) were built between 1914 and 1919 to work with West Point Service Reservoir (built in 1907) to enhance water supply in the Mid-Levels area above Conduit Road (干德道). The works comprised the construction of six filter beds, a covered service reservoir and three staff quarters (which include a bungalow and two workmen's quarters). Originally all three buildings were for Chinese staff, but later the bungalow was used as a European staff quarters.

A renovation programme took place in 1996 to turn the Filters into a service reservoir so that it could meet the demand arising from the mid-levels and high-levels. This renovation was to abandon the service reservoir and use the six filter beds as a fresh water service reservoir. This new service reservoir, renamed as Kotewall Road Fresh Water Service Reservoir (旭龢道淡水配水庫), started operation since 1997. The site is now taken over by Environmental Protection Department (EPD) and The University of Hong Kong and used as Lung Fu Shan Environmental Education Centre (龍虎山環境教育中心).

Architectural Merit

The **Bungalow** (平房) is a single storey building raised off the ground on a rubble wall plinth. The main part of the roof is pitched with an ornamental chimney stack projecting from it. The roofs over the entrance porch, verandah and bedroom are flat. The architectural style is **Arts and Crafts** with **Colonial Neo-Classical** features. The walls are partly painted brickwork and partly painted rough-cast rendering. The open verandah at the side is arched and balustraded in the classical manner. The entrance porch is reached by a short flight of steps. The windows (as shown in the photographs) are transomed wooden casements. Bostwick folding sliding lattice security gates are shown fitted to external doors. Internally the accommodation consists of two L-shaped living rooms, a bedroom and a bathroom.

The two **Workmen's Quarters** (職員宿舍) are similar in architectural

design and construction. They are both single storey pitched roof buildings with red brick walls and regularly spaced steel framed windows and wooden battened doors. Chinese tiles cover the roofs. There are no architectural features of note. The style is **Utilitarian**.

The Bungalow is a rare example of Edwardian Arts and Crafts style, but unfortunately its authentic appearance has been spoilt by painting over the brickwork and stonework. The Workmen's Quarters are not particularly rare. All three buildings have built heritage value however. ***Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity***

The West Point Filters are quite close to the Elliot Pumping Station and Filters (1920s, 1930-1931, 西區抽水站及濾水廠), the Stone House (石寓) (1923, residential block), Boundary Stone of the City of Victoria (維多利亞城界石) on Hatton Road (克頓道) (1903), the former site of the Victoria Battery (維多利亞炮台) (currently the Residence of the Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong) and the University of Hong Kong where declared monuments such as Main Building (香港大學本部大樓), Hung Hing Ying Building (孔慶熒樓) and Tang Chi Ngong Building (鄧志昂樓) stand. ***Group Value***

As government staff quarters, the buildings had limited social value, but they are now being used as an education centre so that they will become better known by the public. ***Social Value, Local Interest & Adaptive Re-use***