

Building Appraisal

Pottinger Street, Hong Kong

Pottinger Street (砵甸乍街) was constructed around 1845 and was named after **Sir Henry Pottinger** the first Governor of Hong Kong who was in office during 1843-1844. It is believed that the street was constructed to facilitate transportation of goods and construction materials for the new prison and magistracy nearby. It was not officially named Pottinger Street until 1858. Because of the steepness of the street, it is covered with rough granite slabs so that pedestrians can walk on the street easily. Thus, many Chinese call the street “Shek Ban Gai” (石板街), literally, “stone slab street.” In the beginning of the 20th century, the area gradually developed into a prosperous commercial zone when traders set up shops and hawker stalls along the street.

*Historical
Interest*

The section of Pottinger Street now under consideration extends from Queen’s Road Central at the north end up to Hollywood Road opposite the entrance to the former Central Police Station at the south end. It is laid out on a northeast-southwest axis and is intersected by Stanley Street and Wellington Street. The street is formed of granite slabs laid breaking bond to form steps. There are open drainage channels on each side of the street, also raised sidewalks with steps on either side of the street. The street is pedestrianised, that is to say, it is closed to vehicular traffic. The heavy granite sections used for the steps probably came from Pedder Hill which was the nearest stone quarry. The slabs were laid on a cement or lime mortar bed with a sub-base of granite chippings and gravel. Originally the granite slabs were laid with a convex crown at the centre of the street to allow rainwater to run off to the drainage channels at the sides. It is of no particular architectural style but can be classified as **Utilitarian**.

*Architectural
Merit*

Pottinger Street is a rare piece of built heritage with considerable historic interest. Although the granite slabs have been taken up and re-laid from time to time for replacement of underground services, the street still retains its authentic appearance.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of the street lies in the role it has played as an access route and as a place where shops and hawker stalls could set up. It therefore has contributed to the commercial development of the area. The street is now one of the sites on the Central and Western Heritage Trail (中西區文物徑).

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

Pottinger Street is surrounded by high-rise buildings. However, the buildings erected along the Street present the architectural characteristic of Chinese residential buildings. There are some declared monuments near to the Street, namely Central Police Station, Victoria Prison and the Former Central Magistracy. *Group Value*