

Historic Building Appraisal
Peninsula Hotel
Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

The Peninsula Hotel (半島酒店) was constructed over a three-year period from 1924 to 1927 and was officially opened in 1928. It quickly became a popular venue for the rich and famous and the social elite. The Duke of Gloucester became the first member of royalty to stay at the hotel in 1929. In the 1930s the hotel became the focal point of society where many functions such as balls, dances, dinners and parties were held.

***Historical
Interest***

On 25 December 1941, Hong Kong fell into the Japanese hands after 18 days of fighting. The Governor Sir Mark Young (楊慕琦) signed the Instrument of Surrender in the Hotel. The Japanese then used the Hotel as a headquarters for the administration for two months. Lieut. General Rensuke Isogai (磯谷廉介), Japanese Governor of Hong Kong, resided in this hotel for 2 months (from February to April 1942) before moving into the Government House. The Hotel resumed business in April 1942 and renamed “The Toa Hotel” (East Asia Hotel) (東亞酒店). The Hotel resumed its old name after the War.

This grand and impressive building is considered to be the most representative example in Hong Kong of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque Revival styles of architecture. The seven-storey building was built to an H-shaped plan with a small piazza featuring a marble fountain in front. The façades are strictly symmetrical treated with a rich vocabulary of classical features such as rusticated stonework, arched windows, keystones and a heavy projecting cornice at parapet level giving the hotel the appearance of an Italian palazzo. Internally there is a wide range of Neo-classical and Baroque decorative features. The ground floor lobby is particularly impressive.

***Architectural
Merit***

In order to retain its premier place and keep up with competition in the hotel industry, the “Grand Old Lady” has undergone several face-lifts and renovations including a new high-rise extension in the post-war years. Nevertheless, the style has remained true to type and should be considered as a rare and unique piece of Hong Kong’s built heritage.

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

The historical social value of the hotel cannot be disputed. Although now surrounded by modern high-rise office blocks and hotels, it remains a famous local landmark and dear to the hearts of local Hong Kong people even though they may never have set foot inside its doors.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Historic items nearby include the former Kowloon-Canton Railway Clock Tower (前九廣鐵路鐘樓) and the former Marine Police Headquarters Compound (前水警總區總部), both being Declared Monuments. ***Group Value***