

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 33 Magazine Gap Road,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

No. 33 Magazine Gap Road (馬己仙峽道) was originally known as No. 516 The Peak. Although Government records indicate that the site had been already occupied as early as 1924, the existing building at No. 33 Magazine Gap Road is a post-Second World War structure constructed in 1949 to replace an earlier building on the site which may have suffered war damage.

*Historical
Interest*

The earliest recorded owner of No. 33 Magazine Gap Road was Sydney Hampden Ross. Thereafter, the site has changed hands a number of times. During the post-World War II period, it was once owned by Dodwell & Co., Limited and China Engineers Limited. Since 1980, it has been owned by a subsidiary company of The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) and has since been used as staff quarters. Occupants used to raise flags at the mansion, including the HSBC Flag during weekdays and the British Flag during holidays. The practice has been abandoned since 1 July 1997.

The building is built in **Italianate Renaissance** style displaying a typical symmetrical palace front façade. The building is three stories high with the lower storey finished with plain rendering (originally imitation stucco stonework) and the upper stories in brickwork (now sadly painted pink). The main entrance with Tuscan columns and a segmental pediment has a grand double-entry balustraded staircase. Windows are arched, pedimented or flat topped with keystones. Modern steel framed windows have been installed. Open verandahs or loggias with giant Corinthian order columns are placed on either side of the central bay on the front façade. A heavily moulded entablature and cornice unites the three bays. Two ornamental festoons or swags decorate the front façade parapet. The roof is pitched and hipped and tiled.

*Architectural
Merit*

This is an elegant piece of architecture with obvious built heritage value. The external appearance has been much impaired by the numerous air-conditioning units, ventilation fans, conduits and plumbing being added to the elevations. The painting of the brickwork and the rendering over of the imitation stucco stonework has also destroyed the original authentic appearance of the building.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

As the building apparently has only been used for residential purposes, the social value to the community is low. It is a reminder of the historical and social development of the Peak and therefore has local interest.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

Sited among pleasant greenery, No. 33 Magazine Gap Road enjoys a quiet environment and connects with other residential villas in the area. Some historic items on the Peak include the Former Gate Lodge (舊總督山頂別墅守衛室, Declared Monument), Peak Depot (山頂倉庫), Old Peak Café (舊山頂餐廳), Former Peak School (前山頂學校), Peak Police Station (山頂警署) and Matilda and War Memorial Hospital (明德醫院). **Group Value**

It is recommended that the building should continue to be used for residential purposes. Any further so-called “renovation work” should be carried out under expert guidance with the aim of preserving the valuable architectural features as much as possible. **Adaptive Re-use**