

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club**  
**Kellett Island, Wan Chai, Hong Kong**

The Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club (RHKYC, 香港遊艇會) on Kellett Island (奇力島) was built in 1939 to replace the previous one in North Point, which due to reclamation was no longer situated on the shoreline. The RHKYC clubhouse was built on the foundations of the old Naval Powder Magazine on Kellett Island. It was again used for ammunition storage during the period of Japanese rule (1941-1945). In 1946, the RHKYC resumed control of Kellett Island.

*Historical  
Interest*

Kellett Island, where the RHKYC is, was ceded to Britain in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century together with Hong Kong Island. In 1854, the British set up a battery with three cannons on the Island to defend the waterway there. After 1860, the defense position of the Island declined in importance as Kowloon Peninsula was taken over by Britain and was used for ammunition and gunpowder storage. The Island remained for the use of the Navy until 1938 when a decision was made to build the RHKYC on the Island.

The RHKYC clubhouse is a magnificent example of **International Modern** style architecture. It was designed by architects G.G. Wood and J.E. Potter of **Leigh & Orange**, Hong Kong's longest established architectural practice founded in 1874. The "ship-like" effect is very characteristic of the International Style and of course very appropriate for the building's function and its situation beside the sea. Architectural features include white painted walls, curved walls, bands of windows and "ship's railings". Internally, the nautical theme continues with a magnificent rose compass ceiling in the Compass Room restaurant (formerly the Ballroom), teakwood joinery, brass fittings and scores of yachting and rowing trophies. The brick vaults of the former ammunition magazine have been converted into a sophisticated restaurant, and traces of the old brickworks can be seen in the interior walls.

*Architectural  
Merit*

The **East Wing** of the RHKYC clubhouse including its exterior stone facings and the G/F of the **Dinning Area** including the arches were erected in 1939. The part above the G/F now accommodating bowling alleys was in operation by May 1940. The **Staff Area** now accommodating kitchens, store and F&B office, etc. on level 1 and staff changing room on level 2 was built around 1970s. The two **workshops** to the southeast of the clubhouse were built afterwards. The **swimming pool** was opened in October 1977.

The RHKYC clubhouse is one of Hong Kong's architectural gems and should be considered a valuable piece of built heritage. Although renovation

*Rarity, Built  
Heritage Value &*

and additions have taken place over the years since the East Wing was built, the clubhouse remains fairly authentic. *Authenticity*

The social value of the clubhouse lies in its historical function providing yachting facilities to members and its connections with the Royal Navy. The RHKYC is well known worldwide and has won many prizes for Hong Kong. Kellett Island and the old former ammunition store also give it local and historical interest. *Social Value & Local Interest*

Today, the tiny rocky island of Kellett Island is located next to the busy Cross Harbour Tunnel and the south of the site overlooks the modern high rise of Causeway Bay and the Victoria Park. The north of the building still faces the natural and rocky foreshore, the parking port for yachts as well as two massive breakwaters. Despite its beautiful surrounding environment, it is also situated among the project area of the Wan Chai Development Phase II where cultural, amenity, government and commercial buildings like the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (香港會議展覽中心, 1988) and the Central Plaza (中環廣場, 1991) stand. *Group Value*

As far as is known there are no plans to close down the RHKYC so that the question of adaptive re-use does not really arise. If it did however the clubhouse would make a wonderful maritime museum. *Adaptive Re-use*