Historic Building Appraisal

Peak Tramways Co. Ltd.

No. 1 Lugard Road, The Peak

Historical Interest

The Peak Tram, Hong Kong's famous funicular railway, was one of the earliest public mass transit systems in Hong Kong. It began operation and was officially opened in 1888 by the then Governor, Sir George William Des Voeux (德輔), the 10th Governor of Hong Kong. The **Peak Tramways Co. Ltd.** (山頂纜車有限公司) is thought to have been built about **1927** as a workshop. An additional floor was added in 1953 to provide a flat for the General Manager of the Peak Tramways Company. Now the building is fully occupied as offices for the Peak Tramways Company.

Architectural Merit

The most remarkable thing about this little building is its peculiar shaped plan which has been likened to an arrow head. There seems to be no logical reason for the shape which just as well could have been rectangular. Its architectural style too is odd and is probably best described as **Colonial Eclectic** as it combines Neo-Classical and Post-Modern features. The window arrangement appears to be haphazard and the additional upper storey is not related to the lower storey in any way except for the rendered and painted walls. The only architectural feature worth mentioning is the front entrance which is situated on the splayed southeast corner. It is constructed in Neo-Classical style with painted stone blocks, grooved joints and shaped voussoirs forming a semi-circular blind arch featuring some Art Deco panelling and the Peak Tramways sign and metal emblem.

Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

This building is certainly not an architectural masterpiece but it is something of a rarity because of its peculiar shaped plan. Its authenticity certainly seems to have been lost due to unsympathetic alterations and additions. Because of its association with the Peak and the Peak Tramways Company its does have built heritage value but only from the historical and not the architectural aspect.

Social Value & Local Interest

The building's social value is limited as it was only used as a workshop and later as a small apartment.

Group Value

The Peak Tramways Office has some interesting buildings around it and therefore adds to the group value. For example, it is geographically close to the Old Peak Café (舊山頂餐廳), the Peak Depot (山頂倉庫) and the Victoria Gap Substation (爐峰峽變壓站).

Adaptive re-uses must be limited due to the building's peculiar shape. It appears to be still used by the Peak Tramways Company who must find it useful.

Adaptive Re-use