

Historic Building Appraisal
Victoria Gap Substation
No. 35 Lugard Road, The Peak, Hong Kong

The Victoria Gap Substation (爐峰峽變壓站) was built by the Hong Kong Electric Company Limited in 1928. It was responsible for distributing electricity to different populated areas. Equipment is installed on the ground floor while the upper floors are used as staff quarters. Only staff who can operate the substation are allowed to live there. Therefore the occupants are electrical engineers and their families. There are three flats in the substation, one on each floor. The substation continues to be both a residence for the staff and an electric substation for the locality.

*Historical
Interest*

Old-fashioned substations have been either demolished or replaced by transmission stations, which are larger, more powerful and far fewer in number. By 2002, there were 3487 substations run by the Hongkong Electric Company, among which only a handful of them were constructed before the Second World War.

The Substation is a four-storey rectangular block with a flat roof the edge of which is extended beyond the main walls to form a projecting eaves. The building is **Neo-Georgian** in style with symmetrical and regular arrangement of windows and giant columns or pilasters which rise up the full height of the building. The columns are smooth faced but the rendered walls between them are rough cast. Windows have projecting cills and windows hoods and plain surrounds. Original windows (probably steel framed) have been replaced with modern aluminum windows. The name of the substation can be found over the doors to the ground floor. Each flat has its own separate entrance. Ornamentation is minimal, confined to a string course at first floor level and stylised motifs on the columns where they pass through the string course. The elevations are rather spoilt by excessive surface mounted plumbing, modern window replacements, window mounted air conditions and a drab colour scheme.

*Architectural
Merit*

There are not many substations left now from the pre-World War II period so that Victoria Gap Substation has rarity as well as built heritage value. Its authenticity however has been undermined by the alterations mentioned above.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of the Substation lies in the role it has played in providing electricity supply to the community and providing quarters for the staff of the Hong Kong Electric Company. Being close to some other

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

historic buildings on the Peak it has group value and local interest.

Situated adjacent to the famous tourist spot of Peak Tower, Victoria Gap Substation enjoys the attractive environment and connects closely with some historic items, namely, the Old Peak Café (舊山頂餐廳), the Peak Depot (山頂倉庫) and the Peak Tramways Co. Ltd. (山頂纜車有限公司). *Group Value*

If the ground floor substation ever became redundant and was decommissioned, presumably it could be converted into staff quarters like the upper floors. *Adaptive Re-use*