

Historic Building Appraisal

Hollywood Road Married Police Quarters, Hong Kong

The original campus of the Central School (which was renamed Victoria *Historical* College in 1889 and Queen's College in 1894) at Gough Street, opened in 1862, *Interest* was followed by a relocation in 1889 to a much larger area at the juncture of Aberdeen Street and Staunton Road (the site of the Hollywood Road Married Police Quarters) and, in 1950, by another move to the present site at Causeway Road, opposite the Victoria Park.

The two police housing blocks on the site have a history dating back to 1951 when they were built as the Asiatic Police Quarters. In the early days, the Hong Kong Police Force provided quarters or housing allowances for high-ranking officers only. After the Second World War, when Duncan William MacIntosh became the Commissioner for Police, the Hong Kong Government started providing married rank and file officers with quarters in order to enhance the morale of the Force. Built in 1950-51, the Former Married Police Quarters on Hollywood Road was the first of these police quarters. The quarters therefore have considerable historical significance in the history of the Hong Kong Police Force.

Architecturally, the buildings are of some merits as they are good *Architectural* examples of post-war modern architecture commonly found in the 1950s. They *Merit* were designed by the Architectural Office of the Public Works Department and made use of the existing site formation keeping some of the original retaining walls and external staircases. The two housing blocks provided 140 single and 28 double units over seven floors with other types of supporting spaces. Block A was built with covered parking spaces at ground floor level. A two stories high recreation centre was also built which after several changes of use eventually became the Central Junior Police Call Centre in 1974.

Externally, the two linear blocks exhibit all the typical features of Modernist architecture, namely crisp white painted walls, flat roofs, bands of metal framed windows united by continuous horizontal window heads, round porthold windows, and long horizontal balconies at each floor level. The Junior Police Call Clubhouse also features plain white painted walls, a flat roof, metal framed windows, with a cantilevered first floor balcony and canopy over the main entrance.

Internally, the two housing blocks have concrete staircases with metal balustrading in the common areas at both ends of each block, but the living units are rather basic and minimalist with plain concrete floors and plastered

walls. Kitchens are fitted out with glazed Belfast sinks, fitted work benches and wall cupboards. Floors are finished with mosaic tiles and walls are finished with white glazed tiled splashbacks above the worktops.

It has been said that the buildings were one of the good examples of the functionalistic and pragmatic approach for designing Government buildings at that time.

Despite it is not aesthetically appealing, there are fewer police quarters of this style and age in Hong Kong. Although the buildings have acquired many excrescences over the years they still retain an authentic appearance. As police housing of the 1950s, the buildings have some built heritage value.

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

As police housing built shortly after World War II the two blocks have local interest, and their use by the police force gives the buildings social value. This site is also the childhood home of the former Chief Executive Donald Tsang, whose father was a police staff sergeant.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

With their distinctive appearance and prominent position at the juncture of Hollywood Road and Aberdeen Street as well as Staunton and Shing Wong Streets, the buildings have been well known local landmarks for many years. They are of local interest to residents.

It is among the cluster of historic sites in the area, for example, there are three declared monuments nearby, namely, Central Police Station Compound at Hollywood Road, Victoria Prison Compound in Old Bailey Street and Old Pathological Institute in Caine Lane. All these buildings have good value from a heritage and cultural point of view. The site also forms part of the Central and Western Heritage Trail – The Sheung Wan Route.

Group Value

The buildings are now vacant and will be transformed into a cultural industries landmark in Hong Kong, which suits well in the artistic and cultural ambience of the area.

***Adaptive
Re-use***