

## Historic Building Appraisal

No. 28 Lugard Road

The Peak, H.K.

Many roads in Hong Kong recall former governors, colonial secretaries and commanding generals and this road on the Peak, constructed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and named after Sir Frederick Lugard (governor from 1907-1912) is an example. The Peak (Victoria Peak) towers over Central district on Hong Kong Island, attracting locals and visitors with cool breezes and stunning views over the harbour. Many aspired to live here, deterred only by lofty prices and the blanket of fog. With the construction of the Peak Tram in 1888, more people moved there to live. *Historical Interest*

The house in No. 28 Lugard Road was initially associated with a family of architects from England, surnamed Bird, who started living in Hong Kong from 1904. The house was built in **1924**. Its first owner was Lennox Godfrey Bird (1878-1956), who was commandant of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps (香港義勇防衛軍), president of the Royal Society of St. George (聖喬治皇家學會), president of the Hong Kong Hockey Club (香港曲棍球會), and a senior partner of the architectural practice of Palmer & Bird – now Palmer & Turner (still a prominent firm to this day). Being a director of the Shek O Development Co. Ltd. (石澳道業主委員會), Lennox Godfrey Bird was the architect of many older bungalows in Shek O.

The house in No. 28 Lugard Road was first assessed for rates in the financial year 1923/24. Between the years 1947/48 and 1950/51, it was not rated, because the house had been wrecked by looters during the Japanese occupation period and was not rehabilitated until 1950/51. The war-damaged house was rehabilitated by the then owner of “**Kelly & Walsh**” which began as a publisher and retailer in Shanghai in the 1870s and grew to having offices in many world cities, establishing itself as a retailer in Hong Kong in the 1950s. The then owner of “Kelly and Walsh” was a bachelor with a gift for gardening, and some of the trees planted by him are still doing well.

No. 28 Lugard Road is a pitched roof colonial bungalow. The bungalow walls are raised off a stepped masonry plinth built of squared granite blocks laid to courses. It is reached from Lugard Road by a narrow pathway and a flight of steps. Several smaller pitched roof buildings or outhouses at the rear presumably were originally used as servants’ quarters. A swimming pool has been built behind the bungalow which takes up most of the garden space. *Architectural Merit*

Architectural features of the bungalow include two **arched window openings** with masonry voussoirs, a half-room **cantilevered viewing platform**

off the terrace in front of the house, and there is a flat roofed canopy over the front entrance door. The delicate **arched roof**, handmade by local craftsmen, is covered with Chinese tiles and the walls made of bricks and granite stones are roughest rendered. Windows are metal framed casements with horizontal glazing bars and wavy typhoon bars. The roof is punctuated by three sturdily built **chimney stacks**.

Internally, notable architectural features include the **arched openings** between rooms, **ornamental fireplaces surrounds** in brickwork and rubble masonry, and **exposed rafters** to the underside of the roof.

The bungalow is similar in some respects but not identical, to bungalows also built by Palmer & Turner for the Shek O Development Co. Ltd. (1920s) where the Bird family had a week-end home. There is also similarity to the bungalows built on army camps in the New Territories after the Second World War for use as barrack buildings and as quarters for army families.

In the early colonial days, the Peak was reserved for Europeans who built lavish houses on the slopes of the Peak. Most of the old houses have gone, and modern apartment blocks stand in their place today. This particular house is a rare example of a colonial hill residence built between the two World Wars.

*Rarity,  
Built Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity*

So has as can be seen the bungalow has not been radically altered since it was built and therefore it retains, at least externally, much of its authentic appearance and should be considered a piece of built heritage.

Its historical past and the fact that it is a pre-Second World War house on Lugard Road, gives it historic role and importance in the development of Hong Kong. Its association with Lennox Godfrey Bird, a Hong Kong celebrity and an architect with Palmer & Turner also contribute to its local interest.

*Social Value  
& Local  
Interest*

Lugard Road, which encircles Victoria Peak and links with the Peak Tram, station, is a popular walking path. A stroll around it offers breathtaking views over lush green tropical vegetation and stunning vistas of Hong Kong's famous harbour and distant islands. The graded buildings nearby include: Peak Lookout, a bungalow-style building (Grade 2), Peak Tramways Co. Ltd. at No. 1 Lugard Road (Grade 2), Victoria Gap Substation at No. 35 Lugard Road (Grade 3) and a house at No. 34 Lugard Road (Grade 3).

*Group Value*

The house is still in residential use. Lugard Road is to this day too narrow for cars to pass for much of its length, and the cliff sides are too steep to build anything on. The site condition would seem to pose a challenge to any adaptation of the house to public use.

*Adaptive  
Re-use*