

N32

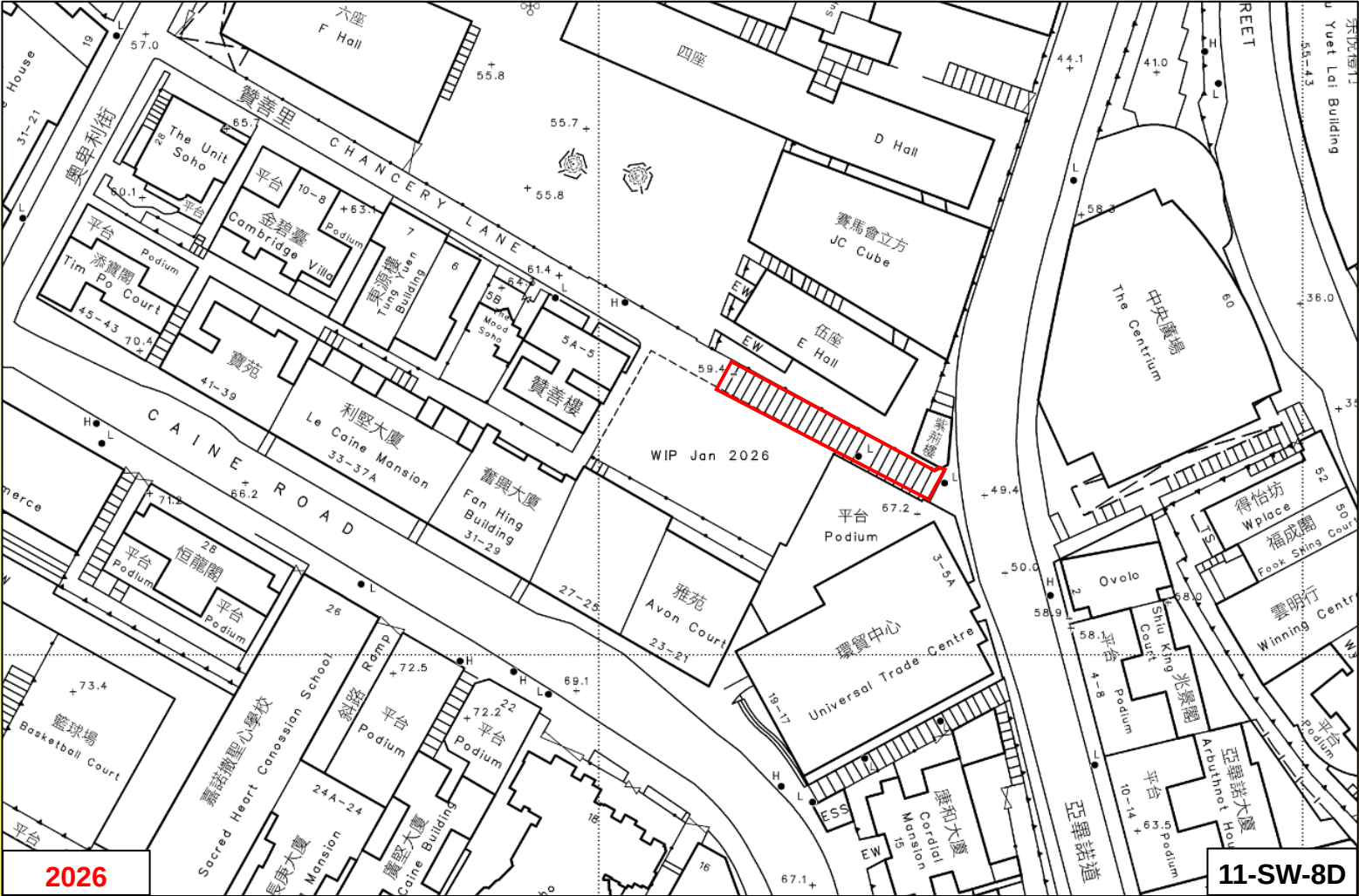
香港中環贊善里台階

Steps of Chancery Lane, Central, Hong Kong

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Steps of Chancery Lane, Central, Hong Kong

擬議沒有評級
Proposed
No Grading

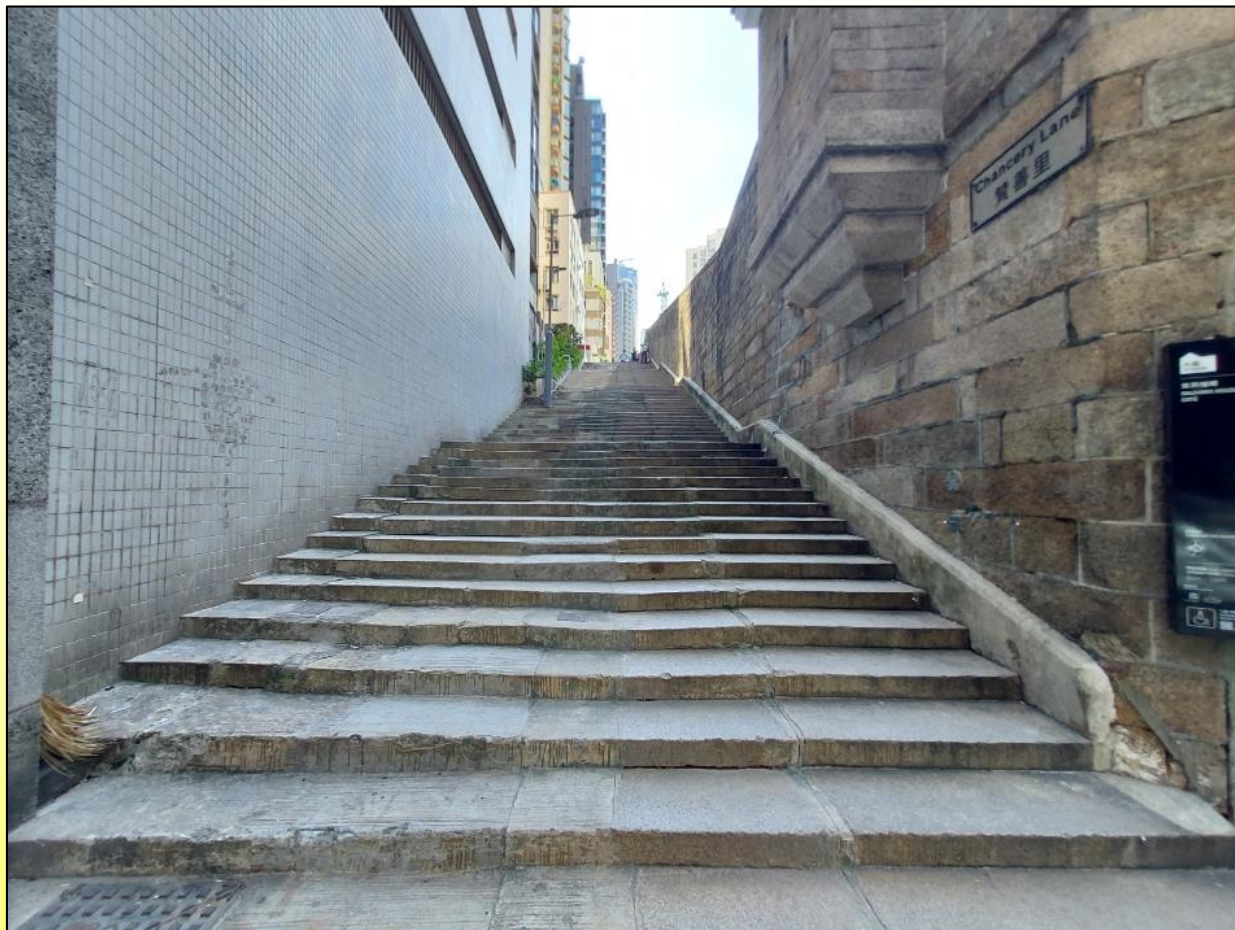


1880年代重建
Reconstructed in
the 1880s

擬議評級範圍
Proposed grading
boundary

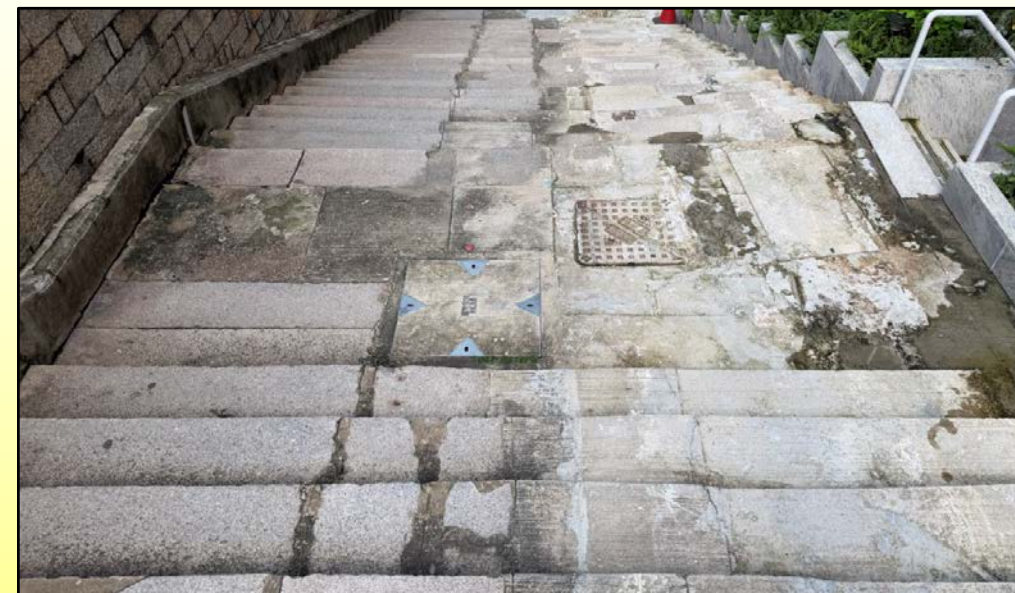
只用於識別位置，並非確實範圍 For identification of location only, not exact boundary

香港中環贊善里台階 Steps of Chancery Lane, Central, Hong Kong



贊善里台階（從亞畢諾道往上望）
Steps of Chancery Lane (view from Arbuthnot Road)

2026
(Source: AMO)



贊善里台階近景
Close-up view of the steps of Chancery Lane

2026
(Source: AMO)

Historic Building Appraisal

Steps of Chancery Lane, Central, Hong Kong

Chancery Lane is a narrow passage that runs from Old Bailey Street at one end to four flights of steps leading down to Arbuthnot Road at the other. The side of Chancery Lane abutting the former Victoria Prison, which was originally known as Victoria Gaol when it was first built in the 1840s, is bordered along its entire length by the prison's boundary wall, while the opposite side is lined with high-rise buildings. **Historical Interest**

The formation of Chancery Lane originated from the early development of Victoria Gaol when its southern boundary was reshaped. Construction of the gaol dates back to 1841,¹ and its initial boundary extended all the way up to Caine Road, as can be seen in the map of 1845.² For reasons that remain unclear, the site of the gaol was later reduced in size, with its southern section truncated by a new public road,³ later named Chancery Lane. The land between Chancery Lane and Caine Road was then laid out in lots for residential purposes.⁴ Chancery Lane was first mapped as an unnamed road in 1848,⁵ but no steps were indicated at that time. The earliest map showing the existence of steps at the end of the lane leading to Arbuthnot Road is the development plan of Victoria Gaol dating from 1851.⁶

The name Chancery Lane appears in English in a directory as early as 1861.⁷

¹ John Ouchterlony, *The Chinese War: An Account of all the Operations of the British Forces from the Commencement to the Treaty of Nanking* (Frankfort: Lancer Publishers & Distributors, 2009; first published in 1844), pp. 217-218.

² "The Ordnance Map of Hong Kong, surveyed by Lieut. Collinson. R. E. 1845", <https://maps.nls.uk/hongkong/102621568.html>, accessed on 4 August 2026.

³ "Victoria Gaol", *Hong Kong Blue Book for the year 1846* (Collection of The Chinese University of Hong Kong Library), pp. 52-53.

⁴ CO129/26, "Plan of the Town of Victoria (1848)", *Despatches: 1848 Sept.-Dec.*, p. 186, from China and the Modern World, accessed on 17 July 2026; Card Number 277013, 277015-277017, 277019-277024, 277027, 277029, 277030, Carl Smith Collection, Government Records Service; "Jury list for 1865", *Hong Kong Blue Book for the year 1865* (Collection of The University of Hong Kong Libraries), p. 252; "Jury list for 1869", *Hong Kong Blue Book for the year 1868* (Collection of The University of Hong Kong Libraries), pp. 239-242.

⁵ CO129/26, "Plan of the Town of Victoria (1848)", *Despatches: 1848 Sept.-Dec.*, p. 186, from China and the Modern World, accessed on 17 July 2026.

⁶ CO129/43, "Report and estimate No. 5 of 1851 Gaol Compound shewing the sites of proposed Debtors Gaol, Gaolers House, and Guard House", *Despatches: 1853 July-Dec.*, p. 264, from China and the Modern World, accessed on 17 July 2026.

⁷ "Professions and Trades (of Hong Kong)", A. Shortrede & Co, *The China Directory for 1861* (Hong Kong: A. Shortrede & Co, 1861), p. 18.

It is derived from an area in London recognised for its cluster of courts and legal practices and was likely influenced by its proximity to the Magistracy on Arbuthnot Road. Little information is available about the steps of Chancery Lane during the early period.⁸ In 1883, a tender was published in the Government Gazette for the reconstruction of the steps in granite,⁹ which is believed to have referred to the present structure, as no further record of reconstruction works on the steps has since been found.

The steps of Chancery Lane (the Steps) ascend from their lowest point on Arbuthnot Road to their highest point at the top step where the concrete roadway of the lane begins and continues towards Old Bailey Street. The Steps comprise four flights, each with approximately 15 to 20 risers, separated by three landings. As a pedestrian walkway believed to have primarily served the residents of Chancery Lane, the Steps were featured a simple utilitarian design without any decorative elements since their construction. Today, the structure is largely composed of concrete, the result of successive replacements over the years, although some of the original granite slabs still remain.

**Architectural
Merit**

The Steps were originally paved with granite slabs.¹⁰ The presence of a wide variety of cast-iron covers along the Steps, however, provides evidence that underground utilities have been laid over the years, including fresh water supply and drainage pipes as well as broadband cables. The installation and repair of these utilities have resulted in damage to the original granite paving, which has affected both the steps and the landings following the removal of the original granite fabric and their subsequent replacement with concrete. Today, the majority of the Steps have been either patched with or replaced by concrete. This is most evident in the Steps closest to the high-rise buildings, while those along the side of the former Victoria Prison remain comparatively intact. Nonetheless, the latter still show clear intrusions, with concrete replacements cutting into the original granite. Very few granite slabs laid in simple horizontal courses on the landings remain visible. Moreover, the lower two flights of the Steps have been extended by later additions resulting from the redevelopment of the adjoining building at 3-5A Arbuthnot Road. These additions comprise a small, newly

**Authenticity &
Rarity**

⁸ It is noted the wording “re-constructing the granite steps in Chancery Lane” in the tender of 1883 suggests that the steps prior to reconstruction were built of granite. Meanwhile, from a news report in 1873 that one of the landings of the steps at Chancery Lane was built of stone. See “Government Notification No. 22”, *Government Gazette*, 20 January 1883, p. 49 and “The Barradas’ Case”, *The Hong Kong Times Daily Advertiser and Shipping Gazette*, 27 October 1873, p. 2.

⁹ “Government Notification No. 22”, *Government Gazette*, 20 January 1883, p. 49.

¹⁰ “Government Notification No. 22”, *Government Gazette*, 20 January 1883, p. 49.

constructed portion of the Steps and do not form part of the original layout.

Stepped streets like the Steps of Chancery Lane are a common sight on the hilly terrain of Hong Kong Island, where they make it easier for pedestrians to go up and down the steeply sloping ground. However, granite steps that have survived in good condition and retain a high degree of authenticity are now rare. The Steps have undergone extensive alterations and repeated repairs over time, and much of their original fabric has been replaced, resulting in a markedly diminished level of authenticity.

The Steps have long provided access for residents of Chancery Lane. They also offered convenient passage for pedestrians travelling from Wyndham Street, across Arbuthnot Road, and up to the residential areas of Caine Road and the Mid-Levels¹¹ before public transport to these areas was well developed.¹²

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The Steps of Chancery Lane have group value with other stepped streets nearby, including Pottinger Street (Grade 1), Ladder Street (Grade 1), the Steps of Pound Lane (Grade 2) and the Stone Steps of Shing Wong Street (Grade 2).

Group Value

¹¹ “Short Cut Lost”, *South China Morning Post*, 20 May 1958.

¹² 〈贊善里一舊樓牆壁發現裂痕〉，《華僑日報》，1966年6月16日。

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