CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES

HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL APPRAISAL

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Central Government Offices, Historic and Architectural Appraisal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Government Offices (CGO) were built in three distinct phases in the 1950s. The buildings were purpose designed as offices for government departments and have remained in this use from their completion to the present. The offices will be vacated once the new Tamar building is completed. This study considers the architectural and historic significance of this group of buildings and makes some recommendations as to the future once they cease to be used as Government offices.

The three phases of the building each have a distinct architectural style. The first to be built was the East Wing which was completed in 1954; the second phase was the Central Wing completed in 1956; the third phase was the West Wing completed in 1959. The Central Wing is judged to be the most interesting architecturally and it is probably also the most significant in historic terms. This building originally had the Legislative Council Chamber in a fan shaped building attached to the north side of the wing. This was demolished in the late 1980s to make way for an extension to the wing which was carried out in an almost exact copy of the original section of the building. The East Wing is also an elegant building which marks a transition from a classical Beaux Arts towards a more modern functionalist style. The West Wing, much the largest of the three elements is judged to be the least successful architecturally. This is a strictly functionalist building with a heavy concrete framed grid across its elevations. It is seven stories high across the centre of the site but drops away to give a thirteen storey height at the west end where it fronts Ice House Street.

All three buildings appear to be the work of the government architects in the Public Works Department and it does not appear to be possible to attribute with any certainty the work to particular individuals. All three wings have been altered a good deal since their original design. All the Wings had an upper floor added in the 1960s and the Central Wing had the major extension to the north in 1989. The West Wing has a new entrance suite on its east front added in 1998. Internally, changes have been made on more than one occasion to the plan layouts and to the fixtures, fittings and finishes. There is little that remains inside these buildings which can be seen as highly significant.

The site itself and the history associated with it is seen as being as significant, possibly more significant than the buildings. This area of Hong Kong has been associated with government since the foundation of the Colony. Government offices are marked on the site in the plans dated 1845 and a larger set of offices was built in 1847-48, which remained in use until they were demolished to make way for the present offices. The presence of Government House and the other historic buildings (The Cathedral and The Old French Mission) also add interest and significance to the site.

These buildings were deliberately designed in the 1950s as low rise to preserve the view of the harbour from Government House. This view may have long since disappeared but the low rise buildings and the trees combine with the other well wooded areas (Government House garden, the Botanic Gardens and Hong Kong Park) to give a large green space in an otherwise heavily developed part of the city. This is something to be maintained in any future development of the site and it is suggested that there might be a "Special Protected Area" in planning terms so that the significance of the low rise well wooded nature of this area is considered when any future applications are considered.

The main conclusions from the study are that that Central and East Wings should be retained but that the West Wing is of lower value and could be demolished for redevelopment. The most difficult aspect of the retained buildings will be to find a beneficial use that is appropriate with the serious nature of the current government use. It would seem to be very undesirable to have commercial use which demeaned the historic and current function of the building and site. There should be no significant concerns over major internal alterations to suit a new use but the exterior of the buildings should be respected as far as possible.

If the West Wing is to be demolished and redeveloped the new development should generally respect the footprint and height of the existing building. The exception to this might be at the west end of the site where a higher rise building could perhaps be considered.

The site was much more accessible to the public until 1997 when the current security fencing was erected. It would be very desirable, when considering any new use, to allow public access across and around the site once more. One radical suggestion would be to remove much of the vehicular access and landscape the area as a public garden as a continuation of the Cathedral Gardens. If some or all of the West Wing is demolished it might be possible to extend the garden over a wider area to provide a green link between Battery Path and the Government House Gardens.

The document ends with a series of "Recommendations". These could readily be converted into "Conservation Policies" if it was thought appropriate to provide such guidance to the future development of the site.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICES

Historic and Architectural Appraisal

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INTRODUCTION

Plan showing the study site in red, with adjacent Declared Monuments highlighted in blue (©Google 2009)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Report

The brief for this report states that the "*objective of the project is to conduct a thorough appraisal of the historical and architectural value of the Central Government Offices Complex*". The Central Government Offices (CGO) are the principal government offices of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). These two 1950s buildings are located on a site that is important for its central location and association with some of the most significant heritage buildings in the region; Government House, St. John's Cathedral and the former French Mission Building. At present new government offices are being constructed on the Tamar site at the waterfront. This will leave the CGO redundant and a new use for the buildings or the site will need to be found.

This Historic and Architectural Appraisal aims to investigate and understand the buildings through an assessment of its history and the reasons why it is significant. As well as looking at the buildings themselves, the report will discuss the immediate surrounding area and the site's situation within the city in order to assess their importance within the wider context.

Following the assessment of history and significance, the report will discuss any issues which threaten the buildings and site. It will then provide some conclusions and recommendations to guide future decisions regarding the CGO Complex.

1.2 Authorship and Ownership

This report was commissioned by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) of the HKSAR Government. It has been prepared by Purcell Miller Tritton LLP (PMT) a specialist firm of conservation architects based in the UK. The completed report will be owned by the AMO.

1.3 Scope of the Study

The Study Site was identified in the brief as the CGO Complex, which includes the East Wing, Central Wing and West Wing of the CGO, plus the immediate surrounding area, comprised of the courtyard between the central and west wings, car parking areas and pathways to the north and south of the buildings and the driveway to the north of the CGO which gives access from the area around the Cathedral. It also includes trees on the site and the landscaped areas.

The Study Site boundary is identified on the plan opposite in red. It is bounded by Lower Albert Road to the south, Garden Road and the Cathedral compound to the east, Queen's Road Central and Battery Path to the north and Ice House Street to the west.

In order to place the CGO Complex in its context and discuss fully the impact that these buildings have on their surroundings, this report will also assess the wider surrounding area in terms of its historic development, the current build up of structures around the Study Site and the significance of the principal historic buildings/ features in the vicinity. The historic buildings/ features that will be discussed are Government House, St. John's Cathedral, the Duddell Street Steps and Gas Lamps and the French Mission Building. These are identified on the adjacent plan in blue.

The history section of this report will look briefly at the establishment of Hong Kong as a British territory and its political history in order to put the CGO complex into context. It will also discuss the architectural history of Hong Kong. However, after considering the requirements of the report the pre-Colonial history of Hong Kong will not be discussed in any detail. The Bibliography section provides details of reference books relating to the history of Hong Kong should further detail be required.

1.4 Existing Information

To prepare this Historic and Architectural Appraisal visits were made to Hong Kong in February and March 2009. During the time in Hong Kong, several visits to the site were made to study the exteriors and interiors of the buildings and the landscape features. The visits included a photographic survey of the CGO. These buildings contain Government offices in full daily use and for this reason internal access was somewhat limited.

In addition, visits were made to several libraries, archives and Government departments to view books, architectural plans, photographs and archive documents. Below is a list of the places visited and a brief description of the sources viewed in each.

A full list of all the documents consulted is provided in the Bibliography in section 6.

- The Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO); historic plans, articles and reports, architectural plans
- The Public Records Office (PRO); Government Correspondence, architectural plans, historic photographs
- Hong Kong University Library (HKUL); Public Works Department Annual Reports, general architectural reference books
- Architectural Services Department (ASD); architectural plans
- Lands Department; historic and current aerial photographs of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Public Library (HKPL); general reference books on architecture and the history of Hong Kong
- The Government Information Services Department (GIS); historic photographs
- The Hong Kong Museum of History's Resource Centre (HKMHRC); historic photographs
- The Geotechnical Engineering Office of Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD); Plans and correspondence relating to tunnels underneath the CGO site

Prior to the visit to Hong Kong, background research was carried out in libraries and archives in the UK. These are listed below and again a full list of the sources consulted is given in the Bibliography.

- The National Archives (NA); historic plans of Hong Kong
- The British Library (BL); general reference books on the architecture and history of Hong Kong

The Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library (NNML); general reference books on the architecture and history of Hong Kong

1.5 Acknowledgements

In the course of compiling this report and while visiting some of the above institutions, help has been received from a number of individuals who are acknowledged below:

Development Bureau
- Jack Chan, Commissioner for Heritage

AMO
- Tom K.C. Ming, Executive Secretary
- Fione S.L. Lo, Curator
- Irene Y.L. Chan, Assistant Curator
- Christine Y.H. Mok, Assistant Curator
- Catherine Chan, Assistant Curator
- Margaret K.M. Chan, Senior Heritage Officer
- R.G. Horsnell, Consultant

CGO Administration Wing
- Harris Liu

1.6 Gaps in Knowledge

Due to the nature of the CGO as a working government building, there were areas inside the buildings where access was restricted due to functions or the confidential nature of the work carried out there. In other areas access was permitted but photography was not. It is thought that a survey of the other floors in each wing has given a full enough overview of the condition and fabric of the building.

During the visit to Hong Kong the tower of St. John's Cathedral was covered in scaffolding due to cleaning and repainting as part of a planned maintenance programme. This restricted the view of the tower and made an assessment of how the cathedral relates to the CGO Complex more difficult. Photographs (and memoirs of previous visits) have been used to inform the description of the Cathedral tower and to view the tower in its context with the CGO.

1.7 Methodology

This report will be divided into six section plus additional appendices. Each section of the report is described below:

1 Introduction

This sets out the basic information relating to the report, such as purpose of the report, existing information and gaps in knowledge.

2 Understanding

The purpose of this section is to analyse the existing information existing about the CGO Complex in order gain an understanding of the site. It is broken down into three sections; statutory designations, detailed description and history.

3 Significance

This section will aim to set out in what ways the CGO Complex is significant. It will do this through an analysis of such themes as historic, architectural, landscape and setting, social importance and national importance.

4 Issues and Vulnerabilities

In this section a description of the issues which face the CGO Complex will be given.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This section will be a response to the 'Significance' and 'Issues' sections and will provide a series of conclusions and recommendations regarding how and why the CGO and its surroundings should be maintained and preserved or the scope for change to the site.

6 Bibliography

A list of all the primary and secondary sources consulted during the compilation of this report.

Appendices

These will include any additional information relevant to the CGO Complex which is too bulky to include in the main body of the report.

2

UNDERSTANDING

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2 UNDERSTANDING

2.1 Ownership and Management

The Central Government Offices are currently used to house various governmental departments, including the offices of many senior government officials. Most of the site is fenced off and only accessible to those who work there and their visitors. However, the north-eastern part of the Study Site around the Cathedral is accessible to the public and is used as a thoroughfare from Garden Road to Battery Path.

The Central Government Offices are owned and managed by the HKSAR Government. The CGO site is held under a Government Land Allocation granted to the Administration Wing in the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office. The day to day running of the building services and maintenance of CGO is handled by the Departmental Administration Unit (DAU) of the Administration Wing, which is led by the Principal Executive Officer, PEO (Adm). The PEO is assisted by various executive and clerical grade officers to oversee the daily management of the building. Some other departments also assist the DAU with the maintenance of the building; the maintenance of the building's structure is entrusted to the Architectural Services Department (ASD), while the maintenance of building equipment, such as lift, air-conditioning and electronic equipment, is entrusted to the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department.[1]

2.2 Statutory Designations

2.2.1 Declared Monuments and Graded Buildings

Important historic buildings are protected under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap.53). This Ordinance established the Antiquities Authority, with the executive arms of the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) and the Antiquities Advisory Board who ensure appropriate protection for Hong Kong's heritage. The Secretary for Development is currently the Antiquities Authority. The Ordinance gave the Antiquities Authority the power to declare a place, which then becomes known as a 'Declared Monument'. The Advisory Board and the Chief Executive must approve the decision and an announcement must be published in the Government Gazette. The Antiquities Authority then has the power to prevent or place conditions on alterations to the protected buildings.

The CGO Complex is not a Declared Monument. However, St. John's Cathedral, Government House and the French Mission Building, all of which are adjacent to the CGO, are. Additionally, the Duddell Street Steps and Gas Lamps on Ice House Street is a Declared Monument. These are shown in blue on the plan on page 8. These structures contribute to the setting of the CGO and therefore their status as Declared Monuments is important. There are 86 Declared Monuments in Hong Kong, 28 of which are located on Hong Kong Island. The four Monuments near the CGO comprise a significant group of heritage buildings which are set within the oldest part of the city.

The Antiquities Advisory Board also classify historic buildings (other than Declared Monuments) into a grading system. Buildings are given a grade of either I, II or III depending on their significance. The system is an internal means for the Advisory Board to assess the heritage value of historic buildings. However, Grading does not confer any statutory protection on a building. There are no Graded Buildings on the CGO site or in the immediate vicinity. However, in the wider vicinity there are several Graded buildings. To the west is the Bishop's House at No.1 Lower Albert Road, a former school building from 1848 which is listed Grade I and now the official residence of the Anglican Bishop of Victoria. The 1930s old S.K.H. Kei Yan Primary School is Grade II. Also to the west is the Grade II Old Dairy Farm Depot at No. 2 Lower Albert Road. To the east, the Hong Kong Park contains several former army Barracks Block from the Old Victoria Barracks, constructed between the 1840s and 1874 and all listed Grade II. The AMO are currently carrying out an assessment exercise to re-grade many of these buildings and to add further buildings to the list.

[1] E-mail correspondence with Mr Harris Liu, Building Manager of the CGO, on 06/04/2009

Plan showing five of the protected trees on the CGO complex (©Google 2009)

Plan showing Hong Kong with the CGO marked in red (©Google 2009)

2.2.2 Register of Old and Valuable Trees

In 2004 the Hong Kong Government established a Register of Old and Valuable Trees. It was set up to "*ensure that the trees can be well preserved and maintained*"[2] and is maintained and updated by the LCSD. Over 500 trees are on the register, including eleven on the CGO Complex. A tree must meet one or more of five criteria to be included on the Register:

- ◇ Trees of large size
- ◇ Trees of precious or rare species
- ◇ Trees of particularly old age (e.g. aged 100 or above)
- ◇ Trees of cultural, historical or memorable significance
- ◇ Trees of outstanding form

A list of the trees on the CGO Complex is given below and they are discussed further in section 2.3.15. Their full Register entries are included as Appendix B and a plan opposite indicates the approximate locations of the first five on the list:

- ◇ LCSD CW/85; Ficus Microcarpa (Chinese Banyan); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/86; Pterocarpus Indicus (Burmese Rosewood); large size, cultural, historical or memorable significance, outstanding form
- ◇ LCSD CW/88; Ficus Virens Var. Sublanceolata (Big-leaved Fig); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/89; Pterocarpus Indicus (Burmese Rosewood); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/90; Ficus Microcarpa (Chinese Banyan); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/91; Ficus Virens Var. Sublanceolata (Big-leaved Fig); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/92; Ficus Microcarpa (Chinese Banyan); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/93; Ficus Microcarpa (Chinese Banyan); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/94; Ficus Microcarpa (Chinese Banyan); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/95; Ficus Virens Var. Sublanceolata (Big-leaved Fig); large size
- ◇ LCSD CW/96; Heteropanax Fragrans; precious or rare species

There is also one protected tree on the Government Home land:

- ◇ In the Government House gardens; LCSD CW/76, Brownea Grandiceps (Rose of Venezuela); Precious or rare species

2.2.3 Outline Zoning Plan

The Town Planning Board has prepared Outline Zoning Plans for the districts of Hong Kong under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap.31), the objective of the plans being "*to indicate the broad land use zonings and major road networks so that development/redevelopment within the Planning Scheme Area can be put under statutory planning* control"[3]. The Study Site is covered by the approved Central District Outline Zoning Plan No. S/H4/12, and the CGO Complex is zoned "Government Institution or Community". Within the zone a wide range of uses are permitted which are mainly for public, leisure or government use. Examples of permitted development include public libraries, post offices, exhibition or convention halls, government staff quarters, government offices or religious institutions. Other development of a more commercial nature or less common uses are permitted only with the permission of the Town Planning Board, such as restaurants, hotels, shops or zoos, funeral parlours and petrol filling stations. Residential development is also allowed only with permission of the Town Planning Board. A full list of permitted development is provided in Appendix C.

2.3 Description of the Site

2.3.1 Location

The CGO are located in the HKSAR. The Study Site is situated in the Central District on the north side of Hong Kong Island. The west end of the Study Site is bounded by Ice House Street, a vehicular road. The western end of the southern boundary of the Study Site is adjacent to a vegetated slope. This is a long thin patch of land set between Ice House Street to the north and Lower Albert Road to the south that slopes steeply down towards the north and is covered in mature trees and plants.

[2] Register of Old and Valuable Trees, accessed 24/02/09

[3] Statutory Planning Portal, http://www.ozp.tpb.gov.hk/pdf/s_h4_12_e.pdf, accessed 24/02/09

To the south the Lower Albert Road bounds most of this side of the Study Site and winds gently downhill to the east. The east end of the Study Site has a short boundary along Garden Road, which turns 90° and continues westwards with the CGO East Wing to the south and the Cathedral driveway and community hall to the north. The boundary then turns 90° northwards to run along the western boundary of the Cathedral grounds.

The northern boundary begins at the French Mission Building, which is located at the north-east corner of the Study Site. The boundary then follows the line of Battery Path downhill to the west where it meets the junction between Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central.

2.3.2 Site Description

Within the Study Site are the two CGO buildings. The West Wing is an 'L'-shaped building. It sits with the shorter section of the 'L' right up against Ice House Street. The Central Wing and East Wing form one building, which is roughly 'T'-shaped. The Central Wing is orientated north-south, with its southern elevation against Lower Albert Road. The East Wing is joined to the Central Wing at its western end and projects eastwards down to Garden Road. Between the Central and West Wings is a courtyard and formal driveway, with vehicular access through gates on Lower Albert Road and from the north via a long driveway accessed north of the Cathedral from Garden Road (technically the eastern part of Battery Path). A large tree is situated in the centre of the courtyard.

North of the West Wing is a small car parking area, and then the ground slopes steeply downwards to Battery Path. This slope is covered with mature trees and vegetation. To the north of the Central Wing is a landscaped area with driveways, trees, flowerbeds and pathways on land that slopes down towards the north-east.

The CGO are set on a site with some sharp changes of level and steep slopes. In very general terms the site slopes down from the south to the north and east. Parts of the slope are very steep, such as along Battery Path, and others have a gentle gradient, such as the driveway leading into the north side of the site. The west end of the site slopes steeply downwards to the west. The area was substantially excavated before the West Wing was constructed and is set on this slope so that the west end has thirteen storeys, while the east end has only seven. To the south of the West Wing the slope and the two elevations of the building form a pit with a steep sloping side – the result of the excavation work.

2.3.3 Site Context

The CGO are set within the Central District of Hong Kong. To the north of the site are located most of the tallest skyscrapers in the region and some of the most iconic buildings in Hong Kong. Immediately to the north, along Queen's Road Central, is Norman Foster's HSBC building (1985) and to the north-east is the Bank of China Tower (1990). This densely packed area houses the main business and financial district of Hong Kong, as well as some of the main government offices. The area is also home to many consulates, including the U.S. consulate just to the south-east of the CGO Complex.

Immediately to the east of the Study Site facing the east end of the East Wing is the Murray Building, another office block used by the government and an early example of a tall office building. A taller, more modern office block is to the north of this, the Citibank Plaza, and to the south is a smaller, older one (the St John's building). Beyond this collection of buildings is Hong Kong Park, formerly the site of the Victoria Barracks. The 8 hectare park was opened in 1991 and provides a large green space in the centre of the city.

To area to the south of the CGO also benefits from not being built up. Government House (1855), the former Colonial Governor's House and now the official residence of the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, sits at the top of a slope up from Lower Albert Road. The building, which was remodelled during the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong in World War II to give it a distinctly Japanese style, is set in landscaped grounds with a lawn to the north and mature trees covering the surrounding slopes.

To the south of Government House are the Zoological and Botanical Gardens, which have been open to the public since the 1860s. This again is a wide open green space of 5.6 hectares. Together with the Government House gardens, the Hong Kong Park and the areas of greenery on and around the CGO site, it provides a "green lung" within the city. Further to the south is an area of residential tower

blocks, then the city gives way to woodland and scrub as the hill slopes up to the Peak above. The Peak is traditionally accessed via the Peak Tram, which leaves from a terminal across Garden Road at the east end of the CGO site.

To the west of the Study Site is another built up part of the city. These are the Lan Kwai Fong and Soho Districts of the city, which are popular with expats and are home to much of the city's night-life. There are many restaurants and bars, as well as many office buildings. Also to the west of the CGO site are two other important heritage sites for Hong Kong; the Sheng Kung Hui Compound, housing the Bishop's House and St. Paul's Church, and the Central Police Station Compound, housing the former Police Station, Victoria Gaol and Magistracy. These three sites link Law and Order, Spiritual and Government functions of society in Hong Kong.

2.3.4 General Description of the Buildings

The complex comprises 3 distinct phases of building:

- East Wing (1954)
- Central Wing (1956)
- West Wing (1959)

The Central Wing is now more popularly known as the 'Main Wing' by government officials working in the building. This section was commonly known as the Central Wing[4], or less commonly as the Secretariat[5], when it was first constructed.

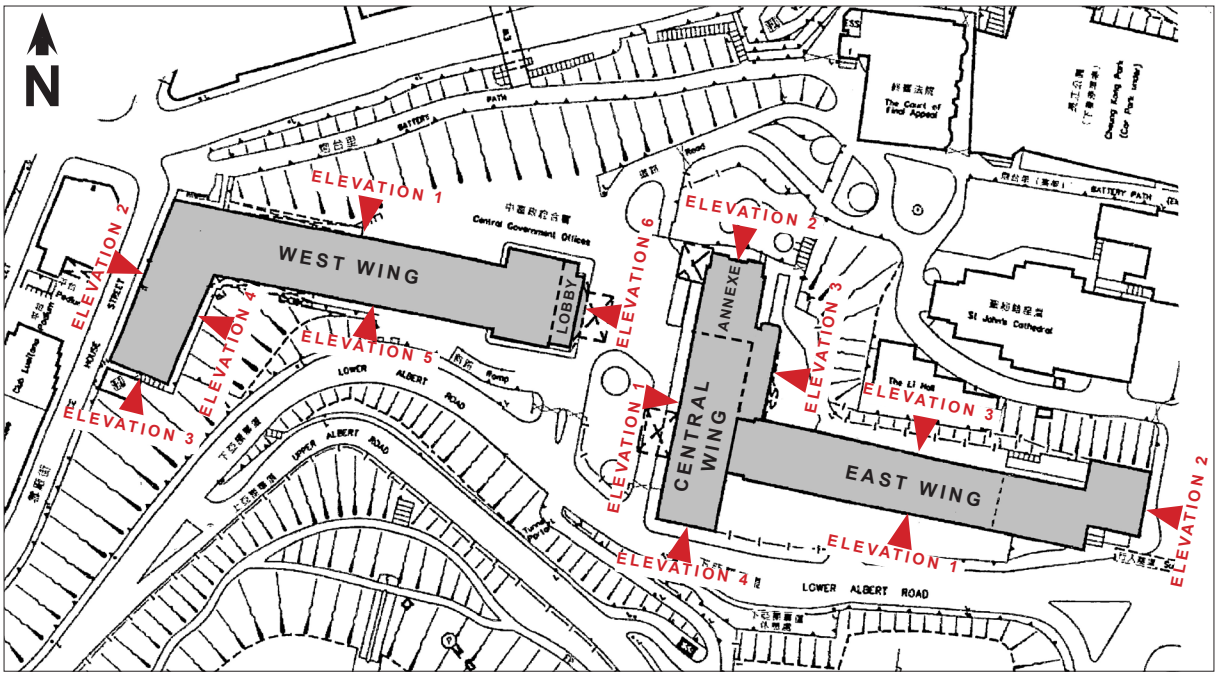
Although constructed in different phases, the design of the buildings appears to have been conceived more or less simultaneously, as evidenced by the original drawings. Consequently, the buildings share many characteristics.

A summary of the floor areas of the three wings is given below:

i. Total GFA of the compound = 42,097 sq.m
ii. Central Wing = 9,109 sq.m
iii. East Wing = 10,612 sq.m
iv. West Wing = 22,376 sq.m

Architectural Qualities

In terms of form and massing the buildings are consciously low-rise, horizontal in emphasis and with flat roofs that keep the height of the buildings to a minimum. The highest point of 13 storeys to the western end of the West Wing is more the result of the natural topography than a desire to build high.



Plan of the CGO complex with labelled elevations

[4] 'Plaque Unveiled' 10/01/57, South China Morning Post

[5] 'New Central Government Offices' 1950-51, Public Works Department Annual Report

The buildings display characteristics of the Functionalist style of architecture, prevalent during the early to mid 20th century. This held as its central tenet the idea that "form follows function"; building forms must be determined by their functions and materials and superfluous features eliminated, with the designer's primary task to expose and clarify, not to embellish.

As a result, architects produced pared-down designs with no ornament and reduced variation between parts. On the whole this produced utilitarian structures with a basic emphasis on structure and materials in which the interior programme and structure dictated the outward form. Technological developments such as prefabricated construction further allowed architects to explore such themes.

When applied to the CGO buildings we see this manifested in a number of ways. The office use dictates the plan form; all have shallow plans to admit the maximum amount of daylight into the internal spaces, as well as maximise natural ventilation.

Through the exposed structural frames; the construction of the building is made manifest, the repetition of standardised elements becoming the means of embellishment and architectural expression. This is further supported by the use of standardised fenestration systems and patterns.

The remarks of a government official from 1952 (see section 2.4.7) are telling, referring to the buildings as looking like *"a factory"* and imploring the designers to add some balustrading *"to make the roof look less unpleasing..."* He evidently did not get his way; original design drawings and early photographs show no balustrading.

However, despite this apparent standardisation, it is possible to detect a progression in the design across the buildings. Architecturally, the East Wing is quite distinct; although completed in 1954, it actually has more of a 1930s feel, with some elements clearly influenced by the Art Deco style, such as the zigzag moulding over the main entrance door. Elsewhere it displays a degree of refinement and attention to detail that is too 'fussy' to be considered properly Functionalist, such as moulded coffers to the car park soffit.

Although the separation in years between the wings is not that great, the Central Wing, and in particular the West Wing, display a more 'stripped-down', functionalist version of post-war modernism that developed as the build progressed, whilst the East Wing appears to be more consciously pre-war in terms of its design and detailing. Of the set, the West Wing is the most utilitarian, with a heavier, clumsier and more regular concrete frame than the East and Central Wings.

Materials and Features

There are materials and details that are common to all of the buildings:

Exposed Concrete Frames

Each building displays an exposed concrete frame in one form or another. Although painted, close inspection reveals that in all instances this has a granular finish. Analysis of samples has revealed that, below the paint, the outer surface of the concrete is a 5 to 8 mm thick layer consisting of a white matrix with a light-to-dark grey and beige-coloured granite aggregate 1 to 3 mm in diameter. Below this there is a dark grey concrete substrate onto which the granular finish has been applied.

It is reasonable to assume that the buildings were originally unpainted, and would in all probability have looked quite different from their current appearance. The nature of the construction described above also raises the possibility of the use of pre-cast elements on the buildings. Concrete is considered in further detail in the section on Technological Significance below.

The exposed concrete frame and steel windows of the CGO

Granite Tile Cladding
Areas of granite cladding can be found to all the CGO buildings, although as an expensive material it tends to be used within the public areas of the site. It is laid in a variety of patterns, although the most prevalent type tends to be courses of alternate headers and stretchers followed by courses of larger stretchers.

There were historically a number of quarries within Hong Kong, as evidenced by place names such as *Stonecutter Island* and *Quarry Bay*. Originally the granite on the site came from Grampian Road Quarry, close to the old Kai Tak airport. When this closed a close match had to be found elsewhere; granite for the 2nd and 3rd phases possibly came from the Diamond Hill Quarry. The relative expense of the material is evidenced by the fact that it is replaced with ceramic tiling on the Main Wing Annexe extension, constructed c. 1989.

Granite cladding

Steel Windows
Crittall became the dominant international source of steel windows and doors, establishing the Crittall Manufacturing Co. of China in 1931. The Universal Range of sections was introduced in 1912; slender in section with clean lines, they became the window of choice for the modernist architect, and provide the basic model of window for all buildings on the site. Although found in different configurations across the site, the basic type and style of frame section is the same for all buildings.

External Decoration
All of the buildings have been recently redecorated externally and finished with the same paint scheme. External structural frames are generally painted a light grey, with a darker bluish-green to the spandrel panels (probably inspired by the mosaic tiles to the spandrel panels of the Central Wing). Steel-framed windows are painted black.

Whilst this muted palette suits the era of the buildings, it is worth noting that the buildings originally looked quite different, with self-finished white concrete frames and window frames painted white. The impact of this is further considered in the section on Architectural Significance, section 3.2.

2.3.5 Exterior – East Wing

Overview
The building is a long, narrow rectangle in plan, with a square-shaped section at the east end, offset to the north side of the main central axis. To the west the building adjoins the later Central Wing (1956) with a granite clad 'transitional' section. The main central section features an exposed concrete frame inset with glazing and spandrel panels, with an open ground storey occupied by car parking.

The exposed frame is painted a greenish-white; the spandrel panels a darker bluish-green. The east end is clad in granite.

The building is of 7 storeys (ground to 6th floors), the top floor penthouse being an extension added in 1962-3. The site is generally flat, although outside of the building line to the north it slopes down sharply towards St John's Cathedral. At the east end (the granite-clad section) the ground also slopes down to the east and the south, with the result that the building increases to 9 storeys here (additional lower ground and basement levels).

Roofs are flat (both the original and the extension) with steel balustrading to the perimeter on the upper penthouse level. There are also various plant enclosures on the roof, clad with profiled metal sheet.

Elevation 1, South-Facing
Facing onto Lower Albert Road, this elevation is one of the most public faces of the complex. It is split into 3 parts;

- ◇ The granite-clad 'transitional' section at the western end that makes the connection with the Central Wing (1956);
- ◇ The main central section consisting of an exposed concrete frame with open ground storey;
- ◇ The eastern section, also clad with granite and featuring the main entrance into the building.

The granite clad 'transitional' section of the East Wing, elevation 1

The granite clad 'transitional' section was actually built as part of the construction of the Central Wing. This is 7 storeys high (ground to 6th floors) with a mono-pitched roof sloping down from west to east forming a gable to the north and south elevations.

Each floor features four bays of openings; the 1st to 6th floors are square-shaped with no surround and a minimal cill so that they appear as if 'punched' into the stone cladding. Fenestration is of the steel-framed Crittall Universal type, single glazed with black-painted frames. The ground floor openings are rectangular and are inset with steel grilles matching those to the front elevation of the Central Wing.

The main central section features an exposed concrete frame. This has a structural hierarchy of vertical and horizontal elements, their importance denoted by their size and location relative to the distance that they are set back from the outside face of the building. This helps to break up the facade into smaller parts, relieving the potential monotony of its 100 metre length by introducing an interplay of light and shade between the various elements.

Consequently, when considered as a whole the building has a horizontal emphasis due to its relatively low height to length ratio. However, when considered individually, the bays could be said to have a vertical emphasis.

The most important elements within the hierarchy are the primary vertical structural elements that run the full height of the building, terminating at 6th floor level (the original roof level), splitting the elevation into 12 bays. Each of these are then further divided into four (to produce a total of 48 bays) by secondary vertical elements which are more slender and recessed back away from the front face of the building. Set within these are windows, vertical-rectangular in proportion and of the steel-framed Crittall Universal variety, painted black.

Each is of 8 lights (2 vertical rows of 4), the top 6 of which are contained within side-hung casements (3 to each). The two bottom panels are fixed; many of these have been altered to allow for retro-fitting of air conditioning units.

The main central section and the eastern section of the East Wing, elevation 1

Between the vertical members there are horizontal elements, corresponding with the window cills and heads. These have their own hierarchy, with those at the head projecting out further than the cills (although not as far out as the verticals). Further modelling is achieved by the introduction of a moulded shadow detail to the head and cill sections which visually reduces the weight of these elements. Below the windows there are recessed concrete spandrel panels; at first floor level and the original roof level (now 6th floor level) these panels are wider, spanning across 4 bays between the primary vertical elements.

The building is finished at what was the original parapet level by an narrow overhanging cornice which also features a moulded shadow detail to the edge, and to the soffit 3 square-shaped caissons, lining through with the secondary vertical elements below and painted a royal blue. Above this the penthouse addition is set back; the main structural elements lining though with the vertical primary structural elements below and supporting a stepped fascia which is relatively deep and clumsy when compared to the original structural elements. Set between the vertical structure is steel-framed Crittall Universal style glazing painted black, each bay divided into 8 lights.

The doorway to the East Wing in the car park area

The ground storey is open, with parking underneath. There are 4 bays of columns across the depth of the building, dividing it into 3 bays, the central bay narrower than the outside two. The primary structural elements are terminated at ground floor by a shaped stone kerb. The soffit under the building features square moulded coffers.

Access is gained into the building at the east end from the car park through a centrally-placed passage with narrow rectangular grey-green coloured ceramic tiling to the walls laid vertically in a stack bonded pattern. At the end of this there is a doorway with a granite surround featuring moulded architraves and a panel over with vertical fluting, displaying Art Deco influences. An identical surround is located at the west end, where it provides access through to the central reception. Within the car park at this end a glass block screen mediates the sightlines between the two.

The car park extends out to the south of the building where it meets a low granite retaining wall along Lower Albert Road with a moulded coping stone into which are fixed railings approximately 2.5 metres high. These were altered prior to handover in 1997, replacing the lower historic railings, examples of which still survive around Battery Path.

The eastern section of the elevation is clad with smooth-finished granite. This is of 11 bays, each opening featuring fenestration of the same type as the central section. These have a recessed surround, producing a shadow detail, and a projecting granite cill. The pattern of the granite facing is of alternate headers and stretchers, followed by a course of larger stretchers

The ground slopes down towards the east at this point, introducing an additional storey to the building (lower ground floor). The car park retaining wall returns back to meet the building where the moulded coping stone becomes a string course, under which there is a wedge-shaped plinth which projects slightly from the face of the building. Within this there are 9 bays of small rectangular windows fenestrated with steel-framed glazing with obscured glass, opening on a centre pivot. There are a further two windows under the 8th and 9th bays, indicative of a further basement storey. A planter is present in the corner between the retaining wall and building.

The cornice from the adjacent main section continues along at what would have been the original parapet level. Above this the penthouse extension is set back, glazed and with a stepped fascia as adjacent.

Continuing east, the elevation steps back with a plain panel of granite on the return, onto which the building name is affixed in Cantonese and English, the latter formed of individual letters in a serif font. This panel is then met in the internal corner by a vertical strip of steel-framed curtain walling, 4 bays wide with black painted spandrel panels at the various floor levels.

The building name of the east end of the East Wing

Below this is the main entrance into the building, at lower ground floor, accessed up 6 steps and sheltered by a canopy projecting from the building, square-shaped in plan with the outside corner supported on a fluted granite column with no base or capital. The double entrance doors are of bronze, each glazed with 32 square-shaped lights (4 across and 8 high) with matching fixed panels either side. Above the doors there is a square-shaped granite panel within which the head of a dragon is carved in relief (no explanation for the significance of this was forthcoming). This is in turn set within a rectangular granite panel carved with a zigzag pattern displaying an Art Deco influence. A similar panel is located above the curtain walling, immediately below the cornice. Adjacent to the entrance to the east there is a granite plinth.

To the east of the entrance and curtain walling there is a further panel of granite cladding. The penthouse extension at this point sits flush with the building face, separated from the granite by the cornice. The penthouse is of painted render with a narrow vertical window of 4 lights towards the eastern edge.

Elevation 2, East-Facing

This is of 9 storeys (basement, lower ground and ground to 6th floors). Fronting onto Garden Road it is the most public face of the complex. The main central section of the elevation is a panel of 10 bays between lower ground and 5th floor with an exposed concrete frame, detailed similarly to the north elevation with slender vertical elements separating the bays and horizontal elements at window heads and cills. Fenestration matches those of the other elevations, with 8-light steel-framed Crittall Universal style windows, painted black.

Framing the central section is a granite surround, with a string course at lower ground floor level and the cornice continuing around from adjacent elevations at 6th floor level (the former roof level). The roof extension here features wide panels to the outer edges of the same width and within the same plane as the granite border below; within these and recessed back there are 10 bays of windows that line through with those in the main section below. The roof has a plain fascia, which is somewhat deeper and heavier in treatment than the original building that it surmounts.

Below the string course there is a granite plinth, wedge-shaped in elevation as a result of the adjacent road which slopes from north to south. This features 7 bays of small rectangular-shaped windows at basement level fenestrated with steel-framed glazing with obscured glass and opening on a centre pivot.

Elevations 2 and 3 of the East Wing

Elevation 3, North-Facing

Essentially a handed version of the south elevation, although displaying some subtle differences, this elevation is of 3 parts; a projecting section clad with granite at the east

end, the main central section with exposed concrete frame and granite 'transitional' section at the west end, where the building adjoins the Central Wing.

Lacking the public entrance and street frontage, it is somewhat more utilitarian in character than the south elevation, and is largely sheltered from view by the dense vegetation on the slope down to St John's Cathedral to the north.

The granite-clad eastern section is of 8 storeys (lower ground and ground to 6th floors) and projects out from the main part of the building. Window openings are off-centre, each taking the form of a narrow horizontal rectangular strip with projecting granite surround. On the ground to 5th floors this is divided by granite piers into 6 bays, each containing a vertical-rectangular proportioned 3-light steel-framed Universal style window. On the lower ground floor it is divided into 4 bays of 8-light windows; the string course from the east elevation continues around at low level here before stepping up to form the window cill.

The later top storey, added in 1962-3, has rendered walls flush with the main face of the original building below, and is separated from the lower floors by the cornice at 6th floor level.

Windows are vertical-rectangular shaped, arranged in 6 bays that line through with those on the lower levels.

The adjacent west-facing elevation that returns back to the main building is similar to the north, featuring the same type of horizontal strip window openings, although these are divided into 4 bays by the granite piers. Fenestration is of the 8-light steel framed Crittall Universal type. The upper storey is of painted render with a deep fascia at roof level and balustrading above, and features 3 bays of windows, the northernmost two lining through with those below.

The lower ground floor opens out onto a service yard which is sunken one storey below the adjacent car park. Walls here are of painted textured render, with doors and windows that serve plant rooms below the building. Above, at ground floor level, there is a granite porch to the internal corner which is accessed via a balcony from the car park. The porch has a flat roof with moulded cornice to the edge. The doorway that it once served has been blocked.

The adjacent main section of building features the same exposed concrete frame as the south elevation, stretching across the entire elevation from the internal corner at the east end to the granite transitional section at the west. Primary vertical elements divide it into 12 bays, which are then further subdivided into four to produce 48 bays of windows of the 8-pane steel framed Crittall Universal variety found elsewhere.

The easternmost 12 bays are of 8 storeys (lower ground, ground to 6th floors); the lower ground storey being occupied by plant rooms, opening out through a series of louvred doors onto the service yard, accessed from car park (ground) level via a concrete staircase. Various pipes and large duct runs connect through from the upper storeys to the plant rooms below (these plant rooms are expressed on the south elevation by the series of rectangular windows within the plinth below the granite-clad section).

Bays 13 to 48 are identical to the south elevation, 7 storeys high (ground to 6th floors, the top storey being a later addition of 1964, set back from the main building line) with an open ground storey supported on columns with car parking below and to the north of the building.

At the western end the connection with the Central Wing is achieved with a granite 'transitional' section in the same manner as the south elevation, with mono-pitched roof and square recessed window openings, although in this location it is somewhat more difficult to view due to the presence of the auditorium and staircase extensions to the east of the Central Wing (see below).

2.3.6 Exterior - Central Wing

Overview

The Central Wing is the smallest building of the group, constructed on a flat site at a right angle to the west end of the East Wing, slightly off-centre. It is 8 storeys high (ground to 7th floors) with an externally expressed concrete frame of vertical and horizontal members forming a Cartesian grid across the elevations. Each floor level is divided into two horizontal rows at cill level, the upper row containing vertical-rectangular proportioned windows, the lower row containing square-shaped spandrel panels.

The vertical elements are offset between rows by a half-bay, producing a staggered effect to the elevation and introducing a degree of

The Central Wing, elevation 1

Painted slate on the ground floor

The canopy over the New Annexe entrance

movement to the facade. The concrete elements taper towards the front face, producing raking jambs, soffit and cill sections to each bay. This reduces their overall size and visual impact. The exposed concrete frame is painted a greenish-white.

Windows within the frame are set back from the face of the elevation by approximately 0.5 metres. Fenestration is of the steel-framed Crittall Universal type, painted black. These are generally of three lights; a fixed horizontal rectangular panel to the bottom (sometimes infilled by air conditioning units) with two casement-opening vertical rectangular lights above. The square-shaped panels below are inlaid with blue / green mosaic tiles (an early alteration after the original slate infill panels started to shale).

The roof is flat, with a number of enclosures that contain various plant and machinery. The building has a number of later additions, the annexe to the north and a stair core and auditorium to the east. These appear to have been added c. 1989, although they are in a style that is largely sympathetic to the original building.

Elevation 1, West-Facing

Overlooking the main forecourt of the CGO complex, this is designed to be one of the most impressive elevations. It is in two sections; the section to the south is the original, built in 1956 as the second phase of the CGO. The northern section is the extension, built to house the Executive Council and constructed around 1989.

The southern section is of 36 bays. The ground storey is clad in slate, which appears to be a greyish-blue, although verification of this is made difficult by the fact that it has been painted gloss black. The slate is separated from the concrete frame at 1st floor by a granite string course. The main entrance is denoted by a canopy at ground floor level between the 17th and 24th bays. This has a flat roof and is supported on 2 rows of 4 columns, one row in line with the front edge of the pavement outside the building, the other some 5 metres or so further out to provide a 'Porte Cochere'. The canopy is also clad in slate, painted black. To the outer face of the canopy there is a circular panel bearing the Chinese emblem and a further circular panel over the entrance doors bearing the emblem of Hong Kong.

The main entrance doors are bronze and date from the original construction of the building. The double doors are flanked by side panels of the same width as each door and above are glazed panels divided by thin vertical elements. Each door and side panel has 20 glass panes in a 4x5 configuration.

The ground storey features 7 bays of square windows to the north side of the canopy, with a further 5 bays to the south. Each of these is infilled with a decorative steel security grille painted white; the windows at first floor level also feature similar grilles, although these appear to be a later addition as they do not appear on the original design drawings. Below the windows to either side of the entrance canopy there are planters running along the perimeter of the building.

The outside edges of the elevation (the vertical sides and along the roof parapet) feature granite stone cladding. Various air-conditioning units have been retro-fitted to the elevation, mostly to the bottom panel of the windows. There is no overriding rationale as to how there have been arranged.

The northern side of the building was originally occupied by a two storey building, fan-shaped in plan, which once housed the Council Chamber. This was demolished around 1989 to construct a new annexe to house the Executive Council. This is of 9 bays and closely resembles the design of the adjacent original section with the staggered exposed concrete frame and similar fenestration. Indeed, the only real discernable difference is in the mosaic tiles, which are of a slightly different shade of blue-green.

The extension is separated from the original building by a vertical strip approximately 3 bays wide featuring horizontal banding contiguous with internal floor levels, each clad with narrow rectangular greyish-brown coloured ceramic tiles, laid horizontally in a stack-bonded pattern. Between the banding at each floor level there is a mixture of louvres to some floors and glazing to others.

To the north-eastern corner of the building there is a canopy, similar to that on the original building adjacent. This is supported on 4 columns, 2 close to the building and 2 further away lining through with the front edge of the pavement. Entrance doors are glazed with black-painted steel frames and steel grilles.

There is some variation in cladding materials between the extension and original building, presumably the result of budgetary constraints. Instead of slate, the lower storey and canopy are clad with the same greyish-brown coloured ceramic tiles. Also, the granite edging of the original elevation is substituted for a square-shaped ceramic tile of a texture and beige colour similar to the granite. The string course at first floor level is not reproduced.

The northern end of the building contains a lift and staircase and steps back from the main building line to form a separate section 9 storeys high (ground to 8th floors), the top floor containing a lift overrun and providing access to the roof. The west-facing section of this consists of a panel of greyish-brown tiles edged by square-shaped beige tiles.

The ground surface throughout the forecourt is generally of tarmac, although some areas are of beach cobbles set in mortar. Adjacent to the canopy on the original section there is a ventilation extract from the car park that runs below the forecourt and continues under the West Wing. This extract is circular in plan approximately one metre tall with ventilation grilles to the sides. It is constructed of concrete with a granular finish similar to that found on the buildings.

Elevation 2, North-Facing
This is a continuation of the stair and lift element mentioned above. The north elevation is plain, clad entirely with the square beige-coloured ceramic tiles. It is divided into 3 bays; the two outside bays project forward with canted returns into the centre, which in turn features a single bay of horizontal-rectangular steel-framed windows on the 1st to 7th floors.

These are painted black, consisting of a narrow rectangular fanlight with 3 vertical rectangular lights below. Lining through with the windows at parapet level there is a cut-away section of wall; at ground floor level there is a set of glazed doors with black-painted steel-frames and a steel grille over. There is evidence here of some remedial detailing introduced at the head in an effort to prevent corrosion to the doors and frame, caused as a result of inadequate drip detailing, the door frames being flush to the building face. To the east of the door at low level there is a dry riser cupboard and a louvred vent terminal.

Central Wing, elevation 2

Central Wing, elevation 3

Elevation 3, East-Facing
This is in essence, a facsimile of the front (west) elevation; the main section of building follows the expressed concrete frame with staggered vertical members as seen elsewhere, with the later extension to the northern end all expressed in the same fashion.

However, there are a several key differences:

- Bays on the first and second floors of the extension are blind, with further blind windows on upper floors in the 1st, 4th and 7th bays. There is no obvious reason for this externally.
- There are several lower structures, a stair core and an auditorium, adjoining the building that obscure sections of the elevation (see below).
- The East Wing abuts the building at the 15th original bay from the north.

The stair core is contemporaneous with the northern extension, being clad in the same square shaped beige-coloured ceramic tiles as seen elsewhere. It adjoins the main building within the vertical strip that separates the extension from the original building, also clad with narrow rectangular greyish-brown coloured ceramic tiles.

Five storeys in height (ground to 4th floors) with a flat roof, the corners of the building are chamfered with the result that on plan the staircase element is an irregular octagon. At each floor level these chamfers feature right-angled projections onto which sit steel-framed corner windows, painted black. These run floor to ceiling and follow the line of the internal floor levels, with some at half landing level so that in elevation they are offset. The main internal floor levels are expressed externally with a raked-out joint in the tiles, possibly for expansion.

Adjoining the stair core to the south via a panel of the greyish-brown coloured ceramic tiles there is a further block, windowless with a flat roof. This is of 2 storeys (ground and first floors), with greyish-brown coloured ceramic tiles to the ground storey and white rectangular tiles to the first. These are of varying thickness, laid randomly to produce an undulating 'hit-and-miss' pattern to the elevation. The 1st floor also features a canted bay projection. The block apparently houses an auditorium / debating chamber, although no internal access was available to verify this.

Although individually these elements have interesting features, when viewed as a group their appearance is somewhat incoherent, obscuring the original building and relating poorly to it and to each other.

Immediately to the south of the auditorium is the connection with the East Wing, expressed through the use of a granite 'transitional' element. Although built as part of the Central Wing phase, these elements are more prominent on the north and south elevations of the East Wing. Consequently, detailed description of these can be found within these sections.

To the south of the East Wing the Central Wing east elevation continues in an identical fashion to the west, 11 bays across with a (painted) slate-clad lower storey inset with square windows with steel grilles, with exposed concrete frame above. The outer edges of the building are clad with granite.

Elevation 4, South-Facing

This elevation is relatively narrow; being the end of the 'T' shaped section formed by the Central and East Wings. Facing onto the back edge of the pavement, it is one of the most public elevations of the complex, yet is relatively plain. It is clad with granite, with one centrally-placed bay of vertically proportioned windows with projecting granite surrounds and cills, inset with steel framed Crittall Universal style windows. The first floor window is inset with a steel grille.

At ground floor level there is a doorway which may once have been a public entrance, featuring a projecting granite porch with a shallow-pitched roof, forming a gable to the street. The doors themselves are modern steel replacements.

Central Wing, elevation 4

2.3.7 Exterior - West Wing

Overview
The West Wing is the largest building of the group. Its site is the most complex of the three, flat at the east end but sloping away sharply towards the west, with the result that the building and ranges from 7 storeys at the east end (7th to 13th floors) to 14 at the west (ground to 13th floors).

Elevations are a mix of granite tile cladding and exposed concrete frame with inset glazing and cladding panels. The frame is painted a greenish-white; the spandrel panels a darker bluish-green.

The building is 'L' shaped in plan, the main 'leg' section orientated roughly east-west with the 'foot' of the L orientated north-south.

All roofs are flat, with a number of enclosures that contain various plant and machinery. The top (13th) storey is a later addition of 1964, set back from the main building line

Elevation 1, North-Facing
The full length of the building cannot be viewed in this elevation due to the slope in front, which is covered with dense vegetation. It ranges from being one of the public faces of the compound at the main entrance to the west on Queen's Road Central, to being inaccessible to the public at the east.

The elevation is of 2 parts; the east end is the smaller of the two, clad in granite and projecting forward from the main building, To the west of this the main part of the building features an exposed concrete frame arranged around a regular Cartesian grid. The ground level at the eastern end corresponds with the 7th floor internally; the actual ground floor is contiguous with Queen's Road Central below.

The projecting granite-clad eastern section is 5 metres wide with 10 bays of window openings, each infilled with black painted steel-framed Crittall Universal glazing recessed well back so that the openings appear 'punched' into the face of the wall.

The fenestration pattern is of 3 panes; a narrow horizontal-rectangular fanlight with two vertical-rectangular casement opening lights below, one narrow, the other wider. All frames are painted black.

At ground level (7th floor) there are four smaller square openings infilled with black-painted steel louvres; to the west of these there are two openings with stainless steel doors.

The pattern of the granite facing is of alternate headers and stretchers, followed by a course of larger stretchers. At parapet level this is finished with a simple coping stone detail.

West Wing, elevation 1, east end

West Wing, elevation 1, west end

Immediately to the east of the granite section there is a rendered section of wall 8 storeys high (7th to 14th floors) and a further section of wall with metal cladding panels. These are part of an extension, added c. 1998 and also consisting of a glazed entrance lobby. These are dealt with in Elevation 6 below.

Continuing west, the building steps back with a plain panel of granite on the return. The main feature of the adjoining main section is an exposed concrete frame consisting of horizontal and vertical elements arranged around a regular Cartesian grid of 32 bays, each 2.8 m high and 2.44 m wide. Within this the fenestration line is set well back, providing some shading and visual depth to the elevations.

The front faces of the horizontal and vertical members are flush, although the horizontal elements are deeper in profile, further emphasising the overall horizontal nature of the building. The verticals have parallel reveals, giving them a somewhat inelegant and heavier appearance when compared to the earlier buildings of the complex. Horizontals are commensurate with the internal floor levels, the top surfaces are sloped to throw rainwater away from the building, which has caused some staining to the faces. The bottom edge of the horizontal elements feature carefully executed drips; the profile then returns up above the window head to form a coffer, with the result that the concrete here is relatively thin, a possible indication that they are 'L' shaped pre-cast units, laid on their side.

Windows are of the galvanised steel Crittall Universal type, single glazed with frames painted gloss black. Each is of 6 panes; 2 horizontal-rectangular fanlights over 4 vertical-rectangular side hung casements, the two outside panes being narrower than those to the centre. Window cills are of 2 courses of tile set in mortar. Below cill level there is a concrete spandrel panel to each bay.
The top (13th) storey is a later addition of 1964, set back from the main building line with a relatively deep projecting fascia panel at roof level. The Crittall windows have 4 vertical rectangular panes over 2 horizontal. The original parapet is still distinguishable, further emphasised by a deeper horizontal concrete band below. At roof level there are assorted balustrades, access gantries and profiled metal clad plant enclosures.

Adjoining the west side of the granite section at 8th floor level a cantilevered concrete canopy with a headroom of 2.1 metres runs between the 1st and 13th bays; below this on the ground (7th floor) the expressed concrete frame is eschewed in favour of a flush concrete wall with doors corresponding to the 5th and 9th bays above. The easternmost bays (1 and 2) provide a passageway through the building between the north and south sides.

At the 13th and 14th bays the space below the canopy is infilled to form a store, accessed from the car park. To the north of this a pre-cast concrete staircase leads down from the car park (7th floor level) to a balcony at 6th floor level with a perimeter upstand into which is fixed a steel balustrade. This provides access to the plant rooms that run underneath the building (corresponding access is provided to the south elevation; see below). The exposed concrete frame at this point is inset with large black-painted steel louvres. Further west, another pre-cast concrete stair (which shows signs of repairs) leads down to 5th floor level, where a further balcony extends out between the 22nd to 25th bays.

Above this on the 7th floor (adjoining the store mentioned above) the 15th to 27th bays protrude from the face of the building by one bay. This contains the staff cafeteria, with floor-to-ceiling glazing of the Crittall Universal type, each bay divided into 7 panes; 2 narrow horizontal-rectangular fanlights over 3 equally sized vertical rectangular casements over 2 vertical-rectangular fixed panes.

The west entrance to the West Wing

Both the balcony and cantilevered cafeteria are visible from the junction with Ice House Street, adding some much-needed visual drama to the otherwise repetitive elevation.

The main entrance to the building is located at the junction of Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central in bays 30 and 31. This is denoted by a rectangular-shaped cantilevered concrete canopy, the profile of which tapers away from the building. The canopy has asphalt weathering and 2 cylinder-shaped downlighters to the soffit. There are steps with 5 risers from the street into the ground floor level of the building with a ramp to the east, a later alteration as original drawings show an L-shaped stair arrangement only. This change is likely to have been carried out in the late 1980s along with the refurbishment of the interior of the reception area. The exposed structural frame to either side and above the entrance doors is infilled with a purple marble with grey/green veining. There are two pairs of double entrance doors separated by a further marble panel. The doors are of bronze with 6 no. narrow rectangular vision panels which run the full-height of the doors.

To the east of the entrance is a retaining wall of granite blocks 1 storey high bearing the building name. The ground slopes up sharply to the east above the wall, eventually meeting the car park at 7th floor level. Sections of the concrete frame are infilled with granite blocks against the slope. Against the retaining wall and between the ramp and stair are low-level planters clad with modern ceramic tiles.

The western edge of the building is clad with a vertical strip of granite which wraps around the corner to become a feature of the west elevation.

Elevation 2, North-West Facing

This elevation faces onto Ice House Street, which slopes up from north to south. It is split into 2 distinct parts; the northernmost section corresponding to the end of the main section of the building and the southernmost section, corresponding to the 'foot' of the 'L' shape at this end of the building.

The slope of Ice House Street is accommodated by a wedge-shaped plinth of rough-hewn granite blocks which stretches across both sections, 1 storey high at its deepest part. Street level in the north corresponds to the internal ground floor level; to the south it corresponds to the internal 1st floor.

West Wing, elevation 2

The northern section this is of 13 storeys (ground to 12th floors) and is divided vertically into 3 sections, each section edged with horizontal and vertical granite banding, the horizontal sections corresponding with the internal floor levels of the building. The central bay features the main stair, with the horizontal granite bands corresponding with the half landing levels to produce a 'staggered' effect between the three parts; the two outer sections are identical with the centre section offset by a half-storey.

The two outer bays are infilled with rendered panels between the granite, painted light green /grey, each with 2 bays of square-shaped window openings with centre-pivot steel windows of one pane.

The centre section features full-height black painted steel framed glazing divided into 9 panels in 3 bays; horizontal rectangular fanlights over vertical rectangular lights to the centre and lower panels.

The granite plinth (ground floor level) has a large rectangular window to the northern end which lights the reception area behind; to the south of this are 4 square openings infilled with louvres ventilating a store behind.

The top of the building features a deeper granite band and is finished with a parapet. To the south side there is a narrow single storey enclosure that projects up above the parapet, containing plant rooms.

The southern section is similar to the main north elevation, with an external concrete frame inset with glazing and spandrel panels. The main difference here is that the horizontal elements are thinner in profile and project out further than the vertical. This produces a more horizontal emphasis to this section, with the vertical elements appearing as 'fins' set within the horizontal.

The elevation is divided into 10 bays, each 2.4 metres wide, with a height between horizontal elements of 2.8 metres. Windows are in steel of 6 panes, identical to the main.
At 7th floor level the building rakes back at an angle of approximately 20 degrees, presumably as a means of admitting further daylight to the street below.

The bay to the bottom south corner corresponding with street level (1st floor level internally due to the slope of the street) features a set of stainless steel doors with marble surround matching that to the main entrance. This once provided an entrance to the public space of the Banking Hall at this level, now removed to provide office space. Two bays to the north of this are a set of louvred steel doors giving access to a plant room.

Elevation 3, South Facing
This forms the southern end of the 'L' shaped section of the building, 13 storeys high (1st to 13th floors) and of vertical rectangular proportion with the top western corner cut away, corresponding to the raking section at 7th floor level and above.

The elevation is faced in granite arranged in 2 course depths; the narrower course is 230 mm deep with square headers and rectangular stretchers arranged in the following pattern: H H ST H H ST, etc. The wider course is 330 mm deep, arranged entirely in stretchers.

Within the eastern half on the 1st to 12th floors (the 13th floor is an extension with no window openings within this elevation) there are 2 bays of square openings which light a staircase behind. These have black painted steel-framed windows of 2 opening casements; one narrow vertical rectangle, the other wider.

West Wing, elevation 3

The windows are recessed well-back so that the openings appear to be 'punched' into the face of the wall.

This section of the building is cut into the adjacent slope, which is supported by a high retaining wall separated from the building by a narrow passageway with a staircase at the south-east corner of approximately one storey height.

Elevation 4, East-Facing
This elevation features the same exposed concrete frame as on the north elevation (see above). Twelve storeys high (2nd to 13th floors), it is of 11 bays. The top (13th) floor is a later addition of 1964, set back from the main building line; the original top of the building is marked by a deeper concrete band at what would have been the former parapet level.

The extension has a deep eaves fascia panel, painted black. Various access gantries and plant enclosures are visible at roof level.

The first bay from the south contains the staircase at this end of the building; the horizontal elements of the frame in this section are offset by half a storey to correspond with the half-landings of the stair, producing a staggered appearance externally.

West Wing, elevation 4

The rectangular-shaped bays throughout are infilled with steel-framed Crittall Universal type glazing to the top section with concrete spandrel panels below. Windows are of 6 panes, identical to the north elevation. The ninth and tenth bays from the south are mostly infilled with black-painted steel louvres in place of glazing.

There are a number of later accretions to the elevation to allow for enhanced servicing within the building, most notably several large pipes at 6th floor level.

The lower storey (2nd floor internally) is partially buried, with glazing to the upper section of the bays. The ground adjacent to the building and the steep slope behind are coated with sprayed concrete to prevent collapse. Apertures within the concrete form planters.

Elevation 5, South-Facing

Similar to the north elevation, the main western part of the elevation continues the exposed concrete grid frame, with a smaller granite-clad section at the east. The building ranges from 12 (2nd to 13th floors) at the west end to 7 (7th to 13th floors) storeys at the east.

The exposed concrete grid frame is over 27 bays, running from 7th to 13th floors with steel-framed windows and concrete spandrel panels, identical to the north elevation. The top (13th) storey is a later addition of 1964, set back from the main building line. The original parapet of the building can be distinguished by a deeper concrete band above the 12th floor. At roof level there are assorted balustrades, access gantries and plant enclosures clad in profiled metal sheet.

At the western end of the elevation between 2nd and 7th floor levels the steep slope of the site creates a wedge–shaped section of the elevation. This is clad in granite, with 5 bays of square windows (similar to those in elevation 3 above) at 7th floor, reducing to 3 bays at 2nd floor.

At 6th floor level in bays 5 to 7 there is a balcony, accessed via a ramp from the main forecourt within the CGO compound. This gives access to the plant rooms which run underneath the building, which can also be accessed from the corresponding balcony on the north elevation (see above).

Directly above this at 7th floor level between the 1st and 13th bays there is a balcony leading from the main forecourt which provides access into the main part of the building. The balcony is sheltered by a cantilevered concrete canopy which runs along the entire length of the building at 8th floor level with a headroom of 2.1 metres; the fascia and soffit of this have

West Wing, elevation 5

been clad with powder-coated steel panels; a later addition.

Below the canopy at the eastern end of the building some vertical elements of the concrete frame have been omitted to create double bays, the easternmost of which (bays 26 and 27) provide a passageway through the building from north to south side.

There are a number of later accretions to the elevation to allow for enhanced servicing within the building; between bays 4 and 5 there is a large stainless steel duct running from the 6th floor plant rooms and discharging at roof level. A further duct runs along the top face of the canopy (see above). At 12th floor level a number of bays have been infilled with balustrading behind which air conditioning units have been mounted. The 14th and 15th bays are infilled with black-painted steel louvres in place of glazing.

At the east end of the building there is a projecting granite-clad section. This is a handed version of that on the north elevation, 7 storeys (7th to 13th floors) with 10 bays of window openings, each infilled with black painted steel-framed Crittall Universal glazing, and finished with a simple parapet coping stone at roof level.

Immediately to the east there is a single-storey glazed entrance lobby, part of an extension, added c. 1998. This is described in Elevation 6 below.

To the south there is a ramp down surrounded by rough-hewn granite retaining walls which gives access to the car park and plant rooms at 6th floor level.

Elevation 6, East-Facing

Also of 7 storeys (7th to 13th floors), this elevation has been partially obscured by a modern extension added c. 1998, containing an entrance lobby and further office space

The original elevation would originally have been divided into 3 roughly equal parts; a central section with two flanking granite-clad elements, the latter featuring a single bay of rectangular window openings. One of these is still visible to the south, but the one to the north has been obscured by the new extension.

The central section employs a different architectural language, with horizontal strip windows with steel-framed glazing spanning between the granite. Below cill level there are white-painted rectangular concrete cladding panels, the joints between them expressed by a simple chamfer.

West Wing, elevation 6

The new extension consists of a single-storey element in front of the elevation, 'D' shaped in plan and containing the entrance lobby, and two 8 storey (7th to 14th floors) 'tower' elements to the northeast corner containing offices and a lift shaft.

The front elevation of the entrance features a light-grey painted rendered plane that is curved on plan, from which a large entrance canopy with coffered soffit projects. This is supported on 3 concrete columns, located away from the building to allow a car to pass between them and the entrance doors.

The east and south sides of lobby feature floor-to-ceiling planar glazing with glass supporting fins. Doors are glazed with polished stainless steel surrounds. The lobby has a flat roof.

Behind the lobby and to the north side there are two separate 'tower' elements protruding from the building and projecting up above the original roof line by one storey. These are expressed separately; one features metal cladding panels and has a single bay of horizontal-rectangular window openings on the 8th to 12th floors inclusive to the east and south sides. Above the windows there are several square-shaped ventilation grilles which are showing signs of weathering. The other tower element contains the lift shaft, and is rendered with applied metal banding corresponding to internal floor levels.

2.3.8 Interiors

A comparison of the original plans and room allocations with the layout of the current buildings reveal that there have been many changes to the internal layouts in the 50 or so years since completion, with few areas surviving in their original state. Original plans are filled with references to uses of spaces that offer tantalising glimpses into the prevailing culture at that time, particularly its hierarchical divisions, such as the distinction between *Junior Male Toilets* and *Senior Male Toilets* and *Senior* and *Junior Dining Rooms* within the West Wing 7th floor canteen, as shown on original drawings from 1955.

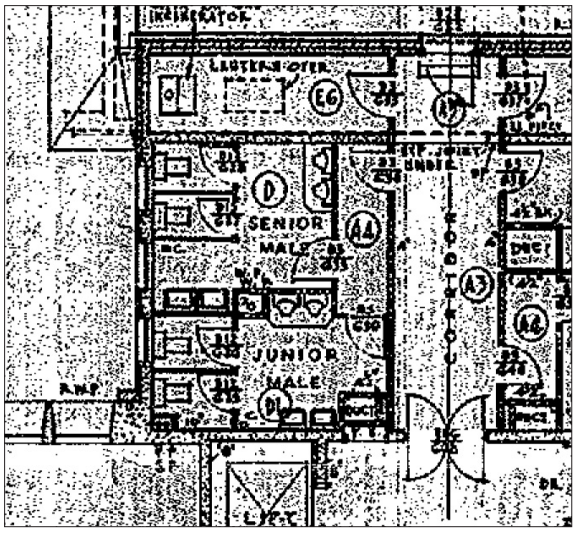
The plans also provide a valuable insight of the roles and services that the Government provided during the mid-to-late twentieth century, some egalitarian, such as medical rooms on the East Wing ground floor, others economic, such as the Banking Hall with public space on the 1st and 2nd floor of the West Wing, and other more unusual sounding activities, such as the Censor Theatre on the 5th floor of the same building.

There are also references to construction. It would appear that originally partitions within the buildings were of 3" and 4" concrete blocks[6] or 3" clay blocks[7]. More recent partitions are of demountable construction partitions.

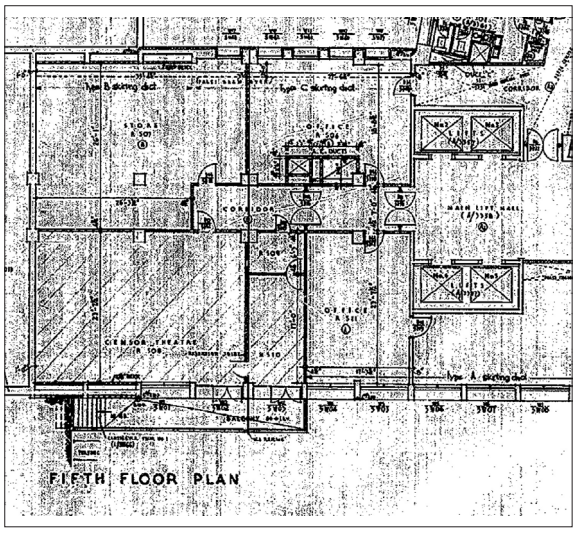
Wholesale alterations took place within the buildings relatively soon after completion; archive drawings within the Architectural Services Department from the early 1960s contain numerous references to "...*dismantling of temporary partitions and erection of 3" hollow concrete block"* and *"demountable partitions removed and re-fixed or stored".* The impact that this had on the spaces is considerable; probably the most dramatic example of this is a plan from 1956 that shows the entire 3rd floor of the East and Central Wings as open plan, allocated to the *Architectural Office*[8].

Finishes have fared little better. Plans show teak panelling and marble to the Central Wing reception[9], *domed lights over* to the East Wing lift lobbies[10], and stone cladding to the walls[11], All of these are now gone, replaced by modern finishes.

The fact that so many of these uses have ceased or moved elsewhere and the spaces and finishes have changed means that a great deal of the potential historic architectural and social interest of the buildings has been lost. It does appear that during the early years of use there was a greater variety of activities and consequently spaces within the buildings, ranging from architectural draughting rooms to libraries, conference rooms to cinemas, banking halls to debating chambers and the Diplomatic Wireless Office on the roof of the Central Wing.



Plan of the Central Wing showing the Junior and Senior Male Toilets (ASD, ref: 24127)



Plan of the West Wing showing the Censor Theatre (ASD, ref: 24194)

6 Plan of East Wing, 5th Floor, 1952, microfilm no. 23565

7 Plan of Central Wing, 4th Floor, 1955, microfilm no. 24126

8 Plan of Central Wing, 3rd, 4th, 5th & 6th floors, 1956, microfilm no. 23701

9 Plan of Central Wing, G Floor, 1955, microfilm no. 24124

10 Plan of East Wing, 5th Floor, 1952, microfilm no. 23565

11 East Wing, Longitudinal Section, 1951, microfilm no. 23567

People from all walks of life and professions would have had contact with one another, producing an interesting mix of people and activities within one place. Nowadays the buildings are far more homogeneous in their use, consisting mainly of offices with little variation between them.

Due to the buildings still being occupied by various government departments at the time of survey, for security reasons limited access was available to the interiors. Areas with restricted access are listed at the beginning of each section. However, whilst access was not available to all of the offices and associated corridors, it was generally available to most common stairs and lift lobbies, which in most instances was sufficient to gain an impression of the level of surviving fabric within the buildings.

As outlined above, the level of surviving original or early fabric is generally low. Since completion during the 1950s the buildings have been refurbished many times, with uses of spaces changed and partitions added or removed, as well as the alteration of finishes and fixtures and fittings. The buildings were designed to be flexible in this manner, and the fact that it has happened so extensively is, in some ways, a measure of their success.

However, refurbishment has been undertaken on a piecemeal basis rather than in complete phases, with the result that there is little coherence between the collective parts and a variety of different finishes. Since the purpose of this study is to assess the historic interest of the buildings, not to provide a description of modern finishes, only the earliest interiors, that are particularly noteworthy, are described in detail.

As a result of the nature of activities undertaken in the buildings (i.e. general office work) many of the spaces are repetitive in nature, featuring similar wall, floor and ceiling finishes. For this reason, descriptions of such areas are treated collectively and referred to as 'typical' (i.e. *typical office space).*

2.3.9 East Wing Interiors

Overview
The main section of the building is a long, narrow rectangle in plan with a central corridor and offices to either side, with a square-shaped section at the east end containing the lifts and stair. To the west the building adjoins the later Central Wing (1956), where there are further stairs and lifts. The building primarily provides office accommodation for civil servants.

Restricted Areas
No access was available to the following:
4th floor
5th floor
Ground floor and Basement Plant Rooms
Roof

Main Reception (Lower Ground Floor)
This is the main entrance to the building, located at the eastern end and accessed from the south accessed via a short flight of steps from Lower Albert Road. The space is rectangular in plan, with bronze entrance doors and two lifts opposite. There are passageways either side of the lifts; to the east provides access to plant rooms and stores, to the west leads to the main stair within this part of the building.

The reception area has been refurbished, with most original finishes and fittings removed. The walls are clad with a light beige-coloured marble with grey and gold coloured veining, with light beige-coloured ceramic tiles to the floor. The ceilings are suspended grids, with metal tiles and recessed downlights. Lifts are modern, with stainless steel fronts.

There is a small, modern reception desk to the east side, adjacent to the doors. Between the entrance doors and the lift there is a row of stainless steel security barriers. Also to the east there is a stair leading down to a tunnel that runs underneath Garden Road and connects with the Murray Building opposite. This does not appear on the original drawings, and probably dates from the construction of the Murray Building in 1969.

When compared with reception areas in the Central and West Wings, it is clear that this is a less significant space, smaller in size and with less impressive finishes.

Typical lift lobby
Lift lobbies are the same configuration as the main reception on the lower ground floor, with the lifts facing the strip of curtain walling over the main entrance on Lower Albert Road. The original lift fronts survive to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th floors, consisting of a beige-coloured terrazzo surround with a fluted central panel between the two lift doors. In keeping with elements of the exterior, these are more akin to the style of the 1930s than the 1950s functionalism of the Central and West Wings. Lifts and lift doors are modern, and there is a further modern stainless steel border surrounding the terrazzo lift fronts.

Typical lift lobby in the East Wing

The western walls are clad with a light coloured marble similar to that in the main reception, later additions undertaken approximately 10 years ago. Walls to the east are of painted plaster. Floors are of mid-grey coloured ceramic tiles; ceilings are suspended metal tiles. The frames of the curtain walling to the south wall are painted white.

The lobby to the ground floor has been refurbished, with the light-beige coloured marble replacing the original terrazzo.

Typical Staircase
The main staircase within this part of the building is located behind the lift shafts. Finishes are largely original; the walls are covered with a light-grey coloured terrazzo to dado level, although it is notable that this is more intricate than seen elsewhere in the Central and West, with additional mouldings around the dado rails and expressed skirtings. Walls and ceilings above are of painted plaster, with a cornice detail at the ceiling junction. Landings and treads are of blue mosaic tiles with grooved terracotta tiles to the nosings.

The balustrade is steel, with the main square-section balusters painted black and smaller circular-section rods between painted blue to match the floor. The handrail is of hardwood.

Typical staircase in the East Wing

Central Corridors
Corridors run through the centre of the building with offices to either side. Corridors are accessed from the south-west corner of the lift and stair lobbies and connect through to the main stair core within the Central Wing to the west

Walls are generally formed of demountable partitions which, although not contemporary with the original construction of the buildings (the original plans show internal partitions as 9” hollow block or 9” clay block) are of an early date. Partitions take the form of panels approximately 2.4 m x 1.2 m covered with a textured beige / grey wall covering. The joints between the panels and around the door frames are finished with an aluminium trim. Partitions are inside of the central columns within the building so that the corridor walls are flush.

Typical central corridor in the East Wing

Doors to offices are of teak, with teak frames and ventilation grilles to the head to promote through-ventilation from the offices into the corridor. In some instances the ventilation grilles also have teak acoustic back-boxes lined with sound-absorbent material to minimise the passage of sound between spaces, demonstrating careful detailing and a use of materials that would be too expensive today. In some instances there are no doors, simply grilles at high level within the partitions.

Ceilings within corridors are suspended grids, with recessed lighting diffusers. Floors are carpeted, the colour and type of which varies between floors.

The 1st floor corridor is a variation on the above, with modern door surrounds, the head of which protrudes from the surface of the wall and forms a continuous shelf along the corridor featuring recessed downlighters. Walls are covered with padded fabric; the floor is carpeted with suspended grid ceiling over.

The ground floor corridor leads through to the car park underneath the building, providing the service entrance to the building. Walls here have dark beige-coloured narrow rectangular ceramic tiles, laid vertically in a stack-bonded pattern. Doors have timber grilles over, all painted off-white. The floor has beige-coloured ceramic tiles, and there is a modern suspended ceiling with metal tiles. The ceiling above is plastered, indicating that it was originally on display. Either side of the corridor there are various plant and service rooms and stores.

Typical Office

The amount of original or early surviving fabric within offices varies from space to space. Some have partitions that, if not original, are of some age, and feature hardwood veneered doors with hardwood frames. Demountable partitions at right angles to the external walls sub-divide the offices laterally.

Ceilings are the suspended grid-type throughout with lay-in tiles; set within the grid are fluorescent lighting diffusers and air-conditioning grilles. Ceiling levels generally have an uncomfortable relationship with the windows, sitting directly at the head, indicating that original ceiling voids were shallower. This is presumably the result of an increased requirement for servicing within the offices.

Walls are painted plaster, with floors carpeted throughout. Desk arrangements vary from space to space according to the occupants' requirements. Some secondary glazing exists to windows, principally to those that overlook busy streets such as Garden Road, providing noise reduction. Windows generally have Venetian blinds.

Typical WC Facilities

WC facilities are located at the eastern end adjacent to the stair. These are all modern refurbishments.

Conference Rooms (1st Floor)

Located in the south-western corner of the building, these are some of the few spaces in the buildings where an early use remains. These spaces also retain a high proportion of original fabric. References to conference rooms appear on plans from 1962, although earlier plans show the space as *General Office*.

The most significant of these spaces is rectangular in plan, relatively large to accommodate a number of people. Walls have teak panelling to dado level, the section in front of the windows containing ventilation grilles to air conditioning units concealed behind. Further ventilation units are concealed within built-in timber cupboards at various locations.

Conference Room with original fixtures and fittings in the East Wing

Walls above are of painted plaster, the window and corridor walls featuring lighting pelmets at window head height. The west wall features two windows that look into the adjacent audio-visual support room, accessed via the corridor. The ceiling features a number of downstand beams, the soffit between infilled with a suspended grid ceiling, an unsympathetic later addition. Centrally-placed within these are three chandeliers, each consisting of a brass frame of concentric circles from which hang teardrop-shaped pieces of glass.

The centrepiece of the room is the large teak conference table, which is most probably original. This is oval in shape with truncated ends, and is believed to have been relocated here from elsewhere within the complex. Unfortunately none of the original chairs survive.

Immediately to the east of the principal room there is a further conference room, slightly smaller but with similar fixtures and fittings, including the table. The suspended ceiling here is lower, with no lighting pelmets or chandeliers. An audio visual room with interconnecting windows also exists at the eastern end.

Roof
No access was available to the roof. However, limited views were possible from the adjacent Central Wing. This suggested that the arrangement was much the same as elsewhere, with bituminous felt covering and various plant enclosures, water tanks, gantries and handrails.

2.3.10 Central Wing Interiors

Overview
The main section of the building is a narrow rectangle in plan, perpendicular to the adjacent East Wing. The general plan form is of a central corridor and offices to either side. The lifts and stair are roughly centrally-located, towards the eastern side. A further escape stair is located at the southern end of the wing. The building provides office accommodation for more senior members of staff.

Restricted Areas
No access was available to the following:

1st floor
3rd floor
4th floor
5th floor
6th floor

Plant rooms
Access was only available to the Ground, 2nd and 7th floors. This has made it difficult to assess the extent of the surviving original fabric, further compromised by the fact that the 7th floor is a later addition, the date of which is unclear. However, from glimpses of restricted areas it was clear that most had been subject to modern refurbishment works, and that little of the original fabric had survived.

Ground Floor Reception
The entrance doors are of bronze, double doors with glazing in 20 vertical rectangular panes (4 vertical rows of 5) with fanlights over with vertical fins. The bronze is of two tones; light coloured to the glazing beads with a darker shade to the main door panels. The doors are flanked either side by fixed panels to the same design. There are a further two fixed panels to the north and south, also to the same design but with 8 vertical rows of 5 glazed panels.

The reception area is an inverted 'T' in plan, the main entrance to the west in the head of the 'T'. The lifts and stair are to the east, the lifts to the north and stair to the south. Original plans show that the walls were clad with marble with areas of timber panelling on the flank walls of the lift and stairs. The main reception area features two columns, also clad with marble.

The reception desk is located adjacent to the entrance doors, to the south.

The layout today is largely unchanged, although a further stair giving access to the first floor only has been inserted to the north of the entrance, which has necessitated the enlargement of the reception to the north by the removal of the former police room. This creates a double-height area around the stair, which gives access to a first floor landing area, also clad in marble with a glazed teak-coloured timber screen to the east leading to the rooms behind (possibly the Council Chamber; no access was available). The date of the stair and landing alterations is unknown, but most likely originating from the alterations associated with the Central Wing Annexe (possibly 1989). They are absent from plans dated 1962

The walls are clad with a light beige-coloured marble with grey and gold coloured veining. It is unlikely that this is original, since some infilling of windows to the ground floor would have been necessary following removal of the police room; no infill is apparent.

The ground floor reception in the Central Wing

Also, the stair is clad with marble which is very similar to that of the walls. Beneath the stair the north wall is clad with a dark reddish-pink marble with grey veining (similar to that in the West Wing reception; see below). Set within this to the east of the stair there is a lighter-coloured marble panel bearing the following inscription:

"This building was opened by his Excellency the Governor Sir Alexander Grantham G.C.M.G. on the 9th January 1957. On the 24th of August 1954 during the demolition of the original Colonial Secretariat which stood on the site of the present building this plaque was discovered, set in the granite foundation blocks at the north west corner of the old building and covering a canister containing coins of the realm."

The brass plaque in question is also inset within the panel, bearing a description commemorating the building of the original Secretariat. Since this was only discovered during the excavation works of the 1950s mention of the plaque is absent from the original drawings. The floor area around the stair and plaque is covered with loose pebbles and several plants in pots – presumably a relatively recent piece of 'interior design'.

The remainder of the reception area has undergone a recent refurbishment. The columns are now clad in a yellowish-orange timber, as are the walls around the lift and stair. Lifts are modern, with stainless steel doors and surround. The floor is of square-shaped stone tiles set at 45 degrees to the walls, inset with square tiles of a darker colour.

Ceilings throughout are of plasterboard with moulded coffered details to principal areas featuring recessed downlights and ventilation grilles. A line of stainless steel security barriers separates the lifts and stair from the main reception area. Although still in its original location, the reception desk is modern and of timber matching that as used for the wall panels.

The commemorative plaque with pebbles and planting

Typical Lift Lobby

As it is a later addition the 7th floor has no lifts; these terminating at the 6th floor.

The modern refurbishment of the ground floor reception area appears to have included the stair and lift lobbies, with finishes common to all, most notably the yellowish coloured timber panelling. This is present to all walls, where it is divided into top and bottom panels by an applied timber moulding. In some instances the top panel is of light beige coloured marble. Lifts are modern, with brushed stainless steel doors and surround. Ceilings are suspended, with a central panel of lay-in tiles inset with downlighters and ventilation grilles to the perimeter. Floors are of highly polished stone tiles, light beige coloured with darker inlaid patterns of concentric squares. Each floor has its own reception desk facing the lifts, of timber to match the walls and with a black granite top. Behind are fitted cupboards, also of matching timber.

Glazed timber screens separate the lobby from the corridor to the west. To the east, accessed via glazed double doors, is a short corridor corresponding to the granite-faced link section between the Central and East Wing with lavatories to either side. A further set of double doors leads to the central corridor of the East Wing.

Typical Corridor

The main central axis of the building features a central corridor with offices to either side. The finishes here vary from floor to floor, all having had modern refurbishments. Generally walls are modern plasterboard partitions with hardwood doors, frames, architraves and skirting of various shades; those to the 2nd floor are of a dark mahogany colour, whilst most are of a mid-tone orangey-yellow. Ceilings are suspended, with lay-in tiles inset with lighting and ventilation grilles. Floors are carpeted.

The 5th floor has a lounge area opposite the lift lobby, with soft furnishings and carpeted floor, all of which is modern. From this the corridor leads off to either side.

Typical corridor in the Central Wing

Typical lift lobby in the Central Wing

Typical Staircase

There are two stairs within the building; the main stair within the lift lobby and an escape stair at the south end.

The main stair has been completely refurbished, probably during the same phase as the main reception area and lift lobbies and features the same yellowish-coloured timber panelling up to dado level (including handrails) with vinyl wall covering above. Landing and treads of the stair are of pink granite with grey flecks, the nosings picked out in a darker colour. Ceilings are painted plaster with a moulded cornice.

The escape stair is largely untouched, save for repainting. This is quite utilitarian, with a mid-grey coloured terrazzo finish to the treads, half-landings and walls to dado level, where it terminates with a shadow detail, above which walls and ceiling are painted plaster. The main landings have dark-grey linoleum floor tiles. The balustrade is of steel with a hardwood handrail. This is probably one of the few areas where the original finishes survive.

The main staircase in the Central Wing

Typical Office with Surviving Original Fabric

Access to the offices within the Central Wing was, at the time of the inspection, extremely limited; there are a number of important government departments within the building, and security restrictions prevented inspection of many areas.

Where a brief inspection was possible, offices generally have modern finishes with suspended grid ceilings and lay-in tiles. Set within the grid are fluorescent lighting and air-conditioning grilles, together with sprinkler heads. Floors are carpeted throughout. Windows generally have Venetian blinds. Walls are of painted plaster.

The escape stair in the Central Wing

On the second floor several office spaces were undergoing refurbishment, which allowed some of the former finishes to be ascertained. The underside of the concrete slab is plastered and painted, possibly an indication that this was originally on display, and there were traces of the locations of former partitions which also revealed elements of the former colour scheme. The floor retained remnants of dark-grey coloured linoleum tiles.

A typical office in the Central Wing

The Press Room in the Central Wing

Press Room

This is located on the ground floor to the south of the main reception area, behind the reception desk. This does not appear to have been the original use of the space as it is not mentioned on the original drawings. However, the surviving fixtures and fittings may be from an early period of the building's use.

The east wall is clad in the same light-beige marble as the reception areas (another indication that this is not the original finish, since this room is later) with a teak ventilation grille at high level and centrally-placed double doors, also of teak with narrow vertical-rectangular louvred panels. To the north of the doors there are two fixed seats, consisting of a plinth with hardwood skirting onto which sit moulded black leatherette chairs. The north wall features a marble border with a central recess within which hang several curtains that would have served as interchangeable backdrops for press announcements. In front of this there is a freestanding lectern, also of marble.

The south wall is made up of a series of telephone booths formed of a series of vertical dividing screens of white laminate with half-round teak nosing. Between these there are horizontal work surfaces approximately one metre above ground, of beige laminate with dark brown half-round plastic nosing. The telephones are fixed to the wall above. There are several fitted cupboards to the west containing audio-visual equipment.

The telephone booths in the Press Room

The west wall is also of marble, with two windows at high level and a row of nine chairs mounted on a plinth as the east wall. The floors is carpeted with modern light-blue coloured tiles; the ceiling is a suspended grid with lay-in tiles and light diffusers.

Overall the space is quite evocative; one can quite easily imagine a press briefing within the space. It may be a suitable space to be conserved if a location to interpret the building's history is required.

The north stairwell in the New Annexe

Staff canteen on the 4th floor of the New Annexe

Press Conference Hall in the New Annexe

Typical WC Facilities
WC facilities are located within the link building to the East Wing. All of these have modern finishes and fittings. They appear to have been refurbished comparatively recently and nothing of the original appearance or fittings remain in these areas.

Roof
The roof is accessed via the staircase in the New Annexe to the north. A description of the roof is given under the section on the annex.

Typical Plant Room
No plant rooms were inspected within the Central Wing.

Basement
This is accessed via a stair at the north end of the wing and also by the escape stair to the south. The whole basement area is occupied by the Emergency Monitoring and Support Centre; due to the classified nature of activities limited access was available here and no photographs were permitted to be taken. Overall this area was utilitarian, with mid-grey coloured terrazzo to the floor and walls to dado height. Walls and ceiling above were of painted plaster. The terrazzo probably dates from the original fit-out of the building.

2.3.11 Central Wing Annexe Interiors

General
The annexe block adjoins the northern end of the original Central Wing and was constructed in 1989. As noted in the external description, this replaced the original fan-shaped Council Chamber, and is, as far as the exterior is concerned, a facsimile of the original office block, with some minor variations.

The 5th, 6th and 7th floors continue with the central corridor arrangement with offices to either side. The junction between the New Annexe and the original building is expressed by piers to either side of the corridor with a downstand beam over. On the lower floors (1st to 4th) there is no connection between the two buildings, these being occupied by staff canteens, the Press Conference Hall and the ExCo Chamber.

Ground Floor Reception
This is an impressive space, rectangular in plan with a lift to the north-west corner and a set of steel double doors adjacent in the north wall. The main entrance doors are in the west

Ground floor reception in the New Annexe

elevation, with a reception desk immediately adjacent to the south. The walls and floor are clad with highly polished greyish-green marble with dark-grey flecks; to the floor this is inlaid with strips of textured stone for a non-slip finish. The ceiling is of plasterboard with recessed downlighters and a ventilation grille against the east wall.

The connecting door into the corridor to the south is of timber, flush with a narrow full-height glazed vision panel and an adjacent stainless steel panel. To the centre of the space there is a cylindrical column, clad in light grey Corian in two sections with stainless steel inlay strips between sections and stainless steel skirting. The lift front is also of Corian, curved in plan and projecting out from the wall; just below ceiling level a canopy, also of Corian, connects the column and lift front. Lift doors are of highly-polished stainless steel. The reception desk is curved in plan with a Corian front inlaid with a stainless steel strip.

Typical Lift Lobby
The lift serves ground to 4th floors only; access to the 5th, 6th and 7th floors at this end of the building is by stair. The greyish-green marble floor and wall cladding continues on the upper floors, with lift doors of highly-polished stainless steel. Opposite the lift the walls are

of orangey/yellow-coloured timber panelling as used in the rest of the Central Wing with doors to the north stair and riser cupboards. Ceilings are of plasterboard with recessed downlighters.

Typical Stair Enclosure
The annexe contains two staircases, one at the northern end within the main section serving all floors, and another to the east serving ground to 4th floors.

The north stair contains various services and riser cupboards, each of which have hardwood doors and frames, possibly teak. Landings and treads have dark grey / brown coloured ceramic tiles, with mid-grey coloured narrow rectangular tiles to the walls, laid vertically in a staggered bond. Ceilings are of painted plaster. The stair balustrade is of steel, with some attention paid to the detail; it is painted black with glazed infill panels and a teak-coloured hardwood handrail, which is also present to the outer walls.

The east stair is contained within a separate enclosure to the east side of the Central Wing (see Central Wing, east elevation above), serving ground to 4th floors. The finishes in this stair are quite utilitarian, with dark grey / brown ceramic tiles to landings and treads and painted plaster walls and ceiling. The balustrade and handrail are of steel, painted black.

Typical Corridor
Where present (5th, 6th and 7th floors) corridors match the original building. All have been refurbished with modern materials and finishes, generally plasterboard walls with hardwood doorframes and skirting, although some floors have painted joinery.

The ground floor corridor has plasterboard walls with grey painted joinery. Floors are of mid-grey coloured granite tiles, with suspended grid ceilings over.

Set into the wall adjacent to one of the doors on the 7th floor is a small safe with a combination lock, surrounded with a timber surround. There were once many of these throughout the buildings, which were used to store keys overnight, ensuring that they remained on the premises. This last surviving example was apparently relocated here from elsewhere in the complex.

Typical Office
No offices were available for inspection within the New Annexe.

Staff Canteens
There are two staff canteens, located on the 3rd and 4th floors.

On the 3rd floor all finishes are modern; walls are covered in vinyl with suspended grid ceiling and carpeted floors. The west side has a timber panelled wall with a serving hatch, behind which is the kitchen. The north wall has an interesting arrangement of fitted cupboards with beige-coloured laminate doors and stainless steel trim at high level.

On the 4th floor all finishes here also are modern; the walls have timber panelling up to dado level, with vinyl wall covering above. Ceilings are of plasterboard with recessed downlighters and coffered panels to the main areas. Floors are carpeted. There is some built-in banquette seating against the walls and a serving counter to the east.

Press Conference Hall/Function Room
To the south of the lift lobby on the 1st floor there is a hall for government functions and press conferences. This is a large rectangular double-height space with grey-blue coloured acoustic panelling to the walls. Flexibility is achieved via a system of sliding panels which sub-divide the space (it is claimed that six different rooms can be formed in this way, although apparently this has rarely been put into practice). The ceiling is made up of several suspended planes with recessed downlighters, the sliding track running in-between them. The floor is covered with blue-grey coloured carpet.

At the southern end of the chamber there is a large light-grey coloured vertical Corian panel bearing the Chinese national emblem; at 45° angles to this on either side there are two rooms containing audio-visual equipment, each with upper floors and horizontal windows overlooking the space. In front of this there is raised podium with timber flooring and three timber lecterns facing into the space from which the main address takes place to the assembled audience. The rest of the space is laid out with stacking chairs.

A doorway in the south wall leads to a corridor which provides access to the audio visual rooms and leads through to the stair core to the east.

The Chief Executive delivering his 2008-09 Policy Address in the Press Conference Hall

ExCo Chamber

This room was not accessible during the site visit of the CGO in February 2009. However, a photograph has been provided from which this description of the room has been drawn.

The room is a ten sided decagon. The floor is carpeted and there is a large circular desk around which the members of the Executive Council sit. The walls are a similar cladding to that of the refurbished rooms in other parts of the CGO; they have fabric clad acoustic panels with maple veneer panelling above. The suspended ceiling has inset spotlights and a large centrally lit section. The emblem of Hong Kong is suspended over the chair of the Chief Executive.

The ExCo Chamber. The photograph was taken during a one minute silence to mark the 1st anniversary of the Sichuan 512 Earthquake.

Typical WC Facilities
Only the WC facilities on the ground floor were inspected. These contained modern finishes, fixtures and fittings and sanitary ware.

Roof
There are various plant rooms on the roof, most of which are later additions. The roof surface is covered with green bituminous felt, with various gantries and walkways over, together with items of air conditioning plant, water tanks and steel framed enclosures clad with profiled metal sheet. The parapet upstand to the perimeter is 1.1 m high. Access to the roof of the original building is by a staircase over a parapet wall at the junction between the two phases of building. The top of the mono-pitched roof of the link between the Central and East Wings that contains the lift overruns is visible, the rest being concealed by the 7th floor extension.

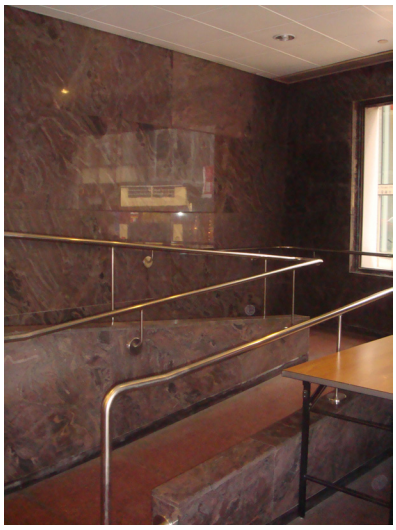
The roof of the Central Wing

2.3.12 West Wing Interiors

Overview
The building is L-shaped in plan; the general plan form is of a central corridor with offices to either side. The main lifts and stair are located at the angle of the 'L', with further stairs at the ends (the east end also contains a lift). The building primarily provides office accommodation for mid-ranking government officials.

Restricted Areas
No access was available to the following:
13th floor
12th floor
11th floor
10th floor (interviews in progress)
2nd floor
12th to 7th floors, east end
1st floor

Ground Floor Reception at the West End
Located at the junction of Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central, the reception area is divided into two parts, a lower section immediately inside the doors, and an upper section accessed via four steps, containing the lifts and stair.



The access ramp in the ground floor reception of the West Wing

The reception today is the result of refurbishment works in the late 1980s. A photograph from the 1960s shows a quadrant-shaped reception desk located to the west of the doors with what appears to be vertical timber strip cladding to the walls and a patterned mosaic tiled floor. This was one of the more publically accessible areas of the building at that time.

Today the walls are clad with the same purple marble with grey/green veining as the exterior which extends to the reception desk, now situated to the east of the entrance doors with an office behind. To the west (in the former location of the reception desk) there is a disabled access ramp leading to the upper level, a later insertion, also marble-clad and with stainless steel handrails. Immediately in front of the doors there is a row of stainless steel security barriers.

Floors are of textured granite of the same reddish hue as the walls but with less colour variation. In the upper section there are decorative shapes inlaid in to the floor in a darker stone. Ceilings are suspended, with square-shaped metal tiles to the edge and a coffered section with moulded edges to the centre. There are recessed downlighters and assorted ventilation grilles to both sections.

There are four lifts; 2 pairs facing each other. Lift fronts are of stainless steel, with a central panel of tiles with a silver-coloured metallic finish.

The stair balustrade is probably original, of steel tubing painted white and bolted to the outside of the string with a timber handrail and infills that follow the angle of the stair. Treads are of the same reddish stone as the floor.

6th Floor Reception at the East End
This is a modern addition, c. 1998. External walls are glazed with glazed entrance doors to the east; the internal wall to the west is of yellowish-coloured timber panelling. Floors are of light grey-beige limestone with dark green inlays. The ceiling is of plasterboard with a curved profile with recessed downlights, sweeping down towards the reception desk located opposite the entrance doors, also of light grey-beige limestone. The area to the north is double height and features a lift.

Part of the reception area at the east end of the West Wing

Typical Lift Lobby at the West End
The result of modern refurbishments, these are of the same configuration as the ground floor, with 2 pairs of lifts facing each other with stainless steel surrounds and tiled panels between doors. The colour of the tiles is purple on upper floors. Walls are clad with granite of a speckled pink / grey colour. Floors are of ceramic tiles, pale pink / beige coloured with inlaid patterns of concentric squares. Ceilings are suspended, with square-shaped metal tiles and assorted downlighters and ventilation grilles.

A typical lift lobby at the west end of the West Wing

Beyond the lift lobby to the south there is a service area containing WCs, kitchens and service rooms. The granite walls continue in to this section with hardwood (possibly teak) door frames and light-grey laminate faced doors with hardwood edging. Those to corridors have glazed vision panels. The same type of doors are used to back-of-house areas and riser cupboards, which suggests that they may be original since it is unlikely that doors in these locations would have been replaced in a re-fit. Where surviving, original floors to these service areas are of dark-grey linoleum tiles.

The 8th floor lobby has been completely refurbished, with plasterboard ceilings, green stone flooring and light beige limestone tiling to walls, together with maple veneered panels and a reception desk.

Typical Lift Lobby at the East End
These have been completely remodelled, with maple veneer panelling to walls, together with light-beige limestone tiling, and dark green tiled floors. Doors are modern of flush veneered type, and ceilings are of plasterboard inset with downlighters and ventilation grilles.

A typical lift lobby at the east end of the West Wing

Typical Corridors
Corridors run through the centre of the building with offices to either side, and are accessed from the lift lobbies.

Walls are generally formed of demountable partitions which, although not contemporary with the original construction of the buildings (the original plans show internal partitions as 9" hollow block or 9" clay block) are of an early date. Partitions take the form of panels approximately 2.4 m x 1.2 m covered with a textured beige / grey wall covering. The joints between the panels and around the door frames are finished with an aluminium trim.

Partitions are inside the central columns within the building so that the corridor walls are flush. Doors vary between spaces, but are generally of hardwood veneer or laminate surfaces and hardwood frames. Ceilings within corridors are suspended grids, with recessed lighting diffusers. Floors are carpeted, the colour and type of which varies between floors.

Some corridors have been refurbished, with plasterboard walls, plaster cornice, painted joinery and panelled doors. Ceilings are suspended grids with recessed fluorescent lighting.

Typical Staircases
In the southwest corner the staircase is largely untouched, except for repainting. Overall this is quite utilitarian, with a terrazzo finish to the treads, half-landings and walls to dado level, where it terminates with a shadow detail, above which walls and ceiling are painted plaster. The main landings have dark-grey linoleum floor tiles. The balustrade is of steel, painted white with a hardwood (teak) handrail.

The west stair is less utilitarian, obviously intended as more of an access stair; the balustrade is as that to the ground floor reception, of white-painted steel tubing with infills of flat-section steel, following the pitch of the stair. The teak handrail is also present to the wall side, continuing across the vertical window strip where it is supported on vertical steel balusters, which form part of the edge protection here in front of the glazing. The walls and ceiling are of painted plaster, with dark-brown coloured studded rubber flooring (a later addition).

Above 12th floor level the stair only provides access to the roof and plant rooms, with finishes changing to closely resemble the south-west stair albeit with a darker grey-coloured terrazzo to walls and treads.

The east stair has been refurbished with a stainless steel handrail with glass balustrade infill. Walls are lined with maple veneer up to 8th floor. Above 8th floor the original finishes are recognisable, indicating that this stair was once quite utilitarian (as the south-west stair) with a terrazzo finish to dado level, which has been painted, and painted plaster above. The stair treads have been overclad to all floors with pink-coloured granite.

Typical Offices
The amount of original fabric within offices varies from space to space. Generally, offices are divided up by (possibly early) demountable partitions of panels approximately 2.4 m x 1.2 m covered with a textured beige / grey wall covering. The joints between the panels are of a grooved aluminium trim. Doors are as found within common areas, with teak frames and grey / beige laminate door panels with teak edging. In some areas partitions to individual offices have vision panels.

Offices have suspended ceilings throughout with lay-in tiles. Set within the grid are fluorescent lighting and air-conditioning grilles, together with sprinkler heads. Floors are carpeted throughout. Desks arrangements vary, but the most common is with a central walkway defined by half-height partitions with desks either side towards the windows. Windows generally have Venetian blinds. Some have secondary glazing, particularly those facing busy roads where it is principally for noise reduction. Walls are of painted plaster.

At the time of inspection a number of offices were in the process of being refurbished. This exposed several areas of original finishes; floors were covered with grey linoleum tiles, external walls insulated with wood wool slabs which were then plastered over. Later suspended ceilings appear to have been much lower than the original, presumably to incorporate the increased level of servicing required, necessitating downstand boxing to the windows.

A number of offices have had modern refurbishments. The variety of finishes varies considerably, with different types of timber veneered panels, individual reception areas, etc. However, on the whole they are variations of a theme, sharing many of the same features as older spaces.

Recent refurbishments move away from the more utilitarian, standard 'modular' type of office fixtures and fittings, employing instead plasterboard walls and ceilings.

A typical corridor in the West Wing

The southwest corner staircase
in the West Wing

The contrasting finishes to the east stair
in the West Wing

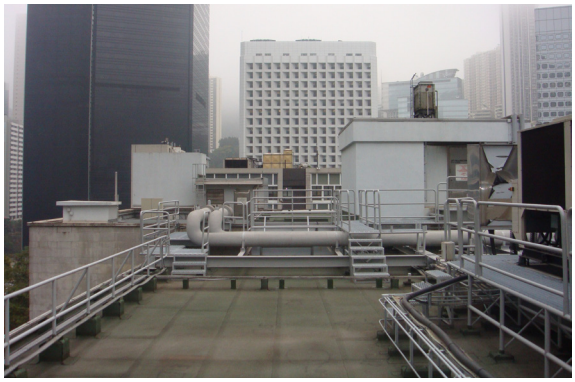
The west stair on the West Wing

A typical office in the West Wing

A typical modern Conference Room
in the West Wing

The document floor on the 6th floor
of the West Wing

The staff canteen in the West Wing



The roof of the West Wing

The main plant room on the 6th floor
of the West Wing

An early umbrella stand

An early chair

Typical Conference Room
Several conference rooms are located in the eastern end of the building:

On the 8th floor in the south-eastern corner the entirely modern decoration is with padded walls for sound absorption, carpeted floors.

The 13th floor conference room is also modern, with timber panelling to the walls inset with acoustic panels, a large modern conference table, and suspended ceiling with assorted downlighters and ventilation grilles.

Document Store
6th floor, east end (ie one floor below ground level in this part of the building): This has linoleum tiles to the floor and a suspended ceiling. Documents are stored on metal shelving.

The lobby adjacent has a further type of demountable partition, which may pre-date the aluminium trim variety found in most areas. This is of rectangular beige-coloured laminate panels with shadow gaps at junctions between them. Doors are of the same variety found elsewhere; laminate panels with hardwood frames.

Staff Canteen
Located on the 6th floor within the projecting section this area was completely refurbished in 1982 and again in 1992. Few original finishes or fixtures remain. The ceilings are suspended grids with lay-in tiles, fluorescent lighting and ventilation grilles. The floor has beige-coloured ceramic tiles. To the perimeter around the windows the original teak handrail exists, similar to that on the west stair, providing edge protection in front of the full-height glazing that overlooks Battery Path and Queens Road Central.

Typical WC Facilities
At the west end those visited were located on the 7th floor. These have been refurbished with dark-grey granite walls and modern sanitary fittings.

The WCs to the eastern end have been completely refurbished to a modern specification.

Roof
The roof has various plant rooms on it, most of which are later additions. The exception being the section over the stair, which is of concrete finished with Shanghai Plaster, as noted on the original drawings. The roof is covered with green-coloured (relatively modern) bituminous felt, with various gantries and walkways over, together with items of air conditioning plant and steel framed enclosures clad with profiled metal sheet. The perimeter has a small upstand, with edge protection provided by a steel handrail.

Plant Rooms
These run underneath the building at 6th floor level, accessed either by a ramp to the south side (that leads down from ground level (7th floor) or via the balcony to the north side. The floor to ceiling height is increased here to 4.3 metres, with a variety of pipes running at high level and large open spaces filled with various items of large plant and machinery sitting on concrete plinths. Floors are screed with exclusion zones around machinery marked out in yellow tape. Walls, columns and ceilings are painted white.

2.3.13 Furniture, Fixtures and Fittings

A number of original (or early) pieces of A number of original (or early) pieces of furniture were still present in the buildings:

Umbrella stands: These are of teak, roughly the size of a small occasional table with four tapered legs and a timber grid top to support umbrellas, and a galvanised drip tray underneath.

Chairs: In various locations around the complex (mostly back of house areas) there are examples of what appear to be original chairs. These match the umbrella stands and are of simple design, made of teak with woven rattan seats, tapered legs and upright backs.
Filing trays: Several examples of hardwood trays were evident throughout the buildings.

Benches: There are several timber benches in the room to the north-eastern corner of the West Wing. The seat is formed of two planks, with an upright backrest of one plank.

2.3.14 Condition

On the whole, the buildings are in good condition. During the limited inspection, very little in the way of outstanding repairs or problems with the building fabric were seen. Where the interiors have been refurbished in recent years the quality of the finishes are high and the rooms have been maintained in good condition. Many of the spaces which have not been renovated are looking tired and dated but are generally in sound condition. No major problems concerning internal condition were identified, though most rooms had suspended ceilings which restricted views to ceilings. There was also limited access to certain areas of the buildings and therefore the full extent of the condition of the building could not be assessed.

The site is, and always has been, an important place within Hong Kong, and a desire for the buildings to reflect this is apparent, particularly through the addition of the Central Wing Annexe (c. 1989) and new reception to West Wing (c. 1998). Both of these are built to a high specification; evidence of the continued importance of the site.

The buildings appear to have recently undergone a programme of repair, certainly with regards to the external decorations, with the result that any historic failures are difficult to identify at the present time. Whether defects will become apparent in the future is, of course, dependant on the quality and nature of the repair work carried out.

A regular regime of repair and refurbishment of the buildings has clearly been in place during the lifetime of this building. We were informed by the Building Manager that extensive repairs were carried out during the 1980s, particularly to the roofs, many of which had failed and were suffering badly from leaks. This was confirmed by a former government employee[12], who recalled that there were problems with the condition of the underside of slabs, particularly under wet areas. Most soffits are now obscured by suspended ceilings, so that inspection was not possible.

All the roofs appeared in good condition with bituminous felt covering. Gullies were clear and parapets properly flashed with required drips. The following issues were identified on site:

East Wing
The areas of exposed concrete frame to the buildings appear to be in good condition. Some minor previous repair work was noticeable on several vertical elements, although these appear to be the result of the removal of services rather than of failure of the concrete.

The panel of granite walling adjacent main entrance has a number of vertical cracks, particularly to the external corner, that are perhaps indicative of some settlement.

Central Wing and Annexe
The structural frame to the elevations also appears to be in good condition. Some localised spalling was apparent to the arrisses. However, the fact that this has been painted over in the last round of decorations indicates that this has been present for some time and has given little cause for concern to the maintenance team.

To the north elevation of the Annexe remedial drip detailing has been introduced at the door head in an effort to prevent corrosion to the doors panels and frame. This has been caused by water ingress as a result of poor detailing, the door frames being flush to the building.

Cracks in the ganite walling

Spalling to the concrete of the Central Wing

[12] Conversation with R. G. Horsnell, 12/02/09

West Wing

Although not particularly noticeable, there is evidence of a number of recent concrete repairs having been carried out to the exposed frame, particularly to the north side. These are probably as a result of corrosion of reinforcement bars which have expanded and blown the face off of the concrete. A number of arrisses over windows also show signs of previous repair.

Above the main entrance there are patches of orange/brown coloured staining visible through the new paintwork, again this suggests corrosion to reinforcement bars within the concrete. This is probably an historic problem that has been painted over.

The design of the exposed frame, with deep horizontal ledges, means that the elevation is subject to staining to the front faces from water run-off. This is once again apparent despite the recent redecoration.

Concrete repairs to arisses

Concrete repairs on the West Wing

Staining on the West Wing

Staining on the West Wing

2.3.15 Site Features

Walls

Most of the walls and revetments on the CGO Complex are made of the local granite. Along the Lower Albert Road the retaining walls to the East Wing car park are built from randomly coursed granite blocks with a moulded cornice detail. The retaining walls to the north of the Central Wing are of similar construction. This type of wall is also used to contain the flower beds in this area. One just to the south-west of the French Mission Building has large cracks in it because of the growing roots from the (fairly large) trees in the bed. Attempts have been made to re-point these cracks but they have subsequently reopened.

Along the south side of Battery Path is a large granite retaining wall. The coursing in this wall varies. At the top of the path the square granite blocks are set in regular rows with a plain stone cap to the top of the wall. Further down the wall has a granite plinth and cap and the main wall is built with random shaped blocks. A section has been rebuilt in concrete block (discussed in more detail below). These sections of the wall have mostly been re-pointed rather haphazardly in cement. At the bottom of the path the wall has been rebuilt with regularly coursed granite blocks. The wall turns 90° at the bottom of the path next the Ice House Street entrance of the West Wing.

Very large granite walls also retain the slopes on the south side of Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central.

Steps and Gate Posts

As with most of the walls around the CGO complex, the steps are also made from the local granite. For example, there is a long flight of steps to the north of the Central Wing leading down to the area at the top of Battery Path.

Near to the top of Battery Path are a set of old stone steps down to Queen's Road Central. A straight set of steps is marked on the 1887 map but the present ones are L-shaped. The 1904 map in section 2.4.12 show the steps as L-shaped so it can be assumed that the steps were built at the end of the 19th century between 1887 and 1904. The treads of the steps are granite with square granite slabs set on the diagonal between each flight. At the top and base of each flight of steps is a granite pier either side. Each of these has an indented moulded panel on the sides and is topped with a granite ball. The section of wall between each post is also granite but with cement plaster panels on the side (probably a later addition).

Repairs to the steps have been carried out at various times. At least one of the stone balls has been replaced, and the workmanship is to a high standard. A large section of the east retaining wall has also been removed, though sections of the pointing have broken away. Other repairs, such as to the cement plaster panels, have not been carried out to a high standard and there are other areas, such as the widening gaps between the paving stones, where repairs are needed.

Just to the west of the CGO Complex the Duddell Street Steps lead down from Ice House Street to Duddell Street. These steps are a Declared Monument and were built between 1875 and 1889. There are similarities in their design to the set of steps on Battery Path. These steps are also constructed out of the local granite and have similarly designed stone piers at the tops and bases of each flight. Here the indented moulded panels on the piers are smaller and there are no stone balls topping them. The side of the steps are also balustraded rather than a solid wall.

The Duddell Street Steps also have four elegant gas lamps; two each at the top and bottom of the steps. These were made by Suggs and Co. in 1922 and are still working gas lamps today. These steps are in need of some urgent repair work which is to be carried out by the relevant departments in the near future. The top easternmost pier of the balustrade and the adjacent wall are being pushed over by the tree growing out of the wall – to the point where some localised collapse is imminent. The gas lamp surmounting the pier has been temporarily disconnected.

A third set of granite piers can be found on the south side of Lower Albert Road. They mark the entrance to a small road that leads up to the Upper Albert Road. Unfortunately, only two of the piers survive and only one of these in good condition. Originally there would have been three piers, two at each side of the entrance to the drive and one set back at the end of a wall which curved up the lower section of the road. The western gate pier survives in good condition while the one opposite no longer exists except for the base. The curving wall has been damaged by the insertion of a tunnel entrance (see below) but the sections left are

The old stone steps on Battery Path

A large crack in a retaining wall for a flower bed

The Duddell Street steps and gas lamps

The retaining wall on Battery Path

Concrete repairs and gaps in the paving of the Battery Path steps

probably the original wall. The third pier has been almost entirely covered over by concrete which has been used to shore up the steep slope behind it.

The piers can be seen in an historic photograph of the old Government Offices in their original condition. This is compared with the view today (see p.90).

Fences, Railings and Gates

There are two different designs of railings on and around the CGO site. The first is a waist height iron railing with wave pattern bars and gilded gold finials on each main upright. These railings were designed and installed when the CGO were constructed in the 1950s. Examples of this type of railing can be found along Battery Path and beside the northern driveway leading into the CGO Complex.

Wave pattern railings from the 1950s

The 1990s railings

In 1997 another set of railings and gates were installed around the perimeter of the CGO Complex to provide a greater security. The tall railings have uprights at tight regular intervals and a band of 'S' patterns running along the top and bottom. Sets of vehicular and pedestrian gates with the same design are located at the top of the north driveway and two sets on the Lower Albert Road.

Trees and Planting

There are eleven Registered Old and Valuable Trees in the CGO Complex, which are listed in section 2.2.2. Their full register entries and pictures are included in the Appendix. The Chinese Banyan (LCSD CW/85) is located on the north side of the East Wing behind the CGO New Annexe. The Big-leaved Fig (LCSD CW/88) and one of the Burmese Rosewoods (LCSD CW/89) are located to the north of the Central Wing. The second Chinese Banyan (LCSD CW/90) is also located here but is best viewed from the north where it sits at the top of a revetment. The largest and most important of the trees is the second Burmese Rosewood (LCSD CW/86) which is registered because of its own characteristics and because of its historical importance as a tree which is likely to have been in this position for over 100 years. It is shown here in the early photograph of the old Government Offices and in the same position today. There are six other Registered trees on Battery Path (LCSD CW91-96) five of which are designated because of their large size. LCSD CW96 is a Heteropanax Fragrans which is designated because it is a precious or rare species.

The small landscaped garden to the north of the Central Wing

To the north of the Central Wing is a small landscaped garden which was laid out in 1975. The plan consists of a series of interlinking circles making up pathways, beds and seating areas. The beds are planted with shrubs and flowers and are well maintained. The paths are made of circular concrete paving stones of various sizes. The benches in the seating areas are curved to follow the plan of the garden.

There are several other areas of vegetation and planting on or around the CGO Complex. There are three areas of heavy vegetation consisting of mature trees and shrubs; on the slope down from the West Wing to Battery Path, on the slope down from the East Wing to the Cathedral compound and on the thin stretch of land between Ice House Street and Lower Albert Road.

Around the Cathedral there are also further plants and shrubs. The Cheung Kong Park to the north of the Cathedral also provides a green space.

Outside the Central Wing and at the Ice House Street and Lower Albert Road entrances to the building are raised flower beds. Those outside the Central Wing have low retaining walls around the bed which are lined with narrow slate tiles. Outside the Ice House Street entrance the walls are lined with small square granite tiles and by the Lower Albert Road entrance are lined with large granite panels and have a decorative cornice detail running around the top.

Hard Landscaping

All of the driveways in and around the CGO Complex are tarmac. In the courtyard between the two blocks there are sections of pavement along the sides of the building and a larger paved area around the Burmese Rosewood tree. The pavements are concrete slabs with cobbled areas for decorative detail. In the oval shaped paved area around the tree the cobbled areas delineate two crossing pathways which originally existed outside the former Government Office that stood on the site of the Central Wing.

Battery Path

Battery Path is located to the north of the CGO Complex and was established in the early days of the colony. It can be seen on the 1887 map in section 2.4.12. Its name is derived from the Murray Battery that was positioned above the path until the late 19th century. The path runs along the edge of Queen's Road Central, up to the French Mission Building passing the Cathedral to the north and down to Garden Road.

The surface of the path is made up of patches of concrete and is relatively unattractive. The north side of the path is marked by the low 1950s wave pattern railings and to the south the land slopes upwards and is retained by a granite wall.

Midway up the path is the entrance to a covered walkway across Queen's Road Central that also has a set of steps down to street level. The entrance to the walkway is clad in granite panels. It was constructed in 1988 in a contemporary style. Further up the path to the east is the late 19th century set of steps discussed above. At intervals up the path there are spaces for benches.

Paving and cobbles in the main courtyard

Battery Path and the entrance to the high-level walkway

The 17th century cannon replica
(photo provided by the AMO)

Cannon Replica

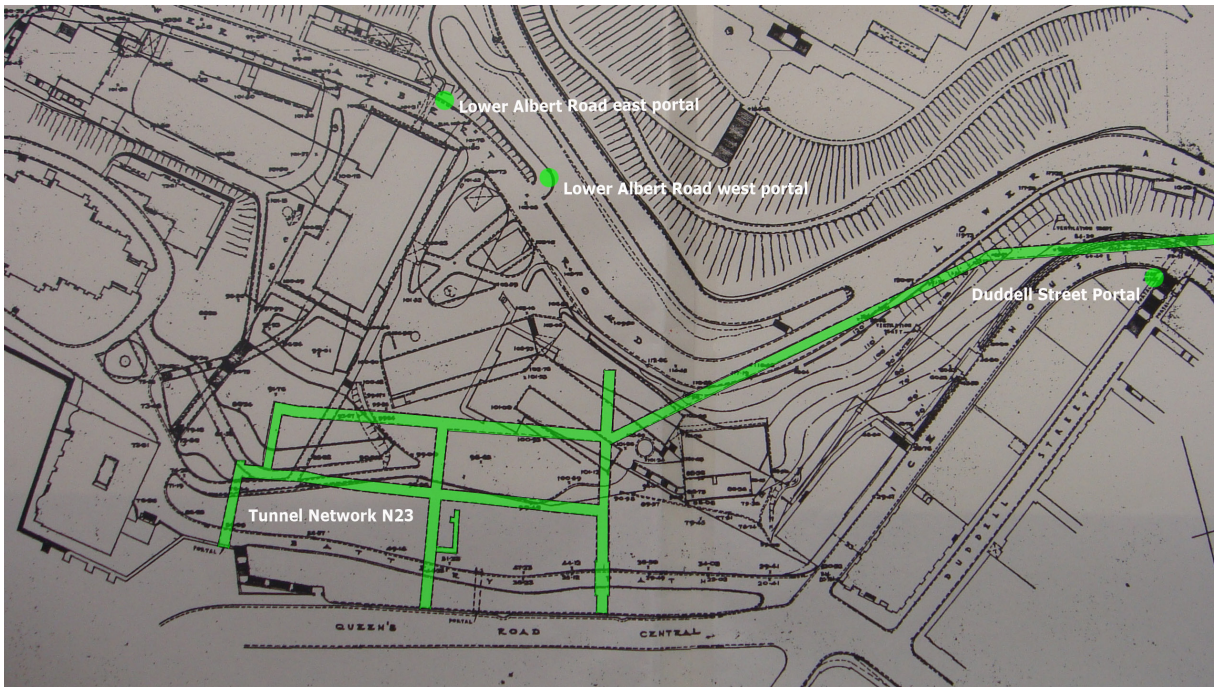
Behind the Central Wing extension is a replica of a 17th century cannon. It was discovered in 1956 in Kowloon Bay during the construction of the old Kai Tak Airport. The original was positioned at the CGO until 1997 when it was moved to the Hong Kong Museum of History.

The cannon sits on a granite plinth and is decorated with an inscription in Chinese characters giving details of the Generals who commissioned the cannon and the date as the "*Sixth Moon of the Fourth Year of Wing Lik*", i.e. 1650. The weight of the cannon is given as 500 catties[13] and the inscription is ended with an approval by the Emperor.

Tunnels

Underneath Government Hill is a network of old air raid tunnels constructed from 1940-41. A plan below highlights the tunnels underneath the CGO[14] and the location of the portals. These also extend to the west down Ice House Street to the Bishop's House[15]. Another set of tunnels lies underneath Government House[16]. Due to the secure nature of that site the tunnel these plans remain confidential.

Above ground some of the entrances to the tunnels are still in existence despite many of the tunnels having been backfilled. They are known as 'portals'. Two relating to the Government House tunnels are located on the south side of Lower Albert Road.



A plan highlighting the tunnels under the CGO and the tunnel portals

13 'Catty' is the English translation of a traditional Chinese weight equal to 500g. http://www.thefreedictionary.com/catties, accessed 96/03/09

14 CEDD Reference: N23- Network No. 1 Queen's Road Central

15 CEDD Reference: 13- Wyndham Street

16 CEDD Reference: 8- Lower Albert Road

The first is at the bottom of a small road that runs between the Lower and Upper Albert Roads to the north of the courtyard between the two CGO blocks. The doorway is a very basic design with a plain concrete lintel and simple doors which are quite worn. The second is situated to the east; a section of the slope has been cut into and retaining walls on either side constructed, including a brick pier which has an unknown use. The door is again simple and worn.

On Ice House Street a further tunnel portal was constructed under the Duddell Street Steps. This is a slightly more sophisticated piece of construction and is cut into the granite retaining wall with a stone arch above. This entrance gave access to the Bishop's House tunnels to the west of the CGO. The space immediately inside this tunnel entrance seems to be in use for storage.

The eastern portal on Lower Albert Road

The western portal on Lower Albert Road

The ventilation shaft on Ice House Street

The tunnel portal under the Duddell Street steps

Across the road from the Duddell Street portal is a ventilation shaft associated with the tunnel network. The small concrete hut-like structure is positioned amongst the vegetation on the strip of land between Ice House Street and Lower Albert Road.

When the 1988 covered walkway was constructed from Battery Path across Queen's Road Central, a small portal like structure was encountered. This may have been some kind of ventilation shaft from the Government Hill tunnel network. There is also speculation that a portion of the retaining wall to the south of Battery Path used to have a tunnel portal in it which has been blocked up since the end of the War. The anomaly in the wall is visible about half way up (see p.57). The design of the wall at this point is a granite plinth with random shaped blocks making up the main part of the wall and a granite cap.

A section in this wall has been rebuilt with the same cap but the main portion of the wall and the plinth are dense concrete blocks. The fact that the plinth has also been rebuilt suggests that there may have been an opening here. One suggestion is that an attempt was made to start an entrance here but rock was encountered soon into construction and so this portal was abandoned and an opening created somewhere else[17].

Signage

Signs for the CGO are located outside each main public entrance; at the Ice House Street Entrance, at the Lower Albert Road entrances in the East and Central Wings. The signs are formed of individual letters affixed to main walls outside the entrances and are in Cantonese and English. The English lettering is in a traditional font. Other smaller signs are brushed steel panels affixed to walls with black lettering.

The Cathedral compound adjacent to the CGO has its own signage. The signs are made of brushed steel with maps and lettering etched on in black.

Other

There are several deigns of lamp posts around the CGO Complex. At the base of the flight of steps to the north of the Central Wing are two lamp posts with a traditional design. They are painted black with gilded details, including a gold finial on top.

Within the compound is another lamp post outside the Central Wing which has a different design. The plain post is also topped by a gold finial but the globe shaped lamp hangs off to the side from a projecting bar which is supported by a decorative brace.

A lamp post outside the Central Wing

[17] Conversation with R.G. Horsnell on 13/02/09

St John's Cathedral

2.3.16 Adjacent Historic Buildings

St. John's Cathedral Grounds & Buildings
St. John's Cathedral is located to the north of the East Wing of the CGO. It was constructed in 1847 under the direction of Charles Cleverly, the Surveyor General. It is a typical English church plan with tower and main entrance at the west end, the altar to the east and transepts either side of the nave. The Cathedral is in the Gothic Revival style taking inspiration from the Early English and Decorated Gothic styles of the 13th century. This has more simplified geometric tracery and decorative detail, such as the design of the windows in the clerestory. These are rounded triangles with a circular tracery pattern.

The building is rendered in roughcast and painted cream. The decorative details are stone that has also been painted cream. The window tracery is painted dark green to match the glazed green roof tiles on the nave and aisles. The doors and window shutters on the aisle windows are varnished wood.

The grounds of the Cathedral are landscaped with hedges, mature trees, paved areas and wood benches. To the west of the Cathedral is a granite War memorial cross in a fenced off area. Beside this is a grave stone; the only known grave in the Cathedral Compound. The granite slab lies flat on the ground with the inscription "*Pte.R.D. Maxwell, 3176, HKVDC, 23.12.41*". The grave stone is surrounded by a low fence of wood posts and metal chains. Private Roy Maxwell was a member of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps who was killed two days before surrender to the Japanese in Wan Chai and buried here by three other volunteers who were with him when he died[18].

Private Maxwell's gravestone

[18] Wordie, unknown date, p.24

The Old Hall

The main entrance to the Court of Final Appeal

The south elevation of the French Mission Building

The New Hall on Garden Road

The Cathedral has two subsidiary buildings in the compound; the Fanny Li or Old Hall and the New Hall. The Old Hall was constructed in 1921 in a similar style to the Cathedral itself but in more of a Perpendicular Gothic style seen in the more elaborate tracery of the windows. The walls are rendered and painted as the Cathedral. The Hall is used for functions, exhibitions and group meetings, such as the Hong Kong Cubs and Scouts. The Cathedral Bookshop is located in a low wing on the north side.

The New Hall is located on Garden Road to the north-east of the Cathedral. It was constructed in the 1955-56 to provide Cathedral administration space and a room for the Sunday School[19]. The building is three storeys with a basement. The ground floor has windows set in recesses with stylised pointed arches over and the first floor windows on the east side project out. The Hall is rendered and painted in the same colour as the Cathedral.

French Mission Building

The French Mission Building (1842-43) is located to the north of the CGO Complex and now houses the Court of Final Appeal. It is a three storey red brick building with details, such as balconies, columns and cornice, in stone, most of which has been painted. The south and west elevations face the Cathedral and have a domestic feel with green painted shutters to the windows. The south face has six stone balconies and a stone niche. The west face has the two main entrances to the building. One has a stone architrave with a plaque reading "*Missions Etrangeres, 1917*" in the cornice, which commemorates the refacing and enlargement of the building by the French Mission in that year. Above are a fanlight and a decorative shield/roundel. The other door is grander and has five steps leading up to it.

The door is flanked by pairs of Ionic columns which are surmounted by an entablature and a broken pediment topped with a modern crest of the HKSAR. Either side of the pediment are square stone finials.

The north and east facades of the building are much grander and have a more monumental scale as they are viewed from below on Queen's Road Central. The red brick walls are elaborated with classical detail in painted stone, (pilasters, pediments and balustrades). The windows here do not have shutters. Above the north-east corner is a cupola on top of the chapel. The east façade has columned balconies on the first and second floors which have been altered by the insertion of plate glass between the columns. The building currently houses the Court of Final Appeal which was established on 1st July 1997.

The Supreme Court Building on Jackson Road is currently used as the Legislative Council building but the Council is due to move into the new government offices on the Tamar site in 2011. The Court of Final Appeal may then move into the Supreme Court building leaving the French Mission Building without a use.

The north face of the French Mission Building

[19] St. John's Cathedral Conservation Management Plan, 2007, p.32

Government House

Government House is situated to the south of the CGO at the top of a slope. The colonial building was constructed in 1851-55 by Charles Cleverly. It was extended in the late 19th century and was again altered during the Second World War by the Japanese so that it now has many Japanese decorative details and to some resembles a "*Japanese Railway Station*"[20]. The asymmetrical north elevation of the building, which is visible from the CGO, is two storeys at the east end and three at the west with a seven storey tower in the centre.

The window shapes and sizes are varied and some have latticework panels covering them. The roofs have been adapted to have flocked up corners in the Japanese style and the tower has balconies at sixth floor level with smooth curved edges. A smaller tower is situated at the west end of the building. The walls are rendered and have been painted blue-grey with pale yellow details around the windows. Most of the building is hidden from view of the CGO by trees.

The main entrance is on the south side in the west wing of the house. A porte-cochere is built over the main door.

Sheng Kung Hui Complex

The Sheng Kung Hui (The Hong Kong Anglican Church) Compound is located to the west of the CGO. It is comprised of a group of buildings, two of which are currently graded and two of which are likely to be graded after the assessment exercise is complete. The Bishop's House is a three storey colonial building from the 1840s with a turret on the north-west corner. It was constructed as a school and is now the residence and office of the Archbishop of Hong Kong. The Bishop's House is a Grade I building. The Old S.K.H. Kei Yan Primary School on Glenealy Road was constructed in 1851 but renovated in the 1930s to give it a Modernist look, though some of the original Tudor Revival features still survive. It is a Grade II building.

The Church Guest House may be given Grade I status after the reassessment exercise. It was constructed in 1919 as a guest house for St. Paul's College, which was located on this site, and still retains many of its original architectural features.

St. Paul's Church is situated around the corner on Glenealy Street. It is a two storey basilica church with a projecting apse on the north side. This is also a building which is not yet graded but it has architectural and historic interest. It may be given Grade I status after the reassessment exercise.

Plans are currently in development for this site where the graded building will be retained while the rest of the site will be redeveloped with two new blocks constructed.

Government House

The Sheng Kung Hui Complex

[20] Welsh, 1997, p.3

2.4 History of the CGO

2.4.1 The British Takeover of Hong Kong Early 19thC-1842

By the early 19th century Britain had established a strong trade in tea with China. However, Britain had few goods to trade in return and an illegal Opium trade had emerged. The drug had been banned since the late 18th century but smuggling continued as it was profitable both to the foreign traders and Chinese merchants. The Qing government, worried about an outflow of capital from its country, appointed a Commissioner, Lin Zexu, to stamp out the illegal trading. The Chinese ordered the British traders to surrender their goods and many factories were forced to hang over their goods. Unhappy with this the British responded by strengthening their forces in the area and attacks broke out between the two sides. This conflict became known as the 'First Opium War'. Britain demanded land from the Chinese in return for an end to the fighting; they had been looking for territory in this region to use as trading posts for many years. Additionally, they were angry that the Portuguese had owned nearby Macau for 300 years and that most of the official trade with China was only allowed to be carried out in this port, regardless of the nationality of the merchant.

The land that the Chinese conceded to Britain was a rocky island off the mainland known as Hong Kong, which was certainly less than Britain had hoped for. However, this "Fragrant Harbour", settled mainly by fishermen and quarrymen, had well sheltered bays where ships could weigh anchor and be secure. In 1841 the British began to establish a settlement on the north side of the island and on the 29th August 1842 the Treaty of Nanjing (Nanking) was signed by the Qing Government and the first appointed Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Henry Pottinger, officially ceding the territory to Britain.

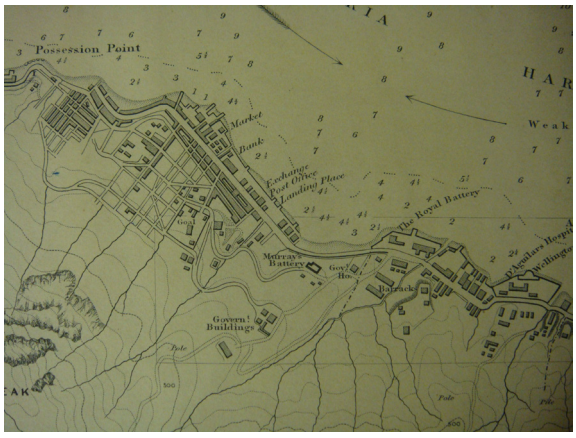
2.4.2 The Establishment of the City of Victoria and Government Hill 1843-1860s

The settlement grew rapidly, with the population increasing from 5,450 in 1841 to 19,000 in 1844[21]. This was due to both the arrival of more men and troops from Britain and an influx of Chinese from the mainland hoping to capitalise on the all the new building work that was being carried out. John Ouchterlony, a lieutenant in the Madras Engineers wrote in late 1842:

"It may be interesting to observe the great change which ha[s] taken place in the appearance of the island, which, from a barren rock with a few poor huts of straw and leaves, ha[s] now become a thriving and populous colony, overspread with substantial houses and adorned by forts, batteries and public buildings."[22]

He also describes the public buildings that had been erected as consisting of *"a government house, gaol, and magistracy, a land office, commissariat office, naval victualling store*[23]*, arsenal, engineer's office, market-place, batteries, fort and barracks for about 1,000 men…".*

A map of Hong Kong in 1845 shows the extent of the development of the city, which by 1843 had come to be known as Victoria. To the west was the main residential area, identified by the grid system of streets. 'Possession Point' marks the landing point of the British in 1841. The main public amenities, such as the market, bank and post office, were situated along the shorefront.



Plan of Hong Kong in 1845 (NA, WO 78/118)

21 Walker, 1990, p.14

22 Cited in Lampugnani, 1993, p.98

23 'Victuals' is an archaic word for food. A 'victualling store' is therefore likely to be a food store.

The eastern part of the settlement was occupied by the military, indicated on the plan by the Barracks and the Royal Battery, as well as warehouses owned by merchants. The first of these warehouses had been set up by Jardine, Matheson and Co. early on in the life of the colony and was the first European building in Hong Kong.

Several of the buildings mentioned by Ouchterlony are also marked on the map. The Gaol compound, which also included the Magistracy building, is visible. Government House, the residence of the Governor, is close to the shoreline between the residential and military areas of the city. To the west of this is Murray's Battery associated with the Barracks to the east. This was named after Sir George Murray the Master General of The Ordnance from 1841-46[24]. Further up the slope to the south is a collection of four buildings marked as 'Government Buildings'. This portion of land that the government officials first occupied between the residential and military districts was to become "*the centre of the colony*"[25]. Another plan of 1840-45 shows the area in more detail (see map progression at section 2.4.12).

Government Hill

From the 1840s this area began to evolve to house the Governor's residence, know as Government House, the main Government Offices and the Anglican Cathedral, as well as a large dwelling and office. The latter was the first to be constructed in 1842-43. It seems to have been constructed for the first Deputy Superintendant of Trade, Alexander Johnston, as it was known as Johnston's House originally. It is likely that it was soon taken over by an American trading firm called Heard and Co. but may have also served for a while as the Imperial Russian Consul's house near the beginning of its life. It was a three storey building with basement that overlooked the Murray Barrack's parade ground.

The second building to be constructed in the area was the Cathedral. The foundation stone was laid on the 11th March 1847 and exactly two years later the official opening ceremony and the first service were held, though this was before the tower was constructed. The work was carried out under the direction of the 2nd Surveyor General of Hong Kong, Charles Cleverly, and the contract for the building works was carried out by Lie Achting for $16,000 for thirty-four weeks of work. The structure was built of "*sound hard Canton grey bricks*"[26] which were then rendered. Achting was also awarded the contract for the internal works, including laying the floor, plastering and installation of the seating. Other contractors were brought in for the construction of the pews and pulpits and the completion of the tower. The total cost for the construction of the church was just under £7,000. Originally known as the Hong Kong Colonial Church, it was renamed the Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist in 1872 after an extension has been added to the west end of the nave.

The collection of four Government buildings shown on the 1845 plan was replaced by one large building, constructed from 1847 to 1848. This was situated to the south of the Heard and Co. building and had its main façade to the west. The foundation stone was laid on 24th February 1847 and was completed the following year at a cost of £14,393[27]. The building was referred to as the 'Government Offices, St. John's Place' and the departments housed in it included the Colonial Secretary's Department and the Council Chamber on the first floor and the Public Works Department (PWD) on the ground floor.

An early photograph shows a two storey, fifteen bay wide building. The Italianate colonnaded ground floor has roundels in the spandrels of the arches and on the first floor a "*massive*"[28] veranda has classical columns and a stone balustrade.

An early photograph of the old Government Offices (photo provided by the AMO)

24 Rollo, date unknown, p.10

25 Welsh, 1997, p.3

26 Walker and Rowlinson, 1990, p.84

27 HK PRO, 'First Central Government Offices', in Buildings- Government, Reference number: PRO-REF-096-01 Encl.10

28 Ibid.

The central bays are marked out by the use of pairs of columns on the first floor and two in-filled roundels on the ground floor. Above the three central bays is a pediment containing a circular window. Not visible in the photo are six tall chimneys and three low pitched roofs which mirror the height and shape of the central pediment. In the open yard in front of the offices is a large Burmese Rosewood tree. Behind this two hand carts stand in front of a set of stone gate posts that mark the entrance of a driveway that connects the Lower and Upper Albert Roads (these still survive in part today- see comparison images at the end of the history section).

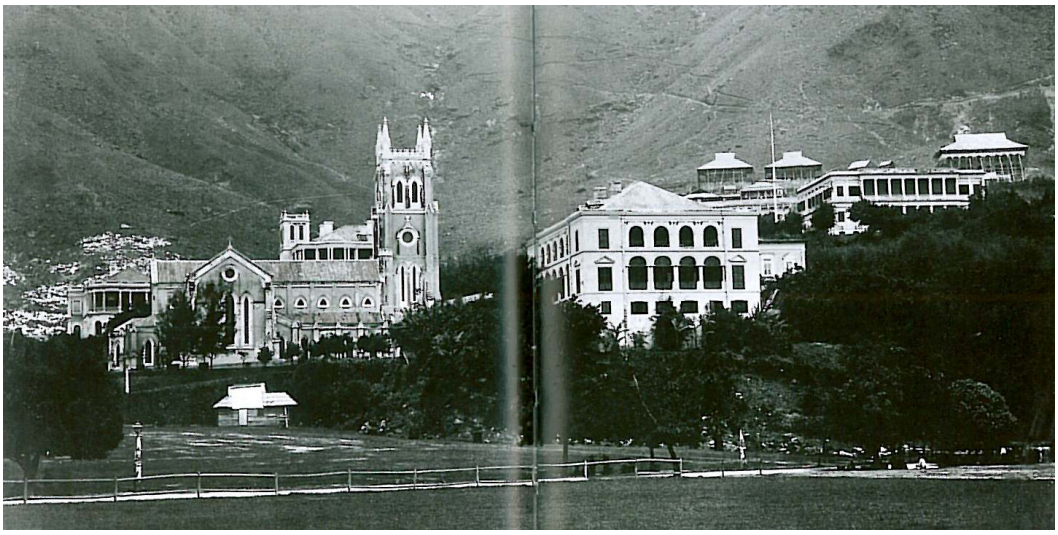
From 1848 discussions began for the construction of a Governor's House to replace the residence close to the shoreline (shown on the two 1840s maps). The work on the house was also overseen by Charles Cleverly and cost an estimated £14,940. In conjunction with the construction of the house, Lower Albert Road was formed below it, built by a workforce of 2,000 convicts. The site was levelled in 1848 but it was not until 1851 that construction began. Progress was slow because of the high cost of materials and delivery delays because of pirates. Workers also went on strike over poor pay. Government House was eventually completed on the 1st October 1855.

The first Governor to the live in the house was Sir John Bowring, the fourth Governor of Hong Kong from 1854-59[29].

The house was in a typical Colonial style with stuccoed walls and classical verandas on the sides. The three storey buildings sat the top of a rise and overlooked the city. It is just visible in the early photograph of the Government Offices at the top right.

The combination of Government House and the Government Offices gave rise to the name 'Government Hill' for this centre of power. This term was popularly used up until the mid 20th century to refer to the general area which included the Cathedral, French Mission Building, Battery Path, Government House and the Government Offices. The term appears on Pottinger's map of 1842 which describes the Murray Barracks as the "Gov't Hill Barracks" and as a term used in books published in the first half of the 20th century, such as Geoffrey Robley Sayer's *Hong Kong, 1841-1862: Birth, Adolescence and Coming of Age* from 1937, p.120.

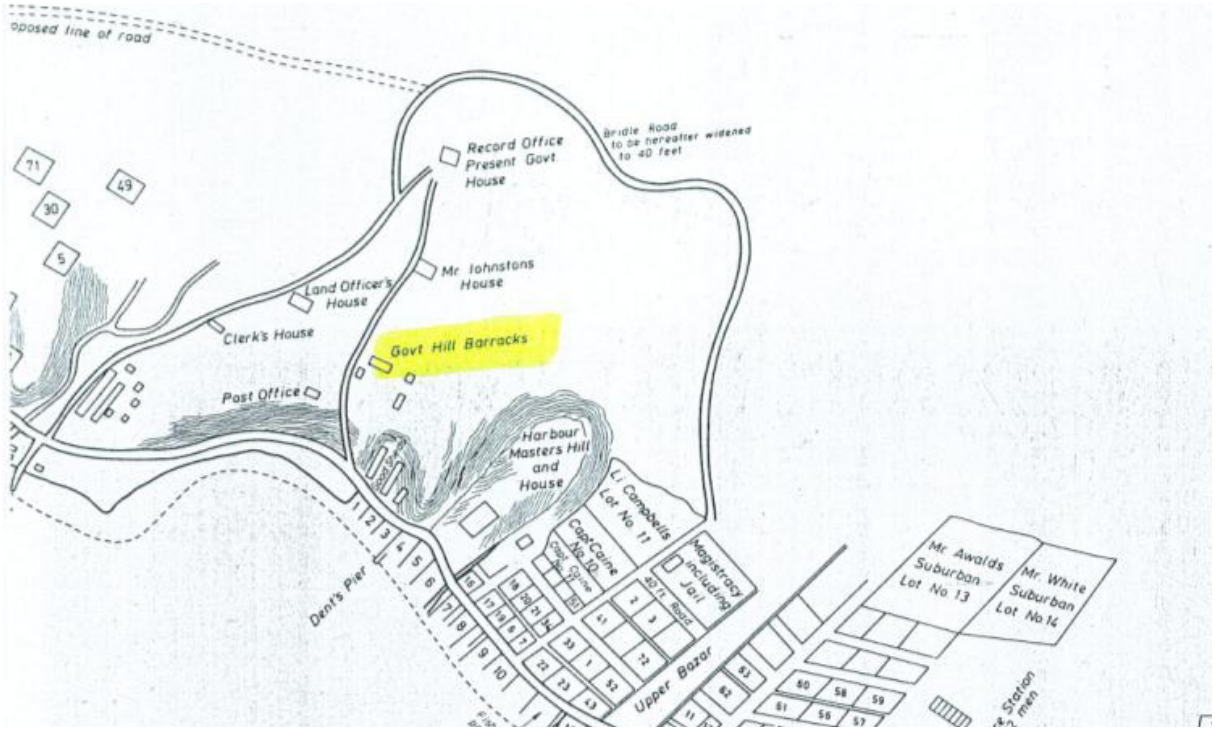
Another photograph, from the 1850s or early 1860s[30], shows Government Hill, looking south towards the Peak. The Gothic Cathedral is clearly visible to the left of the picture. In the centre is the Heard and Co. building with colonnades on each side and a steeply pitched roof. The corner of the Government Offices is just visible behind this building to the right.



19th century image of Government Hill
(Vines, 2001, p.38-39)

[29] *Government House*, accessed 27/02/09

[30] Vine suggests that this photo is from the 1870s, though this does not seem to be correct as other documentary evidence suggests that the Heard and Co. building was extended and renovated by 1868, which is not shown in this image.



Copy of Pottinger's Map, 1842
(Hal Emerson,1992, *Mapping Hong Kong: A Historical Atlas*, p.160)

On slightly higher ground above is Government House, also with colonnaded facades. Behind this three buildings in the process of being constructed are protected from the rain and heat by scaffolding with temporary roofs. It is interesting to note how bare the hills behind the settlement are. It is certainly clear why the island was described by Ouchterlony as a "*barren rock*".

In addition to the government and religious functions of the site, the military also featured. The Murray Barracks had been established to the east of Government Hill from very early on in the life of the colony. Once Government House was constructed the old Governor's House near the shoreline could be demolished and the land was then converted into a parade ground for the Barracks. This is visible in the foreground of the image of Government Hill. Jardine, Matheson and Co.'s first warehouse was close to the parade ground. Associated with the Barracks was the Murray Battery, which is shown on the 1845 map and is said to have had six 24 pounder guns and three 10 inch mortars. It was sited 150ft above sea level in a position that could easily defend the town and the anchorage[31].

2.4.3 The Growth of Hong Kong 1860s- 1900

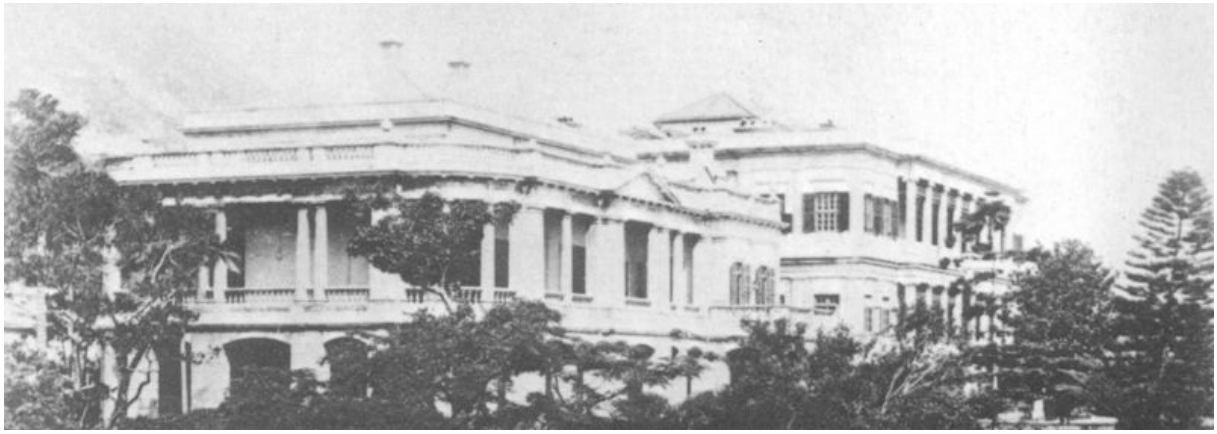
Hong Kong continued to expand throughout the second half of the 19th century. Between 1856 and 1860 the 2nd Opium Wars were fought between Britain and China over Britain's desire to open up more Chinese ports for trading, the legalisation of the Opium trade and the right for Britain, France, Russia and the U.S. to establish embassies in Peking (Beijing). After a failed attempt to end hostilities with the Treaty of Tianjin in 1858, fighting continued until in 1860 the Convention of Peking was ratified by both sides. One of the terms of the Convention was the ceding of Kowloon, an area of the mainland across the bay from Victoria, to Britain.

Development continued in Victoria. Many three or four storey smart colonial buildings were erected along the shoreline. Most of the prominent public buildings and facilities were established over the next few decades. Along with the government buildings and the Anglican Cathedral, City Hall was constructed on the shoreline in 1869, the Hong Kong Zoological and Botanical Gardens were founded in 1871 and the Peak Tramway was completed in 1888. The population in the 1865 census was recorded as 125,504[32]. This rapid population growth lead to two outcomes.

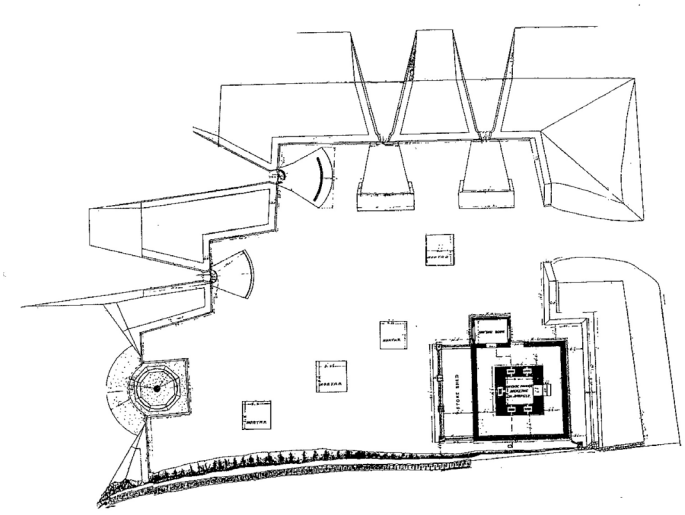
[31] Rollo, 1991, p.10

[32] Thomson, 1873-74, accessed 26/02/09

Beaconsfield House after renovation with the Cathedral on the left
(selected Historic Buildings and Sites in Central District, 2004, p.32)



Government House after extension in the late 1880s



Plan of the Murray Battery (Rollo, 1991, p.9)

Map of Victoria c1887 (provided by the AMO)

Government Hill from the Peak (Yau, 1999, p.98)

Firstly, the need for more space on which to build became apparent and from 1868 to 1873 the first Praya Reclamation scheme took place. Land was added up to the present day De Voeux Road. The second Praya Reclamation scheme took place between 1890 and 1904, which added land up to today's Connaught Road. The shoreline that had originally been located just below the Murray Parade Ground and followed the line of Queen's Road was now 200-250 meters further away. Secondly, there was difficulty maintaining satisfactory sanitary conditions. In fact, conditions were so bad by the end of the century that Bubonic Plague broke out in 1894. This shocked the government into action and in 1903 the Public Health and Building Ordinance was passed.

Also in reaction to this, the government felt that it needed to expand its territory in order to accommodate the increasing population. After other nations, such as France, Germany and Russia, were granted territory in nearby provinces, Britain used its 'most favoured nation' clause[33] to demand further land. The area granted stretched to the Shenzhen River and became known as the New Territories.

Government Hill

Both the Heard and Co. building and Government House were extended and altered during the second half of the 19th century. The Heard and Co. building passed through the hands of several companies. By 1879 it was owned by the Director of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, Emmanuel Raphael Belilios, who renamed the house "Beaconsfield" after British Prime Minister Lord Beaconsfield (Disraeli)[34]. It is shown with this name in a map of the area of 1904 with a terraced row of houses below it which have adopted the name 'Beaconsfield Arcade'.

The building had been renovated in the 1860s with what seems to have been a complete rebuilding of the north façade to add corner towers and more elaborate columned balconies to replace the round arched ones of the original façade. A large retaining wall was also erected around the base of the north and east sides of the building.

Under the Governorship of Sir William Des Voeux (1887-91), Government House was extended with an annex to the east. This was almost as large as the main house and was linked to it via a covered stairway.

The two storey annexe's main function was entertainment; it contained a ballroom, billiard room, supper room, card and smoking rooms[35]. It was in a similar Colonial style to the main building with classical columns to the first floor veranda and a pediment on the north elevation. The total cost of the work was $40,000[36].

Meanwhile, the Murray Battery to the south of Government House had, from 1882, only been used for drill purposes after it was not included as part of a new defence scheme for the harbour. For a time it still had five gun positions and four mortar platforms which are shown on a plan of 1882. However, by 1895 the Battery was not listed in the Armaments List and must have been decommissioned[37].

A map of Victoria from 1887 shows the area with Government House commanding the position at the top of Government Hill. The Murray Battery is to the north and the Government Offices and St. John's Cathedral are to the north-east. All are set within wooded and landscaped grounds. To the west is the Murray Parade Ground and Barracks. To the north of Government Hill the new City Hall can be seen to the west of the cricket ground on land reclaimed in the First Praya scheme. The land proposed for the Second Praya scheme is also indicated on the map.

A 19th century photograph, taken from the Peak, brings the scene to life. The photo looks down on Government Hill. In the centre is Government House, consisting of two rectangular blocks (the main building and the ballroom extension to the east) surrounded by gardens. Just to the right of this is the Government Office building and further to the right is St. John's Cathedral and Beaconsfield House. The surrounding city is rapidly expanding; several new buildings can be seen surrounded in scaffolding, including ones on the newly reclaimed shorefront.

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33 In the Convention of Peking Britain was named as one of the 'most favoured nations'. The clause was a "provision in a commercial treaty binding the signatories to extend trading benefits equal to those accorded any third state. The clause ensures equal commercial opportunities". Most-favored-nation clause, accessed 06/03/09

34 Selected Historic Buildings and Sites in Central District, 2004, p.32

35 Walker and Rowlinson, 1990, pp.88-89

36 Ibid. p.89

37 Rollo, 1991, p.10

2.4.4 The Early 20th Century 1900-1930

By the late 19th century the Government Offices (by this time sometimes known as the Secretariat Building) were in *"a substantial state of repair [and] no major expenditure on maintenance was anticipated in the immediate future"*[38]. However, space in the building was becoming scare. In 1890 the Surveyor General proposed the Murray Battery as a site for a new government office building to include Law Courts:

"…it will be necessary, at no remote period, to provide a considerable sum for the purpose of furnishing adequate accommodation for the Government Departments and the Law Courts. The Colony has out-grown what was thought, and probably was sufficient, years ago. The loss of time and prejudicial effect on public business owing to the offices of the Attorney General, and Crown Solicitor, the Land Office and the Treasury, being removed so far from the Chief Secretary and the Surveyor general are very serious. I propose to provide accommodation for these offices, and for the Law Courts, in buildings to be erected in the vicinity of the present offices. It is hoped that the Military Authorities will give up the disused Murray Battery for the purpose. The site is sufficiently central for all purposes, and commanding as it does the Queen's Road and the Harbour, is, in my opinion, unrivalled as regards its capability for architectural effect. The new buildings erected on such a site should be worthy of the Colony. In the hope that something may be decided, I have inserted the sum of $150,000 in the Estimates, but this must be regarded only as a very rough approximation."[39]

This scheme was never followed through as there is no record of any building with sufficient *"architectural effect"* having ever been built in this location. Instead, in 1908-09 the stables of the Secretariat were adapted and extended to provide accommodation for the PWD at a cost of $13,723.07. They were extended to 38ft long and an extra storey was added. Inside the building could accommodate six rooms for the PWD, four for Engineering staff, one as an Overseer's Office and a telephone workshop and store[40]. The location of the stables is not entirely certain but a description of a covered walkway across Lower Albert Road to connect the block to the main offices indicates that they were north of the road, perhaps the rectangular building shown to the south of the Secretariat on the 1887 map.

In 1928 further office space was provided by the addition of an extra storey to the main building. This was only achievable with extensive internal works, including the rebuilding of piers and the insertion of reinforced concrete columns to support the new floor. The building was also modernised with a lift added, fan and light points, 16 heating points and 13 bell points installed. A porch was added over the main entrance. The contractors for the job were Messrs Sang Lee and Co. for work that cost a total of $99,253.56[41].

Early photograph of the Old Murray Battery with the Government Offices in the background

Plan of the CGO site with the former Murray Battery marked in blue (©Google 2009)

38 HK PRO, 'First Central Government Offices', in Buildings- Government, Reference number: PRO-REF-096-01 Encl.10

39 Pottinger Street and its Tunnels, accessed 27/02/09

40 HK PRO, 'First Central Government Offices', in Buildings- Government, Reference number: PRO-REF-096-01 Encl.10

41 Ibid.

In 1915 Beaconsfield House (the former Heard and Co. building) was purchased by the French Mission. An extensive scheme of alterations was carried out, including the insertion of a chapel topped with a domed cupola in the north-east corner. The facades were extensively reworked and appear to have been almost entirely refaced in red brick and the verandas on the north side were filled in and had windows inserted. A more delicate 'French' Classical scheme of decoration was applied to the exterior, which consisted of slim pilasters, elegant pediments and curved bays on the east façade. Other than the number of floors, the remodelled building bore very little resemblance to the original. A plaque of the south side over the door marked the completion of work on 17th March 1917.

A small 19th century hall stood to the south-west of the Cathedral until the early 20th century. From 1920 to 1921 this was replaced with a larger building, named the Fanny Li or Old Hall. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor of the time, Sir Reginald Stubbs, on the 30th May 1920[42]. The hall was designed in a Gothic style, with pointed arched windows and crenellations, to complement the Cathedral.

Government House was also reworked in the 1920s. In 1929 Governor Sir Cecil Clementi had the ballroom extended so that the annexe wing was more substantially attached to the main house. A conservatory was also added. The cost of the works was $152,000[43].

Plaque over one of the doors on the French Mission Building

2.4.5 Plans for Redevelopment 1930-1940

By the 1930s lack of space in the Secretariat was becoming a real problem. Some departments were now located in other properties around the city. In 1931 the PWD began to drawn up plans for the total redevelopment of Government Hill. The move was also prompted by the imminent collapse of Beaconsfield Arcade and the sale of part of the City Hall site to the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank in order for them to build a larger headquarters (the first tall building over four or five storeys in Hong Kong). By 1933 they had a tentative scheme drawn up.

The plan of this shows the area between Upper Albert Road, Ice House Street, Queen's Road Central and Garden Road as earmarked for major change. Government House and the existing Secretariat were to be demolished. At the top of the hill two blocks of domestic premises would sit above a new large scale Government Office. Lower Albert Road would be diverted and below this would be several blocks given over to business premises. A new City Hall would replace the one demolished to make way for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building.

In 1934 an Ordinance, called the 'Government House and City Development Scheme Bill', was passed which set up a fund "*designed to finance a large, specific scheme of re-development of an area including the site of the former City Hall and the site of the Government house and Colonial Secretary's Office building*"[44]. The money from the sale of the old City Hall site on Queen's Road was put into the fund and further money was to be generated from the sale of the existing buildings and surrounding land. The fund would go towards the building of the new Government Offices, roads and City Hall proposed in the 1933 plan.

However, a year later doubts were being expressed about the viability of the plan. Estimated costs were going up and the new Governor, Sir Andrew Caldecott, voiced concerns at the idea of intensive development of the area and the necessity of demolishing Government House. When Sir Geoffrey Northcote took up the post of Governor in 1937 he also expressed his dislike of the proposal for the intensive development of the area but

42 *St. John's Cathedral Conservation Management Plan*, 2007, p.31

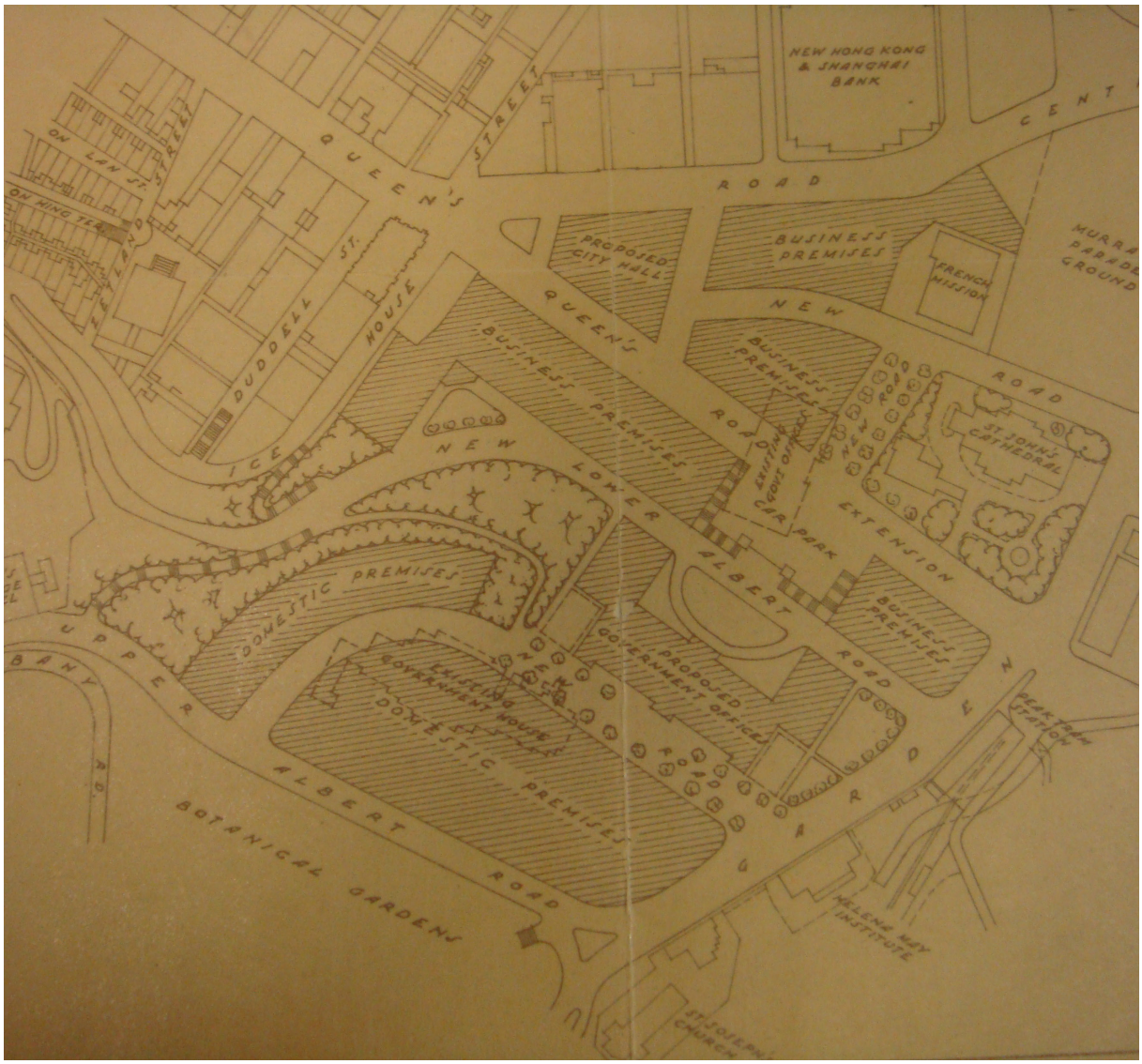
43 Walker and Rowlinson, 1990, p.89

44 *Government House and City Development Fund Winding Up Bill*, 1939, p.7

agreed to the development of the site of the Murray Battery for a new Government House and of the immediate surrounding area. Northcote also wished that a new City Hall be constructed sometime in the future which would be "*part of a large public building including new central Government Offices*"[45].

In 1937 the balance of the Development Fund was $839,000 dollars. However, this was not likely to be enough to cover the cost of even just the new Government House, let alone any further development. It was therefore decided that the money in the fund should be transferred into the government's general revenue and that the scaled down scheme should be funded by the government. The proposal for a new City Hall was put off until an adequate site could be found. Therefore, in 1939 the 'Government House and City Development Fund Winding Up Bill' was passed which abandoned the scheme for development of the whole of Government Hill and the money in the fund was transferred to revenue.

The scheme, however, never went ahead and it can be assumed that this was because of the interruption of World War II, which began in 1939.



Plan of the proposed redevelopment of Government Hill in 1933
(NA, MFQ 1/11)

[45] Ibid.

2.4.6 World War II 1939-1944

In 1941 Hong Kong came under threat from the Japanese forces. The Japanese launched an attack on Hong Kong on the 8th December, just one day after the attack on Pearl Harbour. Fierce fighting began and over the next eight days the Japanese captured the New Territories, Kowloon and finally Hong Kong Island. The troops in Hong Kong were greatly outnumbered and on 25th December Governor Sir Mark Aitchison Young surrendered to the enemy. The occupation lasted three years and eight months until the Japanese surrender on 15th August 1945 in the days after the atomic attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Two of the buildings on Government Hill were affected by the Japanese Occupation. The Cathedral was converted into a public hall and club for the Japanese community. Many of the Chaplains and some members of the congregation were imprisoned in the Prisoner of War camp at Stanley. The Cathedral sustained some bomb damage to the tower but most of the damage done to the building was due to neglect by the Japanese who had removed all the stained glass windows and used the organ for target practice[46].

Government House was most affected by the Occupation and remains a reminder of that period of history to this day. The house was used as the home of General Rensuke Isogai who was the first Japanese Governor of Hong Kong[47]. However, initially the building was not considered to be in a fit state to reside in; the construction of an air raid shelter underneath the house had disturbed the foundations. In 1942 a young 26 year old architect, Seichi Fuimura, was brought in to repair and redesign the house in a Japanese style. The main feature was a new central tower over the link between the main house and annexe. The exterior was completely remodelled with streamlined pillars instead of classical columns, latticework detail over some of the windows and typical Japanese roofs with curved up corners. Inside a reinforced concrete structure was inserted to support the building but the ground plan was roughly adhered to. The work was not complete until 1944. The Japanese signed their surrender at Government House a year later.

The exterior of Government House today with Japanese detailing

The air raid shelters under Government House were part of a wider network of tunnels constructed throughout the Central District between 1940 and 1941 before the Japanese Occupation, including some underneath Government Hill and over to the west under the Bishop's House. During the British Administration the tunnels may also have been used for secret communication. The Government Hill tunnels were accessed through portals on Queen's Road Central, while the Bishop's House tunnels had an entrance underneath the Duddell Street Steps, which is still visible today. A ventilation shaft for this tunnel is also visible on the strip of land between Ice House Street and Lower Albert Road. On the south side of Lower Albert Road two other tunnel portals are still visible which gave access to the Government House tunnels.

A legend is now associated with the Government House tunnels. At the beginning of the War a plan was devised to hide several artistic works of the Chater Collection, the private collection of Sir Paul Chater that he had donated to the Hong Kong Government in his will in 1926. Apparently, a Hungarian artist von Kobza-Nagy was asked to hide several of the works. Some accounts say they were removed from their frames, sealed inside metal tubes and buried in the garden[48]. Others say that they were hidden in the wine cellar or in a secret chamber in the tunnels[49]. Unfortunately Kobza-Nagy died in the war, along with the only two other people who knew the location; Captain Batty-Smith, Aide-de-Camp to the Governor and Thomas Harmon of the PWD. The location of the paintings has, therefore, never been found, though it is

46 Vines, 2001, p.16

47 Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong, accessed 27/02/09

48 Chater Collection on show at Museum of Art, accessed 02/03/09

49 Tunnel Network 13 file, CEDD, Ref: GCSS2/A1/821

quite likely that they were discovered by the Japanese when they made their alterations to the house.

However, twenty-three paintings which formed part of the collection and which had been hanging in Government House during the takeover were said to have been rescued by one of the contractors working on the Japanese renovations of the house, Mr. Sinn Chi Lam. He discovered the paintings in a rubbish dump and smuggled them back to his home village. After the war he returned them to the Hong Kong Government[50].

On a couple of occasions since the War, sections of road above the tunnels have collapsed or cracked, such as at the junction between Ice House Street and Lower Albert Road in 1960. Since then most of the tunnels in this area were backfilled, though many of the entrances (known as 'portals') are still visible.

2.4.7 Post War and Initial Plans for the CGO 1945-1952

Immediately after the War the focus for rebuilding the city was on housing. An influx of Chinese returning to the country after fleeing the war, followed by refugees leaving China when the defeat of the Chinese Nationalist Government by the Communists was looking imminent in 1948-49, lead to an increase in the population from 600,000 during the War to 2.2 million by 1955[51]. The consequence of this was the establishment of several large squatter camps and slums where conditions were poor. After a huge fire in one of these camps on 25th December 1953, 53,000 people were left homeless and a government programme of public housing was established to re-house them in hurriedly constructed apartment blocks.

Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Government was becoming increasingly concerned about their lack of space and the fact that many departments were scattered all over Central District in rented or requisitioned accommodation. After the War there was an increase in the number of government employees and departments because of the urban and economic development in Hong Kong; Sir Alexander Grantham took over as Governor in 1947 and over his ten year term he promoted a laissez-faire attitude which favoured economic-growth and trade expanded rapidly.

In a meeting of the Executive Council on 9th October 1946 the Hon. Mr D.F. Lonsdale expressed concerns over the Government holding so many requisitioned properties that commercial "*firms who wished to open offices in the Colony were obliged to go elsewhere*"[52]. This meeting prompted an investigation into the government's requisitioned and rented office accommodation, the amount of additional space needed at the time by each department and the potential for constructing some temporary accommodation.

Most departments requested more space, including 20,000sq ft for the PWD, 10,000 for the Medical Department, 8,500 for the Education Department and 2,000 for the Public Records Office[53]. The total findings were as follows:

a) Office area occupied in requisitioned premises: 44,500sq ft
b) Office area occupied on agreements: 40,300sq ft
c) Additional office area required by Departments: 42,850sq ft[54]

The PWD gained 16,000sq ft by the construction of two blocks of offices near the Secretariat Building in 1947. There is little documentation about these blocks, though they may be the temporary accommodation referred to in the 1946 meeting and therefore are unlikely to be of much architectural note. Other temporary accommodation proposed was the addition of another floor to the Secretariat Building[55], though this was never carried out.

The new PWD blocks are shown in an aerial photograph from 1949 which is reproduced in the Map Progression in section 2.4.12. They are the long thin building with a white roof to the west of the Secretariat. They are also shown on plans identifying the location of buildings on the site at this time, also in the Map Progression. The blocks are to the west of the Secretariat, one along Lower Albert Road

50 Chater Collection on show at Museum of Art, accessed 02/03/09

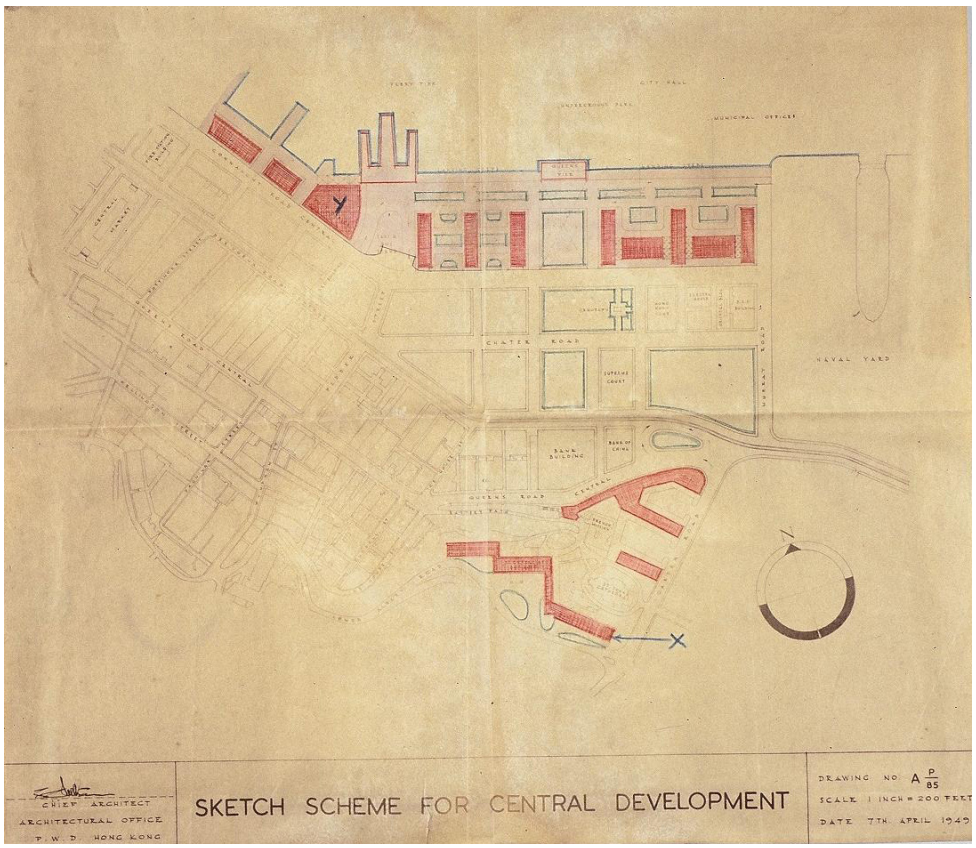
51 The Post War Years, accessed 02/03/09

52 HK PRO, Ref: HKRS 156-1-1803, Meeting Minutes 9/10/46

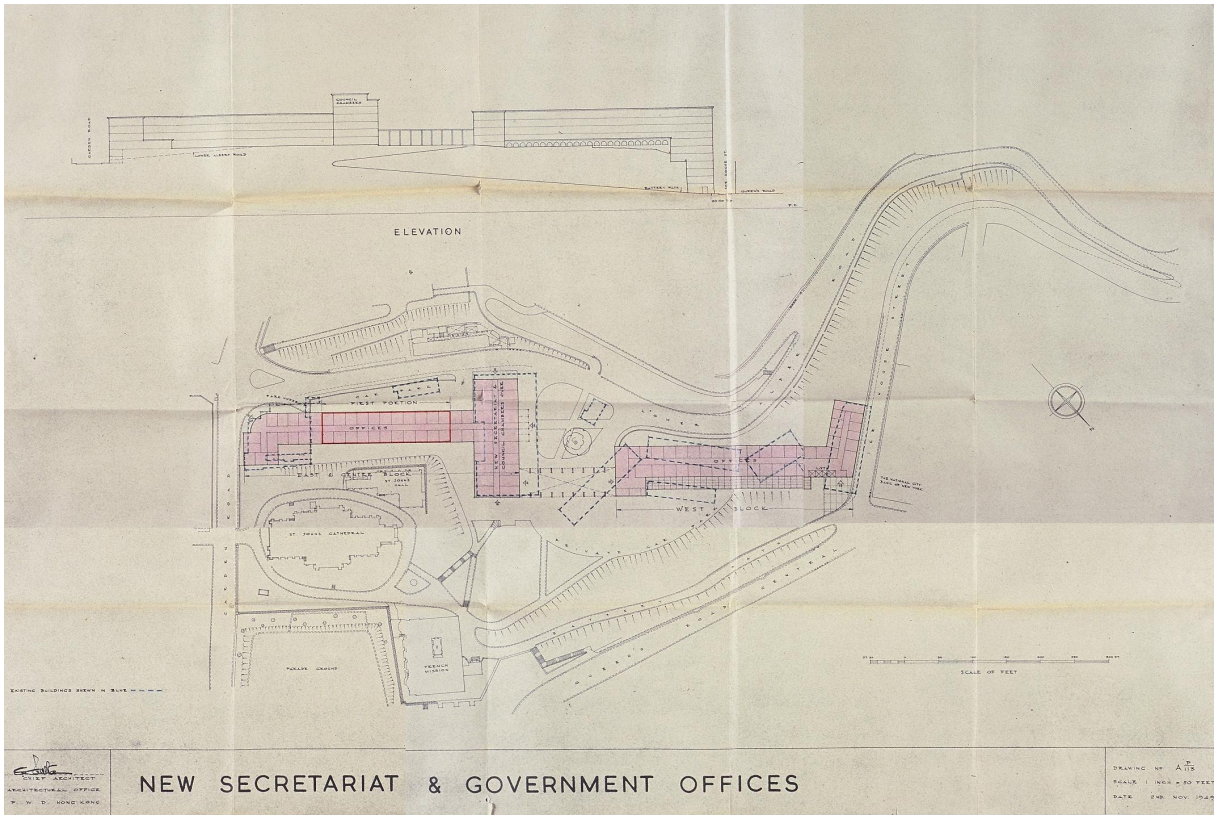
53 HK PRO, Ref: HKRS 156-1-1803, Quartering Authority Letter 17/10/47

54 HK PRO, Ref: HKRS 156-1-1803, Letter 27/10/47

55 HK PRO, Ref: 156-1-1803, Letter from P.A.D.C.S 31/5/49



Plan showing the proposed layout of the new CGO, April 1949
(HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803)



Plan showing a more detailed proposal for the CGO, November 1949
(HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803)

and the other at an angle to that projecting towards the north end of the Secretariat. The alignment of this block is likely to have been because of the difficulty of positioning buildings on the unusual levels of the site.

The government's requisitioning powers were due to expire towards the end of 1948 and therefore the urgency to derequisition properties and construct some purpose built accommodation was growing. During a four month period in 1947 around 200 properties were derequisitioned.

However, as A.E. Lissaman stated in a letter of 13/9/48:

"On the general question of providing accommodation we seem to be getting nowhere. There is no doubt in my mind that when considering the amount of private office accommodation which is occupied at present by Government offices and the additional amount which is being considered for option, [the] Government could not go far wrong by making a beginning in erecting some offices of its own."[56]

There were also increasing concerns over the condition of the Secretariat building which was infested with white ants and timber rot. By 1949 the Chief Architect of the Architectural Office in the PWD, A.M.J. Wright, had begun to put together a draft scheme for the new offices to be located on Government Hill. From the start, the scheme proposed consisted of two or three blocks which could be constructed in stages so that departments could be moved in gradually.

One plan, dated 7th April 1949, shows a scheme proposing development for several government offices in Central, the aim being to centralise all the government offices. Development on Government Hill is proposed as part of a wider plan that included development along Queen's Road Central (to the north of the French Mission Building) and eleven office blocks on a section of reclaimed land beyond Connaught Road. This section of land was reclaimed in 1951 but was not used for government offices in the end. Instead a new city hall was constructed there and completed in 1962.

However, the block along Queen's Road Central was utilised for government use; Beaconsfield House[57] was constructed in 1963 and housed the Information Services Department.

The proposals for offices on Government Hill, which by this time were beginning to be referred to as the Central Government Offices or CGO, included two east-west orientated buildings linked at one corner and a third block orientated north-west to south-east just to the south of the Cathedral. This block would be linked by a narrow building or covered walkway to the central block, here labelled as the Secretariat Building. The main entrance to the building would be on the south side facing Lower Albert Road, indicated by a canopy over the main door in the central block. A smaller fourth office block was proposed to the north of the Cathedral and the east of the French Mission Building.

By November a more detailed proposal for the CGO had been drawn up, which resembled the finished product more completely. A scheme of two blocks (though to be constructed in three phases as a linked East and Central Wing with a separate West Wing) was proposed. A T- shaped building to the east contained the Secretariat and Council Chambers on the top floor. The design shows a curve to the eastern entrance bay. The western block is on an east-west orientation with a wing following the line of Ice House Street to form a loosely L-shaped building. The ground floor is shown with an arcade of round head arches and a covered walkway connecting it to the eastern block.

The solution of how to position buildings on a site with such varied levels had by this time been solved by including several floors below the main site level at the west end of the west wing, so that there is an entrance at the level of the Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central junction.

To construct this scheme all the existing buildings on the site had to be demolished. These included the old Secretariat Building, the PWD buildings constructed after the War, three other buildings to the west of these, the converted stable block across Lower Albert Road, the Hong Kong Defence Force (HKDF) Headquarters at the east end of the site and several other small structures. These buildings

[56] HK PRO, Ref: HKRS 156-1-1803, Letter from A.E. Lissaman to C.S. 13/9/48

[57] The 1960s office building should not be confused with the French Mission Building which was also historically called Beaconsfield House

are marked on a plan in section 2.3.12. The building at the far west of the site may be the old Ice House on the corner of Ice House Street and Queen's Road that lent its name to the street (marked on the 1887 map). The HKDF Headquarters may have been located in an old colonial building; one is shown in this location in the photograph of the 1850s on p.71 just behind the Cathedral.

A letter of 10th December 1949[58] describes the CGO as a "*very promising scheme*" which would mean better communication between departments and a saving of $500,000 per annum on rented accommodation plus costs for messengers and transport. The letter also states that "*the outlook from Government House would not be adversely affected because on the Lower Albert Road level the building will not be higher than the existing Secretariat Block*". A letter from 9th February 1951[59] reiterates this point, describing that the design of the buildings was long and low both for aesthetic reasons and because there would not be interference with the view from Government House.

Three issues were holding up the preparation of the final designs, which were being carried out by J.C. Charter, an architect in the PWD.

1 The lack of decisions about the air-conditioning system
2 The lack of a decision regarding which departments would be moving into the new buildings and what accommodation each are to have
3 The continued presence of the HKDF Headquarters on the site[60]

The first issue is heavily documented in files existing in the PRO. The files contain numerous memos sent back and forth between members of the Architectural Office and PWD about the cost of air-conditioning, whether to have it only in offices or in the public areas as well, the lack of an air-conditioning expert in Hong Kong and which one to bring in from overseas to plan the system. Eventually it was decided to put air-conditioning throughout the building and the CGO became the first government buildings in the colony to have this.

A questionnaire was sent to all the departments at this point asking them what space they needed and to determine which department was at the most immediate need. The third point about the HKDF relates to the fact that the Headquarters building was located on the site where the first stage of building was proposed to take place. No site clearance or preparation could take place until the Defence Force moved into new premises.

Another delay to the final plans came because officials took some time deciding whether to add an additional storey to all the buildings. Discussions about adding floors to the designs of each of the wings took place between 1952 and 1954.

A memo of 2nd May 1952 from 'G.' describes that he is not opposed to the plan in principal but he does have some concerns about the design:

"So far as I am concerned from the point of view of the outlook from G.H. [Government House] I am prepared to agree to an extra storey. It is going to look like a factory, but could not something be done to make the roof look less unpleasing, e.g. by balustrading or something of that nature? I sh'd like to see sketches."[61]

The cost of adding an extra floor to the buildings would be $500,000 but the conclusion was made that it would be cheaper and more convenient to add the floors then than have to make the decision after the buildings were finished. A set of four doctored photographs[62] were produced by the PWD to illustrate the difference in height between the original plans for five storeys on the East and West Wings and six storeys on the Central Wing at the level of Lower Albert Road, to six storeys and eight storeys respectively for the revised plans.

The photographs show the view from Government house with its gardens in the foreground, the CGO in the middle ground and Hong Kong harbour in the background. At this time the skyline of Hong Kong was very different to the one it has become today. Here there are very few buildings rising above the CGO; only the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building, constructed in 1935, has a strong presence over the top of the CGO, though the

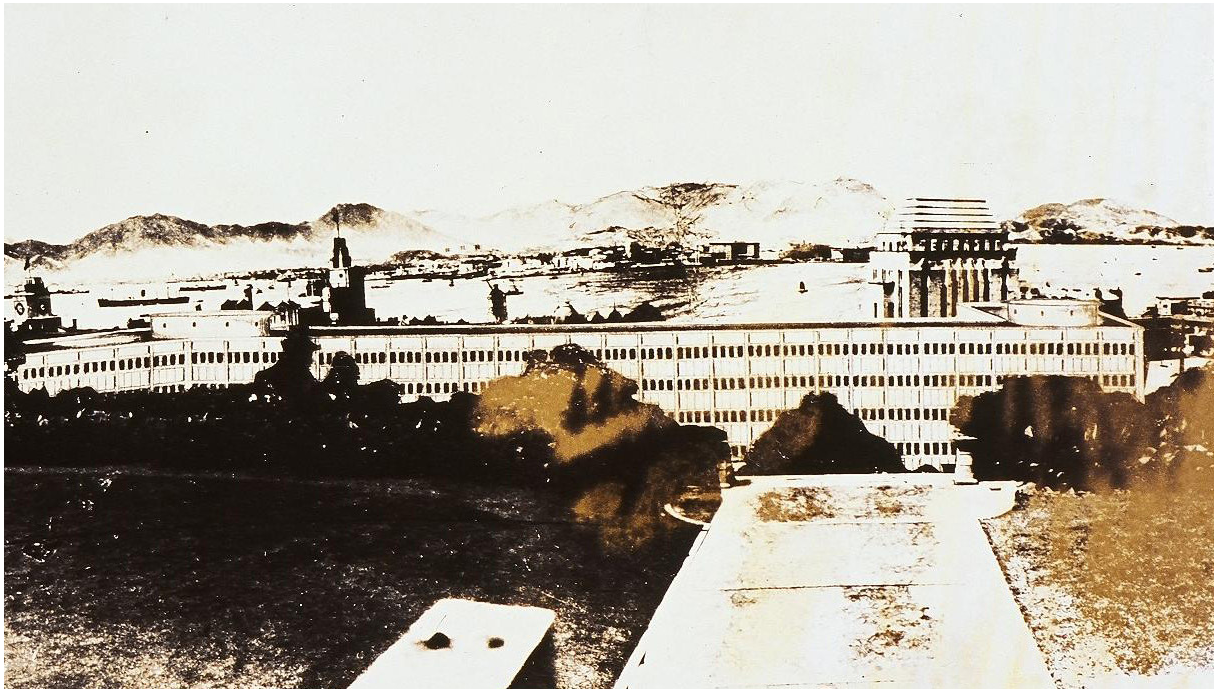
58 HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803, Letter 10/10/49, The author of the letter only gives his name as 'C.S.' and the recipient as 'Y.E.'

59 HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803, Letter 'D.P.W' to 'C.S.'

60 HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803, Letter from 'A.S.I' to 'D.C.S.'

61 HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803, Memo from 'G.' 2/5/52

62 HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803, Four photographs included as an appendix to a Memo from 'D.P.W.' on 17/4/52.



One of four doctored photos which show how the CGO would look from Government House
(HKPRO, HKRS 156-1-1802)

Bank of China building, constructed in 1952, was soon to join it. The decision to add an extra storey to the Central Wing was motivated by the desire to maintain a varied roofline as well as the need for extra space.
At the start of the project the estimated cost of the CGO was $10 million. By 1952 this had gone up to $13,850,000 plus a further $1,070,000 for the extra floors to the East and West Wings. When confirmation was given for the extra floor to the Central Wing in 1954 an extra $300,000 was added on to this giving a total estimated cost of $15,220,000.

2.4.8 The Construction of the CGO 1952-1960

In the 1950-51 PWD Annual Report a summary of the new Central Government Offices was given:

"Preliminary designs have been prepared for new Central Government Offices to be accommodated on a site extending from Garden Road in the east to Ice House Street in the west.

Provision has been made for the demolition of the old buildings and the erection of the new building in three stages: stage I comprises the eventual Public Works Department wing which will occupy the former Defence Force site; stage II comprises the new Secretariat building and Council Chamber and will occupy the present Secretariat site; and stage III comprises the erection of the largest block which will accommodate other Government Departments at present housed in rented offices.

The location and shape of the site has resulted in buildings with horizontal as opposed to vertical circulation. Adequate provision of lofts at the Ice House Street entrance will provide good means of access to the offices for persons approaching from the city.

The planning principle adopted throughout is one of office space on either side of central corridors, the depth of offices being determined as the average between requirements for single offices and large registries and draughting rooms. Fenestration is designed in 4'6" units so that offices may be built up of any multiple of this figure. It is anticipated that the entire building will be air-conditioned, but the building has been planned so that natural ventilation can be relied on if necessary.

Working drawings for Stage I are in preparation and building work is expected to start in September, 1951."[63]

Several of the working drawings for the Central Wing are included in Appendix D.

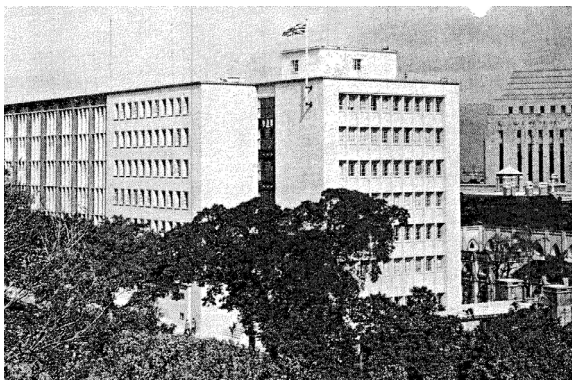
[63] Hong Kong Director of Public Works, Annual Report, 1950-51, unknown page number

Work did start on schedule and the HKDF Headquarters was demolished in September. December of 1951 a contract was let for the preparation of the site. This work was complete by February 1952 and by the end of that year the working drawings were complete and "*considerable progress had been made with the specification*"[64]. The PWD Annual Report of 1952-53 confirms the addition of an extra floor to the designs of the East Wing but says that there were delays starting the construction works because of bad weather in August.

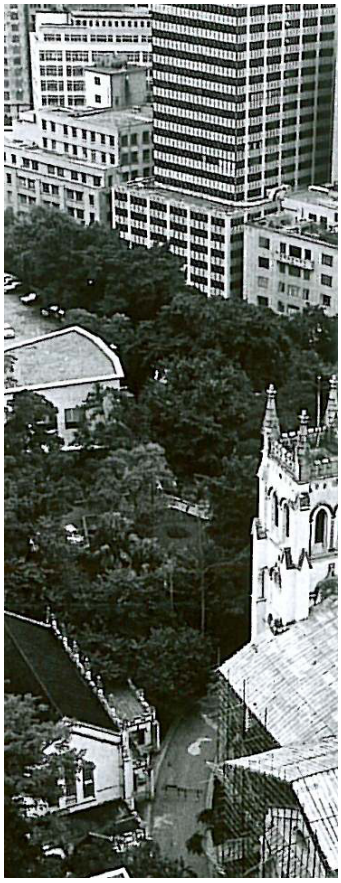
The East Wing was complete by December 1954 giving 96,000sq ft of office space. Several departments took space in this wing temporarily including the Audit, Inland Revenue, Medical, Public Relations, Quartering, Rating and Valuation, Treasury and Waterworks departments. An open plan room on the first floor was used as a temporary Council Chamber. The building also housed a temporary canteen in a future storage area that would provide the employees with cooked meals until the permanent canteen was opened in the West Wing. A recreation room with a ping-pong table was also provided, specially requested by the staff[65].

By October of 1955 the contract for the Central Wing had been let and the reinforced concrete structure was "*well advanced*"[66] by the end of March the next year. This wing was completed in December 1956. It included a fan-shaped Council Chamber built onto the north end of the Central Wing. The Chamber had U-shaped wood desks with built in seats upholstered in cream material and wood panelling up to dado level. The Speaker's desk was also wood panelled and had a decorative grill inset into a panel on the front. Behind the Speaker a Royal Coat of Arms was mounted on the wall.

On the 9th January 1957 a ceremony was held to officially open the building and unveil a plaque commemorating the occasion. Sir Alexander Grantham, the Governor, did the honours. The plaque was located on the north wall of the lobby. The marble panel, with a crown above the inscription, also incorporates a circular metal plaque from the laying of the foundation stone of the original Secretariat.



The completed East Wing before the Central Hall was constructed (PWD Annual Report, 1952-53, p.4)



View of the Cathedral and the Council Chamber in the 1980s (Vine 2001, p.52-53)

The circular metal plaque from the foundation stone of the Old Government Ofifces

64 Hong Kong Director of Public Works, Annual Report, 1951-52, p.3

65 HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1804

66 Hong Kong Director of Public Works, Annual Report, 1955-56, p.3

The Central Wing and fan-shaped Council Chamber in 1957 (GIS, 585/118)

The interior of the Council Chamber in 1957
(GIS, 585/121)

This was discovered during the demolition of the old building and records that in 1847 the Governor Sir John Francis Davis laid the foundation stone. In his speech the Governor described that that old Secretariat was pulled down "*after a useful life of over 100 years*"[67].

That building had cost £15,000 to build, while the new CGO were to cost nearly 100 times more at £4,250,000. Grantham also expressed his opinion of the new buildings:

"I think that these Central Government Offices are very fine-looking. They are what I believe is called Functional design and they can certainly be considered a very great credit to our architects and also to the contractors who, in one form or another, erected them and I hope you will agree with me that the Central Government Offices are in every way worthy of the Colony of Hongkong."

The West Wing was the final phase of the construction works. Working drawings were nearly complete by the end of 1956. The ground works for this wing were significantly more difficult than for the other wings as a huge retaining wall had to be built to shore up the slope down to Ice House Street. After this was built in February 1957, a contract for the demolition of the old PWD buildings was signed and carried out in March. The wing was scheduled for completion at the end of 1958 and would provide 212,600sq ft of space and a car park for 125. However, the PWD Annual Reports record delays in May 1958 because of heavy rain meaning that the building was not completed until early 1959.

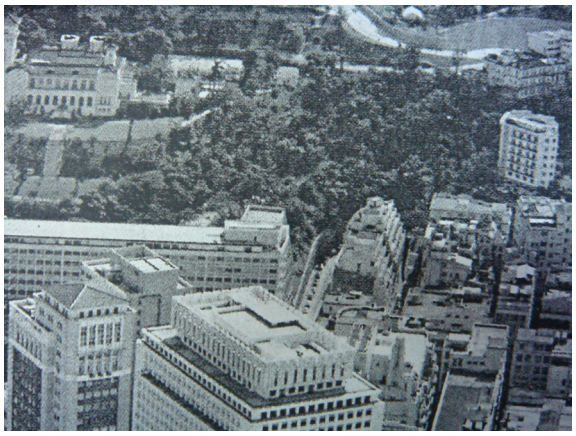
This wing housed the departments that members of the public were likely to visit and the entrance at the bottom floor at the junction of Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central was to be the public entrance. A series of photographs held in the HK PRO show the reception desk just inside this entrance in 1963. The Public Enquiry Service had been set up in 1961 by the Government Information Services Department, who had offices in Beaconsfield House. The staff on the reception desk were there to help members of the public with enquires about almost any aspect of life in Hong Kong "*ranging from business enquiries to domestic disputes*"[68]. The photos show a curved wooden reception desk with a striped design which sits in front of a large window looking out onto Ice House Street. The plain plastered wall is adorned with public information posters, such as one that encourages people to put litter in the bin. The floor is possibly a rubber or vinyl material with a mosaic pattern on it.

The reception area on the ground floor of the West Wing in 1963
(HK PRO, HKRS 365-1-100-4)

[67] Plaque Unveiled, 1957, unknown page number

[68] HK PRO, HKRS 365-1-100-4

Interestingly the view through the window shows the building opposite the CGO at this time, which had a giant Classical pilaster base at the corner. The building is covered in bamboo scaffolding. It has since been replaced with a modern office block. Other photographs from the 1960s and 70s show that buildings slightly further up Ice House Street had a stepped back elevation facing Ice House Street, just as the west end of the West Wing did.



View of the West Wing in the 1970s showing the stepped back facade of the building opposite (Moss, 2002, p.165)

A memo of 13th January 1961 reads: *"Now with the exception of the installation of the Colony Crest the whole scheme is virtually complete and a more accurate estimate of annual expenditure can be given…"*[69]. It records the total expenditure for the CGO as $21,368,148 up until 1959, then an additional $550,000 in 1960-61. An aerial photograph from 1963, soon after the completion of the CGO, is reproduced in the Map Progression at section 2.4.12.

2.4.9 Alterations to the CGO 1960-1998

Almost immediately after the CGO were completely finished changes to the buildings were being made. The car park under the West Wing, which in the 1958-59 report had been recorded as having been enlarged to hold 140 cars, was partly converted into as dental clinic soon after the completion of the building in 1959.

By 1962 it was becoming apparent that there was a problem with the Italian slate facing that was affixed in panels under each window of the west elevation of the Central Wing. The slate was beginning to flake and discolour and tests carried out on samples showed that a chemical reaction was causing calcium sulphate build up and iron stains from the fixings. This reaction could not be remedied. Two solutions were proposed; one to oil the slate and one to replace it. Oiling, however, would have needed to be carried out once every six months, a process which would have included the erection of some sort of scaffolding each time. Therefore, it was decided that the slate panels would be replaced with grey/green glass mosaic tiles at a cost of $40,000[70].

Despite the PWD having added extra floors to the original plans for the buildings when they were being drawn up in the early 1950s, by the early 1960s space was already at a premium. It was decided that additional floors would be added to both the East and West Wings. The PWD Annual Report of 1962-63 records that a floor was added to the East Wing in that year. In 1964 the construction of the additional floor on the West Wing was started and took a year to complete. It is also clear when comparing photographs from the 1960s of the Central Wing and the building today that an additional storey was also added to this wing. This does not appear to have been carried out at the same time as the East Wing's extra storey was added as the original plans for this do not show any works to the Central Wing. The Public Works Department Annual Reports were consulted up until the mid 1960s but no mention of the extra floor was found. Therefore the floor must have been added after this date, perhaps even as part of works to extend the Central Wing in 1989/90 (see below).

Other minor extensions included an additional extension to the top storey of the east end of the East Wing in 1976. The top floor extension of the east end, which was carried out as part of the 1962-63 extra floor, did not cover the whole area of the roof and a portion in the north corner was a flat roof with railing around the edge and a telephone antenna. The extension filled in this corner with a small office and male and female toilets.

Other office accommodation for the Hong Kong Government was being constructed during the 1960s. Beaconsfield House (or 'Defend the North House' as the building was known in Cantonese), on Queen's Road Central was constructed in 1963 in a similar 'Functionalist' style. Adjacent to the east end of the CGO, the

[69] HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803, Memo 13/01/61

[70] HK PRO, HKRS 156-1-1803, Memo 1962

The CGO New Annexe

Murray Building was constructed in 1969. Plans for this were being prepared from 1964/65 and the PWD Annual Report of that year describes it as *"the tallest building so far designed for the Hong Kong Government"* which will provide 228,000sq ft of office space.

Meanwhile, in the CGO there were problems with the air conditioning on the sixth floor of the East Wing. The system was causing terrible vibrations in the offices on this level. In some rooms it was so bad that it caused the furniture to move and the walls to vibrate. The staff were suffering with headaches in these terrible working conditions. It took several letters of complaint by one of the senior staff working in this area before any remedial work was carried out. It was found that there was insufficient damping of the compressor in a nearby plant room which causing was rattling against the RSJ which the air-conditioning equipment was positioned above.

In 1975 a small landscaped garden was added to the north of the Council Chamber. This provided a series of circular paved and planted areas linked by paths of circular paving slabs. Benches offered a pleasant place for staff to sit during breaks or lunch hours.

By the end of the 1980s it seems that lack of space and now outdated décor was becoming an issue as a feasibility study was carried out by the Architectural Services Department to suggest new uses for the CGO site[71]. The report suggested that the Central and East Wing could be demolished and the space turned into a garden. The West Wing could then be refurbished and used for Government and private sector offices. In addition a car park on Garden Road and the site of the 1960s Beaconsfield House could be redeveloped into a low density commercial centre. The proposal was, however, never carried forward because at the time there was not felt to be a need to revise Government office accommodation to such as extent and there were no finances in place for the project.

Instead, at this time it was decided to add an extension to the Central Wing to provide more space for the Executive Council. The new extension, known as the New Annexe, was to be located on the north side of the building and would mean the fan-shaped Legislative Council Chamber would have to be demolished. At his time the Legislative Council moved to the former Supreme Court building next to Statue Square. In 1985 the first ever elections to the Legislative Council had been held, marking the beginning of democracy in Hong Kong[72].

The extension was designed to match almost exactly the materials and design of the Central Wing, with the same grey/green mosaic tiles under the windows and decorative grills over the first floor windows. There was also a lower block behind the New Annexe to house a Council Chamber/Conference Room. The extension was complete by 1991.

Other changes to the building came after the handover of power from Britain to China in 1997. Tall metal railings were erected around the perimeter of the complex, where once the public could walk through from Battery Path to Lower Albert Road. This had also been a place where protests took place, with protestors being sheltered from the sun by the large Burmese Rosewood tree in the centre of the courtyard.

71 Pang Yat Hong, 1995, p.19

72 *History of the Legislature*, accessed 04/03/09

Panorama of Hong Kong in 1973 showing the CGO and new tall buildings in the foreground, including the Hilton and City Hall (Moss, 2002, p.164-5)

The entrance hall of the West Wing at the Lower Albert Road level underwent a major transformation. It was extended out towards the east to provide space for a reception desk on the right and a press conference area on the left. The décor was also upgraded with marble lined walls. A metal panelled tower to the north of the entrance was also added to provide extra offices. Finally, a porte-cochère was added outside the entrance to give visiting dignitaries cover from the rain when getting out of their cars.

Over the years there have been various programmes of internal refurbishment and redecoration throughout the three wings. Some of the West Wing offices are said to have been redecorated between 1991 and 1994[73]. At the time of writing this report a programme of redecoration was underway on the eighth floor of the East Wing. The lavish new decoration consists of marble floors, maple veneer panelling and plush new carpets. The offices will be for top government officials. However, there are many parts of the building which still have their original (or if not original then very early) decoration.

2.4.10 Evolving Hong Kong 1950s-2000s

Since the CGO were first constructed the urban landscape of Hong Kong has changed dramatically. When the buildings were first being proposed the only tall building in the city was the stone clad Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank building, constructed in 1935 on the site of the old City Hall on Queen's Road Central. The Bank of China building next to this followed in 1952 which was just slightly taller. It was during the 1960s though that dramatic development started to take place on the Hong Kong skyline.

In the early 1960s the military handed the Murray Barracks land over to the Government. Though the Government at first felt that the land should be reserved for their use, it was found that the land was not needed and part of it was sold to developers who constructed the Hong Kong Hilton. The hotel was opened in 1961. At 26 storeys it now blocked the CGO East Wing from the view from the harbour.

The Hilton was followed by The Mandarin in 1963 and a new City Hall in 1962, a complex on the waterfront of cultural facilities such as a theatre and library. By the mid 1960s these taller buildings were becoming the predominant features on the skyline in views from the Peak and the CGO were almost totally obscured in views from the harbour.

City Hall

[73] Pang Yat Hong, 1995, p.19

Towards the end of the 1960s development began further up the slope to the south of the CGO. This was in the form of residential tower blocks, though a gap between them and the CGO was maintained because of the position of Government House and the Zoological and Botanical Gardens.

The first skyscraper constructed in Hong Kong was Jardine House with its distinctive circular windows. The 52 storey building was completed in 1972 and it was from this date onwards that Hong Kong really began to take the shape we know today. Skyscrapers became the norm for construction in Central and in the wider urban areas of Hong Kong.

In the immediate vicinity of the CGO most of the earlier buildings were replaced with tall buildings, several of which are iconic pieces of architecture. To the north is Norman Foster's HSBC building, completed in 1985. This replaced the former Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Building constructed in the 1930s. At the time of construction it was the most expensive building in the world to have been built and was the tallest in Hong Kong. Now the building, with its unusual industrial design with tubular steel struts, is dwarfed by many of those around it.

Three tall towers to the northeast of the CGO

To the north-east of the CGO are a cluster of three towers. First to be built was the Bank of China tower on the location of an old colonial building Murray House. Before the tower could be constructed between 1985 and 1990, Murray House was disassembled and moved piece by piece to Stanley on the south side of the island.

Secondly, the Citibank Plaza to the north of the Murray Building was constructed in 1992. Thirdly, in 1999 the Cheung Kong Centre was opened. This tower replaced the old Hilton Hotel and Beaconsfield House, which was demolished in 1995 to make way for the new development.

Now the CGO sits in the middle of Central District surrounded by tall buildings on the west, north and east sides and with Government House to the south. It is one of the few buildings in Hong Kong where the horizontal elements of the design are emphasised more than the vertical. On Government Hill the French Mission Building, Cathedral and Government House have been a constant since the War. The Cathedral has continued its religious functions and in 2005 they Very Revd Andrew Chan became the first Chinese Dean of the Cathedral[74].

After the War the French Mission Building had become the temporary headquarters of the reformed Hong Kong Government, as it had briefly been used by the government before the Japanese invasion. In 1953 the government purchased the building permanently from the French Mission. It was used for various purposes: as the Education Department, the Victoria District Court from 1965, the Supreme Court from 1980, the Information Services Department from 1983 and the Court of Final Appeal from 1997[75]. Government House continued in use as the official Governor's residence until the handover of power and was then transferred to use as the residence of the Chief Executive of the HKSAR Government.

In addition to the changing physical landscape of Hong Kong the Hong Kong Government has also evolved. In 1997 the 99 year lease of the New Territories came to an end, which prompted the British government to hand control of Hong Kong back to the People's Republic of China. The HKSAR was set up and this administration took over the use of the CGO.

[74] St. John's Cathedral History, accessed 04/03/09

[75] *Select Historic Buildings and Sites in Central District*, 2004, pp. 32-33

Many of the most important government departments are now housed in the CGO, while there are now a fair number of other office blocks used by the government both in Central and over the water in Kowloon, such as North Point Government Offices. Plans are also in motion for a new government office complex on a former Naval site on the waterfront named after HMS Tamar, a British ship in service from the late 19th century up until the Japanese Occupation. The site will include a new Central Government Complex, a Legislative Council Complex, an open space and two elevated walkways[76]. The project is due to be completed in 2011.

A comparison between the Old Government Offices in the 19th century and the same view today.
It is thought that the tree is the same one in each image.

[76] *Tamar Development Project*, accessed 04/03/09

2.4.11 Timeline

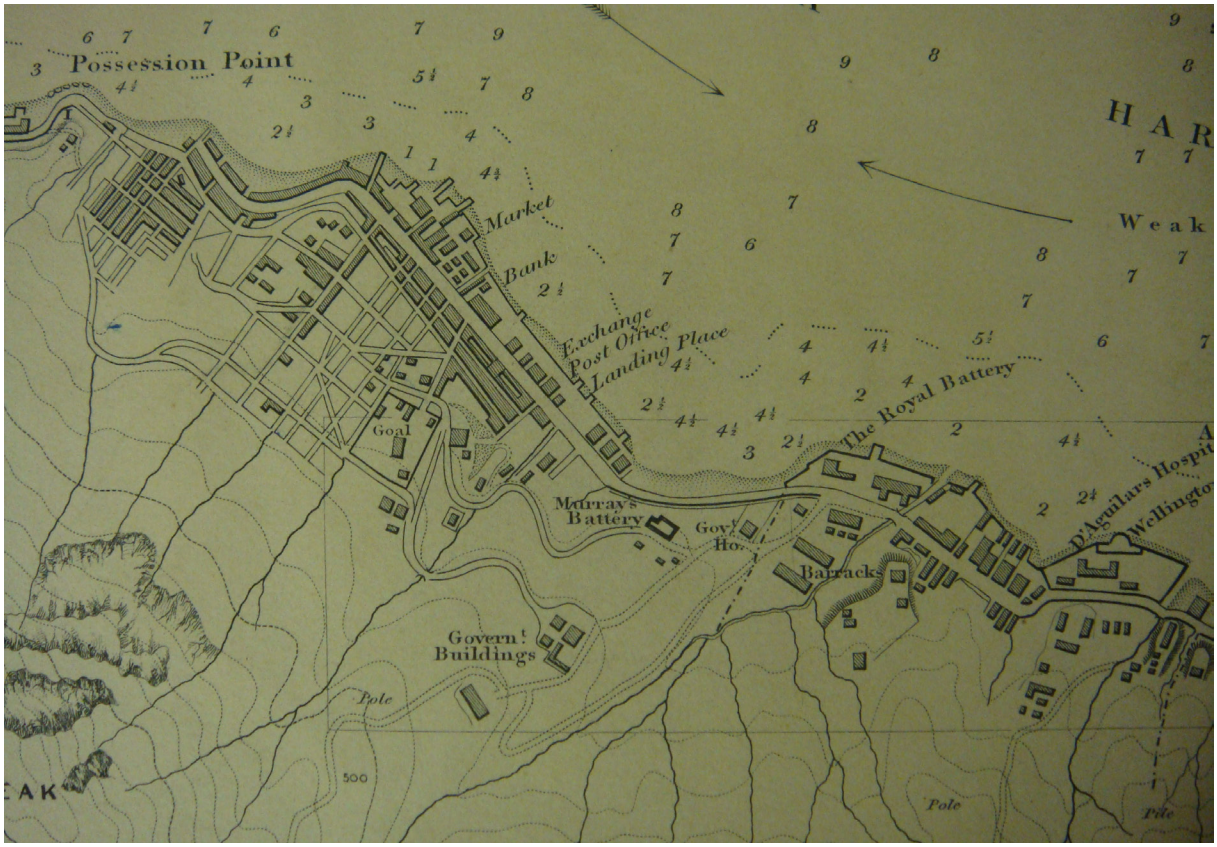
1839-41	First Opium War
1841	Population of Hong Kong 5,450
1842	Treaty of Nanking signed and Hong Kong ceded to the British
1842-43	Heard and Co. building constructed (now known as the French Mission Building)
1844	Population of Hong Kong 19,000
1845	By this date the Murray Barracks and Battery were established
1847-49	Hong Kong Colonial Church built
1847-early 1850s	Government Offices constructed
1848	Discussions for Government House begin and ground levelled
1851-55	Government House constructed
1856-60	2nd Opium Wars, Kowloon ceded to the British
1860s	Heard and Co. Building renovated and extended
1865	Population of Hong Kong 125,504
1869	First City Hall built
1871	Zoological and Botanical Gardens founded
1872	The Colonial Church renamed as the Cathedral Church of St. John the Evangelist
1879	By this date the Heard and Co. Building was owned by the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Director Belilios who renamed it Beaconsfield
1882	From this date the Murray Battery was used for drill purposes only
1887-91	Government House annexe added
1890	Surveyor General proposes a new Government office and law courts on Government Hill
1895	From this date the Murray Battery was decommissioned
1898	New Territories leased to the British for 99 years
1908-09	Stable block converted into offices for the PWD
1911	Population of Hong Kong 500,000
1915	Beaconsfield (old Heard and Co. building) purchased by the French Mission who carry out extensive renovations
1917	On 17th March the French Mission Building was opened
1920-21	Fanny Li/Old Hall built to replace an old church hall
1928	Extra floor added to the old Government Offices
1929	Government House extended to attach the two wings together more substantially
1931-39	Redevelopment plans prepared by the PWD for Government Hill. Scheme eventually discarded
1935	First Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank Building constructed
1940-41	Tunnels built under Government Hill for use as air raid shelters
1941	Population of Hong Kong 1,600,000
1941	Hong Kong attacked by the Japanese from 8th December. British Surrender on 25th December
1942-44	Government House redesigned
1945	Japanese surrender on 15th August
1945	Population of Hong Kong 600,000
Post WWII	French Mission Building used as a temporary Government headquarters
1946	From this date the Government begin looking at building new CGO and initial plans are drawn up
1947	Alexander Grantham takes over as Governor. He serves for the next 10 years
1947	Temporary offices built for the PWD to the west of the old Government Offices
1950-51	Preliminary designs for the CGO completed
1951	Site preparations for the East Wing started
1952	Construction started on East Wing
1952	Extra floor added to the preliminary plans for West Wing and East Wing
1952	First Bank of China Building constructed
1953	Slum fires leading to huge public housing scheme in Hong Kong

1954	Extra floor added to the preliminary plans for Central Wing
1954	East Wing completed in December
1955	Construction started on the Central Wing in October
1955	Population of Hong Kong 2.2 million
1956	Central Wing complete in December
1957	Opening ceremony for the Central Wing on 9th January
1957	Retaining wall for West Wing built and construction of the building started in March
1958	Delays to the West Wing because of heavy rain
1959	Early in the year the West Wing was completed
1959	Dental Clinic added to the Lower Albert Road level of the West Wing
1961	Public Enquiry Service have a desk in the Ice House Street entrance of the West Wing
1961	Hong Kong Hilton built
1962	Replacement of the slate panels on the Central Wing with mosaic tiles
1962	City Hall built
1962-63	Extra floor added to East Wing
1963	Beaconsfield House built
1964	Extra floor added to West Wing
1969	Problems with air-conditioning in the East Wing
1969	Murray Building constructed
1972	Jardine House built
1985	HSBC Building constructed
1989	Feasibility study carried out for the redevelopment of the CGO complex. Scheme not carried out
1989-91	Extension of the Central Wing
1990	Bank of China Building built
1992	Citibank Plaza built
1995	Beaconsfield House demolished
1997	Handover of power from the British to Chinese and formation of HKSAR Government. Railings installed around the CGO complex
1997	French Mission Building becomes the Court of Final Appeal
1998	Entrance refurbishment and extension of the West Wing
1999	Cheung Kong Centre built
Present Day	Tamar site being redeveloped for new CGO

2.4.12 Site/Map Progression

1845 map

- ◇ National Archives: WO 78/118
- ◇ This map shows the initial development of Hong Kong after the territory was ceded to the British.
- ◇ Residential development is to the west, military development is to the east and in the centre are the beginnings of the Government centre.
- ◇ The first Governor's residence is near the shoreline marked as 'Gov't Ho.'.
- ◇ Murray's Battery has been established to the west of this.
- ◇ Four Government Buildings are located further up the slope.



1845 Detail

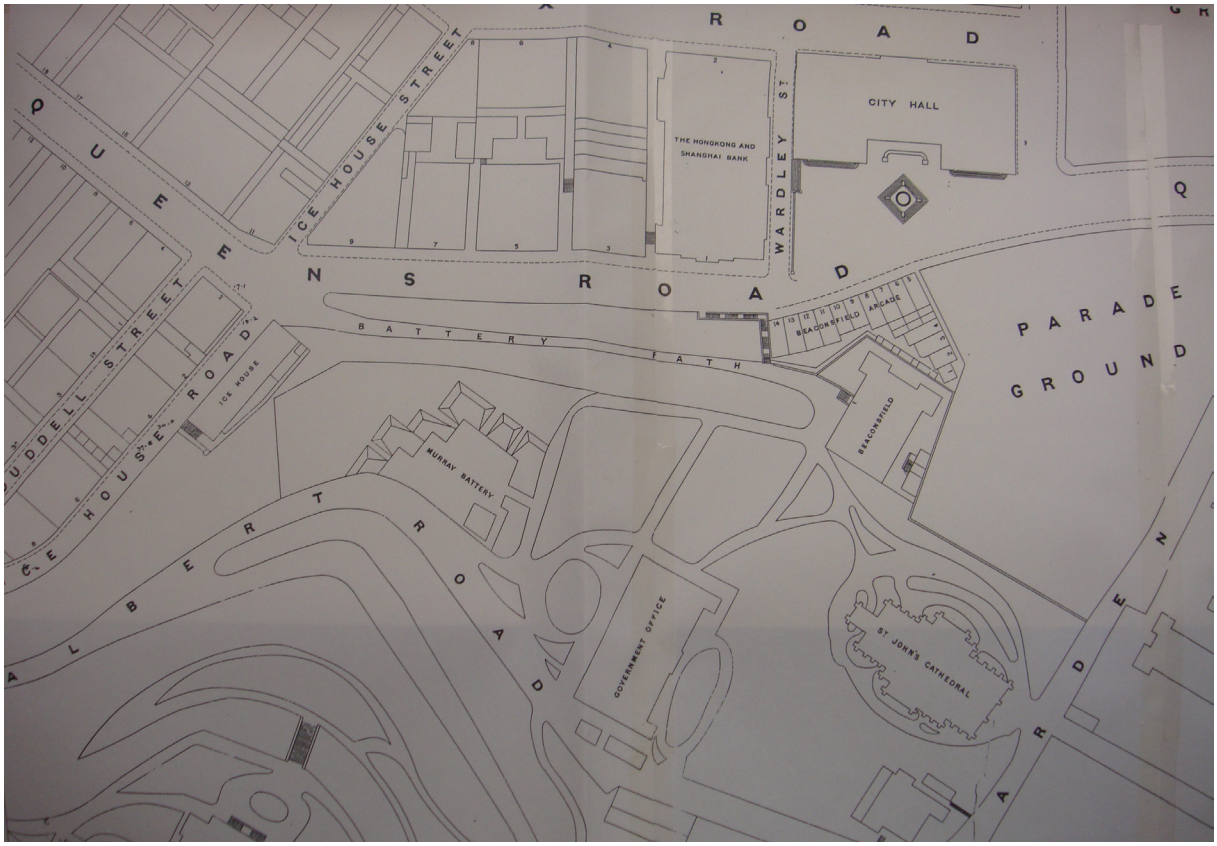
- National Archives: FO 705/82
- This map shows the same features as the previous map but in more detail.
- Note: north is at the bottom of the page.

1887 Map

- ◇ Provided by the AMO
- ◇ The city of Victoria is more established by this date with greater residential development to the west and military development to the east.
- ◇ The first Praya Reclamation scheme has taken place by this date and the plan indicates the extent of the second scheme.
- ◇ Government Hill is also more established. Government House has been constructed and is set in landscaped gardens. Below this are the Government Offices, the Heard and Co. Building (now the French Mission Building) and St. John's Cathedral. The plan form of the Murray Battery is also shown and the Murray Parade Ground is to the north of the Cathedral.
- ◇ Note how the shoreline is now much further away from Government Hill than it was in the 1845 map. The old City Hall has been constructed on the land reclaimed in the First Praya scheme.
- ◇ Today's Ice House Street is marked here are Ice House Lane, while Ice House Street is the section of the road.

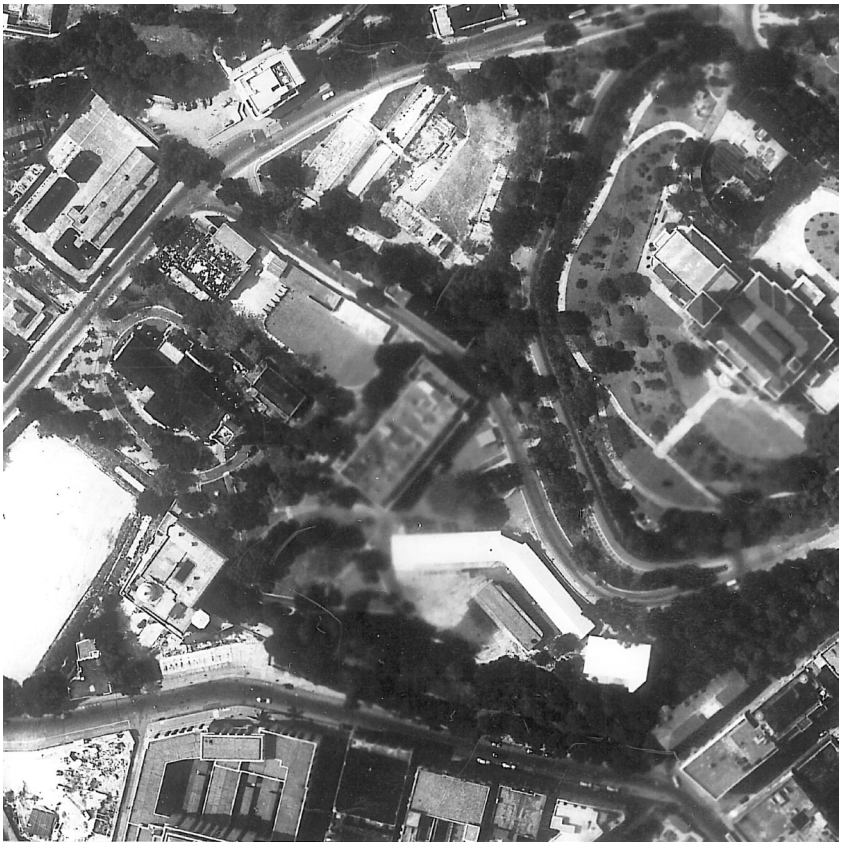
1904 Map

- ◇ Provided by the AMO
- ◇ This detail of Government Hill from 1904 shows a similar picture to the 1887 map but in more detail.
- ◇ As well as the main structures a building can be seen to the south of the Cathedral on Garden Road. This may be the colonial building that would later become the Hong Kong Defence Force Headquarters.
- ◇ Ice House Lane had now become Ice House Road. At the bottom of Ice House Road an 'Ice House' is marked. This could be a building used to store ice in the days before refrigeration.
- ◇ Below Beaconsfield (the former Heard and Co. Building) is Beaconsfield Arcade, a curved terrace of houses.
- ◇ Opposite Government Hill on Queen's Road is City Hall and the headquarters of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank.



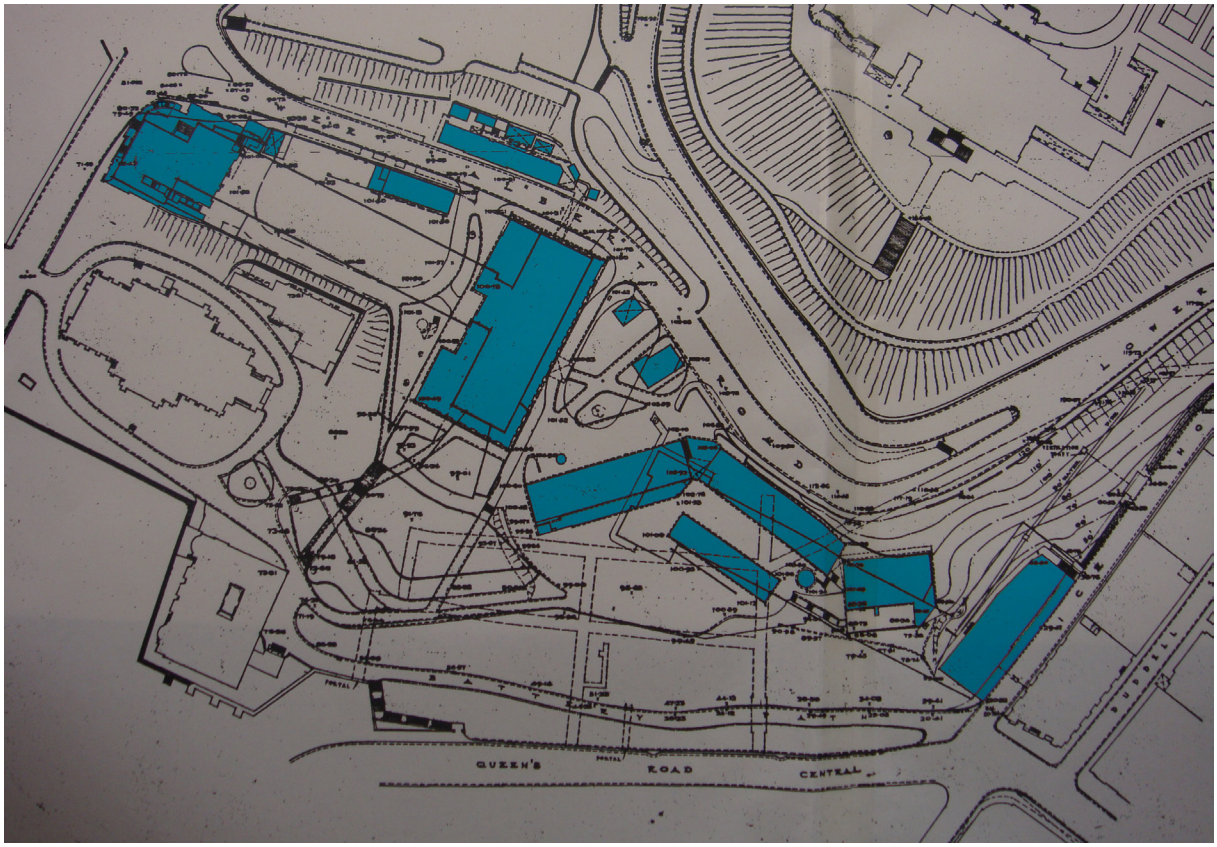
1949 Aerial Photo

- Lands Department: 6067 81A/128 8 May 1949
- This aerial photograph shows a detail of Government Hill. Please note that north is at the bottom of the image.
- Government House can be seen at the top right of the image in landscaped grounds. Many of the trees on the slope have not yet established themselves and the gardens are fairly open.
- The old Government Offices are in the centre of the picture, unfortunately partially obscured by a blurry patch on the image. It is just possible to discern from the shadows on the roof where the extra floor added in 1928 may be located.
- To the west of the Government Office is the temporary PWD office erected in 1947. This is the long thin building with the white roof. The stables which were the PWD's former offices are visible across the road from the Government Offices. Beside the new PWD offices are two more buildings of unknown use.
- At the far west of the site is a rectangular building with a pitched roof and dormer windows visible. This is the 'Ice House' marked on the 1904 map.
- To the east of the Government Offices is the HKDF Headquarters, separated from the office by a small grassed area with some outbuildings. The roof of this building seems in poor condition and is the speckled black and white one.
- To the north of this is the Cathedral and Old Hall. The Cathedral is encircled by a driveway and planting.
- To the north of the Cathedral, on the left hand side of the picture, is a large white area. This is the Murray Parade Ground. The French Mission Building is to the right of this.
- Beaconsfield Arcade, which was marked on the 1904 map, seems not to be in existence anymore. The ground to the north of the French Mission Building has been cleared and to the east is a single building, perhaps a large residence or small office block.
- The old HSBC building is visible at the bottom of the photo towards the left, while the site next door is being prepared for the construction of the old Bank of China Building.



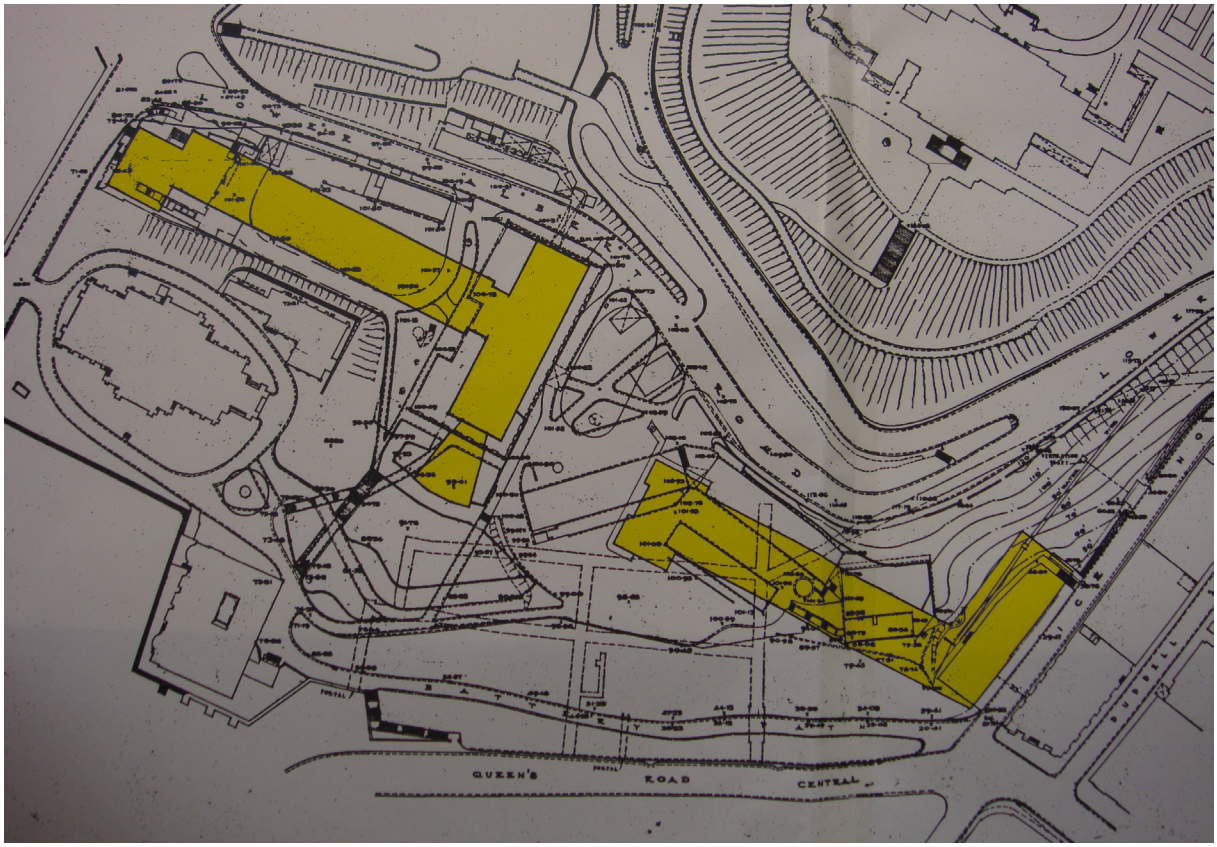
1950s Map

- ◇ Provided by the AMO with amendments by PMT.
- ◇ Note: the date on the plan is illegible but may read 1958 and north is at the bottom of the plan.
- ◇ This complex plan overlays three different features; the proposed new CGO buildings, the buildings on site at that time and the tunnel system under Government Hill.
- ◇ This plan highlights the buildings on site in the 1950s.
- ◇ The largest building highlighted is the old Government Offices in the centre which has a small canopy over the main entrance on the west side.
- ◇ To the east of main offices is a long thin building with two wings. These are the temporary offices constructed for the PWD in 1947.
- ◇ To the far west of the site is a building that could still be the Ice House marked on the 1904 map as it has the same angle to the south-east corner.
- ◇ Across Lower Albert Road is a smaller building, formerly the stables and subsequently the PWD offices. It is connected to the main offices with a covered walkway over the road.
- ◇ At the far east of the site is the old colonial building used as the Hong Kong Defence Force Headquarters.
- ◇ It has not been possible to identify the various other buildings on the site.



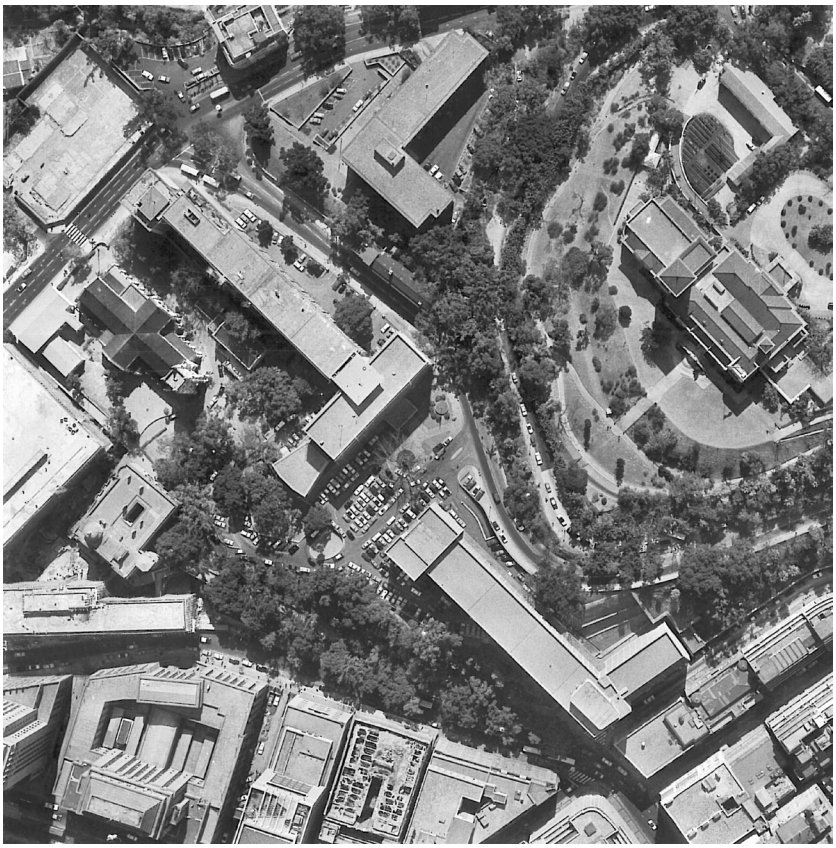
1950s Map

- ◇ Provided by the AMO with amendments by PMT.
- ◇ Note: the date on the plan is illegible but may read 1958 and north is at the bottom of the plan.
- ◇ This complex plan overlays three different features; the proposed new CGO buildings, the buildings on site at that time and the tunnel system under Government Hill.
- ◇ This plan highlights the new CGO buildings.
- ◇ The East Wing extends over the Defence Force Headquarters site.
- ◇ The Central Wing replaces the old Government Offices and the fan-shaped Council Chamber is visible to the north.
- ◇ The West Wing replaces the PWD offices, Ice House and other miscellaneous building.
- ◇ The proposed new landscaping can also just be made out. The courtyard between the two new building will have an oval area of grass or soft landscaping around the Burmese Rosewood, which replaces a cross shaped path layout. To the north of the Central Wing new driveways will be formed.



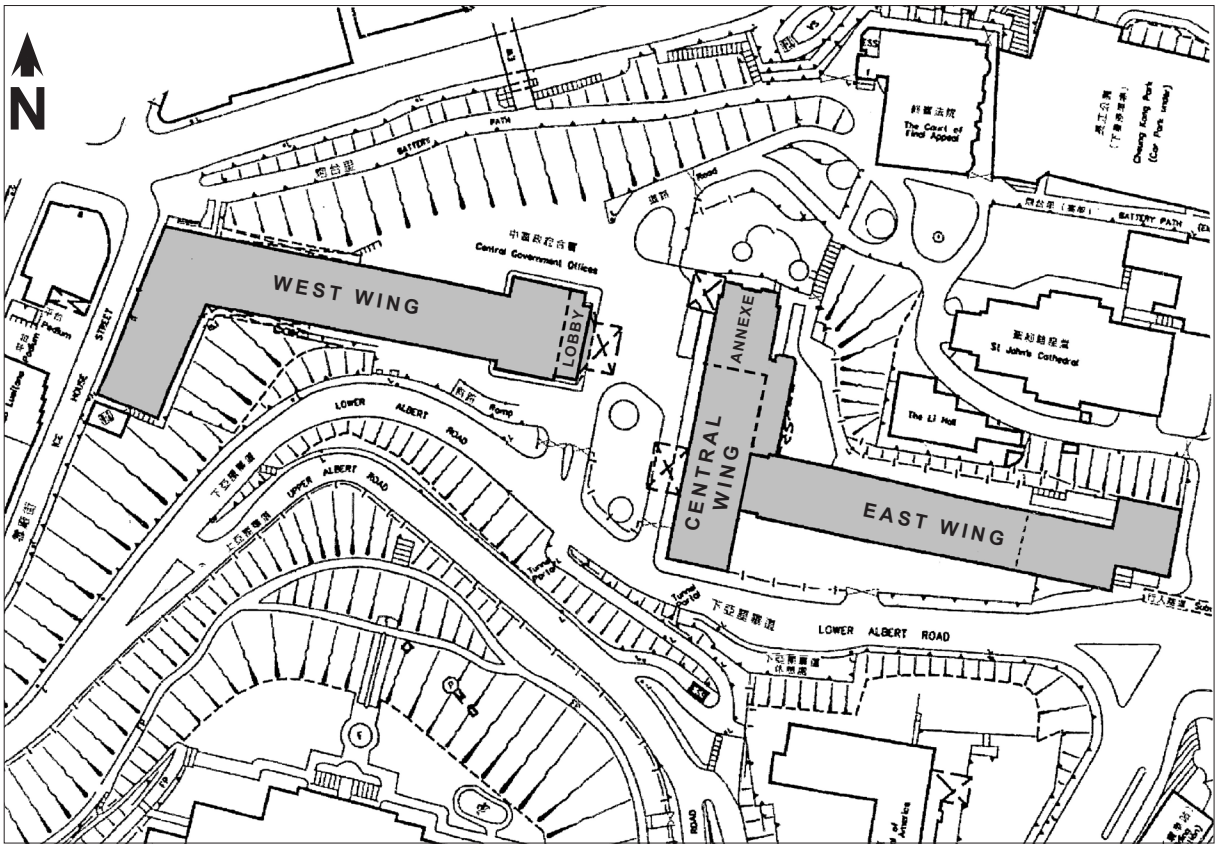
1963 Aerial Photo

- Lands Department: 7468 02 Feb 1963 2700
- This aerial photograph shows a detail of Government Hill. Please note that north is at the bottom of the image.
- This image was taken four years after the completion of the West Wing of the CGO. The two distinctive 'T' and 'L' shaped blocks are visible in the centre of the picture. The Central Wing has the unusual fan-shaped Council Chamber on the north side. The East Wing had by this date already had an extra floor added to create more space. The West Wing, however, would not have its extra floor until a year later and the higher east and west plant rooms can be seen.
- There seems to have been an issue with car parking in these early years of the CGO as the courtyard between the two blocks are full of cars, often parked two deep. It is interesting to note the difference in the number of cars in the whole image compared with only fourteen years earlier in the 1949 aerial photo.
- Government House has changed very little since 1949.
- The Cathedral Compound has changed. The New Hall has been added and the area around the Cathedral has been landscaped with grass and paving.
- Surrounding the CGO Complex there have also been several changes. Immediately to the north of the Cathedral is the Hilton Hotel, which is still under construction. It was completed in 1963 and from this photo it is possible to see that the building would have been located very near to the Cathedral and to the French Mission Building. Additionally, the new Beaconsfield Arcade is in construction to the south, which would have hemmed the French Mission Building in even further.
- The old Bank of China Building has been finished and there is further construction work going on along Queen's Road Central.
- To the south of the East Wing is a new 'L'-shaped building where before here was on open piece of disused land.
- The stable block that previously housed the PWD department is still in existence across Lower Albert Road from the Central and East Wings. It appears as a long thin building with a tiled roof and one or two chimneys and a slightly higher section to the east with a flat roof.



Current Map

- ◇ Plan supplied by AMO
- ◇ In this plan most of the site has remained the same as the previous image taken in 1963. Government House, the former French Mission Building (now labelled as the Court of Final Appeal) and St. John's Cathedral and its two halls have not changed.
- ◇ The West Wing of the CGO has not changed much except that a new lobby and porte-cochere have been added to the east end. We also know that a new floor was added to the wing shortly after the previous photograph was taken.
- ◇ The fan-shaped Council Chamber of the east wing has been demolished and replaced with the CGO New Annexe and with council chambers to the east. This occurred in 1989. The annexe includes a canopy over the entrance door to the west.
- ◇ Another change to the CGO site is that it has been surrounded by a fence and gates. This can be seen on the plan in some places as a line broken up with intersecting short lines at regular intervals.
- ◇ The Hong Kong Hilton, formerly to the north-east of the CGO site, has been replaced with the Cheung Kong Park with car park underneath. This is associated with the Cheung Kong Centre further to the east (off the plan).
- ◇ The former stable block across Lower Albert Road has been demolished and replaced with a lay-by and seating area.
- ◇ The buildings on the west side of Ice House Street have been replaced since 1963.
- ◇ On Battery Path the entrance to an overhead walkway over Queen's Road Central has been constructed.



3

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICE

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3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OFFICE (CGO)

3.1 Landscape and Setting

Physical Setting

One of the main reasons why the CGO are significant is their setting within an open green space adjacent to several important historic buildings. The area known as Government Hill, consisting of Government House, the Government Offices and the Cathedral, was formed in the early days of the Colony. Since the end of the Second World War, when Hong Kong was fast becoming a commercial centre, the rest of the city rapidly expanded upwards while Government Hill remained an area of low rise building and green, open space. Tall buildings are now predominant in the Central District of Hong Kong and several of the most iconic buildings surround the CGO on the north and east sides; Norman Foster's HSBC building, the Cheung Kong Centre and the Bank of China tower. The last of these is one of the tallest in Hong Kong at 1,209ft and seventy storeys[1], which dwarfs the CGO's seven storeys. The CGO are therefore an unusual low rise survival in Central.

Norman Foster's HSBC building as seen from the CGO compound

The buildings are set within one of the few 'green lungs' in Hong Kong; an area which extends from Ice House Street, up to the Zoological and Botanical Gardens and over to the east to Hong Kong Park. The Gardens and Park comprise over 13 hectares of green space in addition to the green areas around Government House and the CGO. This constitutes a significant part of the centre of this urban area. There are five parks on Hong Kong Island and Hong Kong Park is the third largest. (Victoria Park in Causeway Bay is 19ha and Quarry Bay Park is 9.79ha, while Hong Kong Park is 8ha). Other smaller green spaces within the Central District itself are Statue Square and Charter Garden by the Legislative Council Building and the City Hall Courtyard. None of these, however, have the same amount of mature trees and large plants that the CGO Complex and surrounding parks have.

The CGO are located in a prominent part of the Central District of Hong Kong. The public are free to use parts of the area around the CGO. Battery Path is a popular public thoroughfare up through the Cathedral compound to Garden Road and many also use it to access the overhead walkway across Queen's Road Central. The Cathedral compound can be used as a quiet place to sit and rest. The CGO itself must be a pleasant area in which to work as it provides a quiet oasis in the middle of the city with gardens shaded by trees to the north of the Central Wing. Five of these trees are protected on the Register of Old and Valuable Trees because of their large size or outstanding form. The Burmese Rosewood in the central courtyard is also on the Register because of its historical significance.

The Burmese Rosewood in the CGO courtyard

1 *Bank of China Tower*, accessed 09/03/09

The CGO's physical setting is significant as it is located near to several of Hong Kong's most important historic buildings and also some of its most iconic modern buildings. Also very significant is the location of the CGO within one of the largest 'green lungs' in the city. The complex and surrounding area is partly open to the public and is an oasis in the busy urban environment.

Views

The CGO's low height is significant as it does not adversely affect the setting of the surrounding area. During the development of the proposals for the CGO in the 1950s there was much discussion about the height of the buildings and their appearance from Government House (see section 2.4.7, p.80). Photographs were created showing the extent of the view of the harbour behind the new buildings, which at that time was still substantial. During the 1930s concerns had also raised about the intensity of the proposed developments and how they would affect the site. The issue of how the CGO buildings would affect the views was obviously a prime concern when they were first proposed.

The view of the harbour, of course, has long since disappeared. Very soon after the CGO were constructed other taller modern buildings were springing up along the shoreline. The low height of the CGO does, however, mean that views to Government House from the north are more easily possible, though the slope of the land down to the shore here and the tree cover make the view more limited from ground level. Government House will be visible from the tall buildings to the north of the CGO.

The CGO are partly screened from the historic buildings below (ie Cathedral and French Mission Buildings) by the planting and trees on and around the CGO site. This protects the historic buildings and softens the potential impact that the CGO buildings could have on them. It was not possible to gain access to the north lawn of Government House to assess the view of the CGO from there. The CGO will certainly make up a substantial part of the view towards the harbour but, of course, the skyscrapers behind the CGO block this view now. The focus of the view is changed from the original view when the GCO were first constructed.

The CGO are partly screened by the trees. Old Hall is on the left.

The low height of the CGO here would mean that Government House and its gardens are not in the shadow of tall buildings and therefore have plenty of light. From behind Government House, on Upper Albert Road, the CGO are not visible as the house blocks the view. From the Zoological gardens behind Government House the views of the CGO are also mainly obscured by trees.

One of the features of the Hong Kong Park is a thirty metre Vantage Point tower which offers panoramic views of the city, including the area over towards the CGO. From the tower the south side of the East Wing and the east side of the Central Wing are visible behind the Murray Building. This is not the best view of the CGO as all the plant on the roof of the East Wing can be seen. What is perhaps more significant is the amount of open space in this area. Government House is blocked from view by a tall building (St John's Building) on Garden Road but the trees along Lower Albert Road, the Zoological Gardens to the south and the

The view from the vantage point tower in the park.

The view from the Peak with the CGO towards the right of the image

Park surrounding the tower all constitute the 'green lung' discussed above. It is significant that it is possible to get a view like this of the CGO and surrounding area at all in this densely built up city.

Victoria Peak rises above Hong Kong to a height of 1,810ft[2] and public viewing platforms on the mountain afford a spectacular view of the harbour and across to Kowloon. The CGO are visible from the Peak but are certainly not a significant feature of the view. The main features of the view are the tallest and most spectacular skyscrapers while the CGO are small and relatively insignificant next to them. The point can, however, be made that it is significant that the CGO can be seen at all because of the open area around them. Government House and the tower of St. John's Cathedral can also be seen from the Peak.

The CGO's low height is significant because it was consciously designed to protect the view from Government House. It is also significant that the open space around the CGO allows the buildings to be viewed from vantage points at the Hong Kong Park and the Peak. The low height of the buildings and the surrounding vegetation links to CGO with the adjacent sites to form one large low-rise and green area.

Historical Setting

The CGO Complex is located on one of Hong Kong's most historically significant sites. Government Hill is the historic core of the Hong Kong government and located around it are several historically significant buildings, including Government House and the former French Mission Building. St. John's Cathedral adds to this history leading some to describe Government Hill as "*perhaps Hong Kong's last remaining real heritage precinct*"[3]. Since the beginning of the British colony the area that is now Central District has been the heart of the settlement. Other historic buildings from the colonial era survive but the desire for more commercial and business premises in the centre of the city has lead to the demolition of many important buildings, such as the old City Hall which was replaced by the first HSBC building in 1933. The survival of these buildings is therefore important to Hong Kong's heritage and this has been recognised by their designation as Declared Monuments.

Near to the CGO and Government Hill are some of the other remaining historic sites in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Park to the east of Government House was opened in 1991 after it was converted from a garrison called Victoria Barracks. The park still contains several colonial era buildings which have been converted for use as park administration (Rawlinson House), a museum (the Flagstaff House Museum of Teaware), an education centre (Wavell House) and the Hong Kong Visual Arts Centre (Cassels Block). This is another example of a collection of historic buildings in Central. The surrounding area has, however, been altered and adapted for use as the park and there is little sense of historical context.

The Flagstaff Museum of Teaware

2 *Victoria Peak,* accessed 10/03/09

3 Wordie, unknown date, p.21

The Magistracy building on the
Central Police Station Compound

To the west of the CGO are two of the other main historical sites in Central; the Sheng Kung Hui Compound and the Central Police Station Compound. The Sheng Kung Hui site has two graded buildings; Bishop's House (grade I) and the Old S.K.H. Kei Yan Primary School (grade II). The site was formerly the location for St. Paul's College, which moved off the site in 1951. Most of the rest of the buildings on the site are a jumble of 20th century buildings in varying states of repair. Across the road from this site is also the Old Dairy Farm Depot, a Grade II building with a distinctive brick and stone striped façade.

This collection of buildings is linked closely to Government Hill; physically through the stretch of land and trees which runs from Government House to the Sheng Kung Hui Compound and also through the theme of religion, i.e. the Cathedral, St. Paul's Church and the archbishop's residence in Bishop's House.

Further west is the Central Police Station Compound, the centre of law and order for Hong Kong for many years until it was decommissioned in 2006. The site includes the Victoria Prison, Central Magistracy and Police Headquarters, which occupy a considerable portion of land in Central. This too remains a 'low-rise' city block.

The CGO is therefore part of the area that demonstrates many of the main historical functions of Hong Kong society in colonial times; Governmental and political on Government Hill, religious at the Cathedral and Sheng Kung Hui Compound, Military at the old Victoria Barracks in the park and in references to the old Murray Barracks at Government Hill, and law and order at the Central Police Station.

The CGO's location on Government Hill and amongst several important historic buildings is significant. The link between the historic government functions of this site and other historic religious, military and law and order sites nearby is also interesting and significant.

Historic Landscape Features

There are several important historic landscape features on or near the CGO Complex. These include Battery Path and steps to Queen's Road, the air raid tunnels, the replica cannon, the gate posts on Lower Albert Road and the Duddell Street Steps (a Declared Monument). These compliment the remaining historic buildings and enhance their setting.

Battery Path is one of the oldest features of the site, having been in existence from around the time that the Murray Battery was established in the 1850s. It is marked on the map of 1887 in the Map Progression. The late 19th century steps near the top of the path are also an interesting feature. There are significant historic features which are of a slightly later date than the Duddell Street steps. There is good quality stonework, though some repairs need to be carried out and some previous repairs, such as the cement rendered panels between each pier, are poor quality. It is interesting to note the similarities between these steps and the stonework of the Duddell Street Steps on Ice House Street and the gate posts of Lower Albert Road.

The air raid tunnels and the remaining portals that are visible tell a storey of another era in Hong Kong's history, that of the Second World War. The portal in the Duddell Street Steps is well made and complements the design of the steps but is not immediately obvious to an unknowing member of the public as it is in a discreet location to the side of the steps.

The neighbouring shops also use the space outside the portal as a storage area for rubbish which makes it unappealing. The tunnel portals on Lower Albert Road are of a very basic construction and the construction of the western one damaged the existing gate post and wall. These openings are some of the last reminders to the public that the tunnels exist.

The replica cannon is an interesting feature that demonstrates an earlier period of Hong Kong's history, the original having been made in the 17th century when the Ching Dynasty overcame the Ming Dynasty as the imperial ruling power of China. The inscription describes that the "*cannon was cast…when the Emperor was in retreat before the Manchus who had in 1644AD already inaugurated the Ching Dynasty in north China*". The cannon also makes a reference to the nearby former location of the Murray Battery.

These historic features increase the understanding of how the site has developed and show how it has always been at the centre of the development of Hong Kong. All these features have significance and can be used for the interpretation of the history of the site.

Battery Path steps stonework

Stonework of the Duddell Street steps

Gate post on Lower Albert Road

3.2 Architectural

First and foremost the CGO are functional buildings designed to house a number of government departments, requiring a good degree of flexibility and adaptability. This is a task that the buildings have performed admirably in the 50 years since their completion. This 'fitness for purpose' confers a degree of architectural quality to the buildings, which when combined with the fact that they are carefully designed, if a little utilitarian, means that the buildings undoubtedly occupy a place within the architectural heritage of Hong Kong.

This is further reinforced by the buildings being the location of some of the most important decision-making in the history of Hong Kong, being the location of the Council Chamber. In particular the Central Wing has played a prominent role, being the location of the Press Room and with the front elevation serving as a backdrop for important announcements on the future of the city, becoming the 'public face' of the complex.

The buildings are an excellent example of the work of the architectural and engineering departments of the Hong Kong PWD. The buildings are attributed to one of the senior architects in the PWD, John Charter. Charter had been interned in the Stanley Prisoner of War camp with his wife during the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong. After the war he worked for the PWD before moving on to private practice. Little is known of his other works.

Through the common language of form, massing and detail such as exposed concrete framing, steel framed glazing and granite elements the buildings undoubtedly have group value. However, the group is not as coherent as it may at first seem, with some fundamental differences apparent between the buildings.

Examples of the common language of form on the CGO

The Central Wing is probably the most interesting building of the set. The East Wing could have appeared slightly anachronistic at the time of completion, quite far removed from the 'cutting edge' of architectural design at the time and more reminiscent of the 1930s than the 1950s, with details such as fluted columns and coffered ceilings in the ground floor car park. That being said the detailing of the East Wing is handled with assurance. The rhythm of the bays is carefully modulated by the varying thicknesses of the ribs and the careful setting back of the horizontal units. The West Wing is so pared down in design that it is really too utilitarian to be considered an important piece of architecture, despite some dramatic gestures such as the cantilevered cafeteria and balcony, and the raking section to the western end. It does, however, fulfil the Functionalist doctrine by being a rational and practical solution to the problem of building on an awkwardly sloping site, rising to the challenge with an assured and robust architecture that is uncompromising in its execution.

The Central Wing achieves everything that is asked of it, embodying the spirit of the age in which it was built, experimental in the use of technology and materials and employing a 'stripped-down' Functionalist aesthetic whilst retaining a refinement and attention to detail, avoiding becoming overly utilitarian and basic in execution. The syncopated rhythm of the external frame gives a lift and lightness to the façade.

The importance attached to the building is also apparent in the treatment of the various extensions that have been added. The top storey extension was executed as an exact replica of the lower floors to the extent that it is indistinguishable from the original. Similarly, the main part of the New Annexe (c. 1989; the two may have been carried out simultaneously) is an exact replica of the original. Choosing to match this so closely seems to be more than just architectural good manners and indicates the degree of respect and high regard with which the building was held.

The question of the overall significance of the CGO buildings is compromised by the extent of alteration that has taken place. The complex was designed and intended to be used as flexible buildings, which is exactly what has happened. Working buildings of this nature means that the more successful the buildings are in this regard, the more compromised the architectural significance of the building becomes because original layouts and features are removed and upgraded.

With the exception of some conference rooms in the East Wing, practically none of the original spatial configurations and their uses remain. No important internal areas, such as entrance lobbies, remain intact, original features having been removed. Most of the offices have now been renovated (or are in the process of renovation) to provide smarter offices with better facilities. In many cases this has happened more than once. Those interiors that have not been renovated are tired and no longer provide adequate working conditions; many of the offices are cramped and a small number do not even have windows. One interesting discovery was a handful of pieces of furniture, such as wooden filing trays, umbrella stands and chairs, which are most probably original.

Conference Room with surviving original table

Possbile original wooden filing trays

There have also been more dramatic alterations that have had an impact on the external appearance of the buildings, such as the demolition of the interesting fan-shaped Council Chamber, and the unsympathetic addition of the entrance to the eastern end of the West Wing. It is also likely that the buildings appear quite different now than on completion, the original exposed concrete having been painted, with black window frames instead of the original white. Indeed, a photograph of the main entrance of the West Wing of 1964 shows that the panels to the western elevation appear to have some form of patterning to them, indicative of mosaic tiles, rather than the render present today.

The exterior of the entrance area has also changed considerably from the original. The concrete canopy has been retained but the light fittings have been changed. The steps have also been completely remodelled to add a ramp to the left of the door for wheelchair access. This is likely to have been carried out with the refurbishment of the interior of the reception area in the late 1980s as the purple/green marble cladding inside the building is also used either side and above the entrance door on the exterior. The steps therefore have little significance but the canopy is an interesting original feature. Time has not been particularly kind to the buildings, particularly the interiors, and that the amount of alteration throughout inevitably compromises the overall significance of the complex.

The CGO are architecturally important as a good example of 1950s 'Functional' architecture in Hong Kong. They have, however, been significantly altered internally and to a lesser extent externally so that their appearance now is not as coherent as when they were originally constructed. The architectural quality of the three blocks is not of equal value. The Central Wing and East Wing being of a higher quality than the more utilitarian West Wing. There is some significance attached to the group value of these buildings showing the design development over a short period of time – however, the relationship of the West Wing to the Central Block lies only with the east end of the building which has been compromised by the later extension.

A photograph showing the West Wing entrance in 1964 (GIS, 3121-1)

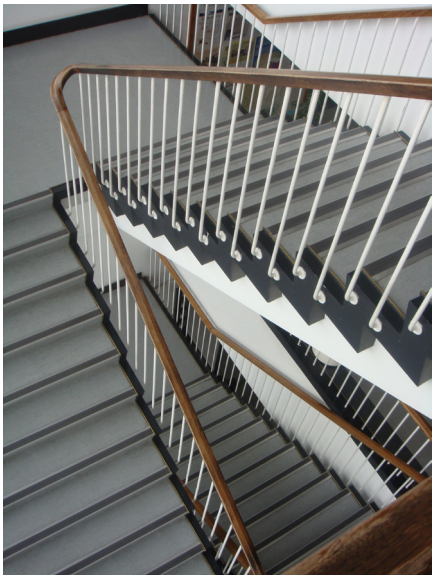
3.3 Comparative Buildings

The context of the buildings in Hong Kong is integral to the question of the significance of the buildings. The CGO buildings are some of the best preserved examples of 1950s architecture in the region, most others being residential blocks less well designed and finished and in generally poor condition. Other office blocks from the period have largely been demolished and replaced by newer taller examples.

The other surviving major piece of modern architecture constructed at the time was City Hall, constructed from the late 1950s and opened on 2nd March 1962. The building was constructed on a section of reclaimed land on the waterfront as a facility for a theatre, library, art gallery and cultural services[4]. It was designed by British architects Ron Philips and Alan Fitch in a modern design described as being influenced by the Bauhaus[5]. A twelve storey tower housed the library and gallery while a lower building to the east housed the concert hall with a large curtain window looking out to the water.

City Hall soon after its construction

These buildings were connected by an enclosed courtyard containing a war memorial. The building was very popular when it first opened to the public and was said to have "*enhanced the stature of the architectural profession in Hong Kong*"[6]. City Hall is a good example of 1950s architecture in Hong Kong with a more interesting design than the CGO. In terms of completeness, both the CGO and City Hall have been adapted and altered internally, the latter in an extensive renovation in 1993, but City Hall perhaps remains more intact. It retains its original purple coloured tiles and some original woodwork in the concert hall common areas, the original handrails in the full height stairwell in the library block and original window frames which have not been marred by the insertion of air-conditioning units. Together with the CGO City Hall was one of the first 'modern' buildings in Hong Kong.



The original staircase in City Hall

Soon after the CGO were constructed, Beaconsfield House was built in 1963 on the site of the old Beaconsfield Arcade below the French Mission Building. The construction of a building on this site for government use had been discussed for as many years as there had been discussion about the CGO. Eventually the six storey concrete building was constructed to house the Government Information Services Department and the Royal Hong Kong Regiment (Volunteers), who had mess rooms in the building, and a post office. However, this building was did not age well and was described as "*ugly and utilitarian*"[7]. It was pulled down in 1995 to make way for the Cheung Kong Centre. The CGO are the only surviving government offices constructed in that era.

Another example of 1950s architecture in central Hong Kong is located at the top of Arbuthnot Road and is adjacent to the Roman Catholic Cathedral. It is now home to the

4 The function is not equivalent to the British use of city halls as the local government offices as Hong Kong does not have a specific body equivalent to a City Council.

5 *Hong Kong City Hall*, accessed 20/03/09

6 Ibid.

7 *Defending the North House*, unknown date, accessed 20/03/09

The Caritas College, constructed in a similar style to the CGO

Caritas Francis Hsu College. It is an example of a building that shares many characteristics with the CGO. Firstly, it is a low rise building of eight to nine storeys. The most similar features are the windows which are set in a comparable grid system with projecting horizontal and vertical elements and rendered spandrel panels, very similar to those on the West Wing. These are broken up with full height rendered sections with horizontal groups of windows like on the east end of elevation 3 of the East Wing, though the tall panels of lattice block work are not represented on the CGO. It is also interesting to note how this building was also constructed adjacent to a major religious building, though here the building is much more intrusive structure as it blocks the Catholic Cathedral from view. The public have to make their way around the back of the building in order to view the Cathedral, whereas the CGO do not really obscure St. John's Cathedral in any significant way. It is possible that the design of the CGO introduced this Functional style of architecture to Hong Kong and therefore could have influenced the design of other buildings, such as this one, though no documentary evidence has been found to prove this.

In England at the same time that the CGO were designed and constructed, buildings using similar design elements were also being designed. However, these were generally office buildings or shopping centres without a particularly high status and no particularly significant examples of high quality architecture of this style can be found from the same period.

Examples of buildings which do use similar architectural elements include the 1958 Queen's Square development of Crawley, one of six 'New Towns' set established after WWII to rebuild communities. This is a fairly bland shopping centre that uses the same clean lines and repetitive windows as the CGO but on a much smaller scale. Another is the Norwich Union offices in Norwich constructed from 1959-62. These use very similar design elements to the CGO, such as projecting vertical concrete beams which divide the windows and latticework decoration above the main doorway. The brick panels underneath the windows are also similar to the rendered panels below the windows of the CGO. These offices have survived relatively intact and, due to the lack of need for air conditioning units, show the façade of the building as originally intended. These examples of typical projects in England at the same date as the CGO were for lower status buildings and most have not aged well or are considered unfashionable.

Queen's Square, Crawley

Norwich Union Building

By the 1950s other styles of modern architecture were emerging and architecture in Hong Kong and the design of the CGO were lagging behind the rest of the architectural world somewhat. The 'Functionalist' architecture of the CGO had its roots in the pre-war architecture of architects such as Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier. After the War architects began to turn to techniques like glass curtain walls, for example at Lever House in New York (1951-52 by Gordon Bunshaft, see p.118), reducing the need for exposed concrete frames. Alternatively architects, such as Le Corbusier, were turning to harsher materials like unpainted concrete.

At the same time that the CGO was being designed and constructed Le Corbusier was constructing a new Secretariat building for Chandigarh, India (1951-58, see p.118), as part of a town planning scheme for a new 'model city'. This building shows the advances in architectural design that had not yet reached the architects in the PWD who were working on the design of the CGO.

Though still in the Functionalist idiom with repetitive horizontals and verticals, Le Corbusier added differing elements to break up the overall form of the Secretariat; one concrete stair tower has small windows rising in diagonal lines to follow the staircases and a central section has varying sizes and shapes of sunscreens corresponding to larger chambers inside the building. In comparison, while the CGO has the same function as the Chandigarh Secretariat, the design is a lot less sophisticated.

The CGO are significant in that they are some of the best preserved examples of 1950s Functional architecture in Hong Kong and may have influenced the design of other buildings. However, City Hall is perhaps a better example of architecture from this period and in international terms the design of the CGO was neither radical or innovative.

Lever House
(David Shankbone, Wikimedia Commons)

Le Corbusier's Secretariat at Chandigarh, India
(Roth, 2007, p.80)

3.4 Construction and Technology

When the CGO was first envisioned one of the aims for the buildings was to improve staff welfare and working conditions. At the time staff were working in rented offices that were cramped and were not air-conditioned. Government correspondence from the time goes into lengthy debates about the need for air-conditioning in the new buildings weighing up the cost issues for having air-conditioning in the whole building or just in the office areas and the cost of hiring in an overseas expert for the design of the system. Ultimately it was decided that it would be wise for the long term to install air-conditioning into the whole building. The CGO was therefore the first government building in Hong Kong to be totally air-conditioned.

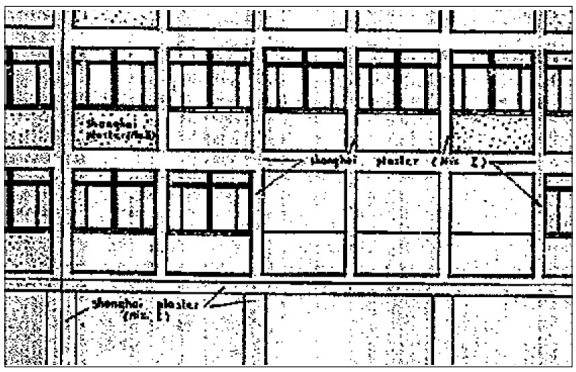
The building design incorporated facilities, such as a canteen and common room spaces. Shortly after the completion of the West Wing a dental clinic was added to the building for the staff's use. Staff had previously not had access to these kind of facilities.

In terms of construction the design of the CGO buildings were a good solution to the problem of accommodating large structures on a site with such varied levels. The site has a flat central area but on the east, north and west ends it slopes away, especially at the west end where the slope is very steep. The West Wing therefore is seven storeys at the centre of the site and gradually lower floors are added to the west end as the ground slopes away so that there are ultimately thirteen storeys. This means that the site can be used fully and that there is a public entrance to the buildings at the Ice House Street level.

A sample of the concrete from the West Wing

Sample analysis of concrete from the West Wing (although the same material appears to be consistent through all of the buildings) has revealed that underneath the modern paint there is a layer 5 – 8 mm thick consisting of a white matrix with granite aggregate 1 to 3 mm in diameter, which would have been the original finish of the buildings (not painted). The substrate beneath this is of a dark grey concrete. Studies of the original drawings indicate that the top layer is "Shanghai Plaster", an external rendering consisting of cement, sand and granite chips, usually in a 1:3:4 mix and applied to minimise maintenance[8]. Some sources cite this as a 'traditional' material. It is not clear whether this was applied to an insitu concrete frame or whether the frame was to some extent pre-cast.

There is an assortment of demountable partitions throughout the buildings. Whilst it is doubtful that these are contemporaneous with the original construction of the buildings (the original plans show internal partitions as 9" hollow block or 9" clay block) these are certainly of an early date; demountable partitions were in use by the early 1960s, a relatively early example of their use. Those to the East Wing in particular are carefully detailed, with



A detail of a plan showing the use of Shanghai Plaster on the buildings (ASD, 24213)

permanent vents above the doors to promote through-ventilation. The vent grilles are of teak, with teak acoustic back-boxes lined with sound-absorbent material to minimise the passage of sound between spaces.

An interesting feature of the CGO are that they were the first government offices in the colony to be fully air conditioned and provide a better working environment for the government staff. The design of buildings is also a good solution to a site with unusual levels. Use of Shanghai Plaster and the use of demountable partitions are also interesting, indicating that the buildings were at the 'cutting edge' of office design and therefore technologically advanced.

3.5 Political

The CGO are closely associated with Hong Kong's government, both before and after the handover of power. The CGO were constructed in the 1950s when the British colonial government was still in office. During the planning and most of the construction of CGO Sir Alexander Grantham was the Governor. His term as Governor lasted ten years. He also oversaw the opening ceremony of the Central Wing of the CGO in 1957 where he remarked in his speech that the new building was "*very fine looking*".

This ceremony is commemorated in the plaque in the lobby of the Central Wing. Now the HKSAR Government operates from the CGO. The emblem of the government is displayed above each main entrance door and the flag is flown in the main courtyard. The buildings are known by the local people as being the central offices for the government and the area is known for its history as the centre for the government, which is embodied in the area's name Government Hill.

8 Lim, 1988, pp.68-69

The emblems of the HKSAR and the People's Republic of China above the Central Wing main entrance

The CGO saw the handover of government from Britain to the People's Republic of China and the formation of the HKSAR Government. The transfer of power officially took place at midnight on the 1st July 1997. The last governor of Hong Kong, Chris Patten, departed Hong Kong that night. Government House then became the official residence of the Chief Executive. The first Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee-hwa, chose not to live in Government House so Mr Donald Tsang, the second Chief Executive, was the first to live there. Changes were made at the CGO, including the replacement of all the Royal crests with the new emblem of the HKSAR and the erection of a fence around the compound. The transfer of power is one of the most important events in Hong Kong's history which marks a new era for the country and it is significant that the CGO were closely associated with these changes.

The CGO are the main government offices in the country which house the offices of the most important political figures. When they were constructed the aim was to centralise the government offices in Hong Kong as they had become more and more dispersed around the city in rented accommodation. The CGO were intended to be large enough to house most of the government departments for many years but this proved to be very optimistic and space soon ran out. Now there are many government office blocks not only in Central but also across the harbour in Kowloon. Examples of government offices are; Queensway Government Offices in the Admiralty District of Hong Kong, on the east side of the Hong Kong Park; The North Point Government Offices housing the Planning Department is located out to the east of the CGO past Causeway Bay; The Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices are over in Kowloon as are the offices of the AMO, among others.

This means that governmental functions have become more dispersed. However, the CGO have remained the main government building. The location of Government House and other historic government buildings, such as the Supreme Court Building (now the Legislative Council Building) on Jackson Road, close to the CGO emphasise the importance of the site and the expansion of the Hong Kong Government into other offices does not reduce the significance of the political setting of the CGO.

Being the main government building of the HKSAR, the CGO is a site where many important government decisions were and still are made. The Executive Council has its offices in the Central Wing. This council is a body which assists the Chief Executive on policy (the equivalent of the Prime Minister's cabinet in the UK). The New Annexe was constructed in 1989 to house the offices of the Executive Council members. The council meets once a week on Tuesdays in the Central Wing of the CGO. These meetings are presided over by the Chief Executive himself. This body has been in existence since the 1840s and has gradually expanded from only a handful of members to around 30 members today who are appointed by the Chief Executive.

The Supreme Court Building

The CGO also used to be home to the Legislative Council, an assembly with the power to make and amend laws. This Council met in the fan-shaped council chamber originally on the north end of the Central Wing. This was demolished in 1989 to make way for the New Annexe after the Legislative Council moved out of the CGO to the Old Supreme Court Building on Jackson Road in 1985.

Many other important decisions and meetings would have been held in the CGO over the years, such as the Financial Secretary's budget and the Governor's policy address.

The CGO is also home to many of the most significant government departments and the principal officers of the Bureaux. The CGO are therefore buildings where many of the most important government decisions are made and where many important figures work.

There have, however, been doubts in the past about whether the CGO are suitable to house the government of one of the world's largest economies. The feasibility study carried out in the late 1980s recommended that the CGO site should be redeveloped "*given that a parcel of ramshackle and unglamorous low rises should not be the centre of government for a high-rise territory with one of the world's largest economies*"[9].

The CGO has a significant association to the Hong Kong Government. It is significant politically as the home to the many important government departments and political figures. Its political significance also comes from it having been home to both the British government in Hong Kong and the HKSAR government after the handover of power.

3.6 Historic

The CGO is located in one of the prime historic sites in Hong Kong; Government Hill. Government Hill was the government headquarters from the very early days of the colony in the 1840s. The first signs of the governmental use of the site are marked on maps as early as 1845 (see government offices on the two maps in section 2.4.12), just three years after the Treaty of Nanking was signed.

The Government Office constructed in the late 1840s was the principal government office for over 100 years. Despite this building having been demolished to make way for the CGO the site has remained in the same use and therefore the governance of Hong Kong has only ever been the function of Government Hill. This function has continued for 167 years.

The construction of the first Government Offices has been commemorated in the plaque in the lobby of the CGO Central Wing. This plaque, erected to commemorate the opening of the Central and East Wings of the CGO, incorporates the foundation plaque for the first Government Offices discovered during the demolition. It records that the Governor Sir John Francis Davis laid the foundation stone on the 24th January 1847. The plaque is a reminder of the history of the CGO site.

The commemorative plaque in the Central Wing lobby

As has been previously noted, the CGO are surrounded by some of the most historically significant buildings in Hong Kong. Government House, St. John's Cathedral and the former French Mission Building were some of the first buildings constructed in the colony and are some of the few that have survived the rapid expansion and modernisation of the city. Their historical significance has been recognised in their designation as Declared Monuments, which gives them protection under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance.

The area is also associated with World War II. This is through the existence of the series of air-raid tunnels and portals located near the CGO site and because Government house still has the distinctly Japanese feel that it acquired during restorations by the Japanese while they were in Hong Kong.

9 Fellman, 1995, unpaginated

The CGO is located on a historically significant site which has maintained its governmental functions for over 150 years. The CGO are also closely associated with some of the most significant historic buildings in Hong Kong.

3.7 Social Events

The CGO are socially significant as a place where members of the public have aired their opinions on government policies and public affairs. As the main government buildings in Hong Kong and being centrally located in the city, Government House and the CGO are traditionally places where citizens of Hong Kong have gathered to protest.

The area has been used in this way for many years. 1967 was a year of particular turmoil in Hong Kong. Young followers of Chairman Mao challenging the British colonial government demonstrated outside Government House started, with crowds chanting quotes from Mao's 'Little Red Book', sticking posters to the wall and presenting petitions to the government. The protests escalated, however, leading to widespread violence and bombing. Eventually warnings came from the Chinese government that leftist groups should stop the violence. Police tried to bring order. One contemporary witness described a Sunday near the Cathedral when a crowd of protesters trying to advance up Garden Road to Government House were stopped by police[10]. In more recent times pro-democracy protestors marched from the Legislative Council building at Chater Road to Government House on the 27th January 2009.

The CGO grounds themselves were said to have been a place where protestors would also come, and they would shelter themselves from the sun underneath the large Burmese Rosewood tree in the central courtyard. Since the handover of power this is no longer possible as large fences were erected in 1997 around the perimeter to provide additional security for the buildings.

The CGO are socially significant as a place associated with public protest and the public's right to voice their opinion.

3.8 Archaeological

There is some potential for archaeological remains under the CGO. It is known that air-raid tunnels exist underneath Government Hill, which extend underneath Government House and the Sheng Kung Hui compound. These are an interesting reminder of the 2nd World War and the struggles Hong Kong went through during that time. Above ground evidence still exists in the form of the tunnel portals and ventilation shaft. However, though the CEDD7 hold plans of the location of the tunnels, many of them were backfilled after the War to prevent collapses and it is not known how much of the tunnel system is still accessible.

The CGO were built on a site which previously had several buildings on it. These included colonial buildings (the old Government Offices and their stables, the HKDF Headquarters, and possibly the Ice House) and newer ones (the temporary PWD buildings). Before the PWD temporary buildings were constructed the Murray Battery was on the site of the West Wing of the CGO.

There is some chance that remains of these buildings still survive. However, the CGO buildings both have underground car parks and extensive site works were carried out to level out the site when they were constructed. This means that much of the potential archaeology is likely to have been removed in the process of building the new CGO. The only place where the potential for archaeology is slightly higher is where the stables were formerly located on the south side of Lower Albert Road. The building no longer exists but no structure has replaced them. The space is now a lay-by beside the road and so not part of the CGO site.

The potential for archaeology of former buildings on the CGO site is low and that which might be found is unlikely to be of particular importance.

10 *Hong Kong during the 1960s*, accessed on 23/03/09

The stables on Lower Albert Road still in existence in this aerial image of 1963
(Lands Department, 7468 02Feb1963 2700)

4

ISSUES AND VULNERABILITIES

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4 ISSUES AND VULNERABILITIES

4.1 Historic Landscape Features

Surrounding the CGO site are several historic landscape features that form an integral part of the historic setting of the CGO on Government Hill. Some of these features, however, are not presented in their best light. Battery Path, which has been in existence since the late 19th century is surfaced with patchy sections of concrete that are untidy and unappealing. The wall along the south side of the path has some sections of re-pointing that are unattractive and messy. This otherwise pleasant tree lined path could be improved with some general maintenance and minor design changes.

The tunnel portals located on Lower Albert Road are an interesting historic reminder of the 2nd World War. However, they are of a utilitarian nature with plain concrete lintels and sealed with metal doors that have layers of peeling paint on them. The western portal was constructed in a rather dirty historic wall terminated by 19th century gate posts. This has marred the setting of these stone pillars. Additionally, one of the gate posts has been lost entirely and one has been almost completely covered over in cement which has been used to shore up the steep bank behind.

Another of the nearby tunnel portals, underneath the Duddell Street Steps, is of a more attractive construction but is not easily found as it is tucked around the side of the steps. No mention of it is made in the interpretation board adjacent to the steps. The area around the portal is also dirty and unappealing as it is used for storage by nearby shops.

Around the back of the Central Wing is a replica of a 17th century cannon. This is an interesting feature but it is not obviously noticeable in its current location and only accessible to staff working at the CGO as it is within the fenced compound. This would benefit from a more prominent or accessible location where the general public can also appreciate it.

4.2 The Site as a Whole

Currently the CGO buildings are surrounded by a tall fence erected in 1997 after the HKSAR Government moved into the CGO. This prevents the public from using a convenient thoroughfare from Battery Path up to Lower Albert Road and restricts access to such historic features as the Burmese Rosewood tree outside the Central Wing and the cannon replica.

The restricted area also breaks up the coherence of the Government House/ Cathedral/ French Mission Building relationship. This would be enhanced if the fences were removed. The landscaped area to the north of the CGO, around the Cathedral, could also be improved. Currently there are some large cracks in some of the stone retaining walls to the tree planters which have been re-pointed in dark grey cement but which have reopened.

The main access to the site for vehicles is through the two gates off the Lower Albert Road. However, there is also a vehicle access on the north side of the site leading from the Cathedral driveway and also from Battery Path. It would not appear that this drive and gateway are much used, nor are the parking spaces in this area. There would seem to be an opportunity, if the fences are to be removed, to integrate the landscaping of the area north of the site with the garden and planting on the CGO site. There can be a removal of a good deal of the hard surface and a general integration of the landscape.

4.3 The French Mission Building

In 2011 the government's new offices on the Tamar site are due for completion. After this the Legislative Council will be moving into the new building and the Court of Final Appeal, currently housed in the former French Mission Building, will most probably move back to the Supreme Court Building where the Legislative Council are currently based. This will leave the French Mission Building vacant and without a use.

This is an interesting building with a significant history. The French Mission did a substantial refacing and remodelling job on the old 1842-43 Heard & Co building. However, it seems likely that much of the original building fabric remains intact internally. Any new use will hopefully complement the new uses for the Government Offices and will sit comfortably alongside the Cathedral. Finding an appropriate use that will not compromise the fabric of the building will be a challenge.

The Buildings
As previously identified, the buildings on the site have been altered many times since their completion, with much original fabric lost. As a result of this, the significance of the surviving buildings is compromised.

Externally, the demolition of the fan-shaped Council Chamber to the north end of the Central Wing has had probably the greatest impact on the original composition. Although replaced with a sympathetic addition in the form of the Central Wing Annexe, its loss deprives the complex of one of its key defining features. Elsewhere, issues such as the top floor additions and external decoration also serve to alter the original appearance of the buildings.

Internally, there are few surviving areas of any note that retain substantial levels of original fabric, being mostly confined to utilitarian areas such as the staircases. The exceptions to this are the East Wing conference rooms, although even these appear to date from the early 1960s rather than the late 1950s.

With such little surviving original fabric, it is clear that whatever remains becomes of key importance. The potential loss of this as a result of alterations for re-use is high.

Accordingly, if the significance of the buildings is to be preserved the control of future change is essential, and a well developed set of policies need to be developed in this regard.

4.4 Historic Use

Government Hill has been described as "perhaps Hong Kong's last remaining heritage precinct"1. It is a rare collection of historic buildings in central Hong Kong that has always been in governmental uses. Once the government move to their new site in 2011, there will be a risk that all reminders of the former use of the CGO disappear. Features such as the plaque in the Central Wing lobby should be retained. This particular feature could also be placed in a more prominent position as currently it is set back underneath a set of stairs with a rockery garden in front of it, meaning that it is not easy to read.

Whatever new use is found for the buildings it would be good to see the 167 years of history as the seat of Government adequately recognised. This could take the form of remote interpretation, but if some part of the building is retained it would be good to see public access to the building and some permanent interpretative display that acknowledges the significance of the site.

4.5 Future Uses and Potential Development

Perhaps the most important question to be settled is whether any new development should be permitted on the site and if so how much and where should this take place.

There is little doubt that it is feasible to reuse the existing buildings. The buildings are generally in good condition and conversion to another use is a feasible and practical proposition that could be achieved relatively easily were the right use to be found. There would be no need for wholesale repairs, or doubts as to whether conversion would be viable because of the poor state of the buildings and the need for major repairs.

However, the nature of the buildings places some restrictions on what uses could be contained within them. Plans are shallow, with relatively small cellular internal spaces, although some flexibility is available through

1 Wordie, unknown date, p.21

the framed nature of the buildings, with columns and demountable partitions. However, the opportunity to create large internal spaces is limited, and floor to ceiling heights are also relatively low.

An appropriate new use for the existing buildings will be a challenge. Any new use should, as far as possible, have some respect for the previous government use. The conversion of the building for housing or for a hotel, for example, would entirely change the feel and character of the site in a way that would seriously compromise its significance.

At present the uses on the site are restricted by the Town Planning Board; under Outline Zoning Plans the site is designated for Government, Institution or Community use (see Appendix C). Uses that are "always permitted" under this designation that are suitable for the site and buildings include:

- ◇ Public Library; this could conceivably be accommodated within the buildings; the original accommodation actually included several libraries for government departments. However, an extensive public library is already available at nearby City Hall.

- ◇ Educational Institution; it is possible that such a use could be accommodated within the buildings, although the incorporation of larger spaces such as lecture theatres could be problematic.

- ◇ Exhibition or Convention Hall; the spaces are unsuitable for this use. They are too small and with low storey heights. The extent of intervention required would make this use unviable.

- ◇ Government Staff Quarters; residential accommodation could be inserted into the buildings relatively easily. However, this would seem to be a very inappropriate use for these buildings.

- ◇ Religious Institution; St John's Cathedral is adjacent to the site. There is, perhaps, the possibility that the Cathedral might wish to use some of the space, though it seems to be highly unlikely that they would use more than a small proportion of it.

Other development of a more commercial nature is permitted with the specific permission of the Town Planning Board. These uses are:

- ◇ Retail shop; it is difficult to imagine this use working within the buildings; they are not ideally located, being outside the main commercial district, with little opportunity for footfall. In addition, internal spaces are generally too small with unsuitable circulation arrangements.

- ◇ Restaurant; in common with above, the buildings are probably in the wrong location for this use to be viable and such a use would be out of keeping with the significance of the building.

- ◇ Commercial Office; the buildings could continue in this function. However, it is worth noting that the office spaces within the buildings are somewhat outdated, lacking the necessary servicing and features such as access floors. The building framework is robust and with a major refit the building could be converted for modern office use. The main question here would be the suitability of any tenant given the historic and cultural significance of the buildings. A straight forward commercial use would lose much of the significance of the site. A more appropriate use might be to let the building to an appropriate NGO – however, it seems unlikely that any local NGO would require even a modest proportion of the available space.

- ◇ Residential accommodation; this use could be inserted into the buildings relatively easily with the creation of some new access cores; the cellular nature of the buildings, shallow plan and storey heights all suiting conversion. However, residential use would completely change the nature of the site and is unlikely to provide any opportunity for enhanced public access or interpretation.

There will, of course, be the possibility of having the site rezoned once the Government departments have moved to the new Tamar Building. Re-zoning, however, is really only a technicality and finding a use which is appropriate in terms of significance will be the major challenge. Ideally it wants to be some sort of public facility – in whole or in part. This would allow for free access around the exterior of the building, as well as internal space for appropriate education and interpretative facilities.

If this could be achieved the site could perhaps be made to work in conjunction with the Sheng Kung Hui complex and the Central Police Station as three significant sites that demonstrate the development of all facets of Hong Kong.

The pressure to find an appropriate new use will be increased by the Court of Final Appeal moving out of the French Mission Building. This will be a highly significant building looking for an appropriate public use and this indeed may be a more appropriate site for any public interpretation.

The question must, therefore, be addressed as to whether these buildings are so significant that they must all be retained or whether there is scope for some or all the buildings to be demolished to allow the site to be redeveloped.

Perhaps the most convincing lines of argument for redevelopment are:

(i) that Government has an obligation to maximise the potential value of any site and the best way to do this is by permitting redevelopment

and

(ii) that it may inevitably be very difficult to find a use for the buildings which is both commercially viable and respects the historic significance of the site. The demolition of some or all of the buildings and the sensitive redevelopment of the site may be favourable to the buildings being used inappropriately. This should only be considered as a course of action when all other avenues for suitable reuse have been explored. Given the significance and architectural quality of the building such an outcome would be a cause of serious regret.

The arguments against redevelopment are, of course, primarily to do with the architectural quality of the building and its significance in cultural, political and historic terms. A compromise will be to keep some parts of the complex and demolish others. As has been seen from this study the quality of the different parts of the complex is uneven.

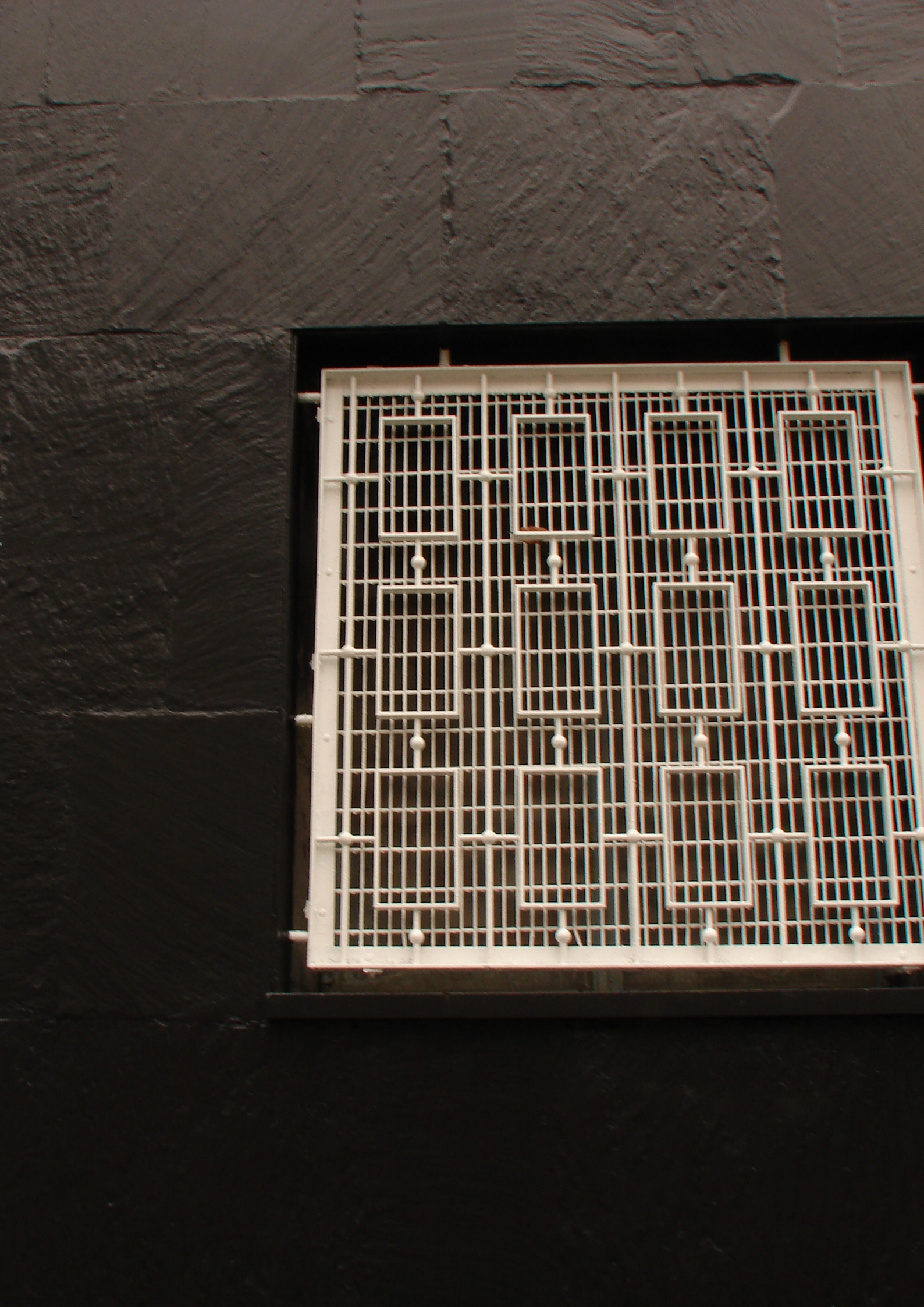
The Central Block and the East Wing being of a higher architectural quality (at least as far as the exterior of the building is concerned) than the West Wing. A good case can be made for keeping the Central and East Wings but for the demolition of the West Wing.

The question must then be faced as to what form of redevelopment would be permitted – would a high rise building be appropriate on this site? When the CGO complex was designed the height of the building was determined by the desire to preserve the view of the harbour from Government House. The view has, of course, long since disappeared but the low rise buildings and surrounding open space have taken on a wider significance.

The CGO site forms a part of a much wider open area which runs from Hong Kong Park in the east to the Sheng Kung Hui site in the west and from the Battery Path in the north through the CGO site, the Government House Gardens and the Botanical Gardens to the south. This now forms a very green space with very little high rise building. It would be undesirable to see a high rise building over the majority of the CGO site as it would encroach into this 'low rise green area' and would also be undesirably close to Government House.

The area of the site where some high rise development could most easily be accepted would be at the west end of the site where the thirteen storey block sits on the corner of Ice House Street and Queens Road. Development along the 'foot' of the 'L' shape of the West Wing, which is at the lower end of Ice House Street, could also be considered. There is already high rise development on the opposite sides of the road.

The possibility of creating some new public garden space on the site is interesting. This idea was discussed in the 1980s – demolishing some of the buildings and creating a new garden space and some low density commercial buildings. Any commercial development now seems to be inappropriate but a new public garden in the place of the bulk of the West Wing would be a fine resource for this central area of Hong Kong. Such a garden could reclaim the main forecourt as a route across the site and over the wider area a newly planted garden would cement the green space of Government House Garden with the trees on Battery Path.



5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations in this section are based on the history and significance examined in the previous sections of this report. The general conclusions can be summarised as follows:

- ◇ The buildings are of a high architectural quality and are exemplars of the beginning of modern office design in Hong Kong and of 1950s architecture generally.

- ◇ The Central Wing is the best piece of architecture of the group and the East Wing is also a good piece of architecture. The more functionalist West Wing is the least good piece of architectural design out of the three.

- ◇ The exteriors of all three buildings have been altered over the years with additional storeys and changed finishes. However, the basic architectural concepts have not been damaged by these changes.

- ◇ There is little of high significance surviving internally. The buildings were built as offices which were intended to be flexible and capable of alteration. In this respect the buildings have performed well and have been altered several times over. As a result the interiors are a variety of different styles and little of the original finishes remain.

- ◇ The site itself is arguably of higher significance than the buildings. This has been the seat of Government since the foundation of Hong Kong as an independent colony. This is the site of the earlier Government offices (demolished to allow the CGO to be constructed) and is closely related to Government House and to the Murray Building.

- ◇ The significance of the site is enhanced by the other adjacent buildings – the Cathedral, the Old French Mission Building and Government House.

- ◇ The potential significance of the site is further enhanced by the historic sites in the wider area; Hong Kong Park (the former site of the Military), Sheng Kung Hui (the site of the church) and the Central Police Station (the site of Law and Order). These sites, taken in conjunction, offer very interesting opportunities for the interpretation of the history of the development of Hong Kong.

- ◇ The low rise nature of the site and the open spaces and trees around the buildings are significant. The buildings, in conjunction with the surrounding sites (Government House Gardens, Botanical Gardens, Hong Kong Park, Battery Path and the Sheng Kung Hui site) make up a large, low rise, green area in the heart of this otherwise dense highly developed part of the city. Any new development should respect the low rise of the existing buildings and open space around them.

- ◇ It is suggested that there might be a case for making all the low rise and well planted area into a 'Special Protected Area' where the presumption would be against any significant redevelopment work.

- ◇ The buildings are well maintained and in good condition. They can continue to be used once the Government Office move out – though the standard of servicing in some areas will be low compared with a modern office block.

The conclusion that is drawn from these headline issues is that the Central Wing and East Wing should if possible be retained and should be internally altered to fit some appropriate new use. The West Wing may be demolished.

If the West Wing site is cleared any new development should either respect the footprint and height of the existing buildings or should be restricted to the western edge of the site where a more high rise development would be possible on the corner of Ice House Street and Queen's Road Central. This would comprise the area occupied by the 'foot' of the 'L' shape West Wing in this area.

It would be very desirable to open up the site to the level of public access that obtained before 1997 and to remove the modern security railings. If it is financially viable the formation of a new small public garden on the site would be very welcome.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of the site is finding an appropriate new use for the remaining buildings. Any new use does need to be suitably 'serious' to show some respect for the previous use as one of the major seats of Government. To turn the spaces into low grade offices, a hotel or perhaps worse still housing would be a denial of the significance of the site and buildings.

It would also be very desirable to have a use that allowed some degree of public access into the spaces for interpretation and education purposes.

Given below are a series of 'recommendations' for the future of the building. These are deliberately framed as 'recommendations' but they could readily be converted to 'conservation policies' if it was desired to give guidance to any potential developers as to what can be done with the site and buildings in the future.

5.1 General Recommendations

5.1.1

Consideration should be given to creating a 'Special Protected Area' to acknowledge the well wooded spaces and low rise buildings in the Hong Kong Park, Botanic Gardens, Government House Gardens, the CGO site, the garden between the Cathedral and French Mission building, the Battery Path area and the Sheng Kung Hui site.

Purpose of the recommendation

One of the main reasons why the CGO are significant is because they are part of a large open green space made up of the above sites, which are within the centre of an urban area. A 'Special Protected Area' would be a tool which could be used to protect this area from inappropriate development. The area also encompasses several significant historic buildings that are Declared Monuments and which would also benefit from the retention of this open space. The designation of the area would recognise the importance of the individual historic buildings and also highlight the historic nature of Government Hill, as well as recognising the significance of the green space.

Protection of this sort will require an amendment of the relevant legislation in relation to preservation in Hong Kong. Reference could be made to similar legislation in the UK and other countries.

5.1.2

Consideration should be given to adding the Central and East Wings of CGO to the AMO's list of graded buildings.

Purpose of the recommendation

The CGO buildings represent an important part of the history of Hong Kong's government and are in a significant open setting. Grading should help to protect the significance of the building and maintain the open space. The gradings should relate to the Central and East Wings (and not to the West Wing) as these are the better pieces of architectural heritage.

A precedent has been set by the AMO in their proposals to Grade the 1962 City Hall at Grade I and the 1955-56 New Hall by the Cathedral at Grade II. These are both good examples of post-war architecture, as is the CGO.

5.1.3

Any proposals for redevelopment should take into account and respect the adjacent Declared Monuments.

Purpose of the recommendation

The historic buildings adjacent to the CGO (the Cathedral, Former French Mission Building and Government House) are recognised as being significant by their status as Declared Monuments. Development proposals for the CGO could adversely affect the significance of these buildings and their settings. Any proposals for development should respect the Declared Monuments' important status by giving them space and by incorporating coherent landscaping.

5.1.4

Should any of the buildings on site be proposed for demolition or major alteration a record of the building should be made prior to this happening.

Purpose of the recommendation

To allow future generations to understand better how the CGO buildings and the site have evolved over time a record of the building should be made. This should be comprised of a photographic survey, a measured survey of the exterior of the buildings and typical internal spaces. This record should be held by the AMO or an appropriate archive facility.

5.1.5

Sufficient historic interpretation of the site should be provided in any redevelopment.

Purpose of the recommendation

The site itself is highly significant having been the seat of government since the British colony was founded. The public and building users should be provided with adequate interpretation to understand the building/site history and significance. Possible locations for this could be the former press room in the Central Wing or the debating chamber in the New Annexe.

5.2 General Building Recommendations

5.2.1

The Central and East Wings should be retained and should be converted to some appropriate new use while the majority or the entire West Wing could be demolished.

Purpose of the recommendation

The CGO buildings are an interesting and relatively well preserved example of Functional architecture of the 1950s. The most interesting building architecturally is the Central Wing which embodies this style and demonstrates an attention to detail. The East Wing is also an interesting piece of architecture showing a transition from the beaux arts style to the functionalism of the Central Wing and includes some attractive details. The West Wing is the least interesting building being fairly utilitarian in nature. The West Wing is the least significant of the Wings and if any demolition is to be considered this would be the most acceptable building to demolish.

5.2.2

If the West Wing is demolished the part of the site that could be redeveloped is the west end on the corner of Ice House Street, with the new development occupying the area of the existing building that faces onto Ice House Street. Any new development of a building higher than the present West Wing should be contained at this west end of the site.

Purpose of the recommendation

It is desirable to maintain and enhance the open green nature of the CGO complex and surrounding area and therefore a tall building covering something similar to the current ground plan of the West Wing would have a negative impact on the current setting, blocking out light and overlooking Government House as well as the remaining Central and East Wings. Towards the west end of the site there is some capacity for a new building, given that this is at the very edge of the open area. The steep slope of the ground at this point also enables a new building to incorporate more floors with less impact on the surroundings.

5.2.3

There is no need for any immediate major intervention or repairs to keep the buildings in good condition.

Purpose of this recommendation

The buildings are generally in good structural order and have been well maintained and looked after. A few minor defects were seen during the survey, such as staining and minor cracks. These are generally being monitored with telltale markers. Other repairs have been carried out to a good standard. A maintenance regime seems to be in place which currently works well. The building could continue in its present use or something similar to it with only routine maintenance for a good number of years.

5.2.4

When deciding on the extent of any alterations to these buildings it is recommended that a thorough investigation of the building is made as part of the detailed planning process.

Purpose of the recommendation

This Historic and Architectural Appraisal is based on an initial survey of a part of the available documentation and limited site inspections. There is always more to learn about the history of any building and there is more to be learnt from detailed study of the building fabric, particularly where this can be coupled with some opening up and invasive examination of the fabric, and archaeological research. This Appraisal should be seen as the starting point for decision making and for future investigations and not as a document that contains all the answers. Further detailed recording of key features and spaces on a room-by-room basis should be undertaken; in particular the Recommendations given below for the individual buildings should be seen only as 'Headline' recommendations that give guidance on a general approach to the work on these buildings. More detailed recommendations should be formulated for each building as part of the design development of any scheme of repair and alteration.

5.2.5

Further investigation should be carried out into the construction of the buildings to determine the construction method, particularly with regard to the extent (if any) of pre-cast elements.

Purpose of the recommendation

The construction of the buildings is currently unclear as a result of the external redecoration, which has obscured many elements and the junctions between them. The construction method and extent of pre-cast elements may add to the significance of the buildings.

5.2.6

An inventory should be prepared identifying features of the buildings that are characteristic of its original appearance and use.

Purpose of the recommendation

This should be prepared to prevent loss of original features of the buildings, particularly items that can be easily removed that may be of significance in terms of the future interpretation of the site. This would include furniture, signage and other associated fixtures and fittings. To prevent 'over-retention' in this regard, the inventory could identify different categories that concentrate on what is needed for the long term appreciation of the site, and salvage only a specimen or a small number of items within each.

5.2.7

If demolished, elements of the West Wing should be salvaged for re-use elsewhere.

Purpose of the recommendation

There are sufficient elements of original or vintage fabric from both the external envelope and internal spaces of the West Wing that could be salvaged were it to be demolished. These include bronze entrance doors, granite cladding, original windows, marble cladding, demountable partitions and hardwood doorsets. Such items would be identified in the record survey to be made prior to any demolition.

5.3 Specific Building Recommendations

Exterior

5.3.1

An attempt should be made to return to the original finish of the exterior of the buildings.

Purpose of the recommendation

Several of the original features of the buildings have been lost or covered over. These include the natural render finish of the buildings that has been painted over, the slate covering to the Central Wing which has also been painted over and the mosaic tiled sections of the west end of the West Wing which have been rendered. This has changed the overall appearance of the buildings and it would be desirable to return them to their original appearance. How practical this is will need to be determined by tests on site to see if applied finishes can be removed.

5.3.2

The external appearance of the building in terms of massing, horizontal and vertical lines, spacing and rhythm of openings and pattern of glazing should be maintained.

Purpose of the recommendation

The appearance of the building with regard to the above is central to the original design concept, displaying a high degree of repetition that it is important to maintain. Any disruption of this would have a detrimental impact on the elevations and compromise their significance.

5.3.3

Unsympathetic services additions, such as the air conditioning units added to many of the windows on the three Wings, should be removed and a replaced with more sympathetic, internal systems.

Purpose of the recommendation

Various accretions have been added to the building in a piecemeal fashion over the years. They are unattractive and intrusive. The horizontal and vertical lines of the building are interrupted which disrupts the overall pattern created by the linear elements. The buildings would benefit from the removal of these elements and therefore the return of the original design concept.

5.3.4

Top-floor extensions to all buildings could be removed.

Purpose of the recommendation

The upper floors of the Central and East Wings are later additions and, though added sympathetically, they do change the nature of the design - this is particularly obvious on the East Wing. These are relatively early alterations to the building and it could be argued a significant part of its history. Removal may also be regarded as uneconomic given the extent of the repair and reroofing necessary. However, if future development made the removal of the added storeys appropriate there would be no objection to this.

5.3.5

The steel-framed *Universal* type glazing system should be retained throughout the buildings, or should be replaced with a sympathetic modern alternative which can replicate the pattern and thickness of the glazing bars.

Purpose of the recommendation

The type of glazing employed is a key feature of the buildings, with the same system employed throughout, albeit to a different pattern. Replacement with a markedly different system would erode the original character of the buildings. It may be desirable in any redevelopment to renew the glazing to double-glazing and to draughtproof windows to exclude the ingress of warm humid air. This will necessitate new glazing profiles, but care should be taken to replicate the balance of the original design.

5.3.6

Although later additions, the steel grilles to the 1st floor windows of the Central Wing should remain.

Purpose of the recommendation

The grilles match those to the ground floor, and are sympathetic to the original style of the building. They also provide an indication of the increased security measures implemented during the later history of the building.

5.3.7

The external signage on the buildings should be retained if possible.

Purpose of the recommendation

The signage adjacent to the main entrance to the buildings is very particular in its execution, with individual letters applied to the granite walls. Consideration should be given to retaining this, even when the government have moved out, perhaps through the addition of some pre-qualification, i.e. "Former Central Government Offices...etc".

5.3.8

The doorway within the entrance porch to the west elevation of the eastern granite clad section of the East Wing (see East Wing, Elevation 3) should be re-opened.

Purpose of the recommendation

This is one of the original access points into the building, leading into a reception area where some elements of original (or early) fabric remain, such as a reception desk. Re-opening of this would re-establish an original circulation route and bring the porch back into use .

5.3.9

The bronze entrance doors to the East and Central Wings should be retained in situ.

Purpose of the recommendation

The entrance doors are some of the few surviving elements of original fabric on the buildings, and are integral to the historic character of the buildings.

5.3.10

The modern steel panelled doors in the south elevation of the Central Wing should be replaced with more sympathetic examples.

Purpose of the recommendation

The doors detract from the external appearance of the building. Replacement hardwood doors should be inserted with reference to the original drawings.

Interior

5.3.11

Substantial internal alterations will be permitted to the buildings provided that these do not impact on the external elevations.

Purpose of the recommendation

There is little architectural detail left of interest in the interiors of the buildings. They have been altered internally in almost all areas with very little remaining of original fixtures, fittings and decorations. Many of the rooms have recently been or are in the process of being renovated. A considerable degree of internal alteration can be permitted provided the rhythm of the glazing is preserved. The limiting factor is likely to be the concrete trace.

5.3.12

The mechanical and electrical services in the buildings will need to be renewed. When stripping out the existing services attention should be paid to any of the services which may date from the 1960s and which are significant or otherwise of interest.

Purpose of the recommendation

It is unlikely that much (if anything) will survive of the mechanical and electrical services from the original build, although this is not impossible.

The historic services can be a significant part of the building's history. The individual features such as light fittings, switches, sockets, taps, sanitary ware, etc. should all be considered as items of potential interest when decisions are made about the extent of any alteration work.

5.3.13

Consideration should be given to the possible reinstatement of the original lift fronts and finishes to the lower ground and ground floor reception areas of the East Wing if any major refit is planned.

Purpose of the recommendation

The lift fronts are an integral part of the character of these areas, particularly that to the lower ground floor, which works in conjunction with the Art Deco-inspired external porch and entrance doors. Reinstatement of these, based on historic drawings and the extant originals to the upper floors, would restore these relationships.

5.3.14

The stainless steel security barriers to entrance lobbies should be removed.

Purpose of the recommendation

These are unsympathetic additions that detract from the original character and appearance of the space, which would have been more open and inclusive.

5.3.15

The East Wing staircase should be maintained in its present form and the original finishes conserved or reinstated where these have been removed.

Purpose of the recommendation

The staircase is one of the few spaces in the complex that is substantially original.

5.3.16

The demountable partitions to the East Wing with teak doorsets, vent grilles and acoustic back boxes should be retained, at least in some part as an exemplar. Consideration should be given to restoring a single office area of the buildings back to its original appearance for interpretation purposes.

Purpose of the recommendation

The partitions are an example of early finishes and of ventilationl within the offices; these could be preserved in-situ or re-erected within a smaller area, together with ceiling heights, wall and floor finishes and furniture, presenting the opportunity to present a more complete area of early fabric and return it to its original appearance and configuration.

5.3.17

One of the conference rooms to the East wing should, if practicable, be maintained in its present form and the original finishes conserved or reinstated where these have been removed.

Purpose of the recommendation

The conference rooms are some of the few spaces in the complex that have substantial amounts of early fabric and are still used for their intended purpose. The Conference Room should, if possible,be a space that can be used for some public function such as interpretation of the buildings. Later and unsympathetic additions (such as the suspended ceilings) should be removed.

5.3.18

Consideration should be given to restoring elements of the Central Wing reception area and stair and lift lobbies to upper floors and removal of the more overtly modern interventions.

Purpose of the recommendation

Although later additions, the access stair to the reception and associated 1st floor lobby area should be preserved. These would provide public access to the Council Chamber.

5.3.19

The plaques in the Central Wing lobby should be preserved.

Purpose of the recommendation

These features are interesting and provide important information about the buildings which adds to the understanding of its history. Consideration should be given to repositioning them to a more conspicuous and accessible area, such as the flanking walls of the lifts.

5.3.20

The basement area of the Central Wing should be retained in its current condition, with the possibility of using this space for education and interpretation.

Purpose of the recommendation

The basement is an evocative space that would have been occupied during times of emergency. It will make an interesting interpretation space.

5.3.21

The Press Rooms to the Central Wing should be maintained in its present form and the original finishes conserved or reinstated where these have been removed.

Purpose of the recommendation

The Press Room is one of the few spaces in the complex to have substantial amounts of early fabric still in use for its intended purpose. It should be kept unaltered for possible use for interpretation purposes. Unsympathic later additions should be removed.

5.3.22

The Central Wing south staircase should be maintained in its present form and the original finishes conserved or reinstated where these have been removed.

Purpose of the recommendation

The staircase is one of the few spaces in the complex that is substantially original. It should be kept unaltered.

5.3.23

The Central Wing Annexe reception area, upper floor lift lobbies and staircase should be preserved.

Purpose of the recommendation

Although later, the lobby is an impressive space, executed in a style that is sympathetic to the original building. The lift lobbies are similar in style, and the staircase is carefully detailed.

5.3.24

The Central Wing Annexe debating chamber should be preserved.

Purpose of the recommendation

The chamber is a suitable for use as an interpretation space. The decision whether to retain the space is dependent on the quality of the (uninspected) council chamber; a decision over the retention of one of these spaces should be made in the light of their possible use for interpretation and education.

5.4 Setting/Wider Context

5.4.1

The modern security railings around the site should be removed and where necessary replicas of the original lower railings should be reinstated. Full public access across the site and around the buildings should be restored.

Purpose of the recommendation

Before 1997, when the HKSAR government took over the use of the CGO, the site was open to the public. This provided an access route from Battery Path to Lower Albert Road and would have meant that the space at the top of Battery Path, currently used for car parking and as a vehicular access route into the CGO complex, would have been better used. It would be desirable to get the site reopened to the public as a way through from Battery Path to the Lower Albert Road.

5.4.2

There should be a presumption against the removal of any trees, especially those that are on the LCSD's Register of Old and Valuable Trees.

Purpose of the recommendation

The CGO complex is unusual in the busy urban environment of Hong Kong in that it has several areas of vegetation. It is also part of a wider green space stretching from the Sheng Kung Hui compound over to Hong Kong Park. This significant 'green lung' should be maintained and therefore no trees should be removed without good reason. The registered trees have been recognised as being significant because of their size, species and historic interest.

5.4.3

The historic buildings on Government Hill (the Cathedral, Government House, the French Mission Building and the CGO) are an interesting cultural group which should be preserved and interpreted.

Purpose of the recommendation

The grouping of the historic buildings around the CGO gives more significance to the CGO buildings themselves given their shared or linked functions. The East and Central Wings in particular are well integrated with the Cathedral and French Mission buildings being close physically but with the CGO building concealed behind a stretch of trees so as not to overwhelm the historic buildings.

5.4.4

A link should be made in the interpretation of the set of culturally significant sites in the area, the CGO site (in conjunction with the Government House), the Sheng Kung Hui site and the Central Police Headquarters and Victoria Gaol.

Purpose of the recommendation

These three sites represent Government, the Church and Law and Order. Their proximity and the survival of buildings of considerable historic interest gives more weight to the significance of all of these sites. It would be appropriate to make the public more aware of the cultural links between these sites through good co-ordinated interpretation.

5.4.5

The landscape around the CGO should blend in seamlessly to the sites around the Cathedral and the French Mission building. If the CGO site is opened up by the removal of the railings a redesign of the landscape would be beneficial.

Purpose of the recommendation

The CGO form an interesting cultural group with the adjacent historic buildings. To link these buildings together the landscaping should be co-ordinated between the different buildings. The most logical time to carry out any redesign would be when the railings around the CGO are removed.

5.4.6

Any new building on the site should take the height of the existing CGO as a maximum height.

Purpose of the recommendation

The height of the CGO buildings was discussed at length when the buildings were being designed in the 1950s. There was a clear intention to preserve the view from Government House. Whilst the view of the harbour has now disappeared, the view across the top of the offices and the former French Mission building is still significant. Other views from longer ranges, such as from the Hong Kong Park and the Peak, also benefit from the low rise of the CGO.

5.4.7

The open spaces on Government Hill around the CGO should be maintained.

Purpose of the recommendation

The combination of the low rise buildings and the open spaces with trees is of great significance given the general level of development in the surrounding areas. The CGO site needs to be seen in conjunction with the gardens of Government House, the Hong Kong Park, the Zoological and Botanical garden, and the trees on the Sheng Kung Hui site. This is a fine open space in the centre of an otherwise highly built up area.

5.4.8

The potential for archaeological remains should be considered if the site is redeveloped. Any remains or artefacts which are found should be recorded.

Purpose of the recommendation

The potential for archaeology on the site is low as it has been heavily excavated for car parks and basements. However, there may be some areas where there could be remains and these may be of some interest. Any features discovered should be carefully recorded.

5.4.9

The replica 17th century cannon behind the Central Wing should be left in-situ.

Purpose of the recommendation

Although not directly related to the history of the buildings or site they have become a familiar and important aspect of the landscape.

5.5 New Uses

5.5.1

Any new use should show respect for the previous function of the buildings as the seat of Government.

Purpose of the recommendation

One of the most difficult aspects of the site will be to find an appropriate new use for these buildings. The site and the buildings reflect over 150 years of Government history of Hong Kong. The buildings are most suited to the use for which they were originally intended as offices.

5.5.2

Should the West Wing be demolished, consideration should be given to redeveloping the whole or part of the area into a public garden.

Purpose of the recommendation

It is desirable to maintain and extend the current green spaces on and surrounding the CGO complex. The whole site of the West Wing could be converted into a public garden, however, financial pressures mean that part of the west end of the site will need to be redeveloped. The remaining space should be integrated into the potential pedestrian area linking Battery Path and Lower Albert Road. This will maintain and enhance the green spaces and create an enjoyable public area.

5.5.3

Following the HKSAR government's move to the Tamar site, the current zoning on the Outline Zoning Plan should be reconsidered and may need to be altered from 'Government, Institution or Community Use' to a more suitable category.

Purpose of the recommendation

Once the HKSAR government has moved off the site the zoning for government office use may be redundant and will need to be altered.

5.6 Management Policies

5.6.1

The current building management and maintenance system should be maintained while the HKSAR are still using the building and until some appropriate new use is found.

Purpose of the recommendation
The buildings are run and maintained by a team headed by the Building Manager. The buildings are in good condition and the current system seems to work well. It would be very undesirable to have this management and maintenance cease when Government moves out. The buildings should be maintained until their future is decided.

5.6.2

When Government move out of the CGO a management framework will be necessary for the site to ensure its appropriate development.

Purpose of the recommendation
Given the significance of the site it will be desirable to have more control over the proposed development than will be provided by the simple designation of the site and buildings. It may be desirable to maintain a close control over the development by setting up a management company or similar vehicle.

5.6.3

Building Management Guidelines

Depending on the level of retention, the establishment of Building Management Guidelines may be appropriate for treatment of more repetitive elements of the buildings such as the facades, office spaces and corridors. These have been explored in the UK in recent years, particularly in relation to large modern buildings with a high degree of repetition in terms of spaces and elements.

The basic model identifies an element or area of a building and considers the significant features that it may have, how this might be at risk from potential alterations and prescribes a number of potential alterations, each of which are graded according to their impact on the significance. This then allows the formulation of proposals for the building with a high degree of certainly as to their acceptability. Such a system can provide a framework to ensure that the significance and architectural integrity of the buildings are maintained into the future.

6

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Appendices

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From the Antiquities and Monuments Office website:

http://www.amo.gov.hk/en/monuments_hk.php

St. John's Cathedral

St. John's Cathedral is the oldest surviving Western ecclesiastical building in Hong Kong. The foundation stone was laid by the Governor, Sir John Davis on 11 March 1847 and the construction was completed in 1849. The Cathedral underwent extension in 1873. During the Japanese Occupation, it was converted into a club house for the Japanese and thus suffered damage. The Cathedral was fully repaired after the War and then reopened. It was declared a monument in 1996.

Government House

Government House was formerly the office and residence of previous Governors of Hong Kong. Construction works started in 1851 and took four years to complete. At that time it enjoyed a fine harbour view. It was originally built in the Georgian style and bore rich colonial characteristics. It underwent a number of large-scale renovations, with the latest undertaken in 1942, during the Japanese Occupation, by a Japanese engineer, Siechi Fujimura, who designed to construct a dominant central tower to link the two original buildings; the roofs were also modified to add in more Japanese flavour, thus diminishing the strong European style of the mansion. It was then used as the military headquarters for the Japanese until 1945. Government House is now the residence and office for the Chief Executive.

Former French Mission Building

The former French Mission Building on Battery Path, Central, was built in 1917 on the foundation of a previous structure. A chapel is incorporated in the north-west corner with its cupola projecting above the roof. The three-storey building is constructed in granite and red bricks in neo-classical style. It was occupied successively by the Education Department, the Victoria District Court, the Supreme Court, and the Information Services Department. It is now used as the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal.

Duddell Street Steps and Gas Lamps

The stone steps at Duddell Street, Central were built between 1875 and 1889. Four gas lamps surmounting the balustrades at the top and foot of the steps are the only surviving working gas street lamps in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong and China Gas Company which was originally founded to provide street lighting in Hong Kong continues to operate the lamps as objects of historical interest.

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From the Leisure and Services Department's Register of Old and Valuable Trees
http://www.gov.hk/en/residents/environment/conservation/regoldvaluetree.htm

General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/85
Date of Photo Taking:	2007-08-15
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Central Government Offices Compound

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus microcarpa
Common Name:	Chinese Banyan
Chinese Name:	細葉榕
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1300 (mm)
Height:	20 (m)
Crown Spread:	17 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/86
Date of Photo Taking:	2007-08-15
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Central Government Offices Compound, near the entrance

Special Characteristic

- ☑ **Large size**
- ☑ **Cultural, historical or memorable significance**
- ☑ **Outstanding form**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Pterocarpus indicus
Common Name:	Burmese Rosewood
Chinese Name:	紫檀
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1500 (mm)
Height:	19 (m)
Crown Spread:	30 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/88
Date of Photo Taking:	2007-08-15
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Central Government Offices Compound

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus virens var. sublanceolata
Common Name:	Big-leaved Fig
Chinese Name:	大葉榕(黃葛樹)
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1400 (mm)
Height:	12 (m)
Crown Spread:	17 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/89
Date of Photo Taking:	2007-08-15
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Central Government Offices Compound (Middle Block)

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Pterocarpus indicus
Common Name:	Burmese Rosewood
Chinese Name:	紫檀
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1200 (mm)
Height:	19 (m)
Crown Spread:	24 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/90
Date of Photo Taking:	2007-08-15
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Central Government Offices Compound

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus microcarpa
Common Name:	Chinese Banyan
Chinese Name:	細葉榕
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1400 (mm)
Height:	15 (m)
Crown Spread:	20 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

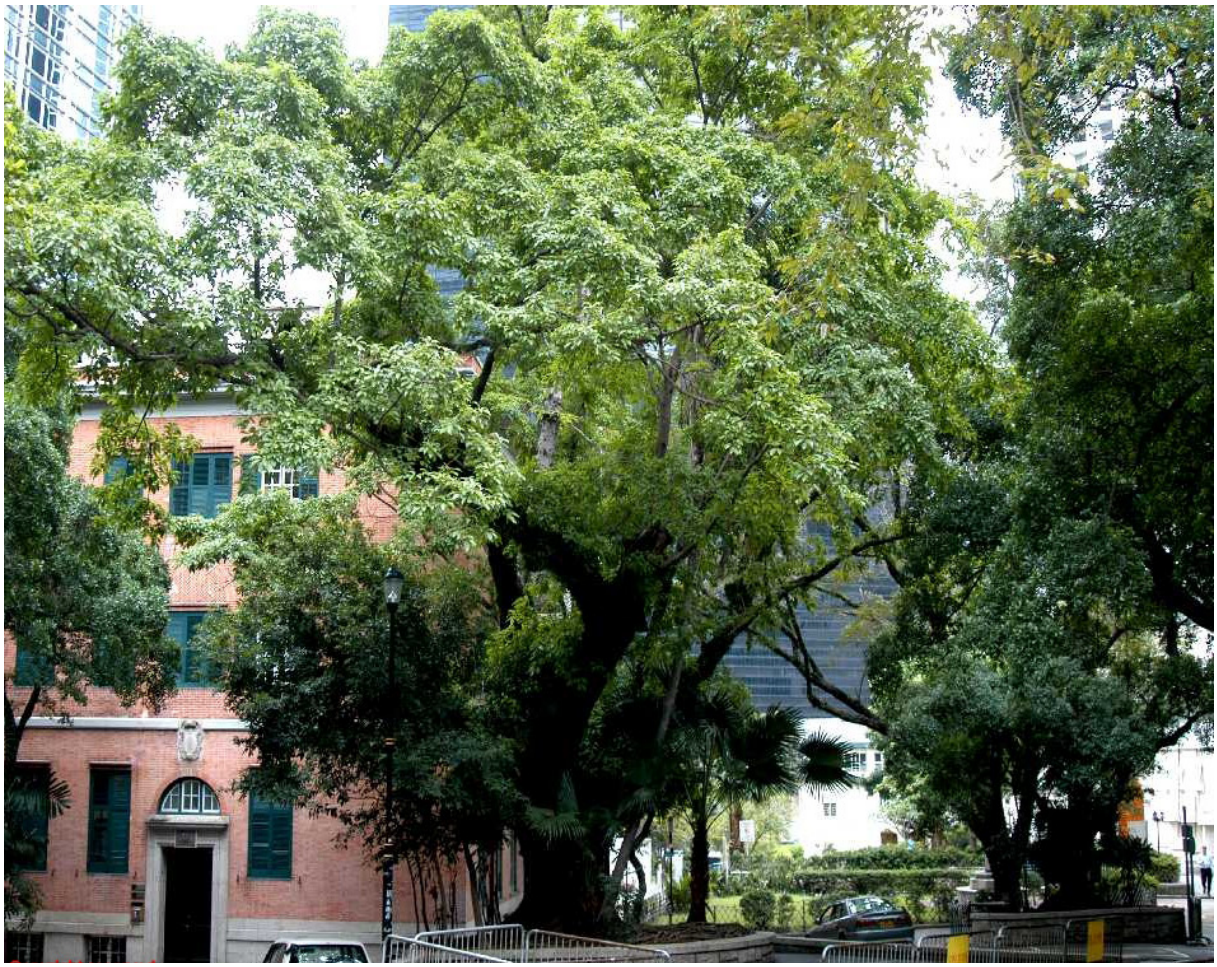
Registration No.:	LCSD CW/91
Registration Date:	8 Sep, 2004
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Battery Path

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus virens var. sublanceolata
Common Name:	Big-leaved Fig
Chinese Name:	大葉榕(黃葛樹)
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1700 (mm)
Height:	17 (m)
Crown Spread:	24 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)



General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/92
Registration Date:	8 Sep, 2004
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Battery Path

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus microcarpa
Common Name:	Chinese Banyan
Chinese Name:	細葉榕
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1050 (mm)
Height:	15 (m)
Crown Spread:	21 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/93
Registration Date:	8 Sep, 2004
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Battery Path

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus microcarpa
Common Name:	Chinese Banyan
Chinese Name:	細葉榕
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1100 (mm)
Height:	20 (m)
Crown Spread:	18 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

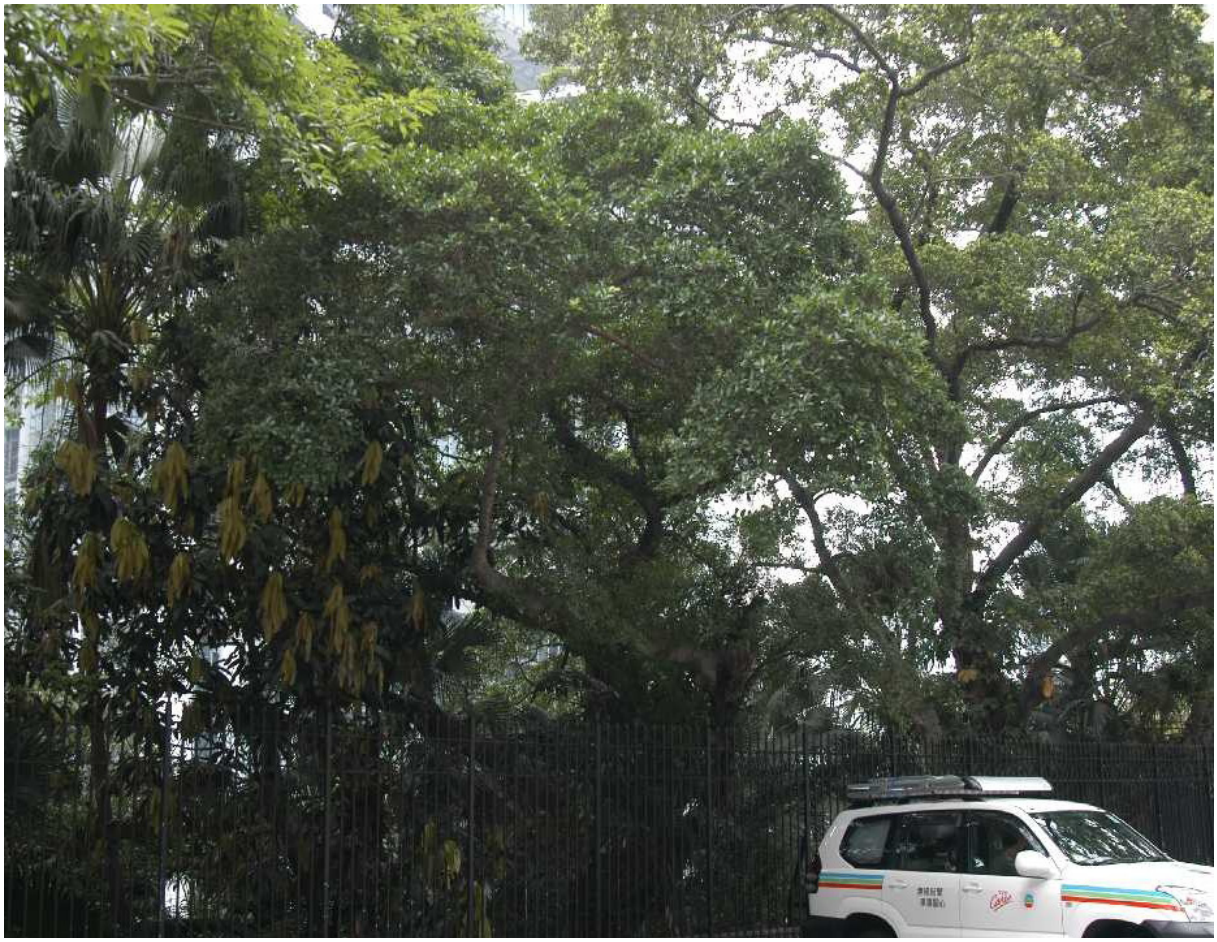
Registration No.:	LCSD CW/94
Registration Date:	8 Sep, 2004
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Battery Path

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus microcarpa
Common Name:	Chinese Banyan
Chinese Name:	細葉榕
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1000 (mm)
Height:	13 (m)
Crown Spread:	19 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)



General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/95
Registration Date:	8 Sep, 2004
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Battery Path

Special Characteristic

☑ **Large size**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Ficus virens var. sublanceolata
Common Name:	Big-leaved Fig
Chinese Name:	大葉榕(黃葛樹)
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	1400 (mm)
Height:	20 (m)
Crown Spread:	18 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

General Information

Registration No.:	LCSD CW/96
Registration Date:	8 Sep, 2004
Maintenance Department:	LCSD
District:	Central & Western
Location:	Battery Path

Special Characteristic

☑ **Precious or rare species**

Tree Detail

Botanical Name:	Heteropanax fragrans
Common Name:	N/A
Chinese Name:	幌傘楓 (火通木)
DBH: (i.e. Trunk diameter measured at 1.3m above ground level)	950 (mm)
Height:	12 (m)
Crown Spread:	12 (m)
Estimated Age:	- (Years)

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Notes to the Statutory Plan for Central District (S/H4/12), accessed at

www.02p.tpb.gov.uk/pdf/s_h4_12_2.pdf

GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTION OR COMMUNITY

Column 1 Uses always permitted	Column 2 Uses that may be permitted with or without conditions on application to the Town Planning Board
Ambulance Depot	Abattoir
Ancillary Car/Lorry Park	Animal Pound
Broadcasting, Television and/or Film Studio	Aviary
Cable Car Route and Terminal Building	Bank
Canteen	Columbarium
Clinic/Polyclinic	Correctional Institution
Cooked Food Centre	Crematorium
Driving Test Centre	Dangerous Goods Godown
Educational Institution	Fast Food Shop
Exhibition or Convention Hall	Flat
Fire Station	Funeral Depot
Government Refuse Collection Point	Funeral Parlour
Government Staff Quarters	Funeral Services Centre
Government Use (not elsewhere specified)	Garden of Remembrance
Hawker Centre	Holiday Camp
Hospital	Hotel
Judicial Facility	House
Market	Marine Fuelling Station
Pier	Mass Transit Vent Shaft and/or Other Structure above Ground Level other than Entrances
Place of Recreation, Sports or Culture	Off-course Betting Centre
Plant Nursery	Office (other than Government Office)
Police Reporting Centre	Petrol Filling Station
Police Station	Photographic Studio
Post Office	Place of Public Entertainment
Private Swimming Pool	Private Club
Public Bathhouse	Quarantine Station or Quarantine Lairage for Animals
Public Car/Lorry Park	Radar, Telecommunications Electronic Microwave Repeater, Television and/or Radio Transmitter Installation
Public Convenience	Refuse Disposal Installation
Public Library	Residential Institution
Public Swimming Pool	Restaurant
Public Transport Terminus or Station	Retail Shop
Public Utility Installation	Sand Depot
Religious Institution	School (other than in free-standing purpose-designed school building)
School (in free-standing purpose-designed school building only)	Service Trades
Service Reservoir	Sewage Treatment/Screening Plant
Social Welfare Facility	Showroom excluding Motor-vehicle Showroom
Underground Pumphouse	Staff Quarters
Vehicle Pound	Utility Installation for Private Project
Wholesale Food Market	Warehouse/Godown
	Zoo

Appendix C

Permitted Development in this Area

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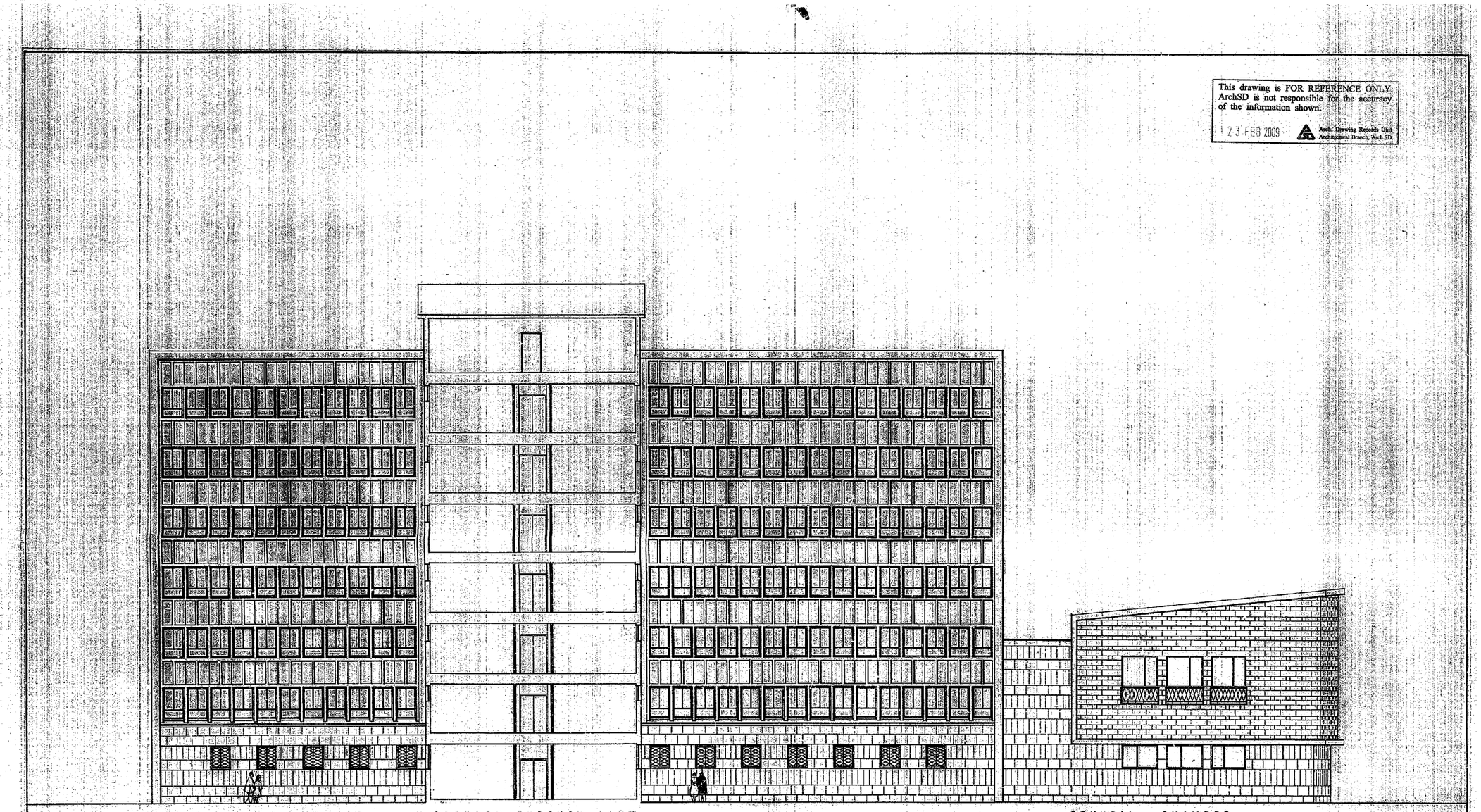
Original working drawings of the Central Wing held at the Architectural Services Department.

THIS IS A SEPARATE A3 APPENDIX

Appendix D

Original Architectural Drawings



SOUTH EAST ELEVATION

SECTION THROUGH LINK

COUNCIL CHAMBER

SECRETARIAT OFFICES

SCALE : EIGHT FEET TO ONE INCH

CHIEF ARCHITECT
ARCHITECTURAL OFFICE
P.W.D. HONG KONG
DRAWING NO: A.P.687
DATE NOV. 30th 1954
DRAWN BY A. FITCH

AP 685
AP 68-

NORTH EAST ELEVATION

SOUTH WEST ELEVATION

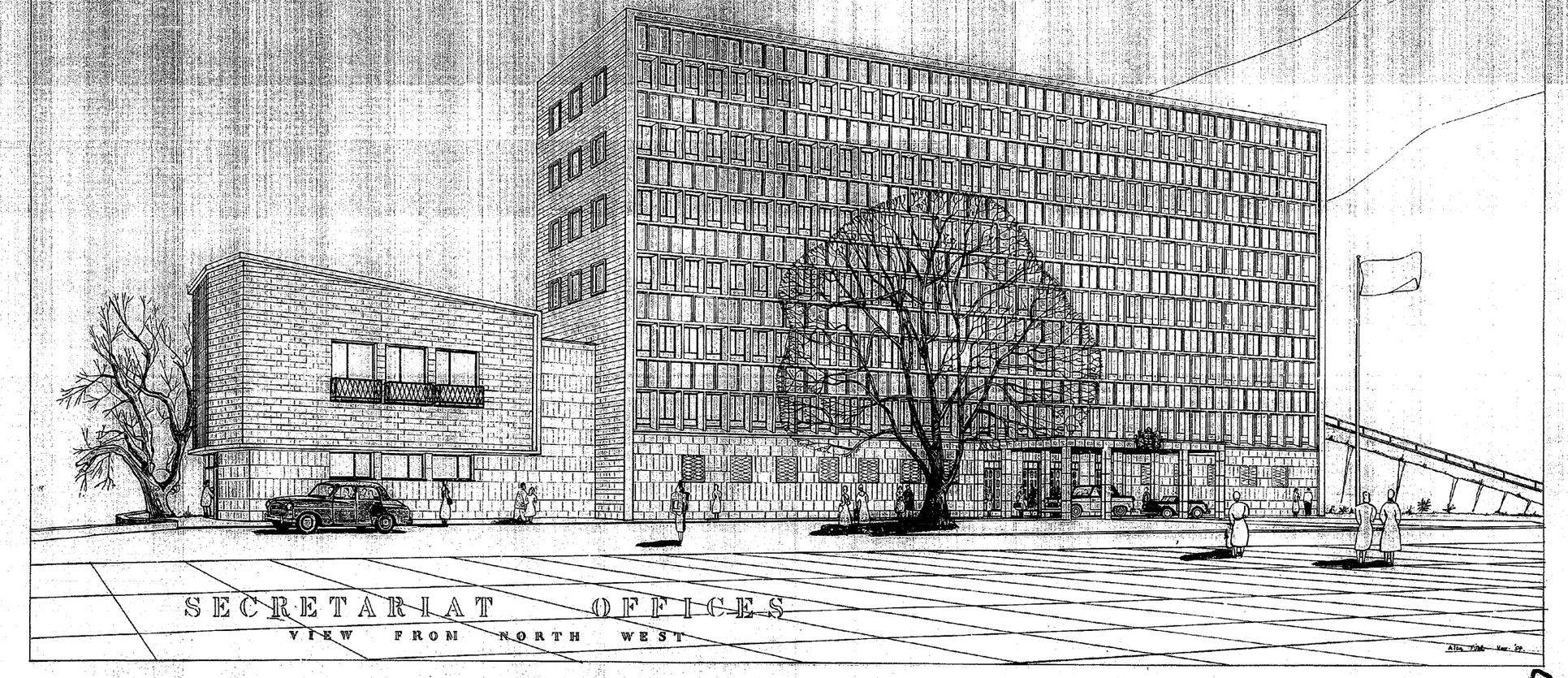
SECRETARIAT OFFICES

SCALE : EIGHT FEET TO ONE INCH

CHIEF ARCHITECT
ARCHITECTURAL OFFICE
P.W.D. HONG KONG
DRAWING NO: A.R688
DATE NOV. 30th 1954
DRAWN BY A. FITCH

803

~~AP 685~~
AP 688

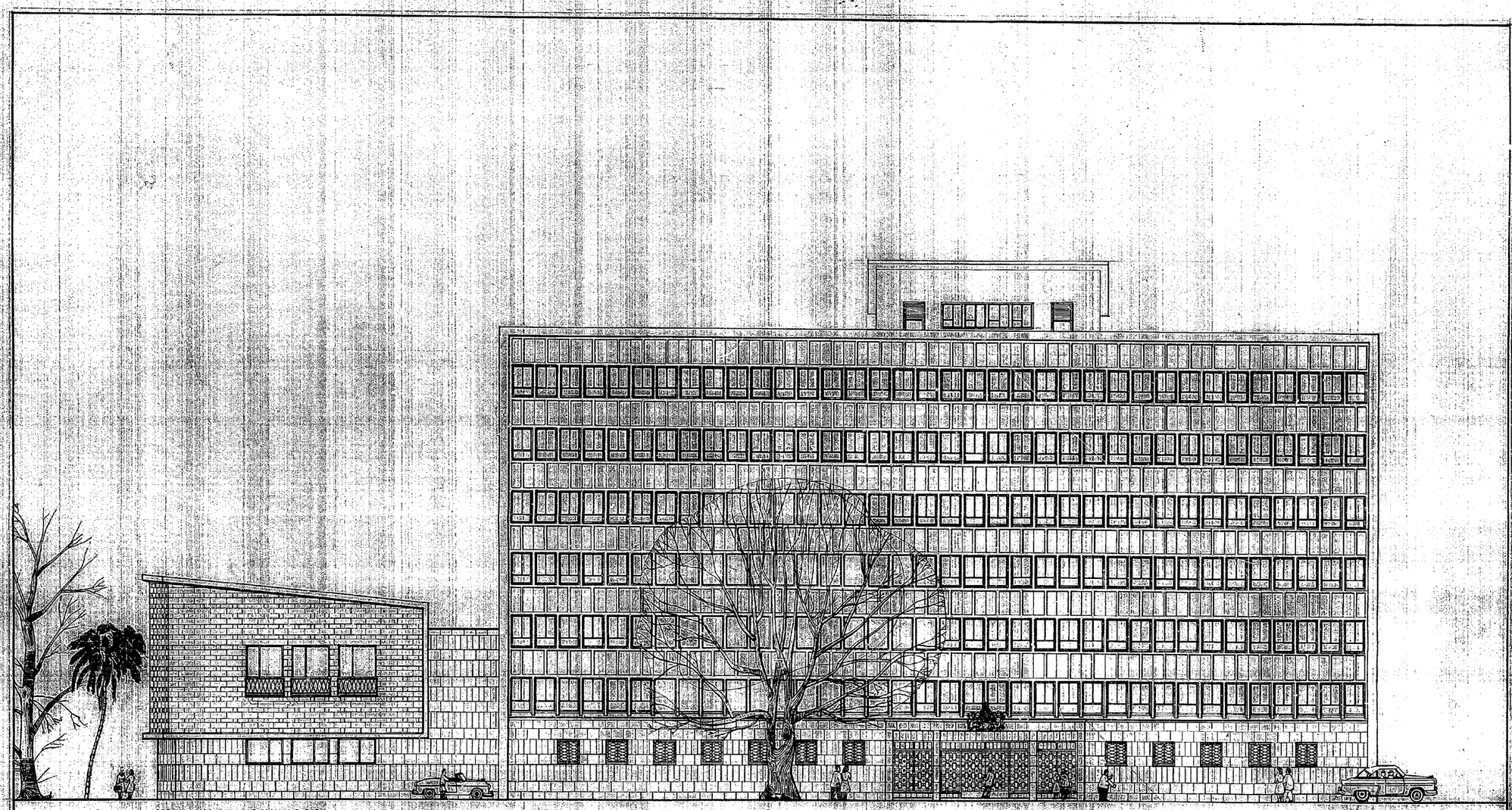


SECRETARIAT OFFICES

VIEW FROM NORTH WEST

DRAWING NO. A 665 A

804



SECRETARIAT OFFICES

SCALE : EIGHT FEET TO ONE INCH

CHIEF ARCHITECT
ARCHITECTURAL OFFICE
P. W. D. HONG KONG
DRAWING NO: A.P. 686
DATE NOV. 30th 1954
DRAWN BY A. FITCH

~~801~~

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AP/686

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