



Why study Hong Kong's colonial urban settlement?

Urban conservation is an important part of modern heritage policies. For at least half a century, **historic cities** have acquired an incomparable status in modern culture and in modern life; a status defined by the quality of the architectural and physical environment, by the persistence of the sense of place, and by the concentration of the historic and artistic events that **form the basis for the identity of a people**. Last but not least, they have become the icons of global cultural tourism and coveted places for the enjoyment of a different lifestyle and for cultural experiences for millions of people.

Quoted from the UNESCO Preliminary Report
"A New International Instrument: The Proposed UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL), 23 August 2010. accessed from: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001890/189099e.pdf>

As a former British colony, studying Hong Kong's colonial urban settlement is the important basis for Hong Kong's urban conservation, and it's so that we can understand Hong Kong as a historic city, which forms the basis for the identity of Hong Kong people.

Quotable quote from Hoyin Lee!

A row of seven flags: a yellow flag with a blue dragon (representing the New Territories), the Union Jack (representing the British colonial period), the flag of the Republic of China (representing the period of the Republic of China), the flag of the Japanese Empire (representing the period of Japanese occupation), the flag of the People's Republic of China (representing the period of the People's Republic of China), the flag of the United Kingdom (representing the British colonial period), the flag of the British Overseas Territories (representing the period of the British Overseas Territories), and the flag of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (representing the current status).

How to build a British colonial urban settlement in 6 easy steps!

Step 1: Claim the Colony

Architecture required: none (need the navy and the army).

Step 2: Occupy the Colony

Architecture required: military facilities – fort, batteries, barracks, parade grounds, etc.

Step 3: Rule the Colony

Architecture required: facilities for keeping law and order – police stations, court houses, prisons, etc.

Step 4: Govern the Colony

Architecture required: administration facilities – government offices, Government House, etc., as well as facilities for trade and commerce, and for public health and hygiene.

Step 5: Convert and Educate the Colony

Architecture required: cathedrals, churches, missionary schools.

Step 6: Civilize the Colony

Architecture required: leisure, cultural and recreational facilities – theatres, museums, libraries, sports grounds, public parks, etc.

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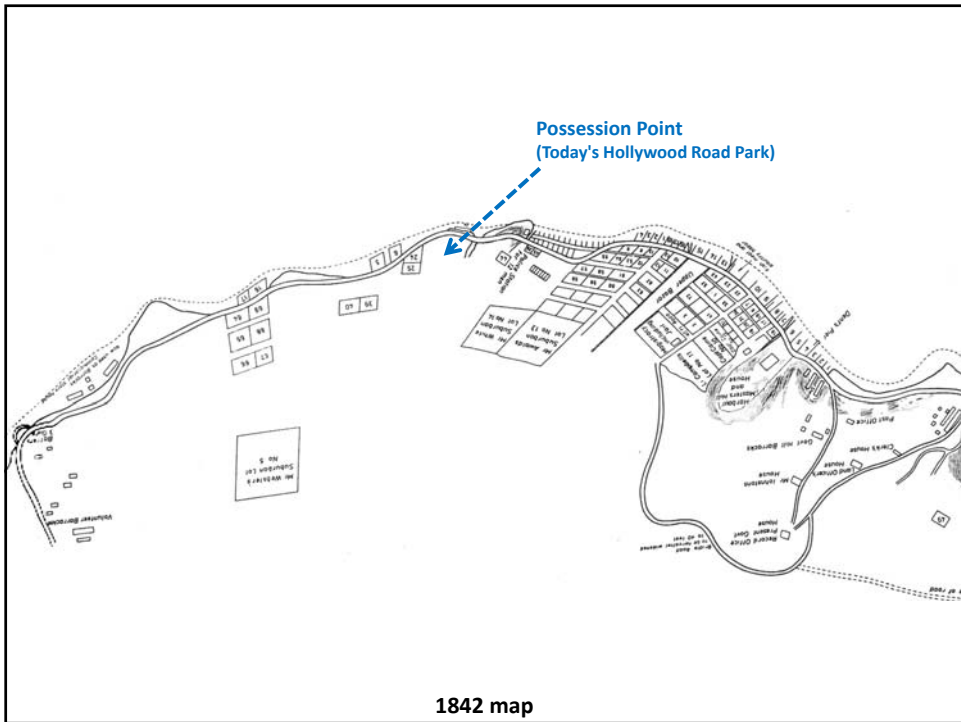
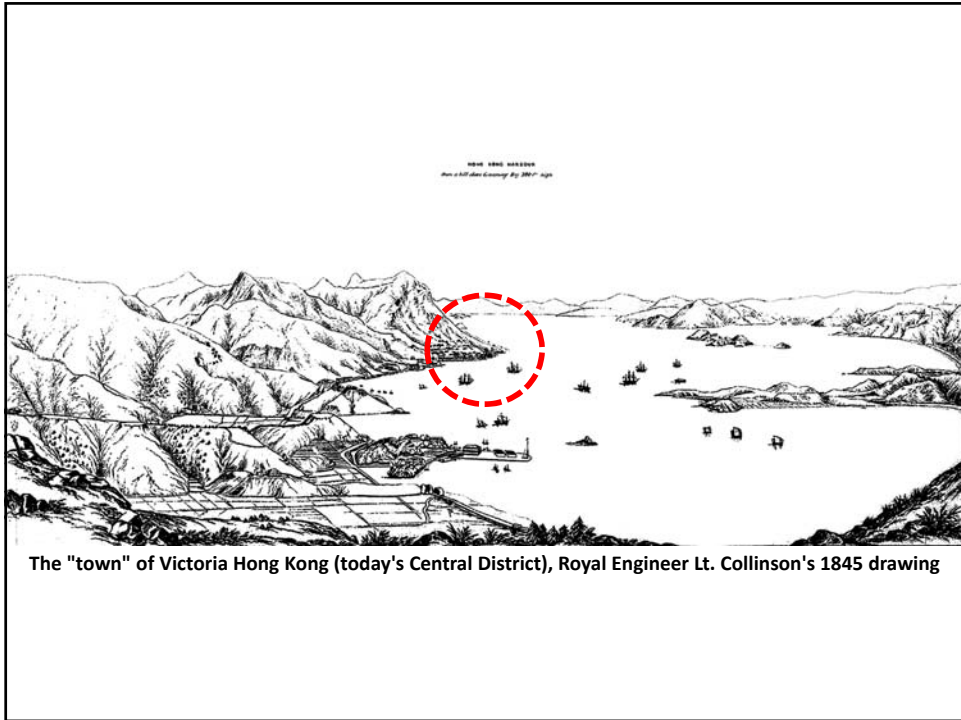
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Step 2: Occupy the Colony

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"Victoria Hong Kong, before the town was built, April 30, 1841"

Step 2: Occupy the Colony

1842 – "garrison town" in Sheung Wan

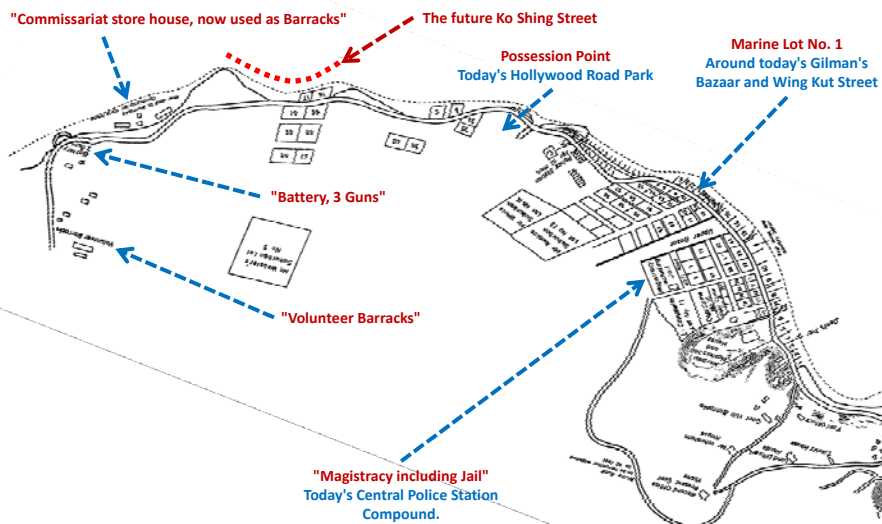
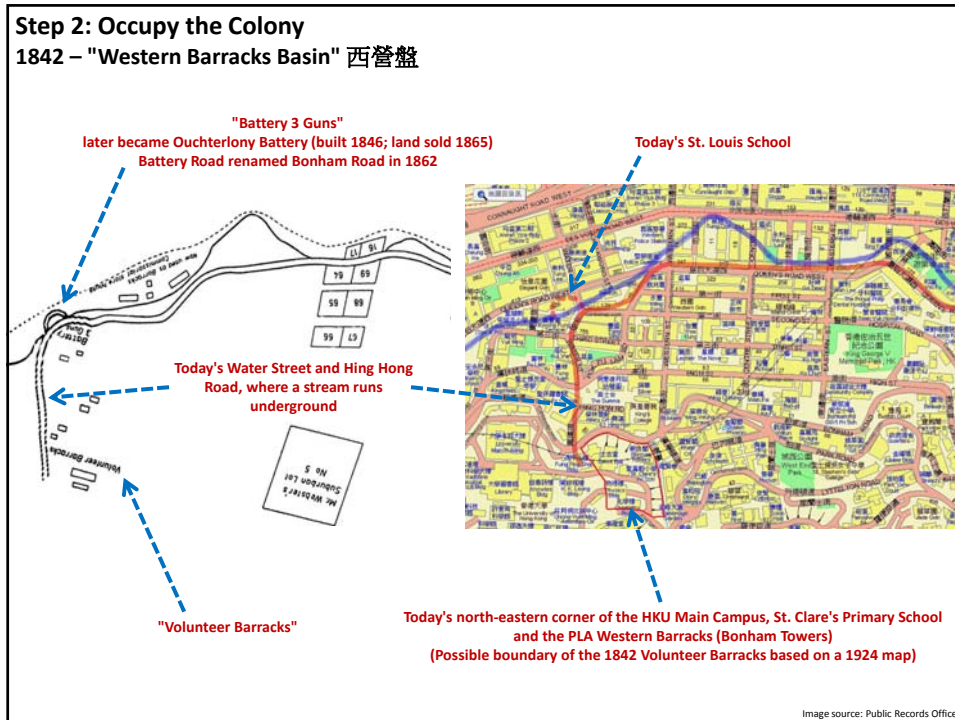


Image source: Public Records Office



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Facilities for keeping law and order:
Police Stations

The beginning of Hong Kong's police force

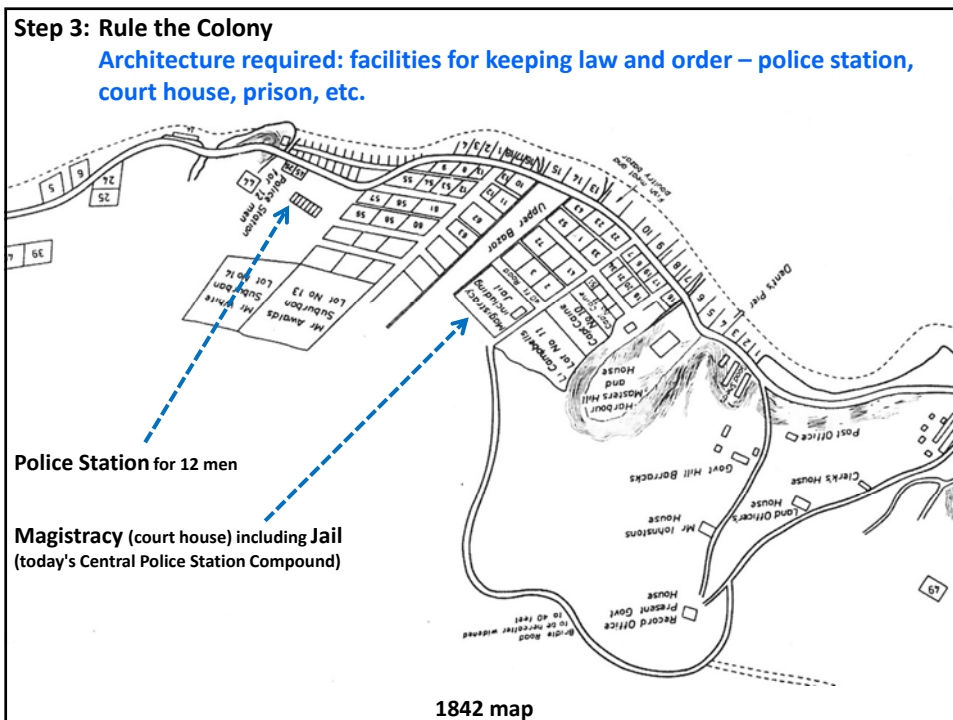


1829 The Metropolitan Police for the City of London, the world's first modern police force, founded by Sir Robert Peel (later Lord Peel, 1788-1850; twice Prime Minister of Britain (1834-1835 and 1841-1846)).

1844 The first dedicated police force was formed for the City of Victoria, Hong Kong.

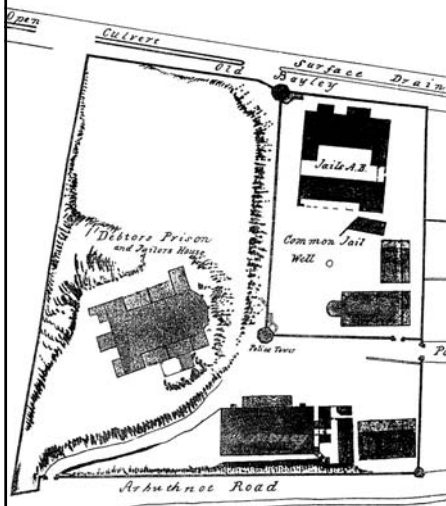
Trivia: Robert = "Bob"; London policemen = "bobbies"

Early police stations in the City of Victoria		
1845	First Police Station	Possession Point, Sheung Wan
1853	No. 1 Police Station	Junction of Percival Street and Leighton Road, Causeway Bay
1868	No. 2 Police Station	Junction of Wan Chai Road and Johnston Road, Wan Chai
1847	No. 3 Police Station	Site of the Old Wan Chai Post Office on Queen's Road East, Wan Chai
1863	No. 4 Police Station	Roughly the entrance area to the Mall of Pacific Place, across the road from the junction of Rodney Street and Queensway, Admiralty
1857	No. 5 Police Station	Junction of Wellington Street and Queen's Road Central, Central
1869	No. 6 Police Station	Victoria Gap, The Peak
1858	No. 7 Police Station	Junction of Queen's Road West and Pokfulam Road, Western District
1870	No. 8 Police Station	Junction of Po Yee Street and Pound Lane, Sheung Wan (in the area formerly known as Tai Ping Shan)
1853	No. 9 Police Station	Caine Road, across the road from the bottom of Shelley Street, Central
1864	Central Police Station	Hollywood Road, Central



Step 3: Rule the Colony

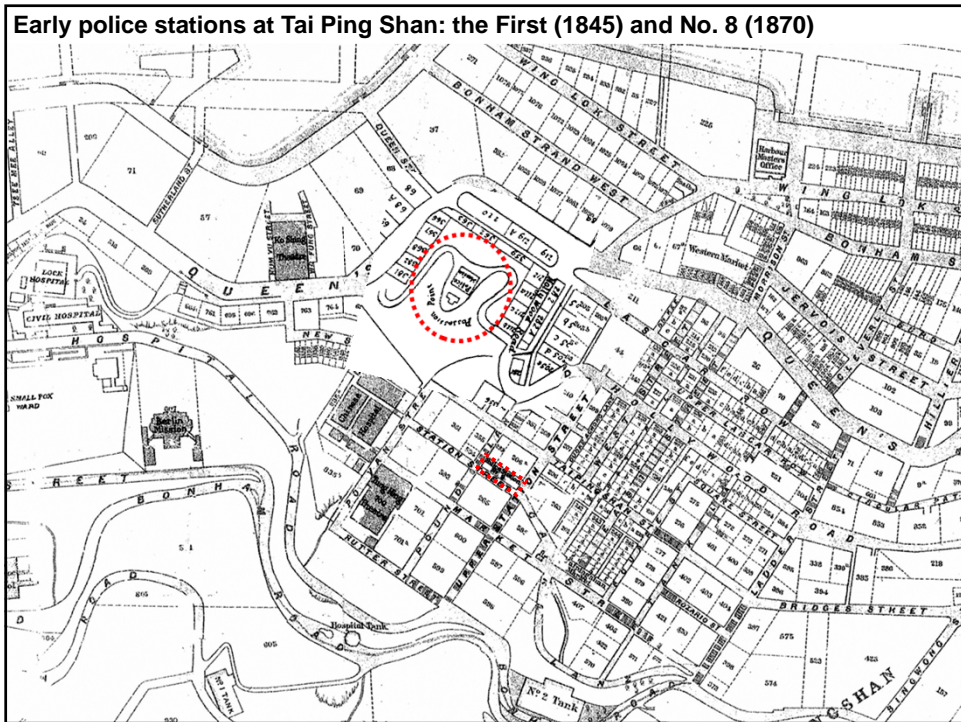
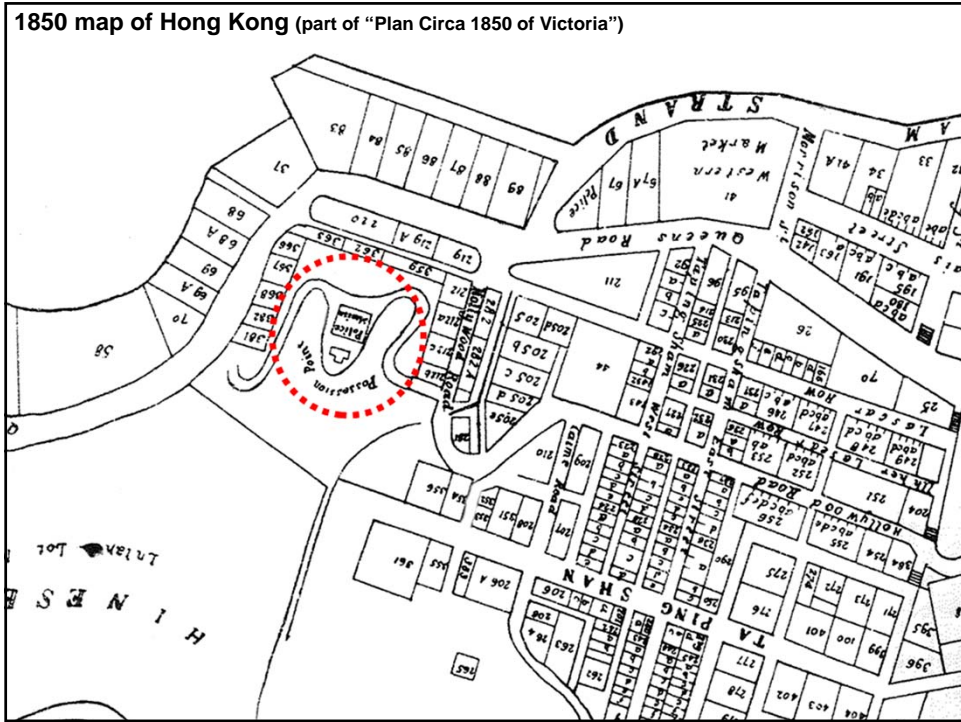
Architecture required: facilities for keeping law and order – police station, court house, prison, etc.

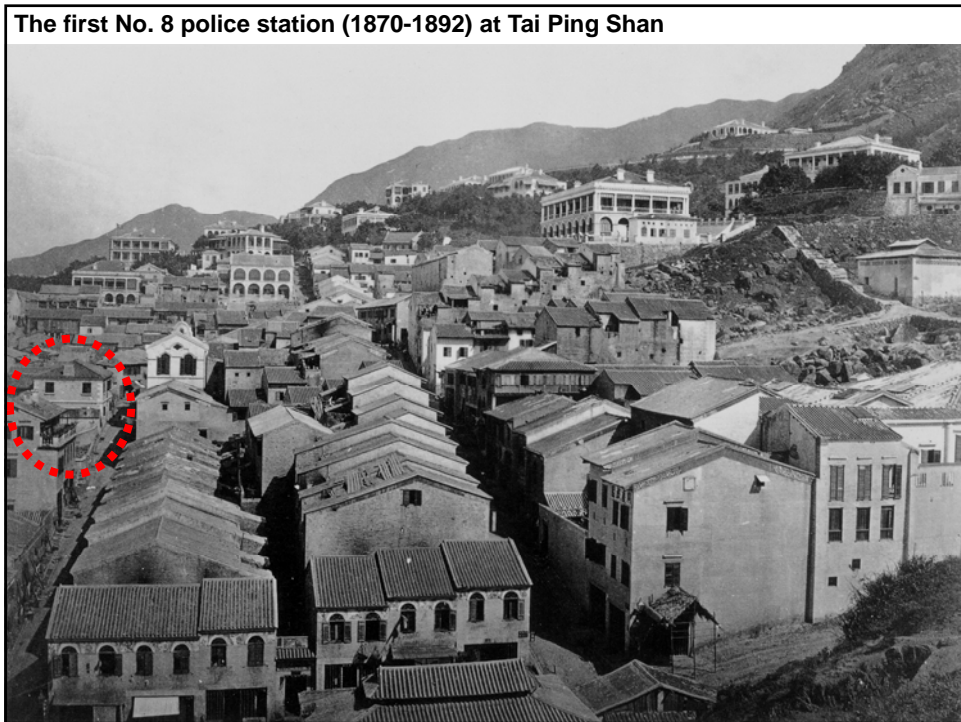
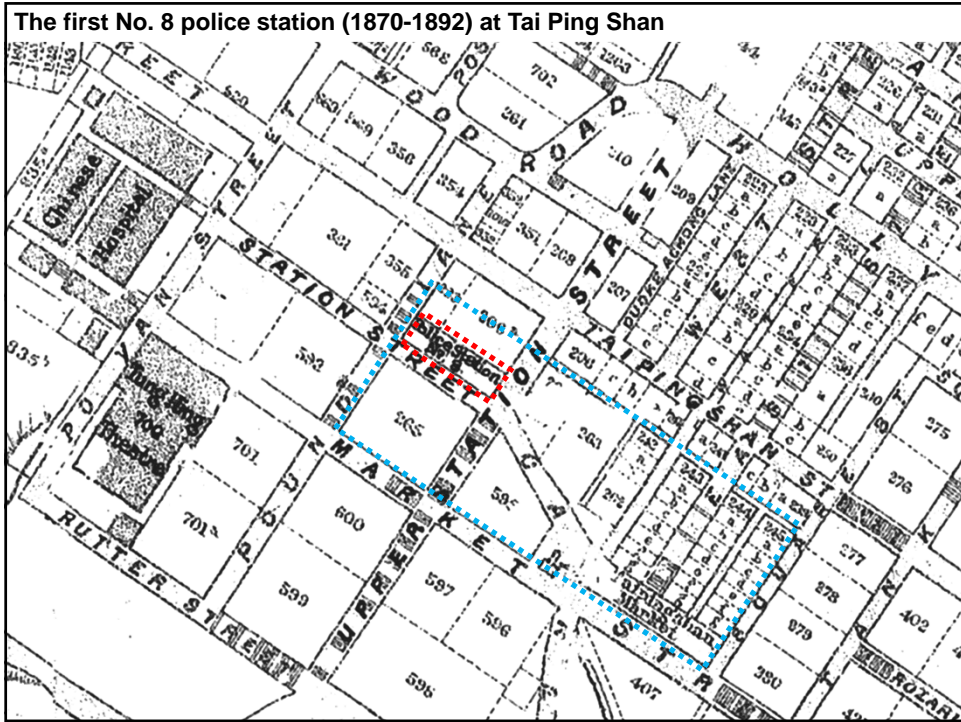


1845-1850 plan, 1860s photo

1842 "Police Station for 12 men" – possibly temporary makeshift structure







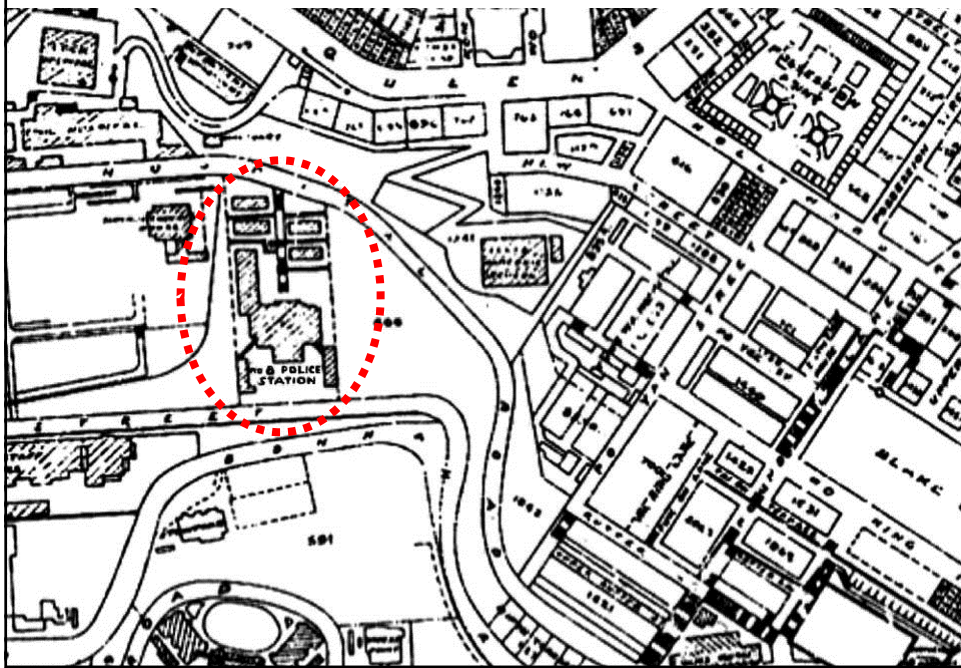
The first No. 8 police station (1870-1892) at Tai Ping Shan



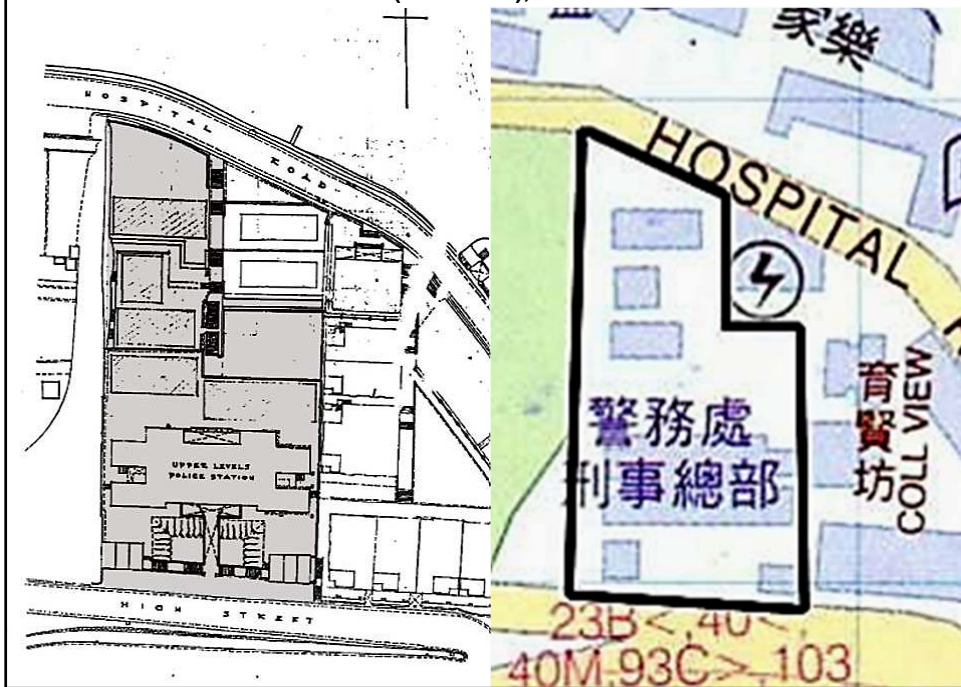
No. 1 Police Station, Hong Kong (1853)

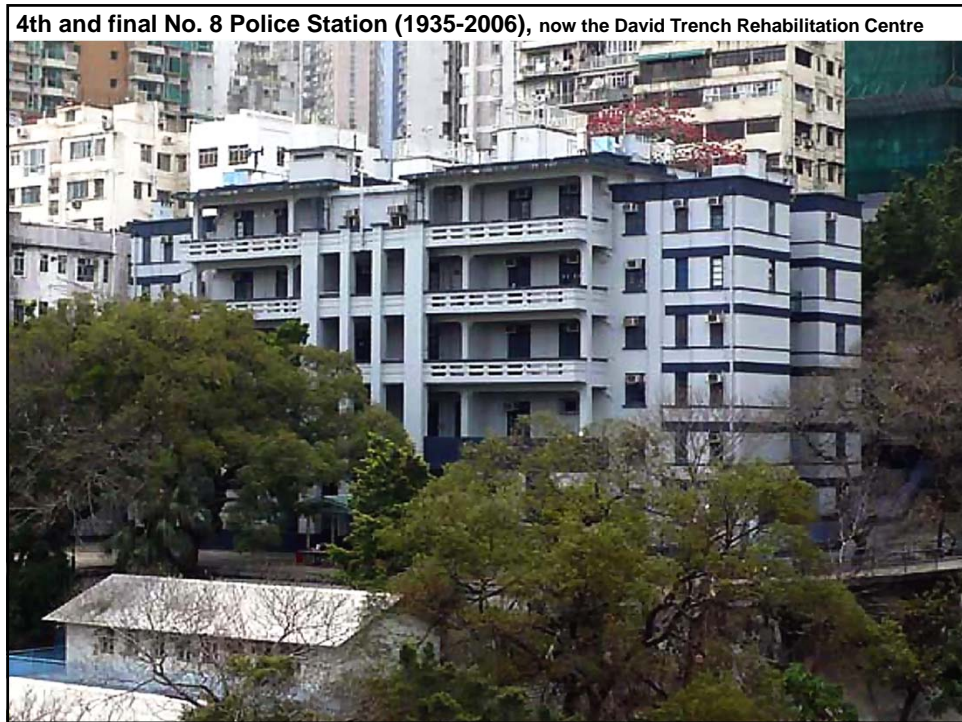


2nd No. 8 Police Station (1892-1925), adapted from the Berlin Foundling House



4th and final No. 8 Police Station (1935-2006), now the David Trench Rehabilitation Centre





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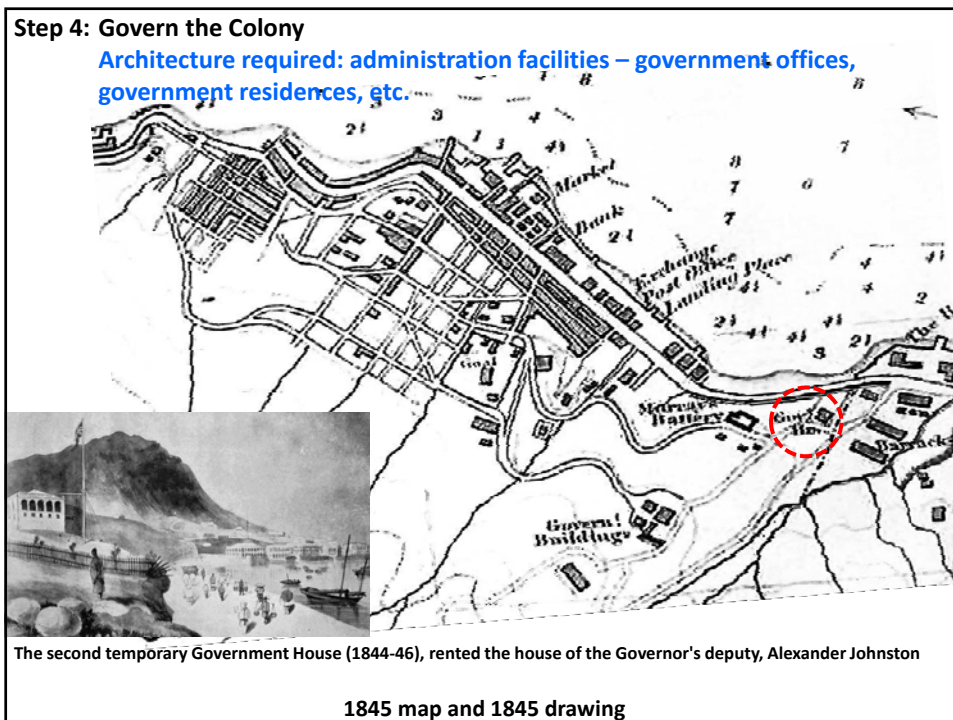
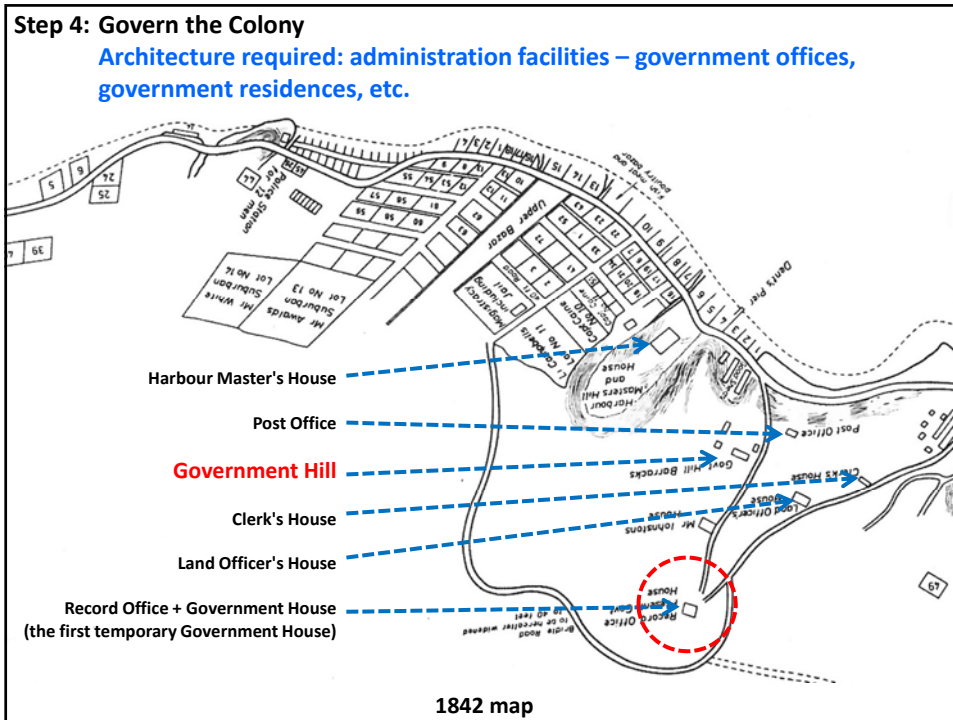
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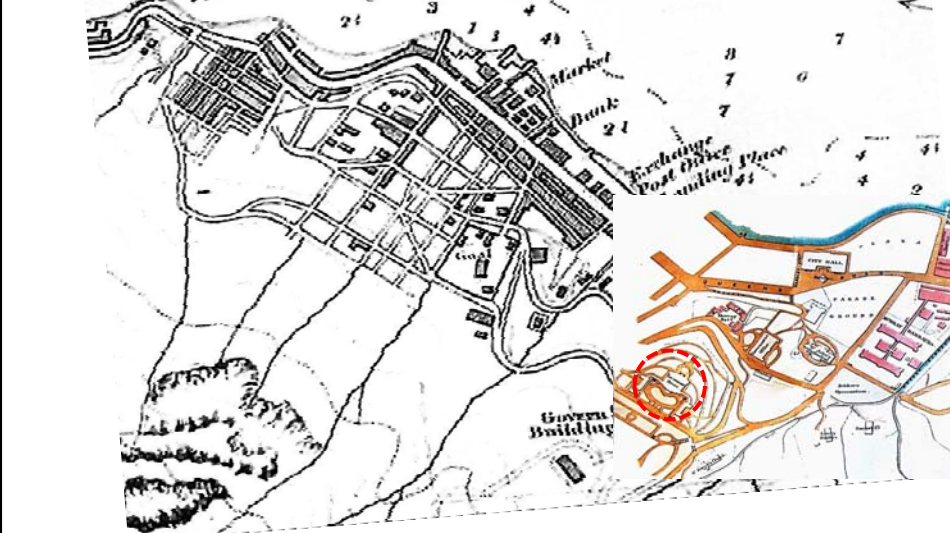


The second temporary Government House (1844-1846), later twice rebuilt on the same site, and much, much later adapted as the HKSAR Court of Final Appeal

1845 drawing (bottom left), 1860s painting (top left) and mid-20th-century photo

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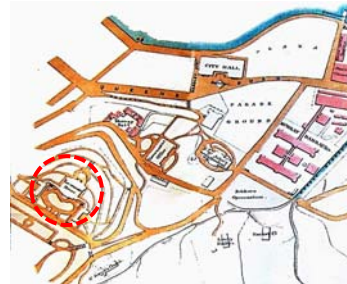


The first permanent Government House (1855-1942), designed by the local Surveyor General, Charles Cleverly

1845 and 1855 maps

Step 4: Govern the Colony

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The first permanent Government House (1855-1942), designed by the local Surveyor General, Charles Cleverly

1855 and 1860s photos

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The current Government House (1944-today), designed by Japanese architect Kensuke Aiga of the South Manchurian Railway Company – 帝冠式様

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The current Government House (1944-today), designed by Japanese architect Kensuke Aiga of the South Manchurian Railway Company – 帝冠式様. Compared with Japanese colonial architecture in Taiwan: (top) Kaohsiung Train Station (1941) and Kaohsiung Museum of History (former government office) (1938).

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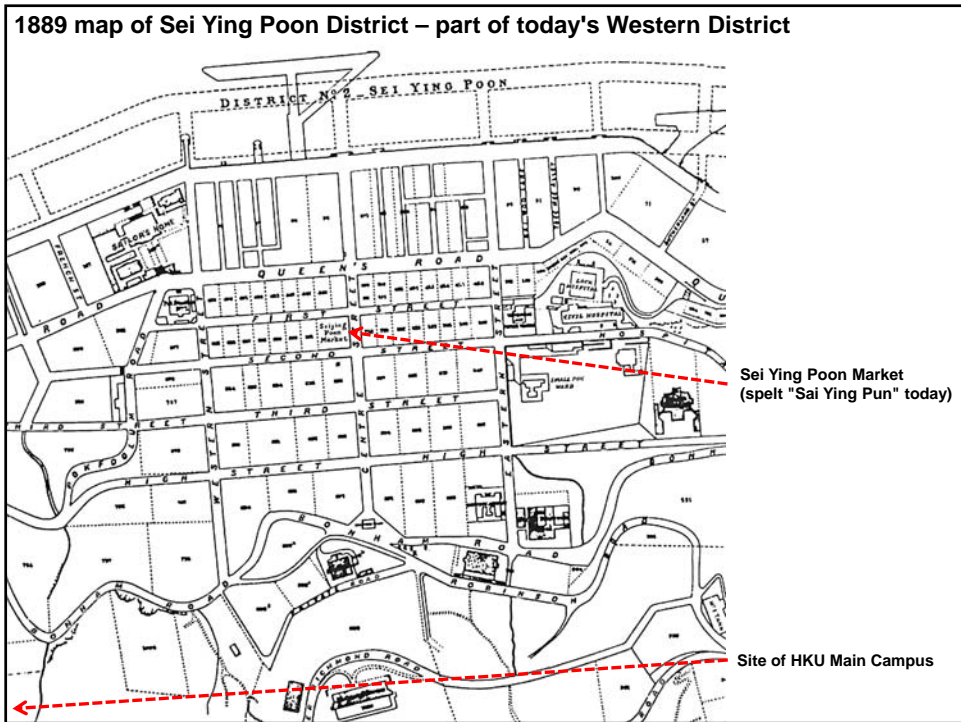
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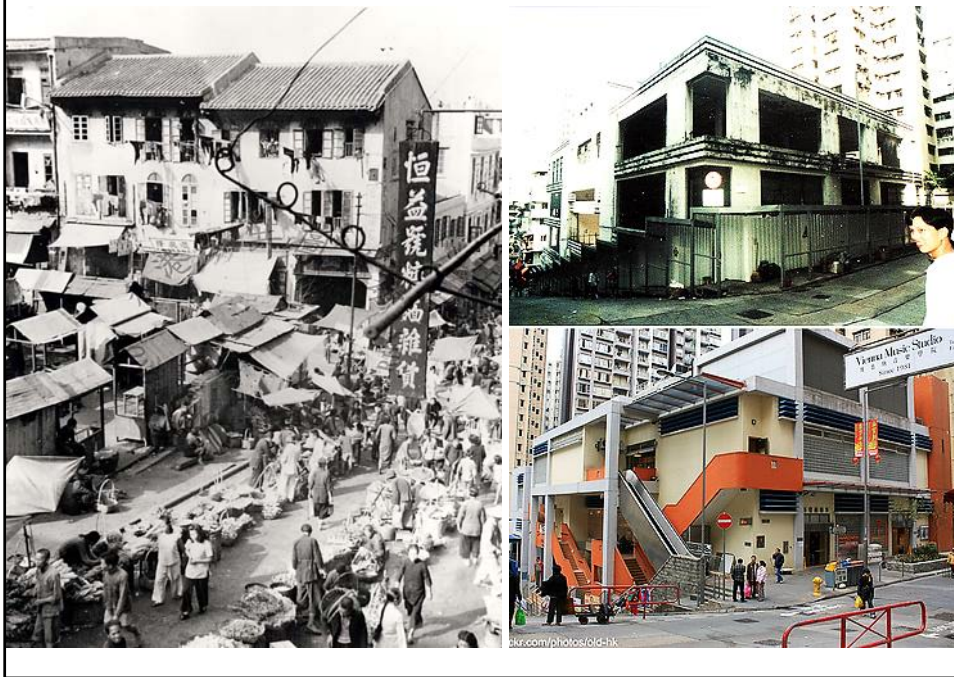
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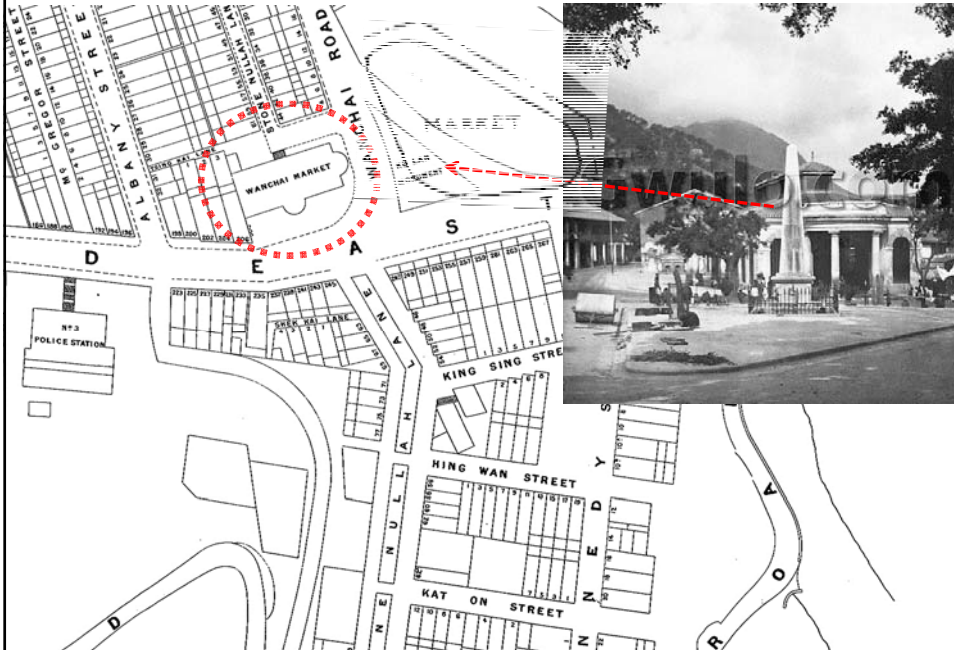
Facilities for trade and commerce:
Indoor Markets



Sei Ying Poon Market (Centre Street Market) – since 1864



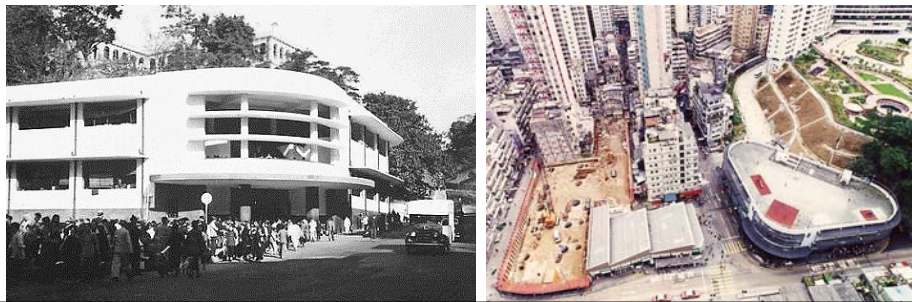
1901 map showing the location of the 19th-century Wan Chai Market
1936 overlaid showing the location of the 20th-century Wan Chai Market



19th-century Wan Chai Market – completed 1858; demolished 1937



20th-century Wan Chai Market – completed 1937; partially demolished 2009



1882 map showing the location of Central Market



19th-century Central Market – completed 1895; demolished 1937



20th-century Central Market – completed 1939; closed for revitalisation 2003



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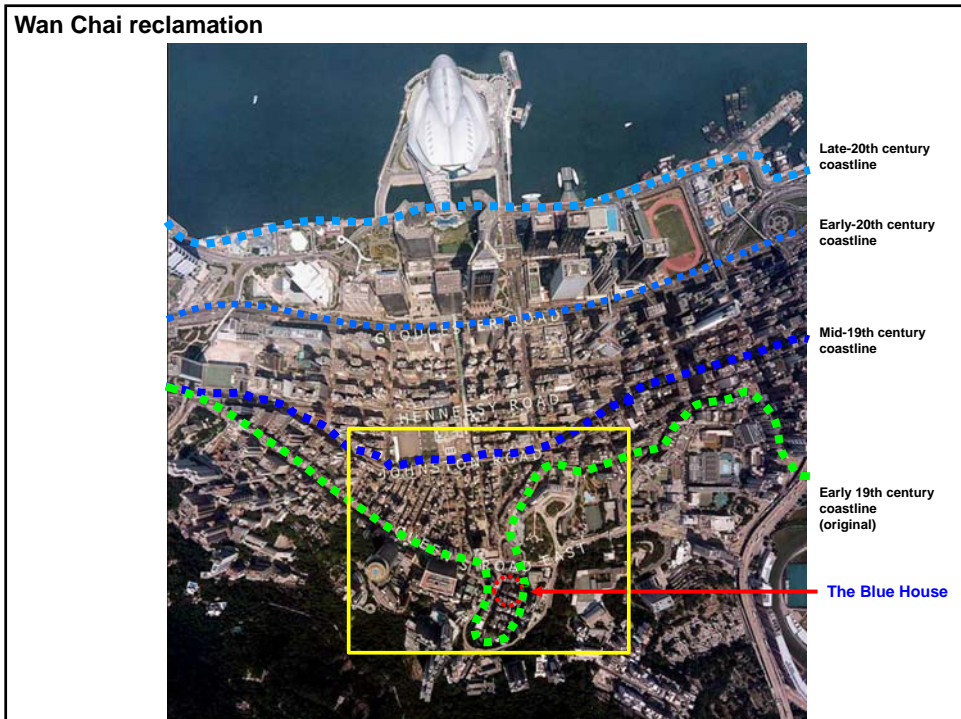
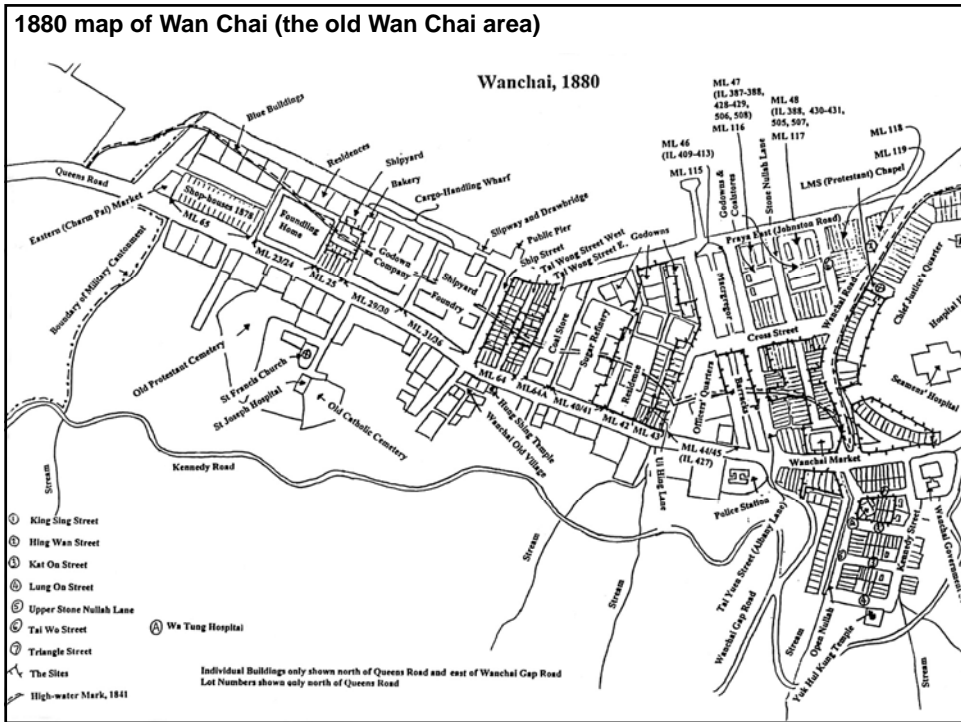
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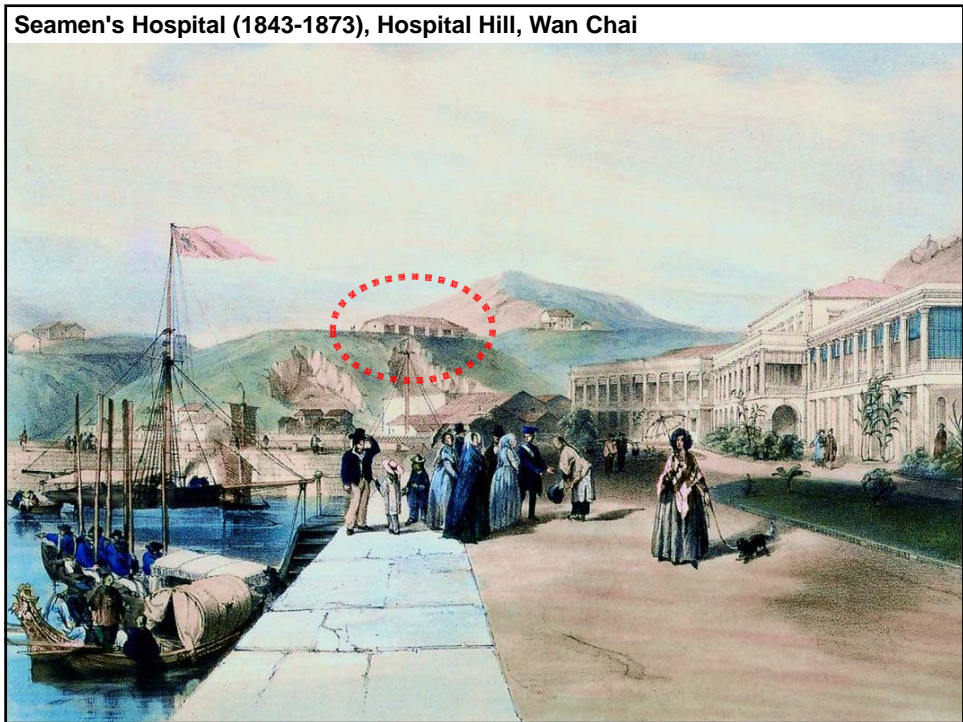
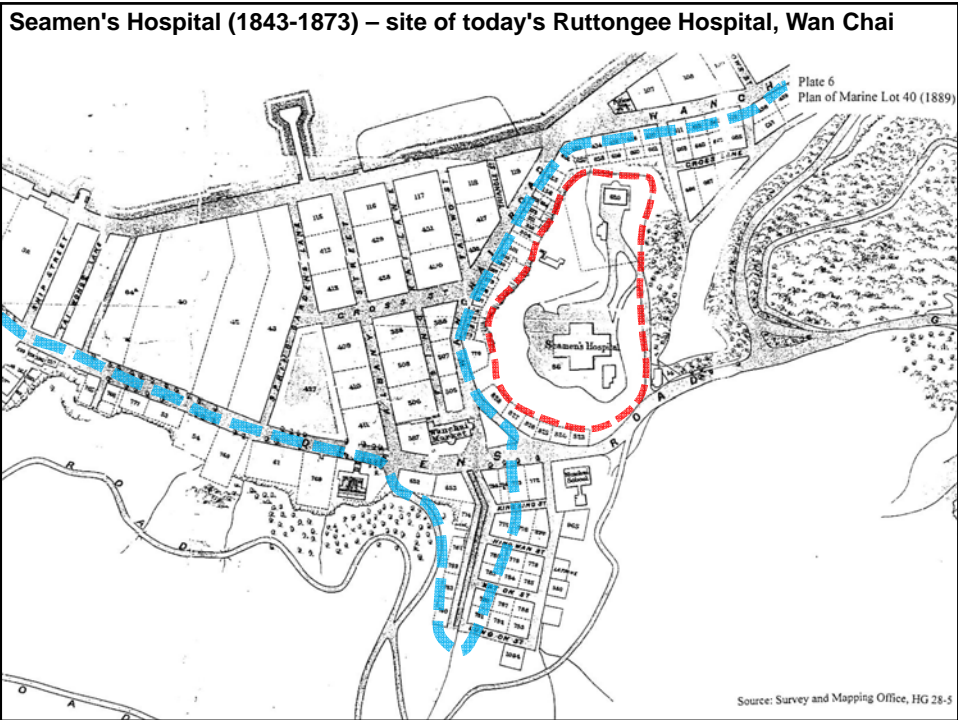
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Facilities for public health and hygiene:
Hospitals

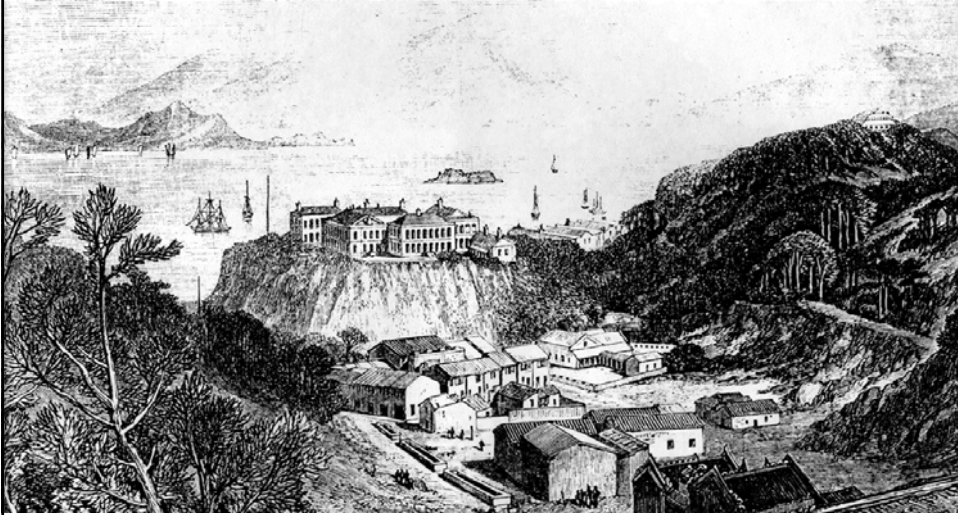
Wan Chai from the Air



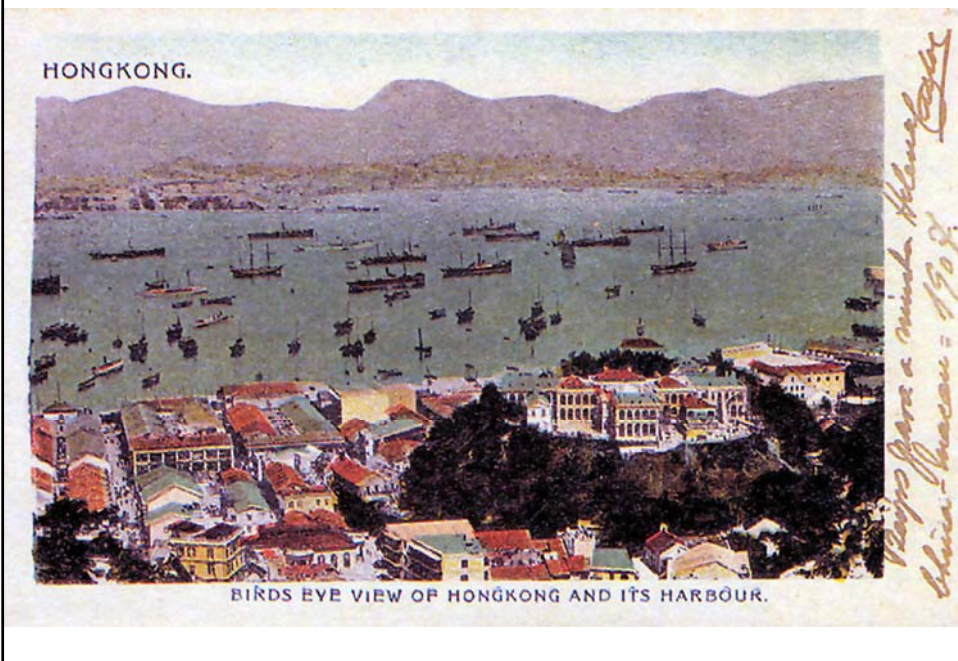




1873 view of the Royal Naval Hospital (1873-1949), Mount Shadwell, Wan Chai



1873 view of the Royal Naval Hospital (1873-1949), Mount Shadwell, Wan Chai



1949 view of Ruttonjee Sanatorium (1949-1991) – a tuberculosis hospital



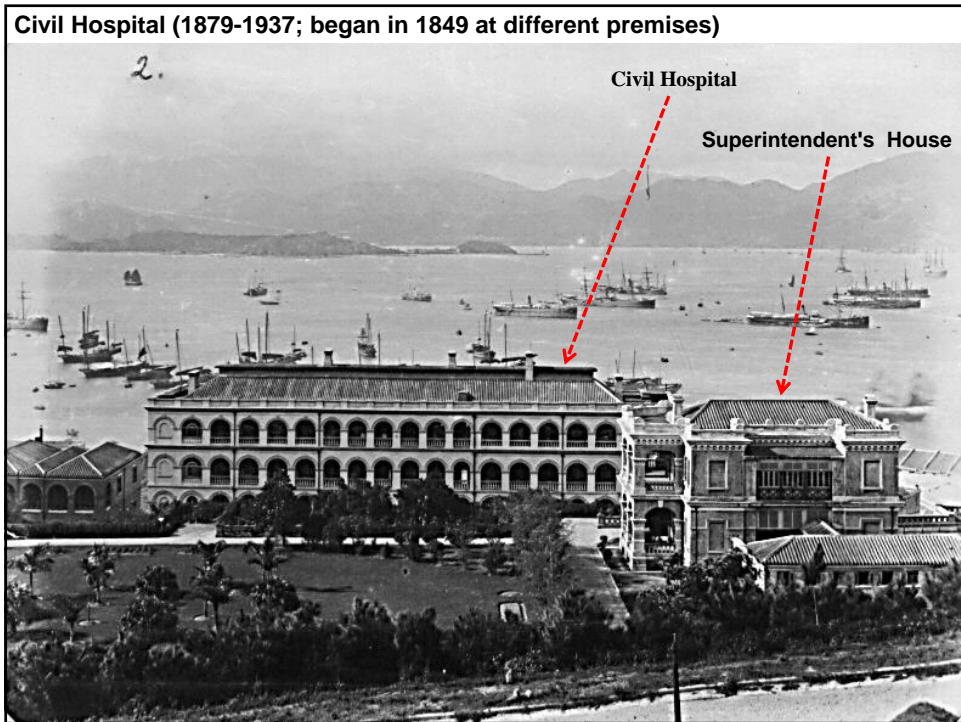
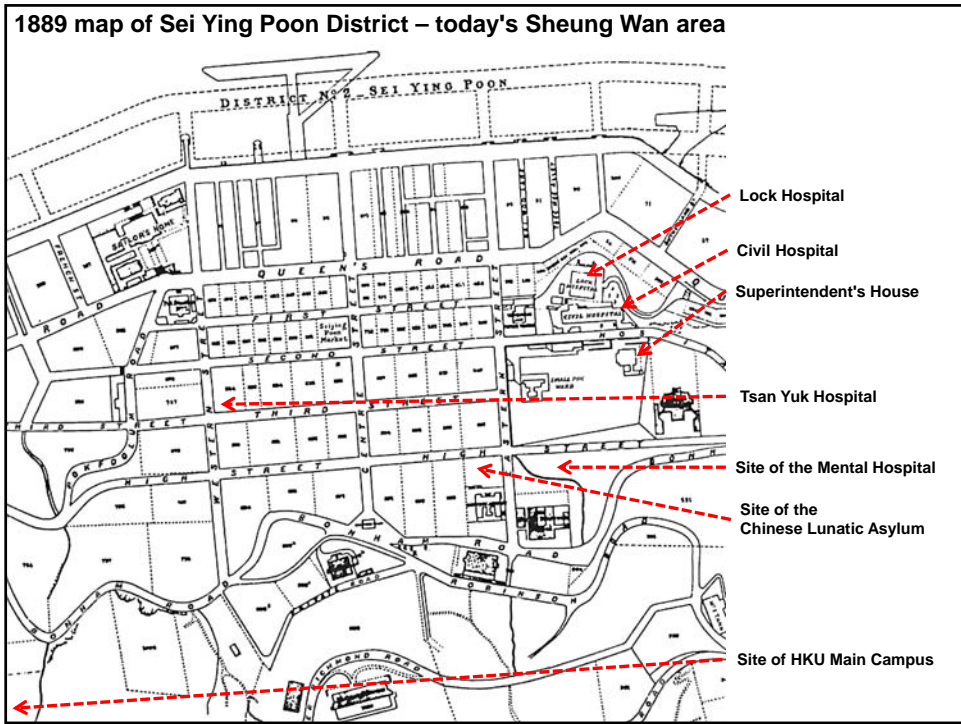
肺病患者福音
律敦治療養院廿四開幕
下月起收容初期肺病

【本報訊】律敦治肺病療養院已定本月廿四日開幕，昨晨十時，負責創辦該院之防務會主席周錫年暨出院後的病人可隨時求檢驗及獲得適當的治療。該院原為海軍醫院，戰時被日人破壞得很嚴重，戰後由香港防務會委成福來辦肺病療養院，由防務會撥款五十餘萬元出來修葺，連設備等一共需款二百多萬元。

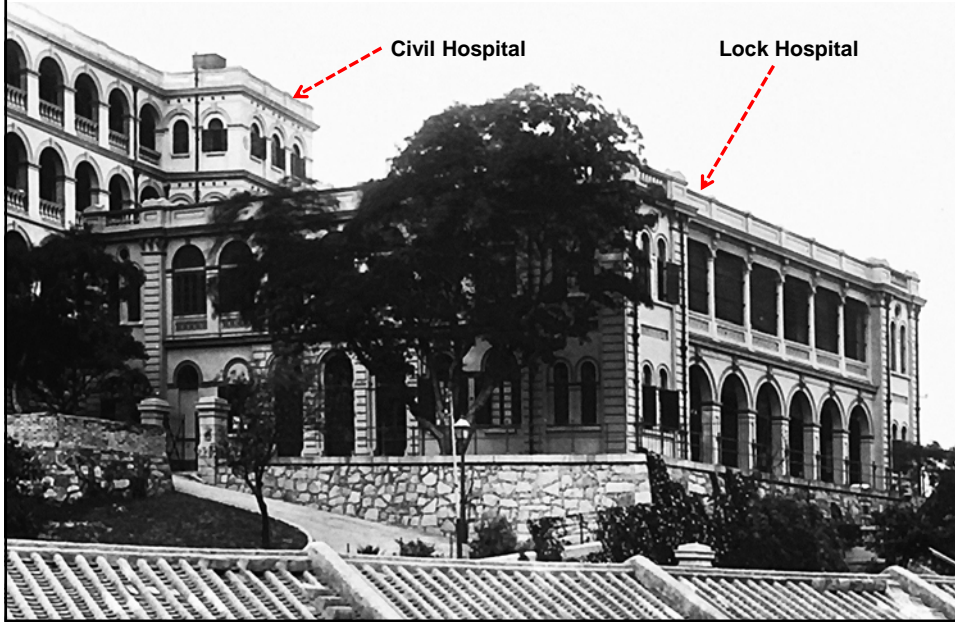
Chinese news dated 21 February 1949; the heading reads: "Good news to tuberculosis victims: opening of Ruttonjee Sanatorium on the 24th; will admit early-stage tuberculosis cases starting next month."

Recent view of Ruttonjee Hospital (1991-present) – a general hospital





**Lock Hospital (1858-1892; began in 1845 at a makeshift premises) – a VD hospital
Renamed Women's Hospital for Venereal Disease (1892-1994)**



**Original Tsan Yuk Hospital – a maternity hospital (1922-1955)
Modern Tsan Yuk Hospital – a maternity hospital (1955-present)**



Medical Staff Quarters (1892-1937) – for European nurses
Mental Hospital (1937-1961)
Psychiatric Clinic (1961-1971)



Medical Staff Quarters (1875-1885) – for Chinese mental patients



**Facilities for public health and hygiene:
Underground Public Toilets**

From 1901 to 1924,
13 underground public toilets were built
by the Public Works Department
in the old districts of
Wan Chai, Central, Sai Ying Pun, Sheung Wan and Tai Ping Shan.

"Birds Bridge" underground public toilet (1911-1990)



Wellington Street underground public toilet (1912-present) – for men only!

公廁

掘史記

命。Renee 入行約 10 年，是城中著名的設計師。她在美國讀設計，人在異鄉，文化衝擊讓她更懂得欣賞中國傳統美學，回港開創自己的品牌，把旗袍的精髓與西方時裝結合。曾修讀港大建築文物保護的她，以「活化」來形容自己的設計：「香港的旗袍店一直在式微，老一輩的經營模式，很難在租金狂飆的年代生存。旗袍藝術要傳承下去，應要跳出傳統的框框，在保留旗袍精神的同時，與時並進才能生命延續。」她堅持傳統店舖的度身訂做，認為這樣才能更突顯旗袍應有的線條，而布料和款式設計，則用上新潮的時裝概念，「我想讓客人知道，旗袍不單是隆重場合才用得着，上班、外出用膳亦派上用場，服裝自然，一點也不突兀。」

李諾然
港大建築文物保護課程主任



威靈頓街的地下公廁重修後，設施現代化，但天花仍有不少歷史痕迹。

街公廁

Aberdeen Street / Staunton Street underground public toilets (1918-1990s?)



www.hk3.com/photos/343-36

Wan Chai public toilet (1913-1915) – converted as a post office



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St. John's Cathedral
(Anglican)

St. Joseph's Church
(Catholic)

1860s painting, 1855 map and 1870s photo

Step 5: Convert and Educate the Colony
Architecture required: cathedrals, churches, missionary schools.

St. John's Cathedral (1847)

1850s and 1860s drawings (top left and bottom) and 1870s photo

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Missionary schools were the predecessor of Hong Kong's school system



St. Paul's College, established by Hong Kong's Anglican Church in 1851

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City Hall
 (theatre, library, museum and assembly rooms)

Plaza
 (cricket ground / civic open space)

Botanic Gardens
 (originally the governor's private garden; open to the public in the 1860s)

1855 map

Step 6: Civilize the Colony
Architecture required: leisure, cultural and recreational facilities – theatre, museum, library, sports field, public park, etc.

City Hall (1869-1933)
 (theatre, library, museum and assembly rooms)

Plaza (1851-now)
 (cricket ground – 1851-1975
 civic open space – 1851-now as Chater Garden)

Botanic Gardens (1864-now)
 (public park)

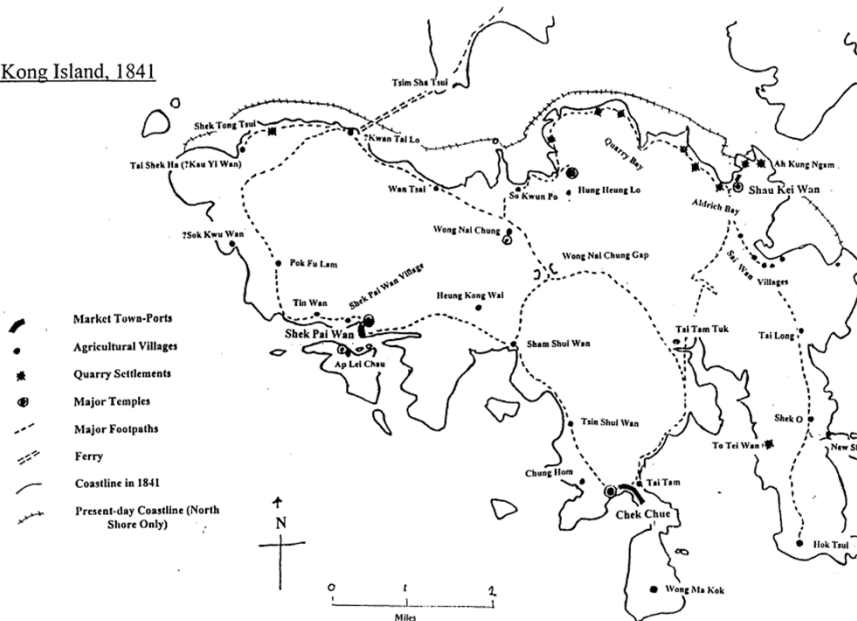
(from top to bottom) 1875, 1908 and 1864 photos

TAI PING SHAN DISTRICT: HONG KONG'S EARLY CHINESE SETTLEMENTS

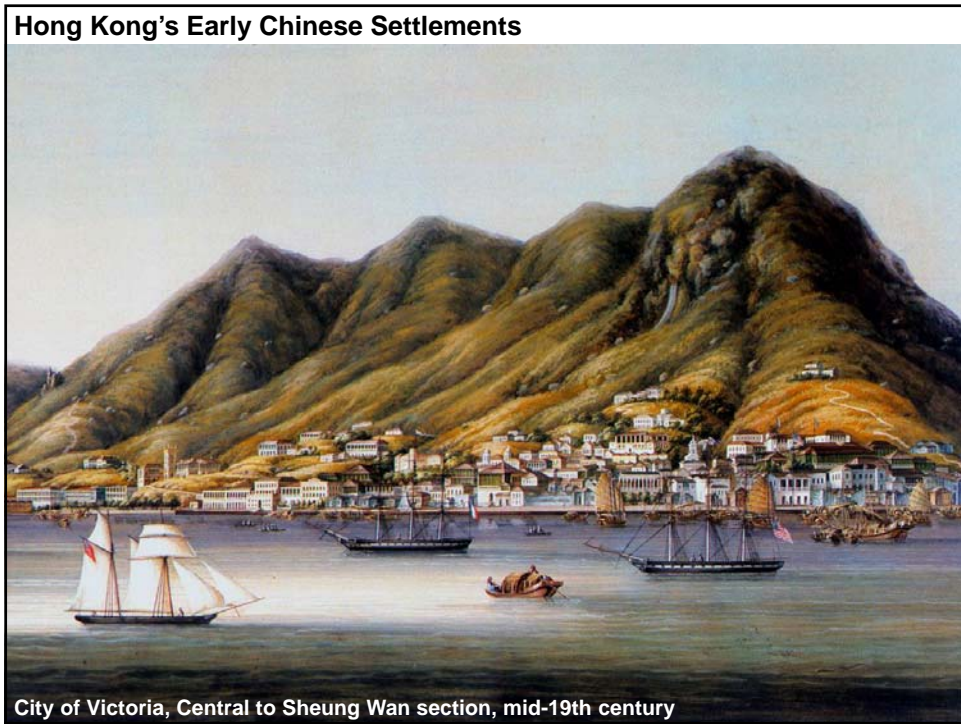
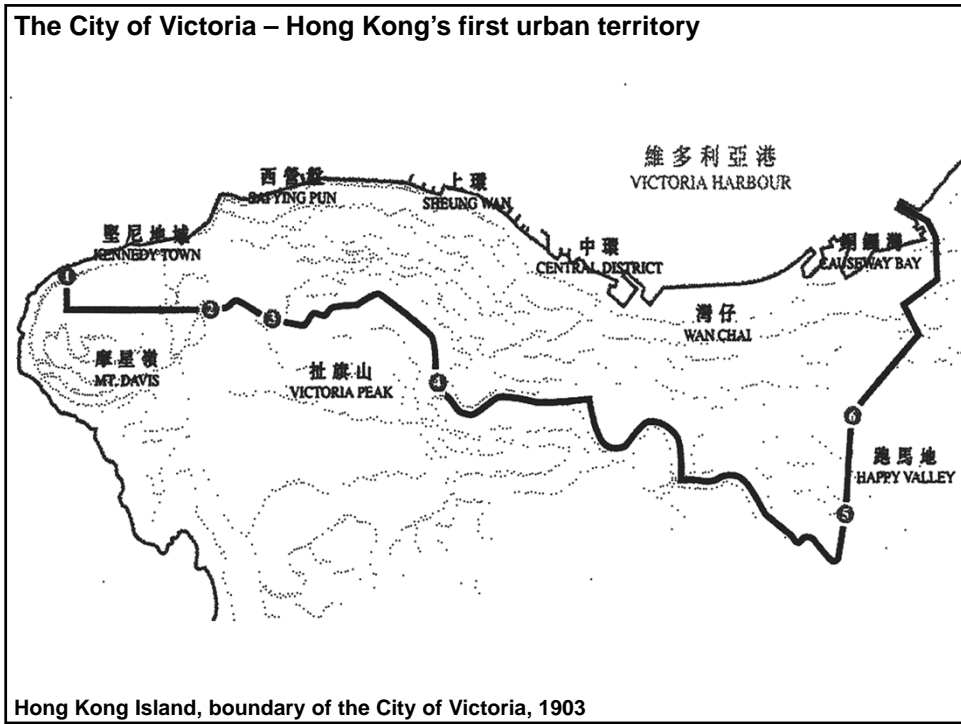


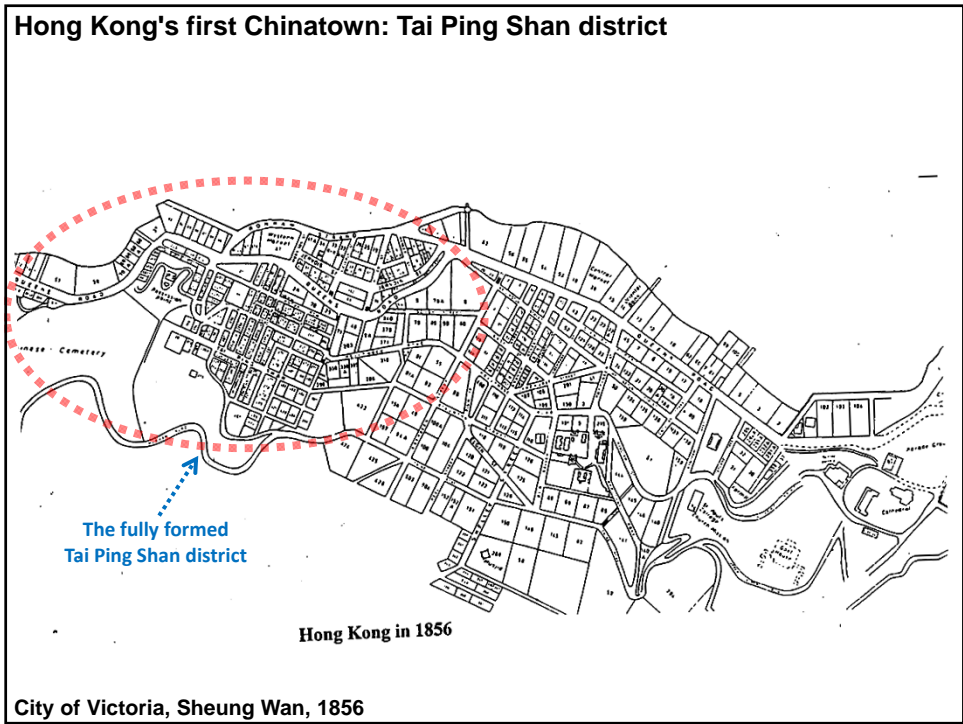
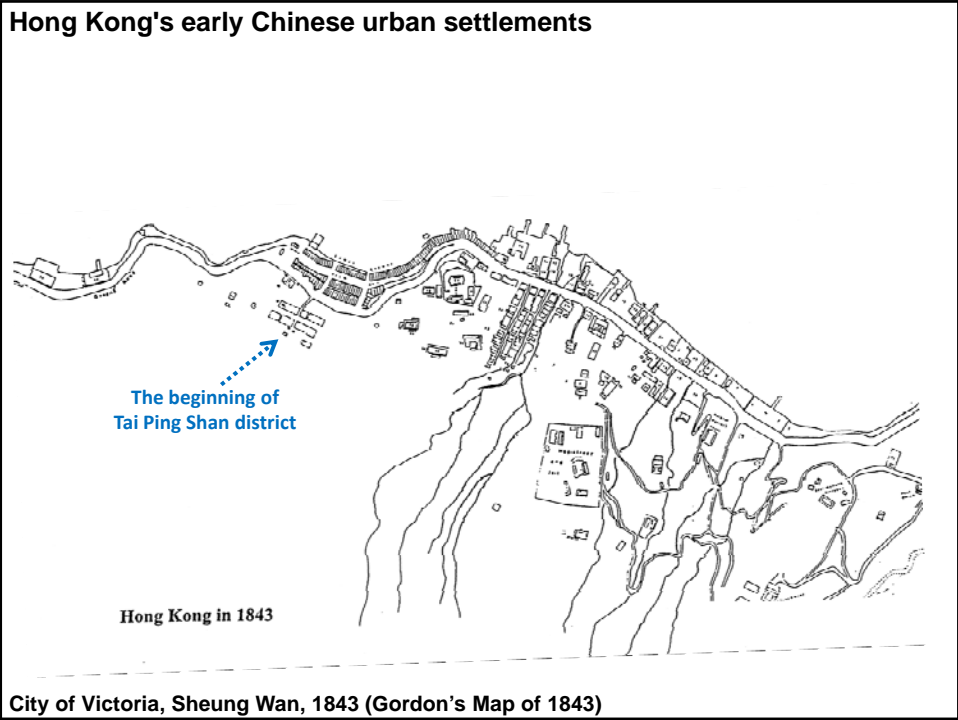
Hong Kong's Chinese settlements before the arrival of the British

Hong Kong Island, 1841

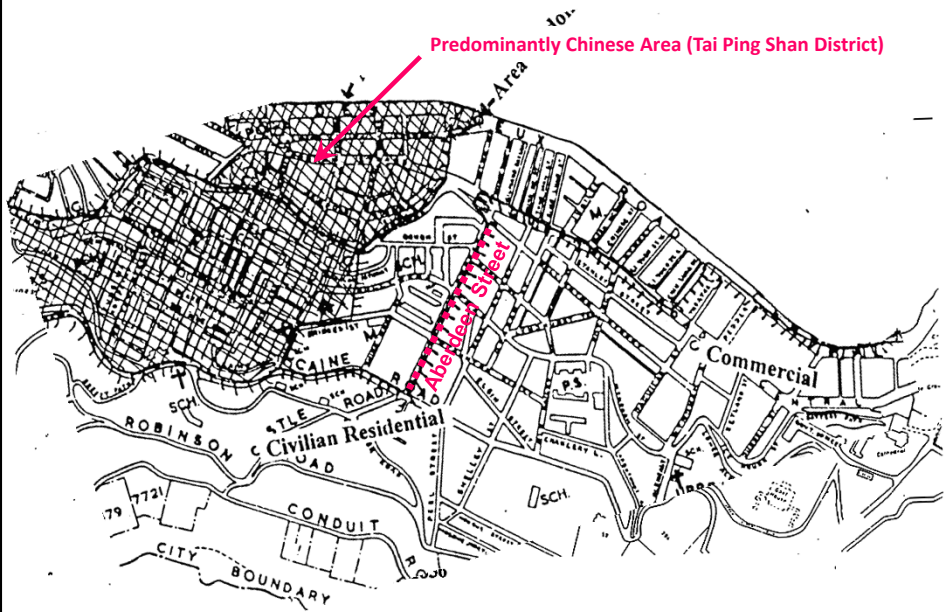


Hong Kong Island, when the British first arrived in January 1841



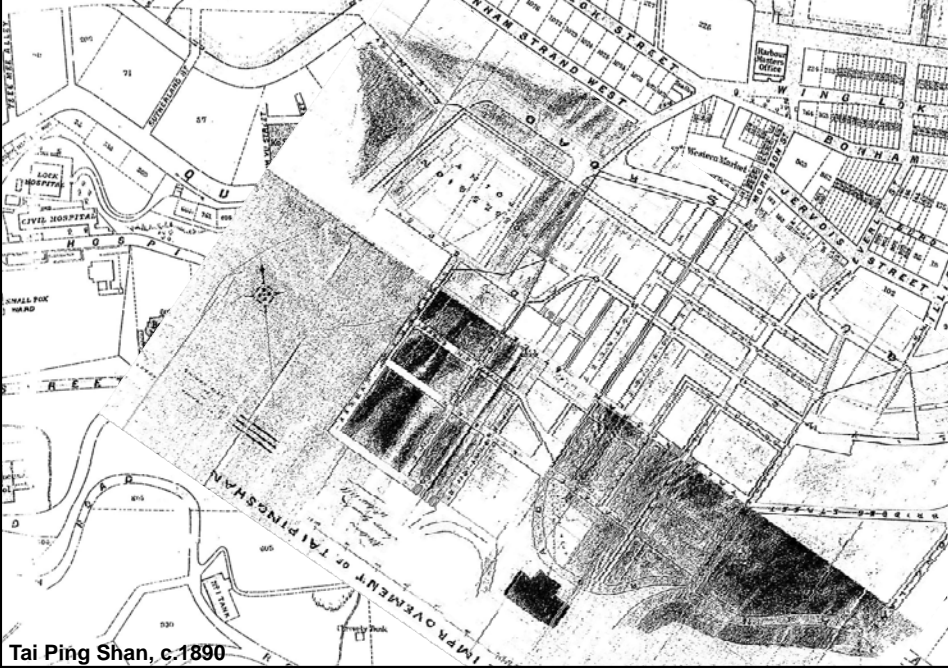


Hong Kong's first Chinatown: Tai Ping Shan district

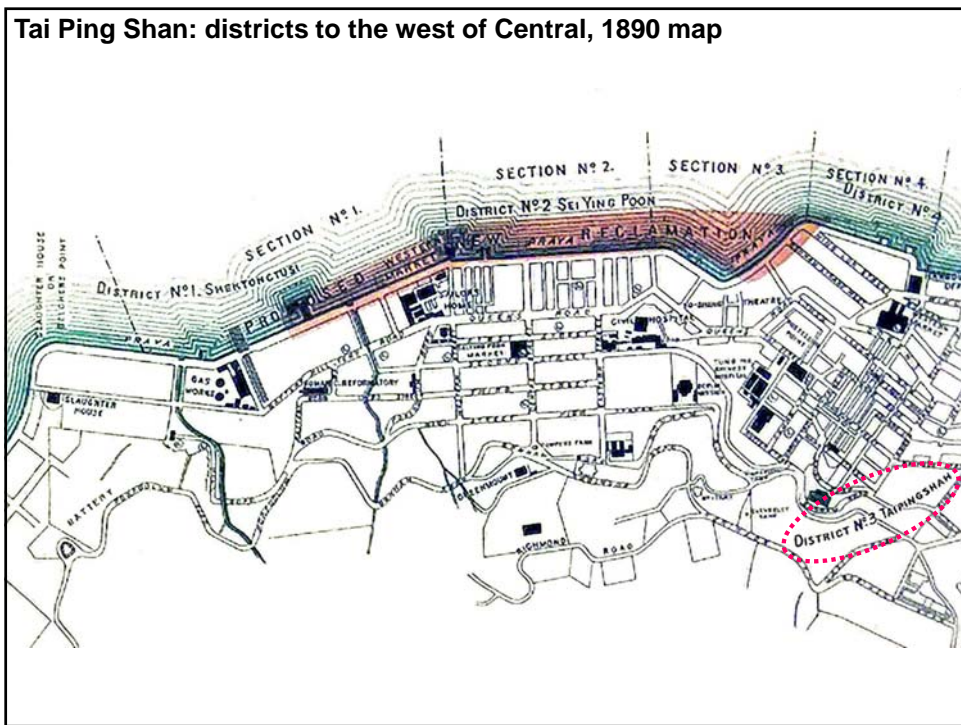
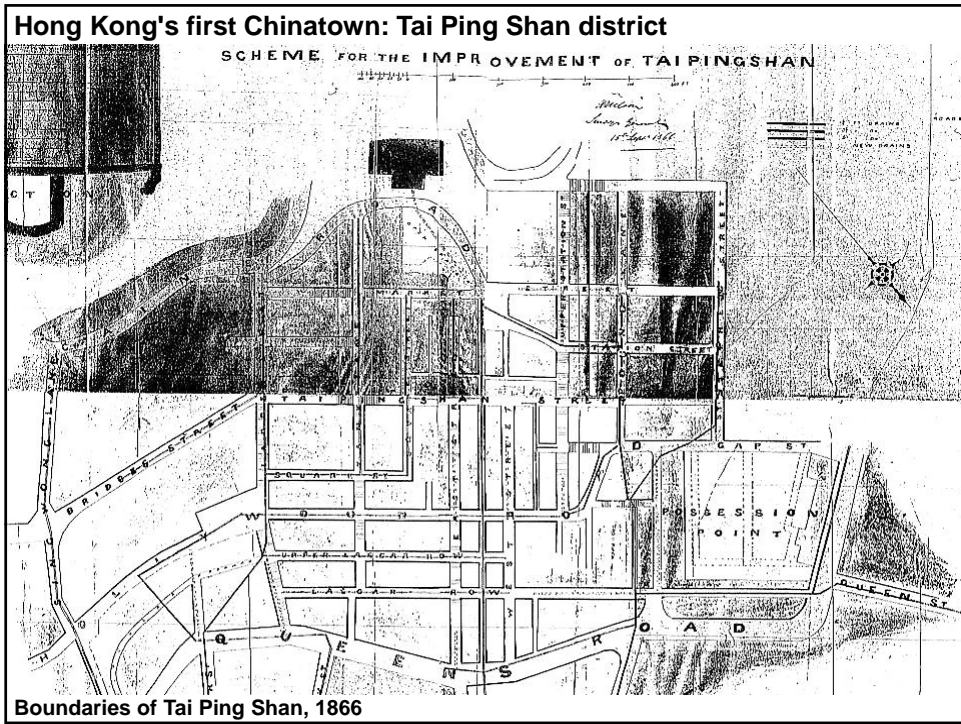


Chinese Quarters the City of Victoria, 1860-90s

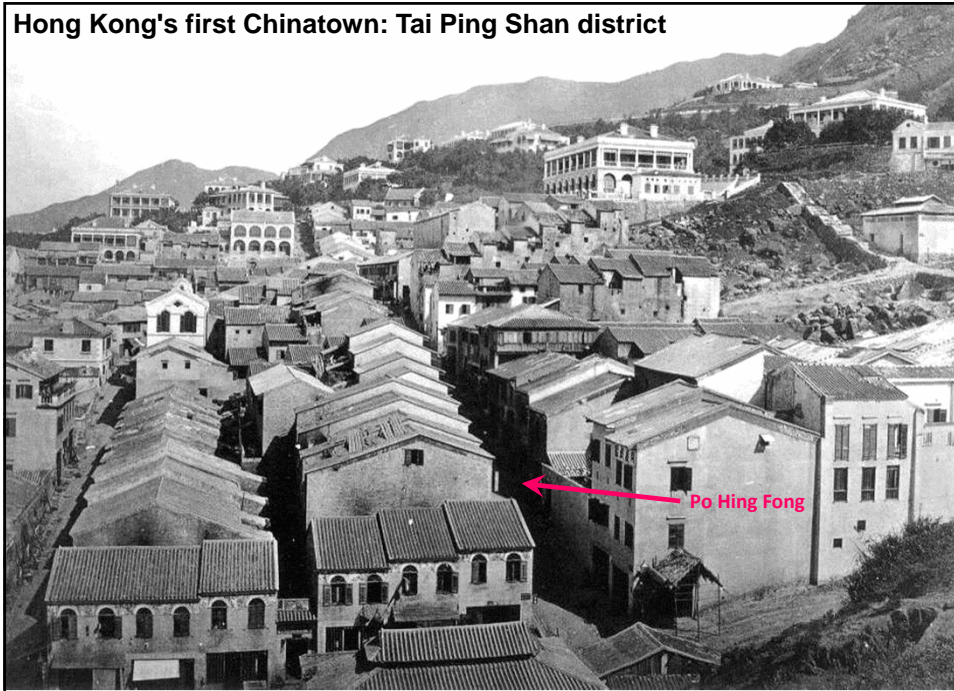
Hong Kong's first Chinatown: Tai Ping Shan district



Tai Ping Shan, c.1890



Hong Kong's first Chinatown: Tai Ping Shan district



Tai Ping Shan, 1880s

Most significant historical event happened at Tai Ping Shan district

- Bubonic plague outbreak in Tai Ping Shan in June 1894
- Thousands infected; mortality rate over 90%



Hong Kong Plague Medal 1894

Image: <http://www.lightinfantry.org.uk>

Most significant historical event happened at Tai Ping Shan district

- Land resumed for urban renewal under the "Taipingshan Resumption Ordinance of 1894"
- "Report on the Progress of the Tai Ping Shan Improvement Works," released by the Public Works Office on 11 August 1896: "Operations were commenced in June, and the removal of buildings in Tai Ping Shan, Market, Upper Station, Square and Bridges Streets and Tank Lane, was affected during the months of August, September and October."

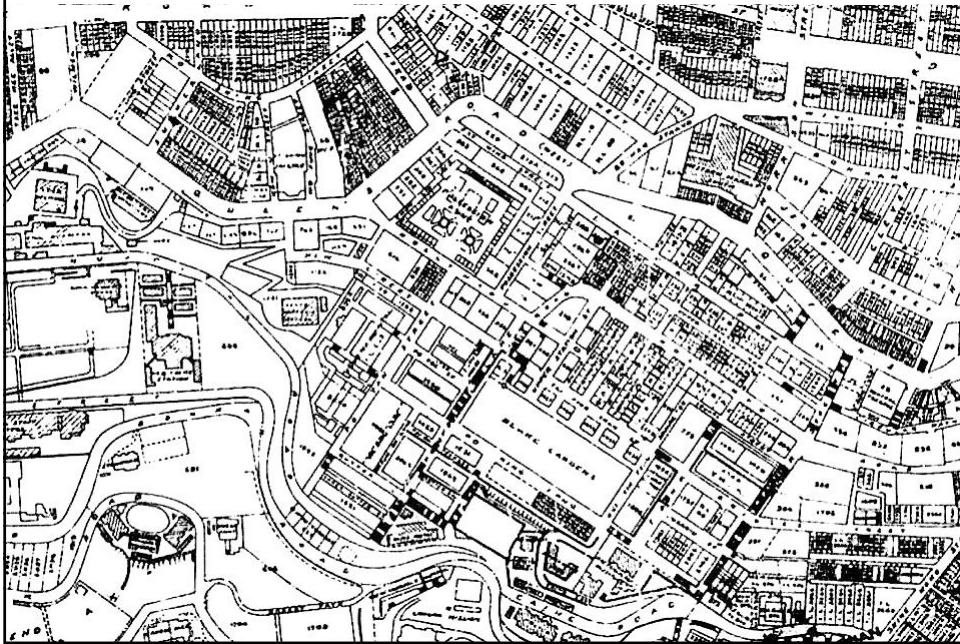


Most significant historical event happened at Tai Ping Shan district

Areas affected by the post-plague outbreak urban renewal in Tai Ping Shan, 1894-98



Most significant historical event happened at Tai Ping Shan district
Post-plague outbreak urban renewal in Tai Ping Shan, 1895-98: Blake Garden



Most significant historical event happened at Tai Ping Shan district
Post-plague outbreak urban renewal in Tai Ping Shan, 1895-98: Blake Garden



Blake Garden and the area of Tai Ping Shan district today



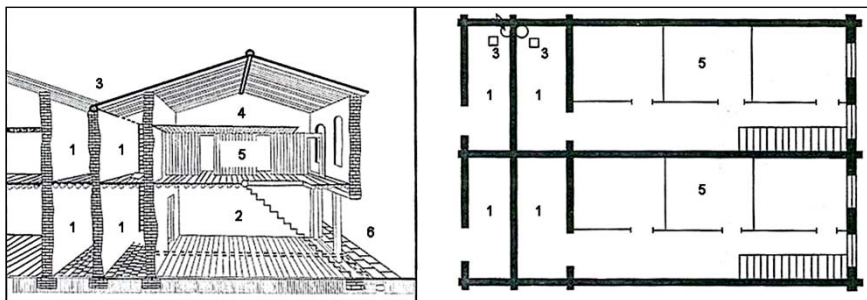
Living condition at Tai Ping Shan before the Great Plague

A final recommendation made by [W. J. Simpson, M.D., professor of hygiene at King's College, London, and lecturer in tropical hygiene at the London School of Tropical Medicine] was a general improvement of sanitary conditions and stricter control over the design of Chinese tenement blocks which he described as follows:

[Simpson's Second Memorandum, sent to the Sanitary Board Office, 20 Mar. 1902.]

"The rooms, as a rule, are far too deep, the object of this depth being to subdivide each room into a number of cubicles for the accommodation of families or lodgers. Though there may be windows at each end of the room, the great depth materially obstructs the light to take an example from the better class of buildings, many of the houses that are being erected are eighty feet deep without lateral windows and contain long, narrow rooms of fifty-five feet in depth, by twelve or thirteen feet in width, lighted in front by a window and also in the rear by another window which looks into a backyard of twelve feet."

Excerpts from E. G. Pryor, Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, "The great plague of Hong Kong," Vol. 15 (1975), 61-70.

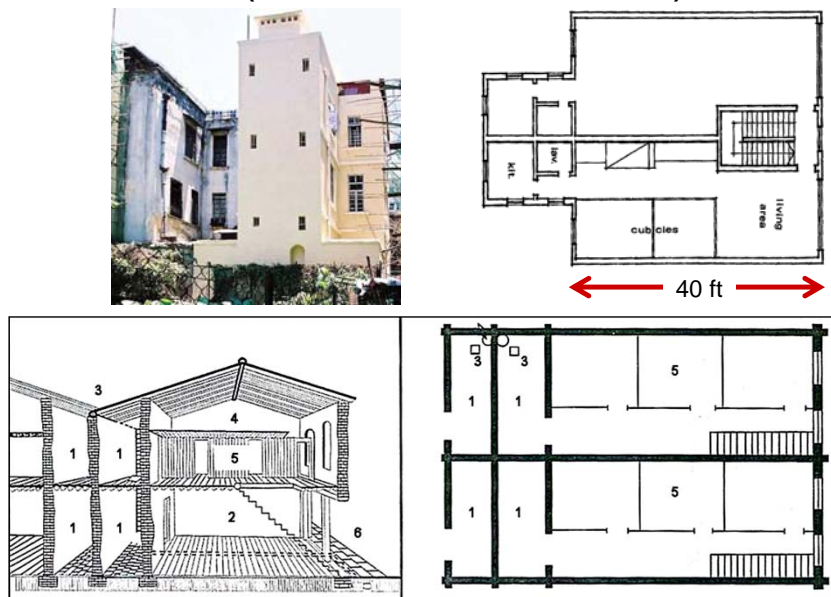


Drawings depicting the section and plan of an early *Tong Lau* found at Tai Ping Shan in the early 1880s. In the drawings, 1 = cookhouses; 2 = shop; 3 = smoke hole through the roof and floor; 4 = cockloft or platform above tenement cabins; 5 = tenement cabins; 6 = street in front of building.

Hong Kong's 1903 Building Regulations for *Tong Lau*

- 1841 No building control.
- 1844 Ordinance for the Preservation of Order and Cleanliness (dealing with dilapidated buildings)
- 1856 Buildings and Nuisance Ordinance (control of uses)
- 1882 *Chadwick Report, 1882*, on sanitary conditions of Hong Kong, specifically targeting tenement housing in *tong lau* at Tai Ping Shan
- 1894 Bubonic Plague Outbreak, 1894, which led to the introduction of open space in the congested Tai Ping Shan to improve sunlight penetration and natural ventilation
- 1889 Buildings Ordinance 1889 (submission of building plans; inspection of completed work; issue of Occupation Permit)
- 1902 *Chadwick Report, 1902*, a further elaboration of previous report
- 1902 *Simpson's Second Memorandum, 1902*, to the Sanitary Board Office, on the appalling living conditions of tenement housing in *tong lau*
- 1903 **Public Health and Buildings Ordinance 1903** (regulating the design standard of *tong lau* in terms of living space, lighting, ventilation and sanitary provisions; Authorized Architect introduced to supervise building works to ensure compliance with the Ordinance)
- 1935 Buildings Ordinance 1935 (higher design standards for living space, lighting and ventilation for staircases; regulations for reinforced concrete construction.)

Post-1903 *Tong Lau*'s "40-foot depth rule" for better sunlight penetration and natural ventilation (further reduced to 35 feet in 1935)



Drawings depicting the section and plan of an early *Tong Lau* found at Tai Ping Shan in the early 1880s. In the drawings, 1 = cookhouses; 2 = shop; 3 = smoke hole through the roof and floor; 4 = cockloft or platform above tenement cabins; 5 = tenement cabins; 6 = street in front of building.

Evolution of the Hong Kong Tong Lau

Four Generations of Development

1st Generation: the 19th-century Brick-and-timber Shophouse (1840s-1900s)

2nd Generation: the early 20th-century Transitional Shophouse (1910s-1920s)

3rd Generation: the Pre-war Reinforced Concrete Shophouse (mostly 1930s)

4th Generation: the Post-war Reinforced Concrete Shophouse (mostly 1950s)

Evolution of the Hong Kong Tong Lau

1st Generation: the 19th-century Brick-and-timber Shophouse (1840s-1900s)

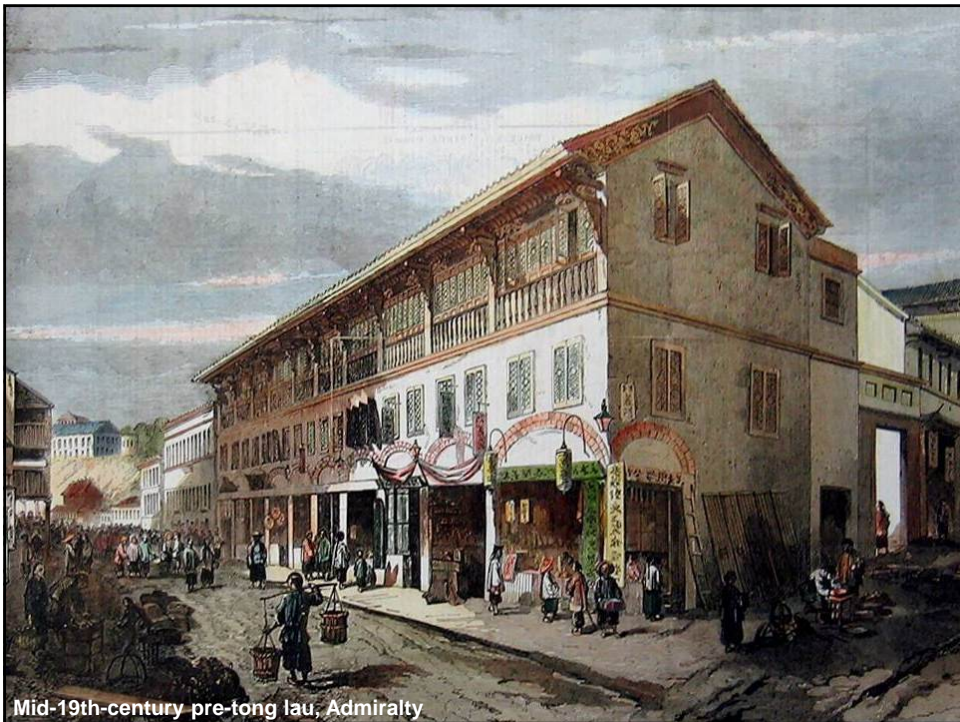
Hong Kong's first generation shophouses were typically built in the 19th century, starting in the 1840s, when builders from southern China were drawn by economic opportunities to the newly founded British colony of Hong Kong. As there was **no building control** imposed on the design of the shophouse, the builders replicated the **southern-Chinese shophouse** form they were familiar with. These shophouses were constructed of **walls of Chinese grey brick, floors of timber beams and boards, and a roof of timber beams and clay tiles.**

Shophouses of this period reflect the economy of construction and display the **minimum amount of decorative details.** This is probably a direct reflection of the general state of the economy of the Chinese settlements in Hong Kong at the time.

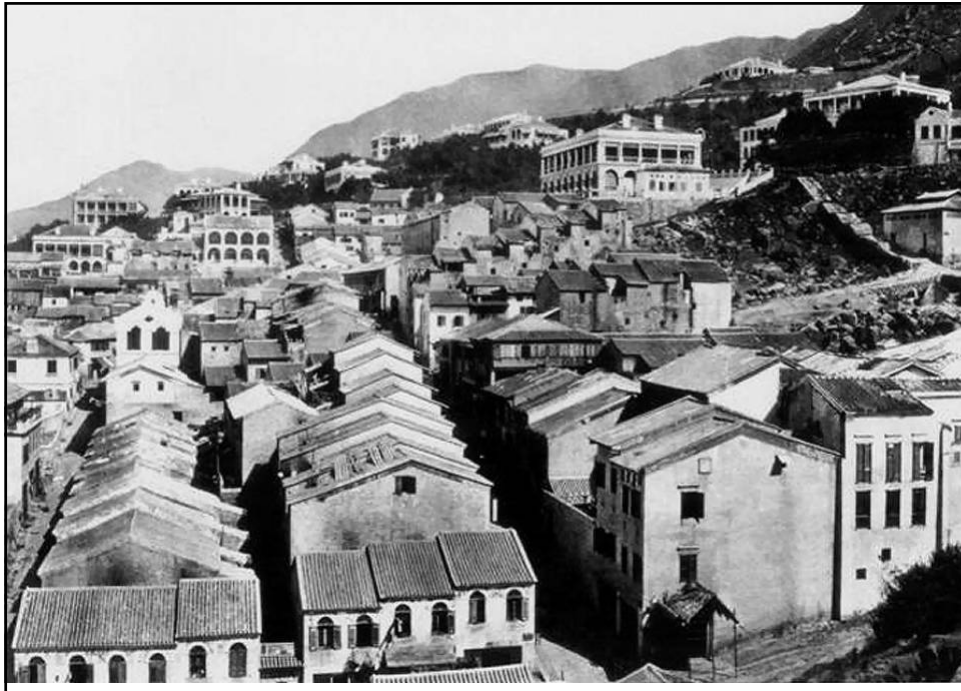
Few extant examples exist in Hong Kong's urban areas, and the only known example to date is the shophouse at No. 120 Wellington Street, completed in 1884, which once housed the famous Wing Woo Grocery.



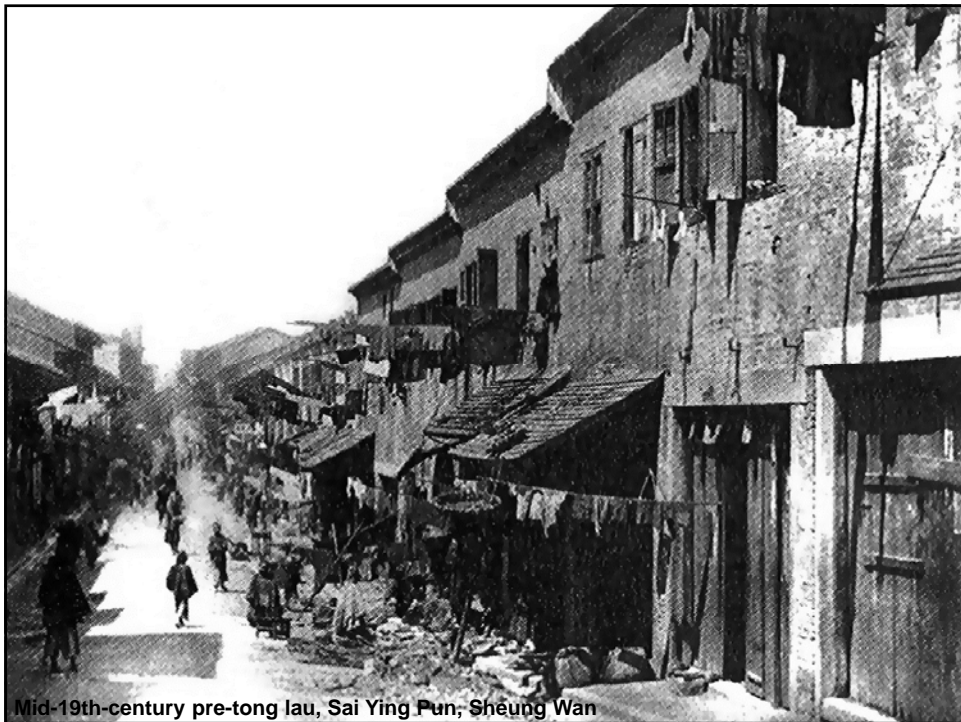
Late 19th-century pre-tong lau, No. 120 Wellington Street



Mid-19th-century pre-tong lau, Admiralty



19th-century tong lau at Tai Ping Shan, Hong Kong



Mid-19th-century pre-tong lau, Sai Ying Pun, Sheung Wan



Late 19th-century Macau shophouse, Rua da Felicidade

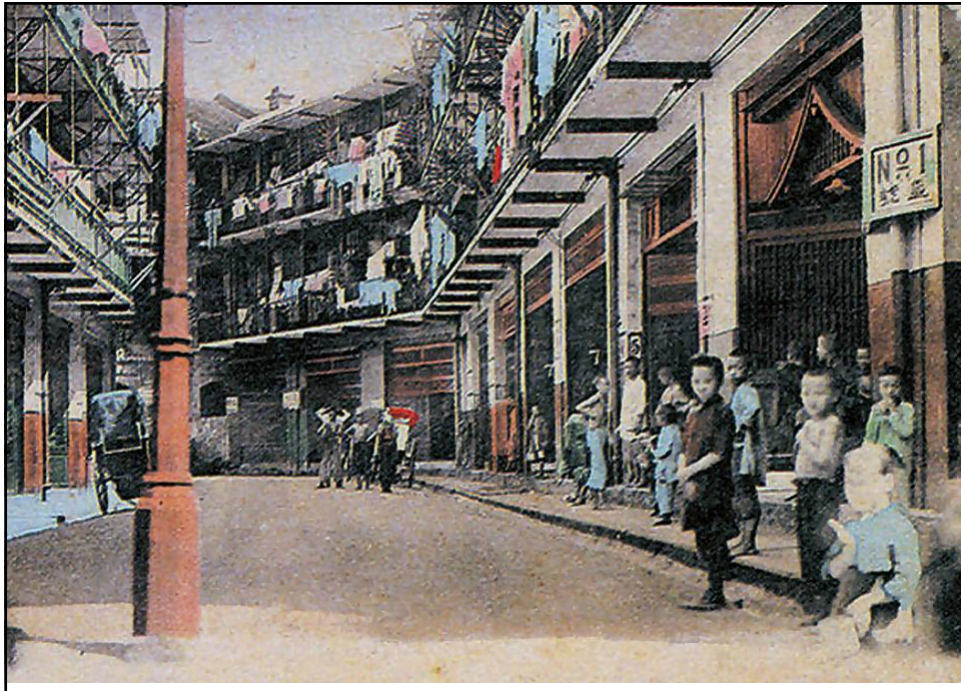
Evolution of the Hong Kong Tong Lau

2nd Generation: the early 20th-century Transitional Shophouse (1910s-1920s)

Hong Kong's shophouses entered into the second generation with the southern Chinese shophouse design being modified by the newly **introduced statutory regulations** as well as new building materials and construction techniques. In terms of regulations, the outbreak of the bubonic plague at Taipingshan District in 1894 brought about Hong Kong's first regulatory control of building design under the ***Public Health and Buildings Ordinance of 1903***, which reshaped the original shophouse into a form with local characteristics.

In terms of materials and techniques, **reinforced concrete construction started to appear** on shophouses from the 1900s to the 1920s. (This coincided with the availability of locally produced cement in 1890.) Early application of **reinforce concrete** was limited to the construction of **cantilevered balconies** on the building façade. A good example is the Blue House at No. 72-74A Stone Nullah Lane, completed in 1922.

The 1920s saw the increasing use of **reinforced concrete** in shophouse construction, resulting in the use of the technique for **floor slabs** towards the end of the 1920s.



1910s tong lau, Spring Garden Lane / Sampan Street, Wan Chai



1920s tong lau, the Blue House and former Green House in Wan Chai



1920s tong lau, Hill Street, Kennedy Town

Evolution of the Hong Kong Tong Lau

3rd Generation: the Pre-war Reinforced Concrete Shophouse (mostly 1930s)

Hong Kong's shophouse typology entered into the third generation in the 1930s, when **reinforced concrete** became a mature technology that saw **widespread application** in building construction. Shophouses belonging to this generation were fully constructed of **reinforced concrete**, including the **floor slabs** and the **flat roof deck**. By this time, **Art Deco** had become a dominant architectural style worldwide, and shophouses that belong to this period feature varying degrees of Art Deco decorative treatment.

Aesthetically, shophouses built in the earlier part of the 1930s tend to be of an **eclectic mix of Classicism** (particularly Stripped Classicism, which became popular worldwide starting in the late 1920s) **and Art Deco**, a reflection of the state of transition from a classical to a modern vocabulary. An extant example is Lui Seng Chun at No. 119 Lai Chi Kok Road, completed in 1931, which is Classical in its general appearance, but incorporates Art Deco-inspired decorative details.

Shophouses built in the later part of the 1930s tend to be more **homogenously Art Deco** in their design. An extant example is the row of Art Deco shophouses at Nos. 190-204 and 210-212 Prince Edward Road West, completed in 1930.

Lui Seng Chun (1931): mixed Classical and Art-Deco tong lau



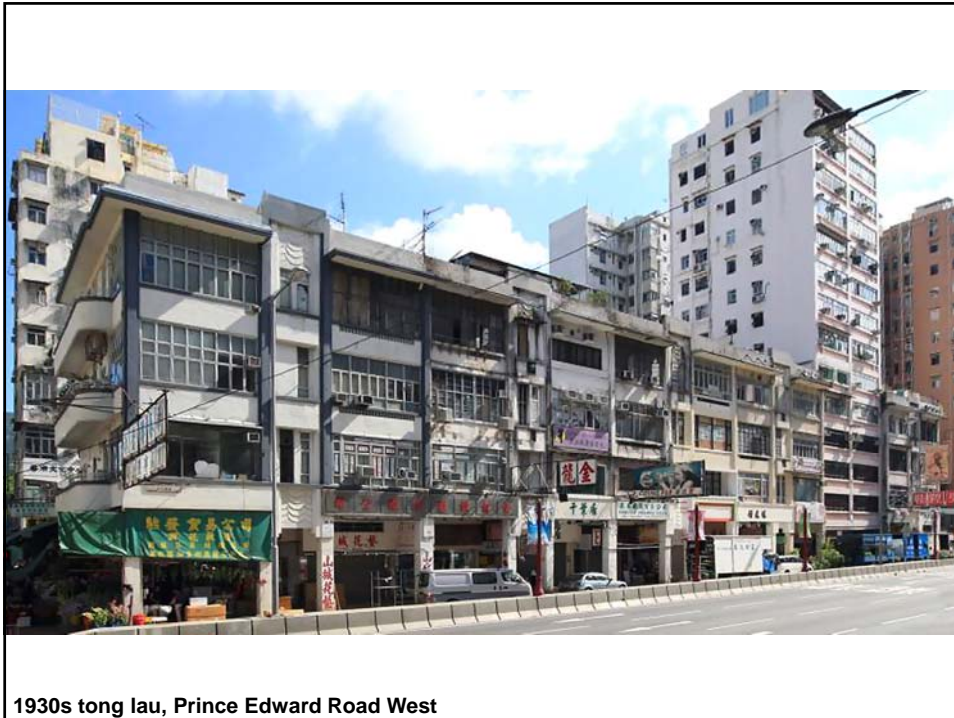
Art Deco tong lau on Nathan Road (1930s)



1930s tong lau, Lai Chi Kok Road and Nathan Road



1930s tong lau, Hennessy Road



1930s tong lau, Prince Edward Road West

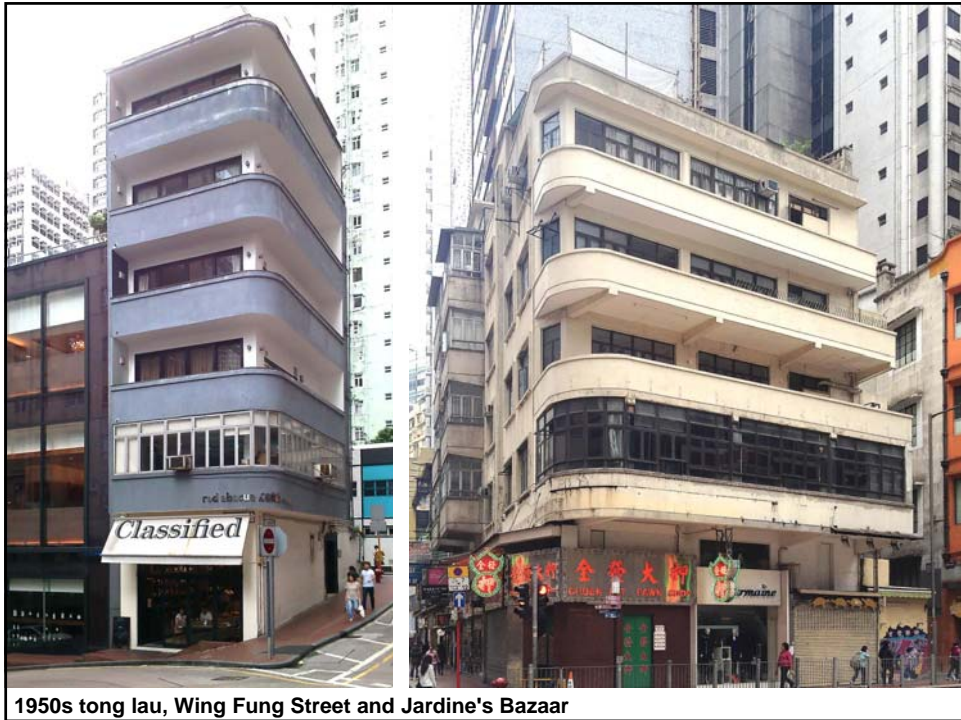
Evolution of the Hong Kong Tong Lau

4th Generation: the Post-war Reinforced Concrete Shophouse (mostly 1950s)

Property development in Hong Kong came to a standstill with the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, and the recovery of the property market from the end of the war in 1945 kept pace with Hong Kong's general post-war economic resurgence. As the economy recovered in a steady pace through the 1950s, the Hong Kong shophouse typology entered into the **fourth and final generation** of development until it was replaced by bigger and taller developments in the 1960s.

The widespread application of **reinforce concrete** in the construction of shophouses during this period reflected the maturity and affordability of the technology. Shophouses of this generation are typically **six-storey high and of austere appearance**.

Extant examples are many, such as the two units of inconspicuous shophouses at Nos. 29 and 31 Bridges Street, completed in 1952, and the standalone shophouse at No. 31 Wing Fung Street, completed in 1957.



1950s tong lau, Wing Fung Street and Jardine's Bazaar



1950s tong lau, Austin Road



1950s tong lau, SoHo and Tai Hang



1950s tong lau, Wan Chai

Thank You!