



(Left to Right) A snapshot of two police officers posing with the cannon at Tai O Police Station; HCF has interviewed many former marine police officers who used to work at the Station; free, daily heritage tours are conducted at Tai O Heritage Hotel.



Heritage Interpretation and Cultural Mapping

HCF has conducted extensive heritage documentation and interpretation exercises to capture the history and anecdotes of Old Tai O Police Station and the Tai O fishing village since 2009. Numerous video interviews with retired marine police officers who have stationed at the Old Tai O Police Station have been conducted. Tai O festivities have also been documented. Besides video documentation, we have also collected valuable historic photos, which have given us a glimpse of what Tai O and Old Tai O Police Station were like in the past, and have conducted architectural and historical research on the heritage site. HCF published the book “Old Tai O Police Station: The Evolution of a Centenary Monument” as part of its heritage interpretation exercises.

A Social Enterprise

Tai O Heritage Hotel operates as a non-profit social enterprise, with surpluses being used for conservation and maintenance of historic buildings, promote and protect the cultural heritage of Tai O and its natural environment, and promote the local economy and tourism. We provide local employment opportunities; employ local service providers, and use Tai O ingredients at the restaurant in order to support the local economy.

The Conservation

The adaptive reuse project follows the Burra Charter, choosing a compatible new use while retaining its spirit of place. In order to convert the site into a boutique hotel, new designs that are compatible and sensitive to the heritage setting have been introduced.

Conservation works should be reversible. To pay absolute respect to the original architecture, all conservation works are reversible so that the site can be reverted back to a bare shell if needed. For example, we put up new walls in front of the original walls so as to protect the latter from being damaged when rooms are renovated into hotel guest rooms.

The project's goal is to adapt a 110-year-old building into a hotel that meets the modern codes and needs, while paying absolute respect to the original fabric and spirit of place. In order to retain and restore the original fabric, temporary, later added features that are graded as least significant have been removed; room structures remain the same. Modern hotel and barrier free access facilities have been added to the back elevations of the buildings, to ensure the front façade is not disturbed by the alternations made to comply with modern building ordinances.

The Architecture

Constructed in 1902, the Old Tai O Police Station quietly nestles on a private headland overlooking the South China Sea and the charming fishing village. This colonial style building originally housed marine policemen posted at Tai O as the first line of defence to the surrounding waters. The marine police vacated the station in 1996 and it then became a patrol post for land police until its closure in 2002. It has been identified as a Grade II historical building by the Antiquities Advisory Board.

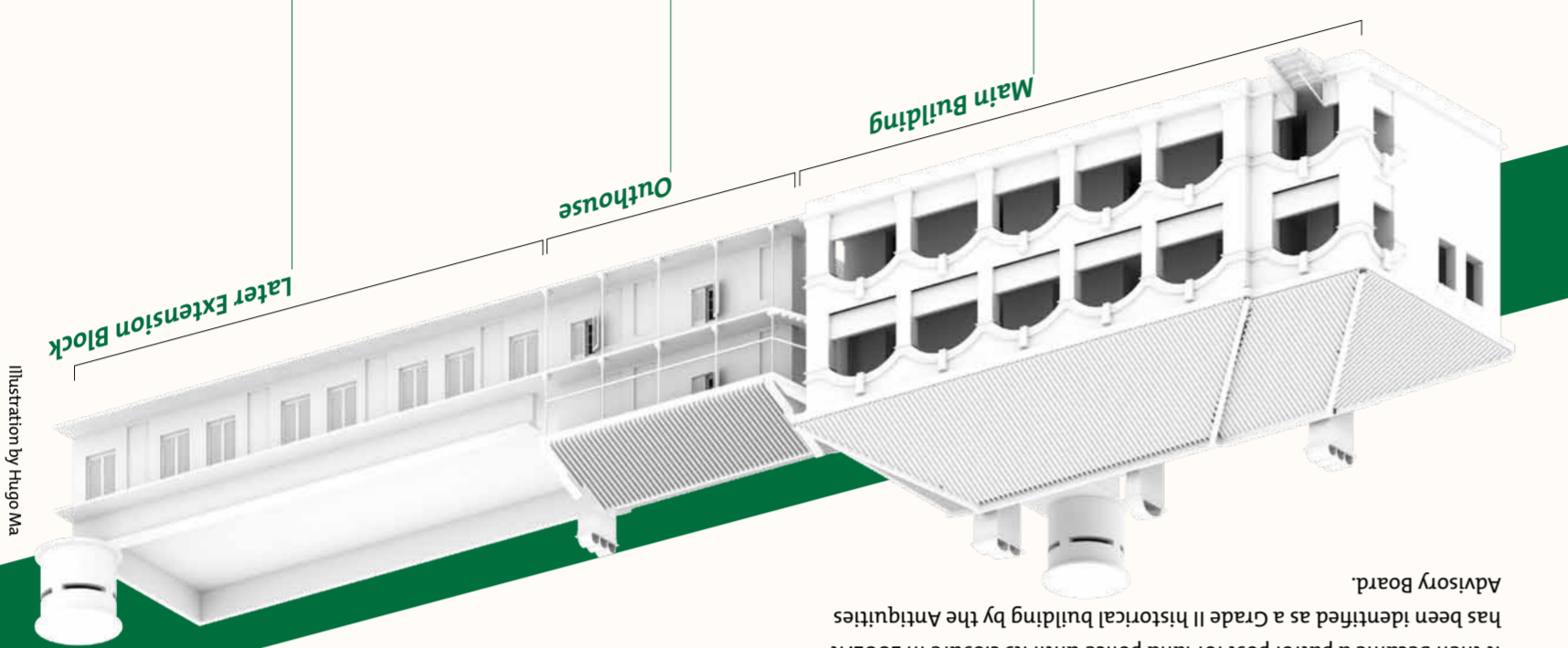


Illustration by Higo Ma

Constructed at the same time as the main building, the Outhouse was expanded in 1961-1962 to improve the working environment for the police officers. This one-storey annex housed facilities like a laundry and a kitchen. The outhouse is connected to the annex addition when the annex was built in 1962.

Constructed in 1902, the main building is the station's earliest structure. Both floors have five rooms respectively. The ground floor included a report room, two cells and an armory. The first floor has quarters for expatriate inspectors and a turret protruding from the roof. Initially, the two staff quarters on the first floor were used by European police officers. During the early days of the police station, Chinese officers were not allowed to be on the first floor, as it was used by expatriate inspectors only. Century-old fireplaces can be found in the Main Building.



2009, and to operate it as Tai O Heritage Hotel since 2012. The adaptive reuse project follows the Burra Charter, choosing a compatible new use while retaining its spirit of place. Tai O Heritage Hotel has been awarded an Award of Merit at UNESCO 2013 Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation for its dedication to celebrate employment and uses local ingredients, so as to support the sustainable growth of the village. We aim to not only restore the historic site and turn it into a nine-suite boutique hotel, but also use the site as a platform to celebrate its rich history, and help to rejuvenate the historic Tai O fishing village. Tai O Heritage Hotel has followed the Burra Charter, choosing a compatible new use while retaining its spirit of place. Tai O Heritage Hotel has been awarded an Award of Merit at UNESCO 2013 Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation for its dedication to celebrate employment and uses local ingredients, so as to support the sustainable growth of the village. We aim to not only restore the historic site and turn it into a nine-suite boutique hotel, but also use the site as

About the Project

Old Tai O Police Station, a Hong Kong Grade II Historic Building, was built in 1902 by the British government as one of its first colonial police stations, with it guarding the western border between China and Hong Kong. The station closed in 2002 and was left vacant and dilapidated since then. Under the Revitalizing Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme by Development Bureau of Hong Kong Government, Hong Kong Heritage Conservation Foundation Limited has been chosen to restore the site in

Visit Tai O Heritage Hotel

HERITAGE TOURS

To present the heritage significance of Old Tai O Police Station, Tai O Heritage Hotel conducts a free heritage guided tour daily. To join the tour, register at www.taiheritagehotel.com, or at the Hotel Reception.

OPENING HOURS

Tai O Heritage Hotel is open for public visits at 11am – 6pm daily.

About HCF

The Hong Kong Heritage Conservation Foundation Limited is a non-profit organisation established by the Ng Teng Fong family in March 2008 to revitalise and maintain heritage buildings, and promote the conservation and appreciation of heritage and historic places, and their importance in the life of the community.

Production:



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Tai O Heritage Hotel Website

Design:



Community Project Development Centre 社區發展中心
Faculty of Architecture 建築學院

REVITALIZING OLD TAI O POLICE STATION

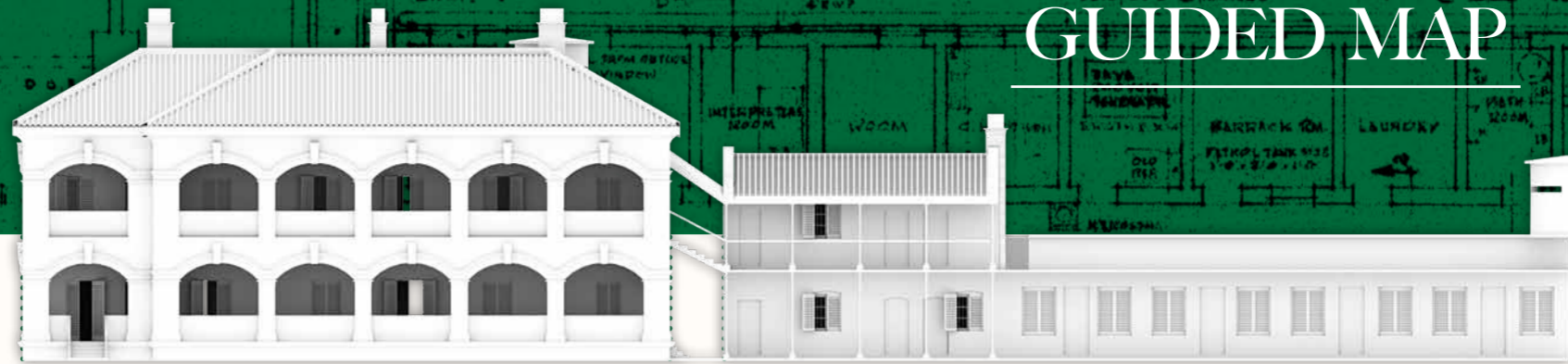


Recognized by UNESCO with 2013 Award of Merit
UNESCO認可及頒授2013年傑出遺產獎



TAI O HERITAGE HOTEL
大澳文物酒店
HONG KONG

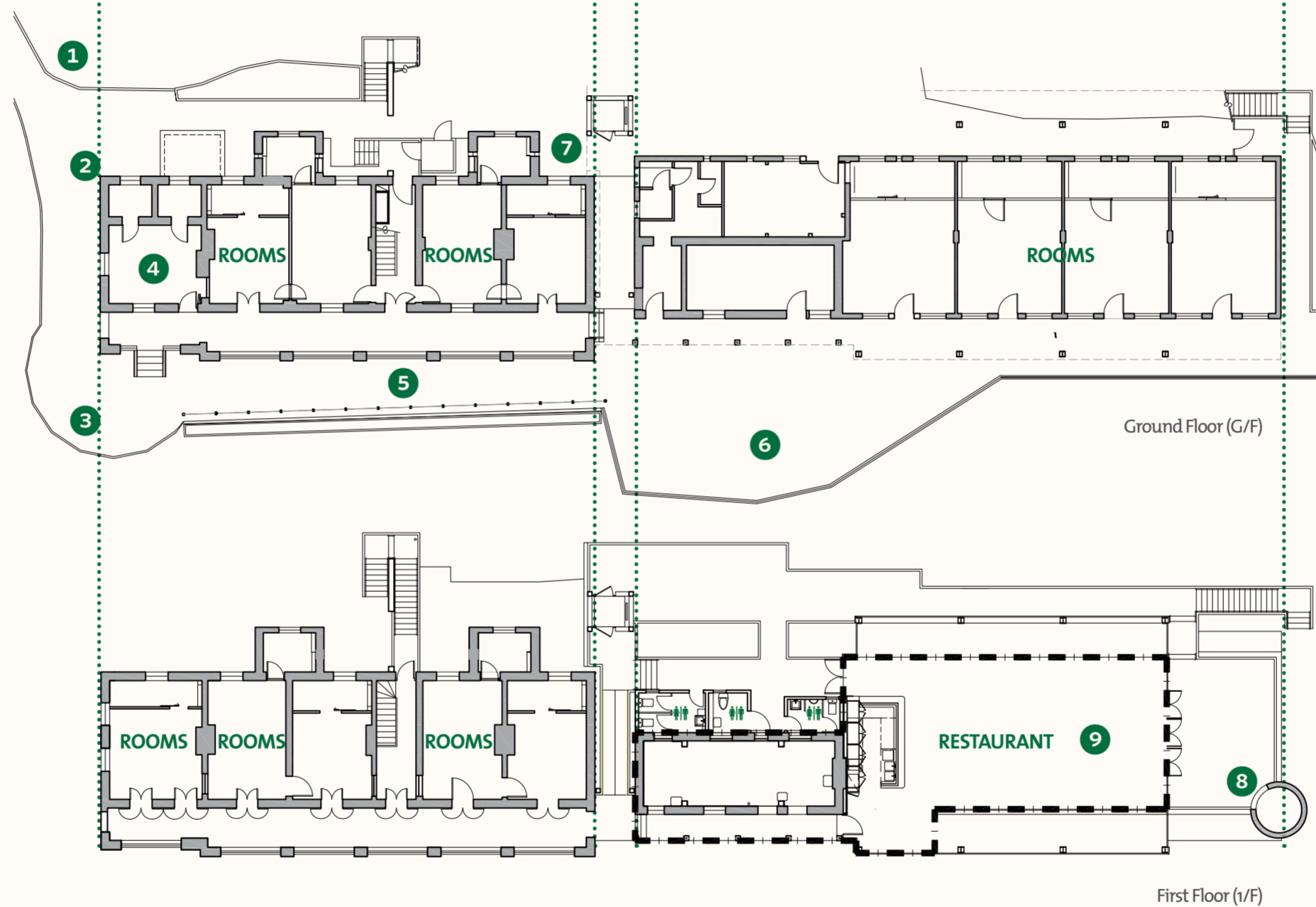
GUIDED MAP



Main Building

Outhouse

Later Extension Block



Ground Floor (G/F)

First Floor (1/F)

1



CANNONS

Prior to 1997, Tai O Bay represented the boundary between the British and Chinese governments, making it a point of strategic importance. The area was also frequently threatened by piracy. The Tai O Police Station was therefore equipped with cast-iron cannons for military and defence purposes. The base of the cannons and the mounts are made of concrete. The cannons and their mounts are significant components of the station's history.

2



MAIN BUILDING

The Main Building was built in 1902. Heavy, metal shutters were installed to protect the officers from attacks. At this corner we have removed the weapon unloading area, which was a later-added, temporary structure, because it would affect the original appearance, covering the original metal shutters.

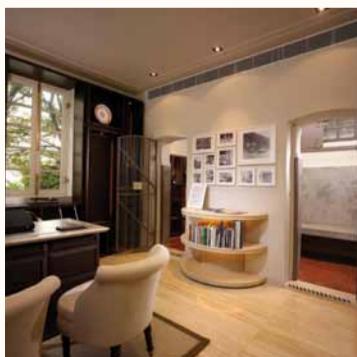
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SEARCHLIGHT

In order to maintain law and order at the sea, the police installed a searchlight here, which allowed the night duty officer to check on surrounding Chinese waters and the Tai O village.

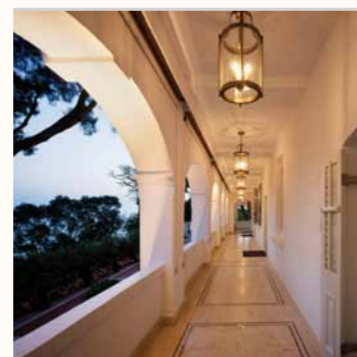
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CHARGE ROOM AND HOLDING CELLS

Located directly opposite the station's main entrance on the ground floor, the charge room was where the criminal cases were reported and recorded. Since Tai O's crime rate remained remarkably low, the two cells located at the back of the charge room were usually vacant – but when used, the police would hold a maximum of 10 people in each cell. The Room is now used as the Hotel Reception.

5



VERANDAH

We aimed to restore the Old Tai O Police Station back to its appearance in 1902. During the latter days of operation, the police had installed windows to cover up the verandahs at the Main Building. However, verandahs were meant to be opened up to serve as a barrier of temperature. Given the sub-tropical maritime climate in Hong Kong, open verandah was a common feature in buildings to maximise natural ventilation and natural lighting for the internal space regardless of the weather. Hence, the later-added windows have been removed to open up the verandahs once again.

6



THE POND

This pond is a replica from the original built in 1967. The pond was built by a local police officer as punishment, after he was found to have pranked his superintendent.

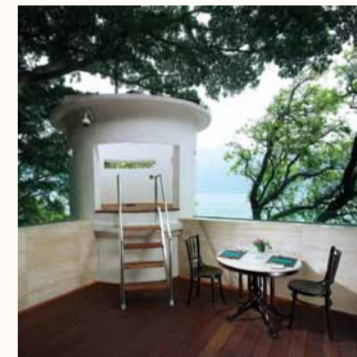
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BULLET HOLES

To determine the value of a historical place, one guideline is to determine the value of its historical and architectural significance. Here you can find a metal shutter with nine bullet holes on one side, and two more on the other. The bullet holes were made presumably during a shooting incident in 1918. We have kept these bullet holes to interpret this dramatic chapter of history during the run of Old Tai O Police Station.

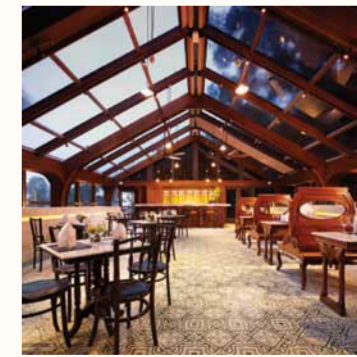
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THE GUARD TOWER

Two concrete conical-shaped guard towers were added to the police station in the 1960s. One is located on the north-eastern corner of the Main Building and the other is located on the south-eastern corner of the Later Extension Block. Both guard towers, which was nicknamed by the police as The Lookouts, extend outward from the façade and above the rooftop. Each guard tower has a narrow slit that allowed officers to monitor the surrounding areas without exposing themselves. Metal "cat ladders" were installed at the bottom of the towers to connect to the rooms below as the only access from the rooms underneath. During the conservation process, the ladders have been removed for safety, and one part of the wall of one tower has been removed for public viewing.

9



TAI O LOOKOUT RESTAURANT

The rooftop of the one-storey Later Extension Block has been covered with a glass canopy so as to turn the space into the hotel restaurant, Tai O Lookout. The antique furniture at the restaurant has been donated from legendary member's club China Tee Club in Central.