

Project: SCL Tai Wai to Hung Hom Project

Title: Desktop Study / Field Survey for Built Heritage

Built Heritage: Former Royal Airforce Hangar (前英國皇家空軍飛機庫) at Former Tai Hom Village (大磡村) (Refer to A6.1-022)

Prior to the Japanese occupation (before and during 2nd World War), there were plans by the authorities to expand Kai Tak Airfield and build paved runways. Owing to this purpose, the former Royal Airforce Hangar (RAF hangar) located at the eastern end of the airfield and constructed in 1934 was dismantled in June 1941.

While it is not entirely clear when the hangar at Tai Hom was erected and by whom (Japanese or British), the current hangar was re-erected on-site around 1941-45. It was designed to be taken down and reassembled quickly.

During the war, the Japanese succeeded the British also planned to expand Kai Tak and built two paved crossing runways. Whether material from the dismantled RAF hangar was reused for the one at Diamond Hill is uncertain but the steel supports of the hangar do indicate that they were made in Britain. Regardless who actually constructed the hangar, it is certain that it had been used by the Japanese troop during the 2nd World War.

After the 2nd World War, the RAF used the hangar which included housing the Spitfire squadron. As the hangar was situated outside the confines of RAF Kai Tak, access to it was via a narrow road that crossed the Kai Tak Airport perimeter road (ie the current Choi Hung Road). This can be seen on an aerial photo circa 1955 according to the publication "Mapping of Hong Kong" with the hangar and the access road traversing the ring road, i.e Clearwater Bay Road, subsequently renamed Choi Hung Road.

The 1945-1958 Kai Tak Airport comprised two paved crossing runways that were built by the Japanese with British prisoner-of-war labour. The main runway in similar direction to the reclaimed runway at Kai Tak was located in the area that we know today as San Po Kong.

Prior to the closure of RAF Kai Tak in the 1970s, Kai Tak Airport and the airfield were divided into civilian and military use. The RAF had always occupied the eastern end of Kai Tak (next to today's Richland and Telford Gardens) whilst the civilian airfield was located at the western end. From the 1930s till 1941, the RAF and the Harbour Department (which controlled civilian airport operations) both operated their own separate hangars.

Built Heritage: Former Royal Airforce Hangar (前英國皇家空軍飛機庫) at Former Tai Hom Village (大磡村) (Refer to A6.1-022)

This hangar is the only surviving pre-war military aircraft hangar in Hong Kong. After the 2nd World War, the hangar had been used by the RAF until in the 1970's when the hangar was vacated.

Over the last 40 years after the use by the RAF, the hangar had served for various functions such as village industries and godown storage. The structure has now fallen into disrepair with the roof exposed and overgrown with vegetation. It is a Grade 3 listed building.



Photograph 1 Hangar

Built Heritage: Stone House, No. 4 Tai Koon Yuen (大觀園 4 號石寓) (Refer to A6.1-023)

The Stone House, No. 4 Tai Koon Yuen was built in 1947 and is a non-graded building. It was originally owned by Wu Junzhao(吳君肇), the ex-manager of the former Shanghai Bank of Communications, and was rented to actor Qiao Hong(喬宏) between 1950s and 1960s. The neighboring house at No 5 Tai Koon Yuen, now demolished, was once home of Li Hanxiang(李翰祥), a famous film director.

The Stone House was built of granite from quarry located within the Diamond Hill areas. It was a two storey building with temporary structure of corrugated steel sheets on the roof. The windows are framed with metal. The front part of the house is single storey with steel balustrade around the flat roof, used as a roof terrace.

The stone building is the only surviving building from the former Tai Hom Village. It is in disrepair and currently surrounded by perimeter fencing. Because of its links with the history of the early film production industry in Hong Kong, it has maintained social value and local interest and has been ascribed non-graded listing by the Antiquities Advisory Board in 2002.



Photograph 2 Stone House, No. 4 Tai Koon Yuen

Built Heritage: Old Pillbox (機槍堡) at Former Tai Hom Village (大磡村) (Refer to A6.1-024)

A fortified pillbox lies to the centre-north of the Tai Hom area, and close to the hangar. This old pillbox was constructed by the Japanese Air Force during the Japanese occupation. It was built to guard the eastern end of the Kai Tak Airport while holding the route from the north.

The pillbox is a dome-shaped structure, with an extension on one side to provide a protected entry. The domed section is approximately 5m in diameter and 2.4m from ground level to top. The walls are made of cut stone blocks which were rendered by cement. There were originally five firing loopholes in the dome walls, and a further one through the wall to the entry. The interior is commonly flooded as the floor is below ground level.

After the war, the pillbox was abandoned and subsequently occupied by squatters. However, the pillbox was retained after the demolition of Former Tai Hom Village in 2000 and is one of the few remains of the old Kai Tak airport. It is a Grade 2 listed building.



Photograph 3 Pill Box

Reference Books

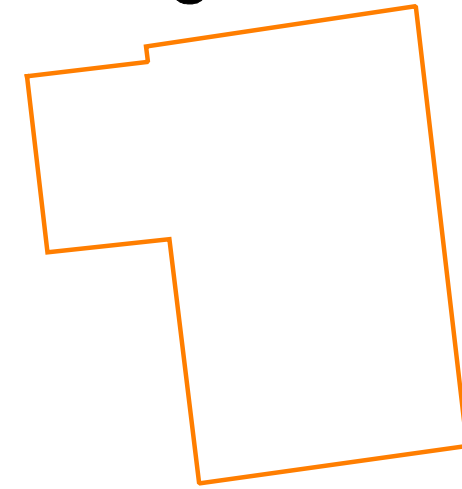
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Anthony SIU Kwok-kin

April, 2009

LUNG CHEUNG ROAD

Former Royal Air Force Hangar



彩虹道

CHOI HUNG ROAD 25

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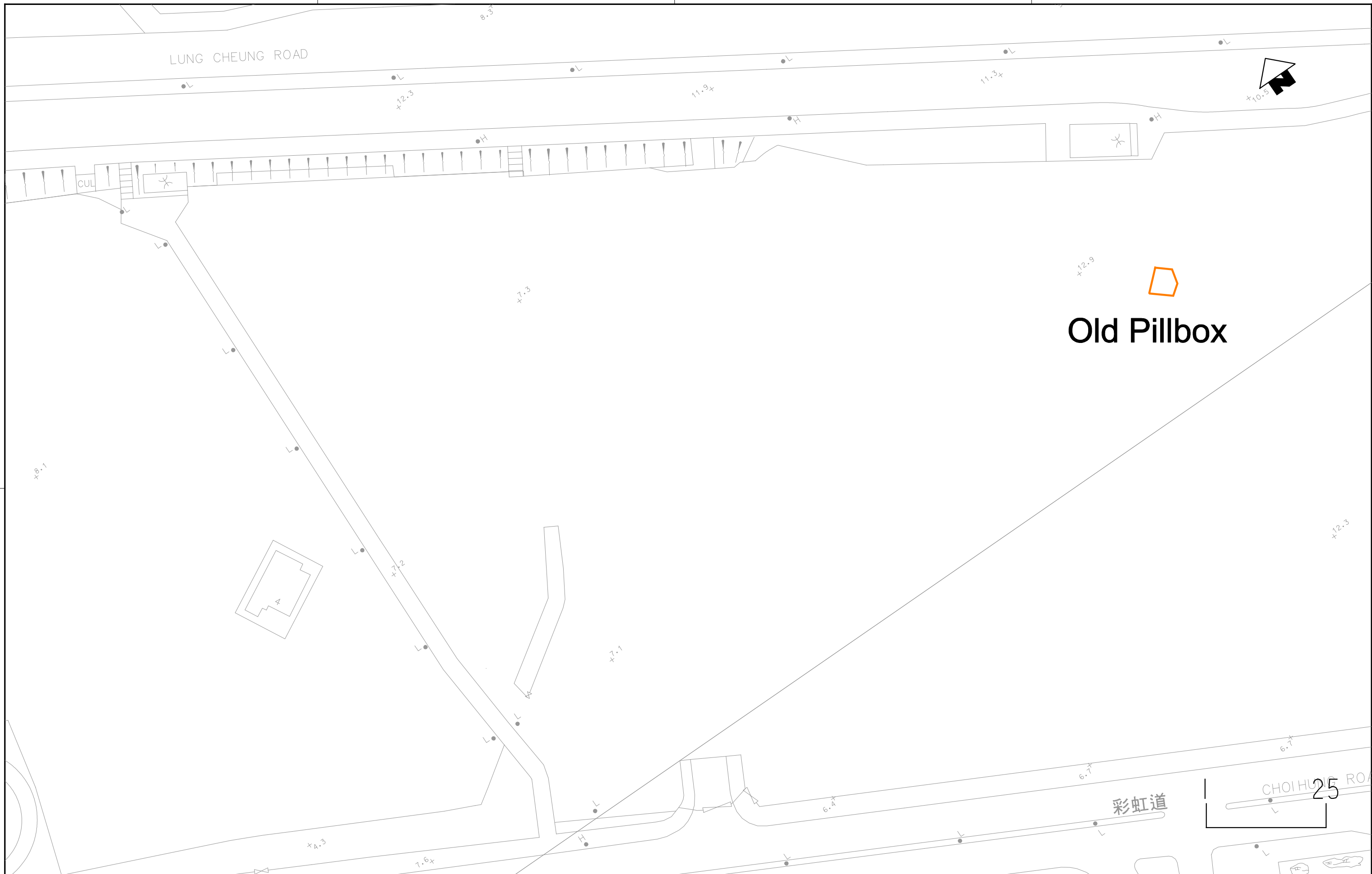
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