

Appendix W

Built Heritage Impact Assessment

A Survey Report of
Historical Buildings and Structures within the
Project Area of the
Central Reclamation Phase III



A Survey Commissioned by the
Antiquities and Monuments Office
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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1. The Survey

1.1 This survey was commissioned by the Antiquities and Monuments Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department in November 2000 to conduct a survey of historical buildings and structures within the project area of the Central Reclamation Phase III (Map 1 on page 15). The project would involve mainly a reclamation for the provision of land for the Central and Wan Chai Bypass and the Airport Railway Extended Overrun Tunnel, associated roads and services, public piers, cooling systems, water mains, etc. A great proportion of the reclaimed land will also be for open space use, possibly a high quality waterfront promenade.

1.2 The survey aims at searching all existing pre-1950 and selected post-1950 buildings and structures having historical interest within the area.

1.3 To provide background information for the buildings and structures, an account will be given on the historical development of the area.

1.4 An assessment of the possible impact of the project works on the buildings and structures and recommendations for their preservation strategy will be discussed in later part of this report.

2. Early Reclamation in Hong Kong

2.1 Pre-1841 Reclamation

2.1.1 Human reclamation for urban development has comparatively shorter history than those for agricultural, industrial or economical purposes. Taking Hong Kong as an example, reclamation can be traced as far back as the early Western Han dynasty (206 BC-24 AD) along bays in Tuen Mun, Lantau, Kowloon, Sha Tau Kok, etc. where beaches were reclaimed into fields for salt plantation. The industry was prosperous and renowned in dynastic China as Hong Kong has a lengthy shoreline with numerous beaches suitable for salt growing and a long hot sunny period throughout the year. As it was a government monitored business, an official was specially appointed to administrate the salt production. The last salt plantation fields in Tai O ceased to production only in the 1950s. Part of the reclaimed salt fields are still traceable today.

2.1.2 Other than sea reclamation, inland reclamation took place to a greater extent in historic Hong Kong when early settlers from Mainland China opened up river valley along Kam Tim River which river banks were reclaimed for cultivation -- a common methodology in China and some other Asian countries for planting of crops especially rice which requires soaking of the fields with water for its early stages of growing.

2.1.3 Sea reclamation was not only for salt growing in Hong Kong but also for gaining agricultural land. In early Yong Zheng (雍正) reign (1723-1735) of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) a large amount of Hakkas were encouraged to migrate to the region after the lifting of the Evacuation Order in 1683. As most of the fertile river valleys such as those in Yuen Long, Fanling and Tuen Mun had already been occupied by the Puntis, the new comers were forced to settle in those poor areas like Tsuen Wan and Sai Kung reclaiming the sea beds for cultivation.

2.2 Post-1841 Reclamation

2.2.1 After the occupation of Hong Kong Island by Britain on 26 January 1841, the first land sale was held on 14 June which purchasers were mostly the British, Indian and Parsee traders such as the Dent, the Jardines, the Lindsay, etc. The traders were mainly import and export merchants and land lots chosen were all having water frontage along the seashore of Victoria Harbour. The first road opened up was to their south, the Queen's Road (Map 2 on page 16). The land lots were then very much expanded and reclaimed from the sea as they wished without paying rent to the government. The shoreline was made very irregular. It can thus be seen that the first land reclamations after 1841 are private ones without any planning at all.

2.2.2 The first government reclamation was made by the then Governor Sir John Bowring (1854-1859) initiated in 1855 to reclaim the marshland north of Happy Valley. The land known as 'goose neck' was later named Bowrington. Piecemeal, irregular and private reclamations continued right through the 1850s and 1860s until 1868 despite the effort of a number of attempts to build a proper seawall and a praya along the shore respectively in 1851, 1855 and 1863 by Governors Sir George Bonham (1848-1854), Sir John Bowring and Sir Hercules Robinson (1859-1865). It was in 1868 that 8.5 acres of land were reclaimed from Wilmar Street to Bonham Strand and then further east along Des Voeux Road.

2.2.3 The intention of the government to build a east-west praya along the seashore extended to Wan Chai and Causeway Bay first initiated by Sir J. Bowring was a fruitless attempt as the marine lot east of Victoria had been occupied by the Navy which strongly opposed a thoroughfare. The occupation of the naval base in the area had significant strategic consequences in the building up of the Island in the past 150 years, not merely building a praya (Map 2 on page 16).

2.2.4 Subsequent reclamations were held not only on Hong Kong Island but also in Kowloon Peninsula and the New Territories after the former ceded to Britain in 1860 and the latter leased in 1898. Two major reclamations however were made on the Island respectively in 1890-1904 and 1921-1929 pushing the shoreline further to the sea. The former is an essential land-gain reclamation acquiring 65 acres of land initiated by the then prominent merchant and philanthropist, Sir Catchick Paul Chater (1846-1926). The praya wall stretched a total of 3,129 metres along the present Connaught Road right to the Naval Dockyard. Mooted in 1897, the 1921-1929 reclamation, known as Praya East Reclamation Scheme, gained land for commercial and residential use between Hennessy Road and Gloucester Road (Map 1 on page 15). Two old photographs showing the two reclamations are on page 17. Before the Second World War the shoreline of Central and Wan Chai was very much in shape of a modern city which population had climbed up to 1.6 million. Further reclamations in the area were no longer for simple reasons of public health and commercial need.

3. Development of the Project Area

3.1 After the Second World War the Naval Dockyard continued to occupy a great proportion of the project area. Its change had not been great before and after the War until its anchorage basin filled up and Lung Wui Road and a linear waterfront rest area built to its north in 1997. A 9-acre piece of land immediately to its west was reclaimed in stages in 1951-1955 as far as Sheung Wan. This portion of reclaimed land was comparatively small as compared with others on the Island and in Kowloon and the New Territories. The Causeway Bay reclamation alone was 55 acres. The land accommodated the new City Hall opened in 1962, the new Queen's Pier and the Star Ferry Pier. Next to the City Hall is a multi-storey car park, Jardine House (1973, formerly called Connaught Centre) and the General Post Office building (1976). Photographs showing the pier, Edinburgh Place and the City Hall Complex are on page 18.

4. Buildings and Structures of Historical Interest

4.1 The Star Ferry Pier

4.1.1 The present Star Ferry Pier has been in use since 1957 after the area was reclaimed. The previous Star Ferry pier was at the foot of Ice House Street on Connaught Road Central. In the beginning, ferries were not operated on scheduled basis. Service for members of the public between Hong Kong Island and Kowloon only commenced after Kowloon Peninsula was ceded in 1860, possibly in the second half of the 1870s.

4.1.2 When Dorabjee Nowrojee, a wealthy Parsee merchant and owner of a bakery and several hotels, bought ferry services from a M. Buxoo who owned two steam launches, *Morning Star* and *Evening Star*, Kowloon Peninsula was sparsely populated with fewer than 8,000 inhabitants. The ferry business prospered alongside with the building up of the Peninsula especially during and after the setting up of the Kowloon Wharf on its western shore. Nowrojee's star ferries provided service for the wharf's workers and by the early 1880s, the service became a regular one serving the public as well.

4.1.3 The Star Ferry Co., Ltd. was not formally established until 1898 when Nowrojee wished to retire to India. The ferry service was sold to Kowloon Wharf which changed the company into a public one. Over the past one hundred years plus of its history, the Star Ferry has witnessed the rapid change of Hong Kong and the rapid change of Victoria Harbour. Its ferries have changed from steam-powered to diesel-electric ones, from single deckers to double deckers. Its wharf has developed from a matshed, a planked one to the present concrete structure. Its wharf on the Island has been relocated several times due to different reclamations; its Ice House Street Pier was built in 1911 and the present one in 1957. Map 3 showing the location of the old pier is on page 19. Two old photographs showing the Star Ferry pier are on page 20. Two old maps showing the locations of the pier in Tsim Sha Tsui are on page 21. The most remarkable feature of the new terminal is the clocktower in the middle presented by John Keswick, Chairman of Jardines. The current pier is a two-finger structure, each with its own pier to cope with rush hour passengers, especially when ferry transport was the dominant mode of cross-harbour transport prior to the opening of the Cross Harbour Tunnel in 1972.

4.1.4 Star Ferry was involved in one of the most influential social movement events in Hong Kong, ignited by the 5-cent fare increase application in 1966. A 27-year old So Sau-chung staged a self-motivated hunger strike at the Island ferry pier. His arrest later was followed by several riots in Kowloon. The fare increase event leading to riots, referred to as the Star Ferry Riots by some historians, is commonly considered a milestone of Hong Kong's social movements.

4.1.5 With the opening of the Cross Harbour Tunnel in 1972 and the cross-harbour section of the MTR in 1980, the cross-the-harbour function of the Star Ferry has been greatly reduced. It is still a must for tourists and the most effective means and the cheapest traffic utility to view the beautiful harbour. Photographs showing the pier are on page 22.

4.2 The City Hall Complex

4.2.1 Hong Kong's first City Hall was built with public subscription in 1869, occupying the present sites of the Hong Kong Bank and Bank of China on Queen's Road. Being a magnificent 2-storey building comprising a theatre, a library, a museum and assembly rooms, it provided a variety of cultural activities for the local community. The building was partly demolished in 1933 to provide space for the new Hong Kong Bank. The rest was pulled down in 1947 for the erection of the Bank of China. Map 3 showing the location of the old City Hall is on page 19. Two old photographs showing the old building are on page 23.

4.2.2 The new City Hall was not built until after the Second World War in 1961 some 200 metres from its original location within the project area. It has been the home of performing and visual arts, and a civic centre for major cultural and entertainment events. It comprises two separate blocks. The low block houses a concert hall, a theatre, an exhibition hall (converted from a ball room) and two restaurants and the high block, which is 11-storey high, houses an exhibition gallery, recital hall, two committee rooms, libraries and a marriage registry.

4.2.3 Unlike its predecessor, which was designed by a French architect, M. Hermite, in the classical style of architecture, the current City Hall complex was designed in the International Style by architects working in the Public Works Department in 1958. A colonnade is built to its northern and western ends connecting the two blocks within which is the Memorial Garden. The design was originally intended to take

advantage of the site's prominent seafront location and directly connect the building with Queen's Pier and the eastern approach road of the Star Ferry Concourse.

4.2.4 The cupolas, colonnades, arches and fountain of the old City Hall have now been replaced by stark, geometric forms and clean lines. To reflect the preoccupation with function and modern technology at the time, the buildings are constructed entirely in steel and concrete and furnished with up-to-date materials and systems, including metal windows, anodized aluminium, glass entrances, doors and windows, acoustic panels and a simultaneous interpretation system.

4.2.5 The blocks, which are basically separate units, are carefully laid along a central axis that results in a cohesive and uniform structure. The exhibition hall, which faces the north towards the sea and is situated along the north-south axis on the centre line of Queen's Pier to the north, has a glass screen facade at the two upper floors to enable an uninterrupted view of the harbour. The western elevation of the exhibition hall, which faces the Memorial Garden, is finished with granite and displays a pattern of small circular bronze windows alternating with tall narrow ones. The concert hall and theatre are situated along the east-west and north-south axis of the exhibition hall, respectively. Photographs of the City Hall are on page 24.

4.2.6 The City Hall has been for a lengthy period organizing many world class and influential cultural programmes drawing numerous overseas and local artists to stage their performance in the complex during the Hong Kong Festivals, the Hong Kong Arts Festivals, the Hong Kong International Film Festivals, the Asian Arts Festivals and others. City Hall is a building that has always been synonymous with the development of culture in Hong Kong and the modern design of the current building is a reflection of Hong Kong's progress since the war. Its cultural status has only been partially diminished when the Cultural Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui commenced operation in 1989.

4.2.7 Between the Low Block and the High Block is the Memorial Garden which is still one of the most popular rest spots in Central and a photo garden for newly-wedded couples. The gem of the complex is the 12-sided shrine in the garden built to commemorate the military and civilians who died for Hong Kong during World War II. It offers memorial ceremonies to give the highest respect to the dead during the Ching Ming Festival (previously the Peace Memorial Day) led by the Chief Executive (previously the Governor), representatives of Government officials, Executive and Legislative Councils, foreign representatives, etc. Photographs showing the Memorial Garden and the shrine are on page 25.

4.3 The Queen's Pier

4.3.1 Not only has the pier been used by the public since its construction in 1961, it was the landing pier for new Governors after arriving at the Kai Tak Airport. They then made their oath to serve as Governors of Hong Kong at the City Hall Concert Hall. Photographs showing the pier are on page 26.

5. Impacts on Items of Historical Interest

5.1 The Star Ferry Pier

5.1.1 The present pier was built in 1957. It has now served the community and tourists for over 43 years. Its golden days were in the late 1950s through the early 1970s before the introduction of public transport making use of the Cross Harbour Tunnel completed in 1972. Although its age alone could not qualify itself to meet the minimum requirement of a historical building, it merits itself of great significance in her role played in Hong Kong's transport history of modern era.

5.1.2 The pier especially its clocktower is a visually important landmark in Hong Kong. It is an eye-catching icon within the beautiful Hong Kong Harbour particularly for tourists and locals crossing it via Star ferries from Tsim Sha Tsui. It is also impressive for tourists as crossing the world famous harbour via Star ferries is a must on their itinerary. No other ferry pier along the harbour could possibly perform such a symbolic function as this clocktower pier. The removal of the Star Ferry Pier to Piers 4-7 leading to its destruction would likely raise public objection and dismay.

5.2 The City Hall Complex

5.2.1 As mentioned in para. 4.2 the City Hall complex is still playing an important role in various local civic and cultural activities. The Memorial Garden and Edinburgh Place are still genuine leisure and sitting out spots especially for the working community in Central and tourists. With the construction of the proposed road network

(i) the City Hall High Block and the western wall of the Memorial Garden would have to be demolished for widening of the existing road to become the proposed Road D6; and

(ii) the City Hall Complex would face to its north a newly constructed east-west road with busy traffic. It is highly undesirable, particularly for road widening purpose, to demolish the City Hall High Block and the western wall of the Memorial Garden which are core parts of the complex.

5.2.2 The shrine in the Memorial Garden was built to complement the Cenotaph (erected in 1923) to its south, both in memorial to those who contributed their lives in the two wars. The lifting of the High Block building and the western wall of the garden would mean a destruction of the entirety of the whole complex, including the shrine. Two photographs showing the building and the wall are on page 27.

5.3 The Queen's Pier and Edinburgh Place

5.3.1 The pier and Edinburgh Place are not merely an ordinary public pier and public open space for community use. They have been for many years two of the very few open spots suitable for breathing the sea air comfortably in Central and viewing the beautiful harbour. To a certain degree, they performed some civic and political functions in the colonial period of post-war Hong Kong after their completion in 1961. Their demolition for reclamation would scrap forever the concrete link to a brief past of local development.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The Star Ferry Pier

6.1.1 Its future home in Piers 4-7 proposed is entirely not welcome. Consideration should be taken to relocate the clocktower, if not the whole pier building, to a new home suitably in harmony with its surroundings.

6.2 The City Hall Complex

6.2.1 The whole complex should be kept intact. With the construction of the proposed roads, the complex would unavoidably face serious air and noise pollution generated by the busy traffic to its north. Measures should be taken to minimize adverse effects brought along by the roads and traffic to maintain a quiet and leisable environment for this historic cultural centre. The design of the proposed festival market and waterfront promenade should be in line with the complex. Together with the Old Supreme Court (Legislative Council Building), the Cenotaph and Statue Square, the retention of the City Hall Complex is in fact in line with the Historic Corridor of the Landscape Concept Plan proposed.

Acknowledgments

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Public Records Office of Hong Kong

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Peter Sui Shan Chan

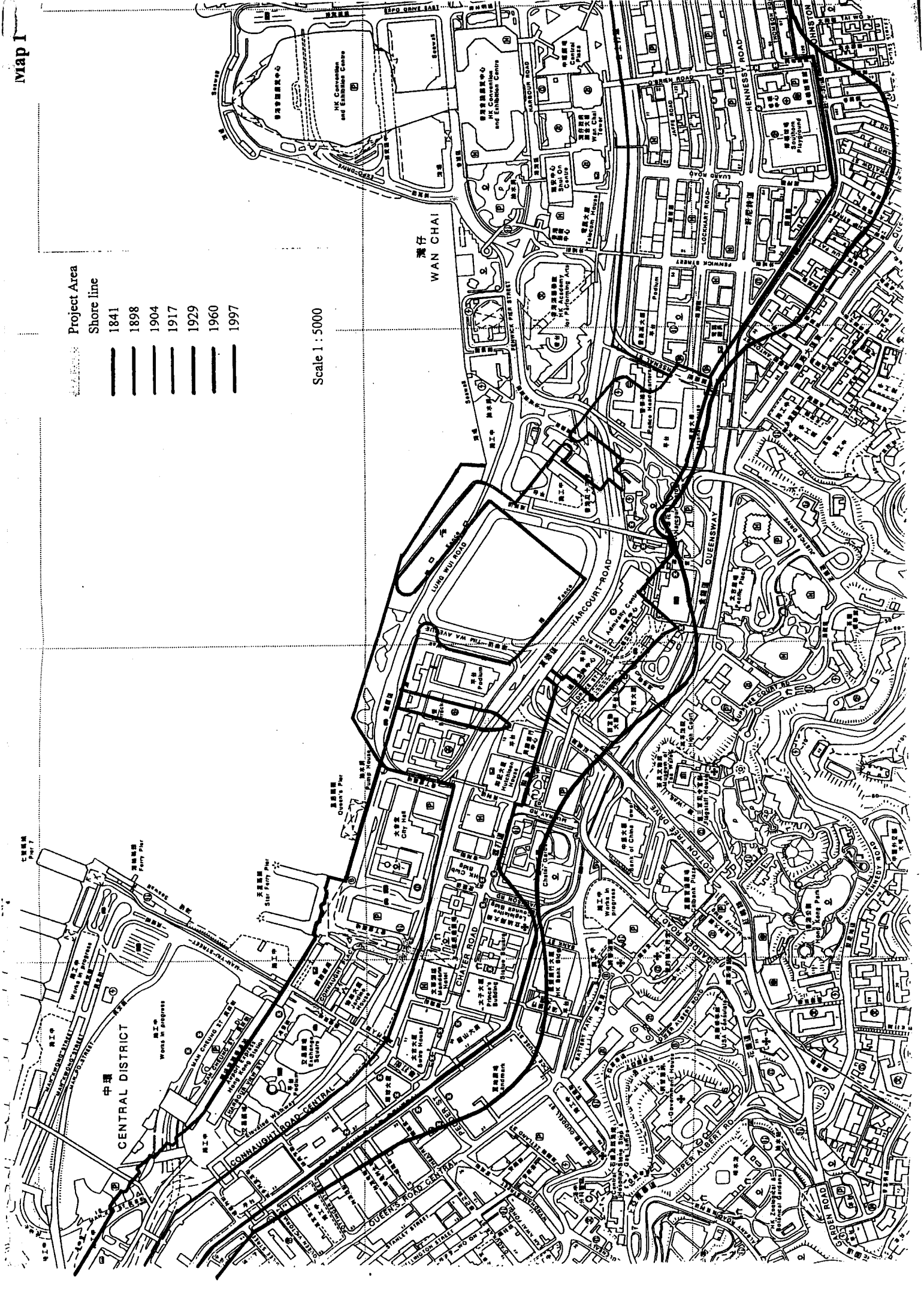
February 2001

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- Project Area
 Shore line
 1841
 1898
 1904
 1917
 1929
 1960
 1997

Scale 1 : 5000



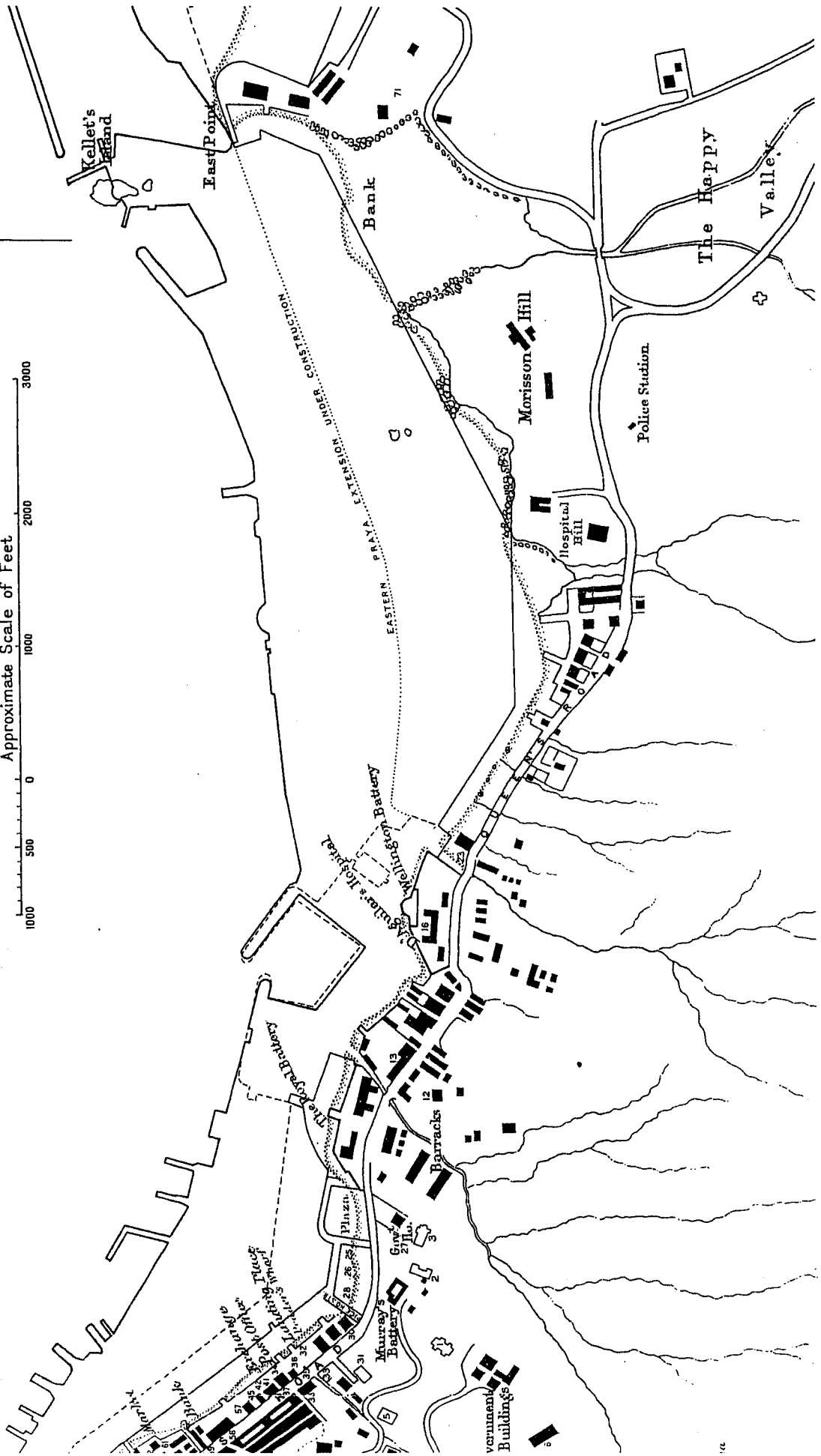
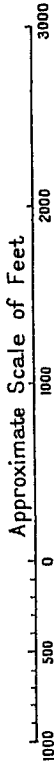
Map 2

CITY OF VICTORIA — HONGKONG

taken from Lt. Collinson's Ordnance Survey, 1845.

References and outline in red taken from the map of A.F. Alves, 1862.

Outline in dotted red shows present sea-frontage, 1923.



A map showing the shorelines of Victoria in 1845, 1862, 1923 and 1991

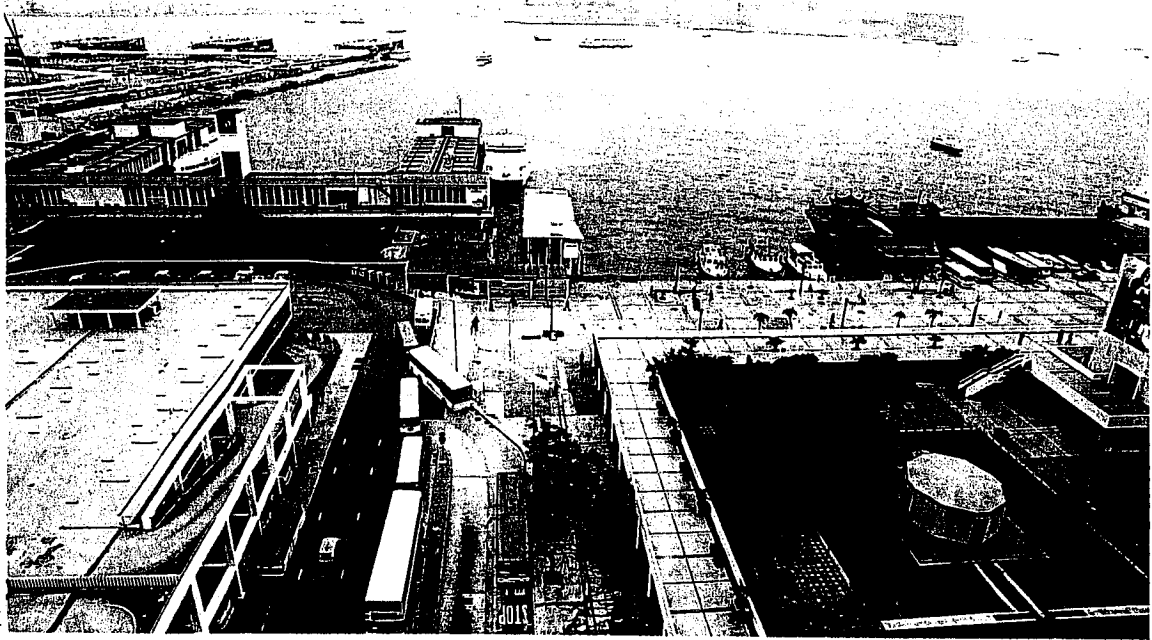


The 1890-1904 Chater reclamation in Central



The 1921-1929 reclamation in Wan Chai

Star Ferry
Pier



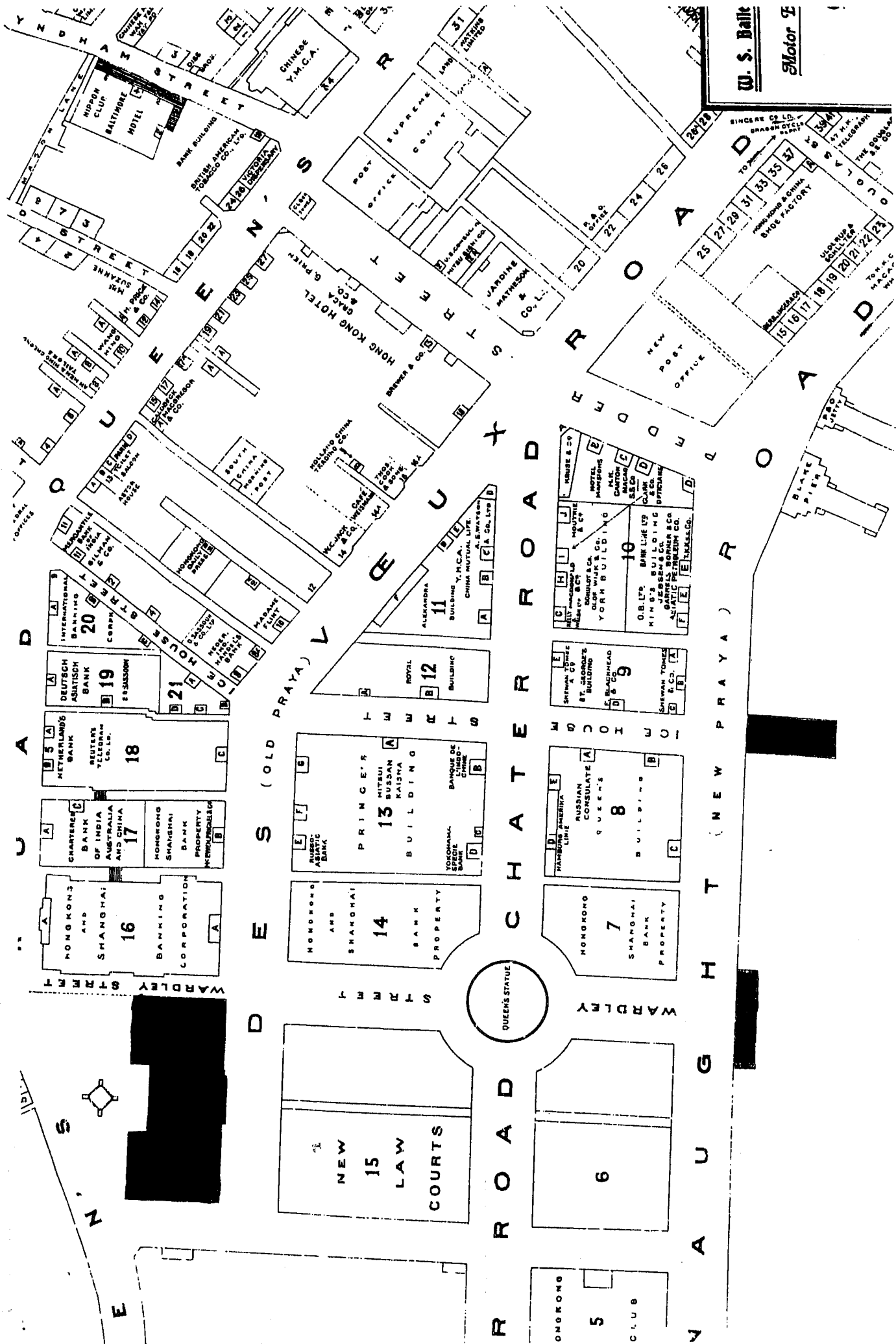
Queen's
Pier

Multi-
storey
Carpark

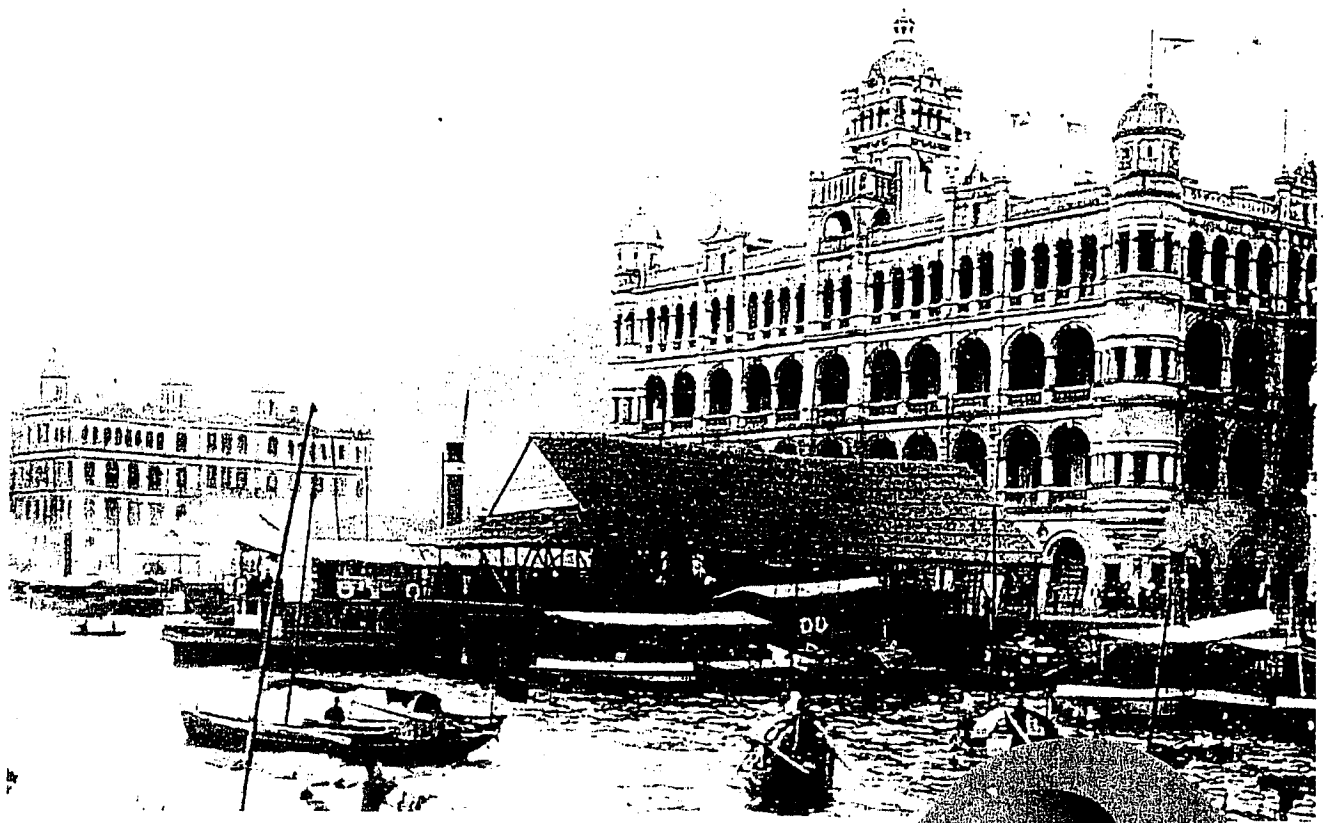
City Hall Complex



Edinburgh Place



A 1907 map showing the location of the old City Hall, Queen's Pier and Star Ferry Pier

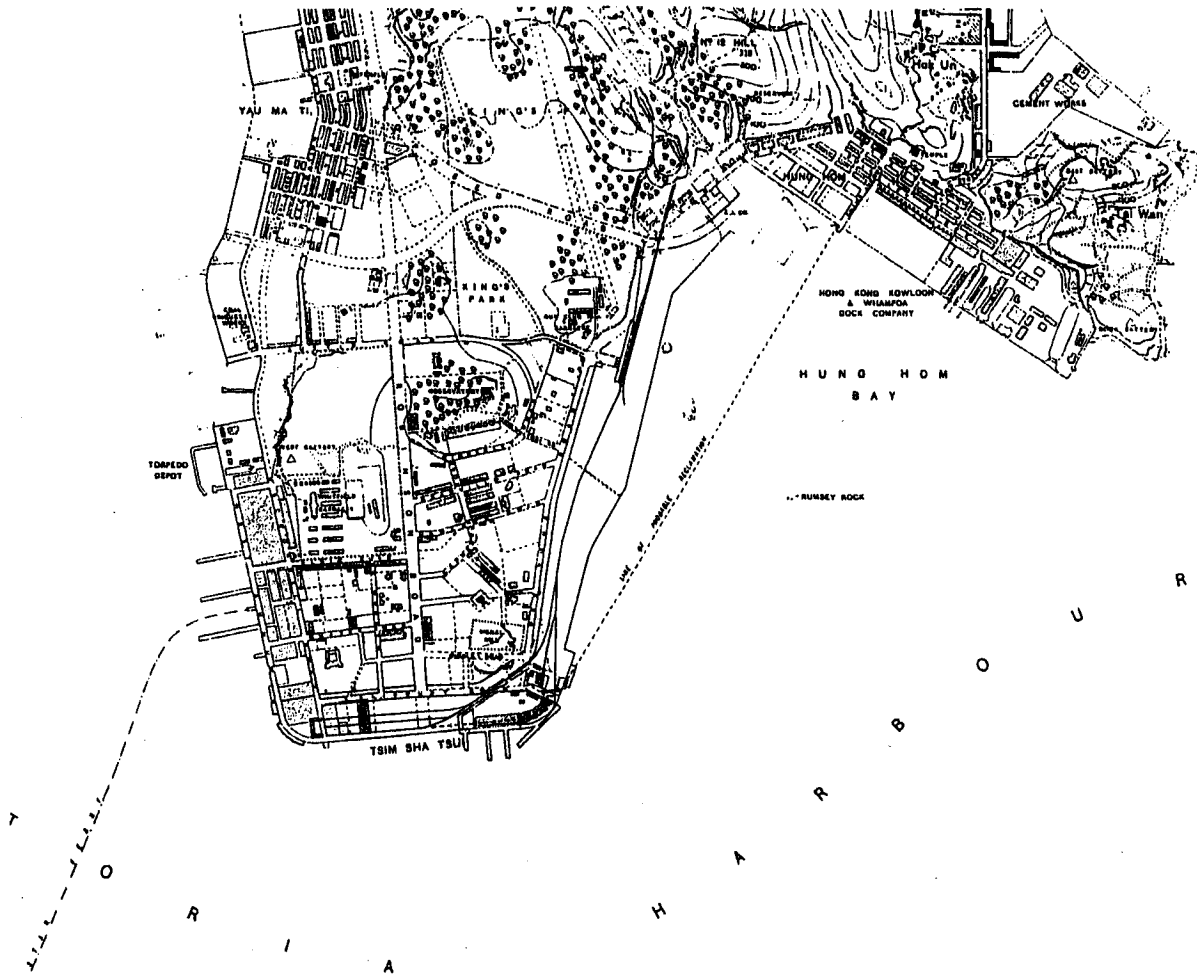


Star Ferry Pier in makeshift form

Founder of the Star Ferry



Later stage of the pier at the foot of Ice House Street



The location of the Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier in 1902



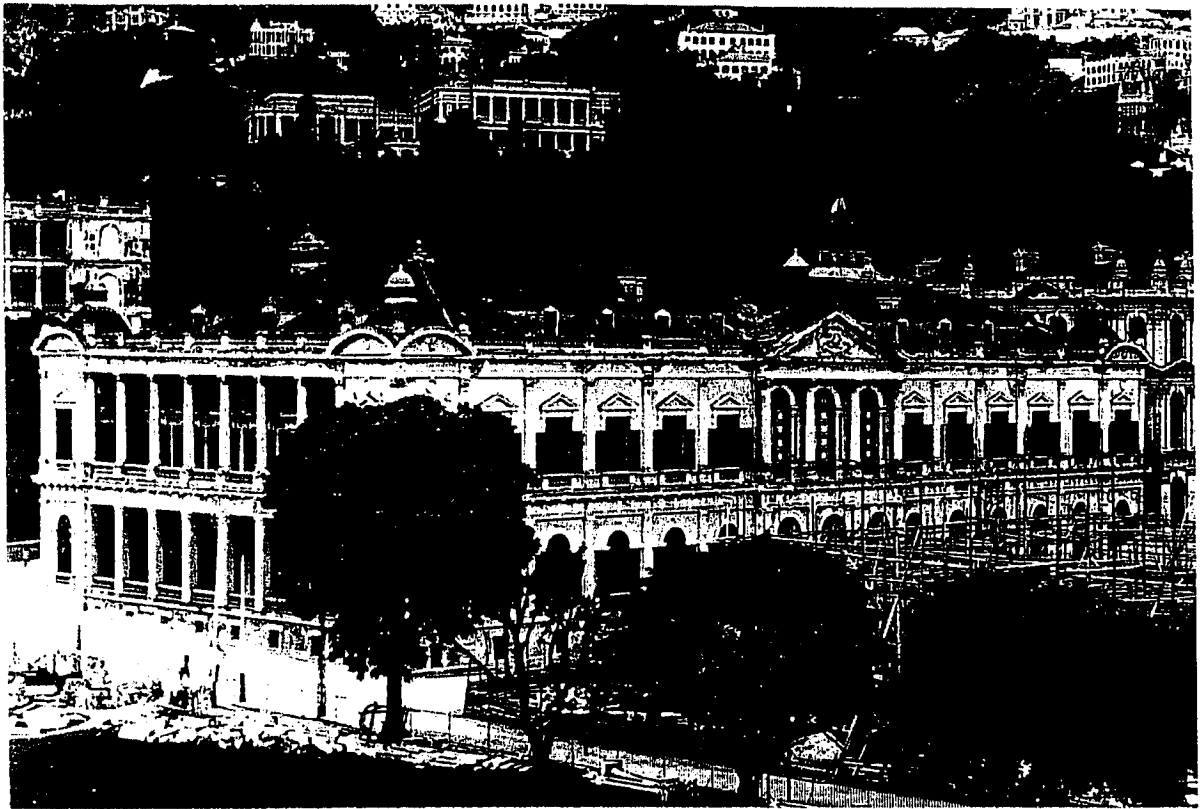
The location of the Tsim Sha Tsui Star Ferry Pier in 1924



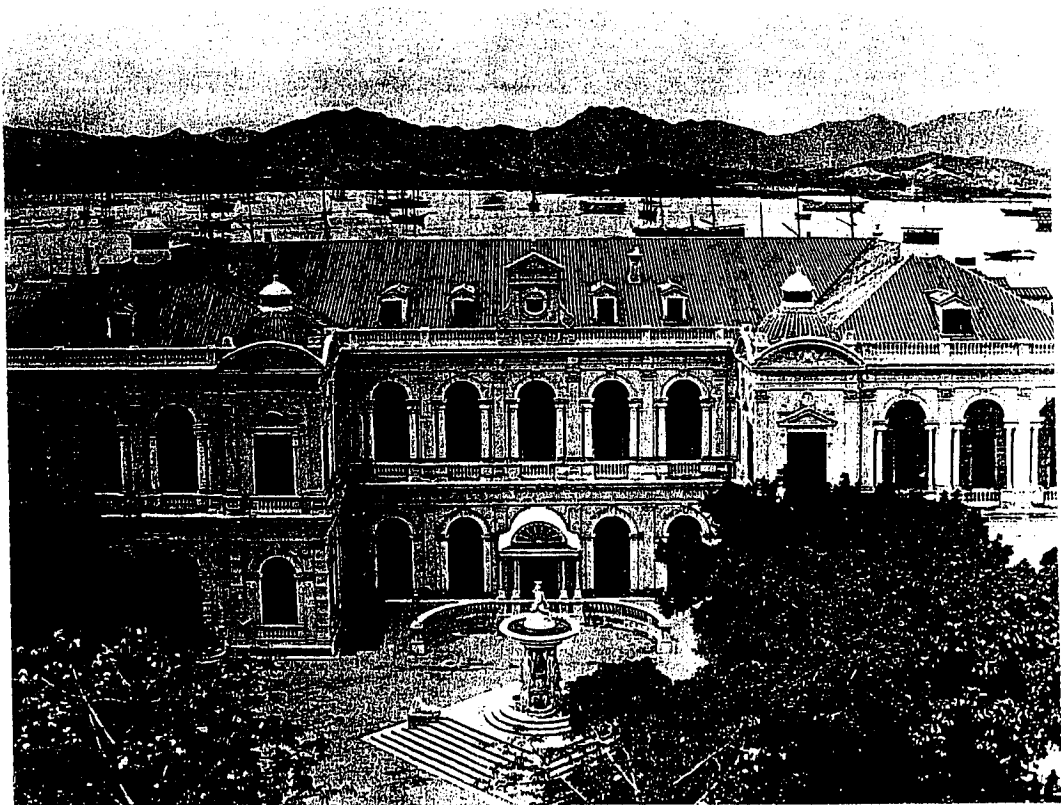
The clocktower was donated by John Keswick of the Jardines



The Star ferries are still the busiest cross-the-harbour ferries



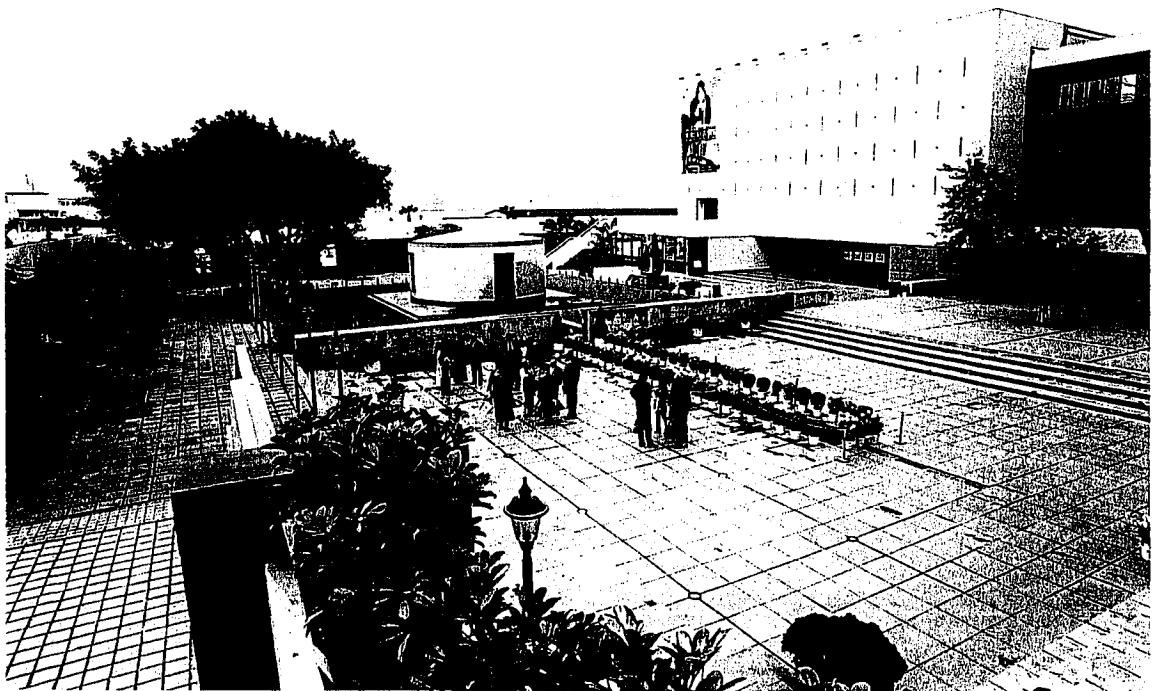
The northern façade of the old City Hall



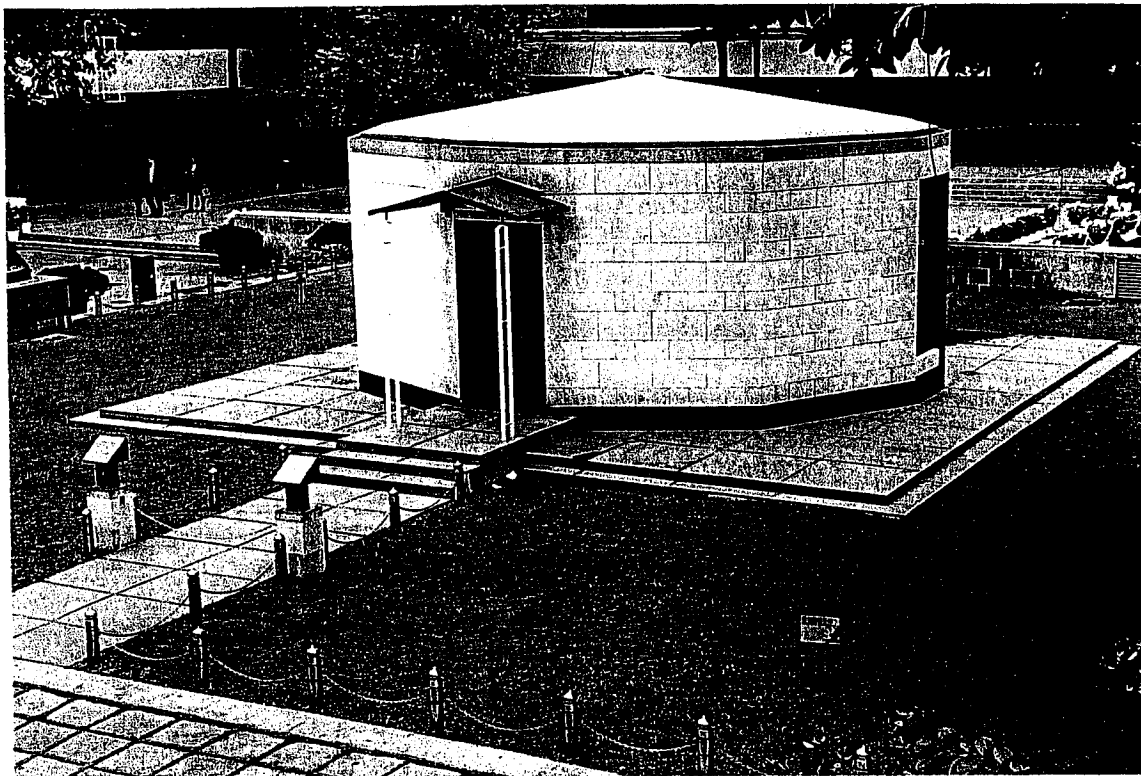
The southern façade of the old City Hall with a fountain to its south



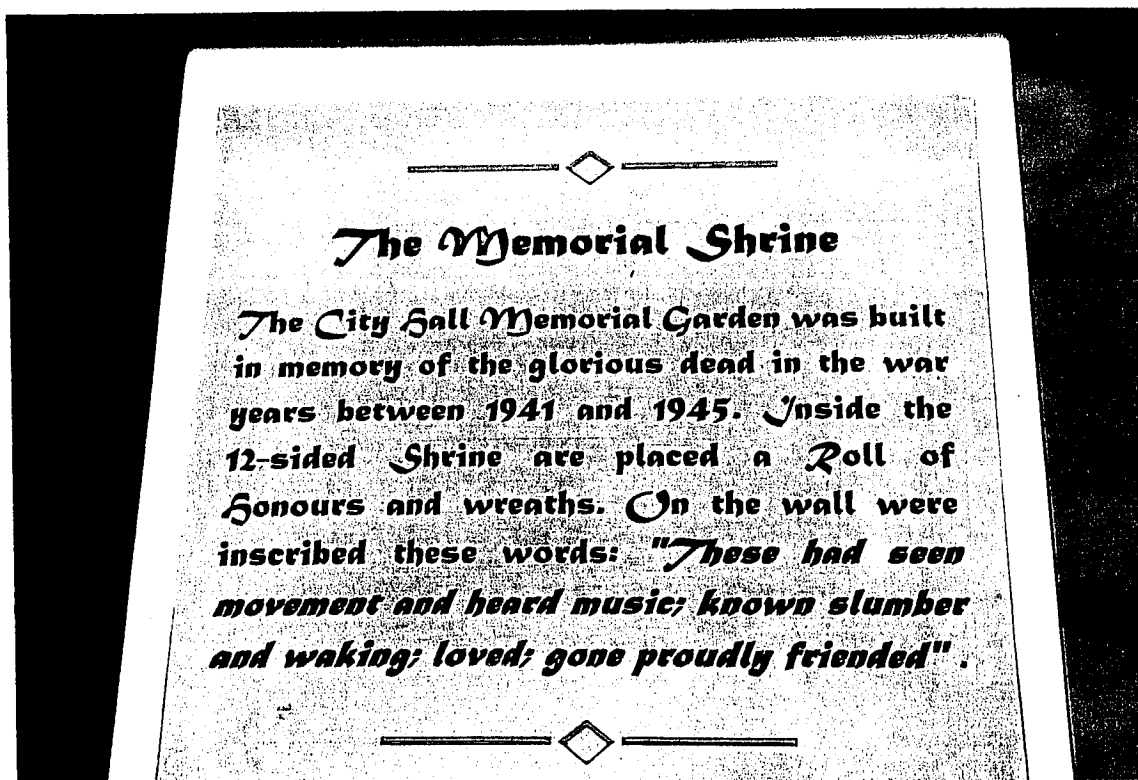
The High Block Building
and the shrine in the
Memorial Garden



The Low Block building to the east of the garden



The 12-sided shrine



An explanatory plaque of the shrine



It was called the Queen's Statue Pier before it moved to the present location



It was the landing pier of new governors in 1961-1997



The High Block and the western wall planned to be demolished



The western wall maintains calm and quietness of the garden