

Recommendation of Lugard Road as Pilot Site
For the “Point-Line-Plane” Approach in Conservation

1. Introduction

In 2014, the Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) completed the policy review on the conservation of built heritage and recommended that the government examine the feasibility of conserving and protecting selected building cluster(s) of unique heritage value under the “point-line-plane” approach. The Administration later accepted the recommendations and announced its plan to carry out a pilot study on the “point-line-plane” approach for conservation.

However the *Report on the Policy Review on Conservation of Built Heritage* compiled by AAB indicates that there was no suggested area or district that clearly stood out as suitable for the implementation of the “point-line-plane” approach. Therefore it is the aim of the present paper to suggest an area of heritage significance for the Administration to consider as a possible site to conduct the pilot study on the "point-line-plane" approach for conservation.

This paper will outline the importance of Lugard Road in Hong Kong’s heritage environment and its unique cultural characteristics that make it a suitable site for conducting the pilot study on the “point-line-plane” approach for conservation..

2. The "Point-Line-Plane" Approach in Heritage Conservation

The "Point-Line-Plane" approach looks at individual buildings as points, buildings along a street as lines and collections of streets as planes. It calls for the extension of the scope of conservation beyond an individual building and consideration to the wider urban or rural setting with distinctive features. It signifies a move from a ‘micro’ level of discreet heritage sites or structures to a ‘macro’ level of streetscape. The advantage of this approach is to preserve not only the historic buildings themselves but also the surroundings of the buildings, as well as the “historical ambience” in the area.

3. The Site

Lugard Road is located on Victoria Peak, approximately 400 meters above sea level. It is a semi-circular 2.4-kilometre road on Victoria Peak that mainly follows the contours of the hillside, connecting Victoria Gap in the east to Hatton Road and Harlech Road in the west. With Harlech Road, Lugard Road wraps around the Peak to form a circuit. It is a popular walking path that forms the initial section of Stage 1 of the Hong Kong Trail, and is known for the spectacular vistas over Victoria Harbour. It has become one of the city's most popular tourist and recreation areas over the years, and ranked as one of the top 10 urban hiking trails in the world by Lonely Planet.

4. Lugard Road as a Cultural Landscape

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) defines cultural landscapes as:

“cultural properties [which] represent the ‘combined works of nature and man’... [and] are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the

physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic, and cultural forces, both external and internal.”

Following this definition, Lugard Road can be unhesitatingly viewed as a cultural landscape that reflects an idealized fusion between humans and nature. It represents large-scale human intervention on a prominent part of the natural landscape, within the wider context of a rapidly growing city. Its character-defining elements listed below further explain the complexity of culture imbued with the Road and reinforce the importance of the area.

(a) Architectural and Engineering Significance:

Lugard Road was built manually in 1913 using the cut-and-fill and pier-and-bridge techniques, with materials mainly found in-situ or, occasionally, brought up the hill via sedan chair or wagon-like vehicles known as “trucks”. The primary physical features of the road itself, including the hillside concrete benching, the cement concrete piers and the buttresses, are the character-defining elements of the Road. Their endurance is testament to their strength and structural integrity, as well as to the exemplary skills of the engineers and workers at that time.

More, the retaining walls flanking the hillside on the southern side of Lugard Road were absolutely essential in ensuring the Road’s structural integrity and providing safety to pedestrians. Over the years, the abundance vegetation that has been allowed to flourish on the walls helped create a harmonized landscape of man-made structures and natural environment. At the same time, the parapet wrought-iron railing on the other side of the Road created a continuity of space between the man-made road and the dense natural vegetation of the hill below.

(b) Tangible Heritage - Buildings

At present, there are 14 individual man-made structures on Lugard Road, of which 5 have been given an official grading by the AAB. Hence, the historic building clusters strongly reinforce the overall heritage value of Lugard Road itself.

Street Number, Building Name (if applicable)	Grade	Date of Grading
No. 1 Lugard Road, The Peak Tramways Co. Ltd. Office	Grade II	21 June, 2010
No. 27 Lugard Road	Grade II	10 Sept, 2013
No. 28 Lugard Road	Grade III	10 Sept, 2013
No. 34 Lugard Road, Westerag	Grade III	22 Jan, 2010
No. 35 Lugard Road, Victoria Gap Substation	Grade III	22 Jan, 2010

According to the *Historic Building Appraisal* done by AAB in 2013, the cluster of graded buildings on Lugard Road consist of group value that plays an important role in the development of Hong Kong. Taken together, they suggest an overarching significance that pertains to the road itself – as a streetscape of profound architectural, historical, and social value.

(c) Intangible Heritage – Historic Use and Scenery

Among the most readily evident historical values of Lugard Road is its long and continued use as a pedestrian road. Since the beginning, it was intended to be “principally used as a promenade, [with] a wonderful panoramic view of the City, Harbour and surroundings being obtainable from it.” Thus, lookout points have been vital to the road’s prominence as a promenade, and it is from such points that hikers and visitors throughout the years have been physically able to witness the world known skyline as well as the development of Hong Kong. In fact, it is not only the road itself that represents the history of the city but its lookout points have been significant locations for citizens and tourists to witness the changes of Hong Kong over the past century.

Further, the viewing areas on Lugard Road facilitate the appreciation of the stunning views across the city and allow people to overlook the harbor from all directions. The use of Lugard Road as a scenic resource helps enhance people’s connection to place and provides a special way for locals to reaffirm their sense of belonging to the city.

(d) Ecological Value

Lugard Road is remarkable for richness in objects of Botanical importance. It is part of the Pok Fu Lam Native Tree Walk that contributes to raising environmental awareness in Hong Kong. It features more than 15 plant species that are native to Hong Kong and acts as a habitat for various local flora and fauna. Moreover, situated between the Pok Fu Lam country park and the Lung Fu Shan Country Park, Lugard Road can be seen as an indispensable element of an important network of natural landscapes on Hong Kong Island that are vital in ensuring a diverse and sustainable ecosystem on Hong Kong. Lugard Road is also part of the Hong Kong Trail, a 50-kilometer walking route, which passes through the five country parks on Hong Kong Island.

Overall, the natural surroundings and coverage of Lugard Road help fuse the man-made structures with the natural environment provide educational resources for botany enthusiasts and much-needed fresh air and greenery in very close proximity to the dense, polluted urban core of Hong Kong Island.

5. Recommendations

To summarize, Lugard Road comprises an important collection of cultural landscapes that extend across Hong Kong Island, and reflects a harmony with the natural environment in our urban area. It is a place that can be enjoyed by different sectors of the community all year round due to its high accessibility and welcoming features. As the Administration considers upgrading its approach to heritage preservation by moving beyond just built heritage to a wider approach encompassing intangible heritage, cultural significance of areas and natural landscape under the “point-line-plane” approach, Lugard Road is an ideal site for the pilot study to implement this approach in an urban setting.