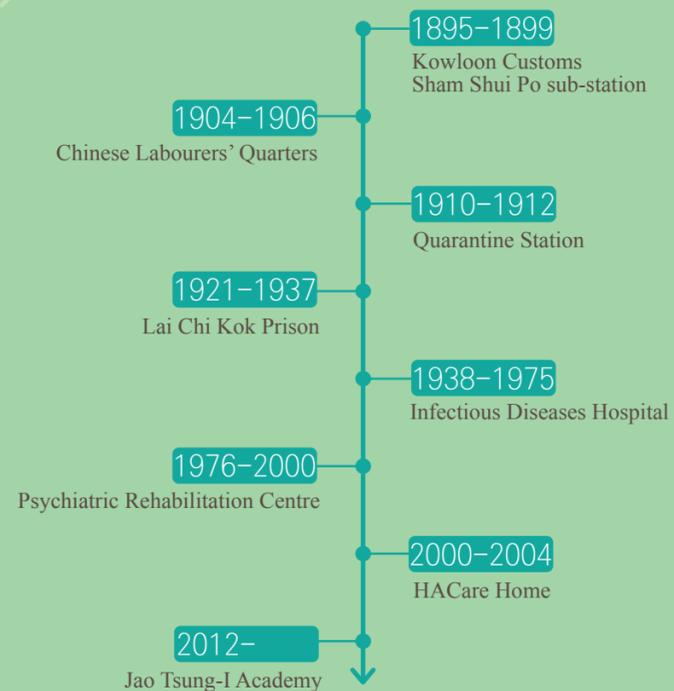


Revolving Door of History

Stepping into the Academy is like boarding a time machine and surveying its architectural history. Besides a showcase of conservation and revitalisation, the buildings are also a microcosm of Hong Kong history. Let's examine their various phases and the stories they tell.

Timelines



Histories and Historical Sites



▲ Image source: The Government Records Service

The oldest building in the Academy can be traced to the period when the grounds served as a Kowloon Customs Station. The Kowloon Customs Boundary stone was built and customs houses were set up for officers to monitor ships and collect tax payments. After the customs station was shut down, it was turned into living quarters for Chinese workers headed abroad, who used to be housed in shabby huts.

In 1908, two years after an outbreak in Hong Kong led to a ban on Chinese labour imports, the British Government renovated the quarters and turned it into the Lai Chi Kok Quarantine Station. The single-storey building was built with two layers of red bricks and became the prototype for the future infectious diseases hospital. Guard room and granite walls were also built. These structures were preserved during the prison and hospital phases and are presently still in use.



▲ Image source: Chinese Labour in South Africa, 1902-10



▲ Image source: Ms. Pauline Tai

To meet changing needs, after minor renovations the quarantine station was turned into the low-security Lai Chi Kok Prison, which was equipped with large and independent cells, as well as a mini-hospital. It was considered a model prison because of its comprehensive facilities. In 1937, as smallpox, diphtheria, cholera raged in Hong Kong, the grounds were converted for medical purposes again, first used to quarantine and treat patients of these infectious diseases and later housing leprosy patients and the mentally ill, as well as patients suffering from chronic illness. The facility

played an important role in the evolution of Hong Kong's medical and rehabilitation networks.

In 2008, the premises were among the buildings included in the first batch of the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme and restored and revitalised by the Hong Kong Institute for Promotion of Chinese Culture. Thus was born the present Jao Tsung-I Academy, which opened in 2012 and became fully functional in 2014.



▲ Image source: Ms. Lee Ho-chun

Conservation and Revitalisation



The red brick buildings throughout the premises were innovative for their time. For example, the cluster in the Low Zone, in keeping with Hong Kong's humid and rainy weather, drew from a minimalist and practical design, the single-storey structures built with traditional English double-layer bricks. Their

pitched roofs were built with Chinese-style arched tiles and supported by wooden beams and rafters, which allow for better circulation and heat dissipation. The round-edged bricks on both sides of the doors made it easier for hospital beds to move in and out.

The point of conservation isn't just to preserve the Kowloon customs boundary stone, the incinerator and other features, but rather to restore the buildings to their original state. So when the conservation team took over the site, the surface of the fireplace was newly retiled and the fireboxes were covered with wooden boards. Therefore the team examined similar fireplaces of the same period, cleared away the added tiles and boards to restore its original appearance.



▲ Image source: Ms. Amy Chan

As for the double-storey structures in the Middle and High zones, their red brick walls were poured with concrete and painted white. To highlight the red brick and educate visitors about the original construction materials, the restoration team manually removed the concrete surface of the walls and polished the red brick, clearing out excess concrete, applying desalination techniques and adding a protective layer. A new canopy was added to shield the walls, which also doubles as an outdoor space.

Region and Environment

This hill bears witness to the development of neighboring districts like Shum Shui Po, Lai Chi Kok and Mei Foo. Large-scale reclamation and re-development since the 1920s, as well as the ceasing of the old pier's operations, transformed the region into an industrial and business district. This period also saw the completion of Hong Kong's first large private housing estate — Mei Foo Sun Chuen.



The Academy's grounds also house over a thousand plants, mostly native to this area, which have attracted dozens of species of birds that have nourished the woods. The site is a diverse ecosystem, a rare oasis in a bustling metropolis.



Supported by The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust:



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HERITAGE TRUST

With the support of the Trust, Jao Tsung-I Academy hopes to restore lustre to this century-old historical site and beautiful natural landscape, allowing visitors to travel through history as they stroll around the site.

Visit Jao Tsung-I Academy

Address | 800 Castle Peak Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong
Open Hours | 10:00 am – 6:00 pm Mondays to Sundays
The Gallery and the Heritage Hall in the Low Zone are closed on Mondays

Enquiry | 2100 2828

E-mail | programme@jtia.hk

Webpage | www.jtia.hk

Guided Tours

Jao Tsung-I Academy provides daily tours led by docents familiar with the history of the buildings and their restoration.
www.jtia.hk/site-visit/cultural-guided-tours/

饒宗頤文化館 Jao Tsung-I Academy

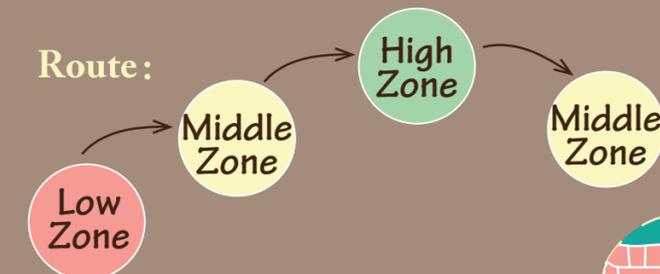
jtia.hk

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Jao Tsung-I Academy Century Heritage Trail

A flurry of conservation activity has shed light on the shifting functions of these historical buildings over the past century, transforming an isolated location into a unique public space and cultural artifact set against the picturesque backdrop of towering trees.

Let's trace the historical roots of the Academy's premises.

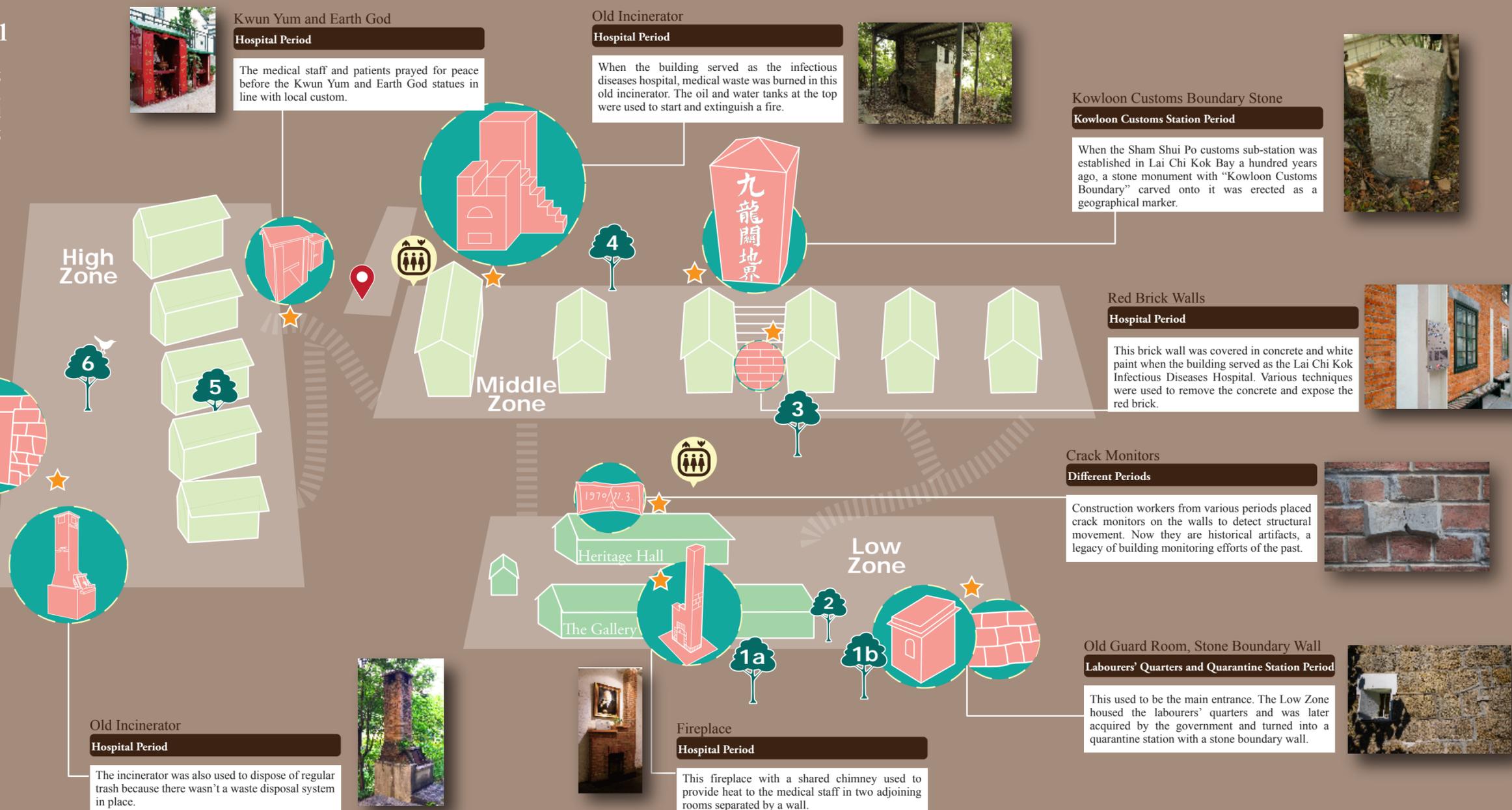


Old Pier
Kowloon Customs Period

At the time the premises was still located on the waterfront, so an old stone pier was built for travelers to and from the customs station, the labourers' quarters and the quarantine station.

★ Tips

Note information boards scattered along the way. Scan the QR code on the boards for video tours.



Old Incinerator
Hospital Period

The incinerator was also used to dispose of regular trash because there wasn't a waste disposal system in place.



Fireplace
Hospital Period

This fireplace with a shared chimney used to provide heat to the medical staff in two adjoining rooms separated by a wall.

Old Guard Room, Stone Boundary Wall
Labourers' Quarters and Quarantine Station Period

This used to be the main entrance. The Low Zone housed the labourers' quarters and was later acquired by the government and turned into a quarantine station with a stone boundary wall.



Crack Monitors
Different Periods

Construction workers from various periods placed crack monitors on the walls to detect structural movement. Now they are historical artifacts, a legacy of building monitoring efforts of the past.



Red Brick Walls
Hospital Period

This brick wall was covered in concrete and white paint when the building served as the Lai Chi Kok Infectious Diseases Hospital. Various techniques were used to remove the concrete and expose the red brick.



Kowloon Customs Boundary Stone
Kowloon Customs Station Period

When the Sham Shui Po customs sub-station was established in Lai Chi Kok Bay a hundred years ago, a stone monument with "Kowloon Customs Boundary" carved onto it was erected as a geographical marker.



Old Incinerator
Hospital Period

When the building served as the infectious diseases hospital, medical waste was burned in this old incinerator. The oil and water tanks at the top were used to start and extinguish a fire.



Kwun Yum and Earth God
Hospital Period

The medical staff and patients prayed for peace before the Kwun Yum and Earth God statues in line with local custom.



Mango(1a) and Banyan(1b) trees

The mango tree and the century-old banyan are home to various species of birds and insects and stand as a testimony to the history of the grounds.

Japanese white-eye

Also known as *sheung si* in Cantonese, their silhouettes can be spotted on tree tops throughout the year.

Jao-Kao Ficus (Ficus Rumphii)

The Jao-Kao Ficus is an especially long-lasting evergreen. Planted by Professor Jao Tsung-i and Professor Charles Kao, it's a symbol of preserving cultural heritage.

Bauhinia Variegata

More than one hundred Bauhinia Variegata trees grow on the hillside, making for a sea of pink when they bloom from February to April.

Oriental magpie-robin

A famed songbird with white long stripes on its wings, it's known for its lively and active personality. It loves to bounce around.

Crape Myrtle

Also known as the "Hundred-day Red" for its extended blooming period, the Crape Myrtle is extremely sensitive to changes of season. They are especially colorful around mid-summer.

Light-vented Bulbul

A resident bird with white stripes at back their heads, they are easily spotted shuttling back and forth in the woods.

High Zone Footbridge

Take a break here to take in a full view of the neighboring Lai Chi Kok and Mei Foo districts, or the sea of flowers during the blooming period between February and April.

Yulania

A rare Chinese species that isn't easily moved or maintained, it's listed as an endangered plant.

Royal Poinciana and Black Kite

The Royal Poincianas are a hovering wave of red during the summer, while Black Kites circle in the sky throughout the year.

scan the QR code to check them out!



Stamp Collection

Collect commemorate stamps as you survey the different historical spots.



Low Zone Lotus



Low Zone Crack Monitors



Middle Zone Kowloon Customs Boundary Stone



Middle Zone Bauhinia Variegata



High Zone Light-vented Bulbul