

= Kowloon Walled City =

Kowloon Walled City was a densely populated , largely ungoverned settlement in Kowloon City , Hong Kong . Originally a Chinese military fort , the Walled City became an enclave after the New Territories were leased to Britain in 1898 . Its population increased dramatically following the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong during World War II . By 1987 , the Walled City contained 33 000 residents within its 2.6 hectare (6 4 acre) borders . From the 1950s to the 1970s , it was controlled by Triads and had high rates of prostitution , gambling , and drug use .

In January 1987 , the Hong Kong government announced plans to demolish the Walled City . After an arduous eviction process , demolition began in March 1993 and was completed in April 1994 . Kowloon Walled City Park opened in December 1995 and occupies the area of the former Walled City . Some historical artefacts from the Walled City , including its yamen building and remnants of its South Gate , have been preserved there .

= = History = =

= = = Military outpost = = =

The history of the Walled City can be traced back to the Song Dynasty (960 ? 1279) , when an outpost was set up to manage the trade of salt . Little took place for hundreds of years afterward , although 30 guards were stationed there in 1668 . A small coastal fort was established around 1810 . In 1842 , during Qing Emperor Daoguang 's reign , Hong Kong Island was ceded to Britain by the Treaty of Nanjing . As a result , the Qing authorities felt it necessary to improve the fort in order to rule the area and check further British influence . The improvements , including the formidable defensive wall , were completed in 1847 . The Walled City was captured by rebels during the Taiping Rebellion in 1854 before being retaken a few weeks later . The present Walled City 's " Dapeng Association House " forms the remnants of what was previously Lai Enjue 's garrison .

The Convention for the Extension of Hong Kong Territory of 1898 handed additional parts of Hong Kong (the New Territories) to Britain for 99 years , but excluded the Walled City , which at the time had a population of roughly 700 . China was allowed to continue to keep officials there as long as they did not interfere with the defence of British Hong Kong . The following year , the Governor , Sir Henry Blake , suspected that the Viceroy of Canton was using troops to aid resistance to the new arrangements . On 16 May 1899 , British forces attacked the Walled City , only to find the Viceroy 's soldiers gone , leaving behind only the mandarin and 150 residents .

Though the British claimed ownership of the Walled City , they did little with it over the following few decades . The Protestant church established an old people 's home in the yamen , as well as a school and almshouse in other former offices . Aside from such institutions , however , the Walled City became a mere curiosity for British colonials and tourists to visit . In 1933 , the Hong Kong authorities announced plans to demolish most of the decaying Walled City 's buildings , compensating the 436 squatters that lived there with new homes . By 1940 only the yamen , the school , and one house remained . During its World War II occupation of Hong Kong , Japan demolished the City 's wall and used the stone to expand the nearby Kai Tak Airport .

= = = Urban settlement = = =

After Japan 's surrender , China announced its intent to reclaim its rights to the Walled City . Refugees poured in to take advantage of Chinese protection , and 2 000 squatters occupied the Walled City by 1947 . After a failed attempt to drive them out in 1948 , the British adopted a ' hands off ' policy in most matters concerning the Walled City .

In January 1950 , a fire broke out that destroyed over 2 500 huts , home to nearly 3 500 families and 17 000 total people . The disaster highlighted the need for proper fire prevention

in the largely wooden @-@ built squatter areas , complicated by the lack of political ties with the colonial and Chinese governments . The ruins gave new arrivals to the Walled City the opportunity to build anew , causing speculation that the fire may have been intentionally set .

With no government enforcement from the Chinese or the British aside from a few raids by the Hong Kong Police , the Walled City became a haven for crime and drugs . It was only during a 1959 trial for a murder that occurred within the Walled City that the Hong Kong government was ruled to have jurisdiction there . By this time , however , the Walled City was virtually ruled by the organised crime syndicates known as Triads .

Beginning in the 1950s , Triad groups such as the 14K and Sun Yee On gained a stranglehold on the Walled City 's countless brothels , gambling parlors , and opium dens . The Walled City had become such a haven for criminals that police would venture into it only in large groups . It was not until 1973 ? 74 , when a series of more than 3 @,@ 500 police raids resulted in over 2 @,@ 500 arrests and over 1 @,@ 800 kilograms (4 @,@ 000 lb) of seized drugs , that the Triads ' power began to wane . With public support , particularly from younger residents , the continued raids gradually eroded drug use and violent crime . In 1983 , the police commander of Kowloon City District declared the Walled City 's crime rate to be under control .

The City also underwent massive construction during the 1960s , with developers building new modular structures above older ones . The city became extremely dense , with over 30 @,@ 000 people in 300 buildings occupying little more than 7 acres (2 @.@ 8 ha) . As a result , the city reached its maximum size by the late 1970s and early 1980s ; a height restriction of 13 to 14 storeys had been imposed on the city due to the flight path of planes heading towards Kai Tak Airport . Eight municipal pipes provided water to the entire structure (although more could have come from wells) . A few of the streets were illuminated by fluorescent lights , as sunlight rarely reached the lower levels due to the outstanding disregard to air rights within the city . Although the rampant crime of earlier decades diminished in later years , the Walled City was still known for its high number of unlicensed doctors and dentists , who could operate there without threat of prosecution .

Although the Walled City was for many years a hotbed of criminal activity , most residents were not involved in any crime and lived peacefully within its walls . Numerous small factories and businesses thrived inside the Walled City , and some residents formed groups to organise and improve daily life there . An attempt by the government in 1963 to demolish some shacks in a corner of the City gave rise to an " antidemolition committee " that served as the basis for a Kaifong association . Charities , religious societies , and other welfare groups were gradually introduced to the City . While medical clinics and schools went unregulated , the Hong Kong government did provide some services , such as water supply and mail delivery .

= = = Eviction and demolition = = =

Over time , both the British and the Chinese governments found the City to be increasingly intolerable , despite a reduction in the reported crime rate . The quality of life in the City ? sanitary conditions in particular ? remained far behind the rest of Hong Kong . The Sino @-@ British Joint Declaration in 1984 laid the groundwork for the City 's demolition . The mutual decision by the two governments to tear down the Walled City was announced on 14 January 1987 . On 10 March 1987 , following the announcement that the Walled City would be converted to a park , the Secretary for District Administration formally requested the Urban Council agree to take over the site following demolition . Owing to the presence of numerous other green spaces in the area the Urban Services Department doubted the need for " yet another park " from a planning and operations point of view , but the council agreed nonetheless to accept the government 's proposal on the condition that the government bear the cost of park construction .

The government distributed some HK \$ 2 @.@ 7 billion (US \$ 350 million) in compensation to the estimated 33 @,@ 000 residents and businesses in a plan devised by a special committee of the Hong Kong Housing Authority . Some residents were not satisfied with the compensation , and were forcibly evicted between November 1991 and July 1992 . After four months of planning , demolition of the Walled City began on 23 March 1993 and concluded in April 1994 . Construction work on

Kowloon Walled City Park started the following month .

= = Current status as park = =

The area where the Walled City once stood is now Kowloon Walled City Park , adjacent to Carpenter Road Park . The 31 @, @ 000 m² (330 @, @ 000 sq ft) park was completed in August 1995 and handed over to the Urban Council . It was opened officially by Governor Chris Patten a few months later on 22 December . Construction of the park cost a total of HK \$ 76 million .

The park 's design is modelled on Jiangnan gardens of the early Qing Dynasty . It is divided into eight landscape features , with the fully restored yamen as its centrepiece . The park 's paths and pavilions are named after streets and buildings in the Walled City . Artefacts from the Walled City , such as five inscribed stones and three old wells , are also on display in the park . The park was designed by the Architectural Services Department , who won a " prestigious award " from the Central Society of Horticulture of Germany for the redevelopment .

Components of the park include :

The Eight Floral Walks , each named after a different plant or flower

The Chess Garden , featuring four 3 @-@ by @-@ 5 @-@ metre (9 @.@ 8 by 16 @.@ 4 ft) Chinese chessboards

The Garden of Chinese zodiac , containing stone statues of the 12 Chinese zodiac animals

The Garden of Four Seasons (named Guangyin Square after the small open area in the Walled City) , a 300 m² (3 @, @ 200 sq ft) garden with plants that symbolise the four seasons

The Six Arts Terrace , a 600 m² (6 @, @ 500 sq ft) wedding area containing a garden and the Bamboo Pavilion

The Kuixing Pavilion , including a moon gate framed by two stone tablets and the towering Guibi Rock , which represents Hong Kong 's return to China

The Mountain View Pavilion , a two @-@ storey structure resembling a docked boat that provides a good view of the entire park

The Lung Tsun , Yuk Tong , and Lung Nam Pavilions

The yamen and the remains of the South Gate (see below) .

= = Declared monuments = = =

The Antiquities and Monuments Office conducted archaeological examinations as the Walled City was being demolished , and several cultural remains were discovered . Among them were the Walled City 's yamen and remnants of its South Gate , which were officially designated declared monuments of Hong Kong on 4 October 1996 .

The South Gate had originally served as the Walled City 's main entrance . Along with its foundation , other remains included two stone plaques inscribed with " South Gate " and " Kowloon Walled City " from the South Gate and a flagstone path that had led up to it . The foundations of the City 's wall and East Gate were also discovered . The Hong Kong government preserved the South Gate remnants next to a square in front of the yamen .

The yamen building is made up of three halls . Originally the middle hall served the Assistant Magistrate of Kowloon 's administrative office , and the rear block was his residence . After the government officials left the area in 1899 , it was used for several other purposes , including an old people 's home , a refuge for widows and orphans , a school , and a clinic . It was restored in 1996 and is now found near the centre of the park . It contains a photo gallery of the Walled City , and two cannon dating back to 1802 sit at the sides of its entrance .

= = Layout and architecture = =

The Walled City was located in what became known as the Kowloon City area of Kowloon . In spite of its transformation from a fort into an urban enclave , the Walled City retained the same basic layout . The original fort was built on a slope and consisted of a 2 @.@ 6 @-@ hectare (0 @.@ 010

sq mi) plot measuring about 210 by 120 metres (690 by 390 ft) . The stone wall surrounding it had four entrances and measured 4 metres (13 ft) tall and 4 @. @ 6 metres (15 ft) thick before it was dismantled in 1943 .

Construction surged dramatically during the 1960s and 1970s , until the formerly low @-@ rise City consisted almost entirely of buildings with 10 storeys or more (with the notable exception of the yamen in its centre) . However , due to the Kai Tak Airport 's position 0 @. @ 8 kilometres (0 @. @ 50 mi) south of the City , buildings did not exceed 14 storeys . The two @-@ storey Sai Tau Tsuen settlement bordered the Walled City to the south and west until it was cleared in 1985 and replaced with Carpenter Road Park .

The City 's dozens of alleyways were often only 1 ? 2 m (3 @. @ 3 ? 6 @. @ 6 ft) wide , and had poor lighting and drainage . An informal network of staircases and passageways also formed on upper levels , which was so extensive that one could travel north to south through the entire City without ever touching solid ground . Construction in the City went unregulated , and most of the roughly 350 buildings were built with poor foundations and few or no utilities . Because apartments were so small ? a typical unit was 23 m² (250 sq ft) ? space was maximised with wider upper floors , caged balconies , and rooftop additions . Roofs in the City were full of television antennae , clothes lines , water tanks , and rubbish , and could be crossed using a series of ladders .

= = Population = =

Kowloon Walled City 's early population fluctuated between zero and a few hundred , and began growing steadily shortly after World War II . However , there is no accurate population information available for much of the Walled City 's later existence . Official census numbers estimated the Walled City 's population at 10 @, @ 004 in 1971 and 14 @, @ 617 in 1981 , but these figures were commonly considered to be much too low . Informal estimates , on the other hand , often mistakenly included the neighbouring squatter village of Sai Tau Tsuen . Population figures of about 50 @, @ 000 were also reported .

A thorough government survey in 1987 gave a clearer picture : an estimated 33 @, @ 000 people resided within the Walled City . Based on this survey , the Walled City had a population density of approximately 1 @, @ 255 @, @ 000 inhabitants per square kilometre (3 @, @ 250 @, @ 000 / sq mi) in 1987 .

= = Culture = =

Contrary to what many outsiders believed , most residents of the Walled City behaved similarly to other Hong Kong natives . In response to difficult living conditions , the residents formed a tightly knit community , helping one another endure various hardships . Within families , wives often did housekeeping , while grandmothers cared for their grandchildren and other children from surrounding households . The City 's rooftops were an important gathering place , especially for residents who lived on upper floors . Parents used them to relax , and children would play or do homework there after school .

The yamen in the heart of the City was also a major social centre , a place for residents to talk , have tea or watch television , and to take classes such as calligraphy . The Old People 's Centre also held religious meetings for Christians and others . Other religious institutions included the Fuk Tak and Tin Hau temples , which were used for a combination of Buddhist , Taoist , and animist practices .

= = Cultural depictions = =

A few people who spent time in Kowloon Walled City have written accounts of their experiences . Evangelist Jackie Pullinger wrote a 1989 memoir , Crack in the Wall , about her involvement in treating drug addicts within the Walled City . In his 2004 autobiography Gweilo , Martin Booth describes his exploration of the Walled City as a child in the 1950s .

In addition to such accounts , many authors , game designers , and filmmakers have used the Walled City to convey a sense of oppressive urbanisation or unfettered criminality . In literature , Robert Ludlum 's novel *The Bourne Supremacy* uses the Walled City as one of its settings . The City appears as a virtual reality environment (described by Steven Poole as an " oasis of political and creative freedom ") in William Gibson 's *Bridge* trilogy , and as a contrast with Singapore in his *Wired* article " Disneyland with the Death Penalty " . In the manga *Crying Freeman* , the titular character 's wife travels to the Walled City to master her swordsmanship and control a cursed sword . The manga *Blood + : Kowloon Nights* uses the Walled City as the setting for a series of murders . The Walled City plays a heavy role in the roleplaying video game *Shadowrun : Hong Kong* , in which the Walled City has been rebuilt in the future .

The 1982 Shaw Brothers film *Brothers from the Walled City* is set in Kowloon Walled City . The 1984 gangster film *Long Arm of the Law* features the Walled City as a refuge for gang members before they are gunned down by police . In the 1988 film *Bloodsport* , starring Jean @-@ Claude Van Damme , the Walled City is the setting for a martial arts tournament . The 1992 non @-@ narrative film *Baraka* features several highly detailed shots of the Walled City shortly before its demolition . The 1993 film *Crime Story* starring Jackie Chan was partly filmed in the deserted Walled City , and includes real scenes of building explosions . A walled neighbourhood called the Narrows in the 2005 film *Batman Begins* was inspired by the Walled City . The 2006 Hong Kong horror film *Re @-@ cycle* features a decrepit , nightmarish version of the Walled City , complete with tortured souls from which the protagonist must flee .

Kowloon Walled City is depicted in several games , including *Kowloon 's Gate* , *Shenmue II* and *Call of Duty : Black Ops* . The game *Stranglehold* , a sequel to the film *Hard Boiled* , features a version of the Walled City filled with hundreds of Triad members . In the games *Fear Effect* and *Fear Effect 2* , photographs of the Walled City were used as inspiration " for moods , camera angles and lighting . " Concept art for the MMORPG *Guild Wars : Factions* depicts massive , densely packed structures inspired by the Walled City . The pen @-@ and @-@ paper RPG *Shadowrun* includes a crime @-@ ridden , rebuilt version of the Walled City set in 2056 .

A partial recreation of the Kowloon Walled City exists in the Kawasaki Warehouse , an amusement arcade that opened in 2009 in the Japanese suburb of Kawasaki , Kanagawa . The designer 's desire to accurately replicate the atmosphere of the Walled City is reflected in the arcade 's narrow corridors , electrical wires , pipes , postboxes , sign boards , neon lights , frayed posters , and various other small touches that provide an air of authenticity .