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DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

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**TAI KWUN CENTRE
FOR HERITAGE & ARTS**
HERZOG & DE MEURON

U-THANT PLACE
RT+Q ARCHITECTS

BULGARI HOTEL SHANGHAI
ANTONIO CITTERIO PATRICIA VIEL

TAIPEI NANSHAN PLAZA
MITSUBISHI JISHO SEKKEI

**ARCHITECTURE
FOR THE SILVER
GENERATION**

HOW THE BUILT
ENVIRONMENT
SHOULD ADAPT



/ WORDS MICHELE KOH MOROLLO

NEW LEASE OF LIFE

A cluster of important historical buildings in Hong Kong undergoes adaptive reuse under the hands of Herzog & de Meuron to become a heritage and arts complex.



In Hong Kong's densely packed, bustling Central and Western District, an important 14,500m² site that has been vacant since 2006 now sees new life as a historical and cultural oasis within the heart of the city.

Built in 1841, this compound, which sits on valuable hillside real estate in between the city's vibrant nightlife hub of Lan Kwai Fong, the commercial streets of Soho, the Central

business district, and Mid-Levels residential area, was formerly the British colony's main police station, magistracy, and the Victoria Prison.

Commissioned by the Hong Kong Jockey Club, designed by Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron, and christened Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage & Art, the revitalised, 27,000m² compound is the largest restoration project ever undertaken in Hong Kong.





/ LEFT

The new volumes cantilever above the walls of the heritage buildings, keeping a minimum distance to the adjacent structures, and maximising the buildable floor area.

/ 1

The old prison buildings are concealed behind the wall, while the new aluminium-clad buildings rise up to establish a new relationship to the site.



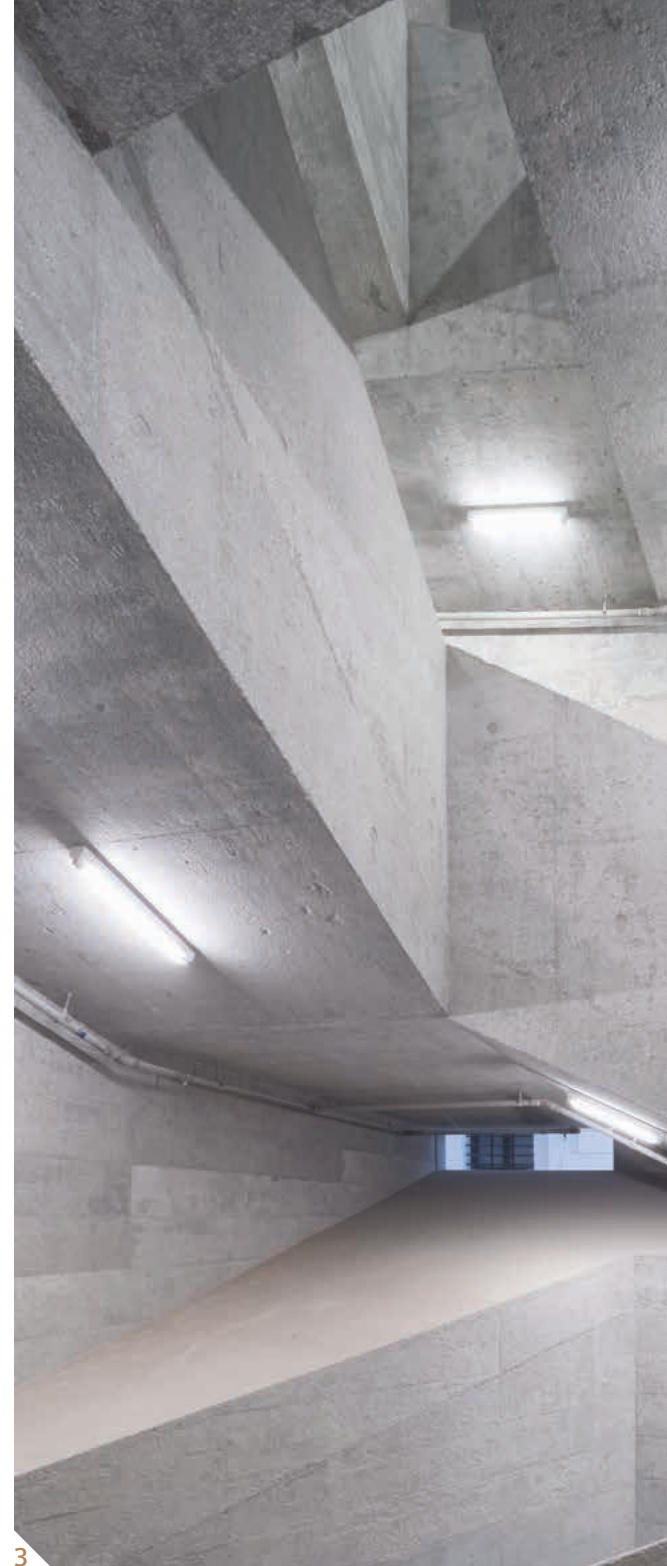
SOMETHING OLD

The Centre, which took close to eight years and approximately S\$665 million to build, consists of two large courtyards, 16 carefully-conserved heritage buildings, and two new, bold and modern volumes that rise over the old prison walls.

The old and new spaces and outdoor areas are all linked by walkways and sculptural concrete staircases.

Set to become a hub for musical and theatre performances, and home to commercial art galleries such as Tai Kwun Contemporary, as well as non-profit art spaces, the Centre includes two large courtyards – the Parade Ground, and the Prison Yard – that offer the rare opportunity to create social, performance or exhibition spaces outdoors in a compact and dense urban area.

“Our goal is to preserve the openness and distinct character of both [courtyards] and to re-activate them for public use as a new type of urban found space. These spaces will define the site physically and programmatically as places of gathering, cultural exchange, leisure, and respite,” says Jacques Herzog, one of Herzog de Meuron’s founders.



Several of the site's historic buildings are located along the perimeter of the Parade Ground, which was conceived as a formal, public recreation and events space that offers direct access to the restaurants and shops on the premises.

The Prison Yard was transformed into an open public space dedicated to cultural programmes.

SOMETHING NEW

Two new volumes — one wing located along Old Bailey Street, and the other

along Arbuthnot Street — contain a gallery with a contemporary art space, called JC Contemporary, and an auditorium for the performing arts, film screenings and educational events, called JC Cube.

Both are clad in recycled cast aluminium “brick” units that give their façades a richly textured, almost futuristic appearance.

“The specific porosity, patterning, and expression of the facade unit is informed by the functional and environmental requirements of the uses within.

/ 2
New public and circulation spaces are created between the heritage buildings to bring them even closer to each other.

/ 3
Staircases connecting the old and new spaces are kept in their original, fair-faced concrete finish and appear like enormous sculptures.



The materiality of the cast aluminium units will have a distinctive roughness and texture breaking down the facade surface, which helps to reduce the reflectivity and glare during the daytime,” says Herzog.

“At night, light emitted from the building will be partially screened by the facade units, expressing the life of activities within but without creating light pollution.”

Tightly inserted within the granite walls of the existing colonial structures, the two new metallic volumes rise up amid the old historical buildings, providing dramatic contrast, while at the same time grounding the heritage structures better in their 21st century context.

“By cantilevering above the walls and keeping a minimum distance to the

adjacent structures, the buildable floor area is maximised while staying within the zoning envelope, and at the same time creating protective offsets from the surrounding historical buildings,” explains Herzog.

The buildings of the former police station sit on either street level, or above the compound’s granite walls and can be seen from beyond the boundaries of the compound.

The prison buildings on the other hand are hidden behind the walls.

The new aluminium-clad volumes neither assert their authority like the police buildings, nor shy away from the city like the prison buildings, but instead establish a new relationship to the site by hovering just above the wall.

**TAI KWUN CENTRE
FOR HERITAGE & ARTS**

LOCATION / HONG KONG
COMPLETION / 2018
SITE AREA / 14,500M²
GROSS FLOOR AREA / 27,000M²
ARCHITECT / HERZOG & DE MEURON
EXECUTIVE ARCHITECT / ROCCO DESIGN ARCHITECTS
CONSERVATION ARCHITECT / PURCELL
CONTRACTOR / ARUP
C&S CONSULTANT / ARUP
QUANTITY SURVEYOR / RIDER LEVETT BUCKNALL
LANDSCAPE / AECOM

/ 4

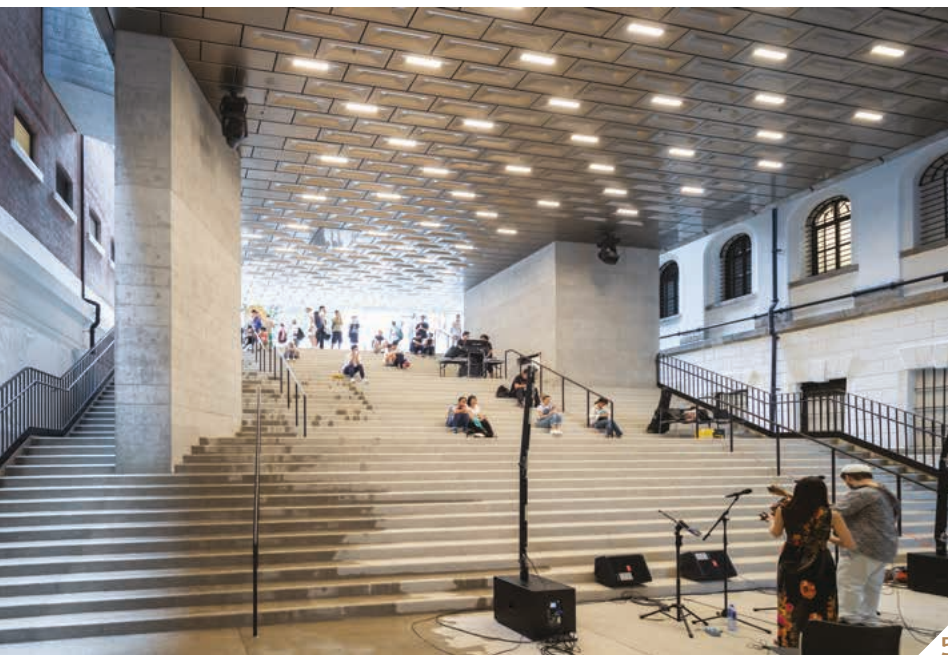
The old and new spaces and outdoor areas are all linked by walkways and sculptural concrete staircases.

/ 5

A gallery and auditorium are located within the new raised volumes, so the architects could incorporate new public and circulation spaces below to create places for gatherings and activities.



4



5

By raising the new volumes, the architects could incorporate new public and circulation spaces below to create generous protected places for gatherings and activities.

The elevation also established a new East-West pedestrian connection from Old Bailey Street to Arbutnot Road, and enabled the two volumes to become new markers drawing attention to a formerly closed-off part of the city.

"What we have done in Hong Kong is to transform a former Police Station into a Cultural Centre. In Hong Kong and also in Mainland China, this is still a totally new approach to architecture – an unusual thing to do because normally old buildings and entire neighbourhoods are being removed and being replaced by new ones. The principle is *tabula rasa*," says Herzog.

