

Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware

茶文物館 茶具



English Version
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旗杆屋

Flagstaff House

The Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware is converted from a historical building to be utilised as a museum premise. Until 1978, Flagstaff House or Headquarter House was the office and residence of the Commander of British Forces in Hong Kong.

Constructed between 1844 and 1846, the two-storeyed edifice (Fig. 1) is the oldest domestic building in Greek Revival style extant in Hong Kong. Over the years, it had undergone several extensive renovations. In the 1860s, cast-iron posts were erected to support the verandahs (Fig. 2), which were rebuilt some time before 1897, to form an iron structure incorporating bathrooms (Fig. 3). Major alterations took place before the Second World War. The verandahs were rebuilt to their present form (Fig. 4). The main door was shifted to a new location and a porch was built at the entrance. A central staircase was installed to replace the two staircases at the ends of the corridor. The floors were covered by concrete. During the Second World War, the roof sustained bomb damage and was repaired.

In April 1981, Flagstaff House (Fig. 5) was put under the management of the Urban Council with a view to converting the building into a museum devoted to the subject of tea culture in China. The conversion was carried out with three objectives. Firstly, the building was to be structurally reinforced so that it would be safe to open to the public. Secondly, the interior was to be modified so that it could accommodate the facilities necessary for a modern museum. Thirdly, in view of its intrinsic architectural interest, the building was to be restored as far as possible to its original mid-nineteenth-century appearance. With the achievement of these objectives, we have preserved a typical example of western architecture in a style popular in Hong Kong in the mid-19th century, which at the same time functions as a modern museum (Fig. 6). On 14 September 1989, the museum was gazetted a historical building under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance. After the opening of the Hong Kong Park in late May 1991, the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware becomes an attractive spot within the park.



1
Headquarter House (Northern & Eastern facades)
at its completion in 1846
Drawing by Murdoch Bruce, colour lithography
by A. Maclure

2
Flagstaff House (Eastern & Southern facades)
in the 1860s
(Note that cast-iron posts were erected to support
the verandahs)
Artist unknown, watercolour on paper

3
Flagstaff House in the 1890s
(Southern & Western facades)
(Cast-iron posts can be more clearly seen)

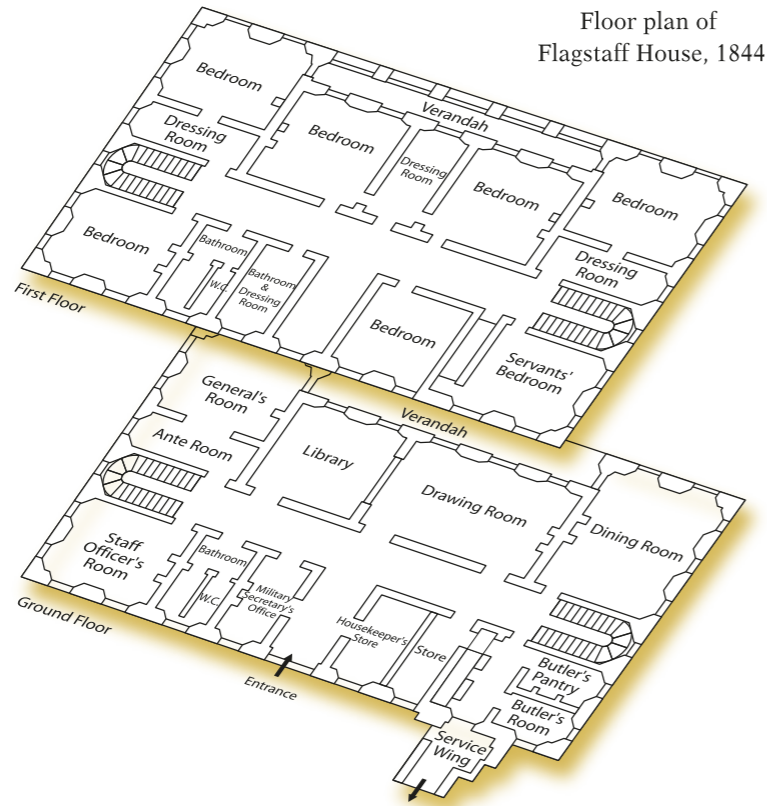
4
Flagstaff House in 1938
(Southern & Western facades)
(Note that iron posts were replaced by concrete
columns)

5
Flagstaff House in 1981
(Southern & Western facades),
vacated for conversion into the Museum of Tea Ware

6
Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware in 1984
(Note that the porch at the main entrance was
demolished)

Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware

茶文物具館



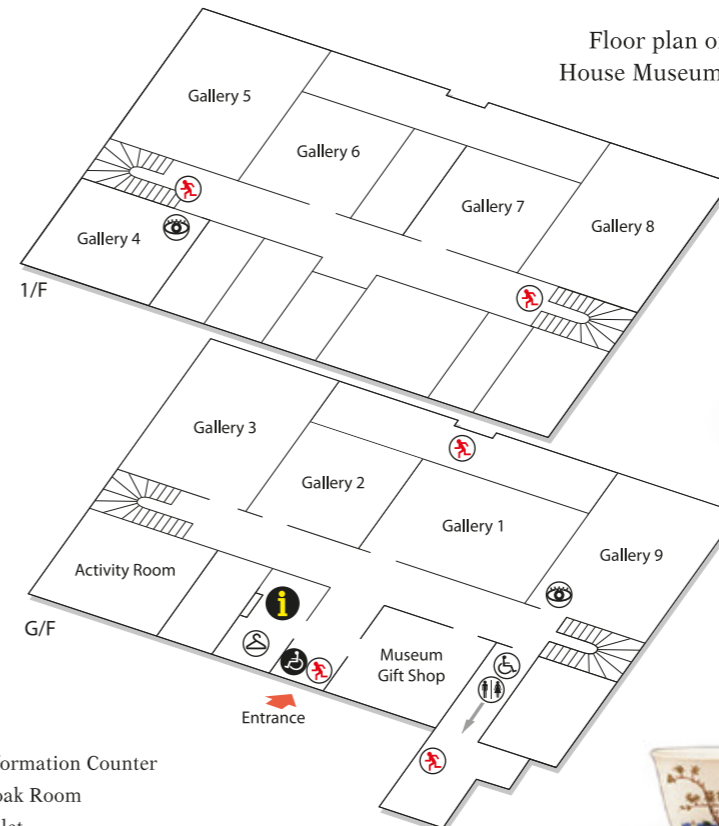
Floor plan of Flagstaff House, 1844

As a branch of the Hong Kong Museum of Art, the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware was opened on 27 January 1984 and specialises in the collection, study and display of tea wares. The core of the museum collection is donated by Dr. Lo Kwee-seong (1910 –

1995), including about 600 pieces of tea wares dating from Western Zhou (11th century B.C. – 771 B.C.) up to the 20th century.

Dr. Lo founded the Hong Kong Soya Bean Products Company Limited in 1940, which later became the Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd. Dr. Lo started the business with the hope that the nutritious soya bean beverage would strengthen China's commercial development and the health of his fellow-countrymen.

Apart from his great achievement in business and commerce, Dr. Lo was devoted to Chinese art with a special preference for Yixing pottery. He began collecting different types of tea wares since the 1950s. With the intention of stimulating general awareness of and interest in Chinese tea culture and ceramic art, Dr. Lo generously donated his tea ware collection to the Urban Council of Hong Kong in 1981.



Floor plan of Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware

- Information Counter
- Cloak Room
- Toilet
- Toilet for People with Disabilities
- Entrance for People with Disabilities
- Emergency Exit
- Starting Point of the Exhibition



8
Teapot in shape of square seal wrapped in cloth
Mark of Molin Tang (Xiang Yuanbian) (Shi) Dabin



9
Twelve cups with Representing Flowers of the Months in *wucai* enamels
Mark of Kangxi in underglaze blue
Kangxi period (1662 - 1722), Qing dynasty

Exhibited at the ground floor galleries is the permanent exhibition "Let's Talk about Tea Through the Ages" which introduces the various methods of tea preparation throughout the history of China. Tea vessels (Figs. 7 to 9) dating from the Tang dynasty (618 – 907) to the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911) are on display. Temporary exhibitions on topics related to tea ware are arranged throughout the year at the first floor galleries.

Apart from the exhibition galleries, the Museum Gift Shop offers for sale different kinds of tea vessels, tea leaves, art books and exhibition catalogues.

7
Song dynasty tea wares in the museum collection
From left to right:
Cup and stand in *yinging* glaze,
Tea bowl with hare's-fur russet-brown markings in black glaze, Jian ware,
Tea bowl with moulded floral scroll design in celadon glaze, Yaozhou ware and
Ewer of oval shape with carved penoy sprays design in celadon glaze, Yaozhou ware





12
Palace bowl painted with scrolling vines and melons in underglaze blue
Mark and period of Chenghua (1465–1487), Ming dynasty

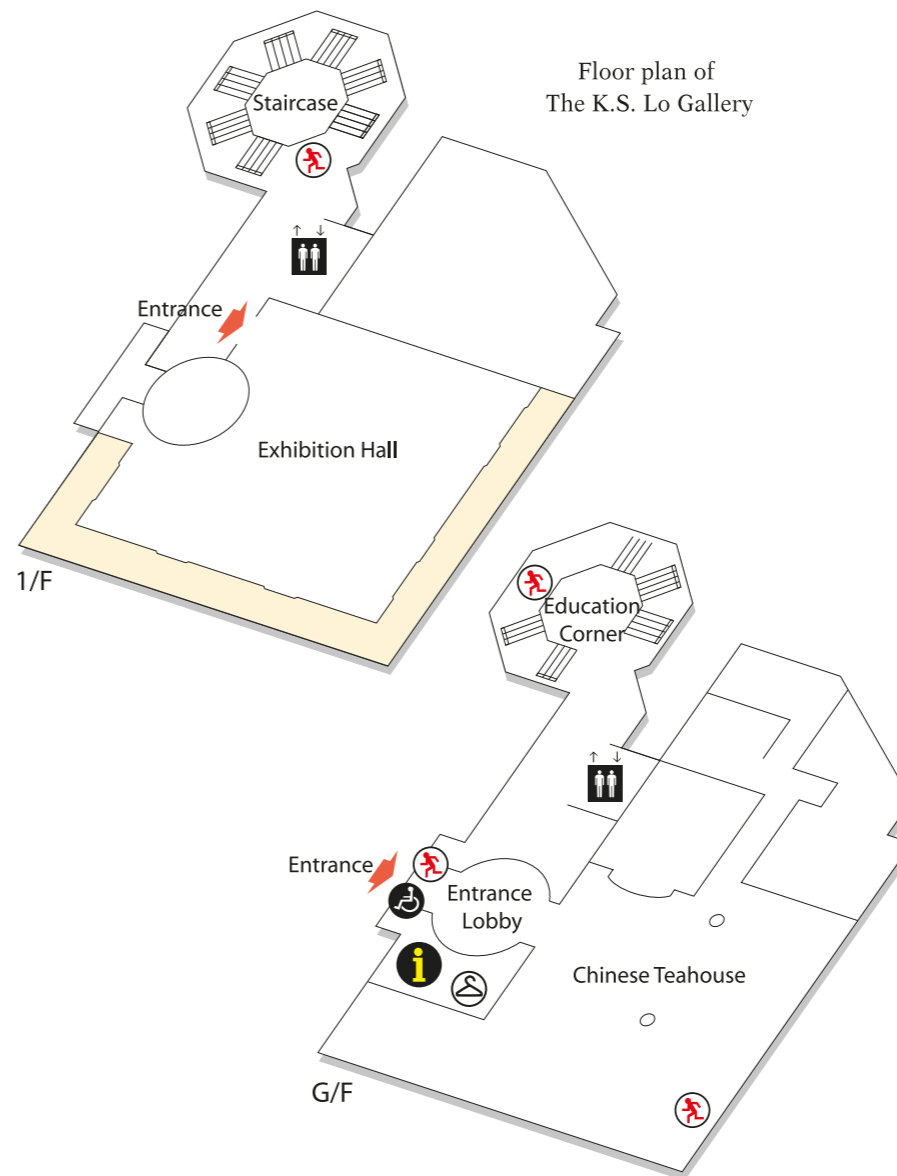
In 1994, The K.S. Lo Foundation donated an additional 25 items of rare Chinese ceramics and over 600 pieces of Chinese seals by noted artists to the Urban Council of Hong Kong. In order to house and display this valuable

donation, The K.S. Lo Gallery was constructed adjacent to the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware. The K.S. Lo Gallery, an extension of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, was officially opened to the public on 14 December 1995. This edifice, with a gross area of 600 square metres, provides an ideal venue for local and overseas visitors to comprehend and appreciate an assemblage of Chinese cultural relics and to enjoy a cup of Chinese tea.

The major architectural feature of The K.S. Lo Gallery is its exterior outlook which matches closely with the classical western style of the Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware, while its interior setting and installation such as doors, windows, furniture and display cases are in traditional Chinese-style design. At the upper floor gallery of this two-storeyed building, all the donated ceramics dated from the Song dynasty (960 – 1279) to the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644), and selected seals dated from the late Ming dynasty (mid 17th century) to the 20th century are on display (Figs. 10 to 13). The Chinese teahouse at the ground floor provides visitors with a venue for the enjoyment of a cup of Chinese tea and the appreciation of tea demonstration.



13
Square seal with four incised characters
Carved by Cheng Sui,
Ming dynasty



- Information Counter
- Cloak Room
- Lift
- Entrance for People with Disabilities
- Emergency Exit





10
Brush washer, Ru ware
Late Northern Song dynasty
early 12th century



11
Longquan celadon
mallet-shaped vase
Southern Song / Yuan dynasty,
13th – early 14th century


Access

MTR  Exit C1 of Admiralty MTR Station

Bus  12, 12A, 23, 23B, 40, 103

(Bus routes are subject to change without prior notice)

 Hotel

 Car Park

Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware,
a branch of the Hong Kong Museum of Art

Address

10 Cotton Tree Drive, Central, Hong Kong
(inside Hong Kong Park)

Website

<https://hk.art.museum>

Opening Hours

Daily: 10:00am – 6:00pm

Closed on Tuesdays (except public holidays)

Closed at 5:00pm on Christmas Eve and

Chinese New Year's Eve

Closed on the first two days of Chinese New Year

Free Admission

Enquiries

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康樂及文化事務署
Leisure and Cultural
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茶具文物館
FLAGSTAFF HOUSE MUSEUM OF TEA WARE

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