

the view and leased it for his family. His successor, Thomson, enjoyed his stay in the house and coaxed the Canadian Government to purchase it as the Official Residence in 1965. The wide, uninterrupted view of the harbour and the sloping gardens made the house one of the most desirable residences in the area.

The Mid-levels had been susceptible to landslides since the area was developed in the 1920s. In 1925, 1941, 1950 and 1962, landslides destroyed several buildings, and caused many deaths. Extensive construction to fill rising demand for luxury flats, combined with heavy rainfall that summer, had undermined the foundations of all the buildings along Severn Road, and the residents were becoming more apprehensive as the summer continued. On May 11th, the Public Works Department advised the Commissioner to evacuate the Official Residence, as the

underpinnings of the entire building were seriously threatened. Through a torrential downpour, personal effects and furniture were removed to safekeeping, and the Waleses returned to the Mandarin Hotel to wait out events.

The Public Works Department confirmed that the foundations of the house had been undermined by excavations at a building site directly below the garden. On June 16th, following a week of heavy rain, a landslide took away the north side of the garden, and the Canadians were warned that the house above was in danger of sliding into it. As more heavy rain was predicted, salvaging the Residence was given up as a lost cause. While this in no way compares to the misfortunes of others in Hong Kong during that disastrous summer, when more than 100 people lost their lives and thousands were made homeless, it is nonetheless a memora-



From 1972 to 1986, the Commission occupied two floors in ubiquitous Asian House – next to the 'E' in the sign.