

Historic Building Appraisal

Po Kok Monastery

Ma Wo, Tai Po

Po Kok Monastery (寶覺禪院) in Ma Wo (馬窩) village, Tai Po was a private monastery set up by a Lee Suk-chee (李淑慈) who converted the building from a private residence into a monastery for the worship of Buddha. She and her followers continued to make use of the building until the 1980s when she vacated it and stayed in a home for the elderly until now. Ma Wo is not an indigenous village and was settled by the Cheungs (張) from Polo (博羅) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the early 20th century. Lee came to the village in around the time of the Japanese Occupation and worked as a teacher after the war in the Pan Chung Primary School (泮涌公立小學) in Tai Po. Many children of Ma Wo were her students. At the time she had already been a member of the Ting Wai Monastery (定慧禪寺) in the southern end of the village.

***Historical
Interest***

The building was probably built in the 1930s as a residence. It is a simple two-storey structure in western style in a rectangular plan. Its façade is with grey Shanghai plaster finish whilst the other elevations are in plain finish. It is a residence in the form of a tenement house which front portion is flat-roofed and rear portion pitched-roofed. The building is characterized by its façade having a sizable porch on the ground floor and a balcony on the first floor. The entire house is without any decoration having only moulded lines on its walls, columns and gables.

***Architectural
Merit***

A rare building in Ma Wo.

Rarity

It is a building with little built heritage value. No renovation record can be traced. The building has been left vacated since the 1980s and is deteriorating.

***Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

Its past history as a residence and a private monastery has some local interest.

***Social Value,
& Local Interest***