

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 13 York Road
Kowloon Tong, Kowloon

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No. 13 York Road (約道) is believed to be constructed between 1932 and 1935 by the Kowloon Tong and New Territories Development Company Limited (九龍塘及新界建築公司). In August 1939, the plot of land known as “New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 2596” on which No. 13 York Road was situated, together with the house with a configuration similar to what we see today, was purchased by Tai Tak (戴德), alias Tai Tak Fu or Tai Yan-cheung as a residence of the Tai family. Tai Tak was the Resident Officer of the Chinese Consular Invoice Office in Hong Kong. After he passed away in 1944, the site was inherited by his wife and Tai Yan-ki (戴恩基). The latter was the Manager of China Merchant’s Navigation Co., Hongkong at that time. No. 13 is one of the few surviving original houses of the Kowloon Tong Garden Estate which was founded by Charles Montague Ede (義德) in 1922. *Historical Interest*

Kowloon Tong (九龍塘) was undeveloped before the 1900s. Its first major development was by a foreign building contractor, Charles Montague Ede. He formed the Kowloon Tong and New Territories Development Company Limited to handle a project which aimed to develop Kowloon Tong into a high class residential area. On 26 October 1922, the company reached an agreement with the government on this building scheme. The developed area, bounded by Boundary Street (界限街) in the south, Cornwall Street (歌和老街) in the north, the Kowloon Canton Railway (九廣鐵路) tracks in the west and Waterloo Road (窩打老街) in the east, consisted of an area of 74.5 acres (3,231,900 square feet). Formation of land levels, with storm water and sewage system, was carried out by the Public Works Department at the expense of the government agreed on in the development. The whole development was then referred to as the “Kowloon Tong Garden Estate” by the government. The estate was characterised by two-storey detached houses with gardens interspersed with public open spaces.

The design of No. 13 York Road looks modern with Art Deco features, which was popular in the 1930s. It is a three-storey house with an asymmetrical plan. It has terraces at roof level and first floor level. The elevations are made up of complicated compositions of cubic, curved and streamlined facades. Art Deco features include a ziggurat shaped gable on the front facade, vertical stripes, and zigzag and waveform motifs. Unfortunately the old Art Deco entrance gates have been removed. The garden wall has also been heightened but the period design has been kept. *Architectural Merit*

No. 13 York Road is not built to the typical designs of other houses found on the estate and is therefore quite a rarity. It does not appear to have been altered radically externally and therefore retains its authenticity. As a surviving example of a once popular design it is a valuable piece of built heritage.

**Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

The social value of the building is limited as it has remained as a family residence since it was built. Due to its prominent position at the corner of York Road it is quite well known in the area.

**Social Value
& Local
Interest**

The building is within walking distance of other historic buildings, such as Maryknoll Convent School (瑪利諾修院學校, Declared Monument), St. Teresa's Church (聖德肋撒堂, Grade 1), No. 2 York Road and No. 7 Norfolk Road (羅福道, both Grade 3).

Group Value