

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 9 Wo Liu Hang

Fo Tan, Sha Tin, N.T.

Wo Liu Hang (禾寮坑) is one of the villages in Fo Tan (火炭), Sha Tin, *Historical Interest* having a history of around one hundred years. The village was founded by the Laus (劉) who branched out from Lok Lo Ha (落路下) village in its northeast. **No. 9 Wo Liu Hang** was built as a residence in **1938-39** by **Mr Ko Hoi** (高開, alias Ko Lo Wa 高露華, c.1890-1988) who came from Guangzhou (廣州). Eventually **Mr Ko** operated a malt sugar factory in Wo Liu Hang, a farm and a fishing pond located in Tai Sang Wai (大生圍), the present day Fairview Park (錦綉花園) in Yuen Long, and a shop called Hop Ying Fung (合螢豐) selling paper offerings in Kwun Chung (官涌), Kowloon.

During the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), Ko Hoi and his family abandoned the house and moved to Yuen Long for fear of bandits and Japanese troops. But he continued to manage the farming business in Yuen Long and the shop in Kwun Chung. After the war, Ko and his family no longer lived in the house, but instead in a villa in La Salle Road, Kowloon Tong. On the other hand, he engaged in the manufacture of Chinese sausages and moon-cakes in Yuen Long.

No. 9 Wo Liu Hang was used as a school called Ka Wo Primary School (加禾學校) from 1945. It was the only school in Fo Tan before the establishment of Fo Tan Primary School (火炭公立學校) in Pat Tsz Wo (拔子窩) village in the west of Wo Liu Hang. At its peak Ka Wo Primary School had some 20 students studying in the ground floor of the house, while the teacher and his family lived on the upper floor. The School was forced to close in the late 1950s as it hanged the national flag of the People's Republic of China. After that, the students were transferred to Fo Tan Primary School.

The residential house is facing southwest with the hill at its back. It is a simple two-storey Chinese style building constructed of concrete and steel bars with its walls and columns to support the flat roof. Workers were employed from Kowloon for its construction whilst the two side blocks were built by local villagers. The two one-storey side blocks were constructed of mud bricks, lime and chopped straw with its walls to support their flat roofs. The three houses were built on a raised terrace accessed through a flight of six steps on their left. Their front is with a small front yard fenced off with a low surrounding wall with wire fence. The residential main building is with a verandah on the ground floor with a balcony on the upper floor at its front facade. At its roof edge is a stepped parapet wall. The building is without any *Architectural Merit*

partition on the ground and upper floors both are used as a living room cum bedroom. A staircase is on the left of the ground floor living room for access to the upper floor. The entrance of the building is on the left end of the front façade. The two side houses are small and narrow. The left one is with a kitchen, a storeroom and a bathroom each has its own entrance. The right one is with a storeroom, a study room and a maid's room each has its own entrance. The three houses are plastered and painted and the floors are with Canton tiles.

The shophouse style of the No.9 residential building is rather common in the old districts in Kowloon and Hong Kong Island like Sham Shui Po, Shanghai Street, Sheung Wan and Wan Chai. Such shophouse style, however, was not so common in the New Territories.

It has some built heritage value. The building has been left vacant for more than twenty years. It is deteriorating with overgrowths cover part of the structures. This would very much diminish the authenticity of the houses.

It is a residential building and was used as a school to remind the history of the village. Ka Wo Primary School was forced to close by the government in the late 1950s as it hoisted the national flag of the People's Republic of China.

Rarity

***Built Heritage
Value
Authenticity***

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