

Historic Building Appraisal
Pedder Building
No. 12 Pedder Street, Central, H.K.

Pedder Building (畢打行) was built in 1923 – 1924 by the architectural firm of Palmer and Turner. The building remained intact during the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 1945), and has always functioned as a commercial building for shops and offices. For instance, a dollar company, a bank, and the offices of shipping companies, airline agencies and The Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited had been housed there. *Historical Interest*

Well known figures in Hong Kong community have had associations with Pedder Building. The earliest recorded owner of the building was So Shek-chung (蘇石鍾); however, the ownership was soon transferred to Ng Wah (伍華, 1874 – 1950) in 1926. Starting as a foreman in the Hong Kong Royal Navy Shipyard, Ng Wah established a construction firm of Sang Tai & Co. (生泰建築) and eventually became a renowned contractor. In the twentieth century, he was in charge of many building projects, such as the construction of Queen Mary Hospital, Queen's Theatre and Yau Ma Tei Shelter. He was the Chairman of the Hong Kong Building Contractors Association (香港建造商會, 1936 – 1937) and served as its Permanent Honourary Advisor (永遠名譽顧問) afterwards.¹ During the Japanese Occupation, Ng Wah was a member of the Chinese Co-operative Council (華民各界協議會) founded by the Japanese in 1942.

From 1962 onwards, Pedder Building was owned by the late Henry Fok Ying-tung (霍英東, 1923 – 2006) and his family. Henry Fok was the Chairman of The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce (香港中華總商會, 1984 – 1988 and 1990 – 1994) and the Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (全國政協副主席, 1993 – 2006), for instance.

Pedder Building is a nine-storey building with a narrow frontage on Pedder Street (畢打街) and a long rectangular plan stretching back to Theatre Lane (戲院里). The architectural style of the building is Neo-classical with some Art Deco influence. The Pedder Street facade is strongly symmetrical made up of *Architectural Merit*

¹ Ng Wah was also a philanthropist. For instance, he served on the Board of Directors of the Tung Wah Hospital (1928 – 1929) and the Chairman of Po Leung Kuk (1934 – 1935).

a vocabulary of classical features including rusticated stonework, moulded cornices, giant pilasters and a central pediment supported on columns prominently displayed at third floor level. An unusual feature, once common in pre-war buildings, is the projection over the pavement forming a covered walkway or arcade for pedestrians.

As the sole remaining historical building on Pedder Street, it has rare built heritage value and remains fairly authentic in appearance at least externally.

Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

Due to its commercial associations, Pedder Building has both social value and local interest. Nowadays, it continues to serve as a commercial block and shopping arcade. A row of small stands and old stalls still survive along the narrow alley sandwiched between the building and the adjacent MTR station, which preserves some flavour of old times. They form a quite unique scene in the commercialised Central. It is remarkable that this old building still survives in the heart of Central.

Social Value & Local Interest

Pedder Building is in walking distance of other historic buildings, such as the old Dairy Farm Depot (舊牛奶公司倉庫), Bishop's House (會督府), Pottinger Street (砵甸乍街) (all Grade 1), Duddell Street Steps and Gas Lamps (都爹利街石階及煤氣路燈), and the exterior of the old Supreme Court (舊最高法院), the former French Mission Building (前法國外方傳道會大樓) and St. John's Cathedral (聖約翰座堂) (all Declared Monuments).

Group Value

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