

Historic Building Appraisal
Nos. 60A, 62, 64 and 66 Johnston Road,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong

The exact date of construction of these four shophouses on Johnston Road cannot be ascertained but they are believed to have been built around the **early 1920s**. **No.66 Johnston Road** is a pawnshop named “Wo Cheong Ngat” (和昌押) which was owned by the Lo family (羅氏). The Lo family is still operating over 20 pawnshops in the territory today. **No.64 Johnston Road** was first owned by Mr. Li Jowson. In 1966, the Yue Clan purchased this building and inscribed the name “The Hong Kong Yue Clansmen Association” (香港余氏宗親會) on the facade. **Nos.60 (now 60A)-62 Johnston Road** is largely altered and integrated into one unit which shares a common staircase in between as the access to the upper floors. They were first owned by Mr. Chee Guan Chaing and later owned by several owners after 1960s. The ground floors of these buildings were all used for retail trades.

*Historical
Interest*

Johnston Road originally was the Wan Chai waterfront, and it is now located several hundred metres northwards due to reclamation. Wan Chai is one of the earliest developed districts on Hong Kong Island since the British Occupation in 1841. It was also known as “Ha Wan” or “Lower Bay/ Circuit” (下灣／環) – one of the Four Circuits (四環), i.e. Lower Circuit, Central Circuit (中環), Upper Circuit (上環) and Western Circuit (西環).

These shophouses are built in the form of **Verandah Shophouse**. They are four stories high with the upper floor verandahs projecting over the pavement supported on columns to form a covered walkway in front of the ground floor shops. The façades are rendered and painted and display **Neo-Classical** influence in the simple design of the columns, the pediments at parapet level, and the regular arrangement of windows in the side elevation facing Tai Wong Street East (大王東街). According to typical shophouse design the plans are elongated with narrow frontages. The two pairs of shophouses each share a common staircase. The kitchens are located at the rear of the shophouses with chimneys carried up through the four stories to the flat roof. Some original green painted wooden windows still survive.

*Architectural
Merit*

Shophouses are becoming rarer each year due to redevelopment. Nos. 60-66 Johnston Road therefore are valuable pieces of built heritage. The authenticity and appearance of the front facades were marred by uncoordinated

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &*

alterations and additions such as enclosure of open verandahs and rooftop structures. *Authenticity*

The social value of the shophouse lies in the contribution it has made to urban development. The shophouse has evolved through several types. These particular shophouses are the early types and are part of the historical urban fabric of Wan Chai. They are part of the local scene and are a well known landmark in the area. *Social Value & Local Interest*

The surroundings, bustling with daily activities, include shops and old residential blocks which match the shophouses. The tramway along Johnston Road is also another important part of Hong Kong's heritage. Shophouses on Nos. 186, 188 and 190 Queen's Road East, Nos. 72, 72A, 74 and 74A Stone Nullah Lane (石水渠街), those on Nos. 2, 4, 6 and 8 Hing Wan Street (慶雲街), Old Wan Chai Post Office 舊灣仔郵政局 (Declared Monument), Hung Shing Temple (洪聖古廟) on Nos. 129-131 Queen's Road East and Wan Chai Market (灣仔街市) are other historic buildings in the surrounding area. *Group Value*

On the question of adaptive re-use, the shophouses fall within the Johnston Road Development Scheme. It has been renovated and will be opened as a restaurant in future. *Adaptive Re-use*