

Historic Building Appraisal

Nos. 8 - 9 Tai Pak Terrace, Kennedy Town, Hong Kong

The slope near Belcher's Street and Sands Street, where Tai Pak Terrace is located, has served as a residential area for the local Chinese population since the 1920s. The site was originally home to the Tai Pak Lau amusement park (太白樓), which was opened in 1915 by Li Po-lung (李寶龍), son of the well-known and influential 19th century Chinese land developer Li Sing (李陞). The name Tai Pak Lau reflected Li Po-lung's admiration for Li Bai (李白) (also known as Li Pak, Li Tai Bai or Tai Pak), the renowned poet of the Tang dynasty (618 - 907). After the amusement park closed in 1924, the site was redeveloped into a residential area, which includes present-day Tai Pak Terrace.

*Historical
Interest*

The buildings at Nos. 8 - 9 Tai Pak Terrace are a pair of tenant houses that were constructed in the 1920s. They have been owned since 1927 by the Hong Kong Society for the Promotion of Virtue (香港道德會), which was inspired by Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism and was founded in 1924 to promote the study and practice of ethics and virtues. The founding president and the vice-president of the society were the renowned local businessmen and community leaders Au Lim-chuen (區廉泉) and Tu Ser-dun (杜四端), both of whom served as directors of Tung Wah Hospital (東華醫院總理) from the 1910s to the 1920s. The society used all of the rooms at Nos. 8 - 9 Tai Pak Terrace as their offices and venue for religious activities from 1927 to 2007. The buildings were vacated for renovation work in 2007.

The tenant houses at Nos. 8 - 9 Tai Pak Terrace are a pair of four-storey buildings. The existing buildings have undergone substantial renovations. Except for the Art Deco styled iron railings on the balconies and the washed granolithic border on the ground floor that have been recovered and reinstated, all of the decorative features in the interior, including the patterned wall tiles and ceiling mouldings, have been removed in the course of the renovation work. Moreover, the original internal staircase leading to the upper floors has been demolished and replaced by a new staircase with aluminium railings and concrete steps constructed at the rear of the building. Externally, one of the entrances in the façade of No. 8 has been replaced by a window as part of the renovation, while a window in the façade of No. 9 has been converted into an entrance and the original entrance has been converted into a window. The original washed granolithic border has been relocated and reinstated, with its surface painted. With substantial alterations carried out both internally and

*Architectural
Merit
Authenticity
& Rarity*

externally, the authenticity of Nos. 8 - 9 Tai Pak Terrace has been greatly compromised.

The social value of Nos. 8 - 9 Tai Pak Terrace lies in the role the buildings played for 80 years as the office of the Hong Kong Society for Promotion of Virtue, which provided a wide range of social services, including free education and medical services in its early years. ***Social Value & Local Interest***

Lo Pan Temple (魯班先師廟) (Grade 1) and Kwong Yuet Tong Public Office (廣悅堂公所) (Grade 3) are located on nearby Ching Lin Terrace. Other historic buildings in the vicinity include the Ex-Western Fire Station at 14 Belcher's Street (前西區消防局) (Grade 2) and the building at No. 9 Ching Lin Terrace (青蓮臺 9 號) (Grade 3). ***Group Value***

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