

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 207 Des Voeux Road West,
Sai Ying Pun, Hong Kong

This four-storey shophouse appears to have been built in the early 1920s but it is not known if it replaced an earlier building on the site. It was originally located in waterfront prior to subsequent reclamation works along the shore. It was used for both commercial and residential purposes. The ground floor shop has been a winery (known as Hau Sang Winery 厚生酒行) since at least 1946 before its use as a fashion dress shop in recent times. Commercial records indicate that the shophouse has been occupied by two mat shops named Kwong Lee Mat Shop (廣利蓆庄) and Wo Sang and Co (和生蓆庄) during the 1930s and 1950s.

*Historical
Interest*

The shophouse is situated at the corner of Des Voeux Road West and Centre Street, Sai Ying Pun. Des Voeux Road West was the original waterfront praya until the 1900s, when reclamation gradually extended the seafront northwards. The road was renamed after Sir William Des Voeux, governor from 1887 to 1891. In 1904, all reclamation work was completed, leaving Des Voeux Road West a block away from the harbour.

The shophouse is four stories high with a narrow frontage facing Des Voeux Road West and an elongated plan stretching along Centre Street terminating in a rear annex and small backyard. The upper floors have enclosed front verandahs jutting out over the pavement supported on stone columns to form a covered walkway or pedestrian arcade. Each floor also has three cantilevered balconies on the Centre Street elevation. The architectural style is simple Neo-Classical featuring rusticated stone columns, urn-shaped balustrading to verandahs and a wide overhanging cornice at parapet level at the front.

*Architectural
Merit*

There are not many shophouses now left in Sai Ying Pun, so that No. 207 Des Voeux Road West must be considered a rare piece of built heritage. Its overall appearance is fairly authentic apart from modern aluminum windows which can be considered as reversible. Some of the classical urn-shaped balusters have been replaced with plain square ones, and most of the ornamental balustrades to the side balconies have been replaced with modern versions. Fortunately three of the old balcony balustrades still exist to show what they looked like originally. The façade has been recently painted and externally at least the building appears to be well maintained.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of the shophouse lies in its historical role in the commercial development of Sai Ying Pun, and the cheap living accommodation it provided for the working class. As a reminder of the old days, and an example of the once common Verandah Type shophouse, it has local interest as well as being a part of Hong Kong's history.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Post-war shophouses and medium-rise structures can be found nearby as Sheung Wan is one of the early developed districts. So the subject building is considered to be matched with this early-developed district. The shophouses at Nos. 145, 147, 149, 151 & 153 Third Street and the old residences at Nos. 9-10 Yu Lok Lane (餘樂里) (which are recorded items of the Antiquities and Monuments Office) are within walking distance from the subject building.

Group Value