

Historic Building Appraisal
Residence of the Financial Secretary
No. 45 Shouson Hill Road, Hong Kong

The present day house of the Residence of the Financial Secretary, now *Historical Interest* situated in No. 45 Shouson Hill Road, was built in **1935**. The house was originally owned by **Sir Shouson Chou** (周壽臣) for his own use. At the end of 1938, the house was sold to **Mr. Heinrich Corra**, the Manager of **L. Rondon and Co. Importers and Exporters**, as a villa. In July 1947, the house was bought by the Hong Kong Government from Mr. H. Corra and became the official residence of successive Financial Secretaries thereafter. The first Financial Secretary who moved into the building was **Sir Charles Geoffrey Shield Follows**, the first Financial Secretary after World War II. The first Chinese Financial Secretary to stay in the Residence was Donald Tsang, who assumed office from 1995 to 1997.

The house is a good example of **Neo-Georgian** style with plain façades *Architectural Merit* and minimal ornamentation. The construction is believed to be brick walls and reinforced concrete floor slabs. The house is two stories high with a flat roof and a plain projecting cornice at parapet level. The plan is asymmetrical with an arcaded entrance porch at the north-east corner. The windows are not sash windows as usually found in classical architecture, but transomed windows with muntins. The arcaded verandahs have been enclosed with elegant glazing and French windows opening on to a terrace. A first floor bedroom balcony has classical style balustrading. The whole building is painted white and in its superb garden setting has an elegant palatial appearance. There is a detached garage and servants' quarters in the grounds, and also a tennis court.

The building is fairly unique and of an architectural style rarely found in Hong Kong. Although not that old, it is a valuable piece of real estate and has obvious built heritage value. The house has undergone numerous renovations to suit the requirements of successive Financial Secretaries. It is well maintained and alterations, such as enclosure of the verandahs, have been carried out sympathetically. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

The social value of the house lies in its historical role as the official Residence of the Financial Secretary where many important decisions affecting Hong Kong must have been taken. It is part of the Shouson Hill environment and one of the original Shou Shan Village houses. Of local interest are a wartime blockhouse outside the main entrance gate and a 1930s style bridge over a small valley in front of the house. *Social Value & Local Interest*

The building is surrounded by excessive greenery on a hillside. The area is made up of low density high grade residences. The overall atmosphere matches with the heritage quality of the building.

Group Value

As far as is known there are no plans to change the present use of the house. The question of adaptive re-use does not therefore arise.

Adaptive

Re-use