

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 2 Hing Hon Road, Hong Kong

Erected around 1916, No. 2 Hing Hon Road (興漢道) is a typical Chinese tenement house with a European-style façade reflecting Western influence on architecture in Hong Kong during the colonial era. Not much seems to be known about its early history, but since 1959 it has been about the property of a Leung family.

**Historical
Interest**

The history of Hing Hon Road dates back to the 1860s when a large plot of land (I.L. 757) on a government lease of 999 years, on which Hing Hon Road stands, was purchased by a Chinese individual named **Choy Akün** on 7 January 1862. It is not unknown as to what was built on I.L. 757 immediately after the purchase, but evidently, **Choy Akün** was also the landlord of “Rose Villas” which used to be located at No. 66 Bonham Road (I.L. 760).

Since its location is sandwiched between the Chinese quarter down the slopes and the wealthy Western quarter in its immediate neighbourhood, Hing Hon Road was a favourite residential area for well-to-do Chinese. A few prominent Chinese families once inhabited on this road. They include, for example, the Chaus (i.e., the ancestors of Chau Kai-bong (周啓邦) who is the son of Chau Sik-nin (周錫年, 1903 – 1985, prominent businessman and social leader) and the grandson of Chau Siu-ki (周少岐, acting Legislative Councillor in the years 1921, 1923 and 1924).

No. 2 Hing Hon Road is a three-storey house in the **Georgian Revival** style. The street façade is faced with stucco grooved to imitate stonework. The ground floor has two arched window openings and a simple doorway with an architrave and segmental hood moulding resembling a pediment. The upper part of the façade has two rows of rectangular windows separated by giant pilasters. There are plain apron panels beneath the windows. A projecting band course marks the first floor level. There is a projecting cornice at parapet level with a parapet wall formed of projecting posts and recessed panels. A single rainwater downpipe serves to drain the roof. The façade is in good repair and well maintained.

**Architectural
Merit**

Due to redevelopment all around, No. 2 Hing Hon Road has now become a rare surviving piece of built heritage. It is a good example of its style and worthy of preservation. Unfortunately the original windows and door have been replaced by modern steel and aluminum framed units but this is considered to be reversible. The original neighbouring buildings on either side have been demolished and redeveloped.

**Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

The social value of this tenement building lies in the visual reminder it provides of the type of house that was built in the early 20th century as affluent Chinese moved up to the Mid-Levels area. It is definitely of local interest.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

It is physically close to the University of Hong Kong where declared monuments such as the Main Building (本部大樓), Hung Hing Ying Building (孔慶熒樓) and Tang Chi Ngong Building (鄧志昂樓) stand. Other buildings in the surroundings graded by the Antiquities and Monuments Board include the Fung Ping Shan Building (馮平山樓) and King's College (皇仁書院). No. 19 Hing Hon Road is another item of historic interest nearby.

Group Value

A suitable adaptive re-use may be difficult to find for this old residential building. Its best use would be to continue as a residential building.

***Adaptive
Re-use***