

Historic Building Appraisal
Nos. 177 and 179 Prince Edward Road West
Mong Kok, Kowloon

Prince Edward Road was laid out in 1925. The two building lots were separately purchased in 1930 by Wong Kit Chau (黃潔秋) and Wong Yiu Nam (黃耀南) and the shophouses were constructed in 1937. Like other shophouses in Hong Kong, Nos. 177 and 179 were built for commercial-cum-residential use. *Historical Interest*

In 1943 the two properties were re-registered by the Japanese authorities. At the time, it was recorded that No. 177 suffered from minor damage. After the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 1945), the surroundings of Nos. 177 and 179 dramatically changed. Many pre-war buildings in Mong Kok were replaced by high-rise blocks, but Nos. 177 and 179 Prince Edward Road West still survive.

Prince Edward Road was originally named Edward Avenue (宜華徑) in order to commemorate the Prince of Wales (威爾斯親皇) who visited Hong Kong in 1922. In 1924, the road was renamed as Prince Edward Road (英皇太子道). The Chinese name was changed from “英皇太子道” (英皇 literally meaning royal) to “太子道” after the Japanese Occupation.

These two semi-detached four storey high shophouses are located at the corner of Prince Edward Road West (太子道西) and Fa Yuen Street (花園街). They are verandah type shophouses with their front verandahs projecting out over the pavement supported on columns to form a covered walkway. Originally open, the verandahs have been enclosed by steel framed and aluminum framed windows. The facades are finished with Shanghai plaster and incorporate Art Deco architectural details such as curved corners, vertical streamlined mouldings, stylised dentil mouldings, and a stepped ziggurat pediment at parapet level with a “draped curtain” motif panel underneath it. The rear and side elevations have balconies and verandahs and projecting bays. These elevations are rather disfigured by unsightly plumbing and water staining. Many of the windows appear to be modern aluminum replacements. A timber staircase with an Art Deco ornamental balustrade can be seen inside No. 179. *Architectural Merit*

Shophouses are becoming rarer year by year due to redevelopment. The design of Nos. 177 and 179 Prince Edward Road West with 1930s Art Deco decorative features as well as the carved elevation is quite rare for shophouses still retaining in Hong Kong. Nos. 177 and 179 are therefore rare pieces of built heritage. Their original appearance has unfortunately been marred by enclosure of verandahs and replacement windows. No. 179 has undergone adaptive re- *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

use, with the facade and verandah retained.

The social value of the shophouse lies in the contribution it has made to urban development. It has evolved through several types. ***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The shophouses are within walking distance of the Main Building of Diocesan Boys' School (男拔萃書院主樓), the Old Kowloon Police Headquarters (舊九龍警察總部), and Nos. 190, 192, 194, 196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 210 and 212 Prince Edward Road West (all Grade 2). ***Group Value***