

Historic Building Appraisal
Nos. 118 and 120 Blue Pool Road,
Happy Valley, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Built between 1939 and 1941, Nos. 118 and 120 Blue Pool Road (藍塘道) are in fact two semi-detached houses which form one building. Prior to the advent of the British, a Chinese village named Wong Nai Chung Village (黃泥涌村) had been in existence at Happy Valley since the Qianlong era (乾隆年間, 1736-1795). In 1923, when the colonial government embarked on a programme of redevelopment in Happy Valley, the Village was subsequently demolished. The development of Happy Valley into an upper-class residential area continued after the Second World War. A series of three-storey houses began to line the streets as more well-to-do people who used to live in Caine Road and Mid-levels moved to Happy Valley.

*Historical
Interest*

The land was sold by public auction in 1937 to Mr. K.S. So on behalf of Eu Tong Sen Limited, a company held by the renowned Eu (余) family headed by Eu Tong-sen (余東旋). Mr. Eu was the founder of Eu Yan Sang (余仁生), a leading producer and distributor of traditional Chinese medicine and healthcare products. He was not only a successful businessman in the pharmaceutical industry, but also a large landowner and estate developer in Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Singapore.

The houses form a three-storey apartment block built in the International Modern design of the 1930s. Facing the elevated road, the north elevation is characterized by streamlined curved facades, curved corners, porthole windows and horizontal hood mouldings. The walls are smoothly rendered and painted off-white. A T-shaped annex at the rear houses an open staircase and rooms and toilets which are probably servants' quarters. The roofs of the various parts of the houses are flat. The plan of the building has a central axis but is asymmetrical for reasons unknown although this does give two types of floor plan for the apartments. Vehicular access is provided by an elevated road on the north side connecting to Blue Pool Road.

*Architectural
Merit*

The houses are a rare example of an apartment block with International influence still remaining in the neighbourhood. Most of the surrounding buildings have been rebuilt due to rapid urban development in the area. The houses are a good example of apartment blocks with built heritage value. The exterior of the houses is fairly well maintained and appears to have retained much of its original appearance.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

Built for residential use, Nos. 118-120 have limited social value, but their interesting architectural style gives them local interest. Being a typical example of buildings demonstrating pre-war development in the district they also have local interest.

Other historic buildings in proximity include the premises at Nos. 5 and 7 Broom Road (蟠龍道) (Grade 3) which were also owned by Eu Tong-sen (余東旋), and Nos. 4, 6, 8 and 10 Green Lane (箕璉坊) (Grade 3).

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