

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 12 School Street,
Tai Hang, Causeway Bay, H.K.

The building at No. 12 Street was constructed in **1949** to replace an earlier pre-war building named Hung Shing Yi Hok (孔聖義學, literally, Confucius free school for the poor) founded in the late Qing Dynasty. This school was funded by donations of local inhabitants. The most generous patron of the school was **Mr. Lau Chu-pak** (劉鑄伯) (1867-1922), an eminent leader of the community. Before his appointment as unofficial member of the Legislative Council in 1914, he had served as chairman of Po Leung Kuk Board (保良局) and chairman of the board of directors of Tung Wah Hospital (東華醫院).

***Historical
Interest***

The historical association between Tai Hang and the Confucius free school for the poor is still remembered today in the street name **School Street** (書館街), which was opened up in the 19th century. Unfortunately, the school building was severely destroyed during the times when Hong Kong came under Japanese rule (1941-1945). After the war, the school was rebuilt on the same site through local donations. The school rehabilitation ceremony in 1949 was presided by **Mr. Aw Boon Haw** (胡文虎) (1882-1954), a Chinese entrepreneur and philanthropist then residing in his Haw Par Mansion (虎豹別墅) in Tai Hang.

A stone tablet (dated 1949) commemorating the re-opening of the school in 1949 is now affixed on the external wall of the building. The Chinese characters on the tablet were the calligraphy of **Mr. Li Wai-tong** (李惠堂) (1905-1979) the then head of the Tai Hang Kaifong Welfare Association (大坑坊眾福利會). Born in Tai Hang, Mr. Li joined South China Athletic Association (南華體育會) at the age of 17 and eventually became a football icon in China. He played football for 22 years, and in that time he lighted up the tournament with his dazzling skills and was crowned as the “King of Football in China” (中國足球球王).

Throughout the years, the building at No. 12 School Street has been used for educational purpose. It was once the campus of Tai Hang School until 1978. Then, it was the campus of Confucian Society Victoria English Primary School (孔聖會維多利亞英文小學) from 1984 to 1999. After that, it became the office of Eastern District Children’s Choir, Eastern District Arts Council (東區文藝協進會東區兒童合唱團) from 2007 to 2010.

The architectural style of the building is International Modern, the main features of which are cubic shapes, flat roofs, white walls, metal windows, horizontal projections (typhoon canopies) and tubular steel railings. Windows are fitted with ornamental ironwork grilles. Internally, the rooms are plain and devoid of architectural detail. In short, the building is utilitarian and functional according to the dictates of modernism.

***Architectural
Merit***

Closely associated with famous historical figures of different generations such as Mr. Lau Chu-pak (劉鑄伯) (1867-1922), Mr. Aw Boon Haw (胡文虎) (1882-1954) and Mr. Li Wai-tong (李惠堂) (1905-1979), the site and the building thereon has great historical value. The 1949 building is well maintained and as no major alterations apart from a few window replacements appear to have been carried out, it retains its authenticity as a structure built in the late 1940s.

***Rarity &
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

The social value and local interest lies in the building's educational service for the community. This particular building is of the post-war type and is part of the historical urban fabric of Tai Hang. It is probably of interest to historians and conservationists.

***Social Value &
Local Interest***

No. 12 School Street has group value with the other old buildings in its environs, such as the Tin Hau Temple of Causeway Bay (銅鑼灣天后古廟, Declared Monument), Lin Fa Temple (蓮花宮, "Lotus Palace") and No. 4 Second Lane in the same Tai Hang area.

Group Value

Perhaps, the best use is for the building to continue to be used for educational purpose.

***Adaptive
Re-use***