

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 2 Hing Wan Street,

Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Not much seems to be known about these four shophouses. The area itself however has quite a few interesting historic buildings such as Yuk Hui Temple (玉虛宮) in Lung On Street (龍安街), old shophouses in Stone Nullah Lane (石水渠街), and Wanchai Market in Queen's Road East. There are also old disused wartime ARP tunnels in the vicinity. *Historical Interest*

Nos. 2 & 4 Hing Wan Street (慶雲街) may date back to the early 1900s, but Nos. 6 & 8 were built in the **mid-1920s**. Nos. 2-8 (Inland Lot no.776) is held under Government Lease and the lease term is 999 years from 8 January 1862. During the Japanese Occupation, the buildings were re-registered to impose taxation on the owners. According to the war-time records, the building suffered certain damage during the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945).

The shophouses are three stories high with small rectangular plans and kitchen annexes at the rear. A scavenging lane runs along the back of the shophouses. The shophouses are paired, with Nos. 2 & 4 sharing a façade and Nos. 6 & 8 sharing another façade. They have shared wooden staircases and pitched roofs. The first and second floors jut out over the pavement supported on columns which form a covered walkway or pedestrian arcade. The ground floors are used for shops, whilst the upper floors are used as living accommodation. The two front facades are similar in design with **Neo-Classical** features such as pediments, ornamental balustrading to the parapet, and stylised motifs applied as decorations. The end elevation corresponds with the front façade, but the rear kitchen annex façades are very plain. Three of the shophouses appear to be well maintained externally at least, the remaining one standing out as a bit of an eyesore. *Architectural Merit*

As shophouses are now becoming quite rare, the Hing Wan Street shophouses must be considered as valuable built heritage worthy of preservation. The appearance of the shophouses appears to be fairly authentic, apart from modern aluminum windows which can be regarded as a reversible alteration. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

The shophouses on Hing Wan Street, together with the shophouses on Nos.72, 72A, 74 and 74A Stone Nullah Lane (石水渠街), form a group of very significant traditional tenement houses in the area. They are also physically close to other historic buildings such as Old Wan Chai Post Office 舊灣仔郵政 *Social Value & Local Interest*

局 (Declared Monument), Hung Shing Temple (洪聖古廟) on Nos. 129-131 Queen's Road East, and Wan Chai Market (灣仔街市) on No.264 Queen's Road East. ***Group Value***

These rather small shophouses with their narrow frontages do not allow much scope for adaptive re-use. No doubt they could be restored and upgraded to current standards. The best use appears to be that for which they were intended: shops on the ground floor and storage or residential accommodation on the upper floors. ***Adaptive Re-use***