Historic Building Appraisal

No. 44 Conduit Road, Mid-Levels East, Hong Kong

Historical Interest

According to aerial photo record, the building at No. 44 Conduit Road was already in existence in May 1949, although the exact year of construction of the building is not known. Land records show that this landed property was registered in the Land Office as early as 1861. And, the lease on this landed property commenced in 1913 and this must have been one of the early lots (but not the earliest) to be sold on Hong Kong Island; however, it is not known when the lot was first built on.

Over the years, the building has changed hands several times. The first buyer of the building after the Second World War was Hilda Tse Kau Chan (陳自球), a medical practitioner at Pedder Building, who owned it from 1952 to 1975. Chan was one of the 14 Hong Kong University students who had passed their final examination in December 1941, by the time Hong Kong surrendered to Japan on Christmas Day that year. They were awarded war-time degrees at a special congregation held on 1 January 1942.

The uses of the building have also changed over the years. It housed a supermarket in the 1980s and a Western restaurant from around 1989 to 1996. In 1996, a supermarket was opened there after the closure of the restaurant. Later in the early 2000s, it was found that the building accommodated a branch office of a property agency. This use is continued today.

Architectural Merit

The building exhibits a number of Neo-classical features including an imitation stone plinth, a projecting band course at first floor level, ornamental apron mouldings under the first floor windows, a continuous stepped label moulding over the window heads, and a moulded projecting cornice below the parapet wall. The walls are stuccoed and painted and the roof is flat with a chimney stack and staircase bulkhead. The building is rectangular in plan with a projecting annex at the rear. Some original features of the central staircase have been preserved.

Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

Due to redevelopment in the area, No. 44 Conduit Road is now a rare example of the early Western style buildings that were once there. Unfortunately the authenticity of the building has been diminished by the addition of conduits, lighting and signage to the front facade and the ground floor windows have been enlarged.

As a surviving example of the early Western style buildings that used to stand on Conduit Road from the 1940s to the present day, the building is of local interest, and thus holds some social value. ***Social Value & Local Interest***

Ohel Leah Synagogue (猶太教莉亞堂) (Grade 1) and London Mission Building (倫敦傳道會大樓) (Grade 2) are within walking distance from No. 44 Conduit Road. ***Group Value***

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Aerial Photo of the Hong Kong Government

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