

Historic Building Appraisal
Lung Wah Yuen
No. 83 Fung Chi Tsuen, Wang Chau, Yuen Long

Lung Wah Yuen (龍華園) was founded in the 1930s by **Wong Jyun-ciu** (黃玄潮), a Buddhist nun of Ling Wan Tsz (凌雲寺) and her colleagues. The house was built as a private Buddhist nunnery for nuns and their adopted daughters. It was managed by private individuals and run for the religious benefit of a small number of occupants. Lung Wah Yuen was also a place of refuge for orphans and homeless women. Although most of the nuns who founded Lung Wah Yuen have passed away, it is still used as a gathering place and home for the women who were orphans brought up by the nuns.

*Historical
Interest*

The nunnery is a two-storey grey brick house in a mixed Chinese and Western style known as **Chinese Eclectic**. The main part of the house has a pitched roof, gable end walls and regularly spaced windows in the rear and side walls. The windows are steel framed with granite surrounds and projecting hood mouldings. The front façade consists of three-bay two-storey open verandahs with brick columns, vertical balustrades, and a flat roof with an ornamental parapet wall featuring curving pediments decorated with plaster reliefs and ball shaped finials to the parapet posts. This façade has recently been painted in rather unsuitable lurid colours. There is a small one-storey kitchen and toilet and toilet annex at the south end of the nunnery.

*Architectural
Merit*

Internally the floor plans are divided into three bays by cross walls, and further divided by wooden partitions to form various rooms used as bedrooms, worshipping rooms and living rooms. Two wooden staircases serve the upper floor. Decorations are minimal, but diamond-patterned and brick-patterned lattice frames are installed above doorways, and there are some decorative mouldings under beams on the verandahs.

Although this mixed style of houses is not uncommon in rural areas, it is not often that this style is used to build a nunnery. It has built heritage value and together with the Tin Hau Temple next door has group value. The authenticity of the nunnery is not in any doubt however the recent external painting work has drastically altered its previous venerable appearance and it now looks rather lurid and garish. With modern techniques it would be possible to remove the paint from the brickwork provided the bricks are not too soft and porous.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of the building lies in its role as a nunnery and as a refuge for orphans and homeless women. The nuns also provided education in rendering, studying and chanting of the Buddhist scriptures and texts of

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

monastic rules for the orphans. Lung Wah Yuen also served in the past as a venue for ceremonies and rituals, such as births, weddings and traditional Chinese festivals.

Lung Wah Yuen still functions as a gathering place and nunnery for the present owners and occupants who are the founding nuns' orphans. As far as is known they have no plans to sell the house and move elsewhere. *Adaptive Re-use*