

Historic Building Appraisal

“Chu Wan”

No. 4 Mount Austin Road, The Peak, Hong Kong

Situated among the slopes of Mount Austin Road, the building known as “Chu Wan” (岫雲) is accessed through an inclined pathway. According to land records, the Rural Building Lot No. 112, where “Chu Wan” stands at present, was held under the Government Lease. The earliest recorded owner was **Alfred Bryer**. Although records indicate that the site was already occupied as early as 1904, judging from its appearance, it is likely that “Chu Wan” was erected in the 1930s, when Modernist styles such as Bauhaus, Art Deco, Moderne and International styles were created and became popular. Possibly, there may have been an earlier building on the site which it replaced.

*Historical
Interest*

No. 4 Mount Austin Road is built in the **International Modern** style. The building is composed of irregularly placed cubic forms with projections and setbacks. Walls are rendered and painted with large rectangular windows protected from the weather by projecting cills and hood mouldings. The roof is flat with a plain projecting parapet coping all round the building. There is a bow-fronted window on the southeast corner. The house is situated on a platform cut into the hillside and supported by a granite retaining wall which has an interesting arrowhead bastion projecting from it. The house is approached by an inclined driveway leading off Mount Austin Road. Ornamental ironwork balustrading and entrance gates can be seen here which do not match the style of the present house. The entrance to the house is through a gatehouse cum garage built in modern style with screen block side walls. A flight of wide steps leads up to the house.

*Architectural
Merit*

All the signs are that the present “Chu Wan” replaced an earlier building on the site. Nevertheless the present building is a good example of its style with built heritage value. As access was not obtainable the authenticity of the present building cannot be determined. It appears that windows are modern aluminum units.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

As a private residence “Chu Wan” does not have much social value to the community; however it does represent the style of living that was once popular on the Peak. It is close to some other historic buildings and therefore has group value as well as local interest.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

Sited among pleasant greenery, “Chu Wan” connects with other residential villas in the area. It is also physically close to historic items such as the Peak

Group Value

Depot (山頂倉庫), Old Peak Café (舊山頂餐廳) and Peak Tramways Company Ltd. (山頂纜車有限公司, recorded item). Other historic buildings on the Peak include the Former Gate Lodge (舊總督山頂別墅守衛室, Declared Monument), Former Peak School (前山頂學校), Peak Police Station (山頂警署) and Matilda and War Memorial Hospital (明德醫院).

As plans of the building are not available it is difficult to suggest an *Adaptive* adaptive re-use. It seems to be quite a large building which could possibly be *Re-use* converted into flats.