

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 7 Shek O Road,

Shek O, Hong Kong

The bungalow at No. 7 Shek O Road was constructed in 1928-29 by the Shek O Development Company Limited. Established in 1921, the Company consisted of 44 English shareholders who were architects, accountants, solicitors and medical practitioners. Most shareholders had very well-off backgrounds such as Godfrey Vernon Bird, Herbert William Bird and Lennox Godfrey Bird, the architects of Palmer and Turner; Cedric Blaker, the Director of the Messrs. Deacons Hong Kong; Frederick Charles Hall, the merchant of the Jardine, Matheson & Company Ltd., and Colin Cunningham Scott, the merchant of the Butterfield & Swire Hong Kong.

*Historical
Interest*

The bungalow was part of the first phase of a development scheme of Shek O Development Company, which purchased a large piece of paddy and agricultural land in 1922 from the Shek O villagers to develop the area into a European residential resort with a golf course, clubhouse and other recreational facilities. Developed through the 1920s, many western style country bungalows were built along the golf courses of the Shek O Country Club (石澳鄉村俱樂部), most of which still exist today.

It was believed that Denis Henry Blake, the solicitor of Shek O Development Company Limited, leased the bungalow at No. 7 Shek O Road shortly after its completion around 1928-29. Nowadays, the bungalow is used as a weekend retreat of the staff of The Hongkong & Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) including its chairman and senior executive.

The bungalow is built to an L-shaped plan with a single-storey wing and a garage wing. The walls are finished with painted rough cast rendering, and the pyramid pitched roof tiled with Chinese pan-and-roll tiles, with two tall square chimney stacks. The front entrance porch is set in the internal angle formed by the two wings. The original windows which were probably standard metal casements have been replaced with uPVC modern units. The simple design of the bungalow can be categorized as **Arts and Crafts**. The use of white walls and Chinese pan tiles give the bungalow the appearance of a villa on the Mediterranean.

*Architectural
Merit*

The bungalow is quite a rare type of building in Hong Kong and the Shek O resort development was an innovative concept. The development is part of the history of Shek O and therefore this bungalow together with its neighbours must be considered as having built heritage value and group value. Alterations include the replacement of the windows and modernisation of the bathrooms, toilets and kitchen.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of this bungalow to the local community is limited as the Shek O resort development was designed exclusively for Europeans. It is of local interest as part of the development, but the concept of a reserve for Europeans only belongs to the colonial era. Nevertheless it is a part of Hong Kong's history.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

The Shek O area is mainly a high grade residential, resort and integrates with this country villa's physical and spiritual quality. The surroundings are a rural area of nice green hills and sea views remote from the city. This area is mainly low density residential including some buildings of Arts and Crafts, pre-modern or early modern style.

Group Value

The best use for the bungalow is probably for it to continue to be used as a residence. The site is remote, private, quiet and surrounded by a green landscape environment so that the bungalow would make an ideal retreat.

*Adaptive
Re-use*