

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 9 Ching Lin Terrace, Kennedy Town, Hong Kong

It is believed that No. 9 Ching Lin Terrace (青蓮臺) was built around the late 1920s. Ching Lin Terrace was laid out as one of the streets of a residential area near Belcher's Street (卑路乍街) and Sands Street (山市街), and was said to be situated in the earliest part of Kennedy Town, which was developed for residential purposes. The developer was Li Po-lung (李寶龍), a Chinese businessman who had constructed Tai Pak Amusement Park (太白遊樂場) on the hillside above Belcher's Street. The park opened for business in the early twentieth century and had extensive gardens, teahouses, trinket stalls. However, the park was not a great business success and eventually closed down. The site was then redeveloped into a residential area. Li Po-lung showed respect to Li Bai (李白), a famous poet in the Tang dynasty (唐朝, A.D. 618-907). In order to commemorate Li Bai, he named three streets of the area as Hok Sz Terrace (學士臺), Ching Lin Terrace (青蓮臺) and Hei Wong Terrace (羲皇臺), which were respectively drawn from Li Bai's official title (翰林學士), alias (青蓮居士) and poems.¹ Ching Lin Terrace was formally named in the Government Gazette of 29 January 1926. According to a government record, fourteen houses, Nos. 1 to 14, had been built at Ching Lin Terrace by June 1926. *Historical Interest*

According to Land Registry records, No. 9 Ching Lin Terrace was in the ownership of Kwan Yan-ming in 1932. Later on, the ownership of the building was divided into three parts over the years.

No. 9 Ching Lin Terrace is a narrow fronted elongated three-storey residence with a roof top structure. The walls are rendered and painted with regularly spaced windows. The front facade has cantilevered projecting balconies with ironwork balustrading at each floor level. The main entrance door is made up of a pair of narrow glazed and panelled wooden doors and a rectangular fanlight with diagonal glazing bars. The door surround is fairly plain but there is an ornamental plaster panel decorated with exquisite tassels over the doorway. Panelled doors and fanlights compatible with the design of the main entrance doorway are also identifiable on the front facade at the second floor level, although they might have replaced the original ones. All these serve to enhance the aesthetics of the building. The roof of the house is flat and is used as a roof terrace. *Architectural Merit*

¹ For example: 李白《戲贈鄭溧陽》：「陶令日日醉，不知五柳春。素琴本無弦，漉酒用葛巾。清風北窗下，自謂羲皇人。何時到溧裏，一見平生親。」

Over time, Ching Lin Terrace had undergone great change as the whole series of residences which looked like No. 9 had been demolished. The building is the only one of its type now left there. As it is representative of the early development of the area, it is considered to have built heritage value. It is believed that the balustrades to verandahs and to roof are not original and have been replaced with metal railings. Although replacement windows, typhoon canopies and surface mounted conduit can be seen on the facade, the overall historic appearance has been retained.

***Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

The social value of the house is rather limited as it has only been used for residential purposes. The complete absence of vehicles led to Ching Lin Terrace and the surrounding areas being a very pleasant and quiet residential area, in sharp contrast to the densely crowded Belcher's Street directly below.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The building has group value with other historic buildings, including Lo Pan Temple (魯班先師廟, Grade I) and Kwong Yuet Tong Public Office (廣悅堂公所, Grade 3).

Group Value

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