

Historic Building Appraisal

Hung Hom (Three Districts) Kaifong Association

No. 66 Gillies Avenue South, Hung Hom, Kowloon

Built in 1954, the building situated at No. 66 Gillies Avenue South, **Historical Interest** Hung Hom, Kowloon is the base of the Hung Hom (Three Districts) Kaifong Association (the “Association”) (紅磡三約街坊福利會). At that time, the Association set up a kindergarten on the ground floor and a public library on the first floor of the building.

The village of Hung Hom, previously called “赤壠村” (Chik Hom Chuen), was recorded in *Xin'an Gazetteer* (《新安縣志》), published in 1819¹. It was a small agricultural village with inhabitants mainly surnamed Tsang (曾) and Lee (李)². After the establishment of the Union Dock Company in Hung Hom in 1864, which later amalgamated with the Hong Kong and Whampoa Dock Company in 1870, and the opening of the Green Island Cement Company in the area in 1898³, the population grew dramatically due to increased employment opportunities from these large-scale industries and other smaller factories set up in the area⁴. The construction of Hok Un Power Station between 1919 and 1921 further attracted more Chinese migrants to the area.

Hung Hom Sam Yeuk Kung Sor⁵ (紅磡三約公所) was set up in 1902 to provide welfare services for the residents of three nearby districts, viz. Hung Hom, To Kwa Wan and Hok Un (Yuen) (鶴園⁶). In 1904, Hung Hom Sam Yeuk Kung Sor opened the Hung Hom Kai Fong Free School (紅磡街坊公立義學) near the Kwun Yam Temple (觀音廟). In late 1940, a new school building

¹ Xin'an County roughly followed the administrative boundaries of modern-day Hong Kong and the city of Shenzhen. *The Map of the Sun-On-District* by Simeone Volonteri in 1866 was the first to indicate the word “紅壠”, which is the earliest record of Hung Hom in literature.

² The village was composed of forty-four premises held under thirty-four individuals, of whom eleven bore the surname Tsang and nine bore the surname Lee. Near the village was 31 *mow* (畝) of land under cultivation. These were also largely held by the Tsang and Lee families. (Carl Smith, James Hayes, “Hung Hom: An Early Industrial Village in Old British Kowloon”, *Journal of the Hong Kong Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol.15 (1975), p. 319)

³ The Green Island Cement Company was established in Macao and moved its factory to Hung Hom in 1898. Its huge factory once had a 3,000-member workforce.

⁴ The Whampoa Dock was essential to the development of the Hung Hom community; in its heyday, it employed more than 7,000 people.

⁵ There are two spellings of the English translation for 公所 used by government departments: kung sor and kung sho.

⁶ Also called “鶴園角”.

was planned for construction on land lot H.H.I.L.275, which was granted to the *kaifong* of Hung Hom. The operation of Hung Hom Sam Yeuk Kung Sor came to a pause during the Japanese Occupation period (1941-1945), and the planning and construction of the new school building was also affected.

Hung Hom Sam Yeuk Kung Sor was reorganised as Hung Hom (Three Districts) Kaifong Association in 1952. Special conditions were imposed on the usage of the land lot H.H.I.L.275: in addition to providing education, public social services to Hung Hom *kaifong* should be provided. Thus, a scheme of setting up a public library was adopted. The building was completed in 1954. At that time, the non-profit Hung Hom Kaifong Association Kindergarten (紅磡街坊會幼稚園) opened on the ground floor of the building, while the first floor was used as a library and the office of the Association. Moreover, in different eras, a vocational training centre and a youth centre were opened in this building to serve the Hung Hom neighbourhood.

Today, a kindergarten and a children development centre are open on the ground floor and first floor of the building, respectively, while the daily routine services of the Association are now performed at the annex building next to the Kwun Yam Temple.

Designed by Hazeland & Co. Architects (希士倫則師行) and constructed by Hop Hing Company (合興公司), the Hung Hom (Three Districts) Kaifong Association is a three-storey building constructed with reinforced concrete. ***Architectural Merit***

Located at the junction of Gillies Avenue South and Station Lane, a splayed entrance gateway stands at the southwest corner of the site, echoing the street intersection point. Resting on top of three granite steps, the entrance gateway is composed of rounded columns supporting a lintel with Chinese inscriptions “紅磡三約街坊會公眾圖書館” (literally means “Hung Hom Kaifong Committee Public Library”) and “華民政務司麥道軒” (literally means “by Secretary for Chinese Affairs David MacDougall”). Flanking the entrance gateway is a boundary wall.

Following a function-oriented approach with minimal decorative ornaments, the building is an exemplar of 1950s form-follows-function architecture. Prominent horizontal bands are featured at each storey level, with the Chinese characters “紅磡三約街坊會” (“Hung Hom (Three Districts) Kaifong Association”) in Chinese calligraphy typeface inscribed above the uppermost horizontal band. The side elevation simply consists of a plain

painted façade punctuated by windows. The internal walls are also generally rendered and painted. At the southwest setback corner near the building entrance, there are the foundation stone laid on 19 December 1953 by Social Welfare Officer Kenneth Keen (乾瑾鼎) of the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs and the terrazzo finished plaque with the Chinese inscriptions “合興建築公司承建” (constructed by Hop Hing Construction Company). The different levels of the building are connected by two flights of staircase; the internal one features a terrazzo parapet wall.

Although the building has been repainted and refurbished for several times, its original design is still discernible. The exterior does not appear to have been altered significantly, aside from the replacement of windows. The interiors, however, were extensively refurbished in its conversion to a modern kindergarten and children development centre.

***Authenticity &
Rarity***

The building is a witness of the development of the Hung Hom community that used to fulfil a rare library function offered by a *kaifong* association. It is an interesting example of *kaifong* welfare utility architecture constructed in the 1950s. Whilst sharing the simplistic design and Chinese calligraphy typeface for the *kaifong* association name plaque inscription common to other *kaifong* welfare associations, the entrance gateway - standing for approximately 70 years - is an uncommon feature among them.

In the building, the Association set up the first district-level public library in Hong Kong. The building also provided adolescents and students with a good place to read and study, since the living environment of most people at that time was crowded or poor. The opening of a kindergarten in the building contributed to the provision of early childhood education in the area. The building itself was completed through various means of fundraising practices including Cantonese opera charity performances and donations from the public, especially neighbours in the area. The building thus reflects community cohesion.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

In addition, the office of the Association has been housed in the building since its completion, offering a variety of social services to the neighbourhood community. In the 1960s, the Association planned to set up additional offices in the district. One of the offices in To Kwa Wan was opened in 1968 to facilitate residents in the area to contact the Association.⁷ Currently, the Association mainly provide services at the annex building next to the Kwun

⁷ 「紅磡三約街坊會北段辦事處成立」，《華僑日報》，1968年1月9日。

Yam Temple. The building testifies to the development of Hung Hom district and the Association pre se, and to the improvement of education and welfare services in the area, and it continues to serve the community today.

Kwun Yam Temple (Grade 1) at Station Lane is a short distance from ***Group Value*** this building. Adjacent to the building, the Hung Hom Clinic is converted from the Hung Hom Maternity Home and Clinic set up by the Association in 1959.

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Historic Building Appraisal

“Birds Bridge”, Queen's Road West, Hong Kong

“Birds Bridge” is the colloquial name that local residents use to refer to the roadway that runs up the small slope from Queen’s Road West to the Sai Ying Pun Jockey Club Polyclinic.¹ It features two inclines that meet in the middle to create the shape of an arch, which is supported by retaining walls of granite blocks underneath, all of which gives it the appearance of a bridge. *Historical Interest*

A survey map from 1843 provides the first known reference to a path that ran from Queen’s Road up to a building named Edger,² later known as Edger’s Bungalow. The government purchased the two-storey building for \$10,000 in 1859 and converted it into the Government Civil Hospital. A lock hospital, specialising in the treatment of venereal diseases, had already opened in the vicinity in 1858.

After Edger’s Bungalow was destroyed by a typhoon on 22 September 1874, the GCH was moved temporarily into the Hotel d’Europe³ on Hollywood Road. An application to build a new lock hospital on the site on which the GCH had stood was then approved by the government. However, the hotel housing the GCH burned down on 26 December 1878. Patients were transferred to the new Lock Hospital the following day, and its premises were taken over by the GCH in 1879.

At the time that the GCH was moved into the new Lock Hospital building, the small road from Queen’s Road (now Queen’s Road West) was in a poor condition: it had been allowed to fall into disrepair, rubbish was dumped along the sides, while coolies treated it as a public latrine, leaving it smelly and dirty as a result.⁴ The inclined-roadway leading up to the GCH from Queen’s Road was renovated and the adjoining granite rubble masonry walls

¹ The polyclinic, which opened in 1960, is located on the site of the former Government Civil Hospital (GCH).

² The Edger’s Bungalow that appeared in the 1843 survey map once belonged to Joseph Frost Edger, a leading British merchant in China and Hong Kong and one of the first unofficial members of Hong Kong’s Legislative Council. He managed the trading firm of Jamieson, How & Co., which maintained a godown that was connected to Queen’s Road by a path.

³ Located at 2 Hollywood Road behind Victoria Gaol, Hotel d’Europe was in business until 1874 when the owner went bankrupt, the hotel closed and the property was taken over by the Hong Kong government, which later converted it into a civil hospital. The building burned down in a fire that broke out in the city at Christmas in 1878.

⁴ Colonial Surgeon Annual Report 1879, Hong Kong Sessional Papers, 1880.

as they stand today were built in 1881. An entrance lodge and gates on the roadway running from Queen's Road to the hospital were constructed around late 1882 and 1883. In addition, retaining walls, a ramp and drainage channels were constructed and the lower end of the roadway was renovated under the same tender.

Known as a trough closet in the early days, a public toilet that contained 38 seats and two urinal stalls was constructed in 1911⁵ underneath the "bridge". Now filled in, five ventilation openings supported by granite windowsills facing Queen's Road West can be found in the retaining wall.

There are different stories that are told about the origin of the colloquial name "Birds Bridge". Some long-time residents recount that the slope used to be home to a bazaar selling birds and bird food, while others say it was named after the large flocks of wild birds that inhabited the wooded areas nearby.⁶

Dating back to the late 19th century, "Birds Bridge" also has historical interest thanks to its close connection with the different hospitals that it has provided access to over many years.

"Birds Bridge" is not in fact a bridge, but a structure combining a wide inclined public road for vehicles (in the past) comprising its eastern section and a narrower inclined pathway for pedestrians making up its western section, supported by two sections of retaining wall. The "bridge" extends along the south side of Queen's Road West from no. 106 at the eastern end to the eastern border of no. 136 at the western end. It is approximately 140 metres in length, 18 metres in width at its widest point and about 4 metres above road level at its highest point at the entrance to the polyclinic.

*Architectural
Merit*

Beneath the roadway is a curved masonry retaining wall built of uncoursed random rubble with low granite piers at each end. Dressed, saddleback granite blocks top the wall stem as capping. Granite is not only a local material that is readily available in Hong Kong, but also the best-known hard igneous rock used in construction in England, which may have contributed to its selection for building the wall. The granite blocks of the wall stem do not have a uniform shape or size, but were nevertheless laid and arranged to keep long vertical joints to a minimum and to distribute pressure

⁵ Public Works Department Report for 1911, (Appendix P), P. 34.

⁶ Neither of these stories can be verified. No official written records have so far been found which refer to 'Birds Bridge,' and only oral evidence seems to be available.

over the maximum area possible. The pier at the western end is simply a plain granite block with no ornamentation, while the one at the eastern end is topped with a pyramid-shaped column cap.

The old masonry retaining wall leading up to the entrance of the polyclinic is still in place. Also built of random granite rubble, it includes an ornamental pier at one end. This pier, which once served as the base for a lamp post, features the most ornamentation of the wall piers. On each of the three outward-facing sides is a recessed panel trimmed with mouldings and decorated with diamond rustication at the centre.

The roadway is now surfaced with concrete paving. Although the paving has been relaid from time to time to allow the underground utility infrastructure to be repaired or replaced, the two inclines still retain their original general appearance. The western section of “Birds Bridge” comprises the pedestrian path, which today is flanked by pipe railings and has a surface water channel on the side adjoining the retaining wall for drainage. Moreover, the modern cement pointing that was introduced in order to repair the arch now dominates the appearance of the wall. In addition, weep holes – which were not originally provided – were built into the wall for drainage. All these later additions diminish the authenticity of the site to some extent.

***Authenticity
& Rarity***

The “Birds Bridge” is a surviving infrastructure work that bears witness to the early development of Sai Ying Pun as well as the transformation of civil engineering techniques. The tangible traces left from the former underground trough closet also qualify the “Birds Bridge” as an important piece of evidence marking the development of public health and hygiene in Hong Kong. Although the window openings and sills left by the trough closet contribute to the value of the “Birds Bridge”, they also altered the original masonry arrangement, with some parts of the wall now coursed rather than uncoursed.

The social value of “Birds Bridge” lies in the role it has played in providing access for more than one and a half centuries from Queen’s Road West to the old GCH and the Lock Hospital in Hong Kong’s early years and the Sai Ying Pun Jockey Club Polyclinic today. A renowned landmark in the district, it has long formed part of the original streetscape along this historical section of Sai Ying Pun and has valuable local interest as well as social value for the local community.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

There are several historic buildings and declared monuments in the vicinity, including Old Tsan Yuk Maternity Hospital (Grade 1), Main Block, Tung Wah Hospital (Grade 1), Main Building and Staff Quarters, Old Lunatic Asylum Chinese Block (Grade 2), the façade of the Old Mental Hospital (declared monument) and the Old Pathological Institute (declared monument). ***Group Value***

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Historic Building Appraisal

Village House, No. 19 Muk Wu, Ta Kwu Ling, New Territories

Built in the 1920s, the village house at no. 19 Muk Wu in Ta Kwu Ling is **Historical Interest** one of the few surviving traditional vernacular houses in the village. The house reflects the traditional self-sufficient lifestyle of villagers in the past.

Muk Wu is a walled village in Ta Kwu Ling in the northern part of the New Territories. It was first recorded in the 1819 edition of the *Xin'an Gazetteer* as Muk Wu Wai (木湖圍), but its history dates back further to the Zhengde period (1506-1521) of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) when the To (杜) clan, originally from Jiangxi province, moved south and settled in the area. After establishing the village of Muk Wu, the clan was forced to move inland by the "Evacuation Edict" in the early years of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911) and did not return until the edict was rescinded. In addition to the To clan, Muk Wu is also home to members of the Wong (黃) and Yam (任) clans, which later settled in the village.

Similar to other villages located in the northern area of Hong Kong, Muk Wu was often threatened by settlers from the north and it therefore joined with other villages in nearby districts to establish a mutual defence alliance called the Ta Kwu Ling Luk Yeuk¹ (打鼓嶺六約) during the Qing dynasty.² The need for security is also reflected in the layout of Muk Wu, the shape of which resembles a square: four parallel rows of south-west facing houses are separated by lanes and surrounded by houses serving as enclosing walls to protect the interior of the village.

Many of the villagers in Muk Wu made their living from farming, and the family who used to live in this house at no. 19 was no exception. According to the available land records, the lot was passed down from generation to generation of a family surnamed To. The house was built by the current owner's father, who passed it on to his son when he died.

¹ It also comprised the villages of Ping Yeung (坪洋), Wo Keng Shan (禾徑山), Nga Yiu Ha (瓦窯下), Sheung Shan Kai Wat (上山雞乙), Ha Shan Kai Wat (下山雞乙), Kan Tau Wai (簡頭圍), Lei Uk (李屋), Tai Po Tin (大埔田), Fung Wong Wu (鳳凰湖), Lo Shue Ling (老鼠嶺) (now known as Chow Tin 週田), Tak Yuet Lau (得月樓), Tsung Yuen Ha (松園下), Chuk Yuen (竹園), Ping Che (坪輦), Tong Fong (塘坊), Nga Yiu (瓦窯), San Uk Ling (新屋嶺), Lo Wu (羅湖) and Heung Yuen Wai (香園圍).

² A self-defence force was also set up in Muk Wu to provide security and conduct regular patrols. In the past, the guards were allowed by the Hong Kong police to carry guns when performing their duties. The patrol service was continued in the area until the 1970s.

Built in a one-hall-one-courtyard design, the courtyard is first seen when entering this village house, with two stoves each on either sides; the living room is at the centre of the house, with the bedroom and the cockloft at the back. Living in the house since the late 1940s, the owner spent most of his time with his mother on the farm cultivating produce that was sold to the market to earn an income or kept to provide food for the family. The crops included radishes, corn, sugar cane, cabbages and fuzzy melons.

To help his mother prepare meals, the owner went up to the nearby mountain to collect firewood and fetch water. Chickens were raised near the stove. On festive occasions, his mother pounded rice at home to make Chinese fever vine sticky rice dumplings and glutinous rice dumplings, among other treats. The tool used to pound the rice can still be found in the living room today.

When the government established the Frontier Closed Area along the China-Hong Kong border in 1951 for security reasons and to tackle illegal immigration and smuggling problems, Muk Wu was included in the restricted zone³ and residents then had to obtain a Closed Area Permit to show when entering or leaving the restricted zone. The inconvenience this caused gradually prompted many residents to migrate to England or the Netherlands or to move to the city in the 1960s, which is also what the owners eventually did.

No. 19 Muk Wu is a Qing vernacular residence designed with a single hall and one courtyard. Constructed with fair-faced grey bricks, the residence is topped with a traditional pitched roof that is laid with Chinese pan and roll tiles, supported by a timber roof system and flanked with gable walls at both ends. *Architectural Merit*

The internal layout of the village house remains generally intact. In the courtyard in front of the hall is the kitchen with two brick stoves and chimneys on both sides and a bathing area in the southeast corner. The living room in the main hall is separated from the rear bedroom and its cockloft by a timber partition. An altar with an L-shaped shelf is constructed as an extension of the cockloft, which is used for worshipping the family's ancestors and for storage purposes.

The front façade (south-west elevation) and the north-west elevation are exquisitely decorated with plastered mouldings and murals. In particular, the

³ This arrangement ended in January 2016 when the third stage of the reduction of the Frontier Closed Area was implemented. Muk Wu has been outside of the area since then.

area above the stone lintel of the main entrance is embellished with a projected eave decorated with calligraphy and plastered mouldings featuring auspicious motifs, including flowers, fruits and crops (such as pomegranates, arrowhead root and corn symbolising fecundity and a long line of descendants and peach symbolising longevity).

Other plastered mouldings and murals on the wall frieze of the south-west elevation and the gable wall frieze of the north-west elevation are decorated mostly with floral patterns and plants, including lotus and lotus pods, which are also symbols of an abundance of offspring.

The village house has retained much of its authenticity in terms of its building fabric and intricate decorations. Other than the addition of a new kitchen stove and chimney in the kitchen in the 1950s, no other major alterations have been identified. However, condition of some wooden structural elements in the house, purlin and cockloft floor for instance, are dilapidating.

Authenticity & Rarity

As a surviving traditional building in Muk Wu village based on the Qing vernacular one-hall-one-courtyard design, no. 19 is a typical example of village houses in the New Territories.

As the village house has been used only as a residence and the village was part of the Frontier Closed Area on the China-Hong Kong border from 1951 until 2016, the house is of relatively low social value for the local community.

Social Value & Local Interest

The building has a group value with the other old buildings in its vicinity, namely the Tin Hau Temple, Muk Wu Tsuen (木湖村天后廟) (Grade 3) and the Entrance Gate, Muk Wu Wai (木湖圍圍門) (Grade 3). This value is based on their unity that reveals aspects of the traditional daily lives and folk beliefs of the villagers and also the layout of the village, which highlights the need for defence and security in the settlement's early history.

Group Value

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Historic Building Appraisal

“The Nest”

21 Ling Shan Road, Fanling, New Territories

Before the territory of Hong Kong was extended northwards to the Shenzhen River in 1898, Fanling was mainly inhabited by the Pang (彭) and Tang (鄧) clans.¹ The opening of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR) in 1910 prompted an influx of investment in agriculture and Western sporting activities in the area.² Fanling soon became Hong Kong’s back garden, and a number of bungalows were erected in the area, including “The Nest”, which is believed to have been built in the 1930s.

*Historical
Interest*

“The Nest” is currently used as a residence for senior staff of the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) under government land allocation number GLA-DN2. It was originally a private property located on lots 1945-49 and 4678 in DD51 before the government purchased them in 1947. The bungalow was referred to as “The Nest” in the document recording the acquisition of these six lots.

According to the available land records, lots 1945-49 were first owned by indigenous inhabitants surnamed Pang. The Block Government Lease of 1905 for the land indicates it was intended for “dry cultivation”, suggesting there were no buildings on the lots at that time. Lot 4678 (garden lot) was first gazetted for auction by the government only in May 1934. In 1938, the owner of the six lots

¹ Fanling has been inhabited at least since the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) when Pang Kwei (彭桂), the founding ancestor of the Pang clan, moved to Lung Shan (龍山, now known as Lung Yeuk Tau 龍躍頭) in Fanling. Later, descendants of the eldest son of Tang Wai-kap (鄧惟汲) of the Tang clan in Kam Tin also settled in Fanling, which prompted the Pang clan to move to the Lau Tsuen (樓村) area. The Tang family lived in Lung Shan, which developed into today’s “Five Wais (walled villages) and Six Tsuens (villages)” (五圍六村) in Lung Yeuk Tau. The Pangs relocated to what is now known as Fanling Wai (粉嶺圍) to build a walled village during the Wanli reign (1573-1620) of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644).

² A large number of fruit farms were established near Fanling Station in 1912 following investments by several Chinese entrepreneurs, including Sir Robert Ho Tung, who also planted lychees on an extensive area of farmland along the road from Fanling to San Tin. In 1914, the Botanical and Forestry Department opened the Fan Ling Experimental Garden in Fanling to cultivate crop plants. Jointly organised by local Chinese and foreigners, the first New Territories Agricultural Show was held at Ho Tung Gardens in Sheung Shui in 1927. The show then became an annual fixture (later at Shek Wu Hui market) until the Japanese occupation (1941-1945). The New Territories Agricultural Association was established in 1931; its headquarters in Fanling were later built with donations from the low-profile philanthropist J.E. Joseph.

In addition to agricultural developments, Fanling also attracted Western sports activities after the KCR opened: the Hong Kong Golf Club (established in 1889) acquired land west of Fanling to build a golf course in 1911, while in 1928 the Fanling Hunt and Race Club (registered in 1929 by a group of wealthy and privileged foreigners and disbanded in 1954) built a racecourse on military land east of Fanling for hunting and horse racing.

was recorded as Mrs. Rosie Weill. Although no documentary proof of the transactions between 1905 and 1938 could be found, old newspapers provide some clues here, including about the origin of the name “The Nest”.

In March 1934, a newspaper advertisement was published announcing that a fruit and vegetable shop named “The Nest” had opened on Peking Road, Kowloon, on 1 March 1934 selling “*Vegetables and Flowers grown at “THE NEST” Fanling, under European supervision.*”

Another newspaper advertisement that appeared in January 1935 stated that “*produce from The Nest, Sheung Shui, will only be distributed from the shop in Peking Road*” and that the business of “The Nest” on Peking Road had been taken over from Grace Ellis by John Russell, a member of the New Territories Agricultural Association, on 1 January 1935. As the shop on Peking Road and the farm in Fanling used the same name and as the advertisements state that produce from the farm was sold exclusively at the shop, it can reasonably be concluded that “The Nest” on Peking Road and “The Nest” in Fanling were owned by the same person, first Grace Ellis and later John Russell. The name “The Nest” last appeared in a directory in 1936, which suggests that John Russell might have sold it to Rosie Weill around or after 1936. Rosie Weill³ then sold the lot to Lionel Arthur Dabelstein for HK\$20,000 before the Japanese occupation of Hong Kong.⁴

The next owner, Lionel Arthur Dabelstein, was employed as a factory manager at the Organic Fertilizer Co., Ltd. at the time he purchased the site; he later worked at Green Island Cement Co., Ltd. Mr Dabelstein did not reside in the house for long: enlisted into the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps in 1940, he was captured by the Japanese upon the fall of Hong Kong on 25 December 1941 and imprisoned in Sham Shui Po Barracks as prisoner of war (POW) for the duration of the occupation. His wife, meanwhile, was sent to Stanley Internment Camp, where she died on 21 September 1944. Although

³ Mrs Rosie Weill was the widow of the French jewellery and watch merchant Albert Weill, who was the owner of the Alberose (Grade 2 historic building) on Pok Fu Lam Road. Their daughter Susie Weill married Alec Hutton Potts, who was a founding member of the Fanling Hunting and Jockey Club. The Hutton Potts family was heavily involved in hunting and horse racing activities in the Fanling area, and it is thought that the property might at one time have been used for recreation and hunting activities.

⁴ Because of the Japanese occupation, the sale was not recorded in the Land Registry’s Memorial (register of land deeds and instruments) until 1947. The entry states that \$20,000 was paid before the war, but does not specify an exact date of the sale. The juror list in the government’s Sessional Paper from 1940, however, notes that Mr Lionel Arthur Dabelstein, who originally lived in Waterloo Road, Kowloon (South China Morning Post, 5 June 1935), now resided in Fanling, which suggests that the lot was sold between 1938 and 1940.

the earliest aerial photo in which a vague image of a house situated at the lots concerned can first be seen was taken in 1945, the house should have been built before the war, as the owner of the lots was imprisoned in the POW camp for a long time and no construction work could be carried out during the occupation.

In August 1947, the Quartering Authority⁵ (宿舍編配局) wrote to Mr Dabelstein to enquire whether he was willing to sell his property “The Nest”, which comprised lots 1945-49 and 4678 in DD51, for HK\$50,000. He accepted the offer and officially transferred ownership of the lots one month later, with the site (including the building and the surrounding farmland) then becoming government property.

The government allocated the property to what was then called the Imports and Exports Department (出入口管理處) on 30 April 1948, which used it as accommodation for its revenue officers to make it easier for them to conduct their work to prevent smuggling along the border. The Imports and Exports Department was reorganised as the Commerce and Industry Department (工商業管理處) in 1949, and “The Nest” was later used as accommodation for the senior revenue inspector of Fanling Revenue Station, which was opened in 1951.

In 1977, the Preventive Service section (緝私隊) of the Commerce and Industry Department was renamed the C&ED, which became an independent department in 1982. “The Nest” currently serves as the accommodation of the head of Land Boundary Command of the C&ED (海關陸路邊境口岸科).

“The Nest” is a one-storey residential cottage surrounded by an open space. Although the building has a rather simple and functional form, it also includes some notable features, such as the external stucco walls and a rounded corner on its southwest elevation, which share similarities with the other private European residences, cottages and recreational clubs that were constructed around the same time in Hong Kong. Elements such as the concrete flat roofs and the chimneys are also commonly found in similar private European residential buildings from that era.

*Architectural
Merit*

The structure is believed to be built in reinforced concrete as well as drywall and brick infills. Internally, the walls of the premises are plastered with skirting

⁵ The Quartering Authority was established in 1946 with the primary main task of requisitioning European-style properties and allocating them to the government, military, navy, air force or citizens in need. At the same time, the authority regularly returned requisitioned properties that it held to the original owners. The work of the Quartering Authority was taken over by the Rating and Valuation Department from 1 September 1960.

with a wooden finish to match the wooden flooring. Two brick fireplaces painted white are installed in the living room and the dining room.

Despite its transfer to government ownership, “The Nest” has been maintained as a residential building. Later additions and alterations, both in the interior and at the exterior, were carried out to adapt the building to meet different accommodation needs. Based on the existing record plan, the entrance vestibule was enclosed to form the existing reception hall in the 1980s and the garage was extended after 2002. Modern building materials, such as the new glass roof erected over the entrance porch and aluminium windows, can also be seen. The authenticity of the building has thus been diminished to a certain extent.

***Authenticity &
Rarity***

“The Nest” is considered a typical example of private European residences in Hong Kong. Unlike other private buildings situated in the northern New Territories, which were often used as summer lodges or for recreational activities, “The Nest” in the rural area of Fanling is a mark of the relatively uncommon European business activities that were once pursued in the New Territories, where agricultural products are believed to have been produced and transported to Kowloon for sale.

The building has served as accommodation for government officials since the Second World War and, is not open for public access. “The Nest” therefore has limited social value in this regard.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Together with Oi Yuen Villa, Kwu Tung (愛園別墅) (Grade1), Fanling Lodge, Kwu Tung (粉嶺別墅) (Grade 1), the Clubhouse (Grade 2) and Half-way House (Grade3) of the Hong Kong Golf Club Fanling Golf Course (粉嶺高爾夫球場會所及小食亭), Enchi Lodge Main Building and Ancillary Block (恩慈之家主樓及附屬建築物) (Grade 2) and Kam Tsin Lodge (金錢別墅) (Grade 2), “The Nest” is an example of how Fanling and other areas in the New Territories were regarded as Hong Kong’s back garden after the KCR opened in 1910, which provided some people from urban areas with an opportunity to expand their sources of livelihood to the northern area of the territory.

Group Value

In addition, the group value of “The Nest” is derived from its connection with the former Fanling Magistracy (前粉嶺裁判法院) (Grade 3), as they were both converted and constructed by the government to meet social and community needs after the Second World War.

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