

N439

九龍九龍城南角道3號

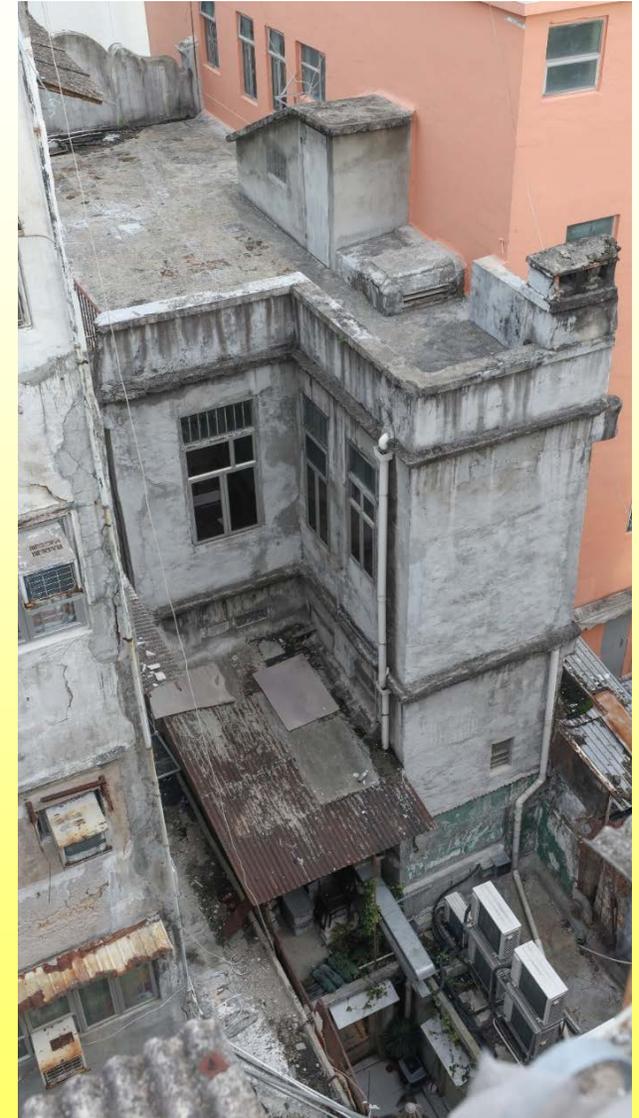
No. 3 Nam Kok Road, Kowloon City, Kowloon



屋頂矮牆
Roof parapet



正立面
Front elevation



背立面
Rear elevation

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 3 Nam Kok Road,
Kowloon City, Kowloon

The building at No. 3 Nam Kok Road is a pre-war verandah shophouse *Historical Interest* located on New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 2143. Land records show that in March 1934, a woman named Chi Kiu (池嬌) signed a Government lease for the lot¹ and a verandah undertaking,² indicating that the building was likely completed by early 1934, as she used it as her correspondence address.

The building has changed owners several times over the past 90 years. It was eventually bought by Luk Chak Yu (陸澤如) in 1952.³ Luk subsequently handed the building over to his wife Cheung Shuen (張順) and his son Luk Tat Wing (陸達榮) as a gift in 1978.⁴ Cheung died in 1997,⁵ and Luk Tat Wing has been the sole owner of the building ever since.⁶

The ground floor at No. 3 Nam Kok Road once housed a metal hardware store called Yee Shun Wing Hardwares (怡順榮機器五金). Little is known about the store, but the indenture of assignment drawn up in 1952 when Luk Chak Yu purchased the building for \$24,000 states that his address was “No. 3 Nam Kok Road (ground floor)” and that he was a “merchant”.⁷ The deed of gift in 1978 also mentions that the Luk family lived at “No. 3 Nam Kok Road, 1st Floor”.⁸ It is therefore believed that Luk was the owner of the metal hardware store, that he had run the store since 1952 and that the Chinese characters “順” and “榮” in the store’s name refer to his wife and son. The ground-floor shop has housed a café since 2021.

The building at No. 3 Nam Kok Road is three stories high. Supported by *Architectural Merit* two square columns, the verandah on the first floor projects over the pavement to form a covered walkway in front of the shop. The top floor is recessed and features a balcony. The front facade of the building is extensively decorated, but it is the roof that stands out, as it was delicately designed with a triple-curved pediment, featuring a central sun motif and symmetrical floral motifs on either side. Floral shaped grilles once decorated the balustrades of the verandah and the balcony, but those on the verandah have mostly been

¹ The Land Registry. Government Lease of N.K.I.L. No. 2143, 26 March 1934.

² The Land Registry. Memorial No. UB141702, 26 March 1934.

³ The Land Registry. Memorial No. UB209533, 23 February 1952.

⁴ The Land Registry. Memorial No. UB1643421, 16 June 1979.

⁵ The Land Registry. Memorial No. UB8068059, 5 May 2000.

⁶ The Land Registry. Land Register of N.K.I.L. No. 2143, 12 September 2024.

⁷ The Land Registry. Memorial No. UB209533, 23 February 1952.

⁸ The Land Registry. Memorial No. UB1643421, 16 June 1979.

covered with cement, while the bottom half of the grilles on the balcony is also partially covered, leaving only the top half visible. Other ornamentation includes the moulded column capitals on the ground and first floors, and a row of dentil mouldings, typically found in Greek architecture, below the balcony. Atop the right column of the balcony on the top floor is an intact floral tassel moulding. The shop front on the ground floor features a large sign bearing the name “怡順榮機器五金”, a reminder of the metal hardware store that once occupied the premises. Two rows of metal window grilles featuring elaborate scrollwork relief in timber frames can be seen above the shop entrance at the cockloft level; the shop front, meanwhile, is protected by a sliding iron gate. To the right of the shop entrance, a metal gate prevents access to the long and steep concrete staircase that leads to the building’s upper floors. The staircase has metal handrails along either side, while the treads are finished with timber boards.

It is worth noting that, although the House Registration Office of the Japanese Military Government recorded that the building was built of reinforced concrete,⁹ the party wall, which can be seen in the interior of the ground floor, has been infilled with granite. It is therefore believed that the party wall was once plastered with concrete, but was exposed when the ground floor of the metal hardware store was converted into a café in 2021.

Decorative mouldings are also present along the edge of the ceiling on the ground floor. The old plaque bearing the name of the metal hardware store “怡順榮” has been retained and is now displayed at the back of the café. A chimney stack remains on the flat roof.

The exterior of the building at No. 3 Nam Kok Road has largely retained its authenticity, although some alterations have been carried out over the years. For example, some of the mouldings on the right columns on the ground and first floors of the building have been removed to make way for a drainage pipe, with the result that the decorations on either side of the columns in the front elevation no longer appear symmetrical. Besides, the floral patterns on the verandah and balcony have been partially covered. Otherwise, the roof pediment is well-preserved and the verandah on the first floor, which was previously enclosed by windows, has been opened up again, as in the original design.¹⁰ Even though the metal hardware store ceased operation in the early

***Authenticity &
Rarity***

⁹ HKRS57-6-14479. “N.K.I.L. 2143”, 1942 to 1945.

¹⁰ A photo taken by the Antiquities and Monuments Office in 1998.

2010s, its metal window grilles, iron sliding gate and signage have been preserved. Internally, care has been taken on the inside of the ground-floor shop to expose and preserve the granite walls. The ceiling mouldings can still be seen, simply painted over. When viewed from the rear elevation, it can be observed that the rear windows on the second floor have been replaced with modern steel frames.

This type of pre-war verandah shophouse, and particularly the example at No. 3 Nam Kok Road where many of the original elements have been preserved, has become increasingly rare in the course of rapid development of Hong Kong, especially in districts like Kowloon City.

As the ground-floor shop of No. 3 Nam Kok Road was a metal hardware store until 2010s, it would be of certain local value and interest in Kowloon City. An oral source states that the store had previously provided metal parts for repair works at Kai Tak Airport in addition to selling hardware items for household use. Since the revitalisation, the ground-floor café has emerged as a local landmark, appealing to a younger clientele who seeks leisure activities in the district.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

While similar types of pre-war shophouses used to be a distinctive feature of Kowloon City, they are becoming increasingly rare today due to urban development. The building at No. 3 Nam Kok Road is within walking distance of two other similar verandah shophouses, one at Nos. 1 and 3 Hau Wong Road (Grade 3), which houses a restaurant, and the other at No. 24 Nga Tsin Long Road (Grade 3), which has been revitalised into a café from an 80-year-old family-run Chinese medicine dispensary. Two other graded shophouses in Sham Shui Po, namely Lui Seng Chun (Declared Monument) and No. 75 Un Chau Street (Grade 3), have been revitalised and converted into Chinese medicine clinics to serve the community. All of these buildings were constructed in the 1930s in the same period as the shophouse at No. 3 Nam Kok Road.

Group Value

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