

Historic Building Appraisal
University Lodge, The University of Hong Kong
No. 1 University Drive, Pok Fu Lam, Hong Kong

University Lodge is the residence of the Vice-Chancellor of The University of Hong Kong (香港大學校長寓所). Completed in 1950, it was first known as the Vice-Chancellor's Lodge or the Vice-Chancellor's House until it was formally named University Lodge in 1995. It replaced the old Principal's House, which was completed sometime after the Main Building was completed in 1912.¹ The Principal's House was located approximately where Hui Oi Chow Science Building (許愛周科學館) now stands. *Historical Interest*

During the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 1945), the Japanese declared the university estate a temporary internment area for the university's expatriate staff who were not in the Armed Forces. This arrangement lasted until the end of January 1942, when they, including the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Duncan Sloss (1881 – 1964), were moved to the internment camp in Stanley. It is not known how the Principal's House was used during the remainder of occupation. Although the Japanese capitulated on 14 August 1945, Hong Kong was not reoccupied by the British naval force until 30 August. As a consequence, Hong Kong suffered a fortnight of lawless chaos following the capitulation. Looting of woodwork from buildings became widespread. Looters removed the teak floorboards, window frames, doors, staircases and roof joists of the unoccupied buildings on the university estate. According to a letter dated 29 April 1948 from Duncan Sloss, the Principal's House had been reduced to bare walls and a partial roof, and it had been decided to convert it into four flats, two for senior and two for junior men. Therefore, it was considered necessary to build a new house for the Vice-Chancellor.

In a meeting held on 8 September 1949, the university's Council (校務委員會) resolved, on the recommendation of the Building Committee, that the proposed Vice-Chancellor's residence would be sited at the old Victoria Battery, and Chau & Lee Architects & Engineering (周李建築工程師事務所) (hereafter "Chau & Lee") would be instructed to prepare plans and estimates for the proposed building.² In the meeting of 19 January 1950, the Council resolved that the sketch plans prepared by Chau & Lee for the proposed residence should be approved, and the estimate of

¹ Both the Main Building and the Principal's House were in the proposal for the building works of the university, which was accepted by Sir Hormusjee Mody in December 1909. Mody was the major benefactor for the construction of the Main Building and other university buildings. The Main Building was completed in 1912, while the Principal's House sometime after it.

² Chau & Lee was established by Chau Iu-Nin (周耀年) and Richard Lee (李禮之) in 1933. Chau graduated from The University of Hong Kong with a B.Sc. (Engineering) degree while Lee was trained as an architect in the UK. They were the first generation of Chinese architects in Hong Kong. Chau & Lee was a leading Chinese architectural firm in Hong Kong before the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 1945). St. Mary's Church in Causeway Bay (1937), No. 92 Blue Pool Road in Happy Valley (1950), University Lodge (1950) and No. 86 Stanley Main Street (1951) are examples of Chau & Lee's works.

\$220,000 (including site formation but not furniture) was acceptable. The invoice for the erection of the house including site formation was first submitted in April 1950. Finally, building works were completed at a cost of \$431,098.93.³ According to an occupation permit, the house was completed in October 1950. Sir Lindsay Ride (1898 – 1977) was the first Vice-Chancellor to reside in the new house.⁴

University Lodge occupies the site of the old Victoria Battery. The works for the Victoria Battery started on 11 November 1888 and were completed by 20 October 1890. A 9.2-inch breech-loading Mark IV gun was mounted to guard the western approaches to Hong Kong. In 1898, the Committee on Armaments determined that the gun was superfluous and should be removed; but it actually remained in service until 1911. The gun barrel was uncovered during the foundation works for the new house. Attempts were made in vain to persuade the Armed Forces to reclaim possession of the gun, and it therefore became the property of the university and was erected in the house's garden.

Up to 2019, University Lodge has been home to nine Vice-Chancellors of the university. They are Sir Lindsay Ride, Kenneth Robinson, Rayson Lisung Huang, Wang Gungwu, Cheng Yiu-chung, William Davies, Lap-chee Tsui, Peter Mathieson and Xiang Zhang.⁵ The house provides both a family home and an attractive and relatively informal venue for receptions and other hospitality events hosted by the Vice-Chancellor as part of his official duties. It serves as a meeting place for staff members, students, alumni and friends of the university. It has also been used for concerts and other performances, either stand-alone events or proceeding receptions or dinners.⁶

The residence was designed by the architectural practice of Chau & Lee. This *Architectural Merit* two-storey, beige-painted, smooth stucco rendered building of reinforced concrete

³ Letter dated 18 December 1958 from Whitney H. Shepardson to Colonel Lindsay Ride, Vice-Chancellor of The University of Hong Kong, "Sir Lindsay Ride Collection : Vice-President's Lodge, 1950 – 1958 (04128)", Box 1, Folder 7, University Archives, The University of Hong Kong.

⁴ Ride was a physiologist. In 1928, he was appointed professor of physiology at The University of Hong Kong. In 1931, he was commissioned into the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps. In 1941, he commanded the Hong Kong Field Ambulance, but was taken prisoner by the Japanese in December. His escape into Mainland China in January 1942 was recognised by an O.B.E. He then formed and commanded the British Army Aid Group (BAAG), which helped escapees from Hong Kong, provided medical and other assistance to prisoners of war, and gathered intelligence. Ride was awarded C.B.E. in 1944 for his outstanding leadership. In April 1949, Ride was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the university, and set about the rehabilitation and expansion of the university. He was knighted in 1962.

⁵ W.C.G. Knowles and A.J.S. McFadzean, two successive Vice-Chancellors after Sir Lindsay Ride, did not live in the University Lodge, since their appointment was for a transitional period and their term of office was brief. W.C.G. Knowles took up the duty temporarily as Vice-Chancellor on 19 November 1964 until 30 June 1965. A.J.S. McFadzean succeeded Knowles and served as Vice-Chancellor for a year.

⁶ According to some old newspaper reports, the University Lodge has also been a venue for wedding receptions, a welcome dinner given by Sir Lindsay Ride for the Presidents of the Commonwealth Universities, and a reunion breakfast between HKU Marathon Team and the Vice-Chancellor, for instance. A garden party for Princess Alexandra of Kent was also organised in the grounds of the University Lodge in 1961.

structure demonstrates the influences of Streamline Moderne design, which is characterised by curves, horizontal lines and a trace of nautical influence.⁷ It features a curved main entrance portico and curved external walls, with a strong horizontal emphasis of the elevations. The curved theme is continued with the two wings that flank the main entrance. The front elevation thus presents a curved frontage, with a flagpole positioned centrally at roof level. The canopy over the main entrance portico, which has balustrade decorated with horizontal plaster mouldings and wrought ironwork of a classical scroll design, is supported by a pair of plain round columns with bases finished with terrazzo. The columns stand on one of the granite steps leading to the main entrance doorway. In-between the granite steps and the entrance door there is terrazzo flooring. Horizontal motif with Streamline Moderne influences can also be identified in the plaster mouldings of the fence wall's cornice. The main entrance gate, fashioned in wrought ironwork with an abstract design, is also of architectural interest.

The two side elevations of the main building varies in design. The right-hand side elevation incorporates a wide projecting balcony at 1/F level, with a balustrade decorated with horizontal plaster mouldings and wrought ironwork in a classical scroll design. The left-hand side elevation instead has no balcony and features long windows with overhead projections. It is connected to a garage and a utility area formed by decorative screen walls. The folding door of the garage is of high-quality hardwood. The rear elevation also features a horizontal design emphasis. Plain round columns and terrazzo finishes are repeated at the G/F verandah and the balcony above.

Internally, the floor layout, with the main staircase centrally located, uses the circular walls to highlight the principal spaces of the house, including the entrance lobby and the dining room on the G/F, and the master bedroom above the dining room. Both those principal spaces on the G/F and the bedrooms on the 1/F are provided with polished hardwood floorboards and have plaster mouldings on the walls. The hardwood floorboards at the entrance lobby are laid in an intricate “star shaped” pattern, while those in other rooms have a “squared-chequer” or a “herringbone” pattern. All the timber skirtings are also well maintained. Other built-in elements, such as the main entrance door to the entrance lobby and the sliding door to the dining room, the treads, risers and handrail of the main staircase made up of polished hardwood, the elegant wrought ironwork of the main staircase, as well as the fireplace in the study on the G/F all attain a high level of workmanship.

⁷ Streamline Moderne, also known as Art Moderne, was a late variation of the Art Deco movement with curves, horizontal lines and a trace of nautical influence. The 1930s was the heyday of the Art Deco style in architecture, and it dominated virtually all design areas in the Western world, from graphic to industrial products, jewellery, furniture, movies and stage sets, and interior and architectural design. On the other hand, vertical and horizontal emphases on external walls were popular in the modernist movement of the 1950s.

University Lodge has important connections with the personalities involved in the development of The University of Hong Kong and Hong Kong's tertiary education. The 9.2-inch gun barrel of the late nineteenth century is also of some local interest and serves to enrich the historical layering of the site.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Also situated in the University of Hong Kong campus are declared monuments, namely the exteriors of Main Building (香港大學本部大樓), Hung Hing Ying Building (孔慶熒樓), Tang Chi Ngong Building (鄧志昂樓), Fung Ping Shan Building (馮平山樓), May Hall (梅堂) and Eliot Hall (儀禮堂). Other historic buildings in the area include King's College (英皇書院) (Declared Monument), the Main Building of St. Stephen's Girls' College (聖士提反女子中學主樓) (Declared Monument), Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong Kau Yan Church (香港崇真會救恩堂) (Grade 1) and Stone House (石寓) at No. 15 Kotewall Road (Grade 3).

Group Value

University Lodge is a prominent example of Streamline Moderne buildings in Hong Kong. It was built to a very high standard of construction, with carefully composed detailing. No major alterations, which would have diminished the authenticity of the house, can be identified. The only minor alteration was to the original one-storey garage, which had a second floor added in the early 1970s for use as a driver's quarters. The building itself is associated with important figures involved in the development of The University of Hong Kong. Its nearby 9.2-inch gun barrel enriches the historical layering of the site.

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

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Historic Building Appraisal
Ex-Portuguese Community School (Escola Camões)
No. 7 Cox's Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon

As the names inscribed at the entrance gateway and the main entrance doorway reveal, the existing building at No. 7 Cox's Road,¹ Tsim Sha Tsui (the "Building"), had once housed the Portuguese Community School (in English), which was also known as Escola Camões (in Portuguese, with "escola" meaning school). In Chinese, it was known as "葡僑公立學校" or "賈梅士學校". The school moved into the Building in 1954, with the then Governor Sir Alexander Grantham (葛量洪爵士) (1947 – 1957) officiating the opening ceremony, which was attended by Dr G. de Castilho, Portuguese Consul General in Hong Kong, on 29 June that year. ***Historical Interest***

In fact, the history of the Building can be traced back to the early 1900s. It was built between 1902 and 1903, and can be identified on a map dated 1904. Situated on a plot of land marked as "Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1132" (or K.I.L. 1132), the Building was owned by George Murray Bain and William Nicholson.² Government records show that it was named Parkside (it adjoined King's Park) and used as a private residence until 1912, when a Deed of Surrender was entered into with the government, through which the government acquired the Building for \$60,000. Of this sum of \$60,000, \$46,682 was defrayed from railway funds, while the remainder came from Item No. 43, Public Works Extraordinary. The Building was then converted into the Manager's House of the Kowloon-Canton Railway (KCR). It continued to be called Parkside after the conversion. In 1928, the house was taken over from the railway department in order to accommodate the Kowloon Junior School, which was then operating in an ex-garrison school building at the nearby Gun Club Hill.³ Conversion works commenced in November 1928 and were completed around the end of the year. Those works mainly involved minor internal alterations, renovations, and the erection of a latrine block and covered way to form a playground. The school was relocated to Parkside in January 1929.⁴ It was

¹ It is said that Cox's Road was named after James Henry Cox (1831/1832 – 1904), who owned the leases on a number of the lots which ran the road. The lot "K.I.L. 1132" on which the Building was situated, and the nearby lots "K.I.L. 1133" and "K.I.L. 1134", for instance, were owned by J. H. Cox. Cox arrived in Hong Kong in 1861 to join the firm of Messrs. Turner and Co. as a bookkeeper. He had been a member of the Hong Kong Club since 1861 and dubbed one of the oldest members and the "Father" of the club. Cox was also a juror and appointed a Justice of the Peace in 1883. His name was in the Jury Lists for the years 1874, 1875 and 1879, for instance.

² George Murray Bain and William Nicholson were the executors of the will of James Henry Cox, who passed away in 1904. George Murray Bain (1842 – 1909) came to Hong Kong in 1864 as a printer. He worked as sub-editor of *The China Mail*. Later he became editor and then in 1875 sole owner of the paper. Bain passed away in 1909 and was buried in the Hong Kong Cemetery. William Nicholson (? – 1947) came to Hong Kong in 1896 to join Messrs Butterfield and Swire. He was an assistant of the firm when he owned the Building. For some years he had been the manager of the Taikoo Sugar Refinery. Nicholson retired from B. & S. in 1926 and lived in Dumbartonshire, Scotland, until passing away in 1947.

³ The Junior Kowloon School had 60 pupils when it was moved to Gun Club Hill in February 1921. The enrolment increased to 100 in 1927 and 99 in 1928. In 1938, the school was still one of the few primary schools the government provided for the European children in Hong Kong.

⁴ For eight years from February 1921, the Kowloon Junior School operated in an ex-garrison school building in Gun Club Hill. But in the autumn of 1928, the military authorities notified the school that it needed to take back the building in order to operate a

reported that the site was damaged during the Second World War, and the Building was described as a “looted shell”. In 1950, the school was relocated to the new premises at another site.

The Building was then unoccupied until 1954 when it became the new home of the Portuguese Community School. The school, financed by the Portuguese Consulate, was established in 1948 and named Escola Camões, with the aim of promoting the study of the mother tongue among the young generation of the local Portuguese community. Named after Luís de Camões, a 16th-century poet who is to Portuguese what William Shakespeare is to English,⁵ from 1949 the school was housed by the Club de Recreio (西洋波會) (Grade 3) at No. 20 Gascoigne Road, where kindergarten and Primary I to Primary III classes were organized. The school had just 15 students at that time. The name was later changed to the Portuguese Community School. In 1951, in response to an increase in the number of students from 15 to 100, Mr. Menezes Ribeiro, then Acting Consul for Portugal, discussed with some Portuguese community leaders the construction of permanent premises. An application to redevelop the site at No. 7 Cox’s Road was thus made. Finally, however, it was considered more economical to rehabilitate the Building rather than demolish and rebuild it. Subsequently in 1954, following the extensive rehabilitation and alteration to the pre-war premises, the Building became the new home of the Portuguese Community School, also known as Escola Camões.

The rehabilitated Building could accommodate some 280 students ranging from kindergarten to Primary IV. The school was co-educational and English was the medium of instruction, while Portuguese was taught as a second language. In 1954, the Board of Governors (總理團) of the Portuguese Community Education and Welfare Foundation (referred to as the “Foundation” hereafter) (葡僑教育及福利基金) was incorporated under the Portuguese Community Education and Welfare Foundation Incorporation Ordinance (葡僑教育及福利基金法團條例) (Cap. 1071). It took over the operation of the school upon being granted the Cox’s Road site. The school also received subsidies from the government from then on.

Among the early students of the school was Gabriel Dias Azedo, who was the President of Club Lusitano in Hong Kong (2002 – 2008), and a member of the Board of Governors of the Portuguese Community Education and Welfare Foundation Incorporated in the 2000s.

garrison school.

⁵ Luís de Camões was a great poet to the Portuguese. For instance, a gathering was organized at Club de Recreio in memory of Camões on 9 June 1948. A professor from The University of Hong Kong delivered a lecture entitled “Poet Camões” (賈梅士詩人).

In January 1997, the foundation surrendered the school premises to the government, since many Portuguese in Hong Kong had emigrated. Then from 1997 to 2012, a local social and charitable organization, Po Leung Kuk (保良局), ran a primary school there, which was once known as Po Leung Kuk Portuguese Community School (保良局賈梅士學校), although admission was open to all nationalities. In 2012, the school was relocated, and the name “Portuguese Community School” or “賈梅士學校” was also abandoned.

Built on an elevated platform and surrounded by brick fence walls, the Building is accessible through a flight of steps from Cox’s Road. The conversion of the Building to the Kowloon Junior School in 1928 mainly involved minor alterations to the interior, renovations, construction of a latrine block and the addition of a covered way to form a playground. The photos and ground floor plan of the Kowloon Junior School before the conversion show that the main building had two storeys and a basement. The entrance with a staircase was in the south-west corner of the Building. Verandahs, which ran almost continuously along all the elevations, except a middle portion on the north elevation, were formed by arcades with classical features, including moulded architraves, keystones, moulded column capitals and bases, balustrades, stringcourses and cornices. Internally, the ground floor contained three main rooms, each fitted with a fireplace. The main staircase gave access to the upper floor. *Architectural Merit*

The Building underwent major alterations during the conversion to the Portuguese Community School, for which A. V. Alvares (Alfred Victor Jorge Alvares) (1910 - 1992) was the architect.⁶ The overall design of the Building was much modernized. Externally, the old entrance in the south-west corner at the basement level was removed. Instead, a new main entrance was created in the middle of the east facade, whose design was highlighted by a pair of trapezoidal features finished with coursed rubble masonry with a canopy atop. The parapet above the canopy was inscribed with the school name “ESCOLA CAMÕES”. Behind it are three flagpoles. A secondary entrance and an exit were respectively located at the north and west elevations. Besides, the verandahs were enclosed by steel windows and most of the classical features were removed, with the architraves (with the keystones removed) on the top floor being the only classical features still identifiable after the conversion. The architraves were finished with Shanghai plaster, whose use extended all the way down to the ground floor. The exterior walls at the ground and first floor levels were finished with roughcast plaster, whereas those at the basement level were cement finished and decorated with groove lines. The tapered pilasters

⁶ A. V. Alvares was a Portuguese born in Macau in 1910. He designed luxury apartments, and was the President of the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in 1968.

on the exterior of the basement are also of some architectural interest. In addition, a new reinforced concrete staircase for use as a fire escape was added at the north-east corner of the Building.

Internally, both the main and secondary entrances at the basement level led to the entrance hall and the main staircase. On the left-hand side of the entrance hall was a doctor's room connected to a waiting room and a covered playground, while on its right was a teacher's room. The exit at the west elevation gave access to a kitchen, a pantry and a dining room. The main staircase has a concrete parapet with moulded and stepped coping. New reinforced concrete floor and roof slabs were added. The enclosed verandahs on the ground and first floors became classrooms, lavatories and store rooms. The previous three main rooms (then the classrooms) on the ground floor, for instance, were thus enlarged after the enclosure of the verandah. The headmaster's quarters connected to his office and a bathroom were located in the enclosed verandah in the south-west corner of the first floor. The interiors were also modernized.

It is not easy to see the Building, as the view of it has been obstructed by its surrounding residential high-rises. Nonetheless, it survives as a historical reminder of the Portuguese community in Hong Kong. The Portuguese came from Macau seeking better opportunities in Hong Kong soon after it was made a British colony and was opened to foreign trade.⁷ The newcomers mainly resided in the Mid-levels. But the growth of the Portuguese population slackened from the early 1900s onwards, when many business and job opportunities had gone to the British who greatly outnumbered the Portuguese.⁸ Also the period from the early 1900s onwards marked the beginning of the Portuguese living in Kowloon, primarily in Tsim Sha Tsui.⁹ Since Portugal was a neutral state in the Second World War, the Hong Kong Portuguese were not interned by the Japanese, apart from those who had served with the British forces. But in fact, several hundred members of the

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

⁷ That emigration tide was more apparent from the 1850s onwards due to declining economic prospects and the social and political unrests in Macau. The newcomers mainly resided at the Mid-levels, such as Caine Road (堅道), Shelley Street (些利街), Peel Street (卑利街) and Chancery Lane (贊善里). The vast majority of those Portuguese were employed as interpreters, clerks and bookkeepers in the Hong Kong government or European banks, trading companies and other expatriate institutions. They were deemed suitable for these roles because of their ability to speak Cantonese and English, as many of them had attended Catholic mission schools in Macau. A small number became merchants or businessmen, or some others joined the colonial military services.

⁸ Some of the census figures of the British and the Portuguese populations in Hong Kong are set out below:
Year 1871 – 1,367 Portuguese and 869 British;
Year 1891 – 2,089 Portuguese and 1,448 British;
Year 1901 – 1,956 Portuguese and 3,007 British;
Year 1911 – 2,558 Portuguese and 3,761 British;
Year 1921 – 2,609 Portuguese and 7,889 British; and
Year 1931 – 3,198 Portuguese and 14,366 British, both including military men.

⁹ Also from the early 1900s onwards was the beginning of the Portuguese living in Kowloon, primarily Austin Road (柯士甸道), Granville Road (加連威老道), Ashley Road (亞士厘道), Knutsford Terrace (諾士佛臺) and Kimberley Road (金巴利道) in Tsim Sha Tsui.

Portuguese community had taken refuge to neutral Macau etc. by the summer of 1942. Some left Hong Kong permanently after the war, and emigrated overseas.¹⁰

Nowadays, the Building is one of the few surviving historic buildings having direct connections with the Portuguese community in Hong Kong. Other examples include Rosary Church on Chatham Road South (玫瑰堂) (Grade 1), St. Teresa's Church on Prince Edward Road West (聖德肋撒堂) (Grade 1) and Club de Recreio (西洋波會) (Grade 3).

The Building is within walking distance from other historic buildings, including the former Kowloon British School (前九龍英童學校) (Declared Monument), St. Mary's Canossian College (嘉諾撒聖瑪利書院) (Grade 1), Kowloon Cricket Club (九龍木球會) (Grade 2) and Kowloon Bowling Green Club (九龍草地滾球會) (Grade 3) **Group Value**

The Building underwent major alterations in the 1950s, during which most of the classical features were stripped out. What we see today is largely the rehabilitated premises of the 1950s. The interior had also been altered to suit the new use. Despite that, the Building is historically and socially significant. Originally built as a private residence, it later became the Manager's House of KCR. It was then adapted as a primary school for European children for two decades from 1929 to 1950. Later, for four decades from 1954 to 1997, it served as the primary school for Portuguese. It is also one of the few surviving historic buildings associated with the Portuguese community in Hong Kong. **Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity**

¹⁰ They emigrated to countries like the US, Australia, Brazil, Canada and New Zealand, due to the social instabilities (mainly riots) in Hong Kong and the declining economic prospects for the Portuguese. It is now difficult to know the number of Portuguese in Hong Kong, as Portuguese are not specified in the census of population by nationality.

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Historic Building Appraisal

Nos. 26A – C Graham Street, Central, Hong Kong

The row of three shophouses are situated at Nos. 26A – C Graham Street.¹ *Historical Interest*

The Chinese community, which mainly comprised newcomers from Mainland China, was first established along the northern coast of Hong Kong Island in the early 1840s, with settlements concentrated in the Upper, Middle and Lower Bazaars. The main business centre near the coast was called the Lower Bazaar (下市場), within which the main street was today's Jervois Street (蘇杭街) in Sheung Wan. The Upper Bazaar (上市場) was located on the hillside at the back of the Lower Bazaar, and was generally referred to as Taipingshan (太平山). The main streets of the Upper Bazaar were approximately where the present-day Lower and Upper Lascar Rows (上摩囉街) (下摩囉街) are situated. The Middle Bazaar (中市場) was an area including today's Peel (卑利街), Graham (嘉咸街), Gutzlaff (吉士笠街), Cochrane (閣麟街), Gage (結志街) and Gough Streets (歌賦街) in Central. At the foot of this area were some marine lots.

The Middle Bazaar was located very close to the areas inhabited by Europeans. In view of the cultural differences between the Chinese and European communities and the undesirable hygienic condition of the Chinese tenements, the government carried out a segregation policy and relocated the Chinese residents of the Middle Bazaar to the Taipingshan area crossed by Lower Lascar Row (下摩囉街), Hollywood Road (荷里活道) and Taipingshan Street (now known as Tai Ping Shan Street) (太平山街). By September 1844, all the old structures in the Middle Bazaar had been removed. Subsequently, all the areas to the east of Aberdeen Street (鴨巴甸街) in Central were inhabited by Europeans. This situation continued until the rise of wealthy Chinese merchants in the 1860s.

Nos. 26A – C Graham Street are situated within the divided lots of a plot of land known as Inland Lot No. 185 (or I.L. 185). I.L. 185 was first owned by a Scott named George Strachan, an architect, under a government lease commencing in 1844, with the earliest available rates records dating back to

¹ Graham Street is situated in one of the earliest settlements established on Hong Kong Island after the British takeover, with a history back in the 1840s. The naming of the street cannot be ascertained. Some said that it was named after James Graham (1792 – 1861, later knighted and became Sir James Graham), Secretary of State for the Home Department (1841 – 1846). Some believed that it was named after Lieutenant Colonel Fortescue Graham (1794 – 1890, later made a Major General), who was a senior Royal Marines officer, serving for 62 years and commanding the marine battalion in the wars in China and Europe, including the First Opium War (1839 – 1842) and Crimean War (1853 – 1856), while others may think that it was named after Henry Hope Graham, who was Captain in the 1830s, Major in the 1840s and Lieutenant Colonel in the 1850s. His time in Hong Kong can be traced back to the early 1850s. In 1855, he was appointed Justice of Peace. In 1857, he assumed command of troops and was appointed a member of Executive Council.

December 1844. In 1853, he sold the lot to a Portuguese chemist and druggist named João Joaquim Braga.² In 1879, a new government lease was entered into by another two Portuguese, Januario Antonio de Carvalho and Henrique Hyndman, who acted as the trustees of the will of the deceased J.J. Braga. In 1916, I.L. 185 was sold to James Albert Samuel, and continued to change hands from time to time thereafter. By 1921, according to rates records, the site was used for the purposes of dwelling, office and dwelling or shop and dwelling. However, it was indicated in those rates records that houses No. 11 and No. 13 Gage Street were situated within I.L. 185. Those houses, numbered “11” and “13”, with their frontage abutting Gage Street rather than Graham Street, were also indicated on a map dated 1897. In addition, the address “No. 11 Gage Street” can still be identified in a land document dated March 1921 as the present-day No. 26B Graham Street. According to the rates records dated July 1921, Chung Ting-chiu (鍾挺超) was the owner of Nos. 11 and 13 Gage Street.

The addresses of Nos. 26A, 26B and 26C Graham Street, are first identifiable in land documents dated from 1922 to 1923. According to those documents, the houses were once owned by Chung Ting-chiu in the early 1920s. Tai Tung-lim (戴東廉),³ who acquired the house lots at No. 26A from Chung Ting-chiu in 1922,⁴ sold them to the Tams in September 1923, while Chung Ting-chiu sold No. 26B to Leung Ming Shi (梁明氏) in February and No. 26C to The Chiu Chow Pat Yap Chamber of Commerce Limited (旅港潮州八邑商會) in January the same year.⁵ The rates collection of the two house lots, however, was cancelled from 1 September 1921. In July 1922, an interim assessment of rates was conducted for Nos. 26A, 26B, 26C and 26D Graham Street, instead of Nos. 11 & 13 Gage Street, at I.L. 185. An aerial photo dated 1924, the earliest one available, shows a row of houses at I.L. 185 in the same orientation of Nos. 26A to C Graham Street. With reference to the historical map, land and rates

² The Portuguese emigrated from Macau to Hong Kong for better opportunities soon after Hong Kong was made a British colony and opened to foreign trade. That emigration tide was more apparent from the 1850s onwards due to declining economic prospects and the social and political unrests in Macau. The newcomers mainly resided at the Mid-levels, such as Caine Road, Shelley Street, Peel Street and Chancery Lane. The vast majority of those Portuguese were employed as interpreters, clerks and bookkeepers in the Hong Kong government or European banks, trading companies and other expatriate institutions. They were deemed suitable for these roles because of their ability to speak Cantonese and English, as many of them had attended Catholic mission schools in Macau. A small number became merchants or businessmen, or some others joined the colonial military services. But the growth of the Portuguese population slackened from the early 1900s onwards, when many business and job opportunities had gone to the British who had greatly outnumbered the Portuguese.

³ Tai Tung-lim owned a number of properties and plots of land in Hong Kong.

⁴ Chung Ting-chiu was a merchant and proprietor of domestic tenements. In 1921, he was one of the petitioners objecting the proposed amendment to the Rating Ordinance of 1901.

⁵ The Tams were Tam Yui-yik (譚裔億), Tam Yee-pui (譚爾佩), Tam Yau-lung (譚友隆) and Tam Ping-tong (譚評塘). The Chiu Chow Pat Yap Chamber of Commerce Limited (旅港潮州八邑商會) was established in 1921. After the Second World War in 1945, its Chinese name was officially changed to “香港潮州商會” (Hong Kong Chiu Chow Chamber of Commerce).

records and aerial photo mentioned above, it is believed that the houses were built between 1922 and 1924.

Traces that Nos. 26A – C Graham Street were built as a row at the same time can still be identified on site – they are connected to each other by the archways in the shared party walls on G/F. Originally, it was a row of four houses from No. 26A to D, with No. 26D in the corner at the intersection of Graham Street and Gage Street. The trace of an archway between Nos. 26C and 26D still exists. Land records show that in 1922, No. 26D changed hands from Chung Ting-chiu to the Kwongs.⁶ No. 26D, together with Nos. 26A to C, is also first identified in the interim rates assessment in July 1922. The four houses survived the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 1945). According to the Japanese Title Deeds dated 1942 (昭和十七年), the houses, comprising shops on the ground floor and residential units on the upper floors (階上住宅階下商店/ 壹階商店, 貳、參階住宅), were three-storey structures built of brickwork and timber (煉瓦及木造), each having its own staircase. They were in good condition (完整) at that time.⁷ Nonetheless, “CIP” (construction in progress) is marked on the house lot of No. 26D in a map dated 1983, showing that it was redeveloped in the early 1980s. At present, only Nos. 26A to C still exist. Over the years, shops selling vegetables, housewares and noodles, for instance, have been operated on the ground floor.

Nos. 26A – C Graham Street comprise three shophouses of three storeys, which sit in a continuous row and are stepped on a sloping site creating a terraced profile. They are a typical example of Hong Kong’s shophouses of the early 20th century. The houses share similar architectural characteristics. They are constructed with load-bearing brick walls while the recessed balconies at the main facades and the kitchens at the rear are built of concrete beams and slabs. Each house has a narrow frontage to Graham Street and deep floor space with a backyard, which adjoins another block by means of a shared brick party wall. Each also has a concrete roof sloping down gently towards the rear elevation.

**Architectural
Merit**

The columns of each house have lines expressed with neat vertical moulding, which extend above the roof parapet on the front elevation. There are simple geometric motifs on the columns and classical mouldings at the copings, whereas the roof parapet features a curved/scroll form openwork

⁶ The Kwongs were Kwong Yun and Kwong Man-kit. Land Registry, Property Particulars of Section B of Inland Lot No. 185.

⁷ The Japanese Title Deeds of Nos. 26B to D with ground floor plans are available, while that of No. 26A is missing. The record for No. 26B is more detailed in the description of the building structure, which indicates that it is made up of brickwork and timber. Only brickwork is mentioned in the records for Nos. 26C and D.

balustrade with vertical balusters. The ornamental pier at the centre of the balustrade carries Art Deco elements with a simple geometric pattern. The front facade is also decorated with classical cornices and string courses. Following the topography of the site, the string courses at the rear elevation run in a zig-zag pattern from one block to another. The stepped chimneys also follow the terraced profile of the houses. Besides, the original recessed balconies on the first and second floors of No. 26B and C are still identifiable, although the setback windows and doors have all been replaced with aluminium ones and the railings have been replaced with modern materials. The balcony of No. 26A has been enclosed by steel windows. The original concrete roof of No. 26C and part of No. 26B have also been removed and are covered with metal corrugated sheet.

Internally, on G/F, each party wall originally had two archways but these have been infilled with brickworks, except for one at No. 26B which is still open through to No. 26C. Some mouldings supporting the timber joists and boarding remain on the party walls. Accessed by timber staircases, the floors of the upper storeys were built of timber boarding supported by timber joists. At present, however, only part of the timber flooring at No. 26A is retained in dilapidated condition while those of No. 26B and C have either collapsed or been removed. Fragments of ceramic colour tiles in hexagonal shape can also be identified at G/F of No. 26A. In addition, all of the windows, at both front and rear elevations, have been replaced by aluminium ones as well.

The houses are a local landmark and a typical example of early 20th century shophouses. They serve as a reminder of a historical streetscape and the retail activities occurring along Graham Street. The continuous facade also looks rather iconic. *Social Value & Local Interest*

Nos. 26A – C Graham Street have group value with other shophouses nearby, namely No. 120 Wellington Street (Grade 1), Nos. 123, 125 and 127 Wellington Street (all Proposed Grade 1), and No. 99 F Wellington Street (Proposed Grade 2). They are also within walking distance of the former Central Police Station Compound, Central Magistracy and Victoria Prison (Declared Monuments) and No. 20 Hollywood Road (Grade 3). *Group Value*

Nos. 26A – C Graham Street are a typical example of early 20th century shophouses, with the building envelope and main decorative features generally retained while most of the flooring and internal layout have gone. The stepped profile of the row houses with a continuous facade bearing some Western *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

influences makes them an interesting piece of built heritage and contributes to the aesthetic character of the streetscape. The buildings are also a local landmark which recalls the reminiscence of the historical streetscape and retail activities along Graham Street.

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Card number, CS/I003/0025561, Carl Smith Collection.
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