

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 89 Electric Road,
North Point, Hong Kong

Electric Road (電氣道) was laid out in 1935. Its name indicated there was once a power station located nearby. According to *Street Index of the City of Victoria* for 1936, the boundary of Electric Road is “from Junction of Causeway Road and King’s Road Northwards, passing Bayview Police Station to Hong Kong Electric Co.’s Power Station and its junction with Power Street.” The North Point power station was demolished and redeveloped after the erection of Ap Lei Chau power station in 1968. *Historical Interest*

According to oral and documentary evidence, the present buildings at **Nos. 89 and 91** was probably built sometime **between 1947 and 1951** to replace an earlier building(s) on site. In fact, the Wing Fat Printing Company Limited (永發印刷有限公司) purchased and erected its factory in No. 89 Electric Road in the 1930s. The business of this company met a downfall since the late 1930s and eventually closed before the Japanese invaded Hong Kong. Also, Nos. 89 and 90 was once used by Kowloon Sauce Factory (九龍醬園) for commercial purpose. They are now owned by two private developers.

Nos. 89 and 91 Electric Road are four-storey shophouses of the later type of **shophouse** architecture. Instead of a covered walkway over the pavement, the upper floors are cantilevered out to form open verandahs which have been enclosed with windows. The balustrade walls to the enclosed verandahs are solid and finished with stucco or render which has been ruled with recessed horizontal lines to give a streamlined effect. No. 89 shares a common staircase with No. 91. Windows for ventilation and light are provided on the half-landings. The roof is flat with projecting chimney stacks, the staircase bulkhead and laundry drying lines. A light well can be seen at the rear between the two buildings which contains a spiral steel staircase probably a fire escape. The walls of the two buildings are rendered and painted. *Architectural Merit*

Shophouses are becoming rarer year by year due to redevelopment. No. 89 and No. 91 should be regarded as having historical value as well as built heritage value. The authenticity of the street facades has been impaired by enclosure of the verandahs but this is probably reversible. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

The social value of the shophouses lies in the contribution they have made to urban development. They have evolved through several different types and these particular shophouses are part of the historical urban fabric. They are of local interest probably only to historians however. *Social Value & Local Interest*

An adaptive re-use which did not further affect the shophouses' authenticity might be difficult to find. The best use is for them to continue to be used for their present purpose but pressure to redevelop the site might be too great.