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# Another piece of history waits to bite the dust

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ANOTHER fine example of Hongkong's once grandiose architecture will be demolished when casino magnate Stanley Ho replaces this classic 1920s mansion with a 24-storey apartment block.

The building, at 1 Seymour Terrace in Mid Levels, is a beautiful - if dilapidated - colonial style mansion which was home to the prominent Li family for more than 60 years.

The house, scene of swinging social parties in the 1950s, was bought by Mr Ho's company, Shun Tak Enterprises, last June.

A spokesman for the company yesterday confirmed that the building will be torn down and the site redeveloped at the end of the year.

Former owner Mr Li Chuen who is ex-Assistant Director of the Water Supplies Department said he is not too sad about the imminent demolition of his family home.

"I was very attached to the place but I felt it really must go," he said.

"It was too big for us, and too much work to keep it going - you really have got to make way for progress."

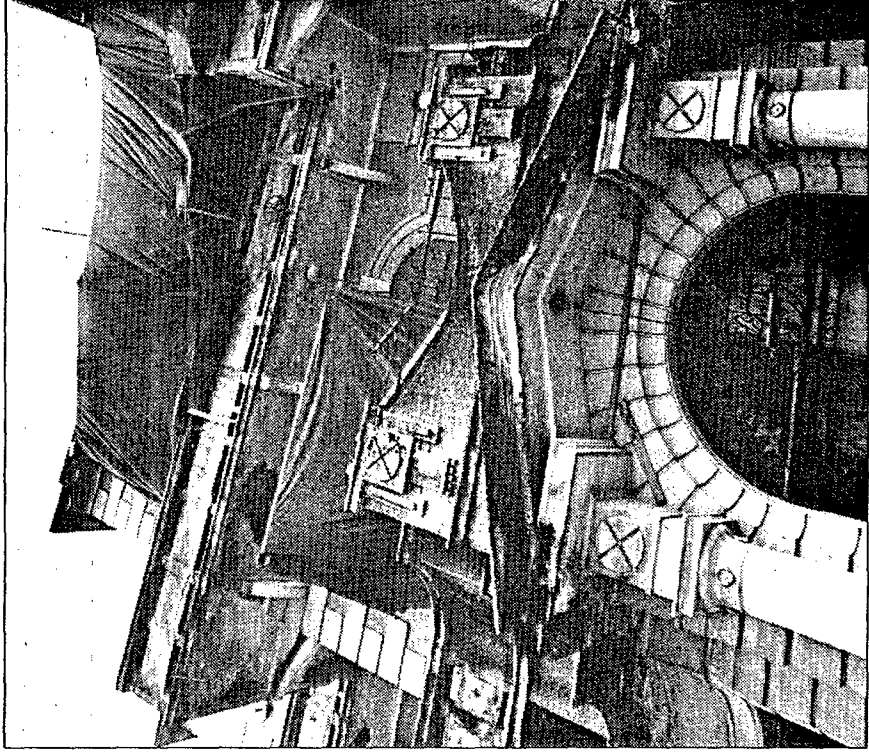
Mr Li said his grandfather Mr Li Po-kwai, a prominent Hongkong merchant, built the house between 1921 and 1924.

It was designed in the colonial style of the day with huge 600 square foot rooms and elaborate Roman columns and plasterwork.

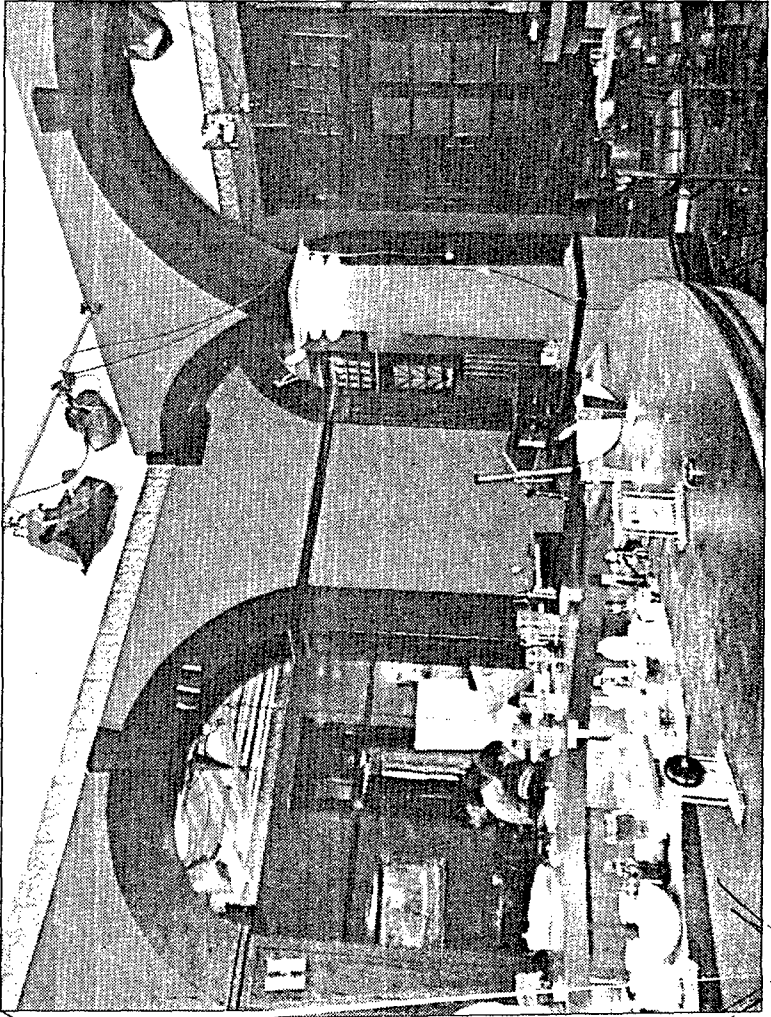
The three-storey mansion originally stood on its own at the top of Seymour Road commanding clear views over Victoria Harbour.

Obstruction of the views began after the war when the area started to become built up. "We used to have great parties there almost every week," remembered Mr Li. "Downstairs there was a large room like a ballroom and we used to dance there to gramophone records."

The mansion will not be entirely lost. It has been used as a location for three Chinese films in the past few months.



Outside...No 1 Seymour Road. Soon to come down. Pictures: Ric Yip



Inside...movie-workers during recent filming in one of the mansion's spacious rooms.