

Historic Building Appraisal
Rosary Mission Centre
No. 1 Wong Mo Ying, Sai Kung, New Territories

Rosary Mission Centre (玫瑰小堂) was built in **1940**. It has been the only *Historical Interest* chapel in Tai Mong Tsai (大網仔) and is one of the Catholic churches built in Sai Kung to provide Catholic divine services for the rural community. Wedding was held in the chapel and the banquet in the ground beside the chapel. The chapel also provided education in the village, so that Wong Mo Ying was one of three villages which had their own schools before World War II. The school was opened by Rev. E. Teruzzi (丁味略神父, 1887-1942) and the curriculum in the 1910s was mainly a combination of Chinese Classic and Bible Study. Teachers were employed from She Hang (舍坑) of Guanlan (觀欄) in Baoan county (寶安縣). There was an additional teacher teaching Bible Study who was a missionary in Tai Long (大浪), Sai Kung. Apart from the children of Wong Mo Ying, some students came from Tai Mong Tsai.

Wong Mo Ying (黃毛應) is a Hakka village with the surname of Tang (鄧), which originated from Danshui (淡水) of Huizhou (惠州) and settled in Wong Mo Ying probably between the 1750s and the 1840s. The village was regarded as an ideal place for a guerrilla base for its geographical location at the outskirts of Sai Kung Market where the Japanese soldiers stationed. During China's war of resistance, Rosary Mission Centre was the place where the famous Hong Kong-Kowloon Independent Battalion of East River Guerrilla (東江縱隊港九獨立大隊) declared its establishment on 3 February 1942.

Father E. Teruzzi and Father Brookes Richard (穀祿師神父, 1892-1980) visited Rosary Mission Centre once for every two to three months on foot before the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945) and Father Caruso (文神父) once a month after the war. The chapel was damaged during the War but was later restored to use. Due to a decline in population in the village, it was abandoned in the 1970s, but later reopened as the first camp site for the Hong Kong (Catholic) Group in 1976.

Rosary Mission Centre consists of an L-shaped building with a two-storey *Architectural Merit* structure at one end of a single-storey structure which was formerly the chapel. A single storey annex at one end forms the L-shape and accommodate the toilets. The roof of the annex is flat but the remainder of the building has pitched roofs of corrugated sheets. The walls are rendered and painted and are strengthened with piers or buttresses externally. The front elevation has a pair of modern steel framed entrance doors with a fanlight protected by a cantilevered porch. Above the porch there is a circular rose window in the gable. The windows in the side elevations and the rear elevation are modern

steel framed windows protected with wire security enclosures. A door from the first floor gives access to the roof over the toilet annex. Internally, the walls are painted white and the King post trusses supporting the roof are exposed and painted white. The original pews and altar have been removed and the building seems to have become a general purpose storeroom. It is difficult to give an architectural style to this building as due to various restorations and alterations it has become rather nondescript and **Utilitarian** in appearance very similar to wartime structures erected on army camps and airfields.

The original appearance of the building is not known, but the present appearance indicates radical alterations thereby affecting the authenticity of the building.

Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

The building shows the importance of Sai Kung as one of the earliest and most important Catholic parishes in Hong Kong. Its social value lies in the role it played in the past in the religious activities of the villagers, its wartime role as a guerilla base, and finally as a recreational and religious centre.

Social Value & Local Interest

When comparing the architectural character of Rosary Mission Centre with other chapels in Sai Kung, one may find some similarities between them, especially the use of traditional Chinese pitched roof with a simplified style of Roman Catholic churches of **Immaculate Conception Chapel** in Tai Long and the pillars supporting the external wall of **St. Joseph's Chapel** in Yim Tin Tsai. The combination of traditional Chinese pitched roof with a simplified appearance of Roman Catholic churches reveals the localization of Western religious architecture.

Group Value

As far as is known there are no plans to close down the Rosary Mission Centre so that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise.

Adaptive Re-use