Annex A

Heritage Impact Assessment of Redevelopment of St. Paul's Co-educational College, 33 MacDonnell Road, Hong Kong

BACKGROUND

The existing St. Paul's Co-educational College at 33 MacDonnell Road was the successor of the former St. Paul's Girls' College at 2 Caine Road established in 1915. In 1927, the College was relocated to its current location which was granted by the government in 1924. It became Hong Kong's first co-educational secondary school in 1945. The College complex developed over time with new wings and school blocks constructed in 1959, 1971, and 1985.

The 1927 school main building block is built of red brickwork to a C-shaped plan. There is an internal courtyard. The architectural style of the building has been described as Neo-Georgian, a stripped down classical style of late Renaissance period in England. It was accorded Grade 3 Historic Building by Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) in 1992 and reviewed and confirmed as Grade 2 historic building on 4 February 2010 in the recent historic building assessment exercise by AAB.

The building with its rather eclectic hybrid mix of neo-classical styles and unusual floor plan is quite rare in Hong Kong. Alterations which have had impact on it include the covering of the basement swimming pool to form a gymnasium, the addition of new wings and annexes and the changing of the pitched roof to a flat roof.
The project is to redevelop St. Paul's Co-educational College in accordance with the schedule of accommodation of 36-classroom secondary school. It involves addition and alteration works of the existing secondary school premises to provide additional classrooms and other facilities.

STATEMENT OF CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Completed in 1927, Main Building of St. Paul's Co-educational College is a 7-storey C-shaped red brickwork academic premise. Its Neo-Georgian facades, verandahs, and the demolished Chinese tiled roof demonstrate the adaptation of a western style building to Hong Kong local culture and climate.

Annex A

a. Social Significance

Formerly known as St. Paul's Girls' College, the school was established in 1915 to provide education for Chinese. The extant MacDonnell Road Main Building is the College's first self owned permanent premise. Despite financial difficulties resulting from Canton-Hong Kong Strike, the construction works were completed in 1927 and were financed by Government's grant, private donations, and funds raised from locals and overseas.

This campus was built to accommodate the increased number of intake reflecting the College's contribution to enhance education level of Chinese. It was also built to improve teaching facilities previous campuses in Caine Road failed to provide, and thus a rare scale of 7 storeys, and the incorporation of an indoor swimming pool on G/F.

The College was the first school in Hong Kong to wear school uniforms since 1918. When the Japanese Occupation ended in 1945 it was once combined with St. Paul's College and became the first co-educational college in Hong Kong. It has since then continued to provide secondary education to girls and boys, and renamed as St. Paul's Co-educational College.

b. Historical Significance

Foundation stone of 1927 Main Building was laid by the Governor Sir R. E. Stubbs on 6 June 1925. Its opening ceremony was officiated by the Governor Sir William Peel.

The College has been serving society since it was established. In 1939 bazaars were held at Lee Hysan Hall, current Physics Laboratory on 5/F to raise fund for refugees and wounded. The campus was used by Colonial Government as "The 7th First Aid Station" when Japanese invaded Hong Kong in 1941. It also survived the Japanese Occupation and provided protection to girl children during wartime.

Between 1951 and 1953 it was used as the prime campus for Chung Chi College's evening classes that later became one of the colleges of the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

c. Architectural and Aesthetic Significance

Giving up the use of terrace which was the traditionally adopted morphology for buildings located on slopes, the planning of the College strategically utilized every available space to provide the maximum floor area.
The design by Little, Adams and Wood reflected features of the Neo-Georgian style. The Classical languages used included verandahs and galleries formed by Roman arches and columns. Fenestrations and doors possessed imitation masonry architraves and surrounds made of Shanghai plaster.

The College has undergone a number of extensions and alterations. The swimming pool was covered up with timber in 1950 with regards to hygienic concerns. The expressive West façade was modified to cope with the extension in 1959, and the original tiled roof was replaced in 1985 due to water seepage. In spite of these, the extant Neo-classical facades, the layout taking into account of local hot, wet climate, high quality workmanship of the brickwork, and delicate architectural features could still demonstrate the excellence of the design and construction of the building.

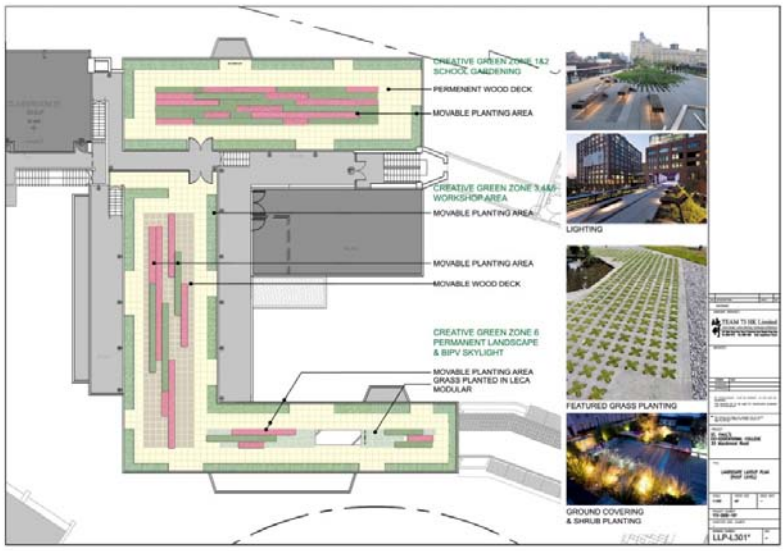
Annex A

KEY DESIGN PROPOSALS

1. Roof design

   The existing concrete flat roof was constructed in 1985 owing to water seepage at the original pitched roof and is not original. It is to be replaced by a new flat roof above the new library at 5/F. The proposed new roof slab will be expressed along roof level of main building facades, with transparent glass pane separating the historic building fabric and new building element of roof slab. The additions will be designed in a minimalist manner to minimize visual impact.

   The original pitched roof would not be reconstructed due to the need of utilizing the roof space as an educational green roof to suit the College's academic requirement, and to comply ArchSD's environmental requirement for subvented school.



Educational Green Roof plan

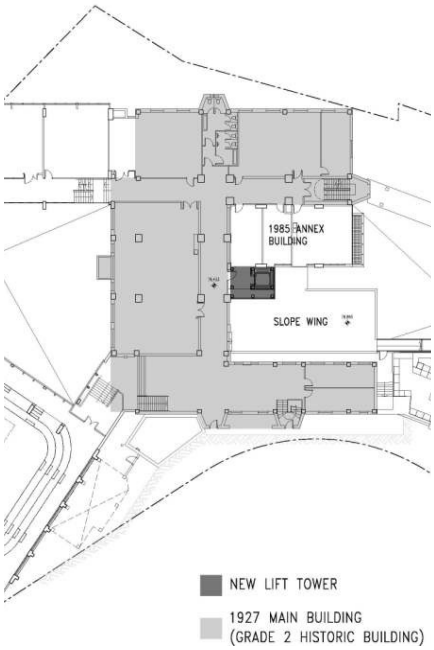
Annex A

Existing Entrance at MacDonnell Road

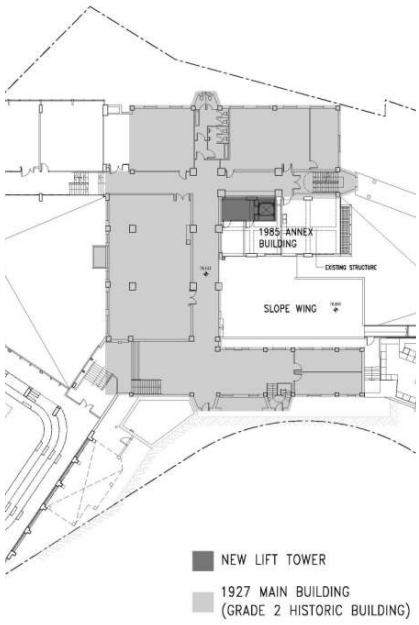
Proposed Entrance at MacDonnell Road

2. Addition of a new lift

A new lift will be constructed to provide barrier free access. It is to be located between 1985 Annex Building and Slope Wing. Connection landing will be constructed between the lift and the verandah. The interfacing portion of brick parapet and imitation masonry top at each floor will be removed to allow this access. The lift will be constructed as a separate independent structure with glass enclosure which could be distinguished from the existing building material of the Grade 2 historic building.



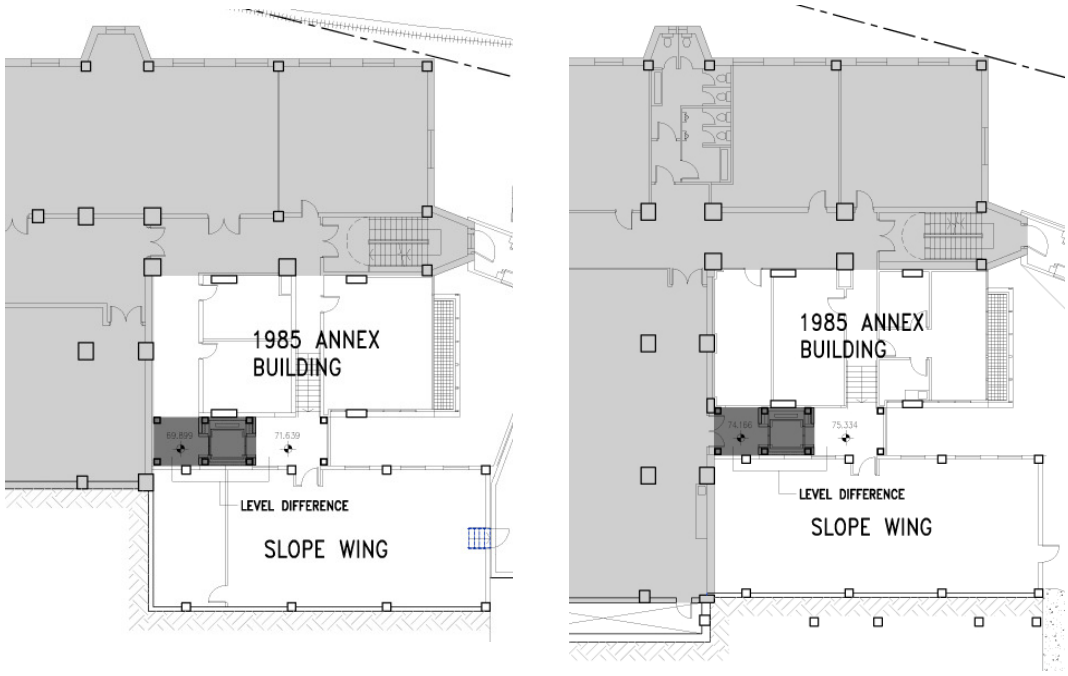
Option 1- Between 1985 Annex and Slope Wing, 3rd floor plan



Option 2 – Inside 1985 Annex, 3rd floor plan

Two locations for the lift are discussed here: Option 1- Between 1985 Annex and Slope Wing, and Option 2- Inside 1985 Annex. Option 1 is adopted as it provides barrier free access to different levels of 1927 Main Building and Slope Wing, which option 2 cannot. Besides it does not take up any interior spaces, and requires no demolition and structural strengthening of existing slabs thus shorter construction time and less cost.

Annex A



Option 1- 1st floor (left) and 2nd floor (right) blow-up part plan

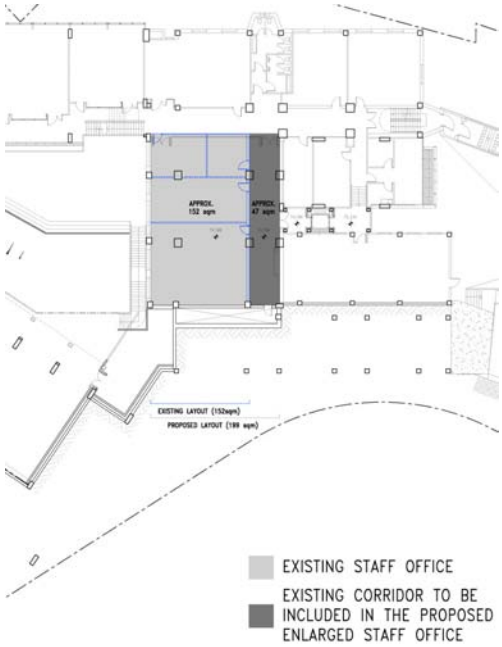
Option 1- Perspective of the glass lift shaft

Annex A

3. Extension and renovation of the new staff room on the 2nd Floor

   Existing partition wall will be removed to form an enlarged staff room and the staff room will be extended to include the existing verandah space with new enclosure to be constructed. The original floor finishes and materials will be retained should reversibility be required.

   The extra area of approximately 47 sq. m is needed in order to comply with latest standard of the schedule of accommodation as laid down by the Education Bureau as well as for the operational need by school due to the change of spatial arrangement of classrooms and staff rooms.



2nd floor part plan of the proposed staff room

4. Building services installation

   Addition and alteration of building services such as air conditioning and mechanical ventilation system, electrical installation, fire services installation and plumbing and drainage system will be carried out in the main building. Their pipes and conduits should be located in hard-to-discern areas, such as recesses or pipe ducts, and further concealed with neatly designed screens, if necessary. Conduits should be arranged and grouped to run in alignment and neatly along corridor.

Annex A

CONSERVING THE CHARACTER DEFINING ELEMENTS

External Elements:

The overall form of the building is significant, and its C-shaped plan and layout should be respected and retained.

The following individual elements should be conserved as character defining elements:

- Overall structural form of the building including main facades
- Significant elements including:
  - Antique red brick walls and their patterns
  - Imitation masonry elements on facades including porch, columns, entablature, architraves to doorways, balconies and window cills
  - Wooden paneled doors
  - Wooden single and double casement windows
  - Gauged flat brick arches over window openings
  - two-ring semi-circular brick arches

Internal Elements:

The following individual elements are considered significant and should be conserved:

- Polished terrazzo dado at staircase inner wall
- Moulded cornices at ceiling
- Moulded skirtings
- Glazed and paneled doors and windows
- Moulded capitals to pilasters
- Granite foundation stones set in wall
- Boarded timber floors
- White marble mantelpiece of fireplace in Music Room
- Red quarry tiled floor with black tiled order along verandah
- Foundation stones
- Classical style columns and beams with details at Physical and Chemistry Laboratory

Annex A

MITIGATION MEASURES AND COMPENSATORY OUTCOMES

- Detailed documentation of the main building photographically and cartographically.
- Photographic display of school historical development as an interpretation tool.
- Careful restoration of the antique red brick wall, timber window and doors, imitation masonry.
- Careful realignment of building services to concealed locations to expose a clean ceiling of open verandah and corridor
- Salvaging of red bricks for reuse on site

St. Paul's Co-educational College

February 2011