

Heritage Appraisal of King's College
No. 63A Bonham Road, Hong Kong

King's College (英皇書院), built in 1923-26, is one of the six *Historical*
surviving pre-war government school buildings in Hong Kong. It was *Interest*
formerly known as Saiyingpun School (西營盤學校), which was
established by Government on Third Street in 1879. As more pupils
enrolled in Saiyingpun School, it was later moved to a larger premise on
Pokfulam Road in 1891. However, the capacity of the new premises
still could not cope with the growing demand. The school management
therefore decided to move the premises once again. The name of King's
College was first adopted in 1922 when the present Bonham campus was
chosen for the construction of a secondary school.

The foundation stone of King's College was laid in 1923. Site
formation, foundation works and construction of retaining walls were
undertaken by Messrs. Foo Loong & Co. (富隆公司) in the same year
and the superstructure was erected by Messrs. Kin Lee & Co. (建利公司)
in 1924. The works were completed in 1926. In September 1926,
Saiyingpun School moved to the Bonham campus and was renamed as
King's College. The *Hongkong Administrative Report* of 1926
described King's College as "one of the finest and most modern of school
buildings" with "29 classrooms, staff and common rooms, the latest
sanitary arrangements, hat and cloak rooms, a museum and library, an art
room, physics and chemistry laboratories, a workshop, swimming pool
and dressing rooms, gymnasium, covered playground, fire fighting
appliances and the usual complement of store-rooms and offices".

The school building was, however, requisitioned by the Military
Authorities as the quarters and hospital for the British Shanghai Defence
Force from February to December 1927. The Force was deployed to
protect British nationals in Shanghai during the Northern Expedition.
On 5 March 1928, the school was officially opened by the then Governor
Sir Cecil Clementi.

With the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941, King's
College was used as a first aid station as it had its St. John Ambulance
equipment set up by the first Principal, Mr. Alfred Morris. During the
Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), the school was used as a military mule
and horse stable for the Japanese Army.

The school building was badly damaged during the Japanese Occupation. The roof was destroyed. All timber window frames, banisters and floorboards were looted for firewood. After refurbishment, the school was re-opened in 1950 as a bi-sessional primary school, which only operated in the afternoon and shared the school premises with the Northcote Training College Attached School (羅富國師範學院附屬學校) and the Government Vernacular Middle School (官立漢文學校). It was restored as a morning secondary school in the next year. The total enrolment of King's College reached 640 pupils in 1951.

In 1953, the school underwent its first extension by adding two laboratories, a preparation room, a lecture room, an art room and five classrooms. The need for further expansion of the school resulted in the addition of an extra floor to the South and East Wings, and two more floors above the gymnasium of the North Wing. With the completion of the next stage of extension in 1960, King's College became a full-time secondary school with a total of 26 classrooms, 10 special rooms and 7 laboratories. In 2000, a new wing, namely the West Wing, with well-equipped classrooms and laboratories was added to the school building.

The red-brick school building in Neo-classical style was originally built around the three sides of a square in 1926 and the whole building comprised a North Wing, a South Wing and an East Wing with a bell tower (now removed) above the colonnaded curved entrance porch at the junction of Bonham Road and Western Street. The three wings of the school building are arranged in collegiate style around a central courtyard which serves as the school playground to form a quadrangle. The dainty school garden at the lower ground level facing Bonham Road with a small fountain and an arched colonnaded curvilinear side wall further enhanced the beauty of the school building.

***Architectural
Merit***

Red-brick Roman arched colonnades are applied along the façade and corridor on the ground floor of the South Wing and coupled columns form loggias on the first and second floors. Roman arched colonnades are also found on the front elevations of the East and North Wings.

Clerestory windows are found on the upper part of the bricked-up arches of the North Wing. Some doorways have Roman arches or flattened arches with fanlight glazing. The red-brick wall angles are emphasised with quoins.

The most impressive part of the school building is its circular entrance porch at the junction of Bonham Road and Western Street. The porch is supported by granite coupled columns with Ionic Order capitals featuring volute brackets and Italian Renaissance style side openings. A groin vault can be seen on the top floor of the entrance block which is rarely found in other school buildings. This gives the school building a distinctive Classical feature which requires high quality workmanship.

The school building has undergone several extensive refurbishment and alterations over the years. During the Japanese Occupation, most part of the swimming pool, including its filter-system, was damaged. Repair and reconstruction works to the school building were carried out after the Japanese Occupation. The bell tower and chimneys at the entrance block were removed in 1950 to make way for the erection of an extra floor to the South and East Wings. Reconstruction of the swimming pool was arranged from 1971 to 1972 with funding from the Old Boys' Association. The school garden was also refurbished and the fountain was reconstructed and upgraded around 2004. The authenticity of the school building has been compromised to some extent but its main architectural characters still remain without affecting its high architectural value. **Authenticity**

According to the *Hongkong Administrative Report* of 1926, at the time of the establishment of King's College in 1926, there were 19 Government schools in Hong Kong providing primary and secondary education for more than 3 500 pupils in Hong Kong. Queen's College and King's College for Chinese, Belilios Public School for Chinese girls, Kowloon Junior School, Victoria School and Quarry Bay School for children of British parentage are some examples of the Government schools at that time. With the rapid development of the city, most of the premier government school buildings were either demolished or ceased to operate. At present, only six pre-war Government school buildings survive, namely the Former Kowloon British School (前九龍英童學校) (built in 1900-1902), the Former Peak School (前山頂學校) (built in **Rarity**

1915), the Former Quarry Bay School (前鰂魚涌學校) (built in 1926), King's College (built in 1926), Cheung Chau Government Secondary School (長洲官立中學) (built in 1928) and King George V School (英皇佐治五世學校) (built in 1936). King's College is now the oldest surviving pre-war Government school building which still serves its original usage.

In addition, the use of red bricks in school architecture decorated with relatively rich Neo-classical style features is rare in Hong Kong. The notable Neo-classical style features such as arched colonnades, colonnaded verandahs, rusticated quoins, moulded cornices and classical stone surrounds to the windows are found in King's College and make it an interesting piece of built heritage. The red-brick school building in Neo-classical style is a rare piece school architecture of its kind in Hong Kong.

The school's social value lies in its contribution to the community and education as well as the historical/ famous figures associated with it. With its long history, many community leaders, such as Jin Yingxi (金應熙) (1919-1991), Lau Din-cheuk (劉殿爵) (1921-2010), Sir Harry Fang Sin-yang (方心讓) (1923-2009), Dr. Simon Li Fook-sean (李福善), the Hon Dr. Leung Chun-ying (梁振英), are alumni of the College. The school building served as a community venue due to the lack of meeting places in Hong Kong in the 1960s. It was constantly reserved for activities by various organisations, such as the Government Clerical Service, the Auxiliary Medical Services, the Police Reserve, the Civil Aid Services and St. John Ambulance Division of the Old Boys' Association.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Due to its prominent position and high reputation, King's College is a focal point in the area. Many old purpose-built educational buildings in the vicinity, including St. Stephen's Girls' College (聖士提反女子中學) (built in 1923); and the Main Building (本部大樓) (built in 1910-12), Hung Hing Ying Building (孔慶熒樓) (built in 1919) and Tang Chi Ngong Building (鄧志昂樓) (built in 1929) of the University of Hong Kong, which have already been declared as monuments, form a cluster of historic school buildings in the Mid-Levels.

Group Value

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