

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Stanley Mosque**  
**No. 53 Tung Tau Wan Road, Stanley, Hong Kong**

Built around 1936-1937 at the time when the Stanley Prison was established, Stanley Mosque was constructed by the hundreds of Indian and Pakistani staff who then worked for the Prisons Department. It was built on an east-west axis to face Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia, which is the holiest city in Islam because the Prophet Mohammed was born there. In the 1970s, around 150 Muslim staff attended the Friday prayers in the prison compound in Stanley, while the figure fell to just seven families in 1998. The Mosque features 14 arched windows which illuminate the delicate Arabic script of framed passages from the Koran hanging on the walls of the prayer-hall. The Mosque is still in operation and mainly serves the Muslim officers of the prison.

***Historical  
Interest***

Stanley Mosque is built to a symmetrical T-shaped plan with an open forecourt in front. A small toilet block at one side provides facilities for ablutions. There is an open verandah (from the Indian word *varanda*) on the front façade raised above the forecourt level by continuous steps along the whole front. The roof is flat and has a decorative crenellated parapet all the way around. The facades of the building are arcaded with decorative ornamental arches, columns and imitation minarets. The finish is painted stucco.

***Architectural  
Merit***

The internal accommodation consists of one large rectangular room which is the prayer-hall. Access is via the main entrance or *iwan* and there are three sets of glazed double doors on each side of the entrance opening on to the verandah. The interior decoration is very subdued. The plain walls and panelled ceiling are painted white. The floor of the prayer-hall is carpeted with prayer mats of geometric and floral patterns. On the opposite wall to the entrance can be seen a niche or recess called the *mihrab* which faces Mecca and indicates the direction in which the congregation should kneel and pray or prostrate themselves. At the side of the *mihrab* can be seen the *minbar* or pulpit for the priest or *iman*. A *pardah* screen separates the area reserved for women, and there are various pieces of furniture to keep head-coverings, religious texts, prayer books and the like.

Stanley Mosque has considerable architectural merit being built in an unusual eclectic mixed style known as orientalism. This style draws on forms, motifs and details selected in this case from Islamic, Ottoman, Saracenic, Moorish, Byzantine and Chinese architecture. The main entrance has an unusual form of arch reminiscent of the horseshoe arch found in the Moorish architecture

of Caliphate Spain. The arched verandah and arcading on the facades feature an unusual oriental form of cusped ogee or ogival arch, which is quite rare and occasionally found in Chinese architecture. The stone bases to the columns and minarets are similar to column bases found in local ancestral halls and temples. The round or semicircular arches to the prayer-hall door and window openings exhibit the Byzantine influence on Ottoman architecture. A typical 1930s feature can be seen in the Art Deco streamlining to the dwarf wall surrounding the forecourt.

It is a rare building style in Stanley and as a good example of this pre-war building style has built heritage value. There is no visual evidence of alterations to the mosque and therefore it can be said to be authentic and ‘as-built’. The Mosque as seen today is well-maintained and believed to retain much of its original appearance, especially its exterior which still has its distinctive architectural features.

***Rarity,  
Built Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity***

The mosque stands in the Stanley Prison compound and together with Stanley Prison itself and other buildings dating from this time such as the Prison Officer’s Club and the old married officers’ accommodation blocks, it has group value and considerable local interest. Although not used as much as in the old days, the mosque is still important to the Muslim community in Hong Kong. The Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Fund of Hong Kong are particularly concerned about preservation of the mosque.

***Social Value,  
Local Interest***

Stanley Mosque has distant group value with a number of graded buildings in Stanley; for example, Old Stanley Police Station (舊赤柱警署, Declared Monument), St. Stephen’s College (聖士提反書院) and St. Stephen’s College Preparatory School (聖士提反書院附屬小學).

***Group Value***

There are no plans to close down the mosque so that the question of adaptive re-use does not really arise.

***Adaptive  
Re-use***