

Historic Building Appraisal
S.K.H. St. Mary's Church
No. 2A Tai Hang Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

Built in 1937, St. Mary's Church (聖馬利亞堂) evolved from a small chapel built in 1911 in the Tai Hang area. Before the Church finally opened its door to the public, church services were conducted at the St. John Ambulance Headquarters Building erected in 1935. The establishment of the Church was mainly attributed to Bishop Gerald Heath Lander who purchased land (I.L. 1900) through contributions of the Anglican Church and donations by the Chinese churchgoers in Hong Kong. A small chapel was subsequently erected on the site. The Church initially served as a place of gathering for the Eyre Diocesan Refuge for Destitute Woman (晏氏棲留院). The fact that this organization aimed at providing shelter and education to homeless women corresponded to the name of the Church which modelled itself on the spirit of acceptance of St. Mary—the mother of Jesus Christ.

*Historical
Interest*

St. Mary's Church was officially opened on 23 December 1937 by Bishop Ronald Owen Hall (何明華主教) and Bishop Mok Sau-tseng (莫壽增會督). Apart from religious services, the Church is also active in the field of education. The Church established St. Mary's Primary School and St. Mary's College in 1959 and 1963 respectively.

The architectural design of the Church echoed the Chinese indigenous church movement in the 1920s. Within the Chinese community, patriotism took its toll as the first group of overseas-educated Chinese, notably Liang Si-cheng (梁思成), Yang Ting-bao (楊廷寶) and Zhu Bin (朱彬), returned to China. Bringing home with them Western ideas and knowledge, they advocated a blend of Western architectural methods with Chinese architectural design. A Chinese indigenous church was thought to be one that met the “three self” ideals, namely “self governing, self-supporting and self-propagating.” Evidently, this movement was vital in reflecting the rapid growth of the Chinese community in Causeway Bay area and its subtle engagement in changing the life-style with the City of Victoria then dominated by Westerners.

The Church is built in a fusion of Western and Chinese construction methods and architectural theory. The Church has a reinforced concrete and

*Architectural
Merit*

red brick structure. The front elevation is the most magnificent featuring a red colonnaded entrance porch approached by a grand flight of steps, flanked on either side by projecting bays and white ornamental balustrading. Stepped roofs ascending to the apex are finished in green glazed Chinese tiles. There is a large white cross in the centre of the facade. Internally the colourful stained glass windows and ornamental roof trusses give the Church a feeling of majesty and grandeur.

The design of the Church is rare in Hong Kong, and therefore it has certain rarity and built heritage value. Although renovations have taken place over the years, the Church retains much of its authenticity.

***Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

In addition to its religious role, the Church has played a key role in educational development in Hong Kong, and therefore has significant social value. Due to its prominent position at the junction of Tung Lo Wan Road and Eastern Hospital Path it is an iconic landmark in the area.

***Rarity,
Social Value &
Local Interest***

St. Mary's Church has group value with other historic buildings, including its General Office (新座, Grade 3), St. Margaret Mary's Church (聖瑪加利大堂) (Grade 1), St. Paul's Primary Catholic School (聖保祿天主教小學) (Grade 2) and Shing Kwong Church (聖光堂) (Grade 2).

Group Value

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