

Historic Building Appraisal
Maryknoll House
No. 44 Stanley Village Road, Stanley, Hong Kong

Maryknoll House (瑪利諾會) was established by **Bishop James A. Walsh**, the first Maryknoll priest who set foot in Hong Kong in 1917. Built in **1935** with funds borrowed from the **Paris Foreign Mission Society**, it served as the headquarters of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, and also as a summer rest home and a language school for priests who were going to preach in China. *Historical Interest*

In 1941, the House was used by the British in preparation for the battle against the Japanese military. As the Japanese gradually approached Hong Kong Island, Maryknoll House became a refuge for many Chinese refugees. It did not take long for the Japanese to conquer Hong Kong, and they requisitioned two classrooms at the House for quartering their men numbering some two hundred. Later, the priests were ordered by the Japanese to evacuate Maryknoll House and they were interned at the Stanley Internment Camp together with several hundred other British, Canadian and Dutch civilians. The House was immediately converted into the Japanese military headquarters.

After World War II, many refugees found shelter there including displaced missionaries from the mainland. From then on, education and social welfare turned out to be the missionaries' major endeavour, as exemplified by the opening of a community centre administered by Father John Curran in Ngau Tau Kok and the Bishop Ford School in Tung Tao Tsuen (1953) as well as the Maryknoll Fathers School (1957). Medical care was also provided for the Chinese as the Maryknollers erected clinics in Ngau Tau Kok, Kowloon Tsai and Kwun Tong. The most ambitious project of all was the opening of Our Lady of Maryknoll Hospital in Wong Tai Sin.

The three-storey building has a handsome red-brick facade showing the strong character of Chinese architecture combined with western elements and details in a style known as **Chinese Eclectic**. This style was purposely chosen by the Maryknoll Fathers according to their vision of spreading the gospel in China. Chinese architectural features include green glazed tiled roofs, green glazed Chinese grilles, octagonal and hexagonal shaped windows, and various decorations and motifs on the façade. The building is symmetrical in plan and the façades also exhibit regular fenestration with only minor deviations here and there. There have been renovations, alterations and additions internally over the years to meet changing requirements, but *Architectural Merit*, *Rarity*, *Built Heritage*

externally the building remains fairly authentic and a rare piece of built heritage of architectural interest and value. *Value & Authenticity*

Today, the House stands as a reminder of the changes that have taken place in Stanley and is one of the most spectacular historic buildings in the area. *Social Value & Local Interest*

The building is situated in a quiet environment overlooking the beautiful scene of Stanley. Although its immediate environment has been developed into residential clusters, and the fishing village of Stanley has long since disappeared and replaced by a bustling tourist haven, several of its surviving predecessors in its proximity still hold the memory of Old Stanley. For instance, the declared monuments Old Stanley Police Station (舊赤柱警署) and School House of St. Stephen's College (聖士提反書院校舍) can be found in the area. The building is also close to historic buildings graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board such as the Stanley Fort (赤柱炮台) (Proposed Grade 2 or Grade 3), historic buildings at St. Stephen's College (聖士提反書院) (Grade 3) and Stanley Post Office (Grade 2). *Group Value*

Economic pressures and changing circumstances may mean that an adaptive re-use may have to be found for the House in the future. *Adaptive Re-use*

REFERENCES

Document Records at The Land Registry Office, Hong Kong

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