

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 28 Kennedy Road, Main Building
Central, Hong Kong
(Main Building, Servants' Quarters & Rickshaw Parking Space)

The building is thought to have been built in the late 1890s. The site was first sold to the Hongkong Land Investment and Agency Company Limited (香港置地投資及代理有限公司) in 1896. The Company was founded in 1889 by two prominent businessmen, Sir Catchick Paul Chater, an Armenian born in Calcutta, and James Johnstone Keswick, a *Tai-pan* (大班) of Jardine, Matheson & Company (怡和洋行). The Company changed its name into the Hongkong Land Company Limited (香港置地公司) in 1971.

Since it was built, the building has had several owners and has been used for a variety of purposes but mainly for educational purposes. For instance, the Queen's College (皇仁書院) used the premises as temporary school in around 1946 until 1950 when the College moved to Causeway Bay. From 1961 to 1989, the premises was shared by the Education Department and the Kennedy Road Junior School. It was used by the Joint Liaison Group (中英聯合聯絡小組) for meetings in the 1990s prior to the Handover. It is currently used as Office of the Former Chief Executives of the Hong Kong SAR.

Although the design of the Main Building is predominantly influenced by the architectural style of Italian Classical Revival, the plan is asymmetrical which deviates from classical rules. The elevations are very richly decorated with Roman arches, classical columns, balustraded balconies, wrought ironwork, jalousies, window tracery and arched patterned friezes. The upper part of the front elevation facing Kennedy Road, comprising the parapet, columns, and a decorative pediment, appears to have been influenced by Oriental architecture. The building is two storeys high above a half basement with a small mezzanine floor between the ground and first floors. The roof is partly flat and partly pitched and hipped. There is a balustraded staircase leading up to a side entrance porch, a detached former servants' quarter in classical style, and a rickshaw parking space also in classical style. Internally the classical style predominates in the architraves, mouldings, skirtings, cornices and panelling. The carved newel posts and balustrading to the main staircase are also prominent features of the building.

The Servants' Quarters is a small building located at the rear of the Main Building in the southeast corner of the site. It is a two-storey building displaying the influence of Italianate Renaissance style with a pitched roof of

Chinese tiles and pedimented gable end walls. Architectural features include the quoins at the corners, ornamental lintels to the windows and a moulded projecting cornice at eaves level. The windows are fitted with jalousies or wooden louvred shutters. The walls are stuccoed and painted to match the Main Building.

The Rickshaw Parking Space is situated at the rear of the Main Building in the southwest corner of the site. It consists of a flat-roofed structure supported on four corner columns. The design displays the influence of Italianate Renaissance style and features elliptical arches and decorative mouldings to the arches, column capitals and parapet coping. It is stuccoed and painted to match the Main Building. It is quite a rare structure of the kind in Hong Kong.

The building is well maintained and many of its original features have been preserved. It is quite a rarity nowadays and should be considered as having considerable historical and built heritage value.

Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

The social value of the building lies in the historical role it has played in the field of education, and as a meeting place for the Joint Liaison Group. Situated in a prominent position on an elevated terrace above Kennedy Road, it is a well-known landmark and one of a number of historic buildings in the area; for example, St. Paul's Co-educational College (聖保羅男女中學, Grade 2) and Nos. 6 and 8 Kennedy Road (Grade 2). Many declared monuments are also nearby, including the exterior of the Main Building, The Helena May (梅夫人婦女會主樓外部), North and West Blocks of St. Joseph's College (聖若瑟書院北座及西座), and Government House (香港禮賓府).

Social Value, Local Interest & Group Value