

Historic Building Appraisal
New Hall, St. John's Cathedral
Nos. 4-8 Garden Road, Central, H.K.

St. John's Cathedral (聖約翰座堂) was announced to be opened for Divine *Historical* Service with 640 seats on 11 March 1849. It was the Governor, Sir Francis *Interest* Davis, who laid the foundation stone of the Cathedral. In the same year, The See & Diocese of Victoria was established by Royal Letters Patent, giving the new church the status of cathedral. Several extensions were carried out in the subsequent years to cope with the expansion.

The New Hall (新座), also known as the Lodge, was built in 1956. The architects were the well-known local firm of Leigh and Orange. The New Hall was opened in 1956 by Mrs. Joan Temple, wife of the Dean of that day, with an occupation permit issued in the same year. The construction aimed at enlarging the venue for the church's function and to build a permanent residence for the Dean. Apart from the administration office and the Dean's Office, the New Hall also accommodates a theological library and a number of rooms for holding church activities.

The New Hall is a three-storey building with a basement. It is an *Architectural* L-shaped building with rendered and painted walls raised off a granite masonry *Merit* plinth. The roofs are low pitched with a green finish. Most of the windows are conventional in design, but triangular shaped oriel windows are featured on the elevation facing Garden Road. A series of polygonal shaped balconies is featured on the northeast elevation. The building also features triangular-headed arches forming arcaded verandahs. This use of geometric shapes and the clean modern look of the building may be derived from Cubist architecture. The faceted and prismatic design of the oriel windows is also a feature of this type of architecture. The building also features ornamental ironwork in simple modern designs. A semi-enclosed staircase is also made an architectural feature of the building.

This style of architecture is rarely found in Hong Kong so that the New *Rarity, Built* Hall should be considered a rare piece of built heritage. No significant *Heritage Value &* alterations which may have diminished the authenticity of the exterior can be *Authenticity* identified.

The social value of the building lies in the role it has played in community *Social Value* service. It is the base for many social organisations and groups which provide *& Local* counseling and advisory services. It is a well-known building on Garden Road *Interest*

familiar to many people in Hong Kong.

The New Hall is within walking distance from other historic buildings, ***Group Value*** including St. John's Cathedral (聖約翰座堂), Government House (香港禮賓府), the Former French Mission Building (前法國外方傳道會大樓), the exterior of The Helena May (梅夫人婦女會) (all Declared Monuments), and the Former Central Government Offices (舊中區政府合署, Grade 1/Grade 2).

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