Historic Building Appraisal

St. Anthony's Catholic Church, St. Anthony's House & St. Anthony's School

No.69A Pokfulam Road, Pokfulam, Hong Kong

Historical Interest

The earliest record of St. Anthony's Church (聖安多尼堂) in Hong Kong was the small chapel built in 1864 by the Missionary of Pontifical Foreign Institute (米蘭會會士) in Bonham Road (the site of the present King's College). In 1921, the land was reclaimed by the Government for the purpose of building a school. The foundation stone of the present St. Anthony's Church in No.69A, Pokfulam Road was laid on 8th June 1952 by the **Rev. Anthony Riganti, V.G.** (戴遐齡副主教), and the Church was officially opened and blessed by **Bishop L. Bianchi** (白英奇主教 2nd Bishop 1952-1968) on 13th June 1953, the Feast Day of St. Anthony. After ten years of development the Church was able to open St. Anthony's School in July 1963 which is now an important primary school in the Mid-Levels. The Church celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2003.

Architectural Merit

St. Anthony's School was built in **1963**. It is built in the **Post-Modern** style with strong geometric and vertical features to the front façade and an impressive 7-bay entrance portico at street level.

St. Anthony's House, now used as Salesians of Don Bosco Provincial Office (天主教鮑思高慈幼會會區辦事處), was built in **1966**. It is also built in the **Post-Modern** style. It is a plain geometric block with regularly spaced windows somewhat lacking in architectural merit.

The architect of St. Anthony's Church was **A.W. Basto** and the style of the architecture has been described as **Modern Eclectic**. The Church is a blend of architectural styles applying **Arabesque** and **Art Deco** details to modern church architecture and construction. The Church has plain rendered and painted walls, tall pointed lancet windows and a green pantiled pitched roof. The main feature is a bell tower or *campanile* incorporating the main entrance from Pokfulam Road, which is highly decorated with an Arabesque zigzag frieze and a latticework surround. Internally there is a bewildering profusion of colour and geometric design in the windows, doors, joinery, floor tiles and furniture.

Rarity & Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

The application of Arabesque architectural designs to a Catholic church is very unusual and rarely found. For this reason alone therefore the Church has a certain built heritage interest if not value. Alterations and renovations have taken place in past years but generally the Church appears to have retained its original authentic appearance internally and externally. St. Anthony's School is a very good example of Post-Modern architecture and does not appear to have been altered at all at least externally, but there may have been changes internally. St. Anthony's House is not a particularly attractive building and is situated on an

awkwardly shaped site. Its built heritage value is not considered to be very great.

Social Value & Local Interest

St. Anthony's Church is closely associated with the Catholic residents of the Mid-Levels. It has been very active in community services since its beginning administering to the spiritual and educational needs of the community. It also administers family care service, a youth centre and a day care centre for the elderly. St. Anthony's Church is a local landmark in the neighbourhood at the busy junction of Pokfulam Road, Bonham Road, Hill Road and Third Street.

Group Value

Certain heritage buildings, include Main Building (Declared Monument), Hung Hing Ying Building (Declared Monument) and Tang Chi Ngang Building (Declared Monument) in the University of Hong Kong and St Louis School, are neighbouring this church complex.

Adaptive Re-use

It seems highly unlikely that the role of the Church will change in the foreseeable future and therefore the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at present.