

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Jamia Mosque & Residence**  
**No. 30 Shelley Street, Central, Hong Kong**

The **Jamia Mosque** (清真寺) was built in 1915 with donations from local Muslim worshippers. Originally the Mosque was a small stone house erected in 1850 by Indian seamen and soldiers who were among the first Muslim Settlers in Hong Kong. Attracted by the opportunities created by the development of the opium and tea trade, Bohra Muslim merchants from India soon followed the steps of the Indian seamen and soldiers. Later in the 1860s, another group of Muslim traders from the southern Indian city of Madras arrived, and successfully established their business in the colony before World War II.

*Historical  
Interest*

A three-storey building behind the Mosque, built probably in the **early 20<sup>th</sup> century**, provides rent-free accommodation to followers. The Mosque is an important place of worship for Muslims. Evidently, it is a symbol of the religious and cultural diversity of Hong Kong, witnessing the history of the Muslims in the early days of the colonial era.

In **Islamic** architecture a mosque is a place for prayer strictly orientated towards **Mecca** the birthplace of **Muhammad** in Saudi Arabia and spiritual centre of Islam. The architecture of the Mosque is dictated by liturgical needs with a large central hall or chamber for prayer and worship. Typical Islamic architectural features found in the Mosque are ogee arches, rich surface decorations and mouldings, coloured glass windows, a dome and a minaret which is a tall tower with a balcony to call people to prayer.

*Architectural  
Merit*

The Mosque has been painted green in the recent past. A photo for 2002 indicates that it was covered by white-coloured plaster. There is an opinion that green is a colour associated with Islam in many countries (Pakistan, for example) and this may have something to do with the repainting. The repainting therefore may have religious rather than architectural significance.

Although not the only mosque in Hong Kong, this type of building is rare with obvious built heritage value. The only alterations are modern floor finishes and the addition of a temporary cover over the porch, so that the Mosque remains fairly authentic. In contrast the residential building behind the Mosque is in western **Neo-classical** style with colonnaded verandahs and fine **Neo-Georgian** style doorways and fanlights.

*Rarity,  
Built Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity*

To the Muslim community the Mosque has obvious social value being a place of worship, retreat and tranquillity. The rent-free accommodation that is provided for those in need is also a social service. The street names Mosque Junction and Mosque Street, Upper Lascar Row and Lower Lascar Row (known by the Chinese as “Mo Lo Gai” 摩囉街, for the meaning of “Lascar” [Mo Lo] is Indian) obviously are named after the Mosque and the original Indian inhabitants. The Mosque has therefore considerable local interest.

Nowadays, Jamia Mosque is physically close to other religious structures graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board such as the Hong Kong Catholic Cathedral of The Immaculate Conception (聖母無原罪主教座堂) and the Sacred Heart Chapel (聖心教堂). Other graded items include Kom Tong Hall (甘棠第).