

Historic Building Appraisal
Old Tsan Yuk Maternity Hospital - Main Building & Annex Block
No. 36A Western Street, Sai Ying Pun, Hong Kong

The building was erected in 1922 as Tsan Yuk Maternity Hospital (贊育醫院) operated under the Chinese Public Dispensary Committee (華人公共診所委員會, formed in 1908), with dual objectives of providing maternity services and training Chinese midwives in modern methods. The erection of the Hospital was due to the work of Dr. Alice D. Hickling (the first foreign female doctor in Hong Kong who worked in the Alice Memorial and Affiliated Hospital 香港雅麗氏紀念醫院) and the support of the Chinese Public Dispensary Committee. With the land granted by the Government and the donations came from several organizations and private donors, the Hospital was formally opened on 17 October 1922. It became the teaching hospital of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the University of Hong Kong in 1926. It was handed to the Government in 1934. In 1955, a new Tsan Yuk Hospital was built in Hospital Road (醫院道) and the old hospital building was renamed Tsan Yuk Social Service Centre. In 1973, the name was changed to Western District Community Centre (西區社區中心) comprising offices and function rooms.

*Historical
Interest*

The complex consists of a Main Building and an Annex Block (former staff quarters). The four storey **Main Building** is built in **Neo-Classical** architectural style to a symmetrical plan but on a sloping site. The composition of the main elevation facing Western Street consists of red-brick walls with rusticated quoins set on a coursed rubble plinth which is stepped to follow the sloping street. There is a central portico of granite featuring a broken pediment. Windows are tall and narrow with transoms and shutters in some cases. There is a projecting canopy over the central 2/F windows. The other elevations are built in the same architectural style and there is an interesting projecting bay or “Regency low” on the rear elevation.

*Architectural
Merit*

The two storey **Annex Block** was built in 1938, and is connected to the rear of main hospital building by means of bridges. This former staff quarters is a brick structure faced with painted roughcast rendering, main architectural feature being a projecting classical style “Juliet” Balcony with columns flanking on two corners. Other parts of this building are typical to other colonial buildings with simple pitched roof, chimney on roof top, fireplace, timber staircase, casement windows and doors. To be distinguished from the main hospital building, its brick façade is painted white and rendered with stucco.

Although there are other red-brick buildings in Hong Kong, this old hospital building has a rare feature which is the “Regency low” on the rear elevation which is the outer wall of the internal **Modernist** Style elliptical main staircase. As a historical hospital building it has built heritage value, unfortunately the elevations have been painted and the interior has undergone various fitting out works so that the authenticity of the fabric and layout have suffered.

**Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

The social value of the building lies in its pioneering role in providing maternity services and midwife training to the Chinese community. The Old Tsan Yuk Maternity Hospital is important as an integral component of a significant architectural and historical complex. It is physical close to Kau Yan Church (救恩堂) (1932, just opposite to the subject), King’s College (英皇書院) (1926), St. Stephen’s Girl’s College (聖士提反女子中學) (1924, declared monument) and the declared monuments in the University of Hong Kong. Being relatively close to other architecturally and historically important buildings in the area, it has local interest and group value and contribute to form up the Central and Western Heritage Trail - The Western District and the Peak Route (中西區文物徑-西區及山頂).

**Social Value,
Local Interest &
Group Value**

The old hospital is now used as a community centre.

**Adaptive
Re-use**