Historic Building Appraisal

East Wing, St. Louis School

No. 179 Third Street, Sai Ying Pun, Hong Kong

Historical Interest

The history of St. Louis School (聖類斯中學) in Sai Ying Pun dates back to 1864, when it was founded by the Fathers of the Catholic Mission as a technical school named "West Point Reformatory". In 1927, the Salesian Fathers, with the aim to preach the gospel throughout China, took charge of the school and renamed it as "St. Louis Industrial School". In 1936, following the severe damage to the school premises caused by a powerful typhoon, the Salesian Fathers established the middle school at the current site, and the school was renamed "St. Louis School", with the school's name inscribed above the entrance of the East Wing. During the Battle for Hong Kong, the school campus was taken over by the Air Raid Precaution Unit (防空救護隊) and the St. John Ambulance Brigade (聖約翰救傷隊).

Architectural Merit

The school campus comprises East, Central, and West wings. The East Wing, built in 1936 at a commanding corner site, is a four-storey building with a basement and a chapel. The entrance façade is designed in the architectural style of Art Deco, featuring a curved canopy over the entrance, projecting curved balconies at second and third floor levels, and an octagonal roof-top structure. The side elevations have horizontal bands of windows. The walls appear to be constructed of pre-cast reconstituted stone blocks, but may be finished in grey Shanghai plasters grooved to look like ashlar masonry. Architectural features in other styles such as Art Nouveau and Neo-Classical can be found internally and externally.

Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

With its dull grey coloured façades and factory style windows the building has rather a drab appearance, but nevertheless it is a good example of this style of architecture. Many buildings with Shanghai plaster finishes have been painted over so that this building is something of a rarity. As an example of 1930s architecture, it is a period piece and has obvious built heritage value. It seems to retain much of its original authentic appearance although there are some obvious alterations and additions.

Social Value & Local

The social value of the school lies in its historical role in the field of education in particular vocational training. The Trade Section of the school and

the Chinese Middle School have now closed and St. Louis has been a subsidized school since 1975. The school is one of a number of historical buildings in the area. ***Interest***

Today, St. Louis School still functions as a school in its original building and extensions. Historic buildings around the school include the University of Hong Kong. Other historic schools nearby include St. Stephen's Girls' College (聖士提反女子中學) and King's College (英皇書院). ***Group Value***