

Historic Building Appraisal
First Church of Christ, Scientist
No. 31 MacDonnell Road, Central, Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Branch of the **First Church of Christ, Scientist** (基督科學教會香港第一分會) was formed in 1905. It began holding services in a small meeting house in Zetland Street (泄蘭街) on Hong Kong Island. The Church acquired the site at No. 31 MacDonnell Road in 1910, and built the permanent church premises in 1912 with donations from church members. The Church is one of many branches of The Mother Church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, U.S.A. founded by **Mary Baker Eddy** in 1879. The Hong Kong branch is the only one of this religious denomination in Hong Kong and China.

***Historical
Interest***

The church is built in the **Greek Revival** style which was a popular style at the time in the U.K. and the U.S.A. The classical design was cleverly thought out to suit the small site and maximises the available area. The main features are triangular pediments supported by pilasters and columns. Although mainly Greek in style Roman features are also demonstrated through arched clerestory windows on the façade. A local adaptation is the pitched roof of Chinese tiles which closely resemble Roman pantiles. Internally the church is fairly plain with ornamentation confined to the classical features around the windows.

***Architectural
Merit***

Due to the inclusion of Roman features the building cannot be said to be “pure” Greek but it is a rare and interesting example of the style and fairly authentic exhibiting no obvious alterations or additions. In 1995 the church underwent significant restoration including replacement of the roof and internal and external redecorations. The Lord Wilson Heritage Trust funded most of the restoration cost.

***Built Heritage
Value, Rarity &
Authenticity***

The building of First Church of Christ, Hong Kong has obvious built heritage value as well as social value and local interest. It is important as one of the historic buildings forming up the **Central Route of the Central and Western Heritage Trail** and the **Hong Kong Heritage Trail** of the Hong Kong Tourist Association. The long-history peak tram (山頂纜車) (1888) is running nearby.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Other historic buildings include the St. Paul's Co-educational College (聖保羅男女中學) (1927), the St. Joseph's College (聖若瑟書院) (1920s) and Serbourne Villa No.1 at No.28 Kennedy Road (堅尼地道廿八號).

Group Value