

Historic Building Appraisal
Former Chatham English School
No. 1 Chatham Path, The Peak, Hong Kong

The Former Chatham English School (前策文書院, also known as 前漆咸英文學校 in Chinese) was built about 1927 by John Caer Clark as a private residence. John Caer Clark was an architect who worked first for the Public Works Department and then resigned to set up his own company at 14 Queen Road Central in 1913. In 1952 the building was registered as a private secondary school under a new Education Ordinance enacted that year, providing education to Chinese and Eurasian children living on the Peak. The school closed around 1973 and became a residence once again.

*Historical
Interest*

The house is an elegant L-shaped mansion with Italianate Renaissance features. The house was built on a platform cut into the hillside supported by retaining walls, with an annex mainly occupied by flush toilets. A narrow terrace surrounds the house. The house is totally screened from public view by trees so that photographs are difficult to obtain. The three main rooms on the ground floor have bay windows with access to the terrace. There are a further three rooms on the ground floor and an ensuite kitchen and breakfast room. The first floor consists mainly of bedrooms, bathrooms, servants' quarters and service rooms. There is a self-contained penthouse on the roof which is a later addition.

*Architectural
Merit*

The exterior of the house is stuccoed and painted and richly ornamental with Italianate classical features such as colonnaded verandahs, ornate ironwork balustrading, cornices, dentil moulding and fretwork friezes. Windows and French doors are wooden transomed casements with moulded plaster architraves around the openings.

A house of this architectural style is now quite rare in Hong Kong, and this building should be regarded as having considerable built heritage value. It underwent repairs and renovations in the 1970s and 1980s, but externally at least the house retains most of its authentic architectural features.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

As a Peak residence and a school for over 20 years, the building is of some social value and local interest. It is part of Hong Kong's cultural heritage representing early development on the Peak and post-war educational trends.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

The surroundings are full of mountain greenery. A 20-minute walk uphill is needed from the main road, May Road, to the Former Chatham English School. The building is partially screened from public view by trees. The Central Green

Trail runs partly along Chatham Path that brings visitors to this building.

Sited among pleasant greenery, No. 1 Chatham Path enjoys a quiet *Group Value* environment and connects with other residential villas in the area. Other historic items on the Peak include No. 3 May Road (Grade 3), the Former Gate Lodge (舊總督山頂別墅守衛室) (Declared Monument), Peak Depot (山頂倉庫) (Grade 2), Old Peak Café (舊山頂餐廳) (Grade 2), Former Peak School (前山頂學校) (Grade 2), Peak Police Station (山頂警署) (Grade 3) and the historic buildings at Matilda and War Memorial Hospital (明德醫院) (Grade 2 and Grade 3).

REFERENCES

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HKRS58-1-101-35. “Proposed new lot on Chatham Path – Application of Mr. J.C. Clark for purchase”

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To Re-new the Existing Native W.C.s at Nos. 1 & 1A Chatham Path on I.L. 2363. (File Ref: 162H/47/162HIN1)

Consultancy Assignment for Slope Upgrading Works to Slope Feature Nos. 11SW-D/C837 at Chatham Path, Mid-Level. (File Ref: 22-3/2023/10/(SF))

Additional Kitchen, Bath & Dressing Room on the Roof of Chatham English School. Chatham Path off May Rd. Lot 2363. (File Ref: 2249/54)

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