

Historic Building Appraisal

Carmelite Monastery

No. 68 Stanley Village Road, Stanley, Hong Kong

Carmelite Monastery in Stanley Village Road was built in 1936, with the foundation stone laid by the then Reverend Valtorta in the same year (Reverend Valtorta was installed as the first Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong in 1948) (恩理覺主教). The property was registered under the name of the Incorporation Trustees of the Carmelite Monastery, Hong Kong in 1981. Many well-known religious persons pay visits to the Monastery occasionally. They included, for instance, the then Bishop Lorenzo Bianchi (白英奇主教), Bishop Francis Hsu Chen-ping (徐誠斌主教), and Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kiun (陳日君樞機).

***Historical
Interest***

The foundation of the Carmelites in Hong Kong originated from the foundation of St. Teresa of Avila (大德蘭修女) in Spain in the 16th century, i.e. the Carmelites are thus called Teresians. The Carmelite Sisters lead a cloistered life in materialistic poverty relying mainly on the voluntary support of friends and benefactors. The Monastery is completely closed to outsiders.

The Monastery was initially started in 1933 in a house at No.75 Robinson Road. The Carmelites eventually located the present site for building the Monastery in 1936. The construction of the Monastery was completed in 1937.

The Monastery was designed by a Franco-Belgian overseas firm with Modernist features. Red brickwork is used for the walls rather than smooth white walls. The monotony of the brickwork is relieved by white painted projecting concrete canopies over windows, white window cills and triangular shaped panels over some windows. The Monastery is built to a U-shaped plan of three wings enclosing a central internal courtyard.

***Architectural
Merit***

This type of building is quite rare and as the first and only Catholic convent of the Discalced Carmelite Order built in Hong Kong, has built heritage value. The building was protected by the Japanese during the Occupation and therefore did not suffer from looting. The building does not appear to have been altered at all and remains fairly authentic.

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

The Monastery is a place of seclusion for the Carmelite Sisters who live apart from the local community. Nevertheless they engage in cottage industries and they also participate in local charity activities. For example, the

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

Monastery functioned as an orphanage for the district during wartime, taking care of at least 15 orphans.

The high brick walls and iron fences emphasize the separateness of the Carmelite Sisters from the world outside and ensure that they have minimum distraction from their life of prayer. However, the building with its distinctive red-brick walls and prominent position on Stanley Village Road is well known in the area.

The area around Carmelite Monastery is facing the Stanley town centre and the bus terminus. There are tourists and visitors frequently on the streets. The Monastery has group value with the Old Stanley Police Station (舊赤柱警署) (Declared Monument) and Maryknoll House (瑪利諾神父宿舍) (Grade 1). *Group Value*

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