

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Shek Kwu Chau Treatment & Rehabilitation Centre Courtyard

Operated since 1963, Shek Kwu Chau Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre (石鼓洲康復院) is 20 minutes by ferry from nearby island Cheung Chau. The Centre provides voluntary rehabilitation programmes and residential treatment for male drug abusers who seek treatment on a voluntary basis. It is a building complex of administration blocks, workshops, bungalows, halls and a Western style garden, showing a nice blend of the Modernist and Chinese Renaissance styles. *Historical Interest*

The proposal of setting up Shek Kwu Chau Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre first came up in the late 1950s when the Government was determined to launch a colony-wide full-scale Anti-narcotic Campaign according to a White Paper in 1959. The Centre was set up with the support of the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers – a non-government organization (NGO) established in 1961. The Centre was inaugurated by the Governor, Sir Robert Black, on 23 April 1963.

Built in 1971, the courtyard (庭院) is the most spectacular site within the Centre.

The courtyard is situated near the Recovery Houses and is comprised of a series of enclosed courts and structures creating a harmonious unity of gardens and architecture. The architectural style is **Neo-Classical** significantly influenced by **Romanesque** and **Italianate Renaissance** styles. *Architectural Merit*

The courtyard begins at a U-shaped bend in the road where a triple-arched gateway and a Romanesque style pavilion have been built. The pavilion is a U-shaped single storey building with a balustraded flat roof and open verandahs of trefoil arches. An ornamental fountain is featured as a centre piece in the indentation formed by the U-shaped plan. The pavilion is surrounded by trees and shrubs giving a pleasant backdrop of greenery. At the rear of the pavilion there is a small square paved and grassed court with a circular ornamental fountain as a centerpiece.

The courtyard is enclosed by an open colonnaded arcade forming a cloister. Colourful ornamental shrubs enliven the scene. Behind this small court is the main feature of the complex which is a long rectangular Roman-style bathing pool enclosed by double-storey arched colonnades. Each abutment on the ground floor is decorated by a protruded angel feature of identical design whilst each of those on the first floor is labeled by a different name of the 108 Liangshan Swamps Heroes (一百零八梁山泊好漢, the main characters in a classical Chinese picaresque novel, *Shuihuzhuan* 水滸傳, literally “The Water

Margin”) carved on a panel with a ball feature implying a “star” above on the roof.

Adjacent to the pool is a small square reception courtyard of lawn and a circular fountain serves as a buffer zone between the terrace and the water pool. It is surrounded by single-storey colonnades of arches as well as two circular towers of dome heads, lanterns, arched windows and dentils.

On the northwest side of the pool there is another enclosed grassed court surrounded by a two-tiered colonnade. Neo-classical garden features such as fountains, parterres, gazebos, pavilions and statues can be found all over the complex.

This style of garden is very rare in Hong Kong and it therefore has built heritage value and a lot of architectural interest. As far as can be seen everything is authentic.

*Rarity, Built  
Heritage Value &  
Authenticity*

The social value of the courtyard lies in the role it has played at the Centre as a place of rest and recreation for staff and patients alike. As for local interest, as the island is remote and inaccessible, the building is unknown and of little interest to anyone other than the patients and staff.

*Social Value  
& Local  
Interest*

The question of adaptive re-use is considered to be not applicable to the courtyard, which can hardly be used for anything else without drastic alterations and demolitions.

*Adaptive  
Re-use*