

Historic Building Appraisal
St. Paul's Convent Church
Tung Lo Wan Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

St. Paul's Convent Church (聖保祿修院) was built in 1928. The convent complex comprises the chapel with seating capacity for 1,000, a hospital, a primary school, a convent and a nurses' dormitory. The convent is a member of the order of the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres which was founded in 1708 by Pere Louis Chauvet, Parish Priest of Levesville, a small village in France. *Historical Interest*

The history of the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres in Hong Kong can be traced back to 1848. When they arrived, they immediately took over the "Asile de la Sainte. Enfrance" (Home of the Holy Childhood), which was a charitable institution that already housed 170 children.

The Church and the whole convent area was converted into a shelter and a hospital during the Japanese invasion in 1941, and patients and injured people were rushed into the convent and were sheltered in the classroom, some even in the chapel, in the care of the sisters. The Church was renamed a number of times in the past decades and the official name of Christ the King Chapel (基督君王小堂) was adopted since 1995.

The church or chapel is built to a cruciform plan with a dome at the crossing. The style is **Classical Revival** with giant Corinthian columns all round the building supporting the entablature. The main entrance and the two side entrances are built as pedimented temple porticos. There is a bell tower at one end and the pitched roof is of double roll Chinese tiles. The giant columns form an open colonnade all around the building and support an open gallery at mezzanine floor level. Internally the nave has a barrel vaulted ceiling and there is a gallery on three sides at mezzanine level reached by a spiral staircase. The interior is elegantly decorated in classical style. Colourful mosaic floor tiles and sculptures of winged angels add to the splendour. *Architectural Merit*

This elegant classical church featuring dome, pedimented porticos and colonnaded facades is quite rare in Hong Kong and must be considered as a valuable piece of architectural heritage. The chapel has almost survived in its original condition. Some minor alterations have taken place over the years but these have not significantly affected the authenticity of the building. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

The Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres first came to Hong Kong to help with the social needs of the fledgling colony of Hong Kong and were soon providing a wide range of religious, educational and medical services for the community. *Social Value & Local Interest*

The chapel is almost completely obscured these days by taller buildings all around and it is a world away from the noise, crowds and squalor only metres away on the streets of Causeway Bay. ***Group Value***

It is physically close to a number of historic churches in Causeway Bay, namely, St. Mary's Church (聖瑪利亞堂, No.2A Tai Hang Road), Shing Kwong Church (聖光堂, No.7 Eastern Hospital Road) and St. Margaret's Church (聖瑪加利大堂, No.2A Broadwood Road).

It is unlikely that the chapel will cease to be used for anything but its present purpose so that the question of adaptive re-use does not really arise. ***Adaptive Re-use***