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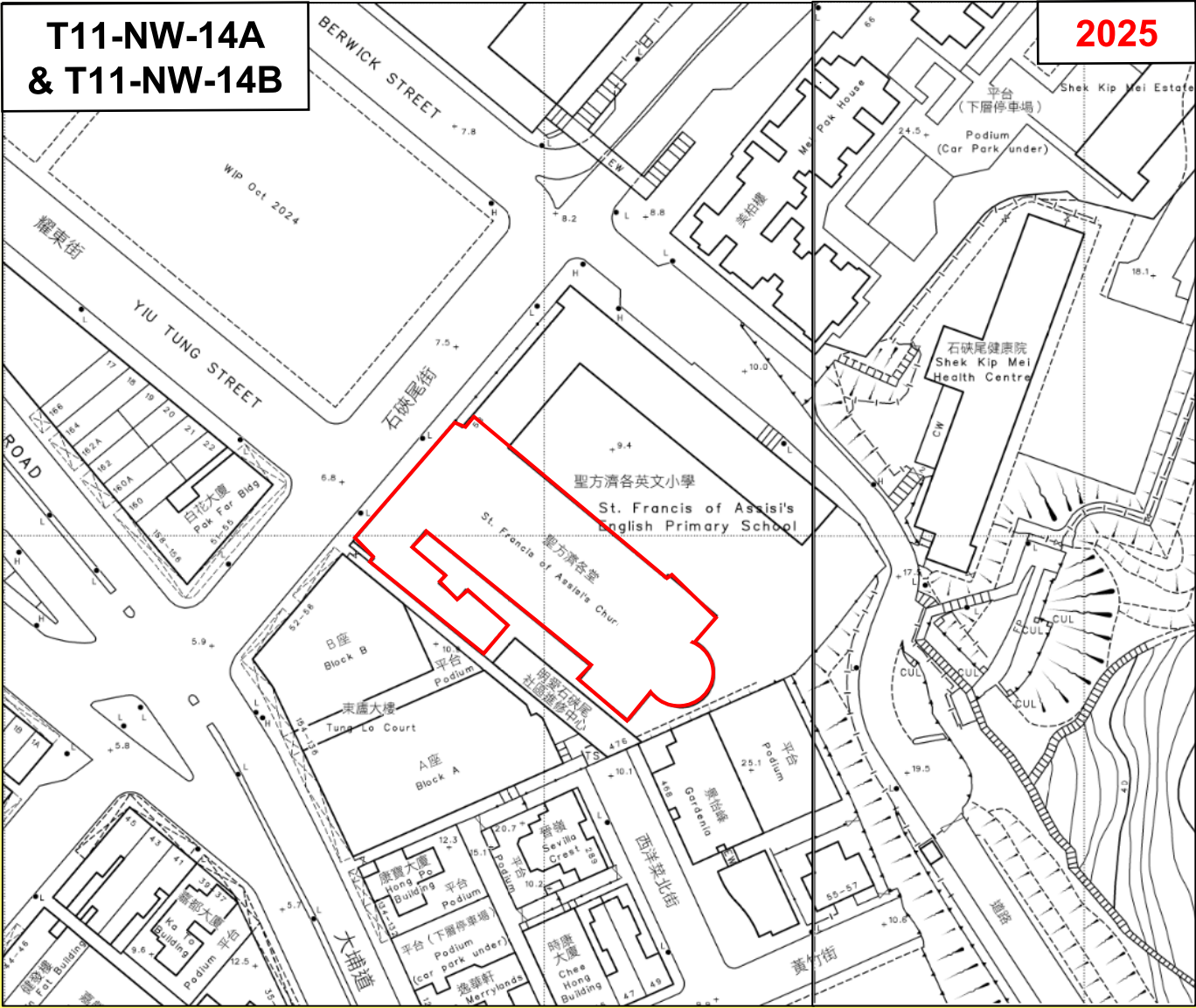
**九龍深水埗石硤尾街58號聖方濟各堂
St. Francis of Assisi Church,
No. 58 Shek Kip Mei Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon**

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九龍深水埗石硤尾街58號聖方濟各堂
St. Francis of Assisi Church, No. 58 Shek Kip Mei Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

擬議一級歷史建築
Proposed Grade 1

建於1955年
Built in 1955



擬議評級範圍
Proposed grading
boundary

只用於識別位置，並非確實範圍 For identification of location only, not exact boundary

N443

九龍深水埗石硤尾街58號聖方濟各堂

St. Francis of Assisi Church, No. 58 Shek Kip Mei Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon



面向石硤尾街的正立面
Front elevation facing Shek Kip Mei Street



面向學校球場的側立面
Side elevation facing school's ball court

N443

九龍深水埗石硤尾街58號聖方濟各堂
St. Francis of Assisi Church, No. 58 Shek Kip Mei Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon



地下大堂
Entrance lobby on G/F

N443

九龍深水埗石硤尾街58號聖方濟各堂

St. Francis of Assisi Church, No. 58 Shek Kip Mei Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon



朝祭台方向
Facing apse



朝聖堂入口方向
Facing entrance of the chapel

一樓聖堂
Chapel on 1/F

Historic Building Appraisal

St. Francis of Assisi Church

No. 58 Shek Kip Mei Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

Bounded by Shek Kip Mei Street to the west and Berwick Street to the north, the site at No. 58 Shek Kip Mei is home to a church and a school managed by the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong — St. Francis of Assisi Church (聖方濟各堂) and St. Francis of Assisi's English Primary School (聖方濟各英文小學). The oldest section of the building dates back to 1955.¹ The church stands out as a prominent landmark. It serves as a parish church notable for its considerable capacity, being the second-largest Catholic church building in Hong Kong.²

**Historical
Interest**

The history of St. Francis of Assisi Church can be traced back to St. Francis Xavier Church (聖方濟各沙勿略堂), which was built in Sha Ti Uen (沙地園) near Kowloon City in 1869.³ The government resumed this site in 1930 to facilitate the expansion of the airport at Kai Tak, and in return, granted New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 1416, which was located at No. 10 Kak Hang Tsun Road (隔坑村道 10 號) in Kowloon City, to the Diocese for the construction of a new church.⁴ Completed in 1937 with the financial support of Anna Teresa Gomes and Guilhermina Maria Gomes,⁵ the church was renamed The Five Wounds of St. Francis of Assisi Church (聖五傷方濟各堂) in honour of their father Francisco d'Assis Gomes and his family.⁶

¹ The church and the old block of the school, which are physically connected, were both completed in 1955. In 1962, an extension was added to the school, adjoining the façade of the 1955 section that faces the ball court.

² St. Francis of Assisi Church has a seating of 1,000, including its choir loft. It is second in size only to the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, which can accommodate 1,200 people. See Ayako Fukushima, "Building St. Francis of Assisi Church and School in Hong Kong: Emergence of Church and School Complex in the 1950s", *Journal of Architecture and Planning*, Vol.85, No.768 (2020), pp. 458 & 462.

³ Ayako Fukushima, "Building St. Francis of Assisi Church and School in Hong Kong: Emergence of Church and School Complex in the 1950s", *Journal of Architecture and Planning*, Vol.85, No.768 (2020), p. 455; "St. Francis of Assisi Church: Introduction", *Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong*, uploaded on 2012, https://heritage.catholic.org.hk/en/catholic_building/st_francis_of_assisi_church/index.html (8 August 2025 accessed).

⁴ 夏其龍：〈香港客家村落中的天主教〉，香港中文大學碩士論文，2005 年，頁 11。

⁵ "NEW CHURCH OPENED: Catholic Structure at Kowloon City BISHOP OFFICATES", *South China Morning Post*, 7 October 1937.

⁶ According to the website of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, the church was renamed The Five Wounds of St. Francis of Assisi Church, but it is also referred to by different names, including St. Francis of Assisi Church and St. Francis Assisi Church, in other publications. See "St. Francis of Assisi Church: Introduction", *Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong*, uploaded on 2012, https://heritage.catholic.org.hk/en/catholic_building/st_francis_of_assisi_church/index.html (8 August 2025 accessed); Ayako Fukushima, "Building St. Francis of Assisi Church and School in Hong Kong: Emergence of Church and School Complex in the 1950s", *Journal of Architecture and*

In addition to its religious function, the church building also housed Da Tung School (大同學校),⁷ exemplifying the early integration of a church and a school within a single building. The church was demolished by the Japanese army during their occupation in 1943 when they decided to expand the Kai Tak aerodrome.⁸

In 1950, Bishop Henry Valtorta (恩理覺) of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong requested the government to allocate a site in Sham Shui Po for a new church and school as restitution for the destruction of The Five Wounds of St. Francis of Assisi Church by the Japanese army during the war. Sham Shui Po was chosen because of the urgent need for permanent religious and educational institutions in the area. At that time, the only Catholic church in the district was a temporary venue inside Tack Ching School that could no longer accommodate the growing local Catholic population, which had surged from approximately 200 in 1930 to over 3,000 by 1950. Furthermore, a dramatic influx of Chinese migrants and refugees settling in the area also created significant challenges for families trying to secure school placements for their children.⁹ In response to these needs, the government leased a plot of land at No. 58 Shek Kip Mei Street to the Diocese in 1953 for the construction of a new church and school complex.¹⁰

The construction of the new church and school was made possible through

Planning, Vol.85, No.768 (2020), p. 455. 另見夏其龍：〈香港客家村落中的天主教〉，香港中文大學碩士論文，2005年，頁11。

⁷ Da Tung School is frequently referred to as Dai Tung School or Tai Tung School in historical records. The building had four levels: the ground floor served as a hall for school activities; the first floor contained classrooms; the second floor functioned as a church; and the third floor housed the residence of the priest in charge. See Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives: IV/09A/03, “Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong Henry Valtorta to Foreign Section Department Imperial Nipponese Government”, 23 September 1943; Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives: IV/09A/03, “Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong Henry Valtorta to Foreign Section Department Imperial Nipponese Government”, 4 July 1942; Ayako Fukushima, “Building St. Francis of Assisi Church and School in Hong Kong: Emergence of Church and School Complex in the 1950s”, *Journal of Architecture and Planning*, Vol.85, No.768 (2020), pp. 454-455.

⁸ Ayako Fukushima, “Building St. Francis of Assisi Church and School in Hong Kong: Emergence of Church and School Complex in the 1950s”, *Journal of Architecture and Planning*, Vol.85, No.768 (2020), p. 455; Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives: IV/09A/03, “Vicar Apostolic of Hong Kong Henry Valtorta to Foreign Section Department Imperial Nipponese Government”, 23 September 1943.

⁹ Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives: IV/11/02, “Bishop of Hong Kong to Public Works Department Office M. I. De Ville”, 29 November 1950; Ayako Fukushima, *Building Catholic Churches in Hong Kong: Stories of the Laity and Living Faith* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 2022), p. 79.

¹⁰ Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives: IV/11/02, “W. L. T. Crunden for Ag. Supt. of Crown Land & Surveys to the Procurator of the Catholic Mission”, 1 September 1953; Ayako Fukushima, *Building Catholic Churches in Hong Kong: Stories of the Laity and Living Faith* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 2022), p. 80.

donations from Anna Teresa Gomes and Guilhermina Maria Gomes¹¹ and was initially scheduled to commence after securing the land lease on 15 December 1953.¹² However, the project faced delay due to the Shek Kip Mei Fire on 25 December of that year. Temporary shelters for fire victims and sheds for the contractor responsible for building resettlement blocks to house those displaced by the fire were erected on the new church site, postponing the building work until late November 1954.¹³ The foundation stone was laid by Bishop Lawrence Bianchi (白英奇) on 25 March 1955.¹⁴ The school section was completed first in September 1955, followed by the church section, which was finished in December of the same year.¹⁵ Although the building was completed, the stained glass windows for the apse—shipped from Italy—arrived late in May 1956, further delaying their installation.¹⁶ The church's opening ceremony was consequently postponed and eventually held on 21 October 1956, officiated by Bishop Bianchi.¹⁷ The new church initially inherited the name The Five Wounds of St. Francis of Assisi Church (聖五傷方濟各堂), and was later renamed St. Francis of Assisi Church (聖方濟各堂) in 1966.¹⁸

The establishment and growth of St. Francis of Assisi Church reflects its sustained efforts to serve the spiritual needs of the local community. Its scale and prominence stands as a testament to the firm establishment of Catholicism in

¹¹ Ayako Fukushima, *Building Catholic Churches in Hong Kong: Stories of the Laity and Living Faith* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 2022), p. 80; “Old Resident Dies”, *South China Morning Post*, 1 August 1966.

¹² Ayako Fukushima, *Building Catholic Churches in Hong Kong: Stories of the Laity and Living Faith* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 2022), p. 81.

¹³ 〈聖五傷芳濟各教堂學校興建〉，《華僑日報》，1954年11月26日；Hong Kong Catholic Diocesan Archives: IV/11/02, “Catholic Bishop of Hong Kong to Crown Lands and Survey Office W. L. T. Grunden”, 26 January 1954。

¹⁴ “Catholic Church and Primary School: Foundation Stone Laid by Bishop Bianchi at Shek Kip Mei Dedicated to Great Saint”, *South China Morning Post*, 26 March 1955.

¹⁵ Ayako Fukushima, *Building Catholic Churches in Hong Kong: Stories of the Laity and Living Faith* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 2022), p. 81; “Notice about St. Francis of Assisi’s School”, *South China Morning Post*, 24 September 1955; 〈深水埗聖方濟各堂明招待一千貧童貧童幸福週今天如期開幕〉，《華僑日報》，1955年12月24日；〈九龍聖方濟各新堂聖誕節開始臨時起用〉，《公教報》，1955年12月25日。

¹⁶ 〈聖五傷方濟各堂新置美術玻璃窗〉，《公教報》，1956年5月6日。

¹⁷ The total construction cost of the entire building was HK\$1,416,628, of which HK\$1,000,000 was donated by the Gomes family. See “St Francis of Assisi Church Opened: Ceremony Performed by Catholic Bishop Costs over \$1,000,000”, *South China Morning Post*, 22 October 1956 and Ayako Fukushima, *Building Catholic Churches in Hong Kong: Stories of the Laity and Living Faith* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 2022), p. 80.

¹⁸ 〈本堂簡史〉，《聖方濟各堂》，<https://sfac.catholic.org.hk/page04/page04.html> (2025年8月8日瀏覽)。

Kowloon by the middle of the 20th century.

Both the church and the school were designed by Chien Nai Jen (錢乃仁),¹⁹ a prominent Chinese architect of the time, as two distinct sections within an interconnected building. The complex presents a harmonious integration of religious and educational functions as well as a blend of Chinese and western architectural features. The church, in particular stands out within the complex, due to its elegant and relatively imposing design. To highlight its religious identity, decorative motifs in the form of crosses feature prominently throughout the church.

**Architectural
Merit**

The church adopted a western structural form, surmounted by a large Chinese pitched roof with upturned eaves that is clad in unglazed, orange-red tiles and decorated with ridge ornaments. The front elevation features a symmetrical design and is dominated by a tall bell tower at its centre that rises above the main entrance. Crowned by a hipped roof and a cross, the bell tower includes a tall narrow arched window with coloured glasses framed by a window trim that seamlessly integrated with the church's gable wall. The wall itself is adorned with a pattern of four-petalled flowers resembling crosses, which also appears under the overhanging eaves, to form a decorative band. The church's front façade includes several rectangular windows separated by pilasters, each decorated with a pair of motifs resembling Chinese sparrow brace (雀替).

Below the bell tower, the church's entrance on Shek Kip Mei Street extends outward from the building, and sits on a plastered base reminiscent of the stone plinth of traditional Chinese buildings. The entrance features a foundation stone laid in 1955, three arched doorways with decorative mouldings and three timber doors fitted with glass panels and cruciform motifs. Above the central arch is a plaque inscribed with the church's original name "St. Francis of Assisi's Catholic Church" and "聖五傷方濟各天主堂". The plaque is integrated with a Chinese-style railing with balustrades adorned with crosses. A large cross stands prominently above the arched doorway and the plaque. The church's two side facades, facing northeast and southwest respectively, are characterised by a row of tall and narrow arched stained glass windows with decorative surrounds. These windows are evenly spaced and separated by pilasters, each embellished with a pair of Chinese sparrow brace motifs. The northeast-facing façade overlooks the school's ball court and connects to a

¹⁹ Chien Nai Jen was born in Guangdong in 1913 and earned a degree in architecture from the University of Michigan in the late 1930s. He later taught architecture at Sun Yat-Sen University before relocating to Hong Kong, where he became an authorised architect in 1941. His architectural legacy includes several Catholic buildings across the territory, notably a Grade 3 school building—St. Anthony's School on Pok Fu Lam Road. Building Records Access and Viewing On-line, Buildings Department. "Plan of No. 476 Sai Yeung Choi Street North" (File Ref No. 2/4033/54), Drawing No. G4, Front Elevation, 26 August 1954.

cantilevered balcony corridor on the first floor, enclosed by a Chinese-style railing with balustrades adorned with crosses that echo those on the front façade. The balcony corridor leads to a staircase that divides in opposite directions at the landing, providing access to the ball court on the ground floor. Adjoining the left side of the church's front façade is a two-storey annex, built to match the height of the school situated to the right of the church. Purpose-built as priests' quarters with a primarily residential function, the annex features a modest architectural design. Its only decoration appears above the first-floor window, where two motifs resembling Chinese sparrow braces (雀替) flank the pilaster, echoing those found on the school's front façade.

Access to the church is through the archways on Shek Kip Mei Street, leading to an entrance lobby that serves both the church and the adjoining school. The entrance lobby is supported by round terrazzo columns decorated with blue-and-white Chinese sparrow brace motifs. Behind the entrance lobby lies the main portion of the church's ground floor, originally a covered playground that opened onto the ball court, now converted into a school hall. The entrance lobby also provides access to the priests' quarters, with the ground floor currently serving as the church office, while the upper level has long been the priests' residence. A niche—present on the ground floor since the church's completion—was used to house a sacred statue for the priests' prayers. The chapel is located on the first floor of the church, accessible from the entrance lobby via a pair of symmetrically arranged semi-spiral staircases. Both staircases are finished in terrazzo with metal railings embellished with cruciform motifs. A baptismal font, inscribed with “PENTECOSTES 16 V 1937” (“Pentecost 16 May 1937” in English), sits at the centre of the entrance to the nave. Nearby stands a pair of terrazzo columns, each fitted with a stoup crafted from the same material. The columnless nave, where the congregation gathers, is supported by an array of 12 pointed reinforced concrete frames that extend all the way into the ground. These frames are said to symbolise the twelve apostles or resemble a tent embracing the faithful, offering them a sense of safety. At the end of the nave is a semicircular apse that houses the sanctuary and the tabernacle, where the Eucharist is kept.²⁰ The apse is framed by an arch decorated with 49 crosses, each composed of five dots representing the five holy wounds received by St. Francis.²¹ It is also adorned with three large stained glass windows, specially ordered from Italy, depicting scenes from

²⁰ Oral history interview with Rev. Aloysius Mak, the Parish Priest of the St. Francis of Assisi Church, conducted by the Antiquities and Monuments Office on 25 October 2024.

²¹ Oral history interview with Rev. Aloysius Mak, the Parish Priest of the St. Francis of Assisi Church, conducted by the Antiquities and Monuments Office on 25 October 2024. 另見〈聖方濟各堂糅合中西建築 陳設顯示聖人方濟各之美（下）〉，《公教報》，2020年9月13日，https://kkp.org.hk/files/kkp10-11_20200913.pdf（2025年8月8日瀏覽）。

the life of St. Francis.²² The original glazed floor tiles, featuring cross motifs along the central aisle of the church, have remained intact to this day. An upper tier within the chapel serves as a choir loft and provides additional seating for the congregation.

The church building has largely retained its authenticity. Much of the original building fabric and many of the architectural features from the 1950s remain intact, particularly those on the front façade. Only a few modifications have been made to the church over the years. The main changes include the enclosure of the originally covered playground on the ground floor with aluminium folding doors to create a school hall and the repositioning of the altar. Originally built against the back wall, the altar was placed in such a way that priests celebrated Mass with their backs to the congregation. A new altar, distinct from the original, was installed facing the congregation in 1967,²³ a change that reflected the liturgical reforms introduced after the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965),²⁴ which promoted a more participatory and engaged form of worship. To meet present-day needs, air conditioning has also been installed through two large ducts running along the chapel's side facades.

**Authenticity &
Rarity**

The building, particularly the church section, stands as one of the rare examples of post-war church buildings from the 1950s that integrates both Chinese and western architectural elements. Its Chinese features reflect the Catholic Church's effort to respect local culture, especially within a community that, at the time the building was completed, was largely composed of Chinese residents.

St. Francis of Assisi Church has long stood as a pillar of the Sham Shui Po community, offering both spiritual and social services. Since its inception in 1955, the church has not only spread the gospel but also provided constant assistance to local residents. In its early years, it focused on addressing the basic needs of the underprivileged by distributing essentials such as rice, bread and flour, etc.²⁵ Over

**Social Value
& Local
Interest**

²² 〈聖五傷方濟各堂新置美術玻璃窗〉，《公教報》，1956年5月6日。

²³ 聖方濟各堂：《聖方濟各堂金禧特刊，1955-2005》（香港：聖方濟各堂，2006年），頁25。

²⁴ Pope John XXIII announced the establishment of the Second Vatican Council, commonly known as Vatican II, in January 1959. Convening in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican over four sessions between 1962 and 1965, the council brought together thousands of bishops from around the world to reconsider the Church's role in the modern world and update its practices accordingly. The council led to a series of transformative reforms that made the Church more open and accessible. The most significant of these included the use of local languages in the celebration of mass to replace the exclusive use of Latin and a shift towards a more participatory liturgy that encouraged greater involvement from the congregation. A notable example here was the repositioning of the altar to face the people, symbolising a more communal worship experience.

²⁵ "Photo Standalone 3 -- No Title", *South China Morning Post*, 21 July 1956; 〈聖五傷方濟各堂分

time, its services expanded to encompass a broader range of initiatives. Among them, the most notable is undoubtedly the provision of low-interest loans through the St. Francis Credit Union (聖方濟各儲蓄互助社). Established in 1964 as the first credit union in Hong Kong to assist laypeople and their immediate family members facing financial difficulties,²⁶ its office has been housed within the church section since it was founded. By the late 1980s, more than 1,370 individuals had already benefited from its services,²⁷ and the office continues to operate to this day. Since the 1990s, the church has also offered free tutorial classes on Sunday afternoons for children who have recently arrived in Hong Kong to help them overcome difficulties they may have learning in a new environment and organised various activities to facilitate their integration into society.²⁸ In 2008, the church set up a support group for South Asian ethnic minority families in partnership with the Catholic Diocese of HK Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (Kowloon) (教區勞工牧民中心—九龍) to provide free Chinese language classes for their children.²⁹ In addition, the church distributes “Francis’s bread” (方濟麵包) and other daily necessities to homeless people in the district on the last Friday night of each month, which underlines its ongoing commitment to caring for the poor.³⁰ These efforts reflect its deep-rooted dedication to improving the lives of Sham Shui Po residents by addressing both their spiritual and material needs.

In addition to these contributions to the community, the building of St. Francis of Assisi Church is also a prominent architectural landmark in Sham Shui Po, standing out in terms of both its function and distinctive design and thus enriching the cultural and architectural fabric of the district.

發麵粉三千包》，《工商晚報》，1958年8月5日；〈聖方濟各堂昨派米數萬斤〉，《華僑日報》，1957年1月14日。

²⁶ 〈儲蓄互助社簡史〉，《香港儲蓄互助社協會》，
https://home.culhk.org/index.php?option=com_cobalt&view=record&cat_id=23&id=31&m=23&Itemid=111&lang=zh (2025年8月8日瀏覽)。

²⁷ HKRS1006-1-65, “Credit Union League of Hong Kong”, 12 March 1981 to 12 April 1987.

²⁸ 〈石硤尾聖方濟各堂服助社群 展現方濟大愛精神 (上)〉，《公教報》，2020年9月6日，
https://www.kkp.org.hk/files/kkp10-11_20200906new2.pdf (2025年8月8日瀏覽)。

²⁹ 〈石硤尾聖方濟各堂服助社群 展現方濟大愛精神 (上)〉，《公教報》，2020年9月6日，
https://www.kkp.org.hk/files/kkp10-11_20200906new2.pdf (2025年8月8日瀏覽)。

³⁰ 〈石硤尾聖方濟各堂服助社群 展現方濟大愛精神 (上)〉，《公教報》，2020年9月6日，
https://www.kkp.org.hk/files/kkp10-11_20200906new2.pdf (2025年8月8日瀏覽)。

In combination with the Precious Blood Convent (Grade 2) and Precious Blood Hospital (Caritas) (Grade 3), the St. Francis of Assisi Church building reflects the spread of Catholicism and the Catholic Church's commitment to serving the underprivileged in Sham Shui Po. More broadly, it features a group value alongside Rosary Church (Grade 1) in Tsim Sha Tsui and St. Teresa's Church (Grade 1) in Kowloon Tong, which together serve as a testament to the history and development of the Catholic Diocese in Kowloon from the early to mid-20th century. **Group Value**

Geographically, the church is within walking distance of a number of built heritage, including the Ex-Sham Shui Po Service Reservoir (Grade 1), Mei Ho House (Grade 2), the Former North Kowloon Magistracy (Grade 2) and the Building of The Garden Company, Limited (Grade 2).

Architecturally, the church building is notable for its harmonious blend of Chinese and western features. It shares a group value with other church buildings that exhibit a similar form of integration, including S.K.H. St. Mary's Church (Grade 1), Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre (Grade 2), S.K.H. Holy Trinity Cathedral (Grade 2) and the Holy Spirit Seminary's Chapel (Grade 3). Collectively, they illustrate how church buildings in Hong Kong have responded to the trend towards localisation by incorporating Chinese architectural features, particularly during the period from the 1930s to the 1950s.

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