

Historic Building Appraisal

Ss. Peter and Paul Church

No. 201 Castle Peak Road, Yuen Long, New Territories

Ss. Peter and Paul Church (聖伯多祿聖保祿堂) was originally built in 1925 in Tung Tau Tsuen (東頭村) of Yuen Long Old Market (元朗舊墟) under the leadership of Rev. Brookes, Richard PIME (穀祿師神父). Rev. Brookes arrived in Hong Kong in 1922 and later served in St. Joseph's Church (聖約瑟書院) in Garden Road and St. Teresa's Church (聖德肋撒堂) in Kowloon City. Ss. Peter and Paul Church was relocated and rebuilt on the present Castle Peak Road site in **1958** with financial support of Bishop Lawrence Bianchi and Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong. It is now the main Catholic Church in Yuen Long District. *Historical Interest*

Before 1993, the building accommodated Ss. Peter and Paul Church and Shung Tak Catholic English College (天主教崇德英文書院). Two storeys were occupied by the school which contained a few classrooms, a library and a geography room located on the ground floor while a music room, art room and a classroom were on the first floor. The College moved to Hung Shui Kiu (洪水橋) 1993. After that, the classrooms have been converted into conference rooms while the second floor is used by the Catholic Laity Formation Centre (天主教教友培育中心).

The Church is a simple two-storey pitched roof rectangular building built on a north-south central axis. The main entrance is at the south end with a mezzanine floor over the entrance vestibule. A central aisle of red and green tiles leads directly to the altar at the north end which is richly carved in Gothic style. Wooden pews are situated on either side of the aisle. The walls are plastered and painted cream and the windows have coloured glass panes. The steel roof trusses are exposed. The entrance doors are formed of coloured glass in an Art Deco pattern. There are two side doors opposite each other about mid-way on plan. Externally the walls are rendered and painted with stone dressings to the plinth, entrances, gable parapet and the bell cote over the main entrance. Decorative green panels unite the windows in vertical emphasis, and also give verticality to the three entrances. The architectural style of the Church can be said to be **Modern Eclectic** since it combines modern architecture with traditional materials and church design. *Architectural Merit*

The Church is a good example of modern 1950s church architecture which has survived the surrounding redevelopment. As the most important Catholic church in the district it is of built heritage value. Inevitably it has undergone renovations over the years including replacement of the roof. Nevertheless it *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

retains much of its authentic appearance and is well maintained and cared for.

The social value of the Church lies in the role it has played in the religious activities of the community. It has local interest because of its architecture and history. Apart from Ss. Peter and Paul Church, there were several chapels in Yuen Long, such as Holy Family Chapel (聖家小堂) in Sheung Che (上輦), Our Lady of Sorrows Chapel (聖母七苦小堂) in Kam Tsin Wai (金錢圍), St. John's Chapel (聖若望小堂) in Cheung Po (長莆). All of these chapels were established in the 1920s and 1930s. The priests visited and said Mass in different chapels by turn.

The question of adaptive re-use does not really arise in the case of this Church which as far as is known is not likely to close down in the immediate future.