

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF

Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) Antiquities and Monuments (Declaration of Monuments and Historical Buildings) (Consolidation) (Amendment) Notice 2023

INTRODUCTION

After consultation with the Antiquities Advisory Board (“AAB”)¹ and with the approval of the Chief Executive, the Secretary for Development (“SDEV”), in her capacity as the Antiquities Authority under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) (the “Ordinance”), has decided to declare two historic buildings, namely the Tin Hau Temple situated at Joss House Bay, Sai Kung (佛堂門天后古廟) and the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong situated at No. 51 Bridges Street, Sheung Wan (香港中華基督教青年會), as monuments² under section 3(1) of the Ordinance.

2. The declaration is made by the Antiquities and Monuments (Declaration of Monuments and Historical Buildings) (Consolidation) (Amendment) Notice 2023 (the “Notice”) (**Annex A**), which will be published in the Gazette on 20 October 2023.

 A

¹ The Antiquities Advisory Board is a statutory body established under section 17 of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) to advise the Antiquities Authority on any matters relating to antiquities, proposed monuments or monuments or referred to it for consultation under sections 2A(1), 3(1) or 6(4) of the Ordinance.

² Under section 2 of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53), “monument” (古蹟) means a place, building, site or structure which is declared to be a monument, historical building or archaeological or palaeontological site or structure.

JUSTIFICATIONS

Heritage Significance

3. The Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”)³ has carried out research on and assessed the heritage significance of the two historic buildings set out in paragraph 1 above. AMO recommends to the Antiquities Authority that the two historic buildings have significant heritage value that meets the high threshold required for declaration as monuments under section 3(1) of the Ordinance. The heritage value of the two historic buildings is summarised in paragraphs 4 to 9 below and elaborated in Annex

B

B.

(a) Tin Hau Temple, Joss House Bay

4. The Tin Hau Temple (“the Temple”) located at the northern shore of Joss House Bay, commonly known as “Tai Miu” (literally, “great temple”), is believed to be one of the oldest surviving Tin Hau temples in Hong Kong. The actual year of construction of the temple building cannot be ascertained. Nevertheless, it is generally considered that the Temple is closely linked to the Southern Song dynasty, as suggested by the rock inscriptions at the back of the Temple.

5. The Temple is composed of five buildings in a row and considered one of the largest Tin Hau temples in Hong Kong. The main building at the centre is a two-hall-three-bay structure, and, on each side, it is flanked by two subsidiary buildings. Though the Temple has undergone several restorations over the years, its overall setting and the spatial layout remain intact as in its early days. Most of the building fabrics, such as the granite columns, the murals at the incense pavilion, the screen doors, the timber cornice boards and the floor tiles, has been retained and well preserved.

³ The Antiquities and Monuments Office is the executive arm of the Antiquities Authority dealing with matters, among others, relating to research, examination and preservation of any place, building, site or structure which is of historical, archaeological or palaeontological value.

The unchanged environs of the Temple also make it a prominent example of the very few Tin Hau temples in Hong Kong which are still close to the seashore.

6. Over the past few decades, the Temple has attracted thousands of worshippers from all over Hong Kong to pay homage to Tin Hau on her birthday. The Temple is of significant historical and social value to the territory, as it represents the traditional religious practices of fishermen and other members of the seafarer community and exemplifies the significance of Tin Hau belief in Hong Kong.

(b) Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

7. Built in 1918, the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong at No. 51 Bridges Street, Sheung Wan (the “Chinese YMCA Building”), currently known as “the Bridges Street Centre”, was the first headquarters building of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong until 1966, when the headquarters moved to Waterloo Road, Kowloon. The establishment of the Chinese YMCA Building was funded by two YMCA members in Chicago, namely Mrs. W.E. Blackstone and Mr. C.H. McCormick, and with the donations of prominent local Chinese leaders and businessmen such as Mr. Huang Mou-lin, the president of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong at the time, Mr. Lam Woo, a property tycoon, and Mr. Wu Ting Fang, the first Chinese Legislative Council member of Hong Kong, etc.. The contribution of the Chinese to the construction of the Chinese YMCA Building was indispensable and showed the growing influence of the Chinese leaders and businessmen to the Hong Kong society in the early 20th century.

8. The Chinese YMCA Building is an iconic six-storey building with a symmetrical front façade and is mainly constructed of red bricks and concrete. The architectural plans of the building were initially prepared by architects Mr. Shattuck and Mr. Hussey of Chicago, who specialised in the design and construction of YMCA buildings in America and China. The architect, Mr. A.R.F. Raven adapted the architectural plans for local use with minor amendments and incorporated Western Neo-classical elements and Chinese vernacular elements into the Chinese YMCA Building. Upon its

completion, the building was equipped with the first indoor swimming pool with provision of warm water and the first elevated wok-shaped running track in Hong Kong. It also houses a gymnasium and an auditorium with a screening room. All these facilities are well-preserved. All of its special features and facilities contributed to making the Chinese YMCA Building modern and advanced for its time.

9. Since its opening, the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong has been providing a wide range of social services at the building, except during the Battle of Hong Kong when the building was used for Hong Kong's Air Raid Precaution Department and to accommodate refugees, as well as during the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945) period when the building was requisitioned by the Japanese Education Department to offer Japanese and German courses. Nowadays, rehabilitation services for the mentally disabled and other social services are provided in the building. The history of the Chinese YMCA Building is a testimony to the development and history of social services in Hong Kong.

Declaration as Monuments

10. The Tin Hau Temple at Joss House Bay and the Chinese YMCA Building have been accorded with Grade 1 status by AAB under the existing administrative grading mechanism⁴. AAB advised in November 2008 that all Grade 1 historic buildings should, given their outstanding heritage value, form a pool of potential candidates for the Antiquities Authority to consider monument declaration.

11. With the recommendation of AMO as set out in paragraph 3 above, the support of AAB and the approval of the Chief Executive, SDEV, as the

⁴ The grading system is an administrative arrangement to provide an objective basis for determining the heritage value, and hence the preservation need, of historic buildings in Hong Kong. Under the grading system:

- Grade 1 status refers to buildings of outstanding merit, which every effort should be made to preserve if possible;
- Grade 2 status refers to buildings of special merit; efforts should be made to selectively preserve; and
- Grade 3 status refers to buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable.

Antiquities Authority, has decided to declare the two historic buildings as monuments under the Ordinance. In addition to reflecting the outstanding heritage value of the two historic buildings, the declaration will provide the two buildings with statutory protection⁵.

12. The Tin Hau Temple at Joss House Bay is situated on private lot under the ownership of The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs Incorporated and the Temple is under the management of the Chinese Temples Committee. The Chinese YMCA Building is leased to the Directors of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong by the Government. The procedure of serving notices to the respective lawful occupiers and owner of the two buildings with regard to the intended declaration is required under section 4 of the Ordinance. Such notices were served on the respective lawful occupiers and owner of the two buildings on 31 August 2023. No objection was received by AMO during the one-month notice period. Explicit agreement of the respective lawful occupiers and owner of the two buildings to the declaration proposal has also been obtained.

13. The declaration of the two historic buildings will be made by the Notice published in the Gazette on 20 October 2023. Copies of plans showing the locations of the two buildings declared by the Antiquities Authority as monuments and deposited in the Land Registry are at **Annex C**. The Notice will take immediate effect and will be tabled in the Legislative Council for negative vetting on 25 October 2023.

C

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL

14. The declaration is in conformity with the Basic Law, including the provisions concerning human rights. It has no financial, civil service,

⁵ Section 6(1) of the Ordinance provides:

“6(1) Subject to subsection (4), no person shall –

- (a) excavate, carry on building or other works, plant or fell trees or deposit earth or refuse on or in a proposed monument or monument; or
- (b) demolish, remove, obstruct, deface or interfere with a proposed monument or monument, except in accordance with a permit granted by the Authority.”

economic, productivity, environmental, family or gender implications. As far as sustainability implications are concerned, the declaration is conducive to upholding the sustainability principle of protecting Hong Kong's heritage assets.

15. Upon the declaration of the two historic buildings as monuments, their repair and maintenance works will continue to be undertaken by their respective owner, lawful occupier and management department as before.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

16. AAB was consulted on the proposed declaration as required under section 3(1) of the Ordinance and rendered its support on 8 June 2023. The Legislative Council Panel on Development was also consulted at its meeting on 25 July 2023. No comments were received from the Panel members.

PUBLICITY

17. A press release will be issued on the date of declaration (i.e. 20 October 2023). A spokesman will be available to answer media and public enquiries.

ENQUIRIES

18. For any enquiries on this brief, please contact Mr. Ivanhoe CHANG, Commissioner for Heritage of Development Bureau, at 2906 1521.

Development Bureau
20 October 2023

Antiquities and Monuments (Declaration of Monuments and Historical Buildings) (Consolidation) (Amendment) Notice 2023

(Made by the Secretary for Development under section 3(1) of the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53) after consultation with the Antiquities Advisory Board and with the approval of the Chief Executive)

(cu) the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong at 51 Bridges Street, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong, as delineated and shown edged red on the plan marked Plan No. HKM11235 signed and deposited in the Land Registry under section 3(4) of the Ordinance by the Secretary for Development.”.

Secretary for Development

13 October 2023

1. Antiquities and Monuments (Declaration of Monuments and Historical Buildings) (Consolidation) Notice amended

The Antiquities and Monuments (Declaration of Monuments and Historical Buildings) (Consolidation) Notice (Cap. 53 sub. leg. B) is amended as set out in section 2.

2. Paragraph 3 amended (declaration of historical buildings)

(1) Paragraph 3(cs)—

Repeal

“Development.”

Substitute

“Development;”.

(2) After paragraph 3(cs)—

Add

“(ct) the Tin Hau Temple, Joss House Bay, Sai Kung at Lot No. 92 in D.D. 240, Tei Tong Tsui, Sai Kung, New Territories, as delineated and shown edged red on the plan marked Plan No. SKM10300 signed and deposited in the Land Registry under section 3(4) of the Ordinance by the Secretary for Development;

Explanatory Note

This Notice declares the following places to be historical buildings under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (Cap. 53)—

- (a) the Tin Hau Temple, Joss House Bay, Sai Kung at Lot No. 92 in D.D. 240, Tei Tong Tsui, Sai Kung, New Territories;
- (b) the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong at 51 Bridges Street, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong.

Heritage Appraisal of Tin Hau Temple
Joss House Bay, Sai Kung

The Tin Hau¹ Temple in Joss House Bay is believed to be one of the oldest surviving temples dedicated to Tin Hau in Hong Kong and the coastal area of Guangdong province. The Temple is commonly known as *Tai Miu* (大廟), literally means “great temple”.² It has been one of the most popular Tin Hau temples in Hong Kong since the 1950s, the period when worshippers residing in Hong Kong waters changed their place of worship.³ *Historical Interest*

A rock inscription situated behind the Temple gives a clue to the early history of the site. The inscription states that an officer in charge of salt production in Kowloon noticed that a man called Lam Tao-yi (林道義) had restored and expanded a *tong* (堂) (literally a “hall” or “shrine”) in the area when he and his friend visited Fat Tong Mun in 1274.⁴ In addition, an old Chinese voyage map produced in the 16th century records a temple dedicated to Tin Hau in northern Fat Tong Mun.⁵

The Tin Hau Temple in Joss House Bay is linked to the Lam family of Chuk Yuen and Po Kong, Kowloon. The *Lam Genealogy of Chuk Yuen, Kowloon* (《九龍竹園村林氏族譜》) records that,

¹ Tin Hau, also known as the Empress of Heaven and the Goddess of the Sea, is a popular patron deity of seafaring folk, particularly in Guangdong and Fujian provinces. Tin Hau worship is originated in Fujian.

² The waters in front of the Tin Hau Temple are marked as “Tai Miu” in the 1895 map of Hong Kong, which is the revised version of the map prepared by Lieutenant Collinson in 1845.

³ Before the 1950s, the Tin Hau temple in Chiwan, Baoan (寶安赤灣) was more popular than the one in Joss House Bay.

⁴ It is stated in the 1819 edition of the *Gazetteer of Xin'an County* (《新安縣志》) that four Chinese characters “咸淳二年 (the second year of the Xianchun period of the Southern Song dynasty) (1266)” were just about legible in a rock inscription found inside a temple at the current site. However, the rock inscription described is no longer in existence. Whatever the relationship between the rock inscriptions, the shrine and the then Tin Hau temple are themselves subject to a number of interpretations.

⁵ The *Coastal Map of Guangdong* (廣東沿海圖) from *The Grand Record of Guangdong* (《粵大記》).

in the Song dynasty, two Lam brothers, Chung-kin (松堅) and Pak-kin (柏堅) were rescued by Tin Hau during a storm at sea. Grateful to Tin Hau for saving them, they built a shack to pay tribute to her on the southern shore of Fat Tong Mun. Chung-kin's son Lam Tao-yi built a temple at the current location.⁶ In 1939, the Chinese Temples Committee took over the Temple from a Lam family which may have a remote connection with Lam Tao-yi.

The Temple has been popular among local fishermen and seafarers throughout the years. The relics preserved in the Temple demonstrate that it was well supported by the locals during the past two centuries. The oldest relic is an incense burner cast in 1803.⁷ Other relics include two bells cast in 1839 and 1840 respectively, an incense burner cast in 1893, a pair of wooden banners offered to the Temple in 1898, a timber plaque bearing the inscription, “神力扶持” (literally, “empowered by the Goddess”) dated 1908, a pair of historic wooden couplets dated 1909, an incense burner dated 1925, and a decorative wooden panel (彩門) dated 1926. These were all offered by the devotees in order to honour Tin Hau's divine prowess.

The Temple building follows the South China vernacular style that was popular during the Qing period. The granite lintel at the main entrance is evidence that the current layout of the building was formed during the restoration work done in 1877.⁸ The Temple is composed of a row of five buildings. The main building is flanked on each side by two subsidiary buildings. The front elevation of the main building is recessed. It shows an entrance porch formed by two granite tie-beams supported by granite bracket supports and inserted into granite columns. Granite *gejia* (隔架) and a wooden camel's hump (駝峰) decorated with shallow reliefs can also be found at the porch. The roof is covered with green glazed tiles. The gable wall is decorated with a plaster relief, showing a grass motif pattern and

***Architectural
Merit***

⁶ “The story of the North and South shrines” (南北二佛堂誌) in the *Lam Genealogy of Chuk Yuen, Kowloon*.

⁷ The two oldest relics preserved in the Temple are two incense burners cast in 1803 and 1804 respectively.

⁸ Reference is made to the inscription “光緒三年歲次丁丑重修” (literally, restored in the third year of the Guangxu reign) on the granite lintel which dates back to 1877.

bogu (博古) ends.

The main building has a typical temple layout, being a two-hall-three-bay (兩進三開間) structure. Between the two halls (the entrance hall and the rear hall), there is a covered incense pavilion and two side chambers. The entrance hall served as a reception area with a pair of screen doors in the middle. Behind the screen doors is the incense pavilion supported by granite columns, decorated with two pairs of antique wooden couplets and tablets. Three statues of Tin Hau sit at the middle of the central altar in the rear hall. Another deity, Madam Golden Flower (金花娘娘), is housed to the right, and two smaller statues of Tin Hau are placed to the left. In front of the central altar, there are sculpted figures of maids and Tin Hau's guardian assistants, the Thousand League Eyes (千里眼) to the left and the Wind-Flavouring Ears (順風耳) to the right. The layout of the rear hall is similar to the setting of a law-court, as it occasionally functioned in the past as a place to resolve matters among the followers in front of the deities.

The two subsidiary buildings to the left of the main building are also two-hall structures. At the rear hall of that subsidiary building which is closer to the main building is the residential chamber of Tin Hau (天后寢宮); the Year Gods deities (*Tai Shui* 太歲) are enshrined in the entrance hall. The rear hall of the furthest subsidiary building is the Matreya Buddha (彌勒佛) hall. The subsidiary buildings to the right of the main building are the back office of the temple management.

The Temple is heavily decorated. One of the most outstanding decorations is a wooden panel painted gold in colour, placed above the screen doors in the entrance hall. Produced in 1926, it is a boat-shaped ornament with intricate carvings depicting a scene of an opera performance. As for the fascia boards, these are decorated with patterns of flowers and plants. Relief mouldings of animal and human figurines and murals are found on the left and right of the friezes. Unlike the murals of other historical Chinese buildings, which feature historical figures and stories, two murals at the incense pavilion depict a young woman rowing a boat, presumably

a modern interpretation of the protection given by Tin Hau.

Restorations and repairs to the Temple were carried out in 1840, 1877, 1925, 1962, 1990, 2009 and 2022. In 1990, the glazed ceramic double dragons with a petal finial at the centre of the main ridge and the *bogu* decorations at the ends of the main ridge and the gable ridges replaced the previous decorative elements. However, the overall setting and the spatial layout of the main building and subsidiary buildings have remained unchanged for years. The building structure and most of the building fabrics, such as the granite columns, the granite *gejia*, the murals of the incense pavilion, the screen doors, timber cornice boards and floor tiles, are all preserved. Last but not least, the decorative ceramic main ridge of 1925 remains at the roof of the rear hall. ***Authenticity***

The setting is the most distinctive feature of the Temple. It is believed that the location of the Temple was carefully chosen with a view of helping Tin Hau to “keep an eye” on the waters, so that she could protect fishermen and seafarers passing through the Fat Tong Mun channel. This sea-facing setting is still the most direct manifestation of the core purpose and value of the Temple. The Temple is one of the most prominent examples in today’s Hong Kong where a Tin Hau temple is close to the sea shore, undisturbed by urban development. Some people believe, additionally, that the setting of the Temple is consistent with traditional *fengshui* principles.⁹ The *fengshui* setting and the scenic view endow the Temple with a leading position among other Tin Hau temples in Hong Kong. ***Rarity***

The Temple provides a centre-piece for those rituals of Tin Hau’s followers which take place in the waters of Hong Kong. The most important event of the Temple is the celebration of Tin Hau’s birthday (known as Tin Hau Festival in English). A considerable number of government documents, photographs and videos, dating from 1950s and 1990s, record the populous and bustling birthday celebrations during the period. On the 23rd day of the third lunar ***Social Value & Local Interest***

⁹ The hill Tin Ha Shan at the rear provides a backup support. To the two sides of the Temple are Tei Tong Tsui and Tei Tong Teng supporting the two wings, “green dragon” and “white tiger”. To the south, Joss House Bay provides a “bright hall” for the Temple.

month - celebrated as the birthday of Tin Hau - thousands of people from all over Hong Kong, including fishermen, seafarers, and other people engaged in sea-related business, as well as local villagers, pay homage to Tin Hau at the Temple. The ferry company arranges ferries to travel between Fat Tong Mun and North Point at the time of the Tin Hau Festival. Nowadays, celebration activities continue to be held annually and reinforce the status of the Temple as a prominent and popular Tin Hau Temple in Hong Kong.

The Temple has a close connection with the Po Toi O Chuen and other villages nearby. The villagers from Po Toi O and Clear Water Bay served as temple-keepers of the Tin Hau Temple in the past. Together, the villagers formed the Joss House Bay Jiao Committee of Sai Kung to hold the Jiao Festival at the Temple, beginning in 2003. In addition, the villagers at Hang Hau perform the Hakka Unicorn Dance at the Temple, as well as at the Tin Hau Temple in Hang Hau, to celebrate the Tin Hau Festival and strengthen the connection between the two places. Through organising the celebration activities, the bonding between the Temple and the local communities is further reinforced.

In addition, the Temple has been selected as the venue for the commissioning ceremony of new vessels in Hong Kong. A recent example is the commissioning ceremony of new vessels held in mid-2021 by the Marine Region of the Hong Kong Police.

The Temple serves as a significant landmark demonstrating and witnessing at the same time the social cohesion, cultural diversity and financial strength of the local society. It also plays a leading role to promote our cultural heritage. The celebrations held at the Temple form a crucial part of the Tin Hau Festival in Hong Kong and contributed to the inscription of the “Tin Hau Festival in Hong Kong” onto the Fifth National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2021.

The vast number of the Tin Hau temples reflects the popularity of Tin Hau belief in Hong Kong. Other than the leading one in Joss House Bay, the Tin Hau temples in Yau Ma Tei, Causeway Bay and Lung Yeuk Tau are declared monuments. The Tin Hau

Group Value

temple at Fung Chi Tsuen, Yuen Long has been accorded the status of a Grade 1 historic building. Eleven Tin Hau temples have been accorded the status of a Grade 2 historic building and twenty-two have been accorded the status of a Grade 3 historic building. These Tin Hau temples have established and reinforced the important folk culture and religion in Hong Kong. The site of the Chinese Customs Station at Junk Island, the Tung Lung Fort at Tung Lung Chau, the Rock Inscription situated behind the Temple at the Joss House Bay (all Declared Monument), the Hung Shing Temple at Po Toi O (Grade 3), and the Temple present the different stages of the development of the Fat Tong Mun area since the time of the Southern Song era in the 13th century. Amongst them, the Rock Inscription and the Hung Shing Temple are within walking distance of the Tin Hau Temple. Collectively, they reflect the historical and socio-cultural development of the area.

Photos of Tin Hau Temple, Joss House Bay, Sai Kung

The front façade of Tin Hau Temple,
Joss House Bay



The granite lintel dated 1877 at the main entrance of
Tin Hau Temple, Joss House Bay



The sea-facing setting is the most distinctive feature of Tin Hau Temple, Joss House Bay.



The main building is a two-hall structure.
An incense pavilion is built between the two halls.



The statues of Tin Hau and Madam Golden Flower at the altars in the rear hall



In front of the altars, there are sculpted figures of two maids and two guardian assistants, the Thousand League Eyes (right) and Wind-Flavouring Ears (left).



The boat-shaped wooden panel dated 1925 above the screen doors in the entrance hall



Decorative fascia board, murals and mouldings of animal and human figurines
at the incense pavilion



Residential chamber of Tin Hau at the subsidiary building

**Heritage Appraisal of
Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong
No. 51 Bridges Street, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong**

Built in 1918, the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong (“the Chinese YMCA Building”), currently known as “the Bridges Street Centre”, was the first headquarters building of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong until 1966, when the headquarters moved to Waterloo Road, Kowloon. *Historical Interest*

The establishment of the Chinese YMCA Building was funded by donations from two Chicago YMCA members, Mrs W. E. Blackstone (碧士東夫人) and Mr C. H. McCormick (麥金覓先生), and prominent local Chinese leaders and businessmen such as Mr Huang Mou-lin (黃茂林), the president of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong at the time, Mr Lam Woo (林護), a property tycoon, Mr Ma Ying Piu (馬應彪), the founder of Sincere Department Store, Mr Kwok Lok (郭樂), the co-founder of Wing On Department Store, as well as Mr Wu Ting Fang (伍廷芳) the first Chinese Legislative Council member of Hong Kong and others.¹ Through the generous support of prominent members and local Chinese businessmen, the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong succeeded in raising the required funds of around USD 25,000 for the establishment of this dedicated building in Hong Kong. The contribution of the Chinese to the construction of the Chinese YMCA Building was indispensable and showed the growing influence of the Chinese leaders and businessmen to the society in early 20th century Hong Kong.

In 1914, the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong purchased the piece of land known as No. 51 Bridges Street in the Tai Ping Shan area from the Government for the purpose of developing the new building. The construction works commenced in December 1915. Bishop of Victoria, the Right Rev. C.H. Lander D.D. (倫治華博士) laid the foundation stone on 10 February 1917. The Chinese YMCA Building was officially opened by the Hon. Claud Severn, C.M.G. (施勳護督) on 10 October 1918. Upon its inauguration, the Chinese

¹ Names of the donors were inscribed on the memorial plaque installed at the entrance of the auditorium.

YMCA of Hong Kong held a five-day celebration, attracting more than 23,000 people to visit the building.²

The Chinese YMCA Building was the first multi-functional building equipped with modern facilities at the time that was dedicated to the Chinese community. The original provision of the building included the Hong Kong's first indoor swimming pool with the provision of warm water, the first elevated wok-shaped running track supported by a cantilever structure, a double-volume auditorium with a screening room that could accommodate some 520 seats, a social room, a billiard room, a dormitory, a kitchen and a dining hall, a library, changing rooms, day and night school rooms and a roof garden.³

In the early 20th century, there were few assembly halls to hold large-scale seminars, gatherings or exhibitions in Hong Kong. After its opening, the Chinese YMCA Building soon became a popular venue for such activities. For example, the first annual general meeting of the “Anti-Mui Tsai Society” was held in 1922 and the first mass wedding was held in 1936.⁴ Other important events held in the building were the two lectures delivered by the famous Chinese writer Lu Xun on 18 and 19 February 1927, attracting over 600 people.⁵ The building had been a place to disseminate new ideas which in some ways enhanced social change.

Sports facilities were crucial elements of the Chinese YMCA Building in achieving the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong's missions of promoting physical well-being of youth and adult. To promote physical education, the architects equipped the building with various

² Website of Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, “Bridges Street Centre 100th Anniversary”, <https://www.ymca.org.hk/bsc/index-en.php>, accessed on 1 April 2023.

³ “New Chinese Y.M.C.A. Description of New Building Official Opening Today”, South China Morning Post, 10 October 1918.

⁴ Sir Shouson Chow (周壽臣) was the witness for the weddings of eleven couples. Mass weddings were held with the aim to steer society away from the custom of extravagant and wasteful weddings and instead promote a ‘frugal wedding’. Celebrities were invited to share information on maintaining a healthy marriage and a good relationship with their in-laws, as well as information on birth control.

⁵ The two lectures delivered by Lu Xun were titled “Voiceless China” (〈無聲的中國〉) and “The Old Way of Writing and Speaking Is Coming to an End” (〈老調子已經唱完〉), which promoted the written Chinese language and literary reform.

sports facilities modelled from the YMCA buildings in America and China. The Chinese YMCA Building was very well-received by the public. According to the archival records of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, a total of 1,557 fitness room users, 730 swimming pool users and 1,557 shower room users were recorded between 23 October 1918 and 3 January 1919.⁶

During the Battle of Hong Kong in 1941, the headquarters of Hong Kong's Air Raid Precaution (Section A of the Mid-Levels) was set up in the building and protected thousands of refugees. During the Japanese Occupation (1941–1945), the building was requisitioned by the Japanese Education Department to offer Japanese and German courses. After the war, the building resumed its usual services.

In 1966, the Chinese YMCA Building turned into a youth centre and was renamed as the Bridges Street Centre. The Home of Love Hostel and Home of Love Sheltered Workshop, which officially opened in 1995, are still in operation in the building. The remaining parts of the building are still used as the youth centre.

The Chinese YMCA Building is an iconic rectangular six-storey building with a symmetrical front façade. Standing on a sloping site, the top three stories are above the street level of Bridges Street, while the other three floors are below. The building is connected to Bridges Street with bridges. Such a design is rare in historic buildings in Hong Kong.

*Architectural
Merit*

The architectural plans of the building were initially prepared by architects Mr Shattuck and Mr Hussey of Chicago, who specialised in the design and construction of YMCA buildings in America and China. The architect, Mr A. R. F. Raven, adapted the architectural plans with minor amendments for local use.

The Chinese YMCA Building is mainly constructed from red brick and concrete. Fair-face red brick was one of the most

⁶ Website of Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong, "Bridges Street Centre 100th Anniversary", <https://www.ymca.org.hk/bsc/index-en.php>, accessed on 1 April 2023.

popular types of facades for Western buildings in Hong Kong, especially between 1890 and 1950.⁷ The building represented the prevailing architectural style at the time.

The Chinese YMCA Building is an example of eclectic architecture, in which Western neo-classical elements are juxtaposed with Chinese vernacular elements. The front elevation displays neo-classical features such as keystones, Tuscan columns, a classical arched main entrance porch, dentils in arranged brickwork and brick arch openings at the basement. More Western features can be found in the building's interior, such as classical-style scroll brackets of the auditorium, a fireplace and plastered moulding. The Chinese feature is mainly the green glazed tiled eaves of the porches at the auditorium entrances, the old lobby and the balconies on the second floor. The rear elevation of the building presents a utilitarian appearance. The use of identical fenestration, demonstrating functional expression and directness, reveals the character of the Chicago School's architectural style. Adopting Chinese architectural elements in a Western building was a practice in ecclesiastical architecture in the early 20th century.

The multi-functional arrangement of different spaces of the Chinese YMCA Building is similar to, and modelled after, other YMCA buildings in North America of the same period. All of its special features and facilities contributed to making it a Hong Kong building that was modern and advanced for its time.

The Chinese YMCA Building has generally retained much of its original appearance since it was built in 1918.⁸ Although some areas of the building have undergone some conversion works in order to meet different uses in the past 100 years and led to subsequent changes to the internal layout and internal finishes,⁹ most of the *Authenticity*

⁷ The old Pathological Institute, Kom Tong Hall, the Fung Ping Shan Building, the Main Building, the Hung Hing Ying Building, Elliot Hall and May Hall of The University of Hong Kong are examples of red brick buildings in the Central and Western District.

⁸ An obvious change is the replacement of the two external metal staircases to fulfil the current building regulations. The new staircases retain the visual character of the original design.

⁹ For example, some areas of the gymnasium have been converted into a store and toilets, the finishings of the swimming pool, changing room and dormitory have been replaced with new materials and the green glazed eave tiles have been re-laid according to the original appearance.

architectural features and heritage assets of the building, including the foundation stone with the emblem of the YMCA, the inscriptions of “Young Men’s Christian Association” at the auditorium and old lobby entrance porches, the fireplace in the old lobby area, the terrazzo steps leading to the stage of the auditorium, timber staircases to the upper loft of the auditorium, the wok-shaped running track and iron railing, the fitness equipment and timber flooring of the gymnasium and other features are all still preserved in good condition. The swimming pool of the building, the first heated indoor pool during wintertime in Hong Kong, has maintained its original use since 1918. The two historic brass rails and the layout of the swimming pool remain unchanged. In addition, the building has been continuously used as a youth centre, offering various kinds of sports and recreational activities and facilities, as well as hostel services, since its establishment. All these factors further enhance its authenticity.

The Chinese YMCA Building is the oldest surviving building in Hong Kong that the YMCA once used as their headquarters. It is also the first building to be equipped with various advanced sports and recreational facilities and other functional facilities. The wok-shaped running track is probably the only surviving example in Hong Kong. *Rarity*

Ecclesiastical architecture with a mix of Western building technology and Chinese architectural features is a special type of architecture in Hong Kong.¹⁰ It is also unique for how it was designed by architects from North America, modelled on the master building form of the YMCA buildings in North America.

The social value of the Chinese YMCA Building lies in its role in contributing to social, religious, educational, sports and rehabilitation services development in Hong Kong. For over a century, from serving as the headquarters in 1918 to 1966 and then as the Bridges Street Centre, a youth and recreational centre and a *Social Value & Local Interest*

¹⁰ Other examples of eclectic-style ecclesiastical buildings in Hong Kong include S.K.H. St. Mary’s Church in Causeway Bay, S.K.H. Holy Trinity Cathedral in Kowloon City, Tao Fong Shan Christian Centre in Sha Tin and the Holy Spirit Seminary in Wong Chuk Hang.

sheltered workshop and hostel today, the building has continuously offered diverse sports opportunities, education, social services and hostel services to the community. Although part of the building has been converted into a sheltered workshop and hostel, the building continues to be a venue for sports programmes and interest classes with the wide participation from the members of the community.

In the early days, the Chinese YMCA Building was an important place for social communication, especially for the Chinese community. Many well-known Chinese businessmen and elites were directors of the Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong. The construction of the building reflected the social network of the Chinese elites, as suggested in the memorial plaques engraved with the name of donors installed outside and inside the auditorium of the building.

With a distinctive appearance and a prominent location along Ladder Street, the Chinese YMCA Building is an iconic local landmark. Because of its historical and social background, it is of considerable local interest and attracts visitors for appreciation. It is also one of the historic buildings along the Central and Western Heritage Trail (中西區文物徑).

Man Mo Temple Compound, Sheung Wan (Declared Monument), Kwong Fook I Tsz (Grade 2), Main Block of the Tung Wah Hospital (Grade 1) and the Chinese YMCA Building were all founded or managed by local Chinese people and located in the Tai Ping Shan area. These historical buildings collectively illustrate the development of the Chinese community in early Hong Kong. Together with the Man Mo Temple compound and the old Pathological Institute (Declared Monument) (currently the Hong Kong Museum of Medical Sciences), these three historic buildings are located along Ladder Street (Grade 1), which connects the Central District and Mid-Levels, where European and wealthy Chinese residents lived. Also, the Bridges Street Market (Grade 3) (currently the Hong Kong News-Expo) is within walking distance of the Building. These historic buildings and structures collectively exemplify the development of

Group Value

Hong Kong – in particular, the historical and socio-cultural development of the Sheung Wan District.

Photos of Chinese YMCA of Hong Kong

Tuscan columns and green glazed tiled eaves at the front elevation of the building



The side and rear elevations of the building looking from Ladder Street.
The Chinese name of YMCA are installed at prominent positions.



The foundation stone at the front elevation of the building



The inscription of “Young Men’s Christian Association”
above the entrance porch near Tank Lane



The fireplace on ground floor.
The emblem of YMCA and couplets backed with marble plate and slabs are
on top of the mantle.



The auditorium

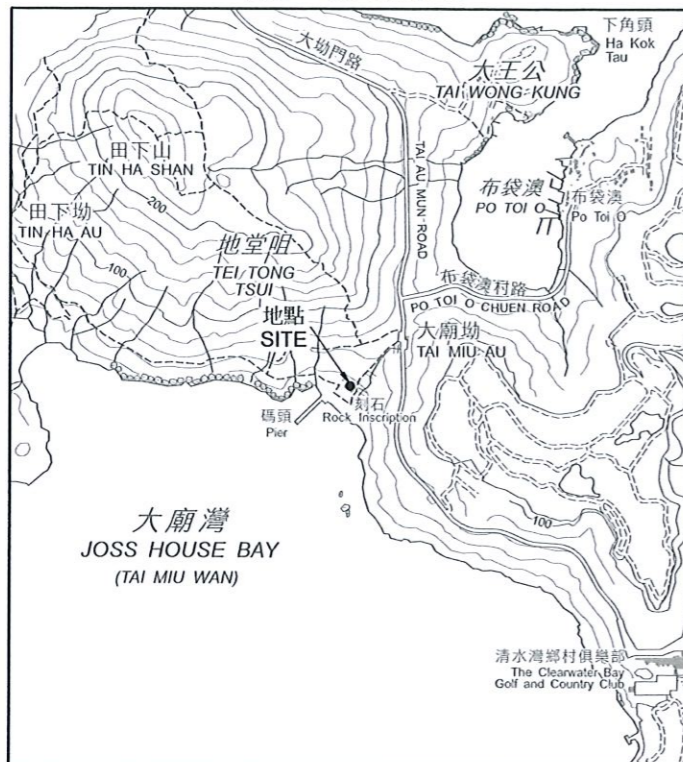


The gymnasium with a wok-shaped timber running track

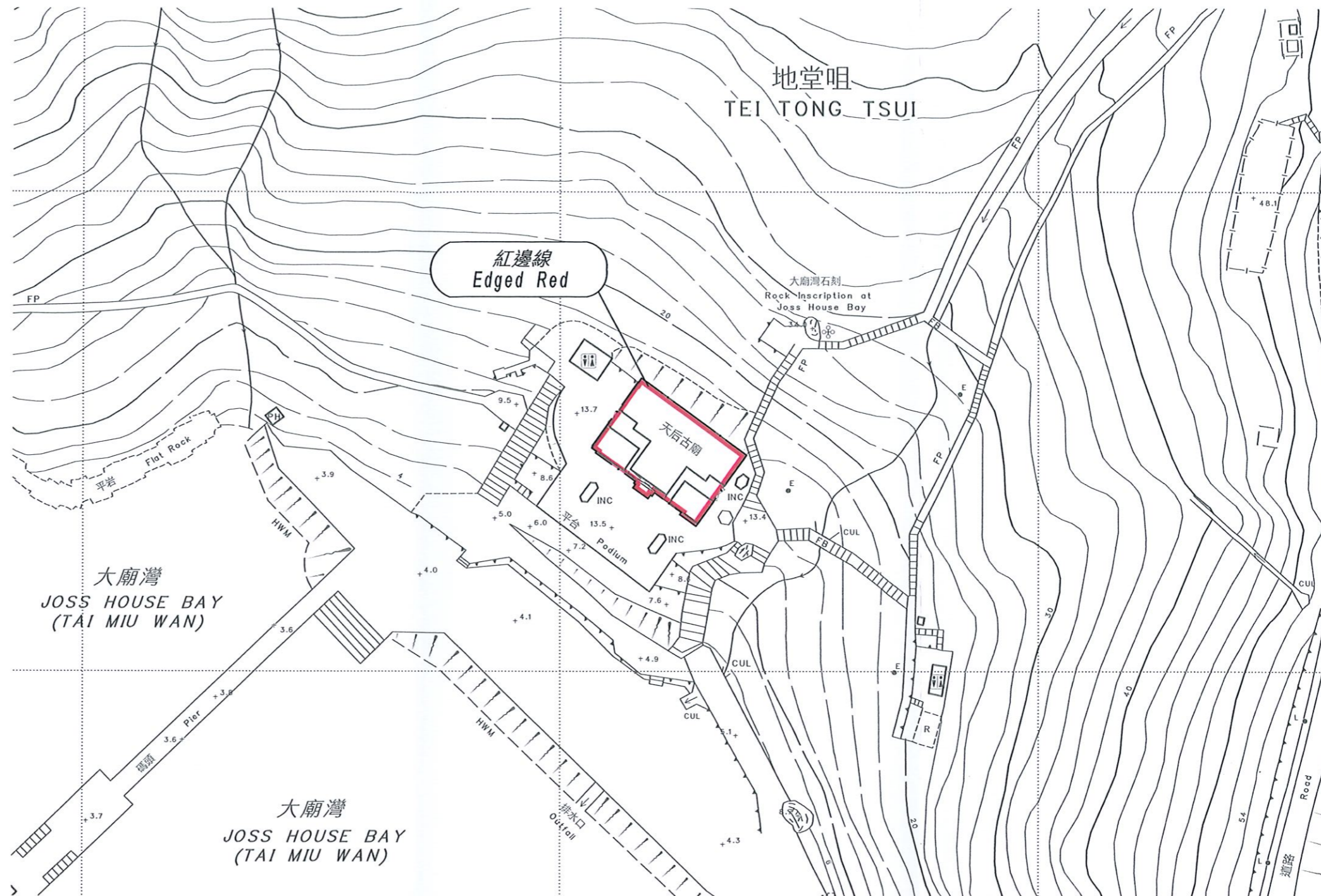


The indoor swimming pool.
The original brass rail (in the foreground) is still in use.

位置 LOCATION



比例 SCALE 1:20 000



以紅邊線標示的面積約為 501 平方米
 EDGED RED AREA 501 SQUARE METRES (ABOUT)



Bernadette Linn

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 發展局局長 Secretary for Development
 日期 Date 13 October 2023

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地政總署 西貢測量處
 District Survey Office, Sai Kung
 Lands Department

古物及古蹟條例 (第 53 章)
 根據第 3 (4) 條存放於土地註冊處的
 位於新界西貢地堂咀丈量約份第 240 約地段第 92 號的
 西貢佛堂門天后古廟的圖則
 ANTIQUITIES AND MONUMENTS ORDINANCE (CAP. 53)
 PLAN OF THE TIN HAU TEMPLE, JOSS HOUSE BAY, SAI KUNG
 AT LOT No. 92 IN D.D. 240, TEI TONG TSUI, SAI KUNG, NEW TERRITORIES
 DEPOSITED IN THE LAND REGISTRY UNDER SECTION 3(4)

檔案編號 File Nos. AMO 21-3/0 PT14 & LD DSO/SK/W2058

測量圖編號 Survey Sheet No. 12-SW-12D

發展藍圖編號 Layout Plan No. -----

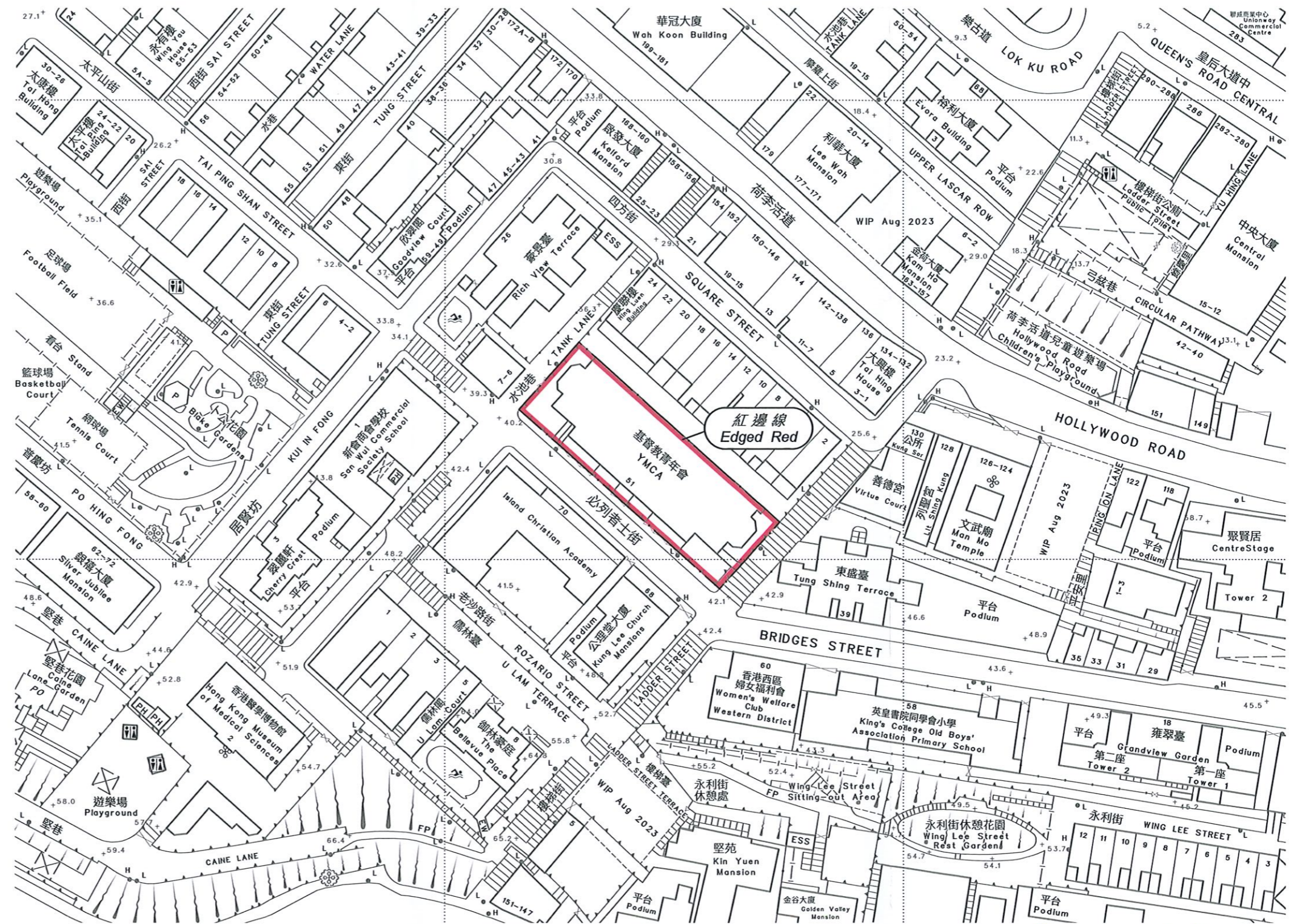
參考圖編號 Reference Plan No. -----

圖則編號 PLAN No. SKM10300

位置 LOCATION



比例 SCALE 1:20 000



以紅邊線標示的面積約為 1 150 平方米
EDGED RED AREA 1 150 SQUARE METRES (ABOUT)

比例尺 SCALE 1:1 000



Bernadette Linn

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發展局局長 Secretary for Development

日期 Date 13 October 2023

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地政總署 港島測量處
District Survey Office, Hong Kong
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古物及古蹟條例(第53章)
根據第3(4)條存放於土地註冊處的位於香港上環必列者士街51號的
香港中華基督教青年會的圖則
ANTIQUITIES AND MONUMENTS ORDINANCE (CAP. 53)
PLAN OF THE CHINESE YMCA OF HONG KONG
AT 51 BRIDGES STREET, SHEUNG WAN, HONG KONG
DEPOSITED IN THE LAND REGISTRY UNDER SECTION 3(4)

檔案編號 File No. DSO/HK 14/2/5/2 Pt. 2
測量圖編號 Survey Sheet No. 11-SW-8C
發展藍圖編號 Layout Plan No. --
參考圖編號 Reference Plan No. --
圖則編號 PLAN No. HKM11235

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