

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF

### Preservation of Former Dade Institute

#### INTRODUCTION

The Secretary for Home Affairs, in his capacity as the Antiquities Authority under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance (A&M Ordinance), Cap. 53, has decided after consultation with the Antiquities Advisory Board to declare 馬禮遜樓 (the Morrison Building) and its adjoining land within the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre (何福堂會所) in Tuen Mun to be a Proposed Monument for 12 months under Section 2A of the A&M Ordinance. The declaration will be made by notice in the Gazette on 11 April 2003. The Executive Council was informed of this decision on 8 April 2003.

#### JUSTIFICATIONS

##### Heritage Value

2. The Morrison Building has witnessed three main stages in history:
  - (a) *Villa of General Cai Tingjie*: The building was first built in 1936 as part of a villa of General Cai Tingjie (蔡廷鍇) (1892-1968), a famous general of the Northern Expedition and in the Anti-Japanese War. In the Battle of Songjiang–Shanghai (一二八淞滬之戰) on 28 January 1932, Cai led the Nineteenth Corps (十九路軍), the only troop to fight against the Japanese invasion.
  - (b) *School building of Dade Institute*: The building was used as school premises of the Dade Institute (達德學院) between 1946 and 1949. The Dade Institute was a tertiary education institution with strong connection with the Chinese Communist Party. Many well-known Chinese scholars, such as MAO Dun (茅盾), LIU Ya-zi (柳亞子), JIAN Bo-zan (翦伯贊), SIMA Wen-sen (司馬文森), QIAN Jia-ju (千家駒), GUO Mo-ruo (郭沫若), and CHEN Jun-ru (沈鈞儒) resided and gave lectures there. Such a phenomenon was unique in the cultural history of Hong Kong. Today, alumni still talk with great relish about that period of enlightenment. The Institute was closed down in 1949 in view of its political background.

- (c) *Religious Centre*: After the closure of the Dade Institute, the London Missionary Society purchased the villa and used it as a religious centre. It was eventually transferred to the Church of Christ in China in 1961, and continued to serve as a religious venue. At that stage, the villa was renamed Hoh Fuk Tong Centre, after Rev. Hoh Fuk Tong, the first Chinese pastor in Hong Kong.

### The Morrison Building

3. The former Dade Institute consists of three buildings, namely, the Morrison Building, the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre Building and the Pavilion, which are now part of the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre at 28 Castle Peak Road, Tuen Mun. Among the three buildings, the Morrison Building is the most important historical building which deserves to be preserved – a view supported by the Antiquities Advisory Board. Historically, it was used as a villa of General Cai and later the main school building of the Dade Institute. Architecturally, it demonstrates a harmonious blend of Chinese and Western styles not commonly found in Hong Kong nowadays. The land on which it is situated is owned by the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China (中華基督教會香港區會, the Church) and zoned “G/IC”. The building occupies an area of 480 m<sup>2</sup>. A site map and a photograph showing the historical building are at Annexes B and C respectively.

### Demolition Threat

4. The threat of demolishing the buildings of the former Dade Institute first arose in 1999 when the redevelopment plan of the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre site by the Church and its joint venture partner came to public notice. Under the redevelopment plan, the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre site and the two adjoining schools would be redeveloped into two standard schools and five residential blocks on the Church’s lot and the adjoining Government land. The Church applied to the Lands Department for an in-situ land exchange, a pre-requisite for implementation of the development; however no offer of such an exchange was ever made. To proceed with the redevelopment, the Church needs to submit an application to the Town Planning Board for amending the previous approved scheme to incorporate the rectifications made, in respect of site area, scheme boundary, development parameters etc in association with the land exchange application. In an attempt to preserve the historical buildings, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department approached the Church to explore alternatives. Despite the on-going negotiation between the Government and the Church and that the Church’s redevelopment scheme with the developer was abandoned in September 2002, the Church has on 1 March 2003 submitted a demolition proposal to the Buildings Department for permission to demolish the historical buildings in Hoh Fuk Tong Centre. Under existing law, the Building Authority (BA) cannot refuse approval of the demolition proposal on heritage preservation grounds unless the concerned historical buildings are declared as Proposed Monuments or Monuments. The deadline for the Building Authority to approve or disapprove the Church’s demolition proposal is 30 April 2003. Under the circumstances,

the Government is left with no choice but to take legal action under the provisions of Cap. 53 to prevent the demolition from happening. In view of the exceptional historical significance of the Morrison Building and in order not to impose excessive restrictions on the Church's future use of the site, the Government has decided to declare the Morrison Building.

### The Declaration of Proposed Monument

5. In order to ensure adequate protection to the Morrison Building which is to be declared as a Proposed Monument, the Antiquities Authority has in accordance with normal practice also included a buffer zone of 3-metre of land bordering the building, except for the easterly side where the buffer zone would be reduced to 2-metre in order to avoid encroachment upon another existing building, into the Proposed Monument boundary. The total area to be declared is thus 829 m<sup>2</sup>.

6. In exercising his power to declare, the Antiquities Authority has consulted the Antiquities Advisory Board as required under Section 2A of the A&M Ordinance. Under section 6(1)(b) of the ordinance, a Proposed Monument may not be demolished except in accordance with a permit granted by the Antiquities Authority. The declaration only has effect for 12 months. Hence by declaring the Morrison Building as a Proposed Monument, the Church's demolition plan involving the building will in effect be suspended for 12 months. Government will use this extra time to continue to negotiate with the Church with a view to working out a mutually acceptable arrangement for preservation. According to section 2C of the A&M Ordinance, the owner may lodge an appeal against the declaration to the Antiquities Authority, and further to the Chief Executive if the first appeal is not successful. Unless the declaration is withdrawn by the Chief Executive, Chief Executive in Council is the authority for deciding the appeal finally.

7. After the building has been declared a Proposed Monument, the owner can still apply to the Antiquities Authority for a permit under section 6 of the A&M Ordinance to demolish the building. If such an application is refused, the owner will be eligible to claim compensation under section 8 of the A&M Ordinance if they can prove that there is financial loss suffered as a result of the declaration. In default of agreement with the Antiquities Authority on the amount of compensation, the owner may apply to the District Court for an assessment. The District Court may on such an application award to the applicant such compensation as it thinks reasonable in the circumstances.

8. The declaration will be made in the Gazette on 11 April 2003, and will take immediate effect. The item will then be tabled for negative vetting by the Legislative Council on 30 April 2003, which is the earliest opportunity as provided under established procedures. The Government cannot withhold the effective date of the declaration to the completion of the normal full negative vetting period (i.e. 28 May 2003 or, if extended by the Legislative

Council, 18 June 2003) because of the urgency to render statutory protection to the Morrison Building before the Building Authority issues the demolition permit on or before 30 April 2003.

## **OTHER OPTIONS**

9. We have considered other alternatives, but have found them to be not feasible. These are explained below -

(a) To allow the Church to proceed with the demolition

If this is allowed to happen, a valuable historical building which represents an important episode in the history of China and Hong Kong will be lost forever. It will also mean a breach of public faith and expectation, which is much in favour of preserving this precious piece of heritage.

(b) To declare the Morrison Building as a Monument

By declaring the Morrison Building as a Monument under the A&M Ordinance, the building may not be demolished except in accordance with a permit granted by the Antiquities Authority. The protection will be permanent. The earliest date for Government to effect the declaration of Morrison Building as a Monument would be well after 30 April 2003 as more steps are required under Sections 3 and 4 of the A&M Ordinance, including, inter alia, allowing 1 month (or such longer period as may be allowed by the Chief Executive) for the Church to make an objection to the Chief Executive. After declaration, the Church may apply for compensation as in the case of declaration as Proposed Monument set out in para. 7 above. However, in view of the long lead-time and in order to allow more time for negotiation with the owner, we do not consider this option feasible.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

10. The proposed declaration is in conformity with the Basic Law, including the provisions concerning human rights. They do not have productivity, environmental or sustainability implications. The temporary statutory protection of the building from demolition will permit negotiations in full respect of private property rights, which should be conducive to engendering confidence in the operations of the property market. The declaration will only be effective for 12 months, during which the Church's current use of the Morrison Building will not be affected.

11. We are unable to estimate the financial implications of the proposal unless and until the Church lodges a claim for compensation with justifications. However, as the declaration is only temporary and the Church's existing right to use the building will not be affected, the magnitude of any such claim is likely to be limited. There would be no staffing implication as the building would remain under the ownership and

management of the Church.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

12. The proposal is in line with the Antiquities Advisory Board's recommendation given on 19 March 2003. The Tuen Mun District Council also discussed the matter on 20 March 2003 and passed a motion to strongly urge the Government to preserve the historical buildings of the former Dade Institute and to resolve the issue of compensation with the owner.

## **PUBLICITY**

13. A press release will be issued. A spokesperson will be available to answer media and public enquiries.

## **BACKGROUND**

14. Under a redevelopment scheme of the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre proposed by the Church in 1999, the existing buildings on the site and the two adjoining schools (But San School and Ho Fuk Tong College) would be demolished to make way for the construction of two upgraded schools and five residential blocks. In the past two years, a series of discussions were conducted between the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Church to seek the latter's consent to preserve the historical buildings. Various proposals were discussed, but no agreement has been reached.

15. On 1 March 2003, the Church submitted a demolition proposal to the Buildings Department for approval. If BA cannot refuse approval of the demolition proposal (see paragraph 4 above), the Church may proceed with the actual demolition work provided that the hoardings and other on-site safety measures are completed to the BA's satisfaction, and a consent to commence demolition work is granted by the BA. BA has to process an application for consent to commence works within 28 days upon receipt of the same.

## **ENQUIRIES**

16. For any enquiries on this brief, please contact Mr Y T LAM, Principal Assistant Secretary (Culture) 2 of the Home Affairs Bureau at 2594 6608.

Home Affairs Bureau  
10 April 2003

## **History and Architectural Assessment of the Former Dade Institute at 28 Castle Peak Road, Tuen Mun**

Situated at the Castle Peak Road, Tuen Mun, historical buildings of the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre were originally built by General Cai Tingjie in 1936.<sup>1</sup> The historical development of the buildings can be divided into three stages: In the first stage (1936-1946), the building was the villa of Cai. In the second stage (1946-1949), it was the school building of Dade Institute. Finally, in the third stage (i.e. since 1950), it has been used by religious organisations for religious purposes. The Morrison House is the oldest building.

The building was formerly the villa of Cai who was a famous Kuomintang general of the Northern Expedition and the Anti-Japanese War. Cai (1892-1968) was a native of Luoding County of Guangdong Province. He was born into a peasant family and lost his parents in his early childhood. He had worked as a peasant, a tailor and a veterinarian for cattle. He joined the army at the age of 19 and rendered eminent services in the revolution against the Qing dynasty and the Northern Expedition against the warlords. In 1930, Chiang Kai-shek realigned the Sixtieth and Sixty-first Divisions to become the famous Nineteenth Route Army and appointed Cai as the army commander. In the Battle of Songjiang – Shanghai on 28 January 1932, Cai led the Nineteenth Route Army, the only troop to fight against the Japanese army. Having succeeded in forcing the Japanese army to change its

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<sup>1</sup> Cai Ting-kai, p.439 from “The Biography of Cai Ting-kai”: “In the 24th year of the Republic of China, i.e.1935.....My wife had bought a piece of land of about 10 to 20 *mu* near San Hui in the New Territories, Hong Kong for building a small house. Pending the completion of the house, I moved to Castle Peak and lived there for a short time as I wished to resume my farming.” p.441: “In the 25th year of the Republic of China, i.e.1936.....I didn’t like the small house she (Cai’s wife) built earlier. As construction fees at that time were quite cheap, I decided to build a house with my own design. I asked a quotation from Tang Yuk-ting of Wing Tai Company. At last, the company undertook to complete the construction within 4 months at an all inclusive cost of \$ 17,000. The issue of dwelling has now been settled.”

commander-in-chief and repulsing the enemy attacks, Cai established his fame as a military man. Afterwards, Cai led the army to Fujian and staged a coup d' état there. In 1933, Cai called on the people to resist against the invasion of the Japanese, overthrow Chiang and join the revolutionary government of Fujian. However, the revolution ended in failure and the army retreated to Quanzhou. In the meantime, Cai took Hong Kong as his base area. In 1936, out of his admiration for the country life in Tuen Mun, Cai built a western-style villa there for leading a relaxing life. There is an archway in front of the villa with a plaque reading “瀧江別墅” (Long Gong Villa) in Chinese. Another archway is also erected along the Castle Peak Road with the Chinese characters of “芳園” (Fong Garden) inscribed on it.

In 1946, Cai lent the Lung Gong Villa to the Institute as the school premises free of charge. He also became a member of the Board of Directors of the Institute. The Institute was the first institute deregistered by the then Hong Kong Government. This incident fully reflected the changes in the diplomatic relationship between the British Government and the Communist Party from 1947 to 1949. In fact, the turning point for the setting up of the Institute was the meeting between Zhou Enlai and Lian Guan in 1946. Lian was responsible for the propaganda and coordination of overseas affairs of the Communist Party Committee of the Guangdong area. Zhou was of the view that owing to the critical conditions of the civil war, many democrats and intellectuals would flee to Hong Kong and it was necessary for the committee to provide work and means of living for them. As a result, the idea of establishing a university in Hong Kong was conceived. The first head of the Institute, Chen Qiyuan was a member of the left wing of the KMT. He had participated in the preparatory work for the setting up of the Zhongshan University in Guangzhou in the 1920s and had also been the head of the Guangzhou Guomin University.

The stated aim of the Institute was to promote the realization of “Active learning, Academic freedom and Autonomous life”. Founded in 1946, the preparatory committee of the Institute was composed of Chan Ki-oi (executive member) and Yeung Bak-hoi, Wong Yeuk-min and Tsang Wai-wai (committee members). In mid-September 1946, Cai lent his villa, “Fong Garden”, at San Hui, Castle Peak to the Institute without charging any rental. The Institute was formally

founded on 10 October 1946 and school began on 20 October. However, it was not until 18 December 1947 the Director of Education issued a license to the Institute.

Since the founding of Dade Institute, the number of students had increased from 180 to 265 in 1948. They were chiefly made up of the young cadres remained in Guangdong after the retreat of the Dongjiang Column to the north; mainland students wanted for or suspected of underground party activities; Chinese Nationals from south-east Asia; youths from Hong Kong and the mainland who held the Institute in high esteem. Among them, overseas Chinese made the longest stay at the Institute while most of the mainland students had to cut short their stay due to financial difficulties or the need of work. The Institute mainly offered 4-year courses in business economics, law and politics and Chinese; a 2-year course in specialized journalism and a 2-year preparatory course for University. Of the above, business economics class had the largest enrolment.

The education ideology of Dade Institute differed greatly from the traditional education belief held in mainland China. The alumni of Dade Institute always spoke of the liberal, democratic and progressive atmosphere prevailed in the Institute. Besides, the Institute also fostered inter-class and group learning, individual research and free participation in extra-curricular activities. In the course of learning, students were encouraged to express their views and they might even comment on the views of the teachers and speakers. Such liberal attitude towards education was at odds with the doctrinaire approach to the mode of teaching adopted in the mainland. Another pioneering act of the Institute was the setting up of the Board of Faculty in 1948. The Board, which comprised staff, professors and students, was the highest executive body in the Institute. It set a precedent for allowing teachers and students to discuss school policies together.

Though Dade Institute came into being for only three years in Hong Kong, many renowned scholars were drawn to the Institute from the mainland. The major reason was that many intellectuals who held different political views from the Kuomintang Government were oppressed and expelled. To make a fresh start, they fled to Hong Kong, enabling the Institute to take in eminent scholars of the time.



Such phenomenon was unprecedented in the cultural history of Hong Kong and until today alumni still talked with great relish about the boom time.

On 22 February 1949, the Governor in Council issued an order to shut down Dade Institute. Subsequently, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Hong Kong Branch) convened a meeting to work out remedial measures and four important decisions were made. Firstly, some teachers and students would be transferred to other organisations where they could continue their work and study. Secondly, most students of the Faculty of Business and Economics would be admitted to Jianzhong Institute for studying banking and finance. Thirdly, some teachers and students (mostly overseas Chinese nationals who returned to study) would travel to the liberated areas by sea for job arrangements to be made by the relevant departments of the Central Committee. Fourthly, students who volunteered to join the armed struggle would be deployed to guerrilla areas in south China.

The Institute had a total enrolment of more than 1000 students<sup>2</sup> for three academic years. When the Communist Party of China (CPC) went back to guerrilla war in south China in 1947, the guerrilla leaders in these areas recalled their subordinates who were studying at Dade Institute. As recounted by Zhang Mingsheng who was responsible for the escort in Fujian, Guangdong and Jinagxi Provinces, more than 100 students were sent to south China for the rural armed struggle between May 1947 and early 1949. The Dade Institute had nurtured a group of young cadres who then worked in their hometowns. Some of them even held important posts<sup>3</sup> in the Central Government after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In those days when Long Gong Villa was used as the campus of Dade Institute, its main building housed all faculty offices and tutorial rooms of the Institute.

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<sup>2</sup> “The Educational Practice of Dade Institute”, page 56.

<sup>3</sup> “The Educational Practice of Dade Institute”, page 58. ‘... According to the incomplete statistics released in 1985, those holding official positions include 1 at the provincial level, 40 at the levels of Central department, State administration bureau and provincial department, 85 at the level of division and over 60 at the level of section, 11 professors, associate professors and researchers, 20 lecturers and engineers, 1 professional writer ...’ .

In the southeast of the main building stood a redbrick house named ‘Red House’, which served as the girls’ dormitory. In front of the Mansion was an outdoor canteen equipped with folding wooden dining tables. The construction of the Democracy Hall, a wooden structure situated in the northwest of the main building, was initiated by the fourth Student Union. A plaque with Li Jishen’s inscription was hung at the main entrance of the Hall which has been rebuilt into a concrete building as the canteen of Hoh Fuk Tong Centre.

After the closure of Dade Institute, the London Missionary Society (now the Council for World Mission) bought the campus and lent it to the Church of Christ in China as a seminary for training women ministers. The seminary was later renamed “Hong Kong Theological Institute” (HKTI), where training was provided to local ministers to become clergy. Following the establishment of the Religion Department in Chung Chi College, HKTI moved to the College. The former campus of HKTI had served as a forum for overseas missionaries in Hong Kong. In 1961, the London Missionary Society formally transferred the ownership of HKTI to the Church of Christ in China at a token fee of one dollar. In 1963, Hoh Fuk Tong College was established and the current Hoh Fuk Tong Centre was the dormitory of the College. In the mid-1960s, Hoh Fuk Tong Centre formally became a retreat and was named after Rev. Hoh Fuk Tong, the first Chinese pastor in Hong Kong.

On the present Hoh Fuk Tong Centre site, there are three historic buildings/structure which had close relationship with the Former Dade Institute. They are the Morrison Building (the main building of the Former Dade Institute), ‘Hoh Fuk Tong Centre Building’ (Girls’ dormitory of the Former Dade Institute, also known as the ‘Red House’) and the pavilion outside the Morrison Building.

The Morrison Building, which was constructed in 1936, is the oldest building on the Hoh Fuk Tong Centre site. It is an imposing 2-storey building built at first glance of solid granite blocks, but which are in fact Shanghai plaster rendering marked with masonry courses to resemble stonework. The front elevation is built in the Art Deco style of architecture popular in the 1930s and may have been influenced by the influx of artisans from Shanghai into Hong Kong at that time.

The main entrance is set in a recessed bay flanked on either side by projecting bays each featuring a 2-storey oriel bay window. The upper part or parapet of the central entrance bay is an interesting arrangement of steps and ramps (sometimes called ziggurats) reflecting the skyscraper profile of large American cities. Although sometimes attributed to Aztec or Egyptian art, the origin of the stepped pyramid-like shape of skyscrapers is more mundane. The zoning laws of America in 1916, intended to prevent overcrowding and to permit the entry of as much light and air as possible, forbade the construction of tower blocks that rose in a solid mass. The greater its height, the narrower the tower had to be in relation to the total ground space the building occupied.

The windows are tall in relation to width and are fitted with metal casement windows and fanlights which appear to be original. The main entrance doors are glazed in geometric pattern with matching fanlights above a transom. The entrance is flanked by raised triangular shaped planters with clipped topiary shrubs and a coniferous tree (believed to be Norfolk pine) on either side.

The side and rear elevations are devoid of architectural features except for a dentil moulded frieze which runs below the parapet coping all round the building uniting the elevations. The rear elevation has had annexes and additions built onto it, and on the side elevations can be seen the extensive plumbing required for the internal accommodation. The window arrangement, or fenestration, on these elevations generally matches the front elevation in proportion and alignment.

The main feature of the roof is a pagoda-like structure with a green glazed Chinese tiled hipped roof with a double layer of red painted projecting rafters forming a wide cantilevered eaves all round, each corner supported by a shaped bracket. Ridge and hip decorations consist of geometrically designed green glazed ornaments in zoomorphic dragon shapes often associated with Shang and early Chou dynastys architecture.

Internally the building has many interesting architectural features including 1930s style period windows and doors, original floor tiling and a very fine timber staircase with reuel posts and wrought iron balustrading in Art Deco style. Walls

and ceilings are fairly plain in the minimalist style with simple panelling and coving to the ceiling. Most of the doors and windows appear to be original and alterations minimal.

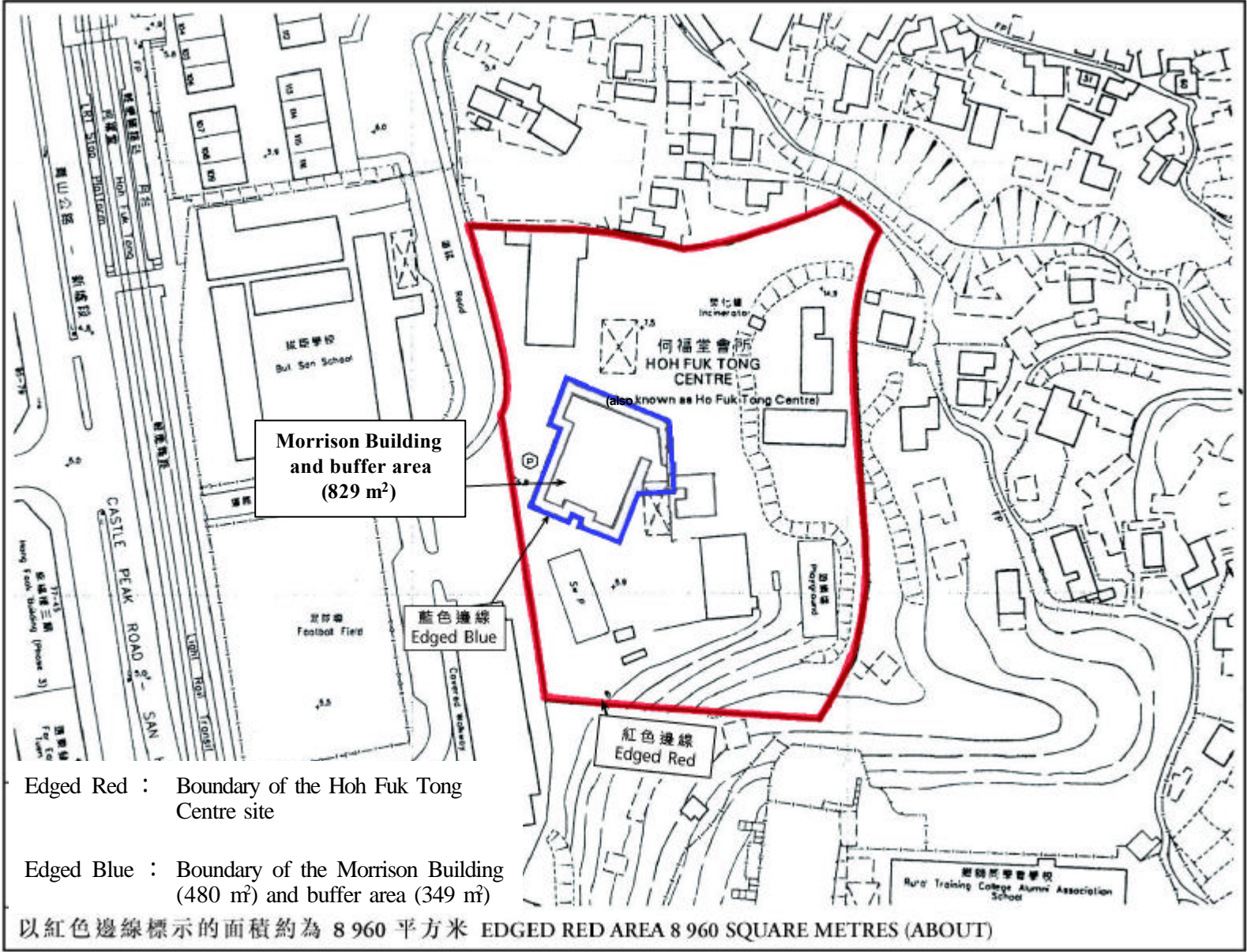
Another oldest building in the site is the 'Hoh Fuk Tong Centre Building', which was constructed in the 1940s as the girls' dormitory of the Former Dade Institute. Since the building was built of red bricks, it is also known as the 'Red House'.

It is a 2-storey brick building built of red bricks in Flemish bond (i.e. alternate headers and stretchers) with horizontal bands of brick-on-end, or soldier courses, at window sill and hand levels. Windows are square or rectangular in shape fitted with metal casements. A plain reinforced concrete balcony runs along the rear elevation. The side elevations are plain with no architectural embellishments or decorations. Art Deco style fence walls still survive around the building.

The main external architectural feature is the front entrance bay built in Art Deco style. The main entrance doors are set in a doorway with a large fluted keystone and a moulded architrave rising from a buttressed plinth. Two narrow windows, one on either side of the doorway complete the design of the entrance, over which projects a box-like cantilevered first floor balcony. The ground floor door and window combination is repeated at first floor level, and the central bay is topped by a flattened triangular shaped pediment in modernist style.

Internally the building still has many of its original features including windows, doors, staircases, and encaustic floor tiling. Walls and ceilings are fairly plain with simple moulded panelling and coving to the ceilings.

Constructed in circa 1936, the Hoh Fuk Tong Pavilion is a small structure built on a pentagon shaped plinth with five simple square columns finished in pink terrazzo supporting a green glazed Chinese tiled roof with a central pommel or ball finial, and a projecting eaves all round. The pavilion is fitted with lighting and seating. Ornamentation is simple consisting of balustrade panels in fretwork pattern and a plain frieze below the eaves painted with different coloured chevrons.







馬禮遜樓（前達德學院主樓）

**Morrison Building (Main building of the Former Dade Institute)**