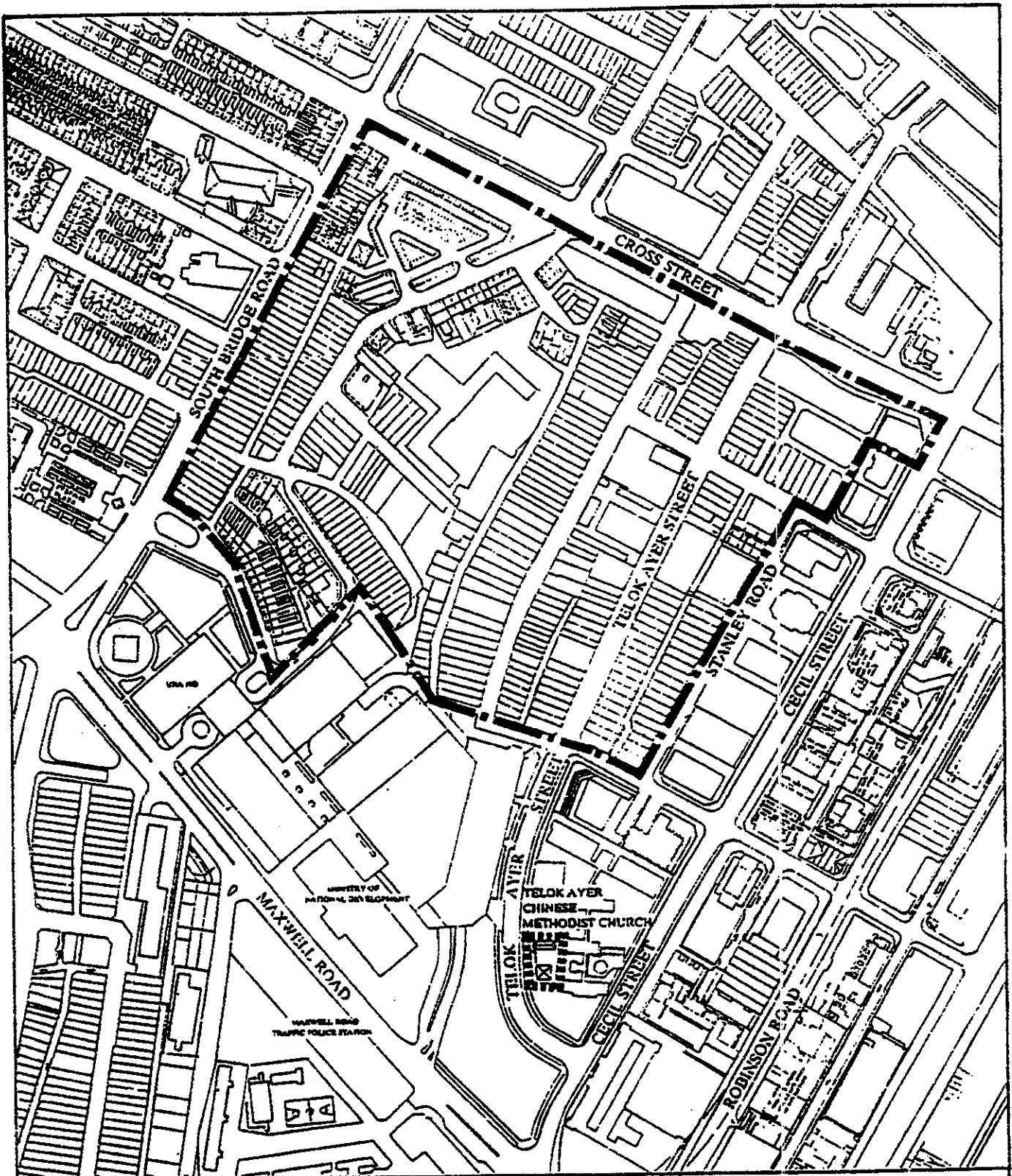


Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church

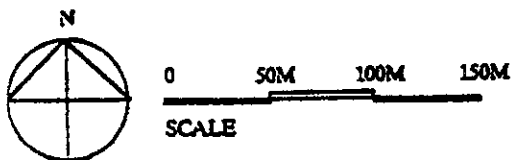
Established in 1889

***First Chinese Methodist Church
in Singapore***







**LOCATION MAP OF
TELOK AYER
CHINESE METHODIST CHURCH**



LEGEND

-  BOUNDARY OF TELOK AYER CONSERVATION AREA IN CHINATOWN
-  GAZETTED MONUMENT
TELOK AYER CHINESE METHODIST CHURCH

First Chinese Methodist Church gazetted as a National Monument

Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church was the first Chinese Methodist Church to be established in Singapore in 1889. It was originally named as "Chinese Methodist Church". The present building of Telok Chinese Methodist Church was built in 1924 and gazetted as a national monument on 23rd March 1989. Restoration and renovation works on the national monument building began in 1993 and were completed in 1995 at a total cost of \$3.2 million.

In 1996, Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church was awarded an "Architectural Heritage Award" for lovingly restored the historical monument building to its former glory.

The present church building is now 80 years old and Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church is celebrating the 80th Anniversary of its church building cum 116th Anniversary on 14th August 2005.

History

In 1889, in a rented house in Upper Nanking Street, Dr Benjamin Franklin West, a medical doctor and missionary started the missionary work and catered to the medical needs of the Chinese Community in the Telok Ayer Basin. The first Sunday service was held in August 1889.

Dr West preached in Malay to 30 people and an interpreter translated the sermon into Hokkien. It then became a Hokkien speaking congregation. In 1905, the shophouse was falling apart due to old age, but the Lord provided a new place of worship in Boon Tat Street (formally Japan Street). The Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church grew and it was soon apparent that bigger church premises had to be sought. In early 1913, a piece of land at the junction of Telok Ayer Street and Cecil Street where the church stands today was bought at the price of \$3,600.00 and a tent was erected on the site. Subsequently, a chapel constructed out of wood and corrugated iron with a floor area measuring 20' x 36' was erected at the Telok Ayer site and known as "Tin Church".

In December 1925, the new 3-storey Church building was completed and dedicated. The Church building was designed by Swan & Maclaren, and a French firm of Bross & Mogin constructed the Church building at a tender price of \$46,000.00. The foundation stone was laid by Bishop G.H. Bickley on 9th January 1924.

In 1935, Dr John Sung, a well-known Chinese Evangelist from China conducted revival meetings in the church. When Singapore fell into the hands of the Japanese in 1942, the church became a refuge for almost 300 people.

Facts on Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church (A National Monument)

Name of Monument	:	Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church
Date of Construction	:	1924
Date of Gazette	:	23 March 1989
Address	:	235 Telok Ayer Street, Singapore 068656
Lot No	:	97-5, 103 & 104-1 TS II
Land Tenure	:	999 Years
Site Area	:	521.9 m ² (5683.49 sq ft)
Approved Gross Floor Area	:	1948.911 m ² (21,166.96 sq ft)
Approved Plot Ratio	:	3.73
Present Owner	:	The Secretary of the Trustees of the Methodist Church in Singapore
Original Architect	:	Swan and Maclaren
Date Completion of Restoration	:	18 th August 1995
Architectural Heritage Award by Urban Redevelopment Authority	:	10 th July 1996

Planning Concept / Design Philosophy

The design of the church is constrained by the existing lot size and orientation. As such, its design does not follow the design of most churches which orientated towards the east. Besides, the architecture of the church incorporates some of the features of Chinese Architecture as in the expression of the open pavilion and its upturned roof eaves and some of the features of Church Architecture as in the expression of the windows in the alternation of columns and piers and column type at the five-footway that connects the church with the surrounding streetscape.

Important features of Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church

Churches in Singapore evolved through the work of missionaries in the region in 1820s. As these missionaries represent different schools of thoughts and countries of origin, churches were important physical representatives of each of these individual discipline or denomination. They essentially reinforced the sense of unity and loyalty of *each group*. The character of the churches of various denominations was distinguished by their architectural styles as reflected in their structural organisation, details of design elements and materials used. Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church reflects the social and cultural needs of the early Christians and is a good representative of the country's multi-faceted heritage.

The Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church is an expression of Singapore Eclecticism drawn from Chinese and European influences. This is evident from the distinct Chinese pavilion on the rooftop with upturned roof eaves and the column/beam sponse details. However, due to the constraint of the site on which it is built, only a few of its features are derivatives of these exemplified in the generic architecture. The building shape and features and the internal spatial organisation of its first and second storeys does not conform to that of a centralised or cruciform plan, especially a Pagoda roof to top it all. The plan is trapezoidal reflecting the shape of the site and its constraints with 4 “cores” located at each of the corners, visually akin to watch towers.

Furthermore, its unique features reflect the Chinese community it serves, its climate adaptation and the prevailing Art Deco architectural style of the 1920s.

The features of the church are:

- (a) Pavilion on the rooftop
- (b) Alternation of columns and piers at five-footway
- (c) Five-footway
- (d) Articulated column and beam joints in the first and second storeys. (There is no capital for each column.)

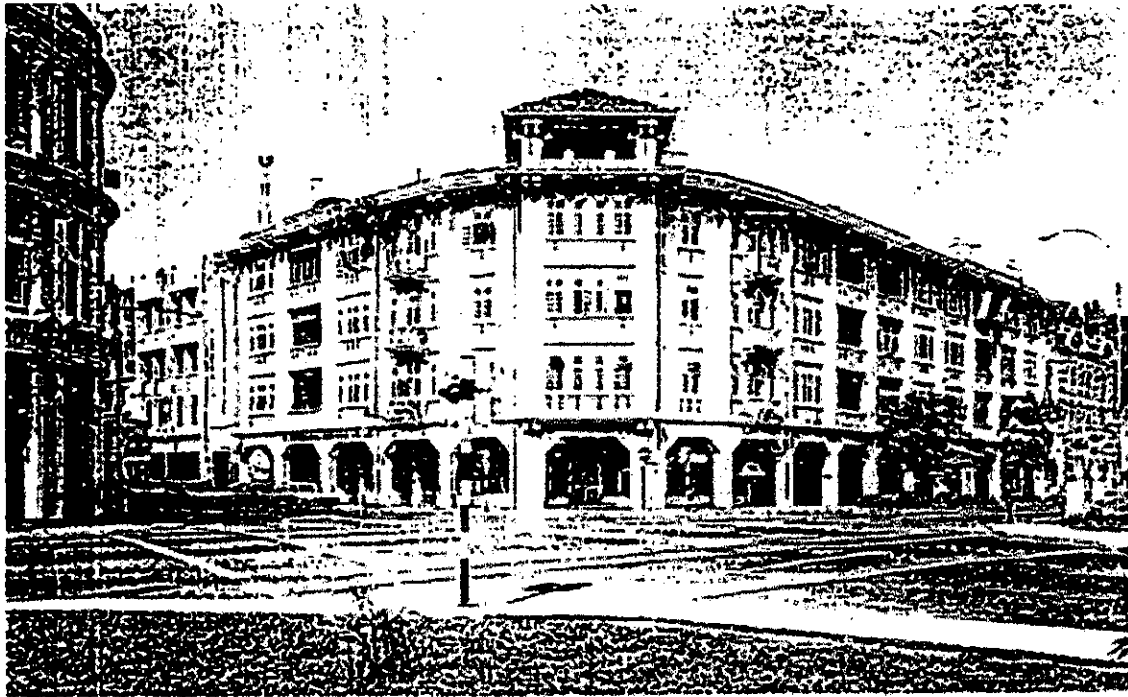
(a) Pavilion on the rooftop

The concept of a pavilion at the rooftop is also shown on buildings of the same period such as the Singapore Eu Court.

The Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church is the first of the Chinese Churches with a pavilion on the rooftop. It is followed by the Holy Trinity Parish Court (1940) at Hamilton Road, which has a pavilion similar to it.

The buildings external verandah of alternating columns and piers is an adaptation of the five-footway streetscape.

Pavilion on the Rooftop:
The concept can be shown on the building of Eu Court



SINGAPORE, EU COURT

(b) Alternation of columns and piers at five-footway

The concept of an alternation of piers and columns on the church can be seen in the following historic buildings:-

Salonika (Turkey), Hagia Sophia (ca. early 8th Century, Byzantine),
Normandy (France), Jumieges Abbey (ca. 1040-1067, Romanesque),
Durham (England), Durham Cathedral (1093-1133, Romanesque-Norman),
Constantinople (Istanbul)(Turkey), Palace of Porphyrogenitus (Tekfur Saray)(ca. late
13th Century, Byzantine)

Alternation of piers and columns at five-footway:

The concept of alternation on the church can be seen in the following historic building.



FRANCE, NORMANDY, JUMIEGES ABBEY

(c) Column type at Five-footway

The circular columns at the five-footway were of a Norman origin such as the cushion capital, found at: -

Speyer (Germany), Speyer Cathedral (1030-61, Romanesque),
Winchester (England), Winchester Cathedral (1079-1093, Romanesque -Norman),
Durham (England), Durham Cathedral (1093-1133, Romanesque -Norman),
Cambridge (England), St Sepulcre Church

Five-footway

The church respects the streetscape of the existing houses built prior to 1924 by incorporating a five-footway which connects with the existing five-footway of the shophouses along Telok Ayer Street.

Column type at five-footway:

The circular columns at five-footway were of a Norman origin such as the cushion capital as shown below.



GERMANY, SPEYER, SPEYER CATHEDRAL.

Architectural significance and Development

The architectural form of a church was developed in the European continent and other Christian countries over thousands of years. Its beginning started as far as the 4th Century during the reign of Constantine, the first Christian Roman Emperor in Constantinople (now Istanbul).

There are many variations to Church Architecture and this vary not only with time but with locality. Examples of the Historical Church Architecture are:

Early Christian	(4 th Century)
Byzantine	(6 th Century)
Romanesque	(11 th Century)
Gothic	(12 th – 15 th Century)
Renaissance	(16 th Century)
Baroque	(16 th – 19 th Century)

Preservation Guidelines

Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church was preserved as a National Monument in March 1989 under the Singapore Government's Preservation order with the Preservation Guidelines prepared by Urban Redevelopment Authority for the restoration of the church building to its original design, features and characters.

Objectives of Preservation Guidelines

To undertake preservation and restoration works on a gazetted monument in a systematic manner, the objectives of the preservation guidelines are:

- To establish the historical / architectural merits and the original character of the building;
- To establish the changes made to the building over the years;
- To establish the extent of restoration works done and the period within which they were carried out;
- To establish the extent of restoration works that are further required to be carried out to the building so as to make it worthy of its status as a national monument;
- To ensure that all future restoration works carried out will meet the stipulated guidelines and standards in the report.

Principles and Standards

All the principles and standards as indicated in the booklet entitled 'Principles and Standards for Preservation and Conservation in Singapore' should be observed in the preservation and restoration of the church.

The types of materials used are:

- Natural colour, unglazed, V-profile clay tiles;
- Timber for windows and doors;
- Textured and coloured glass panes for the doors and windows;
- Marble-chip terrazzo floor finish for the five-footway and entrance foyer.

The restoration architect, in undertaking preservation and restoration works, should adhere to the various cleaning and consolidation standards for each of the material type.

All the principles and standards as indicated in the specific Preservation Guidelines by the Preservation of Monument Boards have been observed and the church building is restored according to the following orders:-

(1) The Principles of Preservation and Conservation

The fundamental principles applicable to all monuments and conservation buildings irrespective of scale and complexity are maximum RETENTION, sensitive RESTORATION and careful REPAIR – the three 'R's.

(2) The Practice of Preservation and Conservation

Preservation and conservation works for the church building are carried out at seven levels. The number of levels required varies from project to project in order of complexity. They are:-

- Maintaining the essential character of the building
- Preventing further deterioration
- Consolidating the structure & material of the building
- Restoring the building to its original design and material
- Rehabilitating the building without destroying its character
- Replacing missing significant features of the building
- Rebuilding severely damaged parts of the building

(3) Preferred "Top-Down" with Sequence

The preferred sequence for restoring a building is to start from the top (roof) downwards with the floor and roof retained. This method will ensure that:

- The building remains structurally stable
- Work can proceed under all weather conditions
- Deterioration due to weather is minimized

General Planning Concept

A. Existing Building Characteristics

The Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church is a typical example of Singapore Eclecticism, an Architectural Pot-Purri with features reflecting the thoughts and aspirations of its original founders and the times that they lived in. Some of more prominent features include:

- A Chinese Pavilion on the rooftop with its upturned eaves reflecting its Chinese origins
- The column/beam sconce details reflecting the prevailing Art Deco of the 1920's
- External Verandah with its colonnade of alternating columns and piers as an adaptable of the five-footway streetscape connecting the church with the existing five-footway of the Telok Ayer Shophouses.

B. Design Concept

The Design Concepts revolve around:

- Restoring the building to its original character and splendor. This entailed undertaking a comprehensive study of the original character of the church.

- Ensuring that the additional rear building annex integrated with the existing one.
- Upgrade the building to meet the requirements of its existing congregation. It was noted that changes had been made to the original structure between 1923 and the present to meet the changing needs of its members. These changes were preserved, adapted or demolished on a selective basis.

C. Conservation Features

Among the more salient features of the reconstruction are:-

- **Fourth Storey**
 - i. De-link the new extension from the Pavilion. Lower the ridge of the extension below the eave soffit of the later so that the Pavilion appears free standing and remains the most prominent feature of the elevation.
 - ii. Conceal all the air-con condensers within the building to free the roof and prevent them from appearing obtrusively either from an elevational or bird's-eye point of view.
 - iii. Replace the Fourth Storey slab owing to its overstressed condition.
 - iv. The entire Pavilion roof truss was taken down, inspected for termite infestation, replaced where applicable and reinstalled.
- **Third Storey**
 - i. Creation of a multi-purpose hall from an original double loaded narrow corridor.
 - ii. Retaining the enclosed balconies on the South and West Elevation and convert into classrooms.
- **Second Storey**
 - i. Removal of the 3 arches and backdrop at the pulpit to reveal the sconce details and the original timber panels with the calligraphic characters. These were covered with gold leaf.
 - ii. Reconstructing and enhancing the mezzanine with the new railings and balusters. The existing mezzanine floor was removed and changed into reinforced concrete slab and steel beams.
 - iii. Retention of the existing column beam sconce details highlighted with uplighters.
- **First Storey**
 - i. Retention of the 2 'staircase cores' in their original alignment and design.
 - ii. Proposing a mezzanine on the First Storey to allow more space for the general and pastoral offices.
 - iii. Recreating the original social hall with a new backdrop.

- iv. New lift with access for the handicapped. A hydraulic lift was introduced to avoid the protrusion of a motor room in the roof elevation.
- v. Absence of false ceiling to reveal the beam, column and sconce details. This applies to the Second Storey as well.

- Exterior

- i. Repetition of the circular window details on the East Elevation onto the West Elevation.
- ii. Repetition of the existing cast iron rain water downpipe on the East Elevation onto the West Elevation with their unique scoop and architectural details.
- iii. Repetition of the tile awning detail with brick sconce on the South Elevation.
- iv. Retention of the original doors and window openings on the original North Elevation onto the existing wall. The original External Elevation has been internalized, retained and preserved for posterity.
- v. Repetition of the original pilasters from the First and Third Storey verandah.

During the restoration process, it was found that the windows at one end of the sanctuary on the Second Storey were sealed up, and a timber backdrop with arches added. These were removed to reveal the original timber windows with four Chinese Characters, "Shang Di Shi Ai" which means "God is Love".

They were then carefully restored. The double loaded corridors on the Third Storey were removed, and the space restored to its original spatial quality.

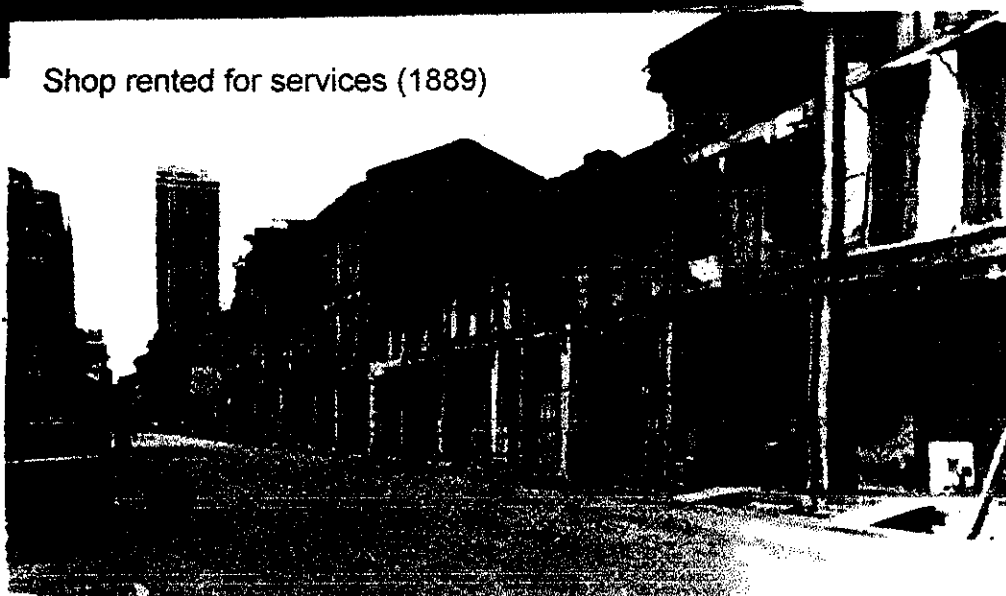
The Fourth Storey was found to be a later addition as its construction details were different from those of the other storeys. This addition was re-constructed into a choir room to harmonise with the original building. Ironmongery, fans and lightings were sourced and added to recapture the old charm of the monument.

In 1889, the dispensary that served as an evangelistic centre.



一八八九年在直落亞逸街一間店屋開設藥房并作佈道工作

Shop rented for services (1889)



一八八九年八月在松柏街租用店屋作聖堂



一九一三年在本堂原址所建築最初之會所

In 1913, the congregation worshipped in this temporary building on their own church site.

Some of the Pastors & Bible Women Of Telok Ayer Chinese Methodist Church



Dr Rev Lim Poh Chin
1918-1924



Rev M Timothy Huang
1926-1928



Rev C E Fang
1930-1932



Rev Hong Han Keng
1933-1961



(Mdm Png Chi Giok)
1946-1950



(Mdm Lee Pek Soat)
1971-1974



Rev C H Fang
1961-1978



Rev Lim Chee Beng
1979-1984

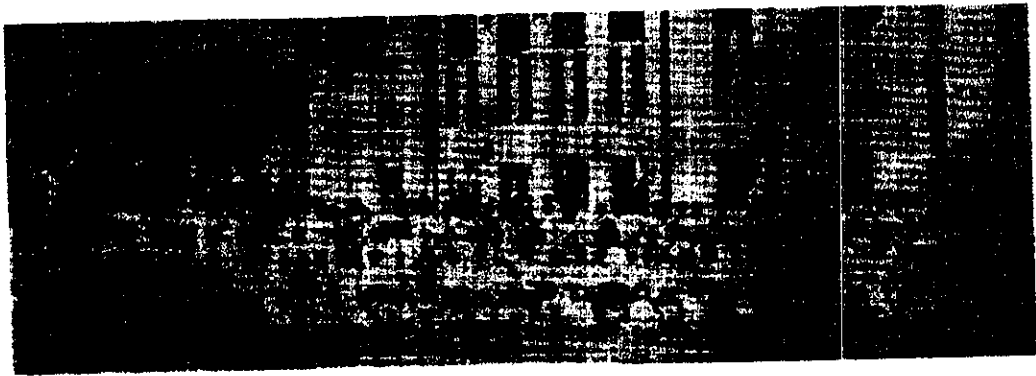


Rev See Ping Eik
1986-Present

A Great Crusade in the 1930's



Dr John Sung



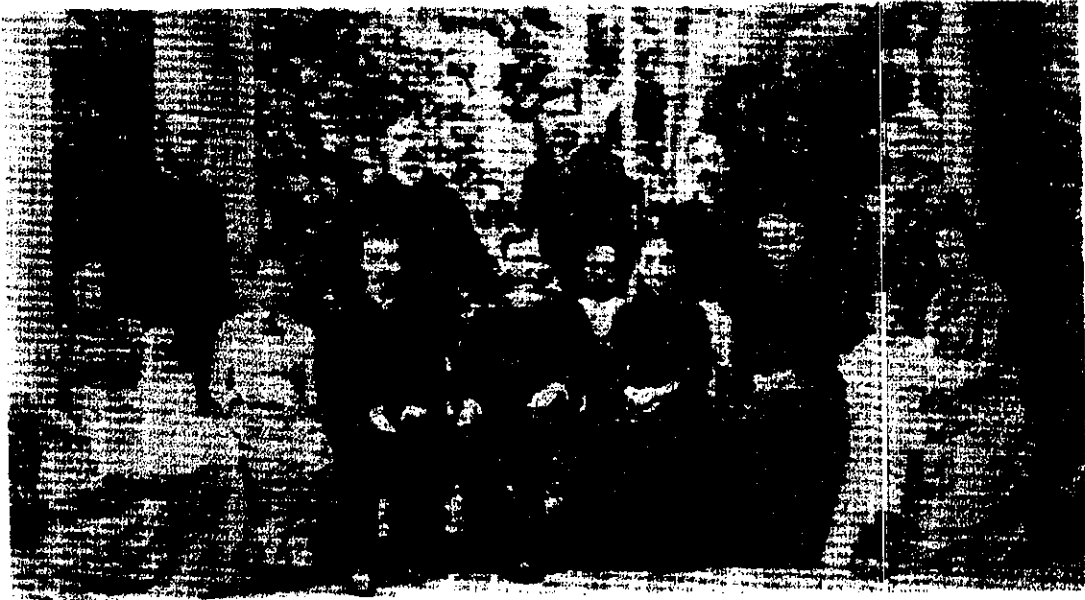
Part of the Congregation outside Telok Ayer Church

FIRST CONFERENCE PICTURE



Malaysia Chinese Mission Conference met at Telok Ayer Church, Singapore
January 14th to 20th 1937 – Malaysia Message

Our Founder – Dr Benjamin F. West



FIRST ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MALAYSIA MISSION, APRIL 1889
Standing : Munson, Brewster, Alex Fox, Polglase and Dr West
Seating : Mrs Munson, Miss Betty, Oldham, Thoburn, Mrs Oldham,
Miss Blackmore, Mrs West & son Harry

In Peneng



Dr. B. F West and Mrs West of Singapore and Peneng

Church Building constructed in 1924



Picture taken in 1930

Old Church Building before Renovation



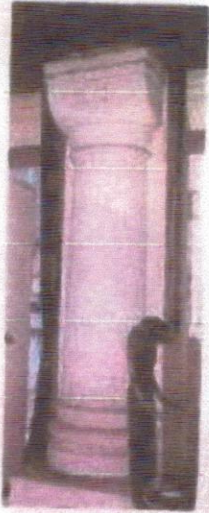
1992



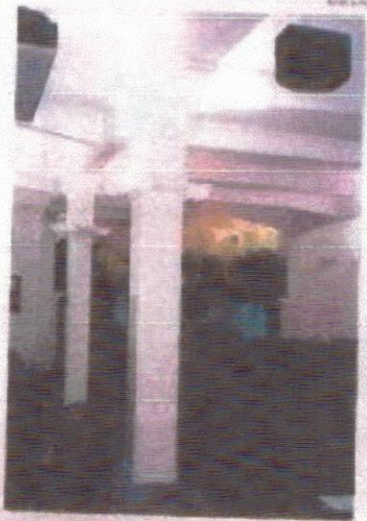
Second Storey Sanctuary Hall



DETAIL OF EXPOSED TRUSS AT BALCONY



DETAIL OF COLUMN AT BALCONY



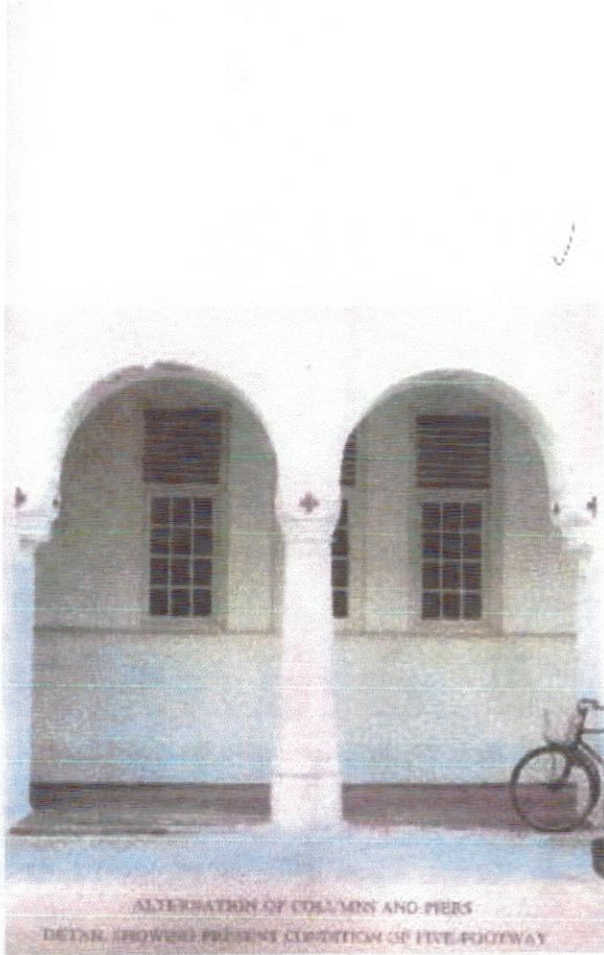
DETAIL OF COLUMNS



DETAIL OF BALCONY WITH STAIR CASE



DETAIL OF MARBLE CHIP TERRAZZO



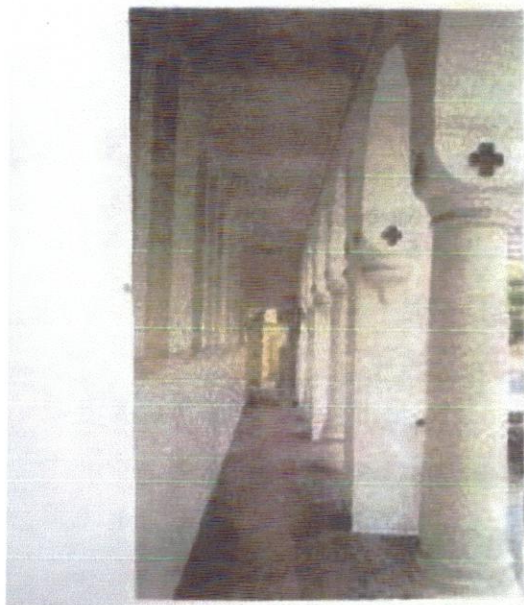
ALTERATION OF COLUMNS AND PIERS
DETAIL SHOWS PRESENT CONDITION OF FIVE-FOOTWAY



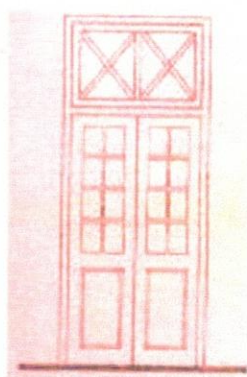
DETAIL OF COLUMN-BEAM JOINT



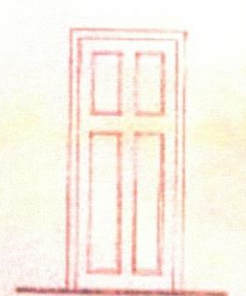
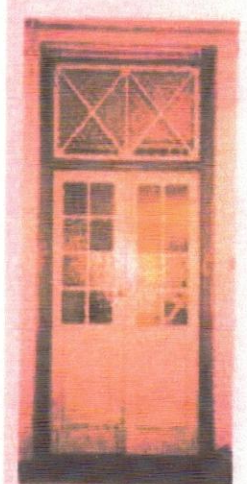
Detail of beams



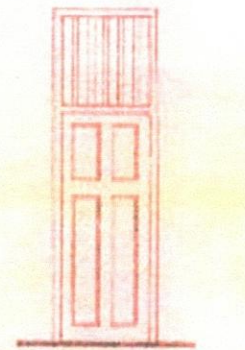
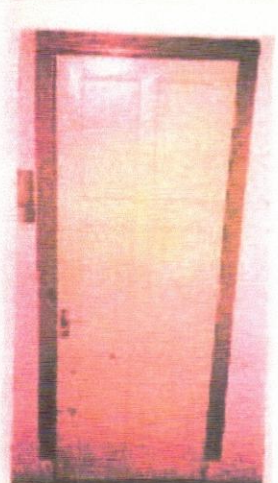
CANOPY AT FIVE-FOOTWAY



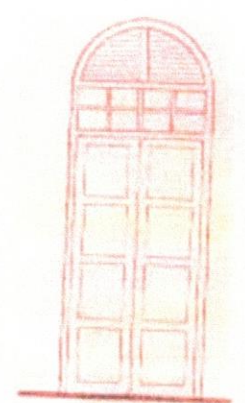
DOOR TYPE 1



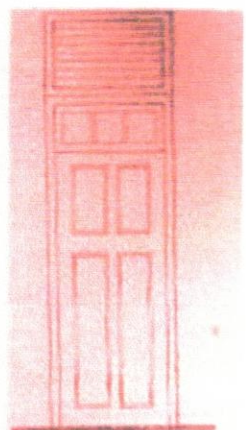
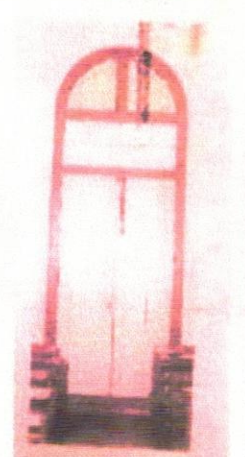
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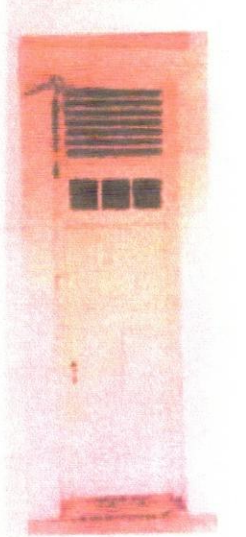
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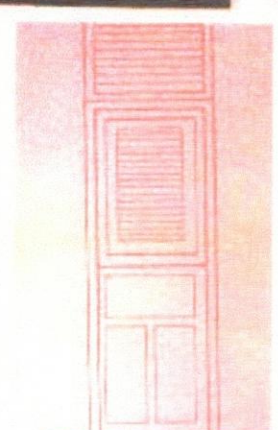
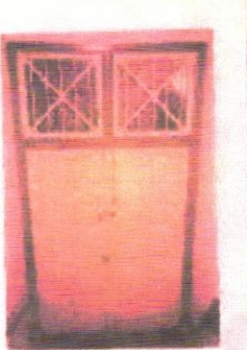
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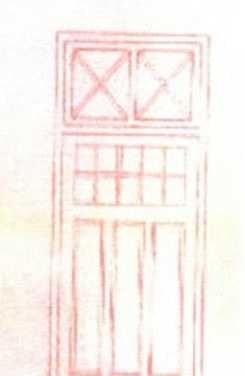
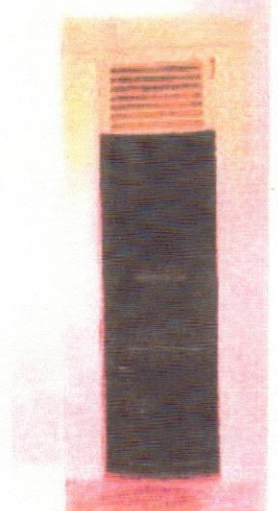
DOOR TYPE 12



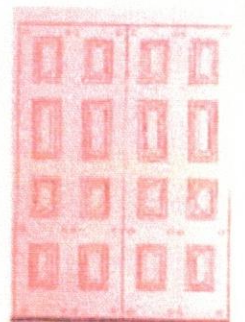
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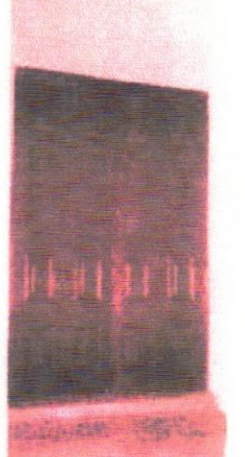
DOOR TYPE 14



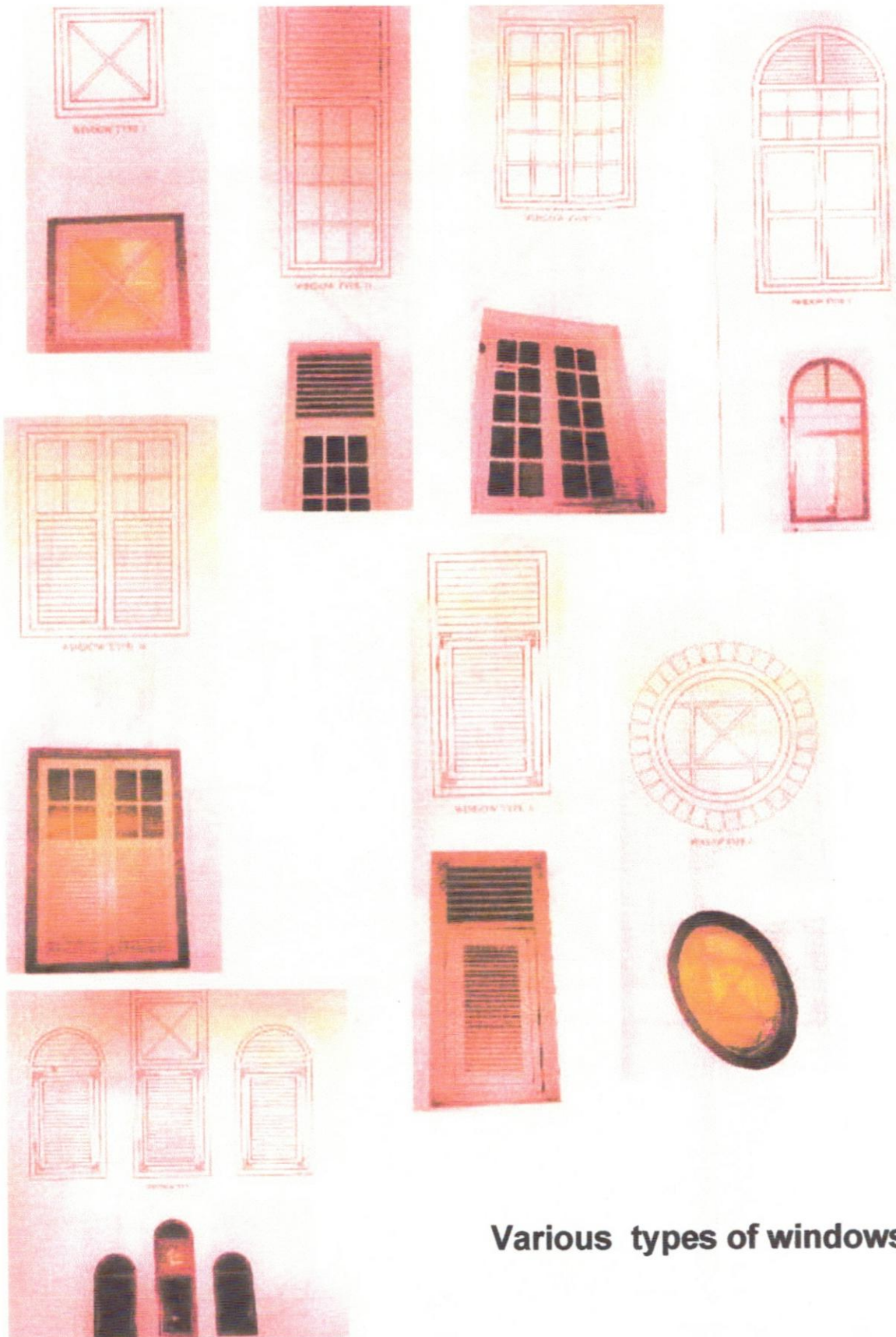
DOOR TYPE 15



DOOR TYPE 16

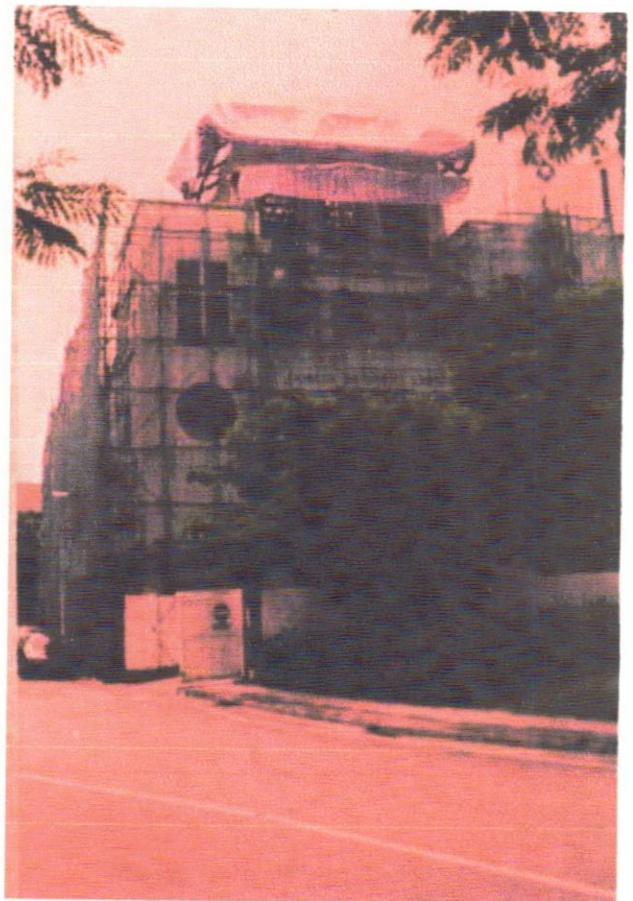
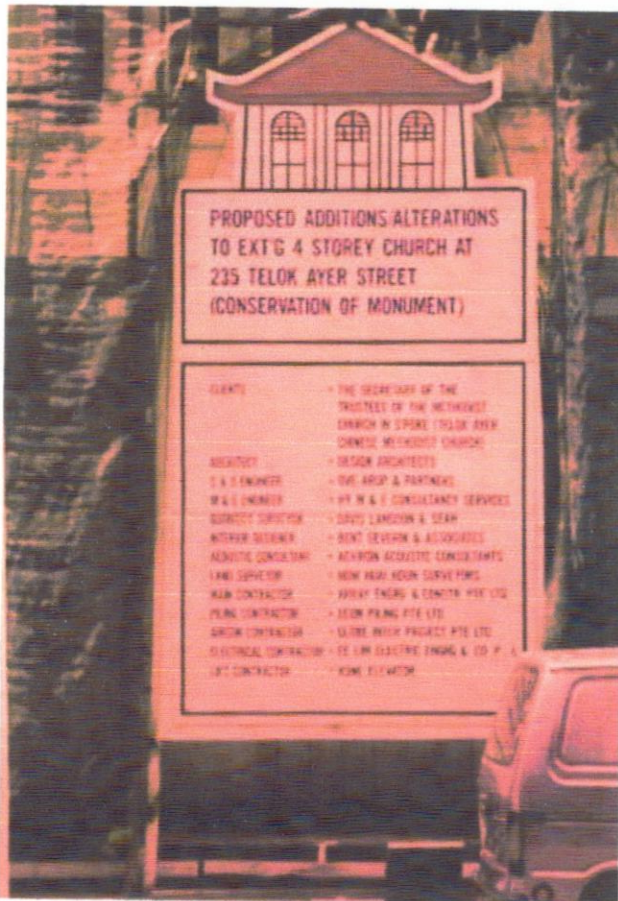


Various types of doors



Various types of windows

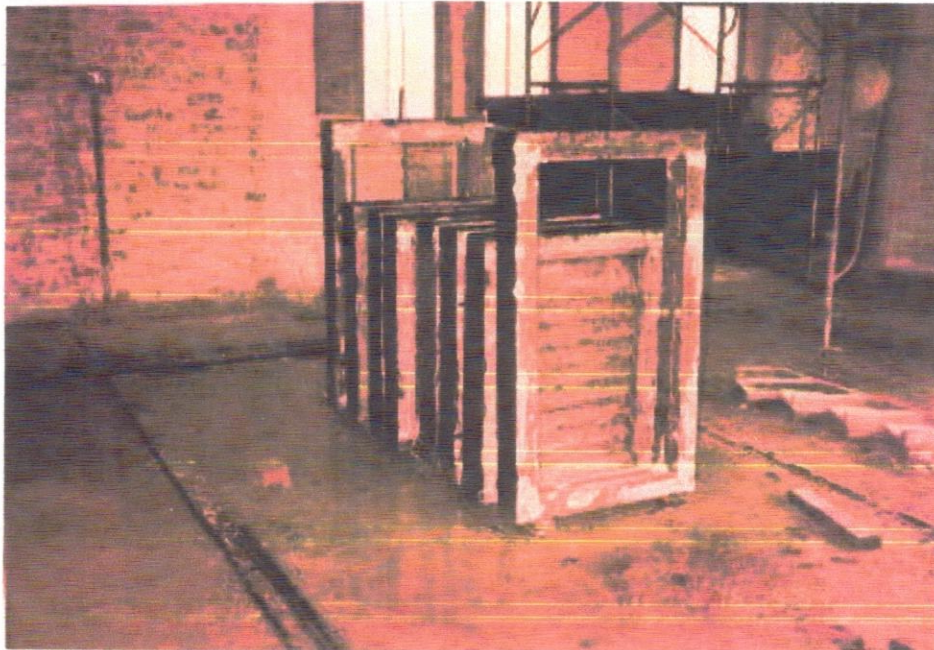
Restoration in Progress 1994



Restoration in Progress 1994

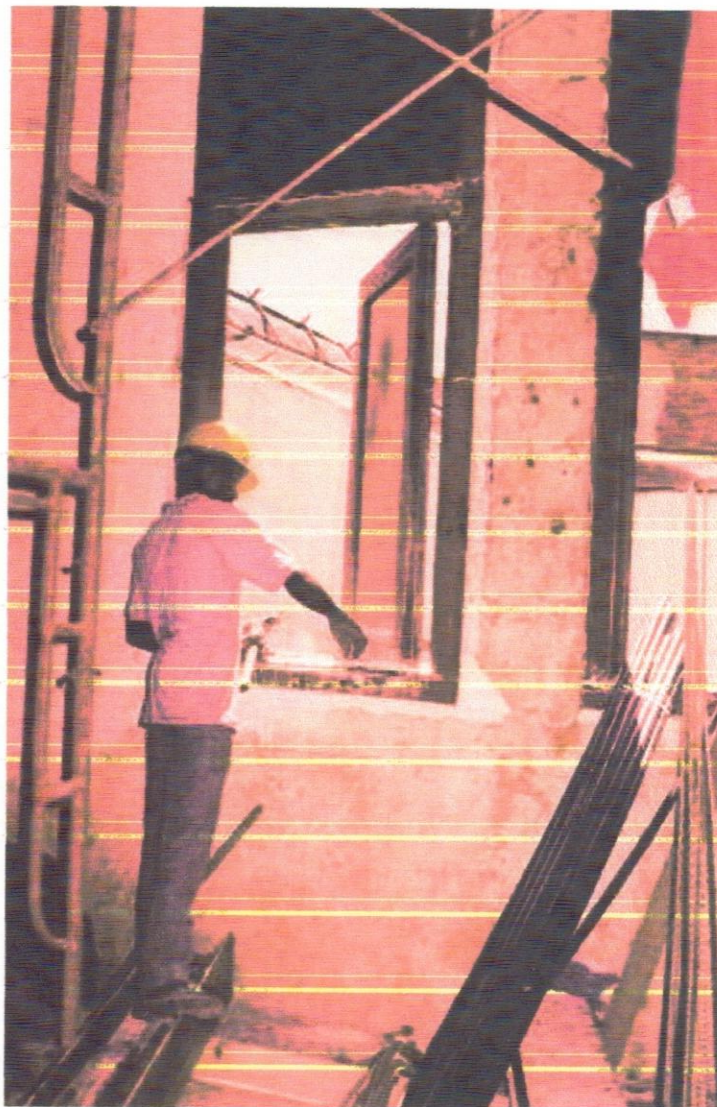


Hacking off and reconstruct Fourth Storey roof slab structure



Timber windows retained for repairs

Restoration in Progress 1994 - continued



Repair timber window

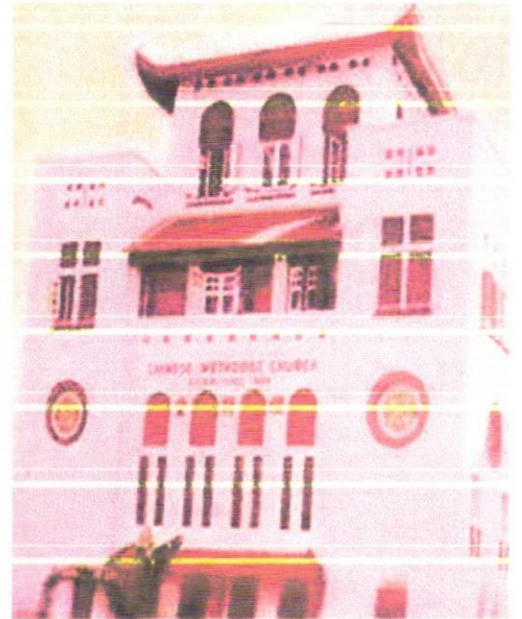


Timber Backdrop removed and revealed Calligraphic character "Shang Di Shi Ai" – God is Love

New Church Building after Restoration 1996



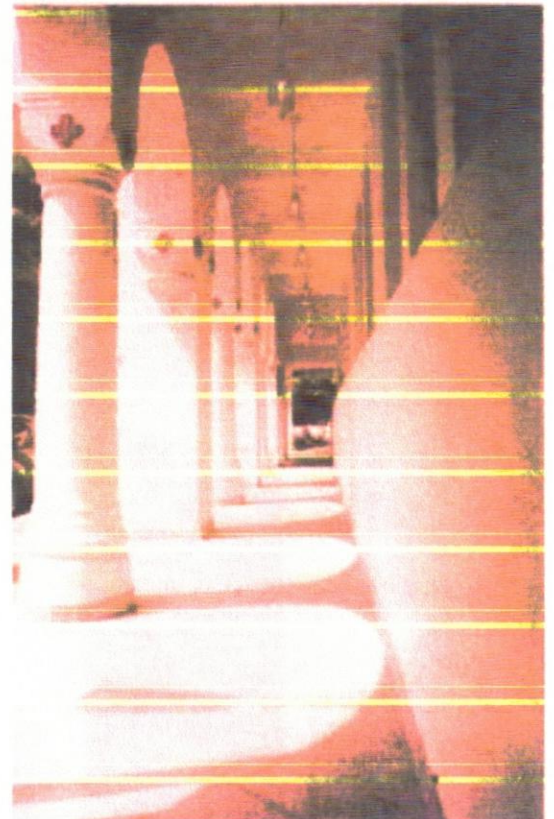
Second floor Sanctuary



Restored Building Facade South Elevation



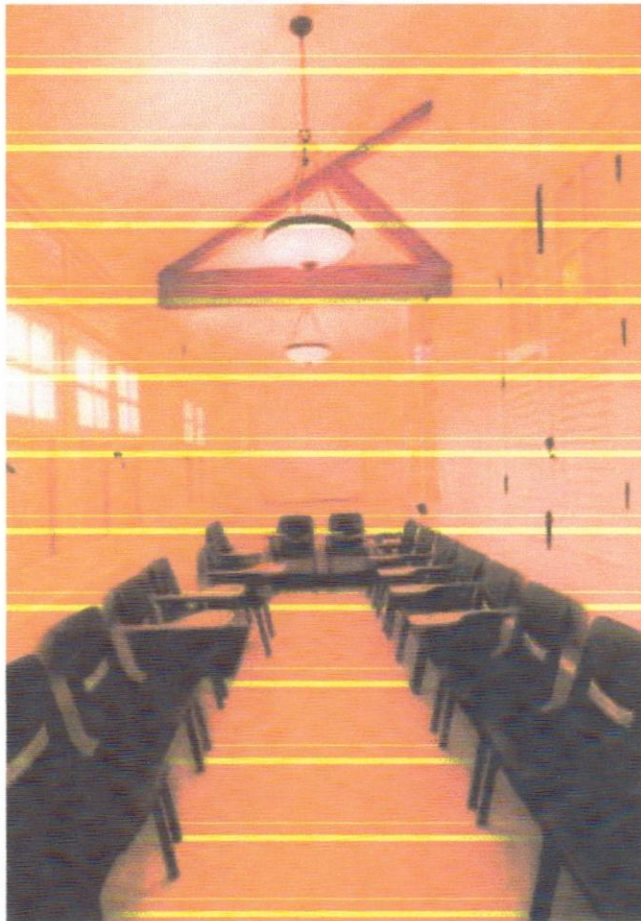
Chinese Pavilion with upturned roof eaves



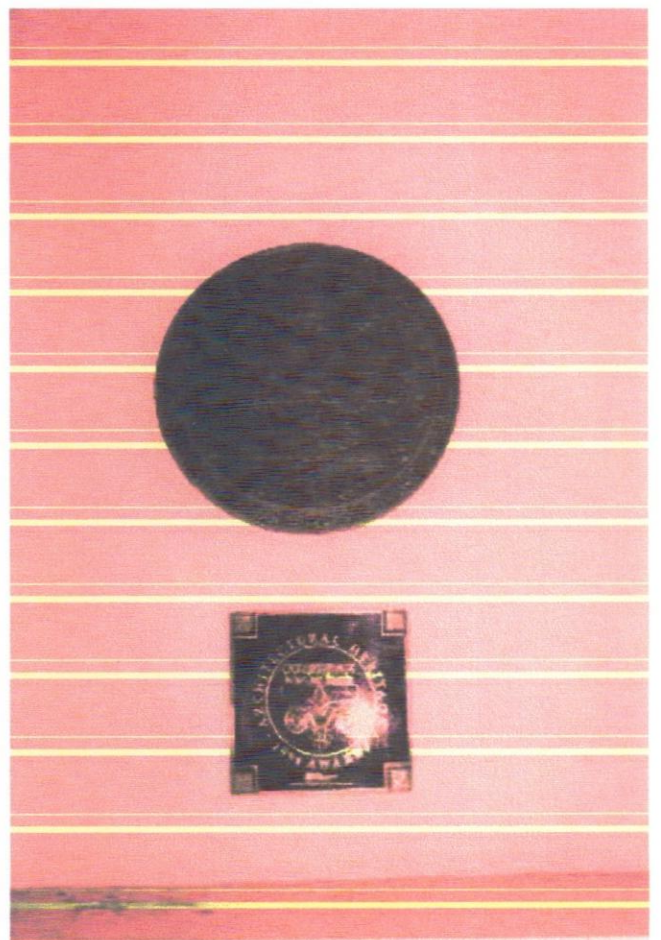
Alternation of piers and column at the five-footway



Iron Gate with church logo



Detail of Exposed Truss and antique pendant light at Second Floor Balcony



Architectural Heritage 1996 Award