

St Anthony's Church



BUILDING

Date: 1558
Location: Largo de Santo Antonio, Macao
Promoter / Owner: -
Contractor:-
Funding / Cost: -
Area: Around 200 meters square
Current state: St. Anthony's Church in Macau is a well-preserved historic site that attracts tourists with its cultural significance, beautiful architecture, and vibrant surrounding area.

CONSTRUCTION

MATERIALS & SYSTEMS

The church was first built in 1558 using thatch and bamboo. It was rebuilt in stone by 1638 and underwent further renovations in 1810 and 1874, reaching its current form in 1930. Inside, the church features a brick and wood structure with oval wooden vaults and a sloped roof. The layout includes a rectangular central hall with walls divided by pilasters. The interior is painted yellow and adorned with white, highlighted by a grand white main altar, large chandeliers, and colorful stained-glass windows, creating a romantic atmosphere. After surviving three fires, the church was rebuilt in 1875, and its stone exterior was finished in 1930. The front facade is in neoclassical style, while the altar showcases Baroque design with intricate details. At the center is a statue of Jesus on the cross, featuring the Jesuit logo "IHS." Small prayer rooms in the hall have exquisite decorations, and the stained-glass windows and choir entrance screens display geometric patterns, adding a modern touch to the church.

WORKERS & SKILLS

St. Anthony's Church was built and maintained by a variety of skilled workers. Architects designed the layout, ensuring beauty and stability. Stonemasons constructed the stone walls, while carpenters built the wooden structures, including the roof. Painters added yellow and white paint, enhancing the church's charm. Glaziers created stained glass windows for color, and restoration experts repaired fire damage, keeping the church historically accurate.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

St. Anthony's Church is one of the three ancient Catholic churches in Macau, originally built in the 15th century as a Jesuit station. It became famous for hosting many Portuguese weddings, where couples wore new white robes and carried flowers, filling the church with beauty. The local Chinese community calls this area "Freguesia de Santo Antonio." The original church was a simple thatched chapel, but like many early churches in Macau, it was damaged by fires. The church is known as the "Church that Attracts Fire." According to an inscription at its entrance, the church was first built in 1558, rebuilt in 1638, destroyed in 1809, rebuilt in 1810, then destroyed again in 1874, and rebuilt in 1875. The fire in 1874 was particularly memorable because it was caused by thunder and lightning. This event is remembered each year on September 22 with the "Scourge Festival," during which people carry the statue of St. Anthony in a parade. In 1930, the bell tower and main facade were rebuilt, and the church's interior was renovated in 1951 and 1953, especially the altar. Today, repairs focus on the walls, portraits of saints, and structural elements to preserve its historical significance.

Student Name – Daniel

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