

Bar blues as police order closure

By MARK HUGHES

ASIA'S finest are hunting for a new watering hole after one of their favourite bars was closed on the recommendation of colleagues.

The Pussy Cat, as synonymous with Wan Chai as Suzy Wong and a magnet for off-duty police, was ordered to pull down its Fenwick Street shutters at midnight last Thursday after losing a bitter row with the licensing authorities. Wan Chai police recommended the closure after claiming there had been an inordinate number of fights at the premises.

But regulars at the club, including many senior police officers, said it was one of the safest places to drink in Hong Kong.

The Pussy Cat had been a part of the Wan Chai night club scene since 1966. It was previously located at the site now occupied by the Evergreen Hotel, moving to its last premises in August 1986.

Last week, manager Tony Law complained it was the end of an era, but vowed to appeal against the closure order.

"It was a favourite venue for police, locals, the military. Between 5 pm and 9 pm dozens of senior police officers would come down here. They would even come over from Kowloon side.

"We can't just let it close. We will appeal against the decision."

Mr Law said there had been six fights in the past year but none had been too serious and that the police had always been called promptly.

"I really don't know why they are picking on us. Thirty-three people have now lost their jobs."

On its final night there were at least 15 off-duty policemen present.