

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple – Quarters of the Temple Keepers & Temple Office Wai Tsuen Road, Tsuen Wan

Tin Hau Temple (天后宮) in Wai Tsuen Road (蕙荃路), Tsuen Wan, was built along the waterfront facing the sea in the 26th year of the Kangxi reign (康熙, 1721) of the Qing (清) dynasty by villagers of the area for the worship of Tin Hau (Sea Goddess). Due to rapid development leading to much reclamation after the Second World War, the temple is now in the central part of the town surrounded by high-rise buildings. An annex was added on each side of the temple. The left one is called Yi Yung Tsz (義勇祠) to commemorate 17 villagers who died for protecting the area against the invasion of villagers from Shing Mun Pat Heung (城門八鄉) which lasted for three years starting from the 1st year of Tongzhi reign (同治, 1862). The temple was also used by Chuen On Kuk (全安局), a local security organization, for discussing the affairs of Tsuen Wan Market and solving disputes among local villagers.

**Historical
Interest**

The temple is a Qing vernacular building having two halls with one annex added to its right and left, each has its own entrance and can be entered through the open courtyard between the halls. A modern *pai lou* (牌樓) was built in front of the temple in a 1983 renovation. The pitched-roof temple has a recessed entrance with granite blocks for its bases and door frames. The greenbrick walls of the temple have been plastered, some portions of them painted with false brick lines. The most exquisite decorations are the Shiwan (石灣) ceramic opera figurines, a pearl and geometric patterns on the main ridge. Its fascia boards and wall friezes are with carvings and plastered mouldings of landscape, flowers-and-plants, figures, etc.

**Architectural
Merit**

Two V-shaped separate buildings are later added to its front. The left one is the keepers' quarters. Its design is complementary to the temple building. The right one is the temple's office.

It is a rare temple which has encountered lengthy changes of Tsuen Wan.

Rarity

It is a temple with moderate built heritage value. The temple was renovated in 1846, 1900, 1918, 1976, 1977, 1983 and 1994. The later added structures and features to a certain degree minimize its authenticity.

**Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity**

The temple, quarters of the temple keepers and the temple's office are inter-related having their own group value. *Group Value*

Since the 1920s the annexes of the temple had been used as classrooms for the Tsuen Wan Public School (荃灣公學) until the 1970s. Other than the Tin Hau Festival (天后誕), at the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes (春秋二祭), the temple will be celebrated with offerings make to the Tin Hau. *Social Value, & Local Interest*