

Historic Building Appraisal
Pat Heung Temple
Sheung Tsuen, Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Pat Heung Temple (八鄉古廟) is located in Pat Heung Sheung Tsuen (八鄉上村) of Yuen Long. As the main deity is Kwun Yam (觀音), the temple is also called Pat Heung Kwun Yam Temple (八鄉觀音廟). The temple was constructed before 1861 as a renovation tablet has the dating inscribed. It was built by the Pat Heung villagers with the land rent paid to the Kam Tin Tangs. The temple had a Chung Ching Tsz (忠精祠, hero shrine) to commemorate those villagers who died in inter-village battles, mainly those in Kam Tin in around the Qianlong (乾隆, A.D. 1736-1795) reign of the Qing dynasty. The temple is managed by a committee named Tung Yik Tong (同益堂) of many Pat Heung villages including Sheung Tsuen (上村), Yuen Kong (元崗), Wang Toi Shan (橫台山) and Ha Che (下峯). *Historical Interest*

The temple is a Qing vernacular building having a plan of three-bay -two-hall-one-courtyard in the middle and a side chamber of two-hall-one courtyard to the left and right. Though the external green brick walls have been plastered, the timber brackets of the pitched roofs retained. The main ridge is decorated with moulding of geometric patterns and ‘two dragons competing a pearl’. Gable friezes and wall friezes are with relief mouldings and paintings of flowers-and-birds, figurines, landscape motifs. The Shiwan (石灣) figurines installed at the brackets are the most unique relic of the temple. *Architectural Merit*

It is a temple of considerable rarity value reflecting a part of the history of Pat Heung. *Rarity*

It is a medium size temple having considerable built heritage value. At least its structure, features and fixtures have not been greatly altered or replaced. *Built Heritage*

Tablets of the temples have inscriptions showing renovations held in 1861, 1887, 1963 and 1986. Other than contributions from Pat Heung villagers, much were made by those moved to San Francisco and Hawaii and their relatives in local and mainland villages. A major renovation in 1986 costing some \$300,000 was a successful one capable to keep its authenticity. *Value & Authenticity*

During Kwun Yam Festival (觀音誕) on the 19th day of the second lunar month, celebrations including Cantonese opera performances will be held in front of the temple. During Da Chiu rituals in Kam Tin and Lin Fa Tei (蓮花地), held every ten years, the villagers would have the deities of the temple invited to ‘participate’ in the celebrations. Organized group worships to the temple with basin meals served are *Social Value, & Local Interest*

popular in recent years.