

Historic Building Appraisal
Shui Yuet Temple
No. 181 Main Street, Ap Lei Chau

Constructed on rocks of a slope facing the sea to the north-east, the Shui Yuet Temple (水月宮) in Ap Lei Chau (鴨脷洲) is a small temple for the worship of Kwun Yam (觀音) built around 1866 by the fishing community of the area according to the local elders. It is close to the seashore convenient for the fishermen to make tribute to their deity. Other deities including Kwun Tai (關帝), Chai Tin Tai Shing (齊天大聖), Wong Tai Sin (黃大仙), Buddha and others are also worshipped in the temple. Side halls for selling of joss-sticks and paper offerings were built on either side of the main building in later years. The temple has been managed by the Chinese Temples Committee since 1930 with the help of the Ap Lei Chau Kaifong Association (鴨脷洲街坊福利會).

***Historical
Interest***

The temple is a Qing (清) vernacular building of a two-hall plan. An open courtyard should be between the entrance and main halls but later covered over with a vault roof (捲棚式簷頂). A counter for the selling of joss sticks on its right and a keeper's quarters with kitchen on its left were later added. The former is with half bow-shaped gables (拉弓牆) and the latter is with descending ridge. The building was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Recent renovations have covered the roofs with ceramic green tiles. Its external wall is plastered and internal walls with imitation brick lines. A concrete beam is added under the roof of the front hall to strengthen the structure. The statue of Tin Hau is in the middle of the altar at the end wall of the main hall with some other deities beside it for worship. A colourful finely carved wooden *caimen* (彩門) made in 1911 is hanged under the eave. Its ridges are with geometric mouldings and a fascia board under the eave at the entrance is with flowers and plants carvings.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a Kwun Yam temple to remind the fishing settlement of Ap Lei Chau.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The temple was renovated in 1891, 1914 and 1995 with some other unknown ones. Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

Fishermen were the major patron worshippers of the temple. Starting from the redevelopment of Ap Lei Chau in the 1980s, it is no longer a fishing village. Indigenous villagers have moved out of the area. The number of worshippers has declined. The festival of Kwun Yam has four days including the 19th of the second, sixth, ninth and eleventh lunar months to celebrate her birth, ordination, deification and assumption as a sea-goddess.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*