

Historic Building Appraisal

Kai Choi School and Hip Tin Temple

Kuk Po, Luk Keng

Kai Choi School (啓才學校) and Hip Tin Temple (協天宮) are allocated in a block of building in San Uk Tsuen (新屋村) village of Kuk Po (谷埔), east of Pat Sin Leng (八仙嶺). The building was constructed in 1931 to replace the old school building in another village, Lo Wai (老圍), in Kuk Po. The construction fee of the school was subsidized by the government and the temple was paid by the villagers. The school had multi-class system providing primary education for children in Kuk Po villages in its three classrooms. A new annex of school building was added next to the school premises. In the 1970s there were some 80 students in the school. It was closed in 1993 due to lack of students. Its registration was cancelled in 2002. The Temple on the left bay on the ground floor of the building is for the worship of Kwan Tai (關帝). It is a one-hall temple without any decoration. A name board is above its doorway. Its altar at the far end of the wall houses a tablet of the deity with an offering table in its front.

***Historical
Interest***

The school is a two-storey building of Chinese Eclectic style blending Qing vernacular and western features making use of Chinese and western building materials. The ground and upper floors of the building are both with three bays. The temple only occupies the left bay of the building on the ground floor. The middle bay on the ground floor was the staff room of the school whilst the rest were its classrooms. The front façade of the building are with an open verandah on the ground floor and a balcony on the upper floor both colonnaded with arched openings and square columns. Vase-shaped green ceramic balustrades are fencing the balcony. It is constructed of green bricks, stone rubbles and cement with its wall and columns to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and ceramic tiles. Timber boards and joists are for the upper flooring. The flooring of the verandah and balcony are with reinforced concrete slabs. The building is plastered. A parapet above the flat-roofed balcony has the name of the school plastered in the middle.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a 1931 school building to witness the education of the villagers in Kuk Po.

Rarity

The building of the 1930s has considerable built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The school is in good condition though it has not been properly maintained.

Authenticity

It has group value with a number of ancestral halls in the area.

Group Value

Other than its education functions, the school was a venue for villagers to deal with their village affairs. Nearly every family of the villages in Kuk Po had contributed in the building of the school. A *she* (沙) festival was organized in the temple with Tai Wong Pak Kung (大王伯公) and Kwan Tai to take part in the festival. It was not held after the Second World War. The deity was also invited to the Da Chiu (打醮) held in Fung Hang (鳳坑) village on the northern shore of Sha Tau Kok Hoi (沙頭角海).

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*