

Historic Building Appraisal
Kwan Tai Temple and Kwun Yam Temple
No. 8 Shau Kei Wan Road, Shau Kei Wan, Hong Kong

Six temples were built between 1969 and 1993 on a flattened hilltop of Shau Kei Wan Road (筲箕灣道) by the Shau Kei Wan Kaifong Advancement Association (筲箕灣街坊福利促進會). They include a Fuk Tak Temple (福德祠), a Kwan Tai Temple (關帝廟), a Kwun Yam Temple (觀音廟), a Hung Shing Temple (洪聖古廟), a Cheung Fei Temple (張飛廟) and a Lau Bei Temple (劉備廟). The first one (i.e. Fuk Tak Temple) having a history of over 100 years was originally at the eastern end of Shau Kei Wan Road. It was moved to Chai Wan Road in the 1930s. After the Second World War, it was moved to the present site due to development by the government.

*Historical
Interest*

Kwan Tai Temple and **Kwun Yam Temple** are in the southern end of the site standing side by side and sharing a common wall. The former was built in 1976 and the latter in 1971. Kwan Tai deity was originally enshrined in Kwun Yam Temple. At the request of local residents, the Shau Kei Wan Kaifong Advancement Association built a separate temple for the worshipping of Kwan Tai.

The entrances of the two temples are accessed through a separate flight of staircases. The temples are Chinese vernacular buildings constructed of concrete. They are having a common flat roof with a descending green roof at their entrances. The external and internal walls are covered with white ceramic tiles and so are the floors with grey tiles. The red-faced Kwan Tai statue is sitting in the main altar with some other smaller statues at the side altars of his temple. The statue of the Kwun Yam is in the middle of the altar at the end wall of the temple. The names of the temples are above the doorways flanked with wall friezes of flowers, plants, birds and landscape paintings. Kwan Tai's model horse 'Red Rabbit (赤兔)' is standing by the doorway. An incense burner in the shape of a ding (鼎) is in front of the staircases of the temples.

*Architectural
Merit*

The temples bear witness to the historical development of Shau Kei Wan, which was the second largest village in Hong Kong Island in 1841, then having a population of 1,200. Most of the fishing folks were Hakkas (客家) and Tankas (蛋家).

Rarity

The temples probably have some heritage value. The authenticity of the temples is affected by the recent modernized renovation.

*Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The temples are managed by the Shau Kei Wan Kaifong Advancement Association established in 1950. The Association has the function to solve the problems for local residents. The Nan On Fong Association (南安坊坊眾會) under its administration handles daily affairs to assist the locals. The Association built the temples for the unification of the kaifongs like the brotherhood of Lau Bei (劉備), Kwan Yu (關羽) and Cheung Fei (張飛). The busiest time of the Kwan Tai Temple would be his festival on the 24th day of the sixth lunar month and that of the Kwun Yam on the Kwun Yam Je Fu (觀音借庫, Borrowing Treasure from Kwun Yam) on the 26th of the first lunar month and her Festival on the 19th of the second lunar month.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*

The six temples are having related group value. Other temples such as Shing Wong Temple (城隍廟), Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) and Tam Kung Sin Shing Temple (譚公仙聖廟) can be found the area. In addition to the six temples situated on the site, the temples have a significant place in Shau Kei Wan.

Group Value

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

*Adaptive
Re-use*