

Historic Building Appraisal

Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market

Shek Lung Street, Yau Ma Tei, Kowloon

Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market (油麻地果欄) was built in 1913. *Historical Interest*
 The name of this market was originally Government Vegetables Market (政府蔬菜市場) which sold fruit and vegetables. Fish traders joined in the 1930s. With the opening of Cheung Sha Wan Vegetables Wholesaling Market (長沙灣蔬菜批發市場) and Cheung Sha Wan Fishery Wholesaling Market (長沙灣魚類批發市場) in 1965, the vegetables and fish stalls moved out. From then on the market has operated as a specialist fruit wholesaling market.

Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market consists of a rectangular site packed *Architectural Merit*
 with market stalls and shophouses, one and two stories high. Originally the upper floors were living accommodation but now most upper floors are used for storage and rest rooms. They are largely built of brick or stone with covered pedestrian walkways or arcades formed by projecting balconies of upper floors.

The most distinctive feature of the market is the unusual use of Dutch Colonial gables and pediments, and the carvings of traders' brand names on pediments or tablets of the gables. In spite of their similarity in structural material, width of shop front and storey height, they formed a symbol and characteristic of the market. Along Reclamation Street, the pair of gable walls of the “福和菓菜欄” have pediments carved with a symbol of the sun in the middle. The “秀和欄” at the corner of Waterloo Road and Reclamation Street has a stylish gable wall and a pediment. The gable wall facing Waterloo Road is in angular wave pattern with minor geometric line carvings; while the arching pediment facing Reclamation Street is decorated with short columns on two sides and ball crests. Along Waterloo Road, the gable walls of “和豐欄” and “三喜欄” are also quite interesting.

Although many alterations and additions have been made over the years, no significant alterations which might have seriously diminished the authenticity of the exteriors of the buildings can be identified. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

In the early days, Yau Ma Tei was a small Chinese community and most of the daily activities centred around the Tin Hau Temple. The fruit market played an important role in the development of the district and fostered the growth of Yau Ma Tei as a commercial centre during the early development of Kowloon. It therefore has great social value and local interest as well as group value due to other historic buildings nearby. *Social Value & Local Interest*

Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market is within walking distance of other ***Group Value*** historic buildings, such as the Yau Ma Tei Theatre (油麻地戲院, Grade 2), the former Pumping Station of the Water Supplies Department (舊水務署抽水站, Grade 1), Yau Ma Tei Police Station (油麻地警署, Grade 2), Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟, Grade 1) on Temple Street and Tung Wah Museum (東華三院文物館, Declared Monument).