

Historic Building Appraisal
Cheung Chau Theatre
No. 120 San Hing Back Street, Cheung Chau

Cheung Chau Theatre (長洲戲院) is a two-storey building at No. 120 San Hing Back Street (新興後街) of Cheung Chau (長洲). Inland Lots no. 196 and 197, where the present Cheung Chau Theatre stands, are held on a government lease of 75 years with the right of renewal for 24 years dated from 1 July 1898. The two lots were first leased in 1898 to Wong Wai Tsak Tong (黃維則堂, the management council of a Wong lineage which received an imperial grant from the Qing Government and later British Government to collect land tax on Cheung Chau and the nearby islands) at an annual rent of \$50. The theatre was built in **1931** and owned by a Mr Yiu (姚). The theatre showed both Chinese and western films, one show in the daytime and two at night. Soundless films, i.e. mimes (默片), were shown in the 1930s with interpreters (解畫人) hired to explain the contents to the audience. The theatre was closed down in the 1990s and left vacant. Since 1992, it has been owned by owned by a Wong Wan-leung.

*Historical
Interest*

The theatre is in Chinese Eclectic style constructed of concrete, bricks and rocks with its walls and columns to support its pitch roof of black tiles. The grand entrance is facing the street in the middle of the front façade. Above the entrance is a projected corbel with volute mouldings. At the roof edge of the façade is a pediment of geometric angled design with water pattern and the name of the theatre moulded on it. The masonry plastered finish of the façade is with groove lines resembling a stone look of the building. The reception lobby behind the entrance is with poster display panels and a ticket booth. Behind the lobby are the theatre hall and the screen at the far end. Above the lobby is the projection room. The name of the theatre is moulded at the lintel. The side external walls are cement plastered and the internal walls are painted with cream colour. The lobby is with red ceramic tiles.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is the only theatre building left on the island as the other theatre Golden Dragon Cinema (金龍戲院) was demolished.

Rarity

It has considerable built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

Despite some minor alterations, the authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

The theatre provided entertainment of film shows to the Cheung Chau residents from 1931 to the 1990s except the Japanese Occupation (1941-45). After it was closed down, scenes of a local Cantonese film ‘Just One Look’ (一碌蔗) were shot at the theatre in 2001.

***Social Value,
& Local Interest***

Cheung Chau Theatre, together with the old shops and houses around it, formed a harmonized community in the past. Although the theatre is not in used today, it is still very much recognized by the Islanders. The building facade stands out in the neighbourhood without overwhelming in itself, so it is considered quite integral with its surroundings. Other historical monuments in Cheung Chau which are graded by the Antiquities and Monuments Board include Cheung Chau Government Secondary School (長洲官立中學), Cheung Chau Fong Pin Hospital (長洲方便醫院), Cheung Chau Police Station (長洲警署), Hung Shing Temple (洪聖廟) and Yuk Hui Temple (玉虛宮).

Group Value