

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

No. 72 Ping Che, Ta Kwu Ling

Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Ping Che (坪輦) of Ta Kwu Ling (打鼓嶺) was built by villagers of Ta Kwu Ling area for the worship of Tin Hau in 1756 as a bell donated by one of the villages has the dating inscribed on it. Connected to the left is a Kung So (公所, Communal Hall) and to the right a Yee Tsz (義祠, Hall of Justice). The former was used for office of the Ta Kwu Ling Rural Committee (打鼓嶺鄉事委員會) until 1968. The latter was built to house the soul tablets of those who died for conflicts with the Cheungs (張) of Wong Pui Ling (黃背嶺) in Shenzhen (深圳) in the mid-19th century until 1910s. The temple had once been used by the government for the registration of new born babies of the villages.

**Historical
Interest**

The temple is a two-hall Qing vernacular building over 250 years old. The later added Kung So and Yee Tsz to its left and right are almost of the same depth. The temple and the Yee Tsz are in a traditional hall-courtyard-hall layout whilst the Kung So has been modified for use as a living room with kitchen and washroom facilities. Part of the courtyard of the temple has been covered. The temple has been repaired with modern materials. While leaving timber rafters and purlins to support the pitched roofs, its front walls are plastered and the roofs covered with green ceramic tiles. Its internal floors have been dressed with concrete screeding. The temple has no elaborate decorations which ridge is stilled with new ceramic pearls and *aoyus* (鰲魚). The mouldings and paintings on the wall friezes with floral, unicorn and calligraphy motifs seem to be old features of the temple retained.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a rare Tin Hau temple of local status to reflect the historical development of the northern part of the New Territories.

Rarity

The over 250 years old temple has some built heritage value though its structure modernized

**Built
Heritage
Value**

Numerous renovations have been carried out to the building with a major one in 1976 diminishing much of its authenticity.

Authenticity

During the Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the 23rd day of the third lunar month celebration in the form of Cantonese and Chouzhou (潮州) opera performances, lion dances, Fa Pow (花炮) and others will be held at the temple. Da Chius (打醮) were held every ten years in Ping Che in front of the temple from the 18th century

**Social Value,
& Local
Interest**

until the 1930s. To pay tribute to the martyrs worshipped at the Yee Tsz, a Spring and Autumn Ritual was held on every Spring Equinox (春分, the 20th/21st day of the fifth lunar month) and Autumn Equinox (秋分, the 23rd /24th day of the ninth lunar month) until the beginning of the Second World War. The temple and the Yee Tsz had once used as venue for teaching children in Ping Che until the 1950s.