

Historic Building Appraisal
Ta Kwu Ling Police Station
Ping Che Road, Ta Kwu Ling , New Territories

Ta Kwu Ling Police Station (打鼓嶺警署) was first set up in 1905 to maintain law and order in the northern frontier of Hong Kong. The original police station was a fortified blockhouse established in 1905 and policemen of Indian descent were dispatched there to prevent Chinese bandits from entering Hong Kong. The blockhouse was also connected with the police stations in Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角) and Sheung Shui (上水) by telephone. The present police station building was constructed in **1937** as a two-storey building with an additional floor added in the 1950s. During the period of Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), most of the police stations in Hong Kong were abandoned or occupied by the Japanese. It is believed that Ta Kwu Ling Police Station was no exception. In the post-World War II period, the police station played a significant role in tackling the problem of illegal immigration across the border.

*Historical
Interest*

The police station is built to a T-shaped plan situated in a large compound opposite the Fire Station in Ta Kwu Ling Village. The architectural style of the buildings is **International Modern** which was a popular style in the 1930s when it was built. Characteristic features of this style are the long rectangular shape, white walls, regularly spaced windows, projecting horizontal typhoon canopies running the length of the facades, and the absence of any superfluous ornamentation or decoration. The colour scheme is white and dark blue which are the distinctive livery colours chosen for all police stations some years ago by local architect **Tao Ho** (何駿) who was commissioned to produce a colour scheme that would give a corporate identity. A distinctive feature on the roof is the round watch tower which is only found on police stations and is something of a trademark. The interior of the building is simple and functional as befits police operational requirements.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is quite rare to find a building of International Modern style in a rural village setting like this. The building has been well maintained and retains much of its authenticity despite obvious alterations and additions. It should be regarded as having considerable built heritage value.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of Ta Kwu Ling Police Station lies in its function as a police station helping to maintain law and order in the New Territories. Although the present building dated from 1937, the police station has a history of 100 years and therefore has historical as well as local interest.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

The Ta Kwu Ling Police Station does not form any architectural complex with any other historic buildings in the surrounding. *Group Value*

As far as is known there are no plans to close down the police station, so the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at present. It very likely will continue as a police station for many years to come. It is interesting to note that one of the Station Commanders set up a small agricultural museum at one time in the room that is now the General Registry Office on the first floor. *Adaptive Re-use*