

Historic Building Appraisal
Two Stone Tablets relating to
The Old Customs Station, Ma Wan, Tsuen Wan

In an agreement made between the Qing (清) and the British governments on customs matters (opium in particular) in the Chefoo Convention (管理香港洋藥事宜章程) in 1886, a Kowloon Customs (九龍海關) station should be set up in 1887. The Customs made use of a revenue-collecting station set up by the Qing government in Ma Wan (馬灣) (then called Kap Shui Mun, 汲水門), one of the four stations for import tax revenue established in 1868-71. The Qing government station was removed to its territory due to the signing of the Convention Respecting an Extension of the Hong Kong Territory (展拓香港界址專條) in 1898 where the New Territories, including Ma Wan, became a part of Hong Kong. The Customs building in Ma Wan suspended in 1899 and fell into ruin before 1910s. Two granite tablets of the station were savaged and erected in a panel by the Ma Wan Rural Committee (馬灣鄉事委員會) for public display off its building close to the Ma Wan Pier.

***Historical
Interest***

The two tablets have the main inscriptions “九龍關借地七英尺” and “九龍關” with a dating “光緒二十三年” (Dated this 23rd year of the Guangxu reign (1897)) to their left. The former was one of the four stones to define the boundary of the custom station. The latter was one of the four corner stones to mark the boundary of a new custom station which access road of seven feet wide was leased from local inhabitants. The two tablets with a commemorative tablet of the Committee in the middle were installed on a panel having a traditional Chinese hipped roof topped with green glazed tiles.

***Architectural
Merit***

They are the two tablets of the customs station to remind its history.

Rarity

They are of considerable built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The tablets are in good condition.

Authenticity

J.O. Johnson, a manager of Diocesan Boys' School, applied to the government for the use of the station's building as a summer school. It was refused as the station had already been in a very dilapidated state. The stones are in close relationship with the customs station in Ma Wan though its history is short.

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