

Historic Building Appraisal
Hindu Temple
Burma Lines, Queen's Hill, Fanling, New Territories

The Hindu Temple at Burma Lines (formerly known as Queen's Hill Camp, 皇后山) in Fanling (粉嶺) was built in the 1960s for the Gurkhas (噶喀兵) who were stationed at the camp. Burma Lines was once a British Army barracks, and the temple was the place where the Gurkhas in the camp went to worship. The Gurkhas are soldiers from Nepal, which is the only country in the world whose state religion is Hinduism. Geographically, the temple is slightly separated from the other buildings in the camp as it was built on the top of a small hill, which created a sense of spirituality and tranquillity. The temple is surrounded by Banyan trees and other vegetation, and is dedicated to the God of Destruction in Hinduism called Shiva. The Gurkhas have now gone and the Temple has been vacant and disused since 1996. *Historical Interest*

The Temple resembles a **lotus**, the holy flower which represents beauty and holiness in Hinduism. The plan is hexagonal and the structure is reinforced concrete formed by twelve triangular upright slabs joined together in three dimensional geometric tent shapes to form a six-pointed crown. The doors which open at all sides of the hexagon (excluding the southeast side) allow access from all directions. There are five entrances fitted with double doors and pointed windows above some of the doors. The whole structure is painted pale green externally and orange and blue internally. Geometric shaped planters and drainage channels surround the Temple. Internally the floor is screeded and there is a raised dais in one corner for an altar. There is a small one-storey pitched roof concrete hut (purpose unknown) and a pagoda-like temporary shrine nearby. At the time of the survey (August 2004) the buildings were derelict and in need of care and maintenance. *Architectural Merit*

The Hindu Temple is a very rare and unique structure in Hong Kong. The hexagonal plan, "lotus appearance" and the interior design is unique in Hong Kong. It is a reminder of the contribution and commitment of Gurkhas to Hong Kong under British rule. Due to its unusual architectural style best described as **Modern Eclectic** and purpose it has built heritage value. It does not appear to have been altered and appears to be authentic. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

The social value of the Temple to the community is minimal as it was built as a place of worship for Gurkha soldiers. It is probably only of interest to architects and historians. *Social Value & Local Interest*

Due to its very unusual design, it is difficult to suggest an adaptive re-use for the Temple. At best, it can only really be an architectural curiosity.

Adaptive

Re-use