

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

No. 182 Yee Kuk Street, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon

Tin Hau Temple (天后廟) in Yee Kuk Street (醫局街) of Sham Shui Po (深水埗) was built in the 27th year of the Guangxu (光緒, 1901) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty by the fishermen and inhabitants of the area. Sham Shui Po was a tiny fishing village in the early nineteenth century inhabited by fishermen and boat people whose patron was Tin Hau, the Goddess of the Sea. The village was close to the sea. It was pushed further inland due to land reclamation and urban development and finally perished. An old Tin Hau temple of the village was erected close to the sea and was demolished due to the development. This Tin Hau Temple was constructed to replace the old one. The temple was first managed by the local community and has been being managed by the Chinese Temples Committee (華人廟宇委員會) since 1931. A keeper is appointed to take care of the temple.

*Historical
Interest*

The temple is a Qing vernacular building of a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The courtyard between the two halls was covered. Two side chambers are built on either side of the temple for storage and other uses. A flat-roofed service block is built at the back of the temple for the keeper's quarters, toilet and services. The temple building is constructed of grey brickwork with its walls and columns to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The roofs are covered with green glazed ceramic tiles and its walls plastered and painted with imitation brick lines. Its recessed entrance is with a narrow platform on either side which roof is supported by two granite columns and a bracket system. The ridge of the entrance hall is decorated with a set of ceramic "Two Dragons Competing for a Pearl" (二龍爭珠). The ridge ends are with geometric mouldings and the gables are with reliefs of floral patterns. The altar at the main bay of the end wall houses the statue of Tin Hau with Kwun Yam (觀音) and Pau Kung (包公) on her right and left.

*Architectural
Merit*

The Tin Hau Temple is a historical reminder of the development of Sham Shui Po, and has some built heritage value. It was renovated in 1990 with some others, having affected the authenticity of the building.

*Rarity, Built
Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The temple is still patronised by locals. It would have celebration of the Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) on the twenty-third day of the third lunar month. ***Social Value, & Local Interest***

The Tin Hau Temple is within walking distance of other historic buildings, such as No. 170 Yee Kuk Street (Grade 3) and Sham Shui Po Public Dispensary (深水埔醫局) (both Grade 2), Nos. 269 & 271 Yu Chau Street (汝州街), Sam Tai Tsz Temple (三太子宮) and Pak Tai Temple (北帝宮) (all Grade 3). ***Group Value***