

Historic Building Appraisal
Watchtower (northwest),
No. 9F Tai Hong Wai, Kam Tin, Yuen Long

Tai Hong Wai (泰康圍) in Kam Tin (錦田) of Yuen Long, was built by Tang Kwong-hoi (鄧廣海) and his son Tang Chung (鄧聰) in the Chenghua reign (成化, 1465-1487) of the Ming (明) dynasty. The enclosing walls and a moat surrounding the wall was constructed in the Kangxi reign (康熙, 1662-1722) of the Qing (清) dynasty to safeguard the villagers from attacks of pirates and bandits. Guns were provided at the walls and watchtowers firing at enemies from their gun holes. In the takeover of the New Territories by the British in 1899, the iron gate of the wall was seized and removed to the residence of the then Governor in Ireland. With the petition in 1924 by Tang Pak-kau (鄧伯裘, 1876-1950) of the Tang clan, a pair of gates was returned. One of which belonged to Kat Hing Wai (吉慶圍) and the other to Tai Hong Wai. The latter gave up its half and the pair was installed back to Kat Hing Wai. With the security functions of the wall diminished, the structure fell into ruin and occupied by village houses built on it. The northwest corner tower and the inner gate of the wall are the only structures survived.

***Historical
Interest***

The old Tai Hong Wai was a near-square walled village constructed with high walls surrounding the village having four watchtowers at its four corners and an entrance gate at the central axis. Rows of houses were built parallel to the front wall. The wall was in symmetrical design constructed of green bricks. A moat was constructed around the village and reclaimed in the 1960s. The present northwest corner tower is constructed of green and red bricks. Part of the walls is covered with plastered rendering.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a remaining structure to show the settlement of the Tangs in Kam Tin.

Rarity

The structure though not at all authentic has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The structure is converted into a two-storey residential dwelling. Its roof is in corrugated sheet. Windows were added for ventilation uses.

Authenticity

The inner gate survived has related group value with this structure.

Group Value

The watchtower is now used as a residential dwelling.

***Adaptive
Re-use***

A shrine was built at the far end of the central axis of the village for worship of different deities which names were written on a tablet above the altar in the middle. Shrines of the Earth God (土地) and Cheung Tin Shi (張天師) deities were at the entrance tower for worshipped. During the Da Chiu (打醮) of the village held once every seven years and at other Chius, the latter deity would be invited to attend celebrations.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*