

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Tin Hau Temple

#### Shek O village, Shek O

Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Shek O Village (石澳村) of Shek O was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> year of Guangxu (光緒, 1891) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty as a wooden plaque in the temple has the dating inscribed on it. The temple is for the worship of Tin Hau by the local villagers. The temple was erected as a serious drought had been with the village damaging their crops when the deity directed the distressed villagers to build a temple at the present site. The villagers were then got the release of the drought. Shek O Village together with Hok Tsui Village (鶴咀村) and Big Wave Village (大浪灣村) had a population of around 200 in 1841. The village has a history of some 200 years which inhabitants were mainly fishermen and farmers. The temple has been a temple of the Chinese Temples Committee (華人廟宇委員會) with its administration maintained by the Shek O Residents Association (石澳居民協進會).

**Historical  
Interest**

The temple is a Qing vernacular building with a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The courtyard between the entrance and main halls was covered. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its flush gable pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Its walls have been plastered and its floors with red cement screeding. The roofs have been covered with ceramic green tiles made in a recent renovation. The altar in the middle of end wall houses the statue of the Tin Hau deity for worship. Its main ridge is with a set of 'Two Dragons Completing for the Pearl' (二龍爭珠) for decoration. Its front façade is with newly installed ceramic tile paintings of legendary stories including the Eight Immortals (八仙), Heavenly Goddess of Baby-boy Bearing (天姬送子), Kwan Tai (關帝), plum blossoms and others.

**Architectural  
Merit**

It is a Tin Hau temple to remind the historic settlement of Shek O Village.

**Rarity**

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage  
Value**

The temple was renovated in 1894, 1929, 1981, 1982, 1991, 1992 and 1993 with some unknown ones. The recent renovations have not been sympathetic ones which would diminish its authenticity.

**Authenticity**

Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) is celebrated normally on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of the third lunar month. It is however celebrated by the Shek O inhabitants on the ninth or tenth months, the exact day would be chosen by the tossing of the divination blocks (擲聖杯) in the early Chinese New Year. Celebrations including parade, opera

**Social Value,  
& Local  
Interest**

performance, vegetarian meal and lion dance would be organized for 5 to 6 days. Fishing boats from Stanley (赤柱), Po Toi Island (蒲台島) and Chai Wan (柴灣) used to sail to the temple to make their tribute during the festival. The practice has been discontinued due to the decline in fishing activities. The village has Da Chiu (打醮) activities once every ten years, the only village on Hong Kong island that has such function. Its highlight would be the Floating Colour Parade (飄色巡遊) where a procession of inhabitants would be dressed up as characters of Chinese legends or other recent renowned characters.