

Historic Building Appraisal

Tin Hau Temple

Po Toi Island

The Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) on Po Toi Island (蒲苔島) is believed to be built before the 19th year of Guangxu reign (光緒十九年, 1893) of the Qing (清) dynasty as a stone tablet in the temple has the year inscribed on it to commemorate a renovation. The temple was erected by fishermen of the island which is at its southern end of Miu Kok (廟角) backed by the hilly slope facing Tai Wan (大灣) to the south. The island had the maximum of some 1,000 fishermen and farmers mainly on fishing, farming and sea-weed harvesting. The erection of the temple was sure a patron need of the fishing community as Tin Hau has long been their goddess protecting from sea disasters. The population over the past decades has very much declined due to better working opportunity in the city. The temple is managed by a Board of Directors headed by a Lau Siu-ming (劉少明).

**Historical
Interest**

The temple is a two-hall structure with one side chamber on its left and right sitting on rocks facing the sea. A boulder is still surfaced on the ground of its west chamber. Doors are opened at the main hall and the two side chambers. The main hall is built slightly taller than the side chambers. The main entrance door is framed with granite blocks and so are the staircases, the foundation base and two columns supporting the main gables at the entrance. The external walls are plastered with minimal decoration mainly a ceramic pearl two aoyus (鰲魚) and geometric patterns on the main ridge.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is the only temple on an outlying island survived to capture a piece of the fading history of a once fishing community.

Rarity

The over 100-year old building has a minimum built heritage value though it is slightly modernized.

**Built Heritage
Value**

Two renovations have been carried out in the last ten years. It seems the repairs are not sympathetic enough taking away some of its authenticity.

Authenticity

The temple is still worshipped by villagers of the island and occasional visitors. At the Tin Hau Festival on the 23rd day of the third lunar month hundreds of worshippers will pay tribute to the temple like all other Tin Hau temples. Shen Gong opera performances (神功戲) will be held for four days and five nights which is highest time of the year. Fa Pow contest (搶花炮) is also held which winner believes it would bring good fortune from the deity throughout the year. Tai Ping Ching Chiu (太平清醮) to ward off evils will be held on the island every three years expecting

**Social Value &
Local Interest**

the continuous blessing of the Tin Han.