

Historic Building Appraisal

Watchtower, Tsing Chuen Wai, Tuen Mun

Tsing Chuen Wai (青磚圍), or Mak Yuen Wai (麥園圍), in Tuen Mun was established by the Tos (陶氏) some 300 years ago whose ancestor Tao Man-chat (陶文質) moved from Guangxi (廣西) to Ngau Tam Mei (牛潭尾) of Yuen Long and later to Tuen Mun Tai Tsuen (屯門新村). With the increase of clan population, they dispersed to other area and developed it into five villages, namely, Nai Wai (泥圍), Tsing Chuen Wai, Tuen Tsz Wai (屯子圍), Lam Tei Tsuen (藍地村) and Tuen Mun San Tsuen (青磚圍). A walled village with entrance tower and four corner watchtowers was built in the village for protection of the villagers against pirates and bandits. Tsing Chuen Wai was so named as the wai was constructed of green bricks. It is also called Mak Yuen Wai, literally Walled Village of Barley Farm, as barley (麥 in Chinese) was grown by the villagers in the area. The wall has lost its security functions and fell into ruin. The enclosing walls and watchtowers were torn down in the 1960s. This portion of the watchtower to the left of the entrance tower is the only remaining structure of the historic wall.

***Historical
Interest***

The remaining portion of the corner watchtower was at the south-east constructed of green bricks of two-storey high with gun holes. It is a Qing (清) dynasty design of a rectangular plan with green brick fair face. The remaining structure is with cracks and the bricks both of green and red brick types are in loose form. The tower had pitched roofs supported by its green-brick walls with timber rafters, battens, purlins and ceramic tiles. Guns were installed at its upper floor ready to fire from the gun holes.

***Architectural
Merit***

A remaining portion of a corner watchtower to remind the historic settlement of the Tos in Tuen Mun.

Rarity

The structure is of some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The structure is in poor condition and is deteriorating.

Authenticity

The Tos had conflicts with the Tang (鄧) clan in Ping Shan (屏山) in the Qing dynasty who made attacks to the walled village. Watchmen at the watchtowers were killed but Tsing Chuen Wai had never been captured by the Tangs. A shrine with the deities of Tin Hau (天后), Kwan Tai (關帝) and a Qing official were worshipped to give protection to the villagers. At a pestilence broke

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

out in the village, they carried the statue of Tin Hau parading around the village. The pestilence was finally suppressed. Chung Yee Tong (忠義堂), a local security association of the area, provided defense measures at the village.