

Historic Building Appraisal
Tin Hau Temple
Temple Street, Yau Ma Tei

Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Yau Ma Tei was originated from a tiny one probably erected in 1865 and later moved to the present site in 1876 by the boat people and villagers in Yau Ma Tei. The Temple Compound had undergone several expansions leading to the present sizable one comprising the main Tin Hau Temple and others including a Kung Sor (公所) (now Kwun Yam Lau She Tan 觀音樓社壇) in 1894, a Fuk Tak Temple (福德祠) in 1903, two Hsu Yuen (書院) (now a Shing Wong Temple 城隍廟 and exhibition centre) in 1897 and 1920 with a big public square in front of them. Other than serving as a worship compound for different deities, the Kung Sor and Hsu Yuen were used as a venue for a free school teaching the boat and land people until 1955. The management of the Temple Compound was officially delegated to the Kwong Wah Hospital by the Chinese Temples Committee (華人廟宇委員會) in 1928.

*Historical
Interest*

The Temple Compound of five buildings are separated by four lanes. The Tin Hau Temple being the biggest is in the middle seconded by the Hsu Yuen to its right. The other three are almost in the same size. The temples are in Qing vernacular style now having their roofs covered with green ceramic tiles. The Tin Hau Temple, the oldest amongst others, has the most ornated features including the granite columns and wooden bracket system at its entrance hall and a set of Shiwan (石灣) ceramic decorations of a pearl, a pair of *aoyus* (鰲魚) and dragons, opera figurines and other geometric and floral pattern on its main ridge.

*Architectural
Merit*

Such a sizable Temple Compound is very rare. The Temple Compound having the functions of worship, communal services and education evolving from a small Tin Hau temple is of high heritage value.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The Temple Compound was renovated and expanded in 1890, 1894 and 1897 leading to the present format. Other repairs have been carried out in 1916 and in 1971 after a typhoon damaging much of its

structures in 1914 and a big fire in 1969 respectively. The Temple Compound has no great alteration affecting its authenticity.

The Temple Compound is a landmark of Yau Ma Tei attracting a large number of tourists visiting it. The public open square in front of the Temple Compound is a spacious ground for open-air entertainment activities and for rest of the locals. The festivals of different deities, including the birthday of the Tin Hau on the 23rd day of the third lunar month, the Kwun Yam Treasury Festival on the 25th and 26th days of the first lunar month, the birthday of the Shing Wong on the 11th day of the fifth lunar month, are celebrated making the Temple Compound a busy one throughout the year.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The Tung Wah Museum (Declared Monument), Kowloon Union Church (Declared Monument), Old South Kowloon District Court (Grade 1), Former Pumping Station of Water Supplies Department (Grade 1), Yau Ma Tei Theatre (Grade 2), Yau Ma Tei Wholesale Fruit Market (Grade 2), Yau Ma Tei Police Station (Grade 2), The Manse of Kowloon Union Church (Grade 3), and Kowloon Methodist Church (Grade 3) are all located within walking distance of the Temple Compound. These historic buildings collectively reflect the historical and socio-cultural development of the local community of Yau Ma Tei.

Group Value