



Preservation of The Historical Heritage of Tak's City Pillar Shrine for Tourism

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Abstract

Restoration of the old Tak city's pillar shrine to preserve the locally historical heritage was manipulated by the member of the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation. Tak city pillar shrine (Old Shrine) is located at Ban Pak Rong, Pa Mango Subdistrict, Muang Tak District, Tak Province, Thailand. It is known as "Chao Por Lak Muang Shrine" which is assumed to be built during the reign of King Naresuan the Great. Due to the most appropriate location for warfare at that time, the great king ordered to bury the first city's pillars to represent a symbol of his royal highness power and to bless the frontier city. Presently, all local people believe that the original pillar has not been moved since it was built. However, the old Tak city's pillar is decayed, and it is taken for granted for several years. Therefore, the restoration project has been requested by the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation for the preservation of this historical heritage area in Tak. The main objective of this study is to determine conceptual framework for preserving the historical heritage of Tak's City Shrine for tourism. The outcomes showed that the design of restoration of the old Tak city's pillar shrine interpreted historical heritage of Tak through architecture and landscape elements. In conclusion, the core concept of the preservation of old Tak city's pillar shrine was initially to preserve the historical value of the original Tak city's pillar by emphasizing arts, architecture and landscape design harmoniously. Besides, tourists will experience the history of Tak through this restoration project that can also promote tourism in this historical heritage. Therefore, this methodology can also be applied to preserve the value of other historical heritage places for developing with historic cores that are introducing to create their future management plans.

Keywords: Building preservation, Historical heritage, the old Tak city's pillar shrine.

1. Introduction

Tak city pillar shrine (Old Shrine) is located at Ban Pak Rong, Pa Mango Subdistrict Muang Tak District, Tak Province, Thailand. It is usually called "Chao Por Lak Muang shrine" by the local people, which is assumed to be built since the reign of King Naresuan the Great. After King Naresuan declared independence to Ayutthaya, Tak city was moved to Ban Pa Mango and became a front-line battle town once again. This city was also used for gathering to attack Chiang Mai in the reign of King Naresuan the Great, King Narai the Great and King Taksin the Great. Due to the history of Tak being involved in battle in the past, the seal of the province is symbolic of King Naresuan the Great who declared the independence of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya during the war with Burma in 1584 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2020). Because Tak is the most appropriate location for warfare, it gave an advantage for his royal army, both offence and defence against the enemy at that time. Therefore, the Great King ordered to bury the first city's pillars to represent a symbol of his royal highness power and to bless the city. Presently, all local people believe that the original pillar has not been moved since it was built, thus some local and tourists visit the shrine to pay respect for blessing their luck or prosperity. However, the old Tak city's pillar is decayed, and it is taken for granted for several years because the new Tak city's pillar shrine was built for commemoration of the four great Kings in 1992. Therefore, the impact of the new shrine seems to present the importance of Tak province that related to remembrance of the Great kings more than the authentic history.

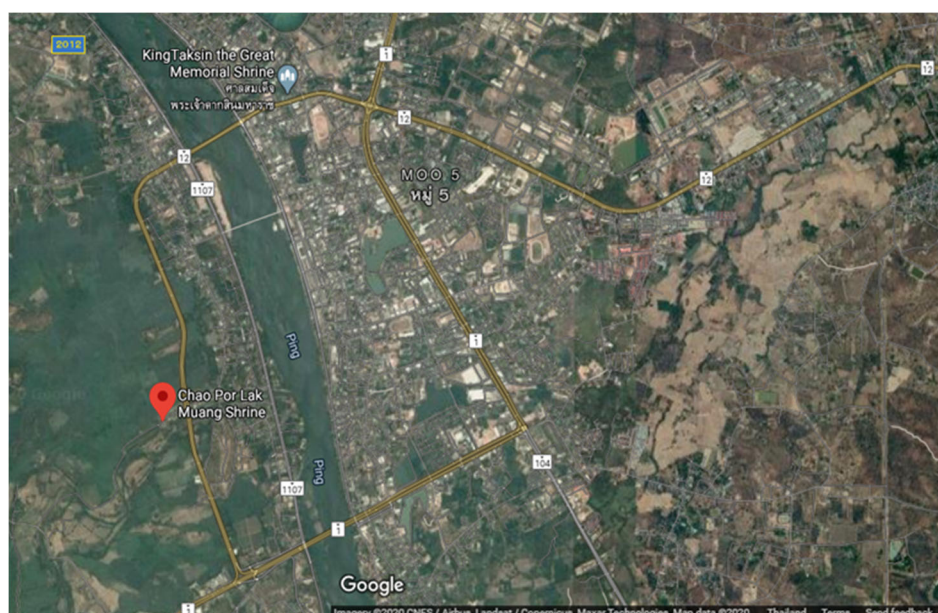


Figure 1 A Google map (2020) shows the location of the old Tak city's pillar shrine

The Tak city's pillar shrine (Old Shrine) is located on the west side of the Ping River, where there are five buildings in this area. The main shrine was built in 1955 by local Thai-Chinese descent groups, so it has a characteristic of Chinese shrine. There are ten pillars inside of the hall under a gable roof, which some of them were made from granite and craft wood. Most local people believe that the authentic city's pillar is the wooden pillar in the front row (see figure2). Then, other buildings were built later by a different group of people. As a result, the whole area of Tak city's pillar shrine has been developed without a master plan (see figure3&4). However, this shrine has remained the most important place for many people because it seems like the symbol of unity and the proud of the city. Presently, this shrine is governed by the members of the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation. Due to low capital, lack of subsidization from government and unprofessional organizing, some local people, particularly young generations, have never been there, and many of them have never known about this historic place.



Figure 2 The authentic Tak city's pillars (the lowest pillar in the front)

[748]



Figure 3 View from the main entrance to the main building of Tak city's pillar shrine



Figure 4 Other buildings in the area of Tak city's pillar shrine

The inspiration to preserve the local heritage began from some leaders of the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation, who were concerned about the significance of preservation of the historical heritage in their hometown. This shrine is valuable in terms of the history of the Tak, and its story can be traced back to the early Sukhothai period (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2020). Then, it was the beginning point of the cooperated activities between the Faculty of Architecture, Rangsit University and the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation to implement the 4+1 project. This participation is mainly focused on the restoration of architecture and landscape in the Tak city's pillar shrine area for tourism and the promotion of the historical heritage of Tak province. This preservation project is designed initially to emphasize the historical landmark of the city, together with the community's learning resource for supporting the cultural tourism in this historic community.



The restoration of the historical heritage of Tak required functions for supporting both local activities and tourism needs. The limitation of design is mainly strict on the location of the main shrine and all pillars that are unmovable. In addition, the new architecture should be designed based on building safety and compliance with construction laws and local regulations. Having been abandoned for a long time, the building materials will inevitably deteriorate, especially in the part of the structure, weight load-bearing that is applied to the building. From the legal requirements for building control, the change of functions, space, technology, materials and construction method may need to be adapted to apply modern materials in combination with traditional materials. These are also normal factors that must be taken into account in determining the new building design of the Tak city's pillar shrine. In addition, the character of the main shrine should be integrated as much as possible in order to maintain the value of buildings (Daengkul and Kaewlai, 2013) that represent the identity of the history of King Taksin the Great who was a Thai-Chinese descent. In order to set up the goals of the preservation, not only the limitation of the historical context but also the tourism system factors should be analyzed. Regarding such factors, this project needs to be analyzed in other related contexts, such as tourism information, marketing demand and supply including legal requirements, economic, society and culture factors, environment, public facilities and the physical context of the tourist attractions. (Preechapuch, 2016). Therefore, this framework is to study the ways to restore the Tak city's pillar shrine for preserving historical area of Tak. By adopting a lifestyle context, culture and history are combined with the concept of preservation. With a restoration process of the new architecture and landscape, the shrine will be recognized as the historical heritage of Tak and promoted as a tourist's destination.

2. Objectives

The main objectives of this article is to focus on proposing ways to preserve the historical heritage in Tak by using the method of the architectural design process together with studying the local history to conduct the appropriate design guidelines which can create the recognition of the historical heritage of Tak through cultural tourism. The objectives of this study are;

1. To study history of the city pillar shrine in Tak Province.
2. To determine conceptual framework for preserving the historical heritage of Tak's City Shrine for tourism.

3. Methods

The methodology of this study is in the form of architectural preservation research, by researching from the local history which is the primary source of information with the following steps in operation. :

3.1 Documentary research by review the historical data from documents and related research papers in order to identify the historical context that affects the existing building.

3.2 Analyze the existing area, architectural styles, user requirements, building codes and standard related to the project.

3.3 Synthesize guidelines of the preservation and the design for restoration that can create the recognition of the historical heritage through cultural tourism.

3.4 Evaluate the outcomes by stakeholders who were delegates from the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation. Then, summarize and discuss the results.

4. Results and Discussion

Regarding the methods of architectural preservation of the Tak city's pillar shrine, this studied outcomes can be considered as follows;

4.1 Study results of the historical data

The original Tak city's pillar shrine is generally known as "Chao Por Lak Muang Shrine", located on the west side of the Ping River. In the past, this area was an important frontier city since the Sukhothai period. Due to the advantage on the warfare of this place, King Naresuan the Great decided to build the city's pillar shrine to announce that this area was possessed by Ayutthaya kingdom. Presently, all local people



believe that the original pillar has never been moved since it was built, thus many local and tourists visit the shrine to pay respect for blessing their luck or prosperity.

According to Tak city's pillar shrine's history, the record showed that the main buildings were built in 1955 by local Thai-Chinese descent groups, so their characteristic was similar to Chinese shrine. In fact, the main shrine has been occupied by the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation, but the others were shared to the local organizations. As a result, the whole area of the city's pillar shrine was developed without master plan. Thus, the restoration project has been requested by stakeholders which anticipated for the preservation of the historical heritage.

Regarding the main building of this shrine that was built in Chinese style, it is a single storey building where the symbolic God of the pillar or "Chao Por Lak Muang" is enshrined (See figure5). The survey found that the major structure is Reinforced concrete structure, and masonry brick is used for walling system. As for the roof, this shrine was roofed with roman tiles with wooden structure. In addition, door and windows are made from wood.



Figure 5 shows the interior space of the Tak city's pillar shrine

Art of architecture and decoration styles of the main shrine are quite similar to general Chinese shrine. It could be assumed that it was influenced from the group of Thai-Chinese descent in Tak who were the main sponsor of this foundation. However, it could also be assumed that it was initially referred to King Taksin's who was a Thai-Chinese descent. (See figure 6)



Figure 6 shows the Chinese style of the Tak city's pillar shrine.



4.2 Conceptual framework of the restoration of tourism

Referring to the main objectives of this preservation project, it was clearly seen that the architecture and landscape of the Tak city's pillar shrine were not attractive for tourism. Although all local people certainly believe that the original pillar was here, a number of local people have never visited their historical heritage shrine. Therefore, the concept of restoration should concern about tourism activities in order to educate visitors through architecture and landscape. The analysis of the framework for preservation and summary of the ideas in various aspects are as follows:

4.2.1 Operational framework and space requirements

The information obtained from the building survey makes the designer aware of the operational framework for determining the size of the building and the techniques for renovating the building condition according to the project objectives, which can be considered from Table 1 as below.

Table 1 Framework of the building renovation

List of Works	Existing Building	Renovated works
Site Work		
Drainage and Sanitary system	- None drainage - Sanitary system was broken down.	- Drainage system - Working based on Sanitary District Regulation
Landscape	- Brownd field	- Landscaping design
Structural Work		
Foundation	- Matt Foundation	- Bored pile
Column	- RC Column	- RC Column
Floor structure	- Concrete slab	- Concrete slab
Roof Structure	- Hardwood rafter size 1½" x 3" - Timber roof batten size 1" x 2" - Timber roof batten size 1" x 2" - Timber roof wattle size 1" x 1"	- Steel C-section 75 x 50 x 20 x 3.2 mm - Metal roof batten - Steel collar beam 2C-75 x 50 x 20 x 3.2 mm
Architectural Finishing		
Floor	- Ceramic floor tile	- Ceramic floor tile
Wall	- Hardwood siding - Wooden fretwork	- Hardwood siding - Wooden fretwork with fixed clear glass window
Ceiling	- Gypsum board	- Timber ceiling
Doors and Windows	- Hardwood	- Hardwood
Roof	- Roman tiles	- Clay tile

The information obtained from the analysis of the tourism system influenced the design guidelines for tourist attraction in the Tak city's pillar shrine. List of requirements for the restoration can be considered from Table 2 as below.

**Table 2** Requirements of the restoration

List of Works	Existing Functions	Functions of restoration
Site work		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscaping design: Chinese garden - Bas-relief panels - The two Great king statues - Multi-purpose area - Parking
Function		
Main shrine	- Chinese Altar	- Chinese Altar
City's pillar hall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single storey building - Polished stainless fence around City's pillar hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Permanent exhibition space with transparent wall around City's pillar hall - Multimedia and exhibition hall
Religion building	- Single storey building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single storey building with wooden fretwork
Restroom	- Restroom with squat toilets	- Universal design restroom

4.2.2 Concept of preservation

Architectural and landscape details defined in accordance requirements could be integrated with the concept of the restoration. The concept mainly aimed to emphasize the value of the Tak city's pillar as well as to create the tourist's attraction. Regarding the concept of preservation for tourism in this heritage place, it can be divided into various aspects as follows:

1) History and community way

Based on the historical background of the Tak city's pillar that related to King Naresuan and King Taksin the Great, a relationship between the historical heritage and community that reflected on the specific style of the existing building is found. The concept of the restoration of this project should integrate the historic essence of the city's pillar together with the local way of life; therefore, visitors could perceive the spirit of this heritage place.

2) Social and economic aspects

The concept of restoration to support cultural tourism activities could create impacts on social and economic development in the community nearby. The benefit of this project will increase the number of tourists that will create employment for local people and motivate them not to abandon their hometown. At the same time, the outcome of this project could also encourage locals and visitors to realize the value of their historical heritage place.

3) Environmental aspect

The concept of preservation by restoration of the Tak city's pillar shrine could also improve the environment in this area as well. This restoration project could conduct more aesthetic in architecture and landscape that will be suitable for the tourist attractions. In addition, the idea of creating an outdoor landscape that combined the style of a Chinese garden with the selection of appropriate plants for the climate could also expand green areas instead of the brownfield.

4.3 Creative works of restoration architecture and landscape to attract tourism.

Architectural and landscape design showed that the design of restoration of the old Tak city's pillar shrine interpreted historical heritage of Tak through architecture and landscape elements (see from figure 7 to figure 11). This creative outcomes of restoration design came up with the core concept of the preservation of old Tak city's pillar shrine. It was initially to preserve the historical value of the original Tak city's pillar by emphasizing arts, architecture and landscape design harmoniously. According to the project goal, tourists will experience the history of Tak through this restoration project; therefore, it can also promote tourism in this historical heritage. Regarding the design of restoration of the historical heritage of Tak city's pillar shrine for tourism, it can be considered as follow:

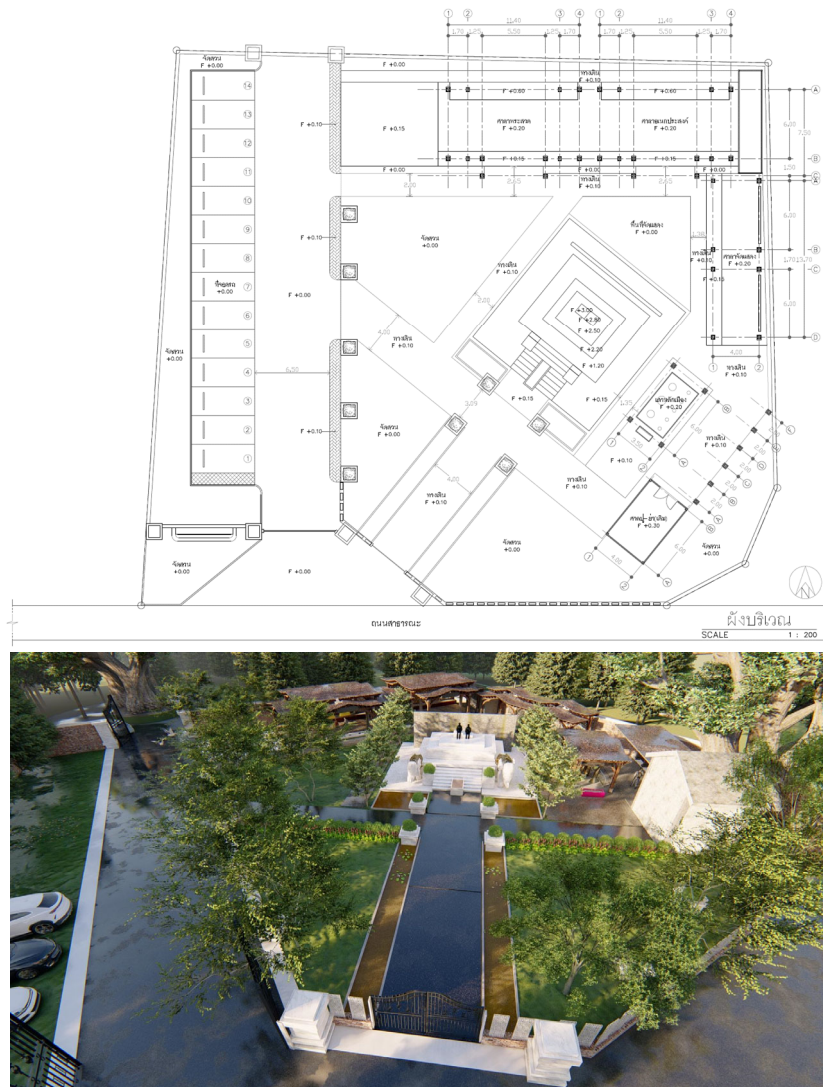


Figure 7 Drawing of master plan of the Tak city's pillar shrine (Above) and Bird-eye view perspective (Bottom)



Figure 8 Landscape design: View of the two Great king statues (Left) and circulation surround the two Great king statues (Right)



Figure 9 Landscape design: View of the Bas-relief panels



Figure 10 Architectural design: Permanent exhibition space with the transparent panel around City's pillar hall.



Figure 11 Architectural design: Religion & Multi-purpose building with wooden fretwork



4.4 The discussion

According to the feedback of the stakeholders meeting, they accepted the concept of restoration. The architecture and landscape design were created for tourist attractions, and it was anticipated to promote tourism in this historical heritage place (Traiyang, 2020). This project outcomes could preserve the historical heritage of Tak's City Pillar Shrine, which not only contributed awareness of the gradually fade-away local historical heritage but also educated local people and visitors through tourist's attraction. Some local people could get more benefit from the preservation of the historical heritage for tourism; consequently, it will increase more income and improve their living quality. Therefore, the participation of community's members will stimulate the government to realize the importance of budget allocation for infrastructure development or encourage the improvement of other valuable buildings to have potential to accommodate the increasing number of tourists.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of the preservation of the historical heritage of Tak's City Pillar Shrine presented the restoration of the abandoned heritage area in Tak province. The core concept of the preservation of old Tak city's pillar shrine was initially to preserve the historical value of the authentic Tak city's pillar by designing it as a landmark of the city. In this case, tourists will experience the history of Tak through this restoration project that can also promote tourism in this historical heritage. Moreover, the studies of historical, social, economic and the local participation were other important factors to determine the appropriate restoration framework. Furthermore, it is able to conserve the value of the prominent point of the historic heritage that will promote the historic core for tourism. Therefore, this study model can be applied to preserve the value of other historical heritage places for developing with historic cores that are introducing to create their future management plans.

6. Acknowledgements

Creative work of the 4+1 project of the Academic Studio+ was implemented by full support from Mr. Konjanat Traiyang, Managing Director of Konjanat Engineering Co., Ltd., the Tak city's pillar shrine foundation and Faculty of Architecture, Rangsit University who subsidized funding for this project. Thanks to all 4th and 1st year students of the Academic Studio+ who are the important participants of the success.

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