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## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Architectural Resources Group (ARG) was retained by the City of Marysville and the Friends of the Marysville Bok Kai Temple to produce a Historic Structure Report (HSR) for the Bok Kai Temple in Marysville, California. The HSR contains information on the history of the site and the building, an evaluation of the architectural materials and features, an assessment of the existing conditions, and recommendations for treatment of the structure. The intended purpose of the HSR is to provide the basis for future stabilization, preservation, or restoration work at the Marysville Bok Kai Temple.

The Taoist Bok Kai Temple was constructed in 1880, incorporating elements of earlier structures on the site, including part of an 1869 temple. Facing the Yuba River, the Temple is a one-story brick structure with a wood-frame portion at the eastern end of the building. The distinctive double-gable roofline over the Altar Hall at the center of the building and the interior organization of the Temple is similar to other examples of Chinese and Chinese-American architecture in California.

The Bok Kai Temple is significant as an example of the important contributions of Chinese immigrants to the early development of the western United States and of the blending of traditional and popular cultural beliefs. The Temple retains a great amount of its historic integrity, continuously used as a temple since 1880. The Temple is also significant based on the presence of the exterior mural paintings, depicting figurative, decorative, and calligraphic scenes. These paintings are unique on a national level as examples of art incorporated into architecture, as well as on an international level because of the destruction of similar mural decoration at temples in mainland China and Taiwan. The Temple also plays an important role in the local community, serving as a focus of local history, celebration, and pride.

The Temple's materials and building systems have suffered from general weathering and deterioration because of minimal maintenance over the building's life. Renovation campaigns in the 1960s and 1970s repaired some of the material failures, but further deterioration has occurred since then necessitating additional work. Some of the conditions requiring immediate attention include the partial failure of porch elements affecting the mural paintings, the decay of wood framing and floor members, and the deteriorated roofing system that allows water infiltration.

The intent of the recommended treatments is to repair the structural and waterproofing deficiencies in order to prolong the continued operation of the building while preserving the existing architectural features and finishes to the greatest extent possible. These treatments include structural strengthening, replacement of the roof and drainage systems, and repair of deteriorated wood and brick materials. The State Historical Building Code should be employed to ensure that future work future work does not adversely affect the significant historic resources of the Temple. A thorough inventory and assessment of the numerous artifacts and furnishings in the Temple to determine the proper storage and care of these objects is also recommended. Accessibility improvements are recommended in a report submitted by ARG under separate cover.

## II. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The primary significance of the Bok Kai Temple lies in its contribution to our understanding of the patterns of the country's history, specifically, to patterns of immigration and expressions of ethnic heritage. Constructed as a Taoist Temple in 1880, the building originally served a religious and social function for many Chinese immigrants who settled in the Sierra Nevada foothills during the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the size of the community associated with the Temple has become smaller over time, the building has maintained its original use and function to this day. The Marysville Bok Kai Temple survives as one of the few examples of a Taoist Temple built by Chinese immigrants to the western United States. Although the Chinese who immigrated to the United States during the second half of the nineteenth century built many similar temples, most were destroyed or greatly altered. The Bok Kai Temple remains a powerful testament to the heritage of the Chinese who built and used the Temple and to the important role that these immigrants played in the settling of the west. Part of this heritage is displayed in the annual festival of the god Bok Eye during the second month of the lunar year. The year 2002 marks the 121<sup>st</sup> year of the Bok Kai Parade and Bomb Day Festival. The Parade and Festival is a ritual celebration that has taken place since the earliest days of the Temple and plays a role in the festival by providing a place of worship for the participants.

The Temple's contribution to our understanding of the immigrant experience is also exemplified by the way the building incorporates elements of traditional and popular Chinese-American culture. As a Taoist Temple, the building provided for the rites and observances of traditional religious practices. The Bok Kai Temple and the deities associated with it refer to the importance of water. In the context of Marysville, water and its popular associations with mining, farming, and transportation has played an important role in the lives of those who the Temple served. The architectural design and mural paintings of the Bok Kai Temple also reveal a blend of traditional and popular elements. The Temple building incorporates portions of earlier on-site buildings renovated to create a religious structure. The materials and basic form of the Bok Kai Temple relate to examples of traditional temple architecture found in southern China.<sup>1</sup> The design is simplified, however, and the traditional Chinese complex of buildings grouped together is reduced to a single building in Marysville.

The Bok Kai Temple is decorated with mural paintings at the upper areas of the recessed porch entrance to the Altar Hall, adding international significance to the Temple for art history and Taoist iconography.

The mural paintings were created by a single master artist at the time of the Temple's dedication in 1880. They are a rare example of exterior decoration associated with Chinese religious architecture, either in the United States or in China. The 13 panels comprising the mural painting have narrative scenes with figures engaged in different activities, calligraphy writings, and decorative scenes of birds and flowers. The use of a colored border ties the composition together. The scenes may represent important Chinese cultural values expressed in popular Taoism. Partially protected by the overhanging porch roof, the colors of the mural painting are still vibrant and the scenes legible. The Taoist mural paintings of the Bok Kai Temple are not only unique in North America, surviving over a century with a strong connection to the original Temple building still intact, but are also among only a small number of surviving examples in the world. Similar temple paintings in mainland China were destroyed and lost in the 1960s cultural revolution, and most temples in Taiwan have been overpainted or refurbished, compromising significant wall paintings.<sup>2</sup>

The significance of the Bok Kai Temple lies not only in its connection to state and national patterns of immigration and cultural expression and in the contribution of the mural paintings adorning the entrance area to art history, but also in the importance of the Temple as a local civic landmark that brings together the entire community of Marysville. The community focus of the Temple relates directly to the role played by a Taoist community temple in a traditional village and is as old as the Temple itself. At the Temple dedication in 1880, the entire town of Marysville was invited to participate in the ceremonies, and announcements and descriptions appeared in the city's newspapers. Since the dedication and to this day, annual Bok Kai festivals have brought together many different citizens and groups in the community who have participated proudly in parades, banquets, and other festivities. These citizens and groups have also contributed to the maintenance and preservation of the Temple and its site, helping to repair aging parts of the building, improve the adjacent entranceway, obtain state and national recognition of the Temple's significance, and organize the current work of preserving the Bok Kai Temple.<sup>3</sup>

### **Period of Significance**

As defined in the National Register Nomination form for the Temple, the years 1880 to 1930 mark the Bok Kai Temple's period of significance. A building's period of significance is defined as the span of time in which a property attains the significance for which it meets the National Register criteria. The Bok Kai Temple in its current form dates to 1880 when portions of earlier buildings were renovated and expanded. The Temple was dedicated in March 1880—this is the most significant date associated with



the Temple. By 1930, the Chinese population in Marysville was decreasing, and the Taoist priest Yee Chow Chung, who was instrumental in the founding of the Temple, no longer served as the Temple's priest.<sup>4</sup>

### **Methodology in Determining Significance Rating**

The building spaces were analyzed and categorized according to significance. Areas were identified as "very significant," "significant," "contributing," or "non-contributing." Spaces designated as "very significant" convey their original uses, retain, for the most part, their original configuration, and are considered the most historically important spaces in the building. Major character-defining features are found in "very significant" spaces. "Significant" refers to spaces that may have been altered but still retain enough of their original fabric and configuration to convey their original function. While "contributing" spaces are usually of lesser importance within the building hierarchy, they may augment understanding of the building's historic use and fabric, especially that of the more important areas. "Contributing" spaces are generally of secondary importance within the building, such as a strictly utilitarian space or closet, and may reflect alterations. In general, "non-contributing" spaces were constructed or altered outside of the period of significance, are without character-defining elements, and sometimes detract from the building's integrity.



### III. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH MATERIALS

The historical research portion of the HSR benefits from documentation and contextual information on the Bok Kai Temple, the city of Marysville, and related cultural issues previously assembled by other researchers. This documentation includes the Registration Form for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places written by Dr. Sue Fawn Chung and a wealth of research material provided by Dr. Paul Chace. To supplement this information, ARG has reviewed primary and secondary research material in libraries and repositories of public record. ARG has not located original construction or maintenance and repair records, if such were archived, or information relating to building alterations as recording in city permit records. ARG has reviewed records and conducted research at the following institutions:

*Asian American Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley*

The Master's Thesis *Chinese Temples in California* by Mariann Kaye Wells (July 1962) was reviewed.

*North Baker Research Library, California Historical Society, San Francisco*

Photographs, maps, city directories, scrapbook collections, and other resources on the history of Marysville were reviewed.

*Office of Historic Preservation, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Sacramento*

Files containing drawings, photographs, reports, and correspondence relating to previous studies and work at the Bok Kai Temple were reviewed.

*Robert M. Fisher Library, John F. Kennedy University, Orinda*

The Master's Thesis *Art and Architecture of Chinese Temples in California* by Carol Stepanchuk (September 1982) was consulted.

*Yuba County Library, Marysville, California*

The photograph collection, pamphlet files, maps, and plans, as well as various books and documents relating to the general history of Marysville, the Chinese community in California, and the Bok Kai Temple were consulted.

In preparing the Bok Kai Temple HSR, conversations with people familiar with the building were also conducted. Archival research and interviews were supplemented by on-site investigation of the building's features to better understand the chronology of the site and the building's construction. Examination of the building's systems and materials helped to develop a chronological relationship that was incorporated into this report. Information on the historical context and construction history of the building was then used to develop the list of character-defining features and to evaluate the historical integrity of the building.

The condition of the building systems and of particular features and finishes were also evaluated during on-site investigations undertaken by the project team comprised of architects, architectural conservators, fine arts conservators, and a structural engineer. The exterior and interior of the building were examined using the available access to determine the existing construction and assess the conditions of the various materials comprising the Temple. This conditions assessment was then used to develop treatment recommendations for the Bok Kai Temple.

In the course of producing this HSR, ARG also completed fieldwork to document the existing conditions of the Bok Kai Temple. The site plan, floor and roof plans, building elevations, and section drawings were prepared using measurements collected during several site visits. The drawings completed for this HSR document the existing conditions of the building's construction. Additional documentation to be performed before the final submission of the HSR includes photographic documentation of the exterior and interior of the building.

Several avenues of research beyond the scope of this report are worth exploring further as part of future work to add to the understanding of the heritage represented in the Temple building. Interpretation of the art and calligraphy depicted in the mural panels and the Temple commemorative boards is one such avenue. Further investigation of the building fabric, to identify the type of brick bonding at the still-concealed corners of the rooms and the nature of the covered and filled-in openings on the west exterior wall, is also recommended. Archaeological work, particularly in the Caretaker's Wing, would also add to an understanding of the historic fabric of the Temple. Finally, further research into the historical development of the early uses of the earlier buildings incorporated into the 1880 Bok Kai Temple is suggested.

#### IV. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

##### **Building Designations and Terminology**

The English name commonly used for the existing Temple in Marysville is Bok Kai Temple. A carved inscription above the main entrance into the Temple reads Bok Ch'i Miu (in Cantonese, or Pei Ch'i Miu in Mandarin). This translates as "North Riverbank Temple"<sup>5</sup> or "North Creek Temple." A similar painted inscription on a north-facing return on the west elevation, visible as one approaches the Temple from the landscaped pathway leading to First Street, reads "Old North Riverbank Temple" or "Old North Creek Temple."

Although past use of the term Bok Kai has not been consistent, the term Bok Kai is used to refer to the name of the temple in Marysville, and Bok Eye is the name of the God that is the central deity of that Temple. Various spellings and transliterations of Bok Kai have been used over the years including, Bok Ai, Bok Aie, Bok Ay, Bok Dai, Bok Eye, Bok Hai, Bok Ky, Bok I, Bok Tai, Buk Di, Peh-ti, and Pei Ti. These names refer to God of the North, God of the North Shore, or God of Somber Heavens. Bok Eye, or Pei Ti, appears throughout Chinese temples in California. The use of Pei Ch'i ("North creek or riverbank") in the inscription above the Temple doors rather than the more common Pei Ti, a popular god among Cantonese often evoked for the blessing of commercial transactions, and the historical references in the Marysville Temple to Bok I ("God of the North Shore," "God of the North Stream," "God of Water Virtue," "Protector against Floods") may imply that the attributes of the deity have been adapted to the particular location of Marysville.<sup>6</sup>

In the book *California's Chinese Heritage: A Legacy of Places*, Dr. Thomas A. McDannold makes the distinction between Bok Kai Miu and Bok Kai Temple, using the first term for the original temple destroyed in 1875 [to allow for the widening of the levee] and the second name for the extant structure.<sup>7</sup> This terminology may be a means of making clear that there have been two different religious structures in Marysville more than distinguishing between the uses of function of the two buildings, however. Miu, or miao, is a term that may be applied to almost any religious building, and is translated as "temple."<sup>8</sup>

The term joss house, or josh house, has historically been used to refer to Chinese places of worship, including the Bok Kai Temple. This term, which first appeared in 1659 and was connected to Chinese gods by English writers by 1711, may derive from corruptions of the Javanese "deyos," Portuguese

“deos,” and Latin “deus,” all meaning “god.” The term was used not only to describe temples, but buildings housing other social functions.<sup>9</sup> The term as spelled “josh” is a Victorian period spelling, no longer in general use today. The Bok Kai Temple in Marysville is more properly called a miu, or temple.

The room names used in this HSR correspond to historic uses of the spaces. The names were developed by Katie Lim and Athena Randolph, members of the Friends of the Marysville Bok Kai Temple, based on previous historical research of the building. The main space serving the primary religious function of the Temple is called the Altar Hall. The section of the building west of the Altar Hall is the Council Chamber. The remainder of the Bok Kai Temple east of the Altar Hall is referred to as the Caretaker’s Wing. Within the Caretaker’s Wing and adjacent to the Altar Hall, the Fortune Reader’s Room is situated on the south side of the building, a storage room (Storage Room A) is the center of the section, and the Gamblers’ Room is on the north side of this space. The Temple Kitchen takes up the northeast corner of the building, with a toilet room and the Caretaker’s Bedroom formed by partitions within this space. Another storage room (Storage Room B) is situated in the southeast corner of the building, with newer toilet rooms located in a corner of this room.

### **Designated Cultural Resources**

The Bok Kai Temple was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975 as having significance on a state level. The building became a California Historic Landmark (Number 889) in 1976. In May 2002, the Temple was listed on the National Register for its significance on a national level and was also placed on the California Register of Historic Places. The Registration Form for this most recent listing is included in Appendix K.

## V. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND CONTEXTS

### **Developmental History and Context of Marysville**

The city of Marysville lies at the confluence of the Yuba and Feather Rivers in Yuba County on a portion of land granted to John Sutter by the Mexican rulers of California in 1841. Sutter leased part of his land to Theodor Cordua, who built a rancho on the north bank of the Yuba River, just east of its junction with the Feather River, and raised livestock in the surrounding area. This was the beginning of the settlement that would soon become Marysville. In 1848, Cordua sold a half interest in the land to a former employee of his, Charles Covillaud, and later sold his remaining interest to Michael Nye and William Foster. Covillaud's partners in the land grant soon changed so that by 1849 four men, Covillaud, Jose Manuel Ramirez, John Simpson, and Theodore Sicard had become Covillaud and Company. In 1850, town lots were mapped out, parcels sold, and the name of "Marysville" chosen for the new town in honor of Mary Murphy, the wife of Charles Covillaud and a survivor of the infamous Donner Party.<sup>10</sup> Marysville was incorporated as a town by the California Legislature in 1851.

Marysville's early history is directly linked to the discovery and exploitation of gold in the nearby foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Following the discovery of gold at Sutter's lumber mill in Coloma in January 1848, Marysville's potential as a point of transfer for goods, people, and riches was quickly realized. The position of Marysville at the meeting of two navigable rivers, and its relative proximity to San Francisco, Sacramento, and the gold fields, made the site well suited to take advantage of the Gold Rush economy. Although gold discoveries were made just a few miles from the town, most of the early growth of Marysville was based on the related industries of trade, transportation, and financing, not directly on mining enterprises.<sup>11</sup>

As with other communities in California that grew rapidly during the Gold Rush period, Chinese immigrants were quick to establish homes, businesses, and a sizeable presence in Marysville. Although there is evidence of some Chinese presence in California before 1848, it was after the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill that the number of Chinese immigrants became substantial. These Chinese immigrants, many from Kwangtung (Canton) province, voyaged across the Pacific to work in the gold fields, build the railroads, and open the businesses that would help to establish the early California economy.

The earliest temple built by the Chinese community in Marysville was probably constructed in 1854 on the north bank of the Yuba River at what was then the southeast corner of the young town.<sup>12</sup> The likely location of this temple, at the southeast corner of what is currently First and B Streets, was adjacent to the Chinese quarter of Marysville that began to develop along the bank of the Yuba River. The temple was also situated near a stream that drained into the Yuba River, where it provided a spiritual barrier to the outward flow of positive energy away from the community and the inward flow of evil spirits along the stream or river. As detailed by Dr. Paul Chace, the temple property was owned by attorneys for the Chinese through the 1860s and then transferred to the Hong Woo & Co., the largest Sze Yup business in Marysville. Sze Yup refers to four districts in southern China populated by peoples sharing a common dialect and ethnic identity. Late in the winter of 1874, devastating flooding of the rivers in Marysville forced the city to widen the levee along the Yuba River, including the area at First and B Streets. In 1875, the Marysville City Council compensated the Sze Yup company for “removing the Josh House” from the site.<sup>13</sup>

### **Development of the Site**

The existing Bok Kai Temple is situated between several structures and the levee along the north bank of the Yuba River. The Temple’s current location, south of First Street near D Street, dates to 1880. At that time, the front of the Temple would have faced Front Street, and D Street would have run along the west side of the Temple to the bank of the Yuba River. Situated at the northeastern corner of the principal bridge into the city, the Temple became the first building everyone saw when entering early Marysville (see Appendix A, Figure 1).

Before the founding of the Bok Kai Temple at its current site, a brick bathhouse and saloon occupied the property at the corner of D and Front Streets. This structure, dating to 1852, was owned by William H. Clark who operated it as the Marysville City Baths. The one-story structure, approximately 20-feet by 60-feet with a basement, was enlarged circa 1856. Clark owned the expanded 20-foot by 80-foot lot until 1857 when it was then auctioned off and passed through a series of owners through the 1860s.<sup>14</sup>

In March 1869, members of the Marysville Chinese community acquired the brick bathhouse building and began work to reconstruct the structure as a Chinese temple. The new Chinese temple was dedicated and opened to the public on May 15, 1869. The front of the building was described in newspaper accounts as “ornamented with Chinese paintings” and the temple hall as “gay if not gaudy” and “about



fourteen foot square.”<sup>15</sup> This temple is called the “Bok Ky Church” in Marysville’s 1876 tax records.<sup>16</sup> The northern wall of the 1852 bathhouse probably remained as the northern wall of the 1869 temple altar hall. The southern wall of the temple may have been newly constructed in 1869 to create a recessed front porch and entrance to the altar hall, a traditional southern Chinese architectural style. If this is the case, the walls onto which the exterior mural is currently painted would date to 1869.<sup>17</sup>

In the site development scenario proposed above, the 1869 temple building would have occupied the southern half of the current site of the Bok Kai Temple. The property immediately adjacent to the 1869 temple on the north appears to have been undeveloped until 1858. At that time, a substantial improvement is listed for the property in the city’s Assessment Roll Book.<sup>18</sup> This improvement may correspond to the construction of an on-site brick building. The owner of the property, as recorded in the 1859 *Book of Deeds*, is Isaac Belcher, a prominent lawyer in Marysville. Although Belcher owned the 20-foot by 80-foot lot until October 1872, it is possible that the lease for the 1869 temple included Belcher’s land and building on the northern half of the site.<sup>19</sup> In 1872, Thomas Seaward and E.C. Ross acquired the Belcher property. These two men had obtained legal ownership of the southern 20-foot by 80-foot Bok Kai Temple property in August of the same year. Seaward and his estate retained ownership of the consolidated 40-foot by 80-foot lot at Front and D Streets until February 1880, at which time the parcel was purchased by Chow You and Yee Wat Chung through an administrator of the deceased Seaward’s estate. Title to the property was then transferred to the Trustees of the Bock Ky Church (Lung Sing, Wang, Tong-Oy-Chow You, and Gee Wot Chung).<sup>20</sup> The term “church” is a term of the Victorian period no longer considered appropriate for the Bok Kai Temple and therefore not in general use today.

The renovation and expansion of the structure that is the present Bok Kai Temple was underway by January 1880. Although the extent of renovation is not definitively known, it likely includes the construction of new east and west bearing walls for the expanded Altar Hall and the application of many decorative details, including the mural painting at the front porch walls. The other brick bearing walls at the perimeter of the current Temple structure probably incorporate the walls of the 1852 Bathhouse and 1858 Belcher Building. Some of the work performed as part of the expansion of the Bok Kai Temple was carried out by Swain & Hudson, a major building firm in Marysville at the time. Chinese craftsmen did other work, including the painting of the figurative and ornamental murals at the entrance porch. The architectural design of the Temple was based on “models furnished...by the Chinese” and “plans drawn by Chinese draftsmen,” according to contemporary newspaper accounts.<sup>21</sup> The construction of the 1880

Bok Kai Temple was accomplished with money from Chinese community members. The names of these people who contributed to the Temple are listed in a plaque in the Altar Hall. The Bok Kai Temple was dedicated in March 1880.

### **Design and Function of the Marysville Bok Kai Temple**

The design of the Bok Kai Temple in Marysville is based on a simplified form of temple architecture found in southern China, from where many of the Chinese who settled in the United States during the middle of the nineteenth century emigrated. The guiding force used in the construction of Chinese religious buildings is the principle of Feng Shui, the relationship between atmospheric forces used to determine the location and arrangement of structures. Based on Feng Shui and traditional values ascribed to the hierarchy of human relationships, “the position of highest authority was located in the middle of the building under the highest roof, facing out into a court,” as Carol Stepanchuk writes in her thesis on *Art and Architecture of Chinese Temples in California*.

“Those areas of progressively less importance were arranged further away from the central chambers as positions diminished in rank. The construction that accommodated these social dynamics never rose above two stories but rather expanded horizontally, reflecting the order of social harmony.”<sup>22</sup>

This form is followed at the Bok Kai Temple, where the Altar Hall is set in the middle of the one-story building, and the side halls house social and service functions. However, whereas the traditional Chinese temple often extended into a grouping of separate buildings, the Temple in Marysville and other California towns was more likely to be a single building.

The exterior form and materials of the Temple in Marysville also relate directly to the design of traditional Chinese temples. The steep-sloping roof and small elevated porch are characteristics of this form. However, the roof construction of the Marysville Temple, although an example of well-executed carpentry work, is not as complex as most temple roofs found in China. The use of wood and brick in the construction of the Bok Kai Temple is similar to the practice of using these materials, as well as stone, in temples in southern China.<sup>23</sup>

Although there is continuity between the organizing principles and forms of the temple as constructed in China and in the United States, the decoration and detailing of those religious structures built in the

United States tend to be simplified. Whereas the profusion of exterior decoration is used to distinguish temples from other buildings in traditional Chinese architecture, roof ornamentation, stone carvings, and geometric lattice work at windows is absent at the Bok Kai Temple and other temples built in California. The mural painting below the porch roof is the only surviving evidence of exterior decoration at the Bok Kai Temple.

The Marysville Bok Kai Temple, like its counterparts in other towns in California and its predecessors in southern Chinese villages, played both a religious and social role in the daily lives of its users. The principle deity associated with the Temple is Bok Eye, a god associated with water and rain. These attributes would have been very important to the founders of the Temple, who had witnessed the flooding of the Yuba River on which the Temple is built. Bok Eye is also known as the God of the North or Dark Northern Heaven. Six other deities are represented in the Temple's Altar Hall. These deities and their social attributes include Kuan Kung (for justice); Tai Sing (or Yu Feng in Mandarin; for civil and military activities); Quon Yim (or Kuan-yin; for mercy); Sing Mo (or Sheng-mu; for seafarers); Wa Ho (or Hua T'o; for medicine); How Toe (or T'u-Ti; protective God of Earth).<sup>24</sup>

The founding of the Temple was a symbol of the growing presence and influence of the Chinese community in Marysville. The maintenance and upkeep of the Temple required contributions from every member of the community, both in time and money. The Temple provided a network of support for the community, which, from its earliest period and particularly after the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, was faced with various forms of discrimination and isolation. From its founding through the present day, the Council Chamber in the hall to the west of the Altar Hall has been used for community meetings, classes, and other social gatherings.

At the same time that the Chinese community in Marysville built the Bok Kai Temple, Chinese immigrants to other areas of California and the west were constructing temples to serve their local community. Among the most prominent of the surviving structures are the temples in Oroville, the Won Lim Temple in Weaverville, and temples in San Francisco rebuilt after that city's earthquake and fire in 1906. These temples display a common organization, relating to the religious and social functions of the temple and the relationship of social hierarchies.<sup>25</sup>

### Early Building Chronology

The Bok Kai Temple is a one-story, unreinforced-brick and wood-frame structure constructed in 1880, but incorporating portions of earlier buildings. (See Appendix E, Drawing E2.2). Before 1880, a bathhouse and another brick structure were built on site, later becoming the Bok Kai Temple. The north-facing return on the west elevation of the Temple and the east-west running brick wall dividing the eastern half of the building into two sections correspond to a party wall separating these two buildings. The brick bearing walls of the bathhouse were used in the construction of the first on-site temple, built in 1869. This building most likely had roughly the same footprint as the southern half of the current Temple. In 1880, the Bok Kai Temple was expanded to include the brick building to the north. At that time, it is likely that the east-west running brick wall was removed from the west half of the Temple and new load-bearing brick walls were installed to form the east and west walls of the Altar Hall.

Evidence for the construction of new bearing walls in the Altar Hall is found in the joints between perpendicular brick walls. The east and west walls of the Altar Hall are not tied into the north wall of the building or the east-west running wall in the eastern section of the building, indicating a different period of construction. In addition, there is a cold joint between the east wall of the Altar Hall and the brick wall dividing the eastern section of the building in half on either side of this east-west running wall. This implies that the east-west running wall is earlier and the other wall was built up to it. Further evidence of the construction chronology is found at the intersecting brick walls in the center of the eastern section of the building. The way that the brick walls are tied together at this location indicates that this was originally an exterior corner of the earlier bathhouse building, and an east-west running brick wall was built to extend the length of the building eastward. The north-south wall running perpendicular to this corner is later and was built up to the corner.

The wood-frame walls on the north, east, and south elevations of the easternmost section of the building most likely date to 1869, 1880, or a short time thereafter. Based on the size of the framing members and the presence of brick features along the walls, these walls are from an early part of the building's chronology. However, it is not clear why the walls would have been built out of wood framing instead of brick like the rest of the structure, other than for the economy of time and money. Part of the south wood-frame wall rests on a brick foundation, the remnants of the brick wall constructed when the bathhouse was expanded eastward.

It is likely that the wood floor framing and ceiling framing in the Altar Hall was constructed in 1880. In the crawl space below the Altar Hall, joist pockets for floor framing are found on the north foundation wall, approximately six feet below the existing floor framing. This may correspond to the floor level of the earlier building on the site. It is not known whether the floor framing and ceiling framing of the other sections of the building date to 1880 or to another date. The ceiling framing of the Altar Hall forms two gables with a barrel vault between the gables. The joists run east-west and the board sheathing is perpendicular to the joists.

The earliest image of the Bok Kai Temple, a photograph dating to circa 1890 to 1900, shows the exterior of the building as it would have appeared very soon after its dedication in 1880 (see Appendix A, Figure 2). In this photograph, the form and the design of the south elevation are similar to the existing building; however, the materials and condition of the Temple were different. The double-gabled middle section of the Temple was flanked by two lower side halls, and exterior doors opened into each of the three sections, as they do now. The middle section of the building was stuccoed and white, with the stucco at the gable ends scored in an orthogonal pattern. The exterior walls of the side halls were a darker color and appear to have been painted a dark color or left exposed brick rather than stuccoed. The visor roofs projecting from the side halls to cover the exterior doors into these spaces were supported by carved wood posts, and the ends of the fascia boards at the visor roofs were carved with an ogee profile similar to the ends of the wood beams at the main porch roof. The roofing of the visor roofs was made of tongue-and-groove wood boards. Two small figurines set on wood plinths were situated on the ends of the beams at the outer end of the porch wing walls. The two gable roofs had wood shingles with rounded ends instead of the tile currently used for roofing, and a decorative ridge board ran east-west across the ridge of each gable section. A railing with turned balusters ran between the bases of the wood columns at the porch platform. Another early photograph shows the Temple in a similar configuration (see Appendix A, Figure 3).

### **Campaigns of Building Alterations**

The form and materials of the existing Bok Kai Temple retain a great deal of the integrity of the Temple as it stood when dedicated in 1880. Sanborn Fire Insurance Company maps for the years 1885 through 1948 show the plan of the 80-foot by 40-foot building almost unchanged over that time period (Appendix D). One minor alteration was the addition of a small room on the north side of the Temple at the northeast corner of the building. This addition appears on the 1890 and 1895 Sanborn maps, but is no

longer present in 1909. The 1948 Sanborn map shows a larger addition at the east end of the building. Although no longer present, the brick foundations visible at the ground surface near the southeast corner of the building may be from this addition. Throughout the life of the Temple, there were periodic repairs and at least two documented renovation campaigns, but these resulted in little change to the overall design. In general, the repairs and renovations were made to preserve the materials and design of the Bok Kai Temple.

The first major documented renovation of the Bok Kai Temple after 1880 did not take place until 1960, although fundraising and planning for restoration work began in 1949. Drawings by Edward von Geldern, dated September 18, 1959, show the floor plan and elevations of the Temple before the 1960–64 renovation. In a 4-year campaign lasting until 1964, renovations to the landscaping, exterior, and interior of the building began. The stone retaining wall and wood pile and board retaining wall between the south façade of the Temple and the levee were replaced with a new concrete retaining wall. At the raised porch in front of the Temple doors, the wooden steps leading into the Altar Hall and the wooden steps on either side of the steps and wood deck were replaced with concrete versions approximating the original configuration. The exterior brick walls of the wings on either side of the Altar Hall were stuccoed to match the central portion of the Temple, and the corrugated metal south façade visor roofs of the side wings were replaced with ceramic roof tile similar to the gable roofs over the Altar Hall. (See Appendix A, Figures 6, 7, and 8). Louvered vents to the roof on both sides of the barrel vault over the Altar Hall may have been removed during this work as well. On the interior, new painted gypsum board was installed over the walls of the Council Chamber and the Altar Hall and the ceiling of the Council Chamber. The floor of the Council Chamber was replaced with a solid concrete pad, and a new plywood subfloor and linoleum tile floor was installed in the Altar Hall. Tongue-and-groove walls running north-south on the west side of the Council Chamber and against the west wall of Storage Room A were removed, and the boarded window on the south wall of the Fortune Reader’s Room was restored.

The next campaign of major work began in 1978, under the direction of the architectural firm Wadley, Martin & Mackensen. An article in the *Marysville Appeal-Democrat* at the end of 1975 describes the scope of work planned for this renovation:

“reconstruction project as outlined by city officials calls for new restrooms, foundation repair, an entrance archway, art work, landscaping and a patio, and restoration or

demolition of pantry and storage areas and restoration to match original construction work, including new walls, roofs and floors... other work includes electrical, storm drain and sewer facilities and a heating unit”<sup>26</sup>

The scope of work seems to have been reduced to stabilization of the existing Temple and construction of new restrooms in the existing building. As part of the work begun in 1978, the room in the southeast corner of the building was renovated, with new wood plank flooring and ceiling installed. The stairs and platform in this room were rebuilt, and the existing toilet rooms were installed at this time as well. Foundation work consisted of strengthening of the floor joists and supports underneath the Altar Hall by adding new wood members to carry the load of the existing deteriorated members. The exterior walls were partially replastered and painted, and selective repointing of brick walls was carried out. A new roof was also installed during this stabilization effort, and some repairs were made to the deteriorated column supporting the east wing wall of the porch. Associated utilities for the building were improved, including electrical, mechanical, and plumbing work.

### **Undated Alterations**

The following changes to the Bok Kai Temple and its site are undated:

The raising of the levee between the south façade of the Bok Kai Temple and Yuba River to its present position obstructing the view from the front of the Temple to the river happened gradually over many years. The levee originally stood at 2 feet until 1872, when its height increased with each occurring flood, ultimately reaching its present dimensions. In typewritten notes, Betty Atwell records that “Mr. Kim [Joe Lung Kim, caretaker of the Bok Kai Temple in the 1960s] tells that in the period of nineteen six to nineteen eleven the levee was very low. The temple was higher.”<sup>27</sup>

The date when the original wood shingles on the gable roofs were replaced with clay tile, as well as when the figurines and wood bases on top of the ends of the wood beams were removed is unknown, although it was sometime before 1950. In a circa 1950 photograph, the gable roofs have clay tiles, the figurines and wood bases at the ends of the wood beams have been removed (see Appendix A, Figure 4).

The installation of the skylight in the Council Chamber is an undated alteration affecting the lighting of the space and introduces waterproofing concerns for the building envelope. The skylight may have been

added in the 1960s to allow more natural light into the room when the openings were filled in on the west elevation of the Temple.

Various repairs and alterations were made to the wood columns supporting the porch roof. These repairs include the installation of metal pins at the base of the east column, the replacement of the bottom sections of both columns with new wood inserts, and possibly the addition of decorative trim to the base and capitals of the columns.

An intricately carved and gilded wood fascia at the outer edge of the porch roof appears in the earliest photograph of the Bok Kai Temple and in a 1977 photograph of the south elevation of the Temple (see Appendix A, Figures 2 and 13). This decorative element no longer exists on the building. Correspondence during the 1978 stabilization work suggests that it was removed at that time for protection, but does not indicate where it would be kept for safekeeping.<sup>28</sup>

### **Summary of Building Chronology**

The following chronology summarizes the development and construction of the Bok Kai Temple and alterations made to the building and site through the present. Elements of this chronology are also shown on a floor plan of the Temple in Appendix E.

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 1854 | Construction of first Chinese temple in Marysville at southeast corner of First and B Streets.  |
| 1869 | Dedication of first Bok Kai Temple at northeast corner of Front and D Streets. This temple incorporated portions of a one-story brick bathhouse built by William Clark in 1852. |
| 1875 | Removal of temple at First and B Streets for the widening of the levee along the north bank of the Yuba River.  |
| 1880 | Expansion and renovation of the Bok Kai Temple at Front and D Streets. A brick building constructed in 1858 by Isaac Belcher was incorporated into the enlarged Bok             |



Kai Temple. New load-bearing walls and roofs for the Altar Hall were built as part of this renovation.

- pre-1890 Small addition made to northeast corner of the building. This addition was present in 1895 but had disappeared by 1909, based on Sanborn maps for Marysville.
- pre-1945 Addition on east end of Temple approximately 20 feet by 40 feet.
- 1960 to 1964 Renovation of the Bok Kai Temple, including reconstruction of the wood retaining wall, main entrance steps, and stoops in concrete; filling in of openings on west wall of building and stuccoing of the exterior brick walls on the west and east wings of the Temple; and replacement of the corrugated metal visor roofs over the doors into the side halls with ceramic roof tile. On the interior, the gypsum wallboard and new flooring in the Council Chamber and Altar Hall was installed.
- 1978 Stabilization of the Bok Kai Temple, including repair of the building's foundations, repair to the exterior stucco, and restoration of the buildings floors, walls, and ceilings. The existing sprayed-on foam roof was installed at this time. New electrical work, storm drain, and sewer services were provided, and the interior toilet rooms at the southeast corner of the building were installed. Landscaping work and the construction of the archway near D Street leading to the Temple was also included in this renovation plan.
- 1996 or 1997 Installation of sheet metal housing at wall vent on west gable end of Altar Hall.<sup>29</sup>
- 1998 or 1999 Installation of iron security gates at exterior doors on south elevation.<sup>30</sup>



## VI. BUILDING DESCRIPTION

### Site

The Bok Kai Temple is situated on the northern bank of the Yuba River at a point where the river widens before meeting the Feather River just to the west. The Temple building occupies a roughly 40-foot by 80-foot area between a levee along the river, a cluster of structures to the north, a public walkway and park to the west, and a parking lot to the east. A chain link fence with barbed wire extends south of the building and defines the Temple property. Gates in this fence at the southwest and southeast corners of the structure provide access to the Temple.

South of the Temple, a concrete walkway separates the south wall of the building from a concrete retaining wall and a series of planting beds and concrete steps that rise up an earthen embankment. From the walkway, steps rise to the concrete platform underneath the porch on the main façade of the Temple. The embankment is a levee built up over time to a height greater than the roof of the Temple to protect the city of Marysville from flooding of the Yuba River. Built into the levee are a walking path and abandoned railroad tracks.

The Temple building is separated from First Street to the north by a group of two-story brick buildings. The building immediately adjacent to the Temple on the north is a house whose side yard extends all the way to the north wall of the Temple. The setback along the north wall of the Temple is not accessible from grounds of the Bok Kai Temple.

The principle access to the front of the Bok Kai Temple is from the west. From the corner of First and D Streets, a smooth- and pebble-textured concrete and brick pathway leads through a ceremonial gateway and past an octagonal pavilion erected in the 1970s to the northwest corner of the Temple building. Open parkland on a rising hill lies beyond the pathway to the west.

East of the Temple is a paved parking lot accessible from First Street. A path on adjacent private property separates the parking lot from the east wall of the Temple.

### **Building Design and Organization**

The Bok Kai Temple is a one-story, brick and wood-frame structure. The exterior unreinforced-brick walls are stuccoed and painted white. The exterior wood-frame walls are covered with corrugated metal siding. A concrete walkway leads to a raised platform in front of the main entrance to the building on the south elevation. A porch roof supported by wood beams and columns covers the main entrance near the center of the south façade and protects mural paintings on the stuccoed exterior walls of the Temple. The beams and columns, as well as the main doors into the Temple are painted red. Additional exterior doors on the south elevation open into side halls to the west and east of the central Altar Hall. Visor roofs supported by newer steel posts project from the south elevation to shelter these doors. A double-gable roof covers the central section of the building, and gently sloping roofs cover the side halls. The double-gable roof of the Altar Hall and porch and the two visor roofs are covered with ceramic tile; the other roofs have a sprayed-on foam roofing material.

Currently, the Bok Kai Temple is divided into three distinct sections. The westernmost section is a large space separated by a wood partition screen into two rooms of roughly equal size. The screen is located at the former position of the party wall between the two earlier buildings on the site. The two rooms in the western wing of the Temple are referred to as Council Chamber A and Council Chamber B in this report. A description of these spaces from the time of the Temple's dedication in 1880 states that the "hall next to D Street appears to be a refreshment room. Its walls are decorated with figures of men and family groups, who resemble Japanese more than Chinese."<sup>31</sup>

The center wing of the Temple is the Altar Hall. The main entrance to this single rectangular room is from the porch on the south façade of the building. There is a door on the east side of the room that connects the Altar Hall to the eastern section of the Temple. An account from the 1880 Temple dedication described the Altar Hall as "glittering with gilded banners and insignia in the Chinese language. The two canopies under which will be seated to-day the deities representative of Good and Evil, as well as representatives of the wise sages whose memories are held in reverence, are most elaborately decorated in tinsel and bronze, and will be found to be the show-cases of the exhibition."<sup>32</sup>

East of the Altar Hall is the Caretaker's Wing. This area of the building has a more utilitarian feel because many of the building's service functions are located here. Brick walls divide this wing into four spaces, with wooden partitions further subdividing the area. A door from the exterior and a second door

from the Altar Hall lead into the Fortune Reader's Room. North of this room is a small storage room, called Storage Room A in this report. A room currently used for storage of carved plaques, but historically used as a Gamblers' Room, sits north of Storage Room A, separated by a wood-frame wall. A second, larger storage room, herein called Storage Room B, lies east of the Fortune Reader's Room. Men's and women's toilet rooms installed in 1978 occupy the southeast corner of Storage Room B. The Temple Kitchen sits in the northeast corner of the Caretaker's Wing. A wood partition encloses the small Caretaker's Bedroom in the southwest corner of the Temple Kitchen.

### **Exterior Description—General**

The different sections comprising the Bok Kai Temple building are evident on the exterior by changes in exterior materials and roof heights. Most of the exterior is finished with white, rough-textured stucco. The stucco is scored to resemble ashlar masonry on the gable ends of the central section of the building. The easternmost section is clad in stucco of a different texture on the east wall and corrugated metal siding on the north and south façades. The stucco and metal siding of the exterior walls come down nearly to grade, with only one course of the brick foundation walls visible at some areas. At the top of the building, the double-gabled roofline of the sanctuary space is flanked by the lower parapet walls of the adjacent sections. The roof of the final section slopes down to the east wall of the building.

On the south elevation, the downward slope of the lower gable forms the roof of the porch over the main entrance into the Bok Kai Temple. Two columns support the south end of the porch roof, and wood beams spanning between the columns and the south wall of the building support brick wing walls. A polychrome mural composed of narrative, decorative, and calligraphic scenes is painted directly onto the plastered building wall and wing walls below the porch roof. The murals appear approximately 15'-6" up from the porch floor, as a frieze enveloping the upper sections of the plastered walls. They are arranged into a horizontal register of three main panels on the main building wall and additional panels on the east and west wing walls following the slope of the porch roof.

The paintings are executed in the *Fresco Secco* technique. A white preparatory ground layer composed of gypsum (calcium sulfate dihydrate) and chalk (calcium carbonate) was first painted directly onto the gritty stucco undercoat. The white ground is very thin (1/16 inch) and shows parallel ridges, lap marks, bubble craters, and other indications of an aqueous-based brush-applied mixture. The paint layers are applied directly onto the plaster/gypsum ground, the reflective white of the ground providing color

brilliance. First, the figures, foliage and other painted forms are outlined with opaque black contour brush lines, drawn in a fluid and graceful manner, characteristic of the Asian traditions of painting on silk and Japan paper. The forms within the lines are then colored with thin, translucent applications of paint. All painterly effects are achieved with a compact cluster of paint colors, derived from natural and manufactured pigments, consistent with late 19<sup>th</sup> century technology. The palette includes carbon black, red oxide earth, brown oxide earth, yellow oxide earth, ultramarine blue, malachite or Emerald green (copper aceto-arsenate), and chrome yellow. Laboratory analysis reveals the presence of almost no binder in both the ground and paint layers, the latter possibly being of oil binder origin. This is consistent with visual and physical examination, which confirms stiff, minimally bound, and extremely fragile ground and paint layers (see Paint Analysis Report in Appendix I).

The three doors into the Bok Kai Temple are all on the south elevation, as are most of the window openings. Recessed wall sections at the location of filled-in openings are visible on the west elevation and two windows are still in place on the north elevation, although one of these windows has been blocked on the interior. Flanking the three sets of doors are painted wooden plaques and paper scrolls bearing the Temple name and other writings. The top of the north-facing return on the west elevation is also painted with the name of the Temple.

### **Exterior South (Main) Elevation Description**

The south elevation is the principal façade of the Bok Kai Temple, as is evident by the number of door and window openings, the important mural painting below the porch roof, and the writings flanking the doorways (see Appendix B, Figure 1). This elevation is oriented toward the river and historically would have been the first view of the Temple for many people as they entered Marysville. With the construction of the railroad embankment and elevated levee along the river, the present access to the Temple site is now from the northwest, and the view of the south elevation is limited. The south elevation retains the main entrance into the building, as well as the two secondary entrances.

The sections of the Bok Kai Temple can be discerned on the exterior south façade. Three of the sections are constructed of stuccoed brick walls. Historic photographs show that only the exterior façade of the middle section, the Altar Hall, may have originally been stuccoed, the other sections of the south façade consisting of exposed brick or painted a dark color. Each of the three wings has a door opening into the building. Windows flank the door opening on the westernmost section, and a single window is located to

the east of the door opening in the third section. The opening into the Altar Hall contains a pair of red-painted paneled doors with a painted iron security gate. There are no windows on the south façade of the section containing the Altar Hall. A series of concrete steps climb to a platform, and another set of steps leads from the platform to the main doors of the building raised above grade level. The easternmost section of the building has corrugated metal siding on a wood-frame wall.

The porch over the doors leading into the Altar Hall consists of the downward-sloping gable over the central section of the Temple, brick wing walls supported by wood beams, and turned wood columns with nailed on trim and ornament. Painted on the plastered surfaces of the two wing walls of the porch and the wall directly above the Temple doors are a series of figurative, narrative, and ornamental scenes. These mural paintings, perhaps the work of a single artist, depict conferring historic figures, a woman and boy engaged in a poetry reading, and other figurative scenes. Some of the writing panels list natural elements, such as water features and tree types. A written signature in one of the panels dates the mural painting to 1880. Birds and flowers are painted in decorative panels of the mural. The white paint on the stuccoed wall below the mural is a modern paint with a different character than the paint used for the mural. It is not known if there is any other painted decoration on this lower portion of the south-facing porch wall that has been covered over. The structural beams and columns of the porch and the bottom of the porch roof joists are painted red. The soffit of the porch and the side of the joists are painted white. An ornamental carved wood fascia was present at the outer edge of the porch roof up to the 1970s but is no longer in place.

### **Exterior West Elevation Description**

The existing principal access route to the Bok Kai Temple leads past the west elevation, which faces the landscaped park with the associated gateway and pavilion structure (see Appendix B, Figure 2). The exterior surface of the west façade is rough-textured stucco painted white. It is roughly rectangular with a north-facing return wall near the center of the elevation. The section of façade to the north of this return wall has two large panels, slightly set back in plane, where openings have previously been filled in and stuccoed over; the south half of the elevation has a larger inset panel. The paint covering the iron lintels above the blocked openings is peeling; some corrosion is visible. The top portion of the return wall is painted red with black writing spelling out “Old North Creek Temple” in Chinese and “Bok Kai Temple” in English. Some of the paint at this sign is fading and peeling, especially near the top. It is not known whether an earlier sign painted with the name of the Temple exists underneath the present sign.

Set back from the flat parapet line of the west elevation are the two gable ends and barrel vault of the roof covering the altar section of the Bok Kai Temple. The larger northern gable has a sheet-metal vent with an electrical exhaust fan on the west side near its peak.

A wall scupper with drain leader to the ground is located at the inside corner of the return wall, and two other drain leaders connected to gutters on other elevations are situated on the north and south corners of the façade. There is vegetation growing at the scupper due to the presence of excess standing water. An electrical meter and conduit are attached to the wall near the north corner of the west elevation.

### **Exterior North Elevation Description**

The white stucco wall of the north elevation is made up of the rear walls of the different sections of the building. These walls all lay in a single plane with the exception of the north-facing return wall on the west elevation. The different sections are indicated by changes in roof height. The downward slope of the gable with parapets at each of the gable ends is visible above the section of the building containing the Altar Hall. The sections on either side of the Altar Hall have flat parapets at the roofline. The fourth section has a shed roof sloping downward to the east.

The walls of the north elevation consist of stuccoed brick masonry and corrugated metal siding over wood framing. A tree is painted on the stucco at one area of the north elevation. Two window openings are visible on the north elevation, both on the eastern portion of the building. One of these windows is filled in on the interior so that it no longer functions as a window. A drain leader connected to a roof drain and electrical conduit run across the north façade from approximately the middle of the elevation to the west corner. Fences at the west and east ends of the north elevation make this side of the building inaccessible.

### **Exterior East Elevation Description**

The east elevation consists of a planar rectangular wall area. The entire wall consists of corrugated metal with a stucco render. Some of the brick wall foundation is visible at the base of the wall. The sloping shed roof of the eastern section of the building overhangs slightly the east façade. Set back from the lower roof line of this shed roof at the eastern section of the building are the two gable ends and barrel vault of the roof over the Altar Hall.



### **Interior Description—General**

The various uses of the interior spaces are clearly defined by the materials and finishes found in the different rooms. The Council Chamber and Altar Hall, the spaces that serve the primary social and religious functions of the Temple, have newer floor and wall coverings than the other rooms. The concrete and linoleum floors and gypsum board wall finishes date to the 1960–64 renovation campaign. These rooms also contain the majority of the religious and cultural artifacts and furnishings used throughout the history of the Temple. The spaces of the Caretaker’s Wing are more utilitarian in use but retain many of their historic materials, including wood floors, exposed and plastered brick walls, and built-in features.

The interior spaces all contain a great number of artifacts and features dating to every period of the building’s use. In the Altar Hall, these features include the altar tables, polychrome figures, shrines, and decorative elements relating to the religious nature of this space. Some of the artifacts may predate the Temple itself, brought from China by the first users of the Temple. The other rooms of the Temple house artifacts and features used for religious ceremonies, such as the intricately carved litters, social functions, including portions of the dragon used in the first Bok Kai Festival parade, and other operations of the Temple, such as account ledgers and a built-in oven and stove. Many of the objects have unique artistic or historic significance because they were acquired over different periods in the history of the Bok Kai Temple. The use of these objects has been integral to temple rituals, festivals, and parades. A number of the objects are now too aged and delicate to be used ceremonially, but they offer tremendous insight into the history and activities of the Bok Kai Temple and its followers.

### **Council Chambers A and B**

Council Chambers A and B comprise the western wing of the Bok Kai Temple (see Appendix B, Figure 3). These rooms have a smooth concrete floor, 4 inches below the top of the door threshold, probably dating to the 1960–64 renovation work. The floor is painted red. The brick walls at the perimeter of the room are covered with gypsum board painted pale blue. Wood baseboard runs along the bottom of the walls. A wooden partition screen with three pairs of doors divides the Council Chamber into two rooms, referred to in this report as Council Chambers A and B. The partition has transom and side panels with calligraphy, carved ornament screens at the doors, and a row of balusters at the top. Part of the partition is painted and part is lacquered. A historic photograph, possibly depicting the interior of the Council

Chamber, shows this partition dividing the chamber into two rooms with vertical wood panel floor and wall finishes. The ceiling in the Council Chamber is covered with gypsum board and painted white.

The set of wood double doors on the south wall provide the only means of access into and out of the Council Chamber rooms. This door, painted red, has applied black molding ornament on the exterior face of each leaf. The door has a non-historic latch set and clasp with padlock. Wooden double-hung windows flank the door on the south wall. Each window has six-over-six sash. A steel-frame skylight with wire glass provides natural light for Council Chamber A. There are no sash weights, locks, or other hardware remaining at the windows. The trim at the windows and doors is wood without a molding profile.

A pair of hanging pendant electrical lights is used for lighting Council Chamber A. A single fluorescent light fixture hangs from the ceiling in Council Chamber B. Most of the electrical wiring in the Council Chamber rooms is built into the wall, with the exception of a section of wall-mounted conduit on the north wall of Council Chamber A. There are no plumbing or heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems installed in the Council Chamber.

Stored within the Council Chamber rooms are a great number of furnishings and important artifacts. Council Chamber A serves doubly as a historic artifact room and a catchall storage space for oversized ceremonial and parade objects. Significant historic artifacts include two elaborately carved and gilded wood litters (used in Bok Kai Festival processions), stacking wood crates containing antique polychromed rod puppets, and three old metal and leather-trimmed wood trunks. The rod puppets are extremely rare, most similar examples destroyed during China's Cultural Revolution. Objects of more recent date include large festival parasols and dragon costume. Interspersed with treasured materials are old wood crates, and remnants of artifacts and hardware piled together without isolation or protection from adjacent materials.

Council Chamber B contains modern tables and glass display counters used for community meetings, sales and other functions. There are seven carved rosewood armchairs, one rosewood serving/card table, and four rectangular carved rosewood side tables. Also stored in Council Chamber B are many historic artifacts, including two long wooden crates containing rolled textiles, four tabletop display easels with framed figural paintings on paper or silk, a nineteenth century, cast iron safe from the firm Titlon &

McFarland, and numerous Bok Kai ledger books (dating as far back as the late nineteenth century). Six carved door panels serve as dividers between Council Chamber A and Council Chamber B.

The Council Chamber is a significant space in the Bok Kai Temple. Although the floor, wall, and ceiling finishes have been altered and do not convey a sense of the historic appearance, the space is still used for social and community functions.

### **Altar Hall**

The Altar Hall, raised above the other interior spaces in the Bok Kai Temple, is in the central section of the building (see Appendix B, Figure 4). The interior floor of the Altar Hall consists of linoleum tile on a plywood subfloor, probably dating to the 1960–64 renovation work. Wood plank flooring is still intact below the 9-inch by 9-inch linoleum tile and plywood. As in the Council Chamber, the brick walls of the Altar Hall are covered with painted gypsum board. In the Altar Hall, the gypsum board has a skip trowel finish painted pink. The linoleum tile and gypsum board was installed up to, not underneath or behind, the built-in features of the Altar Hall. Wood baseboard is used at the base of the walls. The ceiling in the Altar Hall consists of a large gable, barrel vault, and half of a second, smaller gable, all constructed of Douglas fir wood. Upon close examination, a polychrome painted pattern is visible at the ceiling elements. At the gabled sections of the ceiling, the east-west running ceiling joists are painted green, the board sheathing ochre (moderate orange yellow), and the battens between the sheathing planks red. At the barrel vault, the ribs of the vault are painted red, the curved planks green, and the applied molding trim is ochre.

The wood panel doors at the main entrance into the Altar Hall are painted red on the exterior and varnished on the interior. A wooden crossbar and sliding metal latch is used to secure this door. There is also a wood panel door on the east wall, leading into the Caretaker's Wing. This door has a non-historic lockset and clasp with padlock. The casework at the doors consists of painted and varnished wood.

Twelve hanging pendant lamps are used to light the Altar Hall. The shades of these electrical light fixtures are quite ornate, but differ from each other in their ornament and decoration. Modern wall-mounted fixtures on the east wall above the door opening and on the west wall near a countertop are also found in the Altar Hall. A louvered vent on the west gable end wall near the ceiling is used for ventilating the Altar Hall.

The Altar Hall contains many significant built-in features and artifacts. Immediately after stepping over the raised board at the door threshold and entering the space from the main doors, one encounters a screen with doors and a second raised threshold board barrier, both barriers to prevent positive forces from leaving the Temple and negative forces from entering. There is also a carved ornamental screen, several carved wooden panels, and an offering altar table located in the southern portion of the Altar Hall. Along the east and west walls are wooden staffs with decorative sheet metal tops, held in wooden stands with fabric draped from the staffs. A large altar table containing statues of the Temple's principal deities is centered along the north wall. A smaller altar table with statues is situated in the northwest corner of the room. An offering table is located in front of these altar tables and a smaller incense burner is set on the floor altar to the east of the main altar. An L-shaped manager's counter is found in the southwest corner of the Altar Hall. A drum and bronze bell, with painted and cast decoration, are placed on a stand in the southeast corner of the room. Carved plaques bearing inscriptions in Chinese are mounted to the walls and screens throughout the room. There are also large, highly ornamental screens hanging from the roof structure in the Altar Hall. These gilded wood and plaster carvings depict floral and animal subjects. They are as old as the Temple building, and may even predate the construction of the Temple. Other objects located in the Altar Hall include five portable wooden trestle tables used for individual ceremonies, polychromed ceramic and papier maché figures, glass and ceramic vases used to hold fresh flowers, flags and brightly colored jeweled decorations, cast metal statuary and decorative urns (with sand to hold burning incense sticks), pots with oil to burn floating wicks, and portable fire extinguishers.

The Altar Hall is a very significant space because of the sense of the building's use and history that it conveys. This room retains much of its original architectural material, although some the walls and floor have been covered with later materials, as well as numerous important objects and artifacts.

### **Fortune Reader's Room**

The first room one enters in the Caretaker's Wing from the exterior or the Altar Hall is the Fortune Reader's Room (see Appendix B, Figure 5). This room has a wood floor with 5 ½-inch planks running north-south. Joist pockets in the south wall approximately 39 inches above the existing floor and spaced 16 inches on center imply that the original floor of this room was higher than the existing floor. The four walls of the room are brick set in an irregular common bond. The north, east, and south walls have

fragments of ¾-inch thick plaster remaining on the upper portions of the walls. The west wall is exposed brick. The ceiling of the Fortune Reader's Room is a 3 ½-inch wide board ceiling, with the boards running north-south.

A single panel door opens into the Fortune Reader's Room from the exterior on the south wall of the room. There is a transom window above the door. This door has a single doorknob set and clasp with padlock. A six-over-six, wood double-hung window on the south wall provides light into the room. A set of wood steps along the west wall leads to the door connecting this room to the Altar Hall. A board holding the paper fortunes interpreted by the fortune reader sits on the floor propped against the steps. Previously this board was mounted behind the manager's counter on the west wall of the Altar Hall. This significant furnishing is still used today for telling fortunes on festival days. On a platform adjacent to the landing of the steps is a large cast iron stove, which until a decade ago served as a burning receptacle for worshipper's paper offerings. Below the landing is an opening leading into the crawl space below the Altar Hall. A set of double doors on the north wall opens into a storage room. These doors have panels and three lights each; there are wood panels to the side of the doors. At the head of the door opening on the north wall is a large wood lintel beam. On the east wall of the Fortune Reader's Room is a door leading into another storage room. This panel door has four lights. To the north of the door is a boarded window opening, implying that this wall was originally an exterior wall. The size of the opening is the same as the existing window opening on the south wall of the room.

The Fortune Reader's Room contains a single bulb fixture with no shade or diffuser hanging from the ceiling near the center of the room. An electrical subpanel is located on the west wall near the southwest corner of the room. From this subpanel, wall-mounted conduit leads to several light fixtures in this room and to electrical work in the other rooms of the building. There is no plumbing or other modern mechanical equipment in this room.

The Fortune Reader's Room is a significant space. In addition to its important connection to the religious use of the building, this room contains evidence of the Temple's early building construction.

### **Storage Room A and Gamblers' Room**

North of the Fortune Reader's Room is a space roughly the same size but divided into two rooms: Storage Room A and the Gamblers' Room. Each of these rooms has 3-inch wide plank flooring, running

east-west. A wood-frame partition separates the two rooms, with the Gamblers' Room at the north end and the storage room at the south side of the space. The side of the partition facing the Gamblers' Room has fragments of wallpaper attached to the wood boards. The other walls of these two rooms are brick. On the east wall of the Gamblers' Room is a niche approximately 8 inches by 8 inches. A wood baseboard is found at the bottom of the brick walls in the storage room. Both rooms have board ceilings.

In the middle of the wood partition between Storage Room A and the Gamblers' Room is a single door with two lights. A set of double doors, with eight lights each, opens into the adjacent space east of the Storage Room. There is a blocked-off window opening on the north wall of the Gamblers' Room. This opening is smaller than any of the other window openings found in the building.

Hanging electrical wire with single bulb fixtures, one in Storage Room A and two in the Gamblers' Room, are the only electrical work found in these rooms. Much of the aged wiring and lighting in these rooms is limited and makeshift, consisting of the running of extension cords, often from other extension cords, through doorways and walls. There is no plumbing or other modern mechanical equipment, although there is an abandoned stovepipe at the south end of the east wall of the storage room. This stove pipe is set in an opening in the wall and turns downward, running almost to the floor.

Various ledger books, trunks, furniture, and other objects are kept in the storage room. The Gamblers' Room is currently used to store numerous wood plaques carved with Chinese inscriptions. These stand on the floor, propped against the cool, often damp walls of the room.

Storage Room A and Gamblers' Room are contributing spaces to the Bok Kai Temple. Although they retain material dating to the Temple's early period of significance, the original use of the rooms is not well conveyed.

### **Storage Room B and Toilet Rooms**

The room in the southeast corner of the Bok Kai Temple has been designated Storage Room B in this report. This room has 6-inch wide plank flooring, running north-south. The flooring is probably not original. The west and north walls of the Storage Room are brick. The east and south walls are wood frame with 6-inch wide siding on the upper areas of the walls, and exterior corrugated metal siding visible at the lower areas. The west wall was originally an exterior wall, built before construction of the

1880 Temple. Evidence of this includes a boarded window opening and bricked-in transom opening above the door at the middle of the wall. The brick north wall and the 1-foot high partial foundation on the south wall may date to the time when the earlier on-site bathhouse was enlarged. The existing ceiling, which slopes downward to the east, has 6-inch wide boards running north-south. This ceiling is roughly 2 feet higher than an earlier ceiling with similar slope. Filled-in ceiling joist pockets on the west wall and the visible brick ledger parallel to the slope of the existing ceiling on the north wall are evidence of this.

A staircase in the northwest corner of Storage Room B runs along the north wall and up to a wood platform covering the eastern half of the room. Underneath the platform, at the southeast corner of the room, are men's and women's toilet rooms. These toilet rooms were added in 1978; it is unknown what the previous use of the space in this corner of the room was, although there was wood floor and framing prior to the installation of the toilet rooms. The new toilet rooms have been inserted into the Temple in an inconspicuous and sensitive way. Each toilet room has a single toilet, sink, and grab bars on two walls. The floors of the rooms are sheet vinyl and the walls stud walls with gypsum board. A hot water heater, water pipes, and vent pipes for the toilet rooms are located above the platform against the east wall of the room. Copper plumbing pipes continue along the south wall to an exterior hose bib.

Storage Room B is a contributing space to the Bok Kai Temple. Although it retains material dating to the Temple's early period of significance and contains physical evidence of earlier on-site buildings, the original use of the room is not well conveyed. The toilet rooms are non-contributing spaces.

### **Temple Kitchen**

The Temple Kitchen occupies the northeast corner of the Bok Kai Temple (see Appendix B, Figure 6). The irregular plank flooring runs east-west at a slightly lower level than the floor of the adjacent storage room. The west and south walls are brick, and the north and east walls are wood frame of similar construction as the wood frame walls of Storage Room B, although there is no interior paneling or siding in the Temple Kitchen. All of the wood-frame walls have exposed framing, so that the exterior corrugated metal siding is visible. The ceiling joists with the board sheathing above them are visible in the Temple Kitchen. A framed opening may indicate the former position of a skylight at the northwest corner of the ceiling.

An iron lintel and jamb hardware is still in place at the door between Storage Room A and the Temple Kitchen in the west wall of the room. This was probably an opening for an exterior door in the Belcher Building incorporated into the Bok Kai Temple in 1880, before the frame walls were constructed to form the space that is now the Temple Kitchen. There is an intact window on the north wall of the room and a covered window opening on the east wall.

An unshaded hanging light fixture provides lighting in the Temple Kitchen. Modern polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plumbing pipes are mounted to the north and east walls where they are connected to a sink and toilet room.

Assorted materials and objects are piled together and stored in the Temple Kitchen, historic alongside recent. Items include old wrought iron staffs (ceremony poles), antique calligraphy panels, party goods (e.g., paper plates) and oil for burning.

A wood staircase in the southeast corner of the Temple Kitchen climbs to a platform along the south wall of the Temple Kitchen. The bamboo hoops comprising the frame of the dragon used in the first Bok Kai Festival is stored on this platform. Another set of smaller steps at the west end of the platform leads to a small access panel. Although there is currently no access through this panel, it most likely leads to the roof above the western half of the Caretaker's Wing. The Temple Kitchen contains several important built-in features, including a brick oven along the north wall and a brick stove at the southeast corner of the room. There is also a large enamel sink on the east wall.

The Temple Kitchen is a contributing space in the Bok Kai Temple. It retains material dating to the Temple's early period of significance, including built-in features, and contains physical evidence of earlier on-site buildings. The use of the room as a kitchen is evident from the surviving built-in features.

### **Caretaker's Bedroom and Toilet Room**

Within the Temple Kitchen space are two smaller rooms created by wooden partitions: the Caretaker's Bedroom and a toilet room. The Caretaker's Bedroom is located underneath the platform in the southwest corner of the Temple Kitchen. Three wood partition walls and the middle section of the east wall of the Temple Kitchen form the toilet room. Both of these rooms have the same wood plank flooring as the rest of the Temple Kitchen. On the outside face of the partition walls forming the



Caretaker's Bedroom, vertical 3-inch wide beaded boards are used. The brick and wood-frame walls of the Caretaker's Bedroom are covered with several types of wallpaper, vintage newspapers, and fabric coverings. The ceiling consists of flat board panels with sections of the platform framing visible in some areas. The narrow vertical paneling of the toilet room is painted light blue. There is no ceiling over this small room.

The Caretaker's Bedroom and toilet room contain features representative of their use. Although there is no bed in the Caretaker's Bedroom, there are drawers and shelves for storage. The toilet room still contains a porcelain toilet, although it is unknown whether the plumbing for this toilet is operational.

The Caretaker's Bedroom and toilet room are significant spaces in the Bok Kai Temple. They strongly convey the specialized uses of some spaces within the Temple and have changed little over time. They also retain a fair amount of historic material.



## VII. CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

The term “character-defining feature” is used to identify the elements that characterize a building and can include its overall shape, massing, materials, craftsmanship, functional and decorative details, interior proportions, spaces, and attributes, as well as certain aspects related to the site, landscaping, and environment. Creating a list of character-defining features is the first step in ascertaining a structure’s original essence, leading then to retention, rehabilitation, and preservation of the specific elements. As a standard component of a typical HSR, a character-defining features list is a useful tool in enumerating distinguishing traits and crucial in understanding a building’s historic character. Occasionally, no longer existing or altered features appear on the list when their reintroduction would be beneficial to understanding the building’s historic character during a specific time period. The following lists summarize significant building elements and attempts to define elements that contribute to the character of the Bok Kai Temple.

### **Character-Defining Site Features**

- Building oriented to face the Yuba River
- Archway and pavilion along pathway west of the Temple to face the river at the southern entrance of Marysville

### **Character-Defining Exterior Features**

- Polychromatic mural below porch roof
- Carved wood plaques at doors on south elevation
- Double-gable and barrel-vault roof over Altar Hall
- Stuccoed exterior walls at Altar Hall
- Wood double-hung windows

### **Character-Defining Interior Features**

- Traditional Chinese temple floor plan
- Wood partitions and screens in Council Chamber and Altar Hall
- Gable and barrel-vault ceiling in Altar Hall
- Carved wood plaques
- Wood floors and board ceilings

- Plastered and exposed brick walls
- Wood-frame walls
- Wooden steps and platforms
- Built-in features, including altars, brick stove and oven, and partition screens

## VIII. INTEGRITY EVALUATION

### Evaluation of Integrity

The *National Register of Historic Places Bulletin 15* standards and criteria were used to evaluate the integrity of the Bok Kai Temple.<sup>33</sup> *Bulletin 15* defines integrity as the ability of a property to convey its significance. Integrity is the authenticity of a historic resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics existing during the resource's period of significance. Integrity involves several aspects including location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.

### Location

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The Bok Kai Temple sits in its original footprint and was not moved. This is the same location as an earlier temple, dating to 1869, which was expanded to build the 1880 Temple. The Temple's location and orientation are in accordance with Chinese Feng Shui theory. A temple, with its altar facing directly toward an active stream, is considered a spiritual barrier to any evil that might flow along an important water source and sweep away good fortune from a community's enterprises.

### Design

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The general design of the Bok Kai Temple remains unchanged and reflects the original intention for the building. There have been minor modifications to the interior spaces of the building, but the overall plan remains the same as the historic plan, and the form and style of the Temple remain intact.

### Setting

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property, constituting topographic features, vegetation, manmade features, and relationships between buildings or open space. Although the Bok Kai Temple remains in its original location with little change to the design of the building, the surrounding landscape has been altered over time. The most dramatic impact to the setting of the Temple is the gradual building up of the levee along the bank of the Yuba River, which now completely separates the building from the river. Associated with the construction of the levee was the elimination of Front Street, onto which the

Temple faced, and the bridge that crossed the Yuba River at D Street near the Temple. The bridge was the former southern entrance to the city of Marysville.

### **Materials**

Materials are the physical elements combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The integrity of the Bok Kai Temple materials is highly intact because of the presence of a large amount of the original historic fabric.

### **Workmanship**

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture, people, or artisan during any given period in history or pre-history. Workmanship at the Bok Kai Temple is expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes, as well as in the high quality of the exterior mural paintings.

### **Feeling**

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. On the exterior, the feeling of the Bok Kai Temple has been altered because the surrounding landscape was modified. On the interior, the feeling strongly evokes the historic and current use of the building as a Taoist Temple.

### **Association**

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Because the Bok Kai Temple was the principal religious structure serving one of the largest Chinese-American communities in California, it has a strong association with the American immigration experience, especially for Asian-Americans.

## IX. CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

### Conditions Introduction

The following section provides an assessment of conditions for the different building systems and materials comprising the Bok Kai Temple. The assessment of the existing conditions was developed through on-site investigation of the structure, with ladders and available scaffolding used to perform close-up examination of materials and systems at some locations. Although many of the original materials and systems are still present in the building, the integrity of these elements is compromised by their current condition. Many of the building systems display some evidence of deterioration because of water infiltration, normal weathering, or lack of routine maintenance.

### Building System Conditions

#### *Foundations*

The foundations of the entire building are constructed of brick, including the foundation walls of the wood-frame rooms in the Caretaker's Wing. The only area where these foundation walls are clearly visible is in the crawl space below the Altar Hall, accessible through a small opening in the caretaker's chamber. At other locations, the sub-grade foundations are not accessible, although the above-grade portions of the foundation walls are visible.

In the visible portions of the brick foundations below the Altar Hall and other sections of the building, there is some disintegration of pointing mortar and cracking through brick courses, but overall the foundations appear to be in good condition (see Appendix B, Figure 7).

There is little deterioration of the brick units, indicating that rising damp and water infiltration through the foundation walls are not major problems.

#### *Conclusions*

- Open mortar joints
- Cracking through masonry

### *Exterior Walls*

The exterior walls of the Bok Kai Temple consist of stuccoed brick masonry and corrugated metal siding and stucco on wood framing. The stucco on the brick portions of the building is painted white, and at the gable ends of the roof above the Altar Hall, it is scored with vertical and horizontal lines. The stucco on the wood-frame wall of the east elevation is rough-textured stucco. The metal corrugated siding is nailed to the wood-frame walls on the north and south façades of the easternmost section of the building. The metal siding is also painted white.

Both cracking and spalling of the stucco were noted at the stucco walls. Although most of the cracking is minor, some is severe and extends through the masonry wall, such as at the east wing wall of the porch. Vegetation on the west, north, and east elevations contributes to the disintegration of the exterior stucco surfaces by keeping moisture in contact with the walls and breaking apart the stucco as the plants take hold and grow. Soiling of the stucco surfaces is also a common condition (see Appendix B, Figure 8). A typical condition of the corrugated metal siding is corrosion, especially at areas not protected by any overhang (see Appendix B, Figure 9). Most of this corrosion is on the surface and has not caused large gaps or holes in the siding.

### *Conclusions*

- Cracking and some loss in stucco
- Surface corrosion of metal siding
- Vegetation contributing to deterioration

### **Roof System**

Each section of the Bok Kai Temple has a different roof system constructed of different materials. The west wing of the building has a relatively flat roof sloping to a single roof drain at the middle of the west wall. The parapet wall at the roof of this section is higher at the south façade than at the west and north walls. The roof is covered with a sprayed-on foam roofing material. The roof of the central section of the building, the Altar Hall, is a double-gable roof with a barrel vault in between the two gables (see Appendix B, Figure 10). The parallel gables run east-west, with the north gable slightly higher than the other. The gable portions of the roof have clay tile over a foam membrane. The foam membrane was probably applied at the same time as the sprayed-foam roofing found elsewhere because reroofing of the gables and visor roofs was included in the 1978 stabilization work. The barrel vault is covered with a



thicker layer of sprayed-on foam roofing. The roof of the Caretaker's Wing is comprised of two roof systems, one sloping downward to the north and the other sloping downward to the east. The north-sloping roof, over the Fortune Reader's Room, Storage Room A, and the Gamblers' Room, drains to a roof drain at the northwest corner of this section and has parapets on three sides. The east-sloping roof, over the Temple Kitchen and Storage Room B, does not have a roof drain or parapet. Both sections of this roof have exposed foam roofing.

There are also two visor roofs over the south elevation entrances to the Council Chamber and Fortune Reader's Room. These roofs are currently constructed of plywood sheathing and battens with clay tile. Before the 1960–64 renovation work, the visors had corrugated metal roofs. Three steel tube posts set directly onto the concrete walkway in front of the Temple support each of the roofs.

Most of the existing roof materials date to the 1978 renovation work at the Temple. Since that time, the roofs have weathered considerably and are now in poor condition. There are many waterproofing deficiencies, including gaps and holes in the foam roofing material. In addition, the flashing at the parapets and vertical surfaces, where it does exist, is failing. The two existing roof drains are clogged, resulting in standing water on the roof, which eventually works its way to the building interior causing damage to the existing finishes and wood framing. These two drains and the existing gutters are insufficient to properly lead water away from the building.

### *Conclusions*

- Roof materials failing
- Missing or inadequate flashing
- Clogged gutters prevent proper water drainage
- Some downspouts are detached from the drain lines

### **Porch**

The downward slope of the south roof gable and the brick end walls of the gable form the porch over the main Temple entrance (see Appendix B, Figure 11). The roof porch consists of 2-inch by 12-inch joists running east-west set in pockets of the brick wing walls, board sheathing running in two directions, building paper, foam insulation, and clay tile. Battens, visible at the porch soffit, are used to cover the joints between the boards of the bottom layer of sheathing. The porch soffit is painted white with the

exception of the bottom edges of the joists, which are painted red. The wing walls are supported in part by the brick walls of the side halls but primarily by wood beams and columns. One end of each 10-inch by 13-inch beam rests on a portion of brick wall. The other end, which has a carved profile, rests on a turned column. Decorative trim is nailed to the capital and base of each column. The trim may be original, judging by the presence of hand-wrought nails used to attach it. The porch's beams and columns are painted red.

There is extensive decay of the wood beams and columns resulting in deterioration of the porch. Decay at the outer end of the east beam has allowed the wing wall to rotate downward and to the side from a pivot point at the end of the beam closest to the main wall of the Temple (see Appendix B, Figure 12). This settling has resulted in cracking through the brick wing wall. Severe decay at the base of the columns has contributed to the structural movement of the porch elements (see Appendix B, Figures 13 and 14). Similar deterioration has occurred at the west end of the porch, although the cracking and movement of the brick wing wall is not as extensive. In addition to the structural movement, there is also deterioration of the porch framing members. The roof joists are noticeably bowed, and one joist is split at the east end while another has been sawn in half. The deterioration evident at the porch is due in part to poor drainage of water away from the front of the building. There is currently a pieced together leader for water drainage at the east end of the porch that is poorly attached and insufficient to collect water and lead it away.

### *Conclusions*

- Deterioration of wood beams and columns leading to structural movement
- Loss and deterioration of porch roof framing
- Insufficient porch roof water drainage

### **Mural**

The inboard sides of the porch wing walls and the south elevation of the Temple directly below the porch roof are decorated with a mural painting dating to 1880 when the building was constructed (see Appendix B, Figures 15 and 16). The mural has figurative, decorative, and calligraphy scenes. The figurative scenes depict a meeting between an emperor and other wise men, a poetry meeting, and other scenes. Decorative birds and flowers and calligraphy writings are painted in smaller panels between these figurative scenes. The mural is painted in the *Fresco Secco* technique. The design is painted onto

a previously prepared fine layer of white plaster/chalk ground. This has been brushed directly atop a 5/16-inch rough coat of mortar covering the brick walls forming the porch and Temple. The white plaster varies in texture and consistency; in some passages, it is very smooth and continuous, in other passages, prominent brush application marks and air bubble pits are apparent. The painted forms are initially outlined with monochromatic contour drawings of fine brush lines of opaque black carbon paint, in the manner of traditional Asian screen painting. The figures, objects, and landscapes are then filled out with color, achieved with thin, semi-transparent wash applications of localized color. The blue, yellow, green, red, and black pigments used in the mural painting are probably mineral-based, the ochre, rust, and brown tones providing the familiar harmony of natural earth pigments. Laboratory analysis is inconclusive regarding determination of the binder of the paint medium. It is possible the binder is of oil origin. The paint is lean, densely packed, and has no sheen or luster (as true fresco typically would). Additional information on the composition of the paint materials is found in the paint analysis report included as Appendix I.

There is extensive deterioration of the mural painting, particularly at the east and west wing walls.<sup>34</sup> The deterioration is due mainly to the structural movement of the porch wing walls and water invasion, which has resulted in large areas of loss and cracking through the mural. The front-most end of the east wing has traveled forward and to the right (east), the result of settling and rot of the supporting horizontal wood beam and forward separation of the porch roof away from the building. The torquing of the east wing wall supporting the mural has produced a shift of planarity in major plates of the mural, corresponding to the sections between the first and second major vertical fissure. Further faulting of plaster and design occurs towards the top edges, where the plastering meets and has been weakened by pressure from the wood joists and beams of the sagging roof.

The paint is inherently stiff and minimally bound. With the pigment largely exposed, the paint surface is extremely vulnerable to surface contact and abrasion. Exposure to the elements for over a century has contributed to the embrittlement and friability of the painted design. Crystallization of salts below the ground and painted surface layers of the mural has caused extensive small areas of loss. The salt crystallization, produced over time by interior wall moisture invasion and entrapment, forces the paints to blister, pulverize and eventually flake or powder from the mural. Soluble salts are transported to the mural surface by water. As the water evaporates, the salts crystallize and expand, causing adjacent materials, including the mural plaster and paint components to deteriorate.

There are also passages of mechanical damage where objects struck or rubbed against the mural surface, the locations and patterns suggesting they occurred during scaffolding movement and previous building repair campaigns. Other patches of design loss correspond directly to locations where wasp nest mud daubs were built up on the mural surface. Removal of the daubs (by knocking with a broom or other such instrument, or the action of weathering and gravity over time) has also pulled the design layer and upper plaster/chalk wash away from the plaster substrate.

The mural stucco substrate is largely sound and well adhered to the brick walls. Sounding does reveal occasional pockets of separation between the stucco coat and the brick. Many of these locations relate to pronounced water invasion dissolving away lime binder or major shifting of wall plates and brick matrix, as in the east wing wall.

Some of the larger cracks in the mural have previously been repaired, in some cases with a hard Portland cement mortar, causing further damage to the mural by exerting pressure on the surrounding original material. Fortunately, the most extensive damage to the murals is limited to the peripheral exterior wing walls, where the painting design also tapers off.

Earlier design losses, particularly along fissure regions and water damage areas of the east and west wings, have been retouched over the years with a slowly resoluble (with solvents) inpainting medium. The areas with restoration, applied directly onto the rough plaster subcoat, are crude and not in keeping with the intended character or design of the fluid original.

At the upper areas of the mural there is also pervasive fine spattering of oversprayed titanium white exterior paint, the result of painting the roof joists without first properly masking the mural paintings. This paint spattering partially obscures the vibrant polychromatic quality of the mural. Another condition relating to maintenance work at the Temple is the drilling of holes through the mural and into the brick wall to attach electrical conduit for the porch light fixtures.

### *Conclusions*

- Structural damage from movement

- Blistering and flaking of paint due to salt crystallization
- Mechanical damage to mural surface from abrasion, impact, and biological activity
- Periodic locations of pocket separation between stucco coat and brick wall support.
- Previous repainting and mortar repairs
- Spattering of paint from oversprayed painting of porch soffit

## Floors

Each section of the Bok Kai Temple currently has a different floor material. The Council Chamber presently has a concrete floor painted red. This floor, 4 inches below the height of the threshold, may date to the 1960–64 renovation. The linoleum tile floor of the Altar Hall also dates to this period. In the Altar Hall, the 9-inch by 9-inch linoleum tile is adhered to a plywood subfloor that replaced an older floor. The original floor in the Altar Hall is believed to have been a wood plank floor, most likely Douglas fir, although the dimensions of the planks are unknown. The later plywood and linoleum tile was applied up to, not below, the immovable features of this room, such as the wood screens and altar tables. Removal of or further investigation at some of the built-in features may help to determine the exact size of the original floor planks. All of the rooms of the Caretaker's Wing have Douglas fir wood plank floors, although the dimensions and orientation of the planking and the orientation vary from room to room (see Appendix B, Figure 17). The planks in the Gamblers' Room and Storage Room A run east-west and are approximately 5-inches wide. The wood planks of the floor in the Fortune Reader's Room are slightly wider and run north-south. The floor planks in the Temple Kitchen are 12-inches wide and run east-west, while the planks in Storage Room B are 6-inches wide and run north-south. One of the reasons for the differences in orientation is that the rooms were originally part of two different earlier structures. The modern toilet rooms at the southwest corner of the building have vinyl sheet floors.

The visible portions of the concrete floor in the Council Chamber are sound and in good condition. The subfloor is inaccessible, and the construction and depth of this floor is unknown. The linoleum tile floor in the Altar Hall is in poor condition, with deterioration of both the tile and the plywood subfloor visible, especially at the areas of the most foot traffic and the edges near the built-in features. There is some visible deterioration of the floor framing, although most of the problems in the framing appear to have been remediated by the installation of additional framing members. In the northwest corner of the room, there is damage to the floor below the altar. The flooring appears to have extensive rot, resulting in settling and distortion of the altar construction. The plank floors of the other rooms are also in poor

condition. Some areas of decay and loss have been repaired using sheet metal patches. Other areas of loss, including severe decay at the northwest corner of the floor in the Gamblers' Room and at the edges of the floor in the Temple Kitchen have not been repaired. Most of the rot is at the ends of the floorboards. The floor in the Temple Kitchen also has a downward bow near the center. In general, there is little air space between the ground soil and the floor framing of the rooms in the Caretaker's Wing, accelerating decay of the framing.

### *Conclusions*

- Painted concrete floor in Council Chamber sound
- Linoleum tile floor in poor condition with deterioration of plywood subfloor
- General wear and tear and abrasion of wood floors at circulation pattern locations
- Rot of floor boards, especially at ends of boards

### **Interior Walls and Partitions**

The interior walls of the Bok Kai Temple are all brick with the exception of the rooms in the eastern half of the Caretaker's Wing, which are wood frame. The brick walls of the Council Chamber and Altar Hall have been covered with gypsum board. The gypsum board is painted white in the Council Chamber and pink in the Altar Hall. In the Altar Hall, the wall finishes were applied up to the altar tables, wood screens, and other built-in features. The brick walls in the Caretaker's Wing are plastered in the Fortune Reader's Room and Storage Room B, the walls that were originally part of the bathhouse (see Appendix B, Figure 18). The other brick walls are not plastered or painted, and there is no evidence of any original wall finish. The wood framing of the walls in the Temple Kitchen is exposed, with the painted surface of the corrugated-metal siding visible. The wood framing and corrugated siding is visible at the lower portions of Storage Room B and wood siding is used at the higher areas.

Wood partitions are used to divide some of the spaces of the Caretaker's Wing into smaller rooms. The wood partition between Storage Room A and the Gamblers' Room has vertical board siding on the side facing the storage room and wallpaper and vintage newspaper on the other side. The wood-frame partition forming the bedroom in the Temple Kitchen also has vertical siding on one side and wallpaper on the other. A wood partition also forms a toilet room in the Temple Kitchen and new toilet rooms in the southeast corner of Storage Room B.

The gypsum board in the Council Chamber is in poor condition at some areas due to water infiltration, particularly at the inside corner on the west wall. The wall surfaces in the Altar Hall are in good condition, although there is some cracking on the east wall above the door. The brick walls are in fair condition. There are many open and deteriorating mortar joints in the exposed brick portions. There is also severe erosion of the brick units and efflorescence on the surface of the brick at some areas of water infiltration from leaks in the roof or rising damp from the ground, such as in the Gamblers' Room and Fortune Reader's Room. The plaster finishes are sound where the plaster is still attached. However, plaster is no longer present at the lower portions of the walls that were originally plastered, having been removed for work at the walls or lost due to detachment. The wood framing and siding in the eastern section of the Caretaker's Wing is in fair condition. The wood partition walls are also in fair condition for the most part. There is no evidence of extensive decay or deterioration, although the wallpaper finishes are detaching and tearing.

### *Conclusions*

- Deterioration caused by water infiltration at gypsum board wall finishes in Council Chamber
- Open joints and deteriorating mortar at exposed brick
- Detachment of plaster at some walls

### **Ceilings**

As with the floors and interior walls, the ceilings of the different rooms are comprised of different materials. The ceiling in the Council Chamber is covered with gypsum board painted pale blue. The ceiling of the Altar Hall is a decorative wood ceiling comprised of painted roof joists spanning east-west at the gable sections and a barrel vault ceiling in between the gables (see Appendix B, Figure 19). The ceiling elements are painted in a polychromatic pattern with the red, green, and ochre colors. Wood plank ceilings are found in all of the rooms of the Caretaker's Wing except the Temple Kitchen, where the roof framing is exposed.

The gypsum board ceiling in the Council Chamber, like the walls, are stained and deteriorated due to water infiltration. The seams between the boards are visible, and there is corrosion of the fasteners. The wood ceiling of the Altar Hall is in good condition except for the heavy accumulation of soot that obscures the polychromatic color scheme. The wood plank ceilings in the Caretaker's Wing, like the floors, are in poor condition with many instances of rot and deterioration (see Appendix B, Figure 20).

Most of the rot is at the edges of the ceilings and is caused by water infiltration through the roof in association with blocked roof drains, vegetation prying apart the roof materials, and holes or leaks through the roofing surfaces.

### *Conclusions*

- Water damage to gypsum board ceiling in Council Chamber
- Soot accumulation at Altar Hall ceiling obscures polychromatic color scheme of ceiling in Altar Hall
- Rot and missing boards at plank ceilings in Caretaker's Wing due to water infiltration

### **Doors**

The three exterior doors of the Bok Kai Temple are panel doors painted red on the exterior surface and varnished on the interior (see Appendix B, Figure 21). Double doors lead into the Altar Hall and the Council Chamber; the door into the Caretaker's Wing is a single leaf door with a transom window. Each of the three exterior doors has a painted steel security gate. The interior doors are all varnished wood doors, most with glass panes (see Appendix B, Figure 22). Existing door hardware includes hinges, doorknobs, clasps with padlocks, and sliding door latches. Most of this hardware is not historic.

The doors are in fair condition. There is some loss or deterioration of applied ornament at the exterior doors and cracking or loss of glass panes at the interior doors. There is no evidence of rot or severe deterioration at the doors. Each of the doors functions, although the hardware is generally insufficient for the doors. The door thresholds are at different heights, requiring modifications for complete visitor accessibility.

### *Conclusions*

- Doors function although hardware is insufficient
- Some deterioration and loss of door elements
- Door thresholds and some opening widths do not meet code requirements

### **Windows**

There are only four functioning windows on the exterior walls of the Bok Kai Temple, three of which are on the south elevation. The south elevation windows are wood windows with operable double-hung sash, each sash having six lights. There is also a small two-light window high on the north wall of the



Temple Kitchen. None of these windows has sash weights, locks, or other hardware. On the east wall of the Temple Kitchen, the north wall of the Gamblers' Room, and the east wall of the Fortune Reader's Room are blocked-in openings of other non-functioning windows. The small window opening in the Gamblers' Room still contains a window frame and sash, visible from the exterior, which is covered on the interior. A steel-frame skylight in the roof of the Council Chamber lights the northern portion of that room. The skylight has three panes of wire glass.

There is minor deterioration of the wood elements at the functioning windows, but overall the windows are in fair condition. In general, the windows are not completely weathertight due to gaps at the window frames and deterioration of glazing putty. The steel frame of the skylight is corroding and one of the panes of wire glass is cracked. Like the other windows, the seal at the skylight is not weathertight.

#### *Conclusions*

- Wood window sash and frames have minor deterioration.
- Windows are not weathertight; gaps and missing sealant allow infiltration.

#### **Stairs**

The three short sets of steps leading into the Temple doors are concrete, dating to the 1960–64 renovation (see Appendix B, Figure 23). This staircase has steel handrails. On the interior, there are wooden staircases in three rooms. A small set of wooden steps along the west wall of the Fortune Reader's Room provides access into the Altar Hall through a door opening. In the Temple Kitchen, a winding staircase along the south wall leads to the platform area above the Caretaker's Bedroom. Another small set of steps rises from the platform to an access panel in the west wall. The staircase along the north wall of Storage Room B, which has been rebuilt or possibly added during one of the two previous Temple renovations, also leads to a raised platform (see Appendix B, Figure 24). Each of the interior wood staircases is simply constructed with a wood stringer and treads and risers.

The concrete staircase is in good condition. There is no evidence of uneven settling or deterioration. There is some decay at the interior wood staircase. The staircase in the Temple Kitchen is uneven, and there is some rotting of the members. The stairs in Storage Room B are sound, but there is no handrail or guardrail.

### *Conclusions*

- Concrete stairs sound
- Some decay at interior wood stairs
- Wood stair in Storage Room B sound but has no handrail

### **Light Fixtures**

There is a variety of lighting fixtures found in the Bok Kai Temple. On the exterior, hanging pendant lamps with red paper shades are suspended by chains from the porch soffit, and simpler hanging fixtures are attached to the soffits of the visor roofs. There are also floodlights mounted to the porch at the edge of the roof. Inside the building, a fluorescent fixture and shaded hanging pendant lamps are used in the Council Chamber. In the Altar Hall, several paired hanging fixtures with highly ornamental shades are suspended from the screens and ceiling of the room. The six pairs of hanging fixtures all have different designs and colored shades, although they are similar in style. There is also a simple wall-mounted fixture above the counter at the southwest corner of the room and another above the door on the east wall of the room. In the rooms of the Caretaker's Wing, all of the light fixtures consist of electrical cords suspended from the ceilings or walls with a single unshaded incandescent bulb fixture. Switches in the wall operate some of these fixtures and some by pull strings.

The light fixtures in the Council Chamber and Altar Hall are in fair condition, although the electrical outlets used for some of the fixtures are overloaded with too many lights plugged into them. Many of the cords and wires of the fixtures in the Altar Hall and the Caretaker's Wing are open and loose, making them unsafe. There are also hanging electrical wires run from other hanging sockets.

### *Conclusions*

- Electrical cords and wires to lighting fixtures are open and unsafe

### **Miscellaneous Building Features**

The built-in features of the building include partition screens in the Council Chamber and Altar Hall, altar tables, a brick stove and oven in the Temple Kitchen, and wood platforms in the Caretaker's Wing. The partition screen in the Council Chamber spans the entire distance between the east and west walls of the space, dividing it into two rooms. It has three sets of double doors, with panels between and above

the doors, and a row of spindle balusters at the top. The screens in the Altar Hall do not completely divide the space, as does the Council Chamber partition screen. The first screen, near the Temple entrance, has a raised threshold and double doors between two columns. Carved wood plaques, some of which rest on ornamental metal brackets, span the width of the Altar Hall above the screen and also hang in front of the columns. Another screen in the Altar Hall with ornamental wood carving spans between the east and west walls of the room above head height.

The two altar tables along the north wall of the Altar Hall are built-in features (see Appendix B, Figure 25). A brick foundation visible in the crawl space below the Altar Hall supports the larger altar table in the center of the wall. These altar tables, as well as the others in the room, have wood bases and red Formica countertops on which the figures of the gods, shrines, offerings, fortune sticks, incense, and other religious articles are placed. The type of wood at the base of these tables has not been identified. The original tabletops would have probably also been wood. Controlled but regular burning of oil lamp votives and incense has contributed appreciable deposits of soot and resin onto decorative object and furnishing surfaces throughout the Altar Hall. It is also evident that there have been a number of localized fires over the years, where burning of oil got out of control, scorching and blackening adjacent altar carvings. There is no fire extinguishing system in place in the Altar Hall other than a few hand-held fire extinguishers. Not all are of the correct type for grease, wood and electrical fires; several are below functioning charge level, not having been recharged for years.

In the Temple Kitchen, a brick stove along the north wall and oven in the southeast corner are evidence of the original use of this room (see Appendix B, Figure 26). There is also a sink along the east wall of the Temple Kitchen. The rectangular brick stove has three openings for wood, coal, or another fuel. The oven has a square base that rises to a pyramid-shaped top and smaller square chimney.

Large wood platforms in the Temple Kitchen and Storage Room B create mezzanine levels in these rooms. The platform in the Temple Kitchen is supported by the frame wall of the Caretaker's Bedroom immediately below it and has a balustrade on one side. The platform in Storage Room B extends over almost half of the floor area of the room. Heavy timber framing supports the platform. Like the stair leading to the platform, there is no guardrail or balustrade at the edge of the platform. A smaller platform adjacent to the stairs on the west wall of the Fortune Reader's Room supports a cast iron stove.

The wood partition screens are in good condition structurally, but there is some wood decay due to water infiltration, especially at the west end of the partition in the Council Chamber. The varnish finish on this partition is also deteriorating. The smaller altar table at the north end of the Altar Hall is settling unevenly, with the north side lower than the south end. This may indicate decay of the flooring at the northwest corner of the room below the altar table. The wood canopy of this altar table and the adjacent larger altar table are also leaning out of plumb. The brick stove and oven in the Temple Kitchen are collapsing and losing their form. Their location against exterior walls and set on the floor subjects these features to water and fluctuating temperatures that has slowly eroded the brick. The platform in the Temple Kitchen, like the stairs leading to it, is in poor condition, with severe wood decay. The large platform in Storage Room B is sound, but has no guardrail.

#### *Conclusions*

- Minor deterioration of wood and finishes at Council Chamber screen partition
- Uneven settling of altar table at northwest corner of Altar Hall
- Brick stove and oven in Temple Kitchen collapsing
- Wood platform in Temple Kitchen in poor condition
- Wood platform in Storage Room B sound but has no guardrail

#### **Artifacts and Furnishings**

Historic and significant artifacts and furnishings representing the entire period of use of the Temple are found in every room of the building. A complete survey of the objects is beyond the scope of this HSR. However, an observation on the general condition of the objects in the Altar Hall is included here.

Many of the surfaces in the great Altar Hall are black or amber from oil burning soot and byproduct deposits. Because the burning of incense and votives is integral to the historic ritual functioning of the objects, it is appropriate that they carry patination from the burnt offerings. The degree of soiling however is pronounced, suggesting that no program for ongoing conservation and maintenance of the collections is in place. A study of the various artifact and furnishing surfaces, and their appropriate remedial conservation and cleaning needs, is recommended, from which a program for proper ongoing care can be implemented.

### *Conclusions*

- Soot and combustion byproduct accumulation on surfaces of artifacts and furnishings in Altar Hall

### **Site Features**

The features of the immediate site around the Bok Kai Temple include the archway and gazebo to the west of the Temple building, the concrete platform and walkway, retaining walls and planters, chain link fence on the south side of the building, and the apron around the building perimeter. The concrete archway facing the intersection of First and D Streets and the tile-roof gazebo near the northwest corner of the Temple are situated in a park-like setting along a path to the Temple (see Appendix B, Figure 27). These features were built in the 1970s. The raised concrete platform with steps at the central section of the Temple and concrete walkway in front of the other sections of the south elevation were constructed in the 1960–64 renovation (see Appendix B, Figure 28). The platform and steps are painted red. The walkway is not painted and has a drain adjacent to the steps on the east side of the platform. To the south of the walkway and platform, a concrete retaining wall and series of wood retaining walls form planters that rise up the embankment of the levee. A small brick incense burning oven is set in one section of the planters. A chain link fence extending out from the west and east walls of the Temple and joined by a perpendicular section beyond the planters defines the property of the Bok Kai Temple. On the west side of the Temple, a dirt apron approximately 4-feet, 9-inches wide defined by a pressure treated wood edge has been installed, probably as part of the foundation work carried out in 1978. The east and north sides of the building do not have a designed apron, just dirt and grass abutting the building foundation.

The site features are in good condition overall, with some displacement of the wood retaining walls at the planters evident. Although the condition of the concrete features is not deteriorated, these features are contributing to the deterioration of other building elements because of their impermeable surface, which keeps water in contact with the building wall and porch columns. The extensive deterioration at the base of the columns and erosion of brick on the interior surface of the south wall of the Fortune Reader's Room is evidence of this. The concrete site features and chain link fence, as well as the high levee, are also inappropriate historically. A wooden boardwalk, visible in historic photographs of the Temple, was originally used for pathways and landings adjacent to the building.

### *Conclusions*

- Concrete platform and walkway sound but inappropriate
- Concrete features accelerating deterioration of exterior walls and columns
- Concrete block retaining wall sound, wood retaining walls displaced
- Fence inappropriate

### **Utilities**

The electrical, telephone, plumbing, and HVAC systems in the Bok Kai Temple are minimal. The main electrical panel is a 240-amp panel at the northwest corner of building. There is a subpanel with breakers in the Fortune Reader's Room. The rooms finished with gypsum board have hidden conduit. The unfinished rooms of the Caretaker's Wing have wall-mounted conduit. The electrical cords and wiring forming many of the light fixtures are open and loose. There is no telephone service to the building. There is relatively modern plumbing service to the men's and women's toilet rooms in the southeast corner of the building. A hot water heater is set on the platform above these toilet rooms. Copper pipe is used for the newer plumbing on the interior, and PVC tubing mounted to the north elevation is used on the exterior. There is also older plumbing to the sink and toilet room in the Temple Kitchen. The older plumbing has steel pipes. There is no plumbing service to the rest of the building, and no sprinkler fire protection system. There is no building-wide HVAC system. Heating is provided by electrical space heaters, and ventilation is limited to a single louvered vent and fan on the west gable wall of the Altar Hall.

The utilities of the building are adequate but not optimal for the current use of the building. Many of the electrical cords and lines in the Caretaker's Wing and some in the Altar Hall consist of thin extension cord outlets and light sockets run from other hanging sockets or cords. The condition of many of the cords is deteriorated. This presents a dangerous situation, with tremendous potential for fire because of electrical shorting. It is desirable to review and bring all of the wiring and lighting up to code. The plumbing in the newer toilet rooms appears to be in good condition, but the steel pipes of the older plumbing may be near the end of their life, although they are not currently used. The ventilation fan in the Altar Hall was added relatively recently to replace an earlier louvered vent and appears to perform well in keeping that space ventilated. The other spaces have poor ventilation, resulting in high moisture levels and deterioration of the materials.

*Conclusions*

- Electrical service is adequate for current use of building but can be upgraded
- Open and loose electrical cords unsafe
- Telephone service would have to be added if desired
- Combination of newer and older plumbing fixtures and piping
- Poor ventilation in most spaces of the building





## X. TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Introduction

The information presented in this section is intended to provide preliminary recommendations with regard to the future treatment of the Bok Kai Temple. It is assumed that the current religious and social uses of the building will continue. Given this use of the building and the great amount of historic integrity of the existing materials and systems, a maintenance and preservation approach to the treatment of the building is appropriate. The recommendations included in this HSR are divided into those critical actions that should be carried out immediately to address life-safety issues and severely deteriorated conditions, and those treatments recommended to conserve the historic materials and integrity of the building. Items that could be undertaken as part of a restoration approach are also included below. At present, the evidence to justify restoring the building to a specific time is limited to photographs, mainly of the south exterior elevation. These photographs depict the building sometime between 1880 and 1900. Any future work on the Bok Kai Temple should be coordinated with a detailed conditions survey of the building so that specific repair methods and materials can be developed.

### General Recommendations

Any repair, restoration, rehabilitation, replication, or maintenance should have a minimal impact on the historic fabric of the Bok Kai Temple. Deficiencies threatening life and safety, or that may cause further deterioration must be corrected immediately. The value of any other improvements should be weighed against potential impacts to the building's historic integrity. The historic fabric and character-defining features have been described in previous sections of this report. The following recommendations provide a philosophy for any future proposed work and provide a platform for discussions on the best future use of the building and its site features.

The recommendations contained in this report are based on *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings (The Standards)*.

*The Standards* provide general information for stewards of historic resources to determine appropriate treatments. They are intentionally broad in scope to apply to a wide range of circumstances, and are designed to enhance the understanding of basic preservation principles. *The Standards* are neither

technical nor prescriptive, but are intended to promote responsible preservation practices that ensure continued protection of historic resources. There are four basic standards: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. For the purposes of the Bok Kai Temple the preservation standards are applicable.

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Further, because the Bok Kai Temple is a designated historic structure, utilization of the State Historical Building Code (SHBC) will also ensure that future projects have minimal impact on the historic resource. The SHBC allows the use of alternative materials and methods of construction for: “repairs, alterations, and additions necessary for the preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, moving or continued use of a historical building.” The prevailing code, the Uniform Building Code (UBC), was established for use in new construction where compliance was relatively easy. When applied to historic buildings, use of the UBC may damage or remove historic features because of the rigid “prescriptive” nature of the code. The SHBC is a performance-based code, requiring the same level of safety, but permitting the applicant to identify different options to achieve safety. This results in much less historic material being removed and in many instances, a considerable reduction in construction cost.

### ***Material and Building System Repairs***

General rehabilitation of the structure should be carried out. Exterior repairs should be undertaken to restore all of the damaged exterior surfaces and interior features that contribute to and define the building’s historic character. Exterior elements that detract from the historic character should be removed and replaced with features more in keeping with the original design. Materials and building systems should be limited to maintenance and replacement, in kind, of deteriorated historic fabric. Conditions of the material and building systems are outlined more specifically in the preceding Conditions Assessment Section.

### *Critical Repairs*

The following repairs are judged to be critical due to the concerns for life-safety that the existing condition presents or because the severely deteriorated nature of the condition greatly compromises the structural or waterproofing integrity of the building:

- Replace wood beams and east column, and repair west column and brick wing walls at porch over main entrance to Temple with redwood beams fabricated to match the profile and dimensions of the existing members<sup>35</sup>
- Repair porch roof where detached from building wall and tie roof to brick masonry
- Replace failing existing foam roof with new waterproof membrane, and install new roof and flashing over Council Chamber, barrel vault of Altar Hall, and Caretaker's Wing
- Clear roof drains and install new gutters and downspouts
- Remove vegetation on or immediately adjacent to building

### *Recommended Repairs*

The recommended repairs listed below should be undertaken to preserve the materials and building systems of the Bok Kai Temple. The types of repairs and the materials used to perform the repairs are based on the assessment of the existing conditions. These repairs are grouped by material or feature and listed in the same order as each of the materials or features are discussed in the preceding conditions assessment section of the HSR.

- Repoint selective brick mortar joints at foundation walls and interior brick walls with appropriate lime-based mortar
- Patch cracks in brick walls with cementitious patching mortar to match color and texture of brick
- Patch cracks in exterior stucco by routing out cracks and installing new stucco at areas of repair; remove detached sections of stucco and apply new stucco to match surrounding material
- Restore painted signage on north-facing wall of west elevation
- Prepare metal siding to remove corrosion and repaint corrugated metal
- Clean and consolidate mural painting to conserve existing materials and infill areas of loss
- Replace linoleum floor and plywood subfloor in Altar Hall with plank flooring
- Patch and replace decayed floor and ceiling boards in Caretaker's Wing with wood to match existing
- Reattach loose sections of plaster at interior brick walls by grouting at areas of detachment

- Remove gypsum board wall and ceiling finishes from Council Chamber and Altar Hall to expose existing brick walls; repair walls as needed
- Clean decorative wood ceiling in Altar Hall using gentle means to remove soot accumulation
- Patch and replace decayed ceiling boards in Caretaker's Wing with wood to match existing
- Repair deteriorated wood door and window elements; replace missing or severely deteriorated trim with wood to match existing
- Reglaze windows and skylight and reseal perimeters to make windows weathertight
- Repair staircase and platform in Temple Kitchen, replacing severely decayed wood elements as required with wood to match existing
- Replace Formica surfaces of altar tables and counter in Altar Hall with wood countertops
- Stabilize built-in brick stove and oven in Temple Kitchen by resetting loose brick units and repointing open or cracked mortar joints
- Eliminate open electrical cords and overused connections
- Disconnect unused plumbing to Temple Kitchen
- Add crawl space vents and ceiling vents to improve air flow

### **Restoration Approach**

The critical and recommended repairs listed above should be undertaken to address immediate life-safety concerns and to preserve the existing materials and systems of the Bok Kai Temple. Another approach to the treatment of the Temple is to restore the building to its early historic appearance. Although there is little documentation of the original appearance of the building, photographs of the interior and exterior from an early period of the Temple's use can be used to guide a restoration program and recreate missing elements. The restoration work listed below is based primarily on the examination of historic photographs, supplemented by on-site investigation of the building carried out in preparation of the HSR. Additional archaeological research and investigations discussed as a recommendation for further research would also help determine the appropriate level of restoration. Some of the restoration work outlined below could be undertaken as part of the repair work to the porch:

- Replace non-historic clay tile roofing with round-edge wood shingles
- Reconstruct figurine bases and statues at ends of porch beams and other ornament as depicted in historic photographs
- Install decorative ridge board between gable end walls above Altar Hall
- Remove stucco from brick side halls to determine original finish (exposed or painted)

- Reconstruct visor roofs with new carved wood posts, fascia boards, and roofing
- Reconstruct entry staircase, porch floor, railing between bases of columns at porch, and boardwalk as depicted in historic photographs
- Remove gypsum board wall and ceiling finishes from Council Chamber and install vertical wood paneling
- Remove skylight from Council Chamber
- Install wood plank floor in Council Chamber
- Provided accessible toilet facilities are installed as part of improvements to the site or nearby interpretive center, remove interior toilet rooms and restore flooring in southeast corner of Storage Room B

### *Artifacts and Furnishings*

The artifacts and furnishings in the Bok Kai Temple are in various states of preservation. However, it is impossible to determine the specific conservation measures without first completing a comprehensive inventory and assessment of the materials. The following recommendations are given as the first step in a conservation plan for the artifacts and objects in the Bok Kai Temple.

- Conduct an inventory to identify, number (label) and catalog all Bok Kai artifacts, fixtures, and equipment
- Research and prioritize the curatorial importance (artistic, historic, and function) of artifacts
- Perform a conservation conditions assessment of all artifacts and objects to determine types of materials, condition, and immediate vs. long-term needs
- Separate dissimilar materials, such as wood from metal objects or fabric from wood objects, to reduce future deterioration
- Consider removal of stored artifacts to an alternate storage space, offering improved climate conditions, security, and work/storage space opportunities
- Store artifacts and objects according to acknowledged museum storage methods and materials, e.g., setting dimensional objects in neutral pH archival containers to protect and isolate objects from soiling, stacking pressure, and damage from direct handling. Mitigate the effects of temperature and humidity fluctuations
- Replace existing fire extinguishers with gas-filled extinguishers; install gas-filled fire extinguishers and smoke alarms wired to outside monitoring service in every room of the Temple
- Install security system wired to outside monitoring service

## **Maintenance**

At present, housekeeping maintenance of the Temple facilities and collections is minimal and needs to be more thorough. Soot and ash deposits are pervasive and more thorough and regularly scheduled cleaning is needed. Mud packs from insect daubs allowed to be deposited on the exterior wall murals are tenacious and are having a damaging effect upon the fragile aged paint.

- Design and implement improved housekeeping and pest control maintenance to alleviate appreciable foot traffic dirt, airborne pollutants, burning byproducts (soot and ash), and insect damage that have appreciable deteriorative effects upon the building, art works, fixtures and artifacts

## **Archives and Education**

No program appears to be in place to systematically record and document the history, artifacts, structure, and activities of the Bok Kai Temple and its society. Recommended documentation and education would include:

- Collection of materials pertaining to the history and culture of the Bok Kai Temple and the Chinese community of Marysville. Materials would include photographs, printed materials, oral history (recorded sound tapes of interviews with senior members of the Bok Kai community), and donated or purchased artifacts and other pertinent objects.
- Establish an archive or study center, perhaps in cooperation with some existing library, school, or government agency as a permanent resource for history and information about the Bok Kai Temple and its society.
- Establish informative visitor exhibits, legends, labeling, and audio-visual tour materials to educate visitors as to the historical and sociological significance of the Bok Kai Temple and its activities

## **Code Upgrades**

This section addresses physical changes to the building to make the building compliant with required codes. The following text outlines code-related upgrades that will be required for the Bok Kai Temple. The treatments recommended in this report will have effects on the cultural resource; however, it is intended that the treatments will result in benefits providing for a higher level of resource preservation than is now provided. One of the most important design criteria, however, is that the modifications be designed to minimize these effects, both physically and visually. Providing an improved environment for the building's preservation and the safety of its user will mitigate negative effects. Further evaluation will be necessary when the recommendations are developed to a level of design detail specific enough to definitively identify particular building fabric treatments.

### ***Accessibility***

Although not a building code, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that governs accessibility to buildings for the disabled. The law applies to all public buildings, including religious structures such as the Bok Kai Temple. Non-compliance with the requirements of the law put the building owner at risk to potential litigation. Where alterations are undertaken to a qualified historic building, such as a building listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and where the State Historic Preservation Officer or Advisory Council on Historic Preservation agrees that full compliance with the requirements for accessible routes (exterior and interior), ramps, entrances, or toilets would threaten or destroy the historic significance of the building or facility, alternative requirements of compliance may be used.

Alterations to the Bok Kai Temple to fulfill the intent of ADA requirements is a challenge due to the compact nature of the site and building, changes in ground and floor heights, and the location of entrances. Work to provide disabled access should be coordinated with the development of a new nearby interpretive center. As a minimum, this interpretive center should include exhibits that replicate the experience of entering the primary spaces of the Bok Kai Temple and fully accessible restroom facilities. Additional information on providing disabled access to the existing Bok Kai Temple is included in a conceptual accessibility study report by ARG submitted under separate cover.

### ***Fire Protection***

The Temple is not currently protected by any sprinkler system. Fire protection is limited to several handheld fire extinguishers, most of which are located in the Altar Hall. Many of the extinguishers would be inaccessible in the event of an actual fire, and a number have not been recently checked or filled (they no longer have sufficient charge). Gas-filled fire extinguishers are recommended because they would be less destructive to the artifacts in the Temple in the event of use than the powder-type extinguishers currently found in the Altar Hall.

- Clear vegetation away from building perimeter
- Install gas-filled fire extinguishers and smoke detectors in every room of the Temple
- Initiate regular program of yearly extinguisher inspection and maintenance
- Install double-interlock, pre-action water sprinkler fire protection system throughout Temple

### *Abatement of Hazardous Materials*

Testing to determine the presence or absence of hazardous materials was not performed as part of the current study. However, given the age and type of materials present at the Bok Kai Temple, asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paints may be present at the interior and exterior of the building.

- Potential locations of hazardous materials: foam roofing, linoleum tile flooring, lead-based paints

### **Structural**

The building must be upgraded to meet current structural codes if renovation or addition requires work to more than 10 percent of the structure. For further discussion, see the Structural Assessment located in Appendix G.

- Analysis and testing of identified structural deficiencies
- Structural strengthening of building systems



## **XI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### **Additional Documentation**

The current HSR documents the existing condition of the building through historical research, examination of the physical fabric, preparation of plan, elevation, and section drawings, and photographic recordation. Additional documentation of the numerous carved wood plaques and inscriptions is recommended as a possible research topic. Translation of these plaques would provide information on the history of the Temple and the people associated with it. Interpretation of the art and calligraphy of the murals is also recommended.

### **Additional Physical Evidence**

The existing building contains additional evidence of its construction history that could not be determined as part of the present study because it requires extensive removal of material. However, during future repairs to the building, certain features should be investigated to gather additional information on the construction of the Bok Kai Temple from its physical evidence. One of these features is the filled-in openings on the west elevation of the building that are currently stuccoed on the exterior and covered with gypsum board on the interior. If the gypsum board finishes are removed, as recommended above, or if the exterior stucco at this location is repaired or removed, these openings should be examined more carefully. The connection between the north-facing return wall and the west elevation on this side of the building should also be examined during any removal of the existing finishes. This connection may provide information on the relationship between the two earlier structures on the site. Other brick bonds at the corners of rooms currently concealed should also be investigated. Another area of potential investigation is the access hatch at the top of the west wall in the Temple Kitchen, accessible from the platform in this room. This hatch is currently inoperable on the interior and appears to be covered on the exterior by roofing material.

### **Archaeology**

The work recommended above does not immediately impact archaeologically sensitive areas of the building. No archaeological investigation is required in conjunction with any of the repair work. However, archaeological work is recommended as part of a future study of the building site. Given the construction history of the building and the existence of earlier on-site structures that were incorporated into the Bok Kai Temple, it is likely that additional information on these earlier structures and on the Bok

Kai Temple itself can be learned through archaeological research. Possible locations of excavation include the land below the Altar Hall and at the accessible areas of the grade below or immediately to the east of the Caretaker's Wing.

### **Artifact and Furnishings Conservation**

The cursory examination of the artifacts and interior furnishings reveals that the objects currently stored in the Temple are of tremendous significance. The objects cover the entire period of the building's use and relate to the religious, social, and business roles that the Temple plays in the community. Further documentation, research, and conservation of the artifacts and furnishings are recommended. Part of conservation effort should be the development of a maintenance program for the objects. The development of an interpretive center to house and exhibit certain appropriate artifacts is also recommended. A potential location for such an archive is the adjacent city park property to the west of the Temple.

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### XIII. ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Carol Stepanchuk, *Art and Architecture of Chinese Temples in California* (Orinda: John F. Kennedy University, 1982), 46.
- <sup>2</sup> Dr. Paul G. Chace, Draft HSR Review Comments Draft 2.2, Electronic mail communication, July 31, 2002.
- <sup>3</sup> Dr. Paul G. Chace, Draft HSR Review Comments Draft 2.2, Electronic mail communication, July 31, 2002.
- <sup>4</sup> Dr. Sue Fawn Chung and Ross Nelson, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.
- <sup>5</sup> Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 75.
- <sup>6</sup> Mariann Kaye Wells, *Chinese Temples in California* (Berkeley: University of California, 1962), 98.
- <sup>7</sup> Thomas A. McDannold, *California's Chinese Heritage: A Legacy of Places* (Stockton, CA: Heritage West Books, 2000), 174.
- <sup>8</sup> Mariann Kaye Wells, *Chinese Temples in California* (Berkeley: University of California, 1962), 96.
- <sup>9</sup> Dr. Sue Fawn Chung and Ross Nelson, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 18.
- <sup>10</sup> Jessica Bird, "How Marysville Started" in Reuben Ibanez, ed. *Historical Bok Kai Temple in Old Marysville, California* (Marysville: Marysville Chinese Community, 1967), 11.
- <sup>11</sup> Mariann Kaye Wells, *Chinese Temples in California* (Berkeley: University of California, 1962), 53.
- <sup>12</sup> Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 71-72.
- <sup>13</sup> Marysville City Council Minutes, May 31, 1874, p. 41 as cited in Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 72.
- <sup>14</sup> Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 73.
- <sup>15</sup> *Marysville Daily Appeal*, March 23, April 21, May 7, May 15, 1869; *Marysville Weekly Appeal*, March 27, April 24, May 15, May 22, 1869; *The Weekly Sutter Banner*, April 24, 1869 as cited in Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 73.
- <sup>16</sup> City of Marysville, Plat Book, 1876 as cited in Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 73.
- <sup>17</sup> Dr. Paul G. Chace, Draft HSR Review Comments Draft 2.2, Electronic mail communication, July 31, 2002.
- <sup>18</sup> Paul G. Chace, "Draft Notes of Assessment and the Temple, Notes from the City's Tax Assessment Roll Books," May 2002.
- <sup>19</sup> Dr. Paul G. Chace, Draft HSR Review Comments Draft 2.2, Electronic mail communication, July 31, 2002.
- <sup>20</sup> Property ownership records provided by Paul G. Chace in "Notes on Temple Property from the Yuba County, Office of the Recorder, Book of Deeds," May 2002.
- <sup>21</sup> *Marysville Daily Appeal*, January 30, March 3, 6, 9, 17, 20, 21, 1880; *Marysville Weekly Appeal* February 6, 1880 as cited in Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 74.
- <sup>22</sup> Carol Stepanchuk, *Art and Architecture of Chinese Temples in California* (Orinda: John F. Kennedy University, 1982), 40.
- <sup>23</sup> Carol Stepanchuk, *Art and Architecture of Chinese Temples in California* (Orinda: John F. Kennedy University, 1982), 46-48.
- <sup>24</sup> Paul Gail Chace, *Returning Thanks: Chinese Rites in an American Community* (Riverside: University of California, 1992), 75-76.
- <sup>25</sup> Carol Stepanchuk, *Art and Architecture of Chinese Temples in California* (Orinda: John F. Kennedy University, 1982).
- <sup>26</sup> *Marysville Appeal-Democrat*, December 9, 1975.

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<sup>27</sup> Betty Attwell, "Chinese Temple" undated notes in the Bok Kai scrapbook collection of the Yuba County Library.

<sup>28</sup> Correspondence, Bok Kai Temple Files, Office of Historic Preservation, California Department of Parks and Recreation.

<sup>29</sup> Dr. Paul G. Chace, Electronic mail communication, May 7, 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Paul G. Chace, Electronic mail communication, May 7, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> *Marysville Weekly Appeal*, March 26, 1880.

<sup>32</sup> *Marysville Weekly Appeal*, March 26, 1880.

<sup>33</sup> United States Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. (Revised 1995)

<sup>34</sup> The following observations on the condition of the mural paintings were made by the project team during the preparation of this HSR. Additional information on the condition of the murals is found in Leslie Rainer's *Bok Kai Temple Wall Paintings (1880) Marysville, CA Conditions Report*, dated August 15, 2001. This report is included in Appendix H.

<sup>35</sup> Temporary stabilization of the south elevation porch and mural was carried out during the preparation of this HSR to arrest the movement of the east wing wall and further deterioration of the mural. Structural drawings and notes on the treatment of the mural on the east wing wall are included in Appendix J.