

P410065-226

Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: California	
COUNTY: Kings	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 13 1972

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Taoist Temple

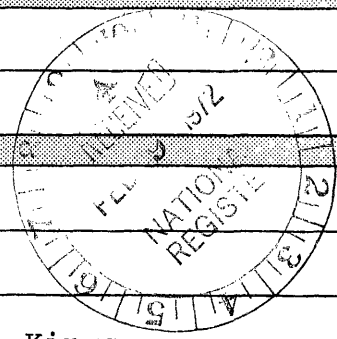
AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Taoist Temple

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
No. 12 China Alley

CITY OR TOWN:  
Hanford

STATE California	CODE 06	COUNTY: Kings	CODE 031
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One) Both	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comments The Temple is not now in use.

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Sam Yup Association c/o Ernest Wing

STREET AND NUMBER:  
1305 North 10th Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Hanford

STATE: California	CODE 06
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Tulare County Recorders Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
South Mooney Boulevard & West Mineral King Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Visalia

STATE: California	CODE 06
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
None

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE:	CODE:
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Taoist Temple, at #12 China Alley in Hanford, California, was built in 1893. The structure is basically similar to many of the commercial buildings of that time in the Valley. Applied to this indigenous framework is a small amount of oriental detailing: a frieze toward the front of the building on the east (side) wall, apparently of carved stone, set in the brick coursing at the roof level; similar capitals on the tops of the two projecting end walls facing China Alley itself; and a carved wooden fascia above the upstairs porch. Doors and windows on the south (China Alley) side and the north side are protected by metal shutters.

The basic structure is two stories tall, with a basement. The walls are of hand-molded brick, twelve inches in overall thickness. The floor of the Temple, about fourteen feet above grade, is supported by two-by-ten joists on sixteen to eighteen inch centers, framed into ledgers along the brick walls. The width of the building is about twenty-five feet overall. The ceiling below the joists is finished in one-by-four tongue-and-groove redwood, running perpendicular to the joists. The floor of the temple is of one-by-six tongue-and-groove redwood, also running perpendicular to the joist, and also probably of redwood. The walls are finished inside with a quarter-inch thick, smooth red plaster, on which the brick mortar pattern is repeated in white paint.

The ceiling of the Temple is of one-by-four tongue-and-groove paneling, painted, running longitudinally (north-south) and nailed to the bottom side of the roof joist. The roof structure, which spans from side wall to side wall, appears to function as a shallow "king-post" truss. It is composed of a two-by-eight bottom chord and a two-by-four top chord, and occurs on approximately one foot six inch centers. The maximum depth at the center is approximately two feet. On top of this "truss" runs one inch thick tongue-and-groove material, which may have served as the original roof sheathing. Erected over this whole assembly is a second roof structure. The components of this structure are four-by-four rafters at about three feet on center, supported at the peak by a one-by-six strut, with one-by-four purlins running longitudinally on about four foot centers. The roofing material is corrugated metal.

The Temple space is essentially one main room, with a secondary room to the rear (north) of the building. Two skylights (one in each room) originally lit the Temple but both are presently boarded over for security reasons. The main Temple room is reached by a straight flight of stairs from the sidewalk below on China Alley. A second stairway once served a porch outside the rear door. This stairway and porch were taken down some years ago. The rear yard of the structure has

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |                                       |   |  |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education    | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry     |   | <u>ETHNIC CULTURE</u>                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape    | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture                      | _____  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian            | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature   | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater                        | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military     | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music        |   | _____  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Hanford's China Alley is the last Chinatown in California's San Joaquin Valley which remains culturally and physically intact. It represents some of the last traces of the Chinese culture that immigrated, in the 1800's, from the Far-yuen region of China to the San Joaquin Valley. The construction of California's railroads and the production of fruit and vegetables in the San Joaquin Valley were in large part due to the labor of these Chinese.

A history of the Chinese that lived in the San Joaquin Valley during the 1800's is virtually nonexistent. Most of the published history of the California Chinese examines only their role in gold mining and the construction of the transcontinental railroad. Most of the information contained below about Hanford's China Alley is difficult to authenticate because it has, through the years, passed verbally from person to person.

The original Chinatown in Hanford was razed by fire in the late 1880's. The urban Chinese population then moved to the present China Alley area. The Alley, which is approximately 200 feet long, was constructed in the early 1890's. From that time to the present, the Alley has remained in complete Chinese ownership. When China Alley was at its peak, it catered to the needs of over 10,000 Chinese. It served the second largest concentration of Chinese in the nation. San Francisco, of course, had the largest Chinese population.

From the 1890's to the early 1900's the Alley became lined with joss houses, herb stores, restaurants, gambling houses, and a general merchandise store. Opium dens flourished in rooms dug underneath the Alley's businesses. Escape tunnels were dug to provide quick exit from police raids. In addition to the Alley, the first Chinese school in the nation was started not far from the Alley.

Continued

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Eberhard, Wolfram, "China Alley" (Los Angeles: Westways, June, 1957) pages 8-9.

Wells, Mary Kay, Chinese Temples in California (Berkeley: R&E Research Associates, 1962), page 78.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Historic Tao Temple in Hanford" (Fresno: The Fresno Bee, May 30, 1971), C Section, pages 1 & 20.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		36 19 41	119 38 16	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Lot size is 25' x 85' or .05 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES:

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Dennis J. Triplitt, Planner

ORGANIZATION: Kings County Planning Agency DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET AND NUMBER:  
11815 - 11th Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Hanford STATE: California CODE: 06

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**      **NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: [Signature]

Title: STATE LIAISON OFFICER

Date: 1/27/72

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

[Signature]  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 6/13/72

ATTEST:

[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: May 26, 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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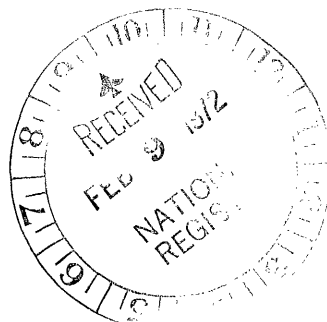
7. Description, Continued-

been protected by concrete block fence about ten feet in height, erected in 1957.

The principal historic merit of the structure would appear to be its value as an example of typical late 19th century indigenous construction, with oriental overtones. This is in keeping with the theme of the original Hanford Chinese settlement and with the buildings still remaining. The Temple and surrounding buildings should be viewed as an American Chinese town, not as a direct transplant or replica of a settlement of China. The local expression should be regarded as historically valid in and of itself. Added to this is the historic value of the contents of the Temple itself.

*Donald J. Christensen*

Donald J. Christensen, AIA



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8. Significance, Continued-

Of all these businesses and other activities, only the Taoist Temple and a herb store remain unchanged. Both now stand unused. Two of the original restaurants on the Alley and professional offices have taken over the other buildings. Remodeling has taken place. However, the new exteriors have been tastefully designed to reflect China Alley as it once was.

The Taoist Temple is ~~the most~~ unique <sup>among</sup> of all the buildings on China Alley. The Temple is said to be one of the oldest Taoist Temples in California. The Sam Yup Kung Saw, which established Hanford's Temple, is supposed to be the parent organization of the Sam Yup Whay Koom in San Francisco.

The first reason for the Temple's uniqueness is the fact that it is a temple. As such, it is the cultural focal point of China Alley. It expresses best the philosophies and customs of a group of people who have contributed much to the growth of California. The second reason is the building is structurally the same as it was when it was constructed in 1893. The only changes are the elimination of a public latrine on the rear of the building and the addition of a different roof structure. Third, virtually all of the artifacts, costumes, and banners used in religious ceremony since the Temple's inception remain intact. Fourth, the Taoist Temple has been designated in the proposed Hanford General Plan for restoration as an historical landmark. It is an integral part of the community's desire to develop China Alley and the area around China Alley into a complex of ethnic restaurants, shops, and other activities which reflect the diverse cultural heritage of the people who reside in Kings County and the central San Joaquin Valley.

