

Ngong Ping Piazza

Background

To further enhance the tourism appeal of Ngong Ping, Lantau and enrich the experience of visitors, the Tourism Commission, Civil Engineering and Development Department and Architectural Services Department launched the “Enhancement of Public Facilities at Ngong Ping, Lantau”¹ programme in February 2008. According to the programme, a 1.5-hectare piazza is constructed in Ngong Ping to link up the various tourist attractions in the area, including the Po Lin Monastery, Giant Buddha, Ngong Ping 360 cable car, Ngong Ping Village and Wisdom Path. It facilitates visitors to explore Ngong Ping, which is a popular tourist spot characterised by its religious setting and beautiful natural scenery.

The construction works commenced in November 2008 and were completed in July 2010. The total cost of the project is \$77.5 million.

Ngong Ping Piazza

The Ngong Ping Piazza is designed to complement the local religious ambience and foster a harmonious juxtaposition of the old and new architecture. It is a pedestrian zone with an emergency vehicular access to the Po Lin Monastery.

The Ngong Ping Piazza has the following four components:

1. New Pai Lau

Set at the entrance of the Piazza, the new Pai Lau is 14.1m tall and 19.1m wide. It is built in the Northern architectural style² of the Qing Dynasty which is also used by the Po Lin Monastery. The new Pai Lau adheres to the proportion of timber Pai Lau of the Northern style, characterised by tranquillity and solemnness. The new Pai Lau is about 150m away from the old Pai Lau near Di Tan. They are connected by the Bodhi Path and Di Tan. The front side of the new Pai Lai features the calligraphic works of Professor

¹ Other items of the “Enhancement of public facilities at Ngong Ping, Lantau” programme include associated storm water drainage works, a roundabout at the end of Ngong Ping Road, an emergency vehicular access to the Po Lin Monastery and a public toilet at the Ngong Ping public transport interchange.

² The Northern style of Chinese architecture, also known as the imperial style, is widely adopted in Chinese temples. With wide spread and sizable tall structures well organised in hierarchy, architectures in northern style generally express a sense of grandness, elegance and prominence.

JAO Tsung-I: a set of four-character horizontal inscription (南天佛國) on the top, flanked by a vertical 20-character couplet (建佛建刹建校莊嚴國土 名山名勝名僧利樂有情). On the side facing the Di Tan, it displays another set of four-character horizontal inscription (嶼山勝境) and a vertical 20-character couplet (如來座中華藏莊嚴世界海 菩提樹下寧靜光天解脫門).

2. Bodhi Path

The Bodhi Path is 122.1m long and 17.1m wide. To blends in with the religious ambience of Ngong Ping, the Path is flanked by Ficus Religiosa, statues of the “Twelve Divine Generals” as well as 40 lotus-shaped stone lanterns on both sides. These statues were custom-made in the Mainland in accordance with Po Lin Monastery’s specifications on their forms. Each stone statue weighs about a tonne on average and stands at 1.8m in height. Besides being the protectors of the Healing Buddha, the “Twelve Divine Generals” are also guardians of the hours of the day, each responsible for a two-hour section. In addition, they represent the twelve Chinese zodiac signs, as denoted by the different zodiac signs on their crowns.

3. Di Tan

A walk through the new Pai Lau and the Bodhi Path leads to the spacious centre of the Ngong Ping Piazza and Di Tan. To align with the religious architectural style of Ngong Ping, granite paving in gray colour scheme has been chosen for both the Bodhi Path and Di Tan. Moreover, four lotus ponds have been built around the Di Tan perimeter at the request of the Po Lin Monastery to facilitate the staging of religious ceremonies.

4. Chinese landscaped garden

The Chinese landscaped garden is 11m wide and covers an area of 1 980m², featuring a Chinese-style pavilion which measures 7.1m from front to rear and 5.4m in height. The Chinese landscaped garden also adopts the Northern architectural design with the roof built in interlocking style. The design maximises internal space to satisfy functional requirements while keeping the building low.

Ends