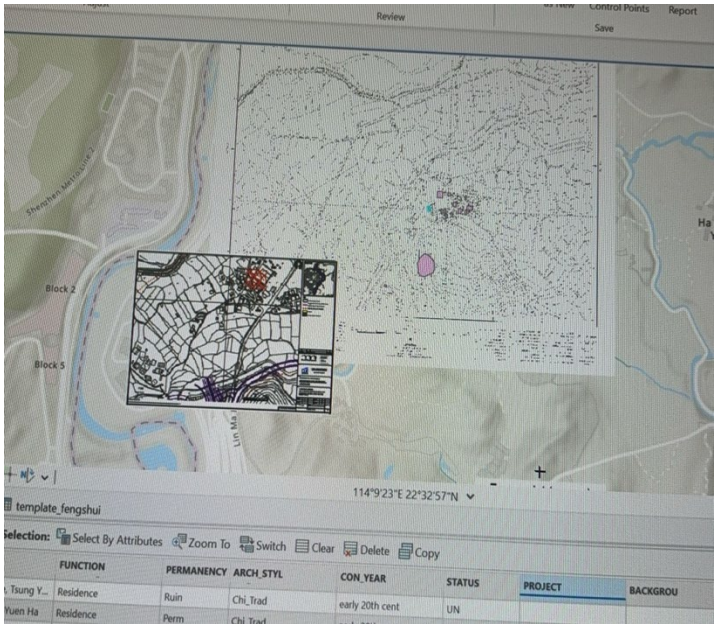
2025 Anthropology Summer Internship Report

Name: Shen Yun

Company: AECOM

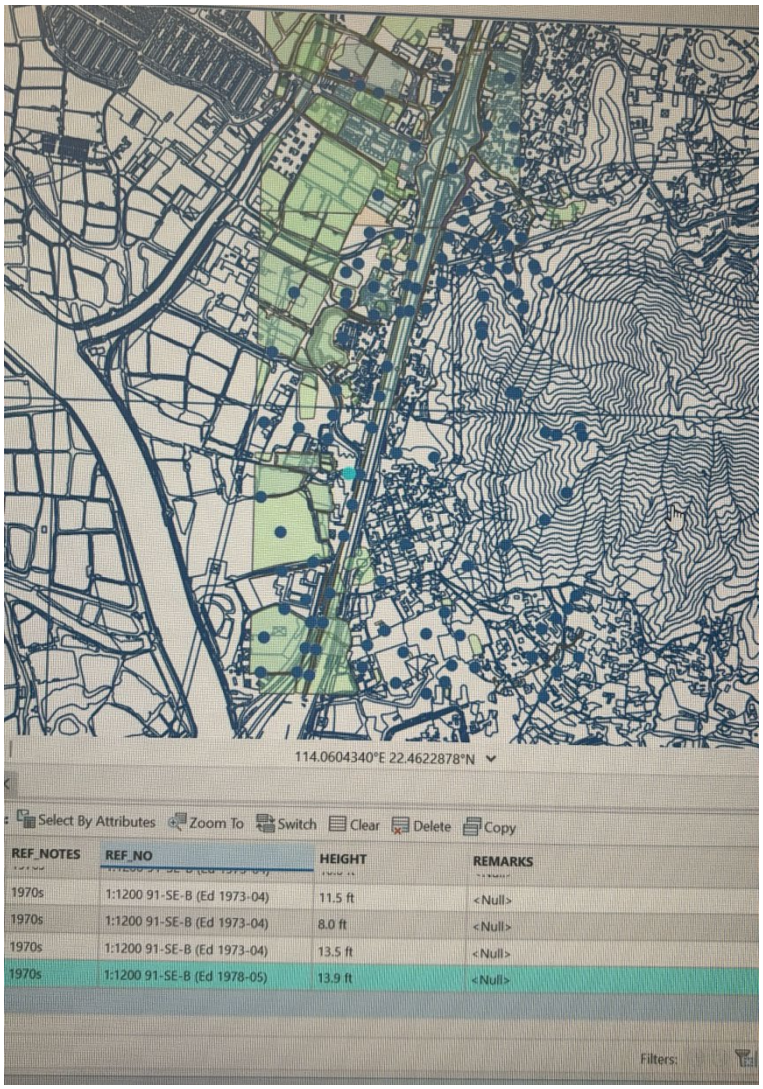
Duration: 7th July – 29th August

I am very grateful to have this precious opportunity of an internship at AECOM Hong Kong this summer. I was working in the Environment Department, Cultural Heritage team. My primary role was to organize information on unlisted built heritage in Hong Kong using ArcGIS, and I also assisted in handling artifacts and writing environmental impact assessment (EIA) reports. I was deeply moved by my colleagues' passion, and I also feel that my work holds great meaning.



AECOM, as an infrastructure construction company, focuses heavily on environmental protection before each project, with cultural heritage preservation as a part of it. As the data on unlisted heritage is not provided by the government, we need to conduct desktop research by reviewing previous EIA reports. I handled the geographic information and architectural appraisal of built heritage, gaining valuable insights into the history of villages in the New Territories. On the other hand, I now have a better understanding of how to communicate the value of built heritage to stakeholders and the government. The geoprocessing work was new to me, and I am grateful to have learned the skill during the internship, as it is useful when analyzing the importance of tangible heritage. My mentor, who was also from CUHK's anthropology department, provided me with lots of assistance in using the software and familiarizing myself with the company culture.

Besides the historical and architectural perspective of analyzing the built heritage's importance, my team leader, Patrick, also provided me with a new angle: Fung Shui. Given that most of our studies focused on indigenous villages, a significant portion of the structures were built according to Fung Shui principles, and removing them may lead to villagers' dissatisfaction. However, it also presented a new perspective on the entire industry, so I needed to create a rationale for identifying Fung Shui-related structures. During the process, I have learned much about the Fung Shui culture practiced in Hong Kong villages, as well as the slight differences between various groups, such as Hakka, Yue, and Teochew. What fascinated me most was that in villages dominated by different ethnic groups, the shape of the earth shrines varies according to the prevailing culture. Over time, the style of other cultures was also adopted. This offers a fascinating perspective on the cultural integration of Hong Kong's villages. Surprisingly, very little research has been done in this area. This also provides me with a topic to explore in my future academic pursuits.



I was also involved in the project of constructing the North Metropolis Highway and the Northern Link Spur Line. My task was to identify and input the assessment areas with no archaeological potential into ArcGIS. I need to refer to several past topographic maps for the first step and then review the previous EIA reports to

complete the desktop research. The changing land usage also exhibits a distinct pattern, providing an interesting angle for studying the history of the New Territories. Another task for me was to organize the artefacts discovered in archaeological research. It is a precious chance to practice my archaeological knowledge in a real-life situation.

I also participated in a site investigation in the Lok Ma Chau area, including several villages scheduled for relocation due to construction. I assisted with archaeological analysis onsite and observed the villagers' daily lives and their attitudes toward the relocation. I also visited the current state of a Grade II listed building. Through conversations with villagers, I gained a better understanding of their feelings about their village's cultural heritage. This was a rare opportunity, as it is not often that people get access to this area.

I truly enjoyed the internship experience, not only because of the meaningful and engaging work I was involved in but also because of the incredibly friendly, supportive, and welcoming colleagues who made the environment enjoyable and motivating. During my time there, I had several in-depth and insightful conversations with my mentor and team leader, who generously shared valuable career advice, guidance, and their perspectives on the industry's future trends and challenges. I deeply value the meaningful connections I built with them and others during my internship, and I am extremely grateful for all the assistance, mentorship, and opportunities I received, which have significantly contributed to my personal and professional growth. I also want to take a moment to sincerely thank the Department of Anthropology for granting me the unforgettable opportunity to deeply explore and understand the vibrant, culture-related industry in Hong Kong.