

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**General House – Main Building**  
**Fung Kat Heung, Yuen Long**

The building known as “General House” was built by Shum Hung-ying (沈鴻英), a warlord of the Kwangxi clique (桂系) during the warlord period (1912-1928) of the Chinese Republic. Shum Hung-ying was born in 1871 and moved to Luorong (離容) of Guangxi (廣西) from Enping (恩平) of Guangdong (廣東). He had been a bandit and later became a prefecture officer (管帶) in the Qing (清) government. He then served at the Republic government and was promoted to a number of posts, eventually became defence commissioner in the two provinces. He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Frontier Defence of the Third Route Army of Guangdong and Guangxi (粵桂邊防第三路軍總司令), had armed confrontations with the renowned generals Pai Chung-hsi (白崇禧) and Li Tsung-jen (李宗仁) in 1925, and later fled to Hong Kong. When he was a general in the Chinese mainland, he bought a lot of land in Hong Kong. He was a member of the Board of Director of Pok Oi Hospital (博愛醫院) in 1932 and 1933 and its Chairman in 1934. His residence in Fung Kat Heung (逢吉鄉) was probably completed in 1932. *Historical Interest*

The residence is called Shum Residence (沈氏大屋) or Chun Nam Tong (鎮南堂) built in a row of three houses separated by two courtyards in the form of a Hakka (客家) house blending with western design elements. The largest being the General House (上將府) in the middle and to its right is the Shum Ancestral Hall (沈氏家祠) and to its left the Hip Wai House (協威樓). The House’s main building is a two-storey structure having a rectangular hall surrounded by a U-shaped unit of living-rooms with a courtyard separating it. The upper storey is accessed by a staircase in the hall and a bridge on the upper storey is linking it to the rear unit. Verandahs are on both storeys of the U-shaped unit. The building is constructed of green bricks having its walls supporting part of its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Part of its roofs are reinforced flat concrete ones. The building is with minimal decoration with the name board at its entrance above the lintel and simple fascia boards and black wall friezes. *Architectural Merit*

It is a rare residence to outline the development of the early 1930s. *Rarity*

The residence is a modern version of a Hakka house of high built heritage value. *Built Heritage Value*

Minor additions and plastering are not that serious to downtune its authenticity. *Authenticity*

The General House was used as the dining and living rooms where Shum met his friends and had meals with his friends and family. Hip Wai House was where Shum lived. The Shum Ancestral Hall houses a number of soul tablets of Shum ancestors for worship with special offerings during the Chinese New Year, Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung Festivals (重陽節). Dim Dang (點燈) ritual is still held at the hall on the first day of the first lunar month. *Social Value, & Local Interest*