

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Sha Lo Tung Cheung Uk

#### Sha Lo Tung, Tai Po

Cheung Uk (張屋) village is in the upland valley among the hills of Sha Lo Tung (沙羅洞) south-west of Pat Sin Range (八仙嶺), Tai Po. The name of the village originates from the surname of the family in the village who settled there for some 300 years. They were Hakkas (客家人) from Chengxiang (程鄉) of Chaozhou (潮州), Guangdong (廣東) province. They first moved to Dongguan (東莞) and then to Lo Wai (老圍) of Sha Lo Tung. Lo Wai was also occupied by the Leis (李氏). With the increase of population, the Cheungs moved to the present site of Cheung Uk and Lo Wai was later named as Lei Uk (李屋). The Cheungs and Leis were farmers growing rice and vegetables and rearing chickens, ducks and pigs having their produce sold in Tai Wo Market (太和市, later known as Tai Po Market). The population of the village in 1960 was 260. With the drop of agricultural activities and villagers moved overseas and worked in the city areas, the village became gradually deserted from the 1960s. In the mid 1970s, only a few dozens of elderly still resided in the village. It is now abandoned.

**Historical  
Interest**

A total of 51 village houses survived in the early 2000s and they are deteriorating. There should be more than 60 houses built most of them residential including three ancestral halls. Only one ancestral hall remains. The small Hakka houses were built in irregular linear rows of around six in accordance with the topography and fung shui facing north-east having their back guarded by a wooden hill (風水林, *fung shui* wood). Most of the houses are single-storey one-hall Qing vernacular buildings. A stove was built inside the small house with living room on the ground floor and bedroom on its mezzanine floor. Most of them were without courtyard with a piece of glass or two among the clay tiles on its roof for natural light. The houses are mostly symmetrical constructed of green or mud bricks or a mix of both with rubble having its walls supporting its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Drippers are with some houses for draining rainwater. As the houses were relatively small, no columns and trusses were constructed. Timber board and joists were used to support its mezzanine floor. Decorations in the form of painting friezes and plaster mouldings are minimal with floral and bird motifs most of them faded away due to weathering.

**Architectural  
Merit**

A Hakka village having 300 years of history with its houses kept intact to witness the settlement of the Cheungs.

**Rarity**

The humble village houses though partially in bad and deteriorating condition are having high built heritage value. ***Built Heritage Value***

The unoccupied houses have not been altered with its originality stripped. ***Authenticity***

The ancestral hall of Cheung Uk village is called Sam Yik Tong (三益堂) where ancestral worship was taken place. A soul tablet is at the altar in the middle of the hall for worship. Kwun Yam (觀音) was also worshipped at the hall. ***Social Value, & Local Interest***