

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 163 Shan Pui

Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Shan Pui (山貝) is in the south of Nam Sang Wai (南生圍), Yuen Long, *Historical Interest* facing a large piece of fishing ponds in the old days. The village was founded by Lam Siu-yuen (林兆元), a 13th generation member of the Lam clan, who moved from Tai Wai (大圍) village in its south some 200 years ago. The Lam Ancestral Hall (林氏家祠) probably built around 1900 is in the eastern part of the village. A row of six houses, Nos. 158, 159, 160, 161, 162 and 163, was built by Lam Hung-mau (林鴻茂), a 17th generation member of the 7th branch. The houses were probably built around 1900. The five houses of Nos. 158 to 162 were built for Hung-mau himself and his four sons. No. 163 was added later also built by Hung-mau. The house was occupied by Sin-cheung (善祥), one of the sons of Hung-mau. The six houses connected together are sharing a common roof at their back. Hung-mau was a businessman of rice and grocery. Sin-cheung had a rice store at the Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟, Yuen Long Old Market) and moved to No.17 Hop Fat Street (合發街) of the Yuen Long New Market (元朗新墟). The shop was called Wing Cheung (永祥). The shop was closed due to the urban redevelopment of the area in the 1980s. He erected three houses at Nos.224-226 in the 1930-40s and he moved to the new houses. The house at No.163 was occupied by his relative surnamed Leung (梁) for several years. It has then been left vacated.

Most of the houses are on the west of the ancestral hall. The row of six houses is on its east. The six houses are facing north like the other houses. No.163 is the last one on the right of the row. The houses are Qing (清) vernacular buildings each having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The cooking stove and a bath corner is respectively on the left and right of the open courtyard in front of the hall. The living room is in front of a bedroom at the hall. A cockloft is above the bedroom also for use as a bedroom. Lower courses of the front façade are of granite blocks. Above the stone lintel of the entrance is a projected eave with plastered moulding of floral patterns. Weathered wall frieze mouldings of geometric floral pattern are on the front façade. *Architectural Merit*

It is a residential house to witness the settlement of the Lams in Shan Pui. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

It has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Lam Ancestral Hall and a number of village houses in the village.

Group Value

Sin-cheung was a merchant active in local affairs. He was one of the managers (值理) of the Pok Oi Hospital (博愛醫院) in the 1920-30s. He also proposed to renovate the Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Nga Yiu Tau (瓦窰頭) in 1938 and donated \$210 for its renovation. The Lam Ancestral Hall is on the left of the row of houses. It was used as the classrooms of a school called Yan Hing School (仁興學校) for teaching village children in the 1920-50s. The school was named after Lam Siu-yuen's grandfather Lam Yan-hing (林仁興). It was then used as classrooms of a kindergarten in 1967-68. Martial arts classes were organized in the open space outside the hall for villagers until the 1960s. Offering of incense to the ancestors at the ancestral hall was made by the Lams in turn called *lun gung pai* (輪更牌) in the morning and at dusk until the mid-1970s but discontinued when more and more clansmen moved out of the village. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual is still held at the hall. The names of the new born baby boys of previous year will be registered in the Tai Wong Temple (大王古廟) of the Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟) and lanterns of the boys will be lit up at both the hall and the temple.

***Social Value,
& Local
Interest***