

Historic Building Appraisal
Lee Ancestral Hall
No. 87A Sheung Wo Hang, Sha Tau Kok

Wo Hang (禾坑) is a Hakka (客家) village occupied by the Lees (李). Before their arrival it had been occupied by the Hos (何), the Tsangs (曾) and the Tangs (鄧). The Lees moved from Fujian (福建) province to Huizhou (惠州) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the 2nd year of Jianyan (建炎, 1128) reign of the Song (宋) dynasty. Lee Tak-wah (李德華), a member of the Lees, moved to Wo Hang in the 37th year of the Kangxi (康熙, 1698) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. Kuen-lam (權林), son of Tak-wah, built the Ancestral Hall (李氏祠堂) in a direction according to the advice of a geomancer. The *fung shui* of the hall was considered harmful to the Hos, the Tsangs and the Tangs that they left the village. Chit-wing (捷榮), the second son of Kuen-lam, branched out to Ha Wo Hang (下禾坑) in 1730 and Chiu-chip (朝楫), the eldest son Chit-wing, branched out to Wo Hang Tai Long (禾坑大朗) in 1750. Chit-kwai (捷桂) and Chit-fong (捷芳), the oldest and youngest sons of Kuen-lam remained to stay in Wo Hang (then called Sheung Wo Hang 上禾坑). The Lee Ancestral Hall in Sheung Wo Hang is the only ancestral hall in Wo Hang built in the 18th century where the Lees of the three villages have their ancestral worship.

***Historical
Interest***

The ancestral hall is built in the middle of five houses erected in a closed compound. Their front is with an open foreground fenced with a wall. The entrance is guarded by an entrance gate house. The ancestral hall is a Qing vernacular building having a two-hall-two-courtyard plan. An open courtyard is in the fore front of the building. The front hall behind the front courtyard was destroyed by a typhoon in 2003. The rear courtyard is in the middle of the halls. The building is constructed of green bricks and mud bricks with its walls to support its roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The altar occupies the entire end wall of the main hall with rows of soul tablets of the Lee ancestors for worship. The tall altar is with fine carvings. Fascia boards under the eaves are of flowers, birds and other auspicious treasures. The doorframe of the entrance is of granite. The ridge of the entrance is in boat shape with mouldings of auspicious flowers, fruits and animals. The ridge of the main hall is with a pair of red *ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings at its two ends.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is an ancestral hall of the Lees to witness their settlement in Wo Hang villages.

Rarity

The two-hall-two-courtyard plan of the building is rare having considerable built heritage value. *Built Heritage Value*

The demolished central hall very much diminished the authenticity of the building. *Authenticity*

It has group value with the entrance gate house of the compound. *Group Value*

Ancestral worship is held at the ancestral hall with especial offerings at the Chinese New Year. During the Chung Yeung Festival (重陽節) they would first have the worship at the hall before they go to the ancestors' graves. The worshipping would be by turn of the Lees in the three villages. Wedding and funeral ceremonies were held at the hall with banquets served. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for new born baby boys of previous year would be held at the hall on the 3rd day of the Chinese New Year when lanterns hung at the hall until the 15th day of the month. Hakka banquet would be served in the old days but discontinued now. *Social Value, & Local Interest*