

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 30 Kau Wa Keng, Kwai Tsing, N.T.

The Tsangs (曾) in Kau Wa Keng, also locally known as Kau Wa Keng *Historical*
 Old Village (九華徑舊村), are Hakkas (客家) who settled in the village in the *Interest*
 Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. Before their
 arrival, the village was settled by a family surnamed Ng (吳). Tsang Bak-tao
 (曾伯韜) first moved from Wangniugang (望牛崗) of Danshui (淡水), Huizhou
 (惠州), to Lizhujiao village (壙竹角村) of Baoan (寶安), Guangdong (廣東)
 province, that is, the present-day Tai Lam Chung (大欖涌) in 1737. His
 second son Wai-heng (維亨) later moved to Kau Wa Keng in the mid-18th
 century. Wai-heng is considered as the founding ancestor of the village.

Hong Kong Island was declared as a free port in 1842 and the Kowloon
 Peninsula was leased by Britain in 1860, which resulted in the general growth
 of China trade. A large number of Chinese were employed by shipping
 companies. Many villagers in Kau Wa Keng started to work as seamen before
 the lease of the New Territories. Their remittances made the village well-off.

Nos. 30 and 32 together form a two-storey residential building situated on
 the east side of the village at the foot of a hill. It is believed that the two
 houses were built around 1937 by Tsang Hin-sheung (憲湘) a.k.a.
 Kwok-sheung (國湘) who was a purser by occupation. Many Tsang clansmen
 from the village worked as seamen and earned enough money to send
 remittances home to their families and eventually build a family residence.

The two semi-detached houses form a long narrow building which is built *Architectural*
 in a combination of Chinese and Western design. This mixed design was *Merit*
 commonly adopted by Chinese who had worked overseas. The building is
 very colonial in appearance displaying beautiful classical style arched windows
 with wooden casements at first floor level. The windows are paired with
 moulded architraves with short columns carrying the arches. An elaborately
 decorated shaped pediment flanked by ornamental posts and parapet walls
 adorns the front elevation. The front entrances have covered forecourts, and
 the arched windows continue along the exposed side elevation. The facades
 are further enhanced by moulded cills under the windows and a wide projecting
 cornice at parapet level. The roof appears to be partly pitched and partly flat.
 Internally the rooms are long and narrow. Kitchens and bathrooms are
 situated at the rear.

Although the elegant appearance of the building has been marred by ugly *Rarity,*

temporary lean-to structures added on, Nos. 30 and 32 display some rare and fine architectural features. Alterations are evident both internally and externally somewhat compromising authenticity.

Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

The social value of the building lies in its role since it was built as a village residence, and its existence due to the hard work and financial success of Tsang Hin-sheung. Its distinctive mixed architectural features give it historical and local interest.

Social Value & Local Interest

No. 30 has group value with other historic buildings in the village, and the former Lai Chi Kok Hospital (荔枝角醫院) (Grade 3).

Group Value

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08-25-070. *Stonecutters Island in the background and Kau Wa Kang in the foreground* (photograph), 1927.

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HKRS209-4-6-41. *Sheet 6. Villages: Kau Pa Kang* (Map No. 104(41)).

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