

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Shek Lun Kok,**  
**No. 33 Kat Hing Back Street, Tai O, Lantau Island**

Shek Lun Kok (石麟閣) was built in 1934 by **Tsang Yung** (曾榕), an *Historical Interest* indigenous villager whose ancestors lived in Sha Tin Tsuen (沙田村) engaging in salt business in the past. Tsang Yung, a native of Huiyang (惠陽), was the Managing Director of Blue Taxicabs Ltd (金邊的士有限公司). He contributed to the development and welfare of Tai O by donations to a street lighting scheme and funding school scholarships.

Shek Lun Kok appears to have been built as a holiday home for Tsang Yung and his family. Tsang Yung usually came back two to three times every year and in each time he would bring his family with him and also his servants, staying for a period of more than a week. The building was a self-contained one well equipped with an electricity generator and water pumping equipment. A large tank was installed on the top of the building.

During the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), the building was once taken over by the Japanese as military headquarters in Tai O for one year, and later was handed back to Tsang Yung, who became the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of the Kowloon Chamber of Commerce (九龍總商會) in 1940. After the war, Tsang Yung moved back to the urban area to re-establish his business.

In the 1980s, the building was acquired by a **Wong Family** and renamed to signify the business of the subsequent owner. “Shek Lun Kok” is named after a recycling factory known as **Shek Lun Waste Paper** (石麟廢鐵). The Wong family lived there for some time and the property was left vacant after the children had grown up.

The house is built on a long narrow plot on a back street of Tai O. Its main *Architectural Merit* feature is the elegant colonnaded verandah along the north and east façades at first floor level. This gives the building a colonial appearance reminiscent of Portuguese or Mediterranean architecture. As the remainder of the building is in the Modern cubist geometric style with typical rendered and white painted walls, the architectural style can be classified as **Modern Eclectic**. This is the term applied to buildings of modern design which adopt some form of traditional ornamentation.

The construction appears to be a reinforced concrete frame with granite cladding to the ground floor storey walls. Windows are standard metal framed casements. At roof level there is a roof terrace, water tank, and chimney stack serving the ground floor kitchen. There are four floor levels including a

mezzanine. The décor internally is in the minimalist style of the 1930s.

Shek Lun Kok is the only house in Tai O which exhibits a colonial verandah so that it is a rare piece of built heritage. There have been several refurbishments and changes of layout since the house was built and original windows have been replaced. Nevertheless the original structure does not appear to have been altered very much and retains much of its authenticity.

**Rarity,  
Built Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity**

Shek Lun Kok is the most visually prominent residential block in Tai O. As the holiday home of a local benefactor and philanthropist, it can be said to have social value and local interest. The house is well known in Tai O and when it was first built it was known as *Si Liu* (新樓 or “New Building” by the villagers.

**Social Value  
& Local  
Interest**

Shek Lun Kok was built with most of the residential units along Kat Hing Back Street, the street which defines the area for inhabitants as a result of the migration policy in the early Qing Dynasty. There are still many tenement houses with Chinese tile roofs along the same street; for example, **No. 23 Kat Hing Back Street**. At the end of this street is the **Kwan Tai and Tin Hau Temple** (關帝及天后古廟).

**Group Value**

Although the house has been rented out as a holiday villa and used as an unofficial vacation centre for police officers, according to local information the building is now seldom used and is left vacant. A family named Wong (黃) lived there for some time and the property is still in the family. The future of the building is not known at the present time so that it is difficult to suggest an adaptive re-use.

**Adaptive  
Re-use**