

## Historic Building Appraisal

### No. 10 Kau Wa Keng, Kwai Tsing, N.T.

The Tsangs (曾) in Kau Wa Keng, also locally known as Kau Wa Keng Old Village (九華徑舊村), are Hakkas (客家) who settled in the village in the 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 Wah Keng in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Wai-heng is considered as the founding ancestor of the village.

***Historical  
Interest***

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.

It is believed that No. 10 was built around the 1910s – 1920s. The income of the Tsangs came from remittances from their men-folk who worked as seamen and also rent from tenants. This was supplemented by raising chickens, pigs and cows and cultivation of their farmland.

The design of the house displays a mixed use of Western and Chinese elements. It is a two-storey pitched-roof building with gable walls flanking the two sides. On the left, there is a single-storey room attached to the gable wall with a pitched lean-to roof. The front facade is the most impressive being a simple classical composition of square columns, moulded capitals and cornices, and a decorative panel embellished with festoons and a cartouche in the centre portion of the roof parapet. The lower part of the front elevation is an open verandah or porch. In contrast the gable walls are simply rendered and painted, with rows of casement windows. Granite is believed to be the main construction material.

***Architectural  
Merit***

Alterations include a false ceiling in the ground floor living room, replacement of original wooden windows with modern aluminium windows, and ceramic or plastic tiles to the floors. The design of the house is rare and distinctive compared to other village houses in the village.

***Rarity, Built  
Heritage Value  
& Authenticity***

Together with a few other houses of the same style nearby, it has built

***Social Value &***

heritage value. It adds local interest to the village and also has a certain social *Local Interest* value.

No. 10 has group value with the other historic buildings in the village, and *Group Value* the former Lai Chi Kok Hospital (荔枝角醫院) (Grade 3).

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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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