

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Entrance Gate

#### Muk Wu, Ta Kwu Ling, N.T.

Muk Wu (木湖) village is in the closed area on the east of Man Kam To (文錦渡). It was first settled by the Tos (杜) from Dongguan (東莞) of Guangdong (廣東) province probably in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century the earliest. The Wongs (黃) and the Yams (任) later came to settle in the village. It is now inhabited by fewer than a hundred villagers. It was a walled village with four watch towers at the four corners of the square village. An entrance gate was built in the middle of the front outer row of houses with a shrine at the opposite end on the last row of houses on the central axis of the village. The symmetrical layout of the village had the central axis, that is the main street in the middle, bisected the village into two halves with four rows of houses running parallel to the front and back rows of houses separated by horizontal lanes between them. The outlying row of houses, the four corner towers and the entrance gate formed as an external wall to protect the inner houses. It was probably first built 300 years ago when the village was established.

**Historical  
Interest**

The entrance gate is connected to a house on either side facing southwest like the other houses in the village. The gate is a Qing (清) vernacular building of a one-hall rectangular plan. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Its front doorway is in rectangular shape whilst its rear doorway in arched shape. Two circular holes are above the front doorways for *fung shui* benefit and for security watching. Inside the gate entrance on the left rear wall by the door is an Earth God (土地) niche with an incinerator in its front. The building is retained with fair-faced green bricks. The central portion of the floor is paved with granite slabs. A wooden *tanglung*(趟籠) is still installed at the front door.

**Architectural  
Merit**

It is an entrance gate to witness the history of the village.

**Rarity**

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage  
Value**

It has its authenticity kept.

**Authenticity**

It has group value with the ruined shrine and the Tin Hau Temple (天后廟) in the village.

**Group Value**

The entrance gate was an essential structure to protect the villagers living inside the village. It was used to keep away all the enemies, bandits and any threats that would endanger the villagers. It was closed at night. A voluntary self-defence guard force was organized in the village to provide patrol and security service. The guards were allowed to have guns for its duties. The service was discontinued in the 1970s. The villagers had Dim Dang (點燈) ritual at the shrine and the Earth God niche at the gate would be given incense offerings as well.

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