

Historic Building Appraisal

Cheung Ancestral Hall

No. 87 Shui Tsiu Lo Wai, Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Shui Tsiu Lo Wai (水蕉老圍) is a Hakka (客家) village having a history of some 300 years in Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉) of Yuen Long occupied by eight clans including the Kans (簡), the Tsangs (曾), the Chans (陳) the Cheungs (張), the Yeungs (楊) and others. The Cheungs came from Boulo (博羅) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the Kangxi (康熙, 1662-1722) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. With the increase of population, they moved south to establish their own village, Nam Hang Tsuen (南坑村), in the 1830s. They did not however move the Cheung Ancestral Hall (張氏宗祠) in Shui Tsiu Lo Wai which was constructed probably in the 18th century the earliest. The Cheungs had another ancestral hall in Nam Hang Tsuen.

*Historical
Interest*

Located in the first row of houses in the six rows of houses in the village, the ancestral hall is connected to a house on either side. It is a Qing vernacular building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of green bricks and mud bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are partially plastered and painted and some covered with ceramic tiles. The floors are with ceramic tiles. A soul tablet of the Cheung ancestors is on the ceramic-tiled altar at the end wall of the hall. The name of the hall is engraved on a piece of stone on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Wall frieze paintings of flowers are on either side of the name board. A pair of geometric mouldings is at two ends of the front and main ridges. The front façade walls are covered with green ceramic tiles.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is an ancestral hall of the Cheungs to witness their settlement in Shui Tsiu Lo Wai.

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

A renovation was made in the 1970s. The building has been unsympathetically painted and modernized with the ceramic tiles used. Its authenticity has been diminished.

Authenticity

It has group value with the other ancestral halls of the Kans, Chans, the Yeungs and the Tses (謝) in the village.

Group Value

The Cheungs would make ancestral worship to their ancestors at the hall at the Chinese New Year and at Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung (重陽節) Festivals with special offerings. They had wedding, funeral and Dim Dang (點燈) rituals at the hall but discontinued after the Second World War. The Cheungs have participated in the Fa Pow (花炮) activities at the Tai Shu Ha Tin Hau Temple (大樹下天后廟) in Ngau Yiu Tau (瓦寮頭) of Shap Pat Heung on the 23rd of the third lunar month. *Social Value, & Local Interest*