

Historic Building Appraisal

Nos. 4, 5 and 6 Tai Tan

Tai Po, New Territories

Tai Tan (大灘) is a small village close to the sea in the north of Wong Shek Pier (黃石碼頭), Sai Kung. It was a self-sufficient village. Paddy and vegetable fields were found around the village. Villagers used to carry their agricultural products to Tai Po market or Sai Kung Market for sale. They also sold their fish as secondary income. *Historical Interest*

Tai Tan is a single-surname village occupied by the Li clan. Mr **Li Shi-yi** (李仕義), who is respected as the great-grandfather (太公) of the Li clan in Tai Tan, settled in the area in the 35th year of the reign of Emperor Qianlong (乾隆三十五年, 1746) of Qing Dynasty.

Li Shi-yi was a descendent of Li King-mau (李景茂), the 15th generation ancestor of the Lis. Li King-mau had moved from Guixin (歸善) of Guangdong (廣東) province and settled in Wu Kau Tang (烏蛟騰), northeast of Pat Sin Leng (八仙嶺). After several generations, the expansion of the Lee clan led to the branching out of the Li clan to other places.

Before the Second World War, the row houses then located at **Nos. 4, 5 and 6 Tai Tan** was one-storey high. In 1954, because of the reason for *fung shui* (風水; topographical and geometrical settings in traditional Chinese belief), the descendents of Li Shi-yi pulled down the old houses, which were rebuilt to become the present appearance.

The block of three houses is facing southeast like the other houses of the village. A hill is at its back. The row of houses is built on a terrace with an open forecourt in its front. The block of houses is in Qing vernacular design having three houses built connected together. It is probably constructed of green bricks and concrete with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The three houses are separated by party walls and each is recessed in its front façade. Each house has its own entrance. The two-storey house has windows opened at its front façade. The walls are plastered and painted in cream colour. Two petal patterns are on the party walls. *Architectural Merit*

It is a residential block of building to remind the settlement of the Lis in the village. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

It has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

The remote village had its geographical constraint for further development. Except some coastal land in its north and south, it is separated from the hill in its west and southwest. Growing of rice and vegetable is the main occupation of the Lis. They were also supported by fishing. They had their agricultural produce and fish sold at the Tai Po and Sai Kung markets. Starting from the end of the 19th century, the Lis worked overseas and many of them settled in the U.K., the U.S., Holland and other overseas countries. Some have moved to the Sai Kung and Tai Po town areas and return only at the Chinese New Year and when their overseas relatives return to Hong Kong. They would pay tribute to the soul tablets of their ancestors at the ancestral hall at No. 9 on the left of the block.

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

It has group value with the Li Ancestral Hall (李氏家祠) at No. 9 on its left.

Group Value

The question of adaptive re-use does not arise at present.

Adaptive Re-use