

Historic Building Appraisal
Old House
Ha Wai, Sham Chung Tsuen, Tai Po, N.T.

Sham Chung Tsuen (深涌村) is a Hakka (客家) village in the south of Tolo Channel (吐露海峽), Tai Po. It can be sub-divided into five areas, including Ha Wai (下圍), Shek Tau King (石頭徑), Pao Wai Tsai or Pao Nei Tsai (包圍仔/包籬仔), Wan Tsai (灣仔) and Dui Min Tsuen (對面村). Sham Chung Tsuen was first settled by the Lees (李氏) and then the Wongs (黃氏). The Lees came from Wu Kau Tang (烏蛟騰), south of Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角) during the reign of Emperor Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) of Qing (清) Dynasty. A Catholic church, the Chapel of the Epiphany of Our Lord, was erected in 1956 in Ha Wai where many villagers became Catholics. Thus Ha Wai has been called “Chapel Village” (聖教堂村). The Chapel housed a school called Kung Man School (公民學校) with some 50 pupils and two teachers. Another school, Shum Chung School (深涌學校), was set up at Shek Tau King in the 1950s. The two schools however were incorporated into Sham Chung Public School (深涌公立學校) established in 1958. The block of house at Ha Wai was probably built **before 1938** by the Lees. It was renovated in the 1960s and is left vacant.

Historical Interest

The south facing block of residential house is with the hill at its north. It is a Qing vernacular building of three units constructed of rammed earth and green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Behind its entrance, each unit has its kitchen with a stove on its left and a bath corner at its right. Behind them is the living room. Above the living room are the bedrooms accessed through a wooden staircase. The walls are plastered and the floor cement-screeded. Each unit has a recessed front façade. Under the eave is a moulded cornice with four moulded petal patterns on the walls.

Architectural Merit

It is a block of residential building to witness the settlement of the Lees in the village.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The building is lack of upkeep and maintenance with part of it covered with overgrowth.

Authenticity

The Lees have grave sweeping at their ancestors' graves in Sham Chung Tsuen; however, they have no ancestral hall in the Tsuen. They have their ancestral worship at the ancestral hall in Wu Kau Tang (烏蛟騰) on the second day of the Chinese New Year.

Social Value, & Local Interest

The Old House is situated next to the footpath with a large field at the front and a grove at the rear, which is recognized to have a good *fungshui* setting. Most of the fields are ruined now, and most of the houses in the village have been left vacant. There is another historic building, Chapel of Epiphany of Our Lord, which is a church-cum-school built in 1956. ***Group Value***