

## Historic Building Appraisal

### Mo's Old House

#### Po Toi Island

Po Toi Island (蒲台島) is in the south of Hong Kong Island with a small population in the old days mainly inhabited in two villages, namely, Chang Shek Pai (長石排) and Shan Liu (山寮). Most of the villagers carried the surnames of Yu (余), Ho (何), Wan (溫), Pang (彭) and Chan (陳) who subsisted on farming, fishing and the harvesting of sea-weed. Over the past few decades, the island's population has fallen dramatically as the younger generation began to move away and seek other employment opportunities in the city.

*Historical  
Interest*

Mo's Old House (巫氏古宅) is situated in Chang Shek Pai. It was built on the site of an original Mo house that was built soon after the Mos came to the island from Huiyang (惠陽) of Guangdong (廣東) province about one hundred years ago. The existing Mo's Old House was built in the **1930s** by **Mo Siu-tong** (巫少棠), who was said to be an orphan. Mo Siu-tong left the island in his teenage years and worked in the urban area for 20 years. He returned to the island in 1933 and built what is now known as Mo's Old House, intending to establish a permanent home for retirement's sake. However, after an attempted collusive kidnap by pirates and his maid during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45), he fled the island and left the house to an old housekeeper, without returning again. The house has been left vacant after the death of the housekeeper about fifty years ago.

Built in the 1930s using local materials and building techniques, Mo's Old House is considered a good example of Chinese Vernacular architecture. The stone house is in a diamond-shape plan. It is constructed of granite blocks and concrete with its walls to support its flat roof. Projecting flat eaves are at the front façade and hooded windows are on the walls. Long and narrow openings are on the walls probably watching holes for security purposes. Four characters “保乂流芳” (meaning “keeping the righteousness for posterity”) are moulded on the wall above the doorway. This suggests that the owner intended to leave this house for his eventual offspring. Since the house has been left vacant for years, the site is now covered with vegetation and is very much concealed from the immediate surroundings. Although dilapidated in the present state, the house continues to stand as a remnant of the past of Po Toi island. It was also once recognized as the most grandiose and prestigious mansion on the island.

*Architectural  
Merit*

The site is a reminder of the Mos' settlement on the island.

*Rarity*

The site has some built heritage value. Its authenticity is partially kept. The existing house has fallen into ruins. Although presently in a rather unsightly state, it still manages to retain some of its simple details and sturdy front walls.

*Built Heritage  
Value  
Authenticity*

The site is rumoured to be haunted. It has become a tourist attraction of the island.

*Social Value &  
Local Interest*

Other historic items on Po Toi Island include the declared monument of the **Rock Carving on Po Toi Island** (蒲台島石刻) and the Antiquities and Monuments Office recorded item of **Tin Hau Temple** in Tai Wan.

*Group Value*