

Historic Building Appraisal
Entrance Gate
Shek Wu Wai, San Tin, Yuen Long

Shek Wu Wai (石湖圍) village is in the south end of San Tin (新田), Yuen Long. It is established by the Man (文) clan of San Tin. The village is separated by San Tin Highway (新田公路) on its north from the main villages of the clan including Yan Shau Wai (仁壽圍), Fan Tin Tsuen (蕃田村) and others. The village is a comparatively young village of the Mans founded some 300 years ago by those who branched out from Chau Tau Tsuen (洲頭村) at the east end of San Tin. Chau Tau Tsuen was established by Man Ting-sze (文廷士), a 9th generation member of the Mans. An entrance gate was built at the first row of six rows of east facing houses in the village. The first row of houses 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. It was rebuilt in 1965 with the donations from overseas villagers who mainly emigrated from the early 1950s onwards.

*Historical
Interest*

The entrance gate is an independent structure connected to a short wall on either side. The gate is a modern Chinese vernacular building of a one-hall rectangular plan. It is probably constructed of green bricks and concrete with its walls to support its flat roof. Its front doorway is in rectangular shape whilst its rear doorway in arched shape. Two circular holes are above the front doorway for *fung shui* benefit and for security watching. Inside the gate entrance on the right wall is an Earth God (土地) shrine with an offering table in its front. A cockloft built up of joists and planks is inside the gate entrance. The entrance gate is topped with a parapet wall surrounding the structure. It front is moulded with the year 1965 and bat and geometric patterns. Above the front doorway is the moulded name of the village flanked by a couplet and bat pattern. The structure is plastered and painted internally and externally. The floor is of cement –screeded.

*Architectural
Merit*

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

Rarity

It has little built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

The gate was rebuilt in 1965. It has its new version authenticity kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Pak Tai (北帝) shrine and another Earth God shrine 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 village guard force (更練) was formed to provide a self-defence system in the village. Five to six guards patrolled within the village area every night. During the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), the village guards were renamed self-defence corps (自衛隊). The village was not seriously affected during the Occupation. At the end of July 1946 after a meeting at Tai Po among the District Officer, the police force and the village representatives of the New Territories, a decision was made to arm village guards in support of the regular police force. Consequently, the village guards were armed with guns. They attended training courses on gun firing provided by Lok Ma Chau Police Station. The security service was discontinued in the 1960s. The cost of rebuilding the gate entrance was with sponsorship of the Mans moved overseas in Britain.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*