

Historic Building Appraisal
Wai Cheung Ancestral Hall
Yau Tam Mei Tsuen, San Tin, Yuen Long

Yau Tam Mei Tsuen (攸潭尾村) is a multi-clan village in the south of San Tin (新田), Yuen Long. It was occupied by the Chus (朱), the Laus (劉) and the Chows (周), the Chows being the majority. Chow Yam (周壬) and his brother Chow Lung (周龍) came to settle in the village from Bolou (博羅) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the 19th century. The Wai Cheung Ancestral Hall (維祥公祠) was built by Chow Yam to commemorate his ancestor Chow Wai-cheung (周維祥) in 1887. Wall paintings at the entrance drawn by Wong Wah (黃華) from Taiyi (台邑) have the year inscribed on them. *Historical Interest*

The ancestral hall was a block of building having three bays when it was first built. Two side bays were added connecting to it on either side in the 1950s for the residence of the Chows. The two bays have their own separate entrances. The block has a common roof for the bays. The ancestral hall is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a one-hall plan of three bays. Two rooms are on either side of the middle hall. It is constructed of green bricks and mud bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The internal walls are plastered and the floor cement-screeded. The external walls are of fair-faced green bricks. A simple soul tablet of the Chow ancestors is on the altar at the end wall of the hall for worship. The name of the hall is moulded on the wall above the lintel of the recessed entrance. Wall frieze paintings of flowers and birds and calligraphy are under the eave of the entrance. A ceramic cock is in the middle of the ridge for decoration. *Architectural Merit*

It is a family ancestral hall of the Chows to witness their settlement in Yau Tam Mei Tsuen. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value. *Built Heritage Value*

The roof was repaired after a typhoon in the 1960s. The authenticity of the building is kept. *Authenticity*

The ancestral hall has the ancestral worship of the Chow ancestors regularly and at the festivals including the Chinese New Year, Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung Festivals (重陽節). Many of the Chows who moved overseas would make worship to the ancestors when they return to the village. Wedding, funeral and Dim Dang (點燈) rituals were held at the hall. Banquets *Social Value, & Local Interest*

were also held at the hall and at the open ground outside the building to celebrate the weddings and birthdays of the villagers.