

Historic Building Appraisal

Entrance Gate

Nai Wai, Tuen Mun, N.T.

Originated from Watlam (鬱林) of Guangxi (廣西) province, the To (陶) *Historical Interest* clan moved to Ngau Tam Mei (牛潭尾) of Yuen Long and then to Tuen Mun Tai Tsuen (屯門大村) in the Yuen (元, 1271-1368) dynasty. Their founding ancestors are To Man-chat (陶文質) and one of his grandsons Ka-ye (嘉儀). Due to the increase of the clan population, five villages, namely, Nai Wai (泥圍), Tsing Chuen Wai, (青磚圍), Tuen Tsz Wai (屯子圍), Lam Tei Tsuen (藍地村) and Tuen Mun San Tsuen (屯門新村) were subsequently developed. Nai Wai, originally called Wong Kong Wai (黃崗圍), was established in the Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. It was a walled village with four watch towers at the four corners of the square village. An entrance gate was built in the middle of the front outer row of houses with a shrine at the opposite end on the last row of houses on the central axis of the village. The symmetrical layout of the village had the central axis, the main street in the middle, bisected the village into two halves with seven rows of houses running parallel to the front and back rows of houses separated by horizontal lanes between them. The outlying row of houses, the four corner towers and the entrance gate formed as an external wall to protect the inner houses. The entrance gate and the shrine were probably first built some 270 years ago when the village was established. The entrance gate and the shrine like most of the houses were built facing west. The entrance gate was moved to the present southern outer row of houses with its entrance facing south about 200 years ago due to *fung shui* reasons.

The entrance gate is connected to a house on either side facing south like *Architectural Merit* the other houses on the same row. The gate is a Qing vernacular building of a one-hall rectangular plan. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Its front and rear doorways are in rectangular shape. Two hexagonal holes are above the front doorway for *fung shui* benefit and for security watching. Inside the gate entrance on the left front wall by the door is an Earth God (土地) niche. The front façade is retained with fair-faced green bricks with granite blocks for its doorframe. Above the lintel is a stone board engraved with “五柳薰香” (Fragrance of Wuliu (五柳先生), a renowned To in the Eastern Jin (東晉, 317-420) dynasty). A wave-shaped pediment added probably in the early 20th century with a short column on either side is at the top of the front façade with a sun, two phoenixes and floral pattern mouldings. Its internal walls are

plastered and painted with imitation brick lines. A *tanglung* (趟籠) was at the front door but the wooden fixture has been removed leaving the granite frames with the grille holes at the frames. A cockloft is at the entrance gate. The floor is paved with granite slabs.

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

Rarity

It has high intangible heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

It was renovated in 1995. It has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the shrine of 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. The Tos were farmers engaged in farming. They had large pieces of land around the area for their cultivation. A Ng Lau Study Hall (五柳學校) was established in the village but was replaced by a Hing Tak School (興德學校) set up in 1954.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*