

Historic Building Appraisal
Entrance Gate
Ma Tin Tsuen, Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Ma Tin Tsuen (馬田村) in Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉), Yuen Long, was a *Historical Interest* walled village having a history of some 300 years. It was inhabited by 7 lineages surnamed Chan (陳), Wong (黃), Kwan (關), Cheng (鄭), Chow (周), Ho (何) and Tang (鄧). The wall including an enclosing wall, a moat, four watchtowers at its four corners, an entrance gate and a shrine were constructed for the protection of the villagers against any attack from bandits, pirates and other enemies. The entrance gate and the shrine are on the same central axis at opposite ends of the village. The moat was later reclaimed and the four watchtowers demolished. Only a small portions of the walls remained. An Earth God (土地) niche is at the left wall close to the external doorway of the entrance gate. The deity has the worship of the villagers daily and at festivals with special offerings.

The entrance gate is a building of a one-hall rectangular plan built in Qing (清) vernacular style. Its recessed entrance is slightly switched to the left due to *Architectural Merit* *fung-shui* reasons. Its rectangular entrance doorway is facing north whilst its internal doorway is facing the village houses. It was originally constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Its external doorway is framed with granite blocks and above the lintel are two big circular holes. Under the eave is a wall frieze of landscape paintings.

It is an entrance gate of a walled village to remind the history of the village. *Rarity*

It is an item of historic interest.

Built Heritage Value

The entrance gate was rebuilt in 2009.

Authenticity

The entrance gate and the shrine have related group value.

Group Value

A study hall was set up at the left of the entrance gate for teaching village children. A teacher was employed to give lessons to the children. Martial arts classes were also conducted at night time for villagers. It was also a venue for the villagers to meet and deal with village affairs. The Earth God is also among the deities of the village being worshipped and given offering at festivals and at special occasions such as villagers' wedding. The village had its defense force for the protection of the village with guns. After the Second World War the force *Social Value, & Local Interest*

was disbanded. When Dim Dang (點燈) ritual is held at the shrine, a lantern will be put up at the entrance gate other than the bigger lantern hanged at the shrine.