

Historic Building Appraisal

Lee Ancestral Hall

Tai Po Mei, Tai Po

Tai Po Mei (大埔尾) village is on the west of the Chinese University, a short distance from the Tolo Harbour (吐露港). The Lee moved from Changle (長樂) of Guangdong (廣東) province about two hundred years ago. The Lee Ancestral Hall (李氏宗祠) was built in the early 19th century to commemorate Lee Fong-yuen (李芳遠) the founder of the village and a 17th generation ancestor of the Lee clan. The Lees had the advantage of engaged themselves in fishing at the Tolo Harbour and farming growing rice and vegetable in their village. *Historical Interest*

The ancestral hall is an independent building in the east of the village built against a hill at its back. The hall is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. The small open courtyard is in-between the entrance and main halls. Side chambers and rooms are on either side of the middle bay. The walls are plastered and the floors with cement screeding. The lower half of the internal walls is covered with ceramic tiles. The building is constructed of green bricks, mud bricks and rammed earth with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafter, purlins and clay tiles. The altar is in the middle of the end wall of the main hall housing a soul tablet of Lee Fong-yuen for worship. A tie beam at the main hall is carved with four Chinese characters “百子千孫” (Hundreds of Sons and Thousands of Grandsons). The front façade of the building is decorated with new ceramic tiles of dragons, phoenixes and other subjects under the eave. *Architectural Merit*

It is an ancestral hall of the Lees to remind their settlement in Tai Po Mei village. *Rarity*

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

It has its authenticity kept. *Authenticity*

It has been used as a place for ancestral worship and traditional rituals including offerings at the Chinese New Year and at the Chung Yeung Festival (重陽節). They however had no Dim Dang (點燈) ritual at the hall and worship at the Chung Yeung Festival. A school was housed at the hall in 1907-1941 where village children were educated. It was replaced by a school set up at Cheung Shu Tan (樟樹灘) in its north. It was also used as a venue for *Social Value, & Local Interest*

the teaching of kung fu for the villagers. During the early period of the Japanese Occupation (1941-45), the village was occupied by the Japanese soldiers and it became a stepping post for the army to continue to invade the southern part of Hong Kong. The hall was used by the soldiers as a forward station.