

Historic Building Appraisal
Lam Ancestral Hall
No. 11 Hang Ha Po, Tai Po

The Lam Ancestral Hall (林氏家祠) in No. 11 Hang Ha Po (坑下莆) village of Lam Tsuen (林村) valley is probably constructed before 1906 as the Land Registry has its dating recorded, the earliest identified. It was built by the Lams in this single named Hakka (客家) village for their ancestral worship. The Lams have their distant ancestors in Putian (莆田) of Fujian (福建) province who first settled in Wong Chuk Yeung (黃竹洋) in Sha Tin and then moved to Hang Ha Po. Due to further expansion of the village population, the Lams branched out to Kau Liu Ha (較寮下) village in Lam Tsuen and Nam Wah Po (南華莆) in Tai Hang (泰亨) further north of Lam Tsuen. This family ancestral hall (家祠) is for ancestral worship of younger ancestors settled in Hang Ha Po and the bigger one (a clan one) at No.13 on the same row of the village houses is for the worship of earlier ancestors.

***Historical
Interest***

The ancestral hall is in the middle of a row of village houses in the village. It is a type of Qing vernacular building of the Hakka called *dou lang* (斗廊) sharing a common pitched roof with other houses in the same row. The hall itself is a one-hall one-courtyard structure built of green bricks with a recessed entrance. The altar is at the end of the hall in the middle housing only one ancestral tablet with an Earth God shrine at the bottom. A separate altar for the Kwun Yam (觀音) is on its left. The building is supported by the brick walls topped with roofs of wooden rafter, purlins and red clay tiles. Its entrance has granite door frame, lintel and threshold. Other than the finely carved soul tablet at the altar, the hall is without any decoration.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a family ancestral hall having some value of local context. A simple and plain ancestral hall to denote a historic Hakka village of considerable built heritage value.

***Rarity & Built
Heritage
Value***

It was renovated in 1980. Its authenticity has been maintained with some minor defections.

Authenticity

This hall and the clan ancestral hall at No.13 of the village have related group value.

Group Value

Dim Dang (點燈) ritual was held on the first day of the lunar month in the Chinese New Year for new born male babies of previous year by lighting up the lanterns. The ritual however has been discontinued.

***Social Value,
& Local
Interest***