

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 44 Cheung Shing Street
Yuen Long Kau Hui, Yuen Long

Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟, literally, Yuen Long Old Market) is in the north-east of the present Yuen Long town centre with Nam Pin Wai (南邊圍) and Sai Pin Wai (西邊圍) in its south and west. The market lied along three streets where shops of mixed trades were located. Cheung Shing Street (長盛街) is the longest one. The other two shorter streets, Lee Yick Street (利益街) and Wine Street (酒街), form a parallel pair. There were two entrance gates to the market – Tung Mun Hau (東門口) and Nam Mun Hau (南門口), which were locked up after the market hours to guard against theft and robbery. Two temples, inns and pawnshops were also in the market. *Historical Interest*

Yuen Long Kau Hui was established during the reign of Kangxi emperor (康熙) under the leadership of Tang Man-wai (鄧文蔚). Tang was a 23rd generation member of the Kam Tin Tang Clan who attained a jin-shi (進士) degree and then decided to move the market from Tai Kiu Tun (大橋墩) to the present site. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the market was a hub of commercial activities of the Hong Kong region. Farmers, boat people and traders came as far as from the coastal districts of Guangdong province (廣東省) to buy and sell agricultural produce and daily necessities.

No.44 Cheung Shing Street is one of the surviving residential buildings in the market. It is not known when it was built. Land record shows that it was owned by a Lam Long-wai (林朗偉?) of Shan Pui Tsuen (山背村), northeast of the market in 1953. He had a gold shop called Kai Tak (啟德) at Lee Yick Street. Other than retailing, gold ornaments were produced in the shop. Lam and his family occupied the house. The building is now owned by another person.

The residence at No.44 Cheung Shing Street is a long and narrow building with its entrance facing the street. The building is connected to others along the street. It shares with its two neighbouring buildings a common wall on either side. It is a one-storey building of Qing vernacular style with a recessed front façade. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Its external walls are retained with fair-faced green bricks. The interiors are partitioned with its walls painted. Wall frieze paintings of flowers and landscape and calligraphy are under the eave of the front façade. The entrance door is of wooden planks. *Architectural Merit*

It is a residential building to witness the history of the Yuen Long Kau Hui.	<i>Rarity</i>
It has some built heritage value.	<i>Built Heritage Value</i>
Its authenticity is kept.	<i>Authenticity</i>
It has group value with other historic buildings in the old market, including Tai Wong Old Temple (大王古廟), Yuen Kwan Yi Tai Temple (玄關二帝廟), Chun Yuen Pawn House (晉源押) and other shop-cum-residence buildings.	<i>Group Value</i>
Market days fell on the 3 rd , 6 th and 9 th days of each of the three ten-day periods of every lunar month; on these days, the place would be bustling with traders involved in the buying and selling of agricultural produce (e.g. rice, vegetables, sugar cane, wine, fish, meats, soy sauce, spices), farming and kitchen utensils, furniture and all kinds of daily necessities.	<i>Social Value, & Local Interest</i>
The market operated from 6 a.m. until dusk. It was managed by Kwong Yu Tong (光裕堂), a trust of a branch of the Kam Tin Tang Clan. The market was getting less prosperous and shops were closing down since the early 20 th century, in face of competition of other markets especially when the Yuen Long New Market (元朗新墟) in its southwest opened in 1915.	