

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 55 Hang Tau Tsuen

Ping Shan, Yuen Long

Ping Shan (屏山) was settled by the Tangs (鄧) in the late Southern Song (*Historical Interest* 南宋, 1127-1279) dynasty. Tang Yuen-ching (鄧元禎) is considered as the first ancestor of the Tangs who settled there in 1216. Two villages were first founded including Hang Tau (坑頭) and Hang Mei (坑尾) villages, the former in the north and the latter in the south. The former was founded by Waai-tak (懷德, 1548-1622) and the latter by Waai-yee (懷義, 1529-1607), two brothers of the 14th generation. The building at Nos.55 and 99 of Hang Tau Tsuen was originally one block of detached building which later divided into two belonged to two different owners. The block of building was probably built in the early 19th century. Tang Hin-ho (鄧獻可, 1777-1831), a 20th generation member of the Tangs, is believed to have lived in the building. He gained a *juren* (舉人) title in the 9th year of the Jiaqing (嘉慶, 1804) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty and served as a military officer in the Qing government. The block of building was probably divided into two houses not later than 1898. Kwan-shing (袞臣, 1849-1909), a grandson of Hin-ho and a *guoxuesheng* (國學生, student of the Imperial College), owned No.55.

The residential block is among a group of bigger houses in the southern part of the village facing west. The Tang Ancestral Hall (鄧氏宗祠), the clan ancestral hall of the Tangs in Ping Shan, is three blocks further south. The block of building was originally a Qing vernacular building having a symmetrical one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The open courtyard was in front of the hall. A granary was on the left of the building (part of the present No.55) and a side room on the right of the hall. The building is facing west and two entrances are on the north and south side walls of the courtyard for *fung shui* benefit. The block of building is divided in the middle into two halves each with one room and a hall at the back. House No.55 has been altered and a two-storey structure added on the old house. Its interior has been modernized with its external walls of green-brick and granite block retained. The projected eave moulding above the lintel of the entrance and part of the weathered wall frieze moulding still survive. The *wok yee* (鑊耳) gable wall of the house is connected to the new building structure. (*Architectural Merit*)

It is a residential building to witness the history of the family of Tang Hin-ho in Hang Tau Tsuen. (*Rarity*)

It has little built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The authenticity of the house is not kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Tang Ancestral Hall, Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall (愈喬二公祠), Kun Ting Study Hall (覲廷書室) and other historic buildings of the village.

Group Value

Kwan-shing had a boy but died at an early age that he adopted his nephew as his son. Ching-wah (清華), his adopted son, had two sons, one of which was adopted by his brother who had no son. The other son, Ting-fei (廷輝) had only a daughter. Ting-fei lived in the house until he died in 1976 and his wife is still living in the house No.55. The Tangs worship their ancestors at the Tang Ancestral Hall in the village especially at the Chinese New Year and at the Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung (重陽節) Festivals. They took part in the Da Chiu (打醮) organized by Ping Shan villages. Children of the Tangs studied at the Tang Ancestral Hall and Tat Tak Public School (達德學校). They had a security group called Ping Shan Village Vigilant Guard Group (屏山鄉更練團) established in the 17th century providing patrol and security services for the villages. The group was disbanded in 2003.

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