

Historic Building Appraisal
Kong Ha Tong
No. 34 Sheung Chuk Yuen, San Tin, Yuen Long

Chuk Yuen (竹園) village is in the south of San Tin (新田), Yuen Long, *Historical Interest* occupied by the Wongs (黃), the Lees (李), the Chows (周), the Yuens (袁) and the Aus (歐), the first three being the majority. The Wongs came from Tong Ha (堂夏) village of Dongguan (東莞), Guangdong (廣東) province, and settled in the village in around the 18th century. With the increase of village population, a Sheung Chuk Yuen (上竹園) village was developed in its east. The two villages are now separated by the San Tin Highway (新田公路). To improve the living condition of the families, two brothers of the Wongs, Kat-cheung (吉祥) and Fuk-shing (福盛), built this Kong Ha Tong (江夏堂) building in Sheung Chuk Yuen for ancestral worship and for their residential purpose in 1958. The block of building of three units with separate entrances had a major renovation in 1965. No.34 in the middle is the ancestral hall whilst Nos.33 and 35 are the residences of the descendents of Fuk-shing and Kat-cheung.

The block of building is a Qing (清) vernacular building with the middle recessed unit used as the Wong's family ancestral hall. The three units were each having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard was in-between the entrance and the main halls. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The three units share a common roof for their entrance and main halls. In the renovation of 1965, the pitched roof of the entrance halls was turned into a flat one and its height lifted. A pediment is added above the entrance of the ancestral hall with the name of “江夏堂” (Kong Ha Tong) and the year 1965 moulded on it. The external facades of the building are retained with fair-faced green bricks. The green-brick altar is a small one in the middle of the end wall housing a soul tablet of the Wong ancestors for worship. The internal walls of the units are partially plastered. An open storey is added at the entrance hall. The pediment is decorated with mouldings of bats, flowers and coins. Wall frieze paintings of landscape motif are at the recessed entrance. *Architectural Merit*

It is an ancestral hall and residences of the Wongs to witness their settlement in Chuk Yuen village in San Tin. *Rarity*

It has some heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

Despite the lifting of the level of the entrance hall, the authenticity of the block of building is kept. *Authenticity*

It has group value with the two units next door.

Group Value

The Wongs were engaged themselves in fishing and farming in the old days. Poultry and pigs rearing were also practised. Some of the villagers later worked as seamen in the 1930s and some worked in Britain starting in the late 1950s. Many then moved to Britain and some moved to the urban areas. The hall has been used for ancestral worship of the Wong ancestors. Wedding and birthday banquets were held at the hall and at the open ground of the village for the celebration. The Wongs participated in the Da Chiu (打醮) activities in the area. *Social Value, & Local Interest*