

Historic Building Appraisal
Nos. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42 Yung Shue O
Tai Po. N.T.

Yung Shue O (榕樹澳), also known as Yung Shue Au (榕樹凹), is a remote village in the northeast of Sai Sha (西沙) of Tai Po (大埔). The earliest record of the village was demonstrated in a map from the Wanli (萬曆, 1573-1620) period of Ming (明) Dynasty. Thus the village has a history of more than 300 years. It is a multi-surname village inhabited by the Haus (侯), the Shings (成), the Fongs (方), the Lees (李), the Tsangs (曾), the Chams (湛) and the Yungs (翁). *Historical Interest*

The row of six houses at **Nos. 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42 Yung Shue O** was built by the Fongs in the 1920s. The Fongs were the majority of the village. According to *The Genealogy of the Fong Clan at Yung Shue O, Sai Kung North Alliance* 《西貢北約榕樹澳方氏家譜史》, the Fongs originated from Hetain (河田) of Dongguan county (東莞). In 1742, the 17th generation of the clan (counting from Hetain), **Fong Shiu-ki** (方肇基), firstly moved into Yung Shue O.

The Fongs in Yung Shue O were mainly farmers who engaged in rice and vegetable growing. They also collected firewood and grass for sale, taking part in fishing and collecting coral and shells for use as ingredients for lime making in the lime kilns along the coast. **Nos. 37, 38 and 39** were demolished. **Nos. 40, 41 and 42** remain *in-situ*.

The row of six houses is in the second row of three rows of houses in the village all facing west to the sea like the others. It is a Qing vernacular building and each house has a one-hall plan. It is constructed of green bricks and mud bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Houses Nos. 37, 39 and 41 are recessed at its front façade whilst houses Nos. 38, 40 and 42 are projected. A living room is behind the door of each house with a bedroom at its back. A green brick stove is normally behind the door for cooking. A cockloft is above the living room accessed via a staircase. The walls are plastered and painted and the floor cement-screeded. *Architectural Merit*

It is a row of six residential houses of the Fongs to remind their settlement in the village. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The existing houses are not in proper upkeep condition. Its authenticity is *Authenticity*

not entirely kept.

The houses are still owned by the Fongs. In the late 1950s and 1960s, many of the Fongs emigrated to Britain where they are residing. Only house No. 40 is occupied by the Fongs and the other five houses are left vacated. The founding ancestor Fong Shiu-ki was buried at the hill Pak Shek Tsui (白石咀) close to the village where the Fongs would have their grave sweeping worship at Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung (重陽節) Festivals.

***Social Value &
Local Interest***

Nowadays, most of the houses in Yung Shue O have been replaced by modern *ding uk* (丁屋, small houses). The row house along Nos. 37-42, together with other Antiquities and Monuments Office recorded items in the village including the houses at Nos. 17-20 and 43, remain as remnants of the past. All these buildings have good value from a heritage and cultural point of view.

Group Value