

Historic Building Appraisal
Yuen's Mansion – Small House Attached to the East Watchtower
Chung Hau, Mui Wo, Lantau Island

Chung Hau (涌口, literally, Mouth of a Stream) is one of the small *Historical*
 villages in Mui Wo (梅窩), Lantau Island. Seven clans were deemed to be the *Interest*
 earliest residents in Mui Wo. They are, namely, the Sus (蘇氏) and the Dus
 (杜氏) in Pak Ngan Heung (白銀鄉), the Gans (甘) in Luk Tei Tong (鹿地
 塘), the Tsuis (徐氏), Lams (林氏) and Wongs (黃氏) in Tai Tei Tong (大地
 塘), and the Wans (溫氏) in Chung Hau.

Yuen's Mansion belongs to the Yuen family who were latecomers who
 first settled in Mui Wo in the 1920s. The Mansion was built in the
 1920s–1940s by Yuen Wah-chiu (袁華照, 1888-1971). A native of
 Zengcheng in Guangdong province(廣東增城), Yuen Wah-chiu moved some
 of his family members to Mui Wo in the 1920s. At the time, the Yuen family
 raised livestock and grew rice and vegetables in a self-sufficient way, and
 sold the surplus in Cheung Chau (長洲). In the 1940s, Yuen Wah-chiu moved
 his whole family including wives, sons and 80 followers to Mui Wo for
 permanent settlement.

Yuen Wah-chiu was a high-ranking officer who served in the army of the
 Guomindang (國民黨, Chinese Nationalist Party). He joined with the
 guerrillas to fight against the Japanese along the Kowloon-Canton Railway in
 the late 1930s. He was the commander of the Sixth Commando (第六挺進縱
 隊) in Huizhou (惠州) in 1941. When people in Mui Wo were short of food
 supply during the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), he released his stock of
 rice to the people in need and shipped food from the mainland. Due to his
 war efforts, he received a decoration from T.V Soong (宋子文), Finance
 Minister of the Nationalist Government (國民政府), for his braveness
 against the enemies. In 1953-63, he served as the chairman of Mui Wo Rural
 Committee (梅窩鄉事委員會). He passed away in 1971, at the age of 83.
 The coffin was transported back to Mui Wo from Queen Elizabeth Hospital
 in Kowloon, and he was buried in Yuen's farmland on Tiger Head Hill (虎頭
 山). One of his grandsons, Yuen Chit-chi (袁哲之), was a Councillor of
 Islands District Board in 1985-94.

Yuen's Mansion, which consists two watchtowers, a residential block and *Architectural*
 ancillary buildings, is a rare example of a comprehensive medium size old *Merit*
 rural residential building group. It is sited beside Silver River (銀河)
 behind Silvermine Bay in Mui Wo, and enclosed with extensive fields linked
 to the hillside of Southern Lantau Island (嶼南路). Originally, the mansion

used to be protected by a moat which has been removed now.

Natural granite courses are the major building material in the Yuen's Mansion. The granite courses were laid on cement and sand mortar that forms all walls and columns. The houses were built merely to meet imperative accommodation needs therefore the building design and construction are simple. Ornamentation is minimal in this building group.

The **Small House** is connected to the east of the East Watchtower. It is constructed of granite blocks and cement with its walls to support its flat roofs. The roof has come down leaving its four walls still standing. It was for residential use.

It is a residential building of the Yuen's Mansion to witness the Yuens settlement in the village. **Rarity**

It has some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The small house has been deteriorating.

Authenticity

The Yuen's Mansion is still owned and occupied by the original family, the Yuen family. It has interest to the local inhabitants. **Social Value, & Local Interest**

Together with the old buildings in nearby villages of Pak Ngan Heung (白銀鄉), Luk Tei Tong (鹿地塘) and Tai Tei Tong (大地塘), it bears witness to the historical development of Mui Wo. **Group Value**