

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 57 San Wai Tsuen
San Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories

San Wai Tsuen, originally called Fuk Hing Lei (福興里), was first founded by the Wongs (黃) and the Chius (趙). From the early to late 19th century, the Yeungs, the Lees, the Wongs and the Chans migrated from Siyi (四邑), i.e. Xinhui (新會), Kaiping (開平), Enping (恩平) and Taishan (台山), to San Wai Tsuen (新圍村) due to the social upheavals on mainland. Many of the families in San Wai Tsuen originated from Taishan (台山).

*Historical
Interest*

No. 57, San Wai Tsuen (新圍村) was built in the 1930s by **Chau To-fai** (周道輝) who came from Taishan (台山). He went to Canada to find work and sent remittances home to his family in San Wai Tsuen. Eventually the family emigrated and the house was leased to relatives. Without their ancestral halls, some of the Chau family members worshipped their ancestors at the house. An altar has been erected on the second floor. The house was still used as a residence around the 1970s. Today it is vacant and semi-derelict.

The house is of mixed Chinese and Western styles and can be classified as **Chinese Eclectic**. The house is two storeys high with a detached single storey kitchen annex at the rear. The house and annex are built entirely of grey bricks. Windows are steel framed with semi-circular hood mouldings in moulded plaster or stucco. The front façade has a canted bay at first floor level supported by the columns of the ground floor porch. There is an ornamental balustrade at parapet level with a segmental decorative pediment featuring scrolls and a star flanked by a pair of classical urns. The main entrance door is framed in granite. The roof is pitched. The plan of the house is rectangular with rooms opening off the main hall on the ground floor and a similar layout on the first floor.

*Architectural
Merit*

Whilst mixed style houses are not uncommon in rural villages, this house stands out as special because of its unusual floor plan, canted bay and applied architectural features. It definitely has built heritage value and retains much of its original appearance.

*Rarity, Built
Heritage Value
& Authenticity*

The social value of the house lies in its mixed style of architecture which reflects cultural interaction in San Wai Tsuen. The builders of the house and the construction materials came from Taishan. The house with its unique style of architecture is not only of local interest, but has group value with other village houses of mixed style.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

The house is no longer used as a residence and is now vacant and *Adaptive* semi-derelict. It is being used for temporary storage purposes by a steel furniture *Re-use* company which has erected ugly steel shelters in front of the building and dumped rubbish there. The house should be restored and used for residential purposes once more.