

Historic Building Appraisal

Nos. 5A, 5B, 5C & 6 Pai Tau,

Sha Tin

Pai Tau (排頭) in Sha Tin was a multi-lineage village occupied by the Lams (藍), the Cheungs (張), the Tsangs (曾) and the Yaus (邱). The Lams were the majority. They were Hakkas (客家), headed by Lam Shun (藍信), moving from Wuhua (五華) of Guangdong (廣東) province to Sham Tseng (深井) in the Qing (清, 1644-1911) dynasty. They stayed in Sham Tseng for several generations and a terrible typhoon damaged their houses in the 1850s. Lam Shing-cheong (藍勝昌), one of the descendents of the Lams, moved with his wife and two sons to the present Pai Tau village and settled there. He is considered as the founding ancestor of the Lams in Pai Tau. In the 1920s-30s, some of the clansmen worked overseas and sent money back for the construction of Nos. 5A, 5B, 5C and 6 of Pai Tau village for residential use.

**Historical
Interest**

Located close to the KCR Sha Tin Station, the row of village houses is backed by a *fung shui* grove (風水林) and fronted by an open foreground which was used for drying grains. The foreground is surrounded by a low wall. The houses are Qing vernacular buildings of Hakka style called *doulang* (斗廊) having five bays with three projecting bays and two recessed bays (No.6 occupies one projected bay and one recessed bay). The recessed bays are normally bounded by the projected bays. Two projected bays and a recessed bay form a plan look like the Chinese character 凹 (*ao*, literally meaning indented). The shape of the three units looks like an indented container, called *aodou* (凹斗) in Chinese from which the name *doulang* derives. Each bay has its own entrance. The recessed and projected units have an entrance hall in its front and a main hall at the back. Most of the main halls are with cocklofts for bedrooms or storerooms. The houses are constructed of green bricks and granite blocks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Granite is used for the doorframes, window frames, entrance steps and lower courses of the front walls. The row of five houses shares a common roof. A set of red geometric mouldings is at its two ends. Despite some minor alterations made to some of the units, the houses are still retained with the original decorations. *Ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings are on the gable wall friezes. Frieze mouldings of flowers, rocks and birds are on the projected units. Wall paintings of landscape, flowers and birds and calligraphy are under the eaves of the recessed units. Fascia boards of scrolls, flowers and birds carving are also under the eaves of the recessed units.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a Hakka row house to depict the settlement of the Lams in Sha Tin.	<i>Rarity</i>
It has high built heritage value.	<i>Built Heritage Value</i>
Minor alterations have been made to the building which slightly diminished its authenticity.	<i>Authenticity</i>
It has group value with other historic houses in the Pai Tau village.	<i>Group Value</i>
Children of the houses studied at No.13 of the village to their right. The school was Kai Man School (啓文學校) providing education for the children in the village and those nearby in the 1920-40s until it was replaced by the Pai Tau Public School (排頭公立學校). Nos. 5A and 5C were used as a slaughter house by the Japanese during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45). No.5B was once used as a Chinese herb shop until 1942.	<i>Social Value, & Local Interest</i>