

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Lam Ancestral Hall**  
**Nos. 8, 10-14 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), moved 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. His sons Yuk-in (毓賢) and Yuk-cheung (毓祥) resided in the row of six houses at Nos. 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. A map of 1905 shows the existence of the building. After the death of the two brothers, Nos. 11 and 13 were converted as two ancestral halls to commemorate the two Lam ancestors. The rest of the houses are 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 with a gate house for its entrance. The houses are Qing vernacular buildings of Hakka style called *doulang* (斗廊) having seven bays with four projecting bays and three recessed bays (No.8 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 units have an entrance hall and a main hall with an open courtyard in between. The projected unit is with two halls having no open courtyard. 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. The main halls at the back share a common roof. The altars of the two ancestral halls are at the end walls housing soul tablets and photographs of their ancestors for worship. Despite alterations made to some of the units, the houses are still retained with the original decorations. *Ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings are on the front walls of Nos. 12 and 14. Wall paintings of magpies, roosters, peony, chrysanthemum and others are on the front façade of Nos. 11 and 13.

**Architectural  
Merit**

It is a Hakka row house to depict the settlement of the Lams in Sha Tin.

***Rarity***

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage  
Value***

The altered units have very much diminished the authenticity of the building.

***Authenticity***

It has group value with other historic houses in the Pai Tau village.

***Group Value***

Both altars of the ancestral halls are with soul tablets for ancestral worship. A Kwun Yam (觀音) image is also at the altar of No.13 for worship. Other than ancestral worship, Dim Dang (點燈) rituals are also held at the halls for new born baby boys of the previous year at the Chinese New Year. Wedding ceremonies were held at the halls for the Lam bridegrooms. No.13 was also used by Kai Man School (啓文學校) to provide education for 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).

***Social Value,  
& Local Interest***