

Historic Building Appraisal

Nos. 7-8 Sheung Wun Yiu

Tai Po, New Territories

Wun Yiu (碗窑), literally “Bowl Kiln,” is named after the kilns of ceramic bowl making in the area which has a history of 400 years. The village in the south of Tai Po was later subdivided into two, Sheung Wun Yiu (上碗窑), the upper one in the south, and Ha Wun Yiu (下碗窑), the lower one in the north. The kiln industry was set up in the Wanli (萬曆, 1573-1620) period of Ming (明) Dynasty by the Mans (文氏) and Tses (謝氏) in the area, the former were from Jishui of Jiangxi province (江西吉水) and the latter from Meilong of Guangdong province (廣東梅隴). The kaolin earth and the river Wun Yiu River (碗窑河) provided favourable conditions for the making of porcelain wares of plates, bowls, spoons and other daily utensils with the expertise of the Mans who had the experience in their home province.

*Historical
Interest*

When the Evacuation Edict (遷海令) was proclaimed in the early Qing (清) times in 1662-1669, all inhabitants had to move inland. When the Edict was ended, only a few of the Mans and the Tses returned. The Mas (馬氏) arriving in Tai Po in the 13th year of the Kangxi reign (康熙, 1674) from Changle (長樂, the present Wuha 五華) of Guangdong province took over the industry from the Mans. The porcelain wares industry boomed since the Qianlong (乾隆, 1736-1795) reign and the products were sold in Guangdong province and exported to Malaysia. The golden age was in the mid-Daoguang (道光, 1821-1850) reign up to the Guangxu (光緒, 1875-1908) reign, when about 300 people worked in the kilns producing 400,000 pieces of porcelain each year. The production declined in the late 19th century due to competition from other kilns in the mainland until it ceased to operate in 1932.

The **village houses at Nos. 7 and 8 Sheung Wun Yiu** were probably built **before 1921** and repaired in the 1960s. The houses were owned by two brothers of the Ma clan, Tsun-i (俊義) and Tsun-sun (俊新), the descendents of the famous ancestor Ma Choi-yun (馬彩淵) who erected Fan Sin Temple (樊仙宮). The houses are now owned by a company.

The village houses at Nos. 7 and 8 consist of a main building with an annex of side halls. They are surrounded by a tall boundary wall with an open forecourt in front of the main building. The buildings are Qing vernacular design houses. The main building has a two-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls. The annex is on the right of the main building having four rooms for residential, storage and other uses. They are in irregular forms and have been modernized. The buildings are

*Architectural
Merit*

constructed of green bricks with its walls to support their pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Most of the walls are plastered and the floors cement-screeded. The front and side walls of the entrance hall of the main building have been retained with fair-faced green bricks. Wall frieze paintings are under the front eave of the entrance hall.

The buildings are vital witness of the historic Wun Yiu village and the settlement of the Mas in the village. ***Rarity***

The buildings have some built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

The main building has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

The village is still dominated by the Mas and most of the village houses have been rebuilt. The Fan Sin Temple in the village erected by the Mas in the Qianlong reign with the Fan Sin deity invited from their hometown. The temple a short distance in their north-east was declared as a monument under the protection of the law.

Social Value, & Local Interest

Coupled with the famous Fan Sin Temple (樊仙宮) the Wun Yiu Public School (碗窑公立學校) and the relics of a porcelain kiln nearby together, the village houses reflect the past village life of Wun Yiu.

Group value

It is considered that the question of adaptive re-use does not arise at the present time.

Adaptive Re-use