

Historic Building Appraisal

Sun Old House

Nos. 38, 39 and 40 San Tsuen, Tsuen Wan, N.T.

San Tsuen (literally “new village”) at the foot of Fu Yung Shan (芙蓉山) of Tsuen Wan (荃灣) is a dual-surnamed village occupied by the Suns (孫氏) and the Dus (刁氏). They are both Hakkas (客家). The Sun founding ancestors are believed to have come to Tsuen Wan (荃灣) from Dongguan (東莞) of Guangdong (廣東) province several hundred years ago. They first settled in the area now occupied by Nam Fung Centre (南豐中心) next to the MTR Tsuen Wan Station. In 1659, they settled in San Tsuen. *Historical Interest*

A block of three residential houses Nos. 38, 39 and 40 in the village was built by **Sun Tat-on** (孫達安) before 1903. Previously, Sun Tat-on’s eldest son lived in No. 38 and his younger son lived in No. 40. No. 39, with an open courtyard in the middle, used to be a common area for the residents of No.38 and No.40 to take a rest and chat with each other. The entrance hall of No. 39 served as the family’s mortuary called *shiting* (屍廳) where dead bodies of the villagers were temporarily accommodated before they were buried and before the rites of placing the soul tablet of the deceased onto the altar, known as *shangtai* (上柩), were performed.

The block of three houses is a detached building facing southeast. It is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. It was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The open courtyard is between the entrance and main halls at No.39. Side chambers and rooms are on either side of the halls. Part of the front façade of the building is still retained with green bricks. Mezzanines are added at the side rooms, chambers and the main hall. A shower corner is at the left wall of the entrance hall and the left side room. The doorframe of the recessed entrance hall is of granite. Above which are wall frieze paintings under the eave of landscape and flowers. *Architectural Merit*

It is a block of three residential houses to witness the settlement of the Suns in the village. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value.

The authenticity of the building is kept.

Built Heritage Value & Authenticity

The Suns were farmers engaged in rice and vegetable growing. The grain and vegetables were for their own consumption. A rice polishing pestle (碓) with a mortar (臼) was at house No.38 for rice polishing and flouring to make noodles and Hakka teacake (茶粿) at festivals and their special occasions. The children of the Suns had their primitive education provided by a villager called Sun Kam (孫金). They further their education in Yuen Long schools. The Suns have their ancestral hall in the village where they have their ancestral worship.

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

It has group value with the Sun Old House (孫氏古屋, Nos. 38, 39, 40 San Tsuen) and the façade of Du Ancestral Hall (刁氏家祠) in the village.

Group Value

Probably the most appropriate use for the building is residential which is what it was originally intended for.

***Adaptive
Re-use***