

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 42 Shing Uk Tsuen
Wang Chau, Yuen Long, New Territories

Shing Uk Tsuen (盛屋村) is in the west of the present Yuen Long Industrial Estate (元朗工業邨), Yuen Long. It was a single-clan village established by the Shings (盛氏) who moved from Ngau Tsin Tsuen (衙前村) in Ping Shan (屏山) in around the 2nd year of Chenghua (成化, 1466) reign of the Ming (明) dynasty. It is said that they were originally surnamed Mo (毛). One of their ancestors was a Prime Minister of the Army (兵部尚書) and his clansmen bullied other villagers in the area. The Emperor was reported and had all the Mos killed. A pregnant woman of the Mos survived and gave birth to a twin of a boy and a girl. The boy was surnamed as “剩” (literally meaning left over) and changed to “盛” (Shing, meaning prosperous) of the same pronunciation. The girl was married to the Ngs (吳) in the Ng Uk Tsuen (吳屋村), north of Shing Uk Tsuen. A row of five houses, Nos. 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43, was built in the last row of four rows of houses in the village. It was built by the father of Shing Lin-kwong (盛連光) who had five sons. The five houses belonged to his five sons who had a trust called Ng Tat Tong (五達堂). The row of houses was built not later than 1870s, according to the oral testimonies of villagers in 2003. The houses have been left vacated.

**Historical
Interest**

The row of five residential houses is facing east like the other houses in the village. The houses are Qing (清) vernacular buildings each having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. A cooking stove and a bath corner is respectively on the left and right of the open courtyard in front of the hall. A living room is in front of a bedroom at the hall. A cockloft is above the bedroom also for use as a bedroom. Above the lintel of the entrance of each house is a projected eave with mouldings of plums, chrysanthemums and calligraphy. External and internal walls are partially plastered and painted and the floor cement-screeded.

**Architectural
Merit**

The row of five houses is to witness the settlement of the Shings in the village.

Rarity

The row of houses has built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The houses are in good condition except house No. 43 having part of its structure collapsed. The rest have their authenticity kept.

Authenticity

The row of houses has group value with the rebuilt Shing Ka Tsz (盛家祠) *Group Value* in the village.

Lin-kwong was a village representative of the village in the 1940-50s. He was also the vice-president of the Ping Shan Rural Committee (屏山鄉事委員會) in 1952. He resided in No. 41 where he was born and died. His portrait and two of his parents are still hanging at the house. The Shings were farmers engaged in rice and vegetable growing. The Shing children studied at a study hall called Kwan Yin Hok Suk (群賢學塾) in the village which was reconstructed in 1971 and renamed as Kwong Ling Tong (廣陵堂). Another school Wing Hing Tong (永興堂) was on its right also provided education to the children. The Shing Ancestral Hall, on the left front of the row, is for ancestral worship of the Shings. The ancestral hall is a rebuilt building. The Shings had Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for new born baby boys once every three years. Oil lamps would be hung at the ancestral hall, the Tai Wong Temple (大王廟) in Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟) and the houses of the boys. The ritual however has been suspended since the late 1960s. Da Chiu (打醮) was held once every eight years in the village but has discontinued since the 1940s. *Social Value, & Local Interest*

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