

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 51 San Wai Tsuen,
San Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories

San Wai Tsuen, originally called Fuk Hing Lei (福興里), was first founded by the Wongs (黃) and the Chius (趙). From the early to late 19th century, the Yeungs, the Lees, the Wongs and the Chans migrated from Siyi (四邑), i.e. Xinhui (新會), Kaiping (開平), Enping (恩平) and Taishan (台山), to San Wai Tsuen (新圍村) due to the social upheavals on mainland. Many of the families in San Wai Tsuen originated from Taishan (台山).

*Historical
Interest*

No. 51, San Wai Tsuen (新圍村) was built in 1931 by Mr. Chu (朱) who had emigrated from Taishan to the United States in the early 1900s. On his return he settled down in San Wai Tsuen and built the house for his family. Mr. Chu is buried in Wang Ping Shan (橫平山) behind the village. The Chu family left the house during the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945). The Japanese took away all the furniture there.

This two-storey house is built in traditional **Qing Vernacular** style. A portico in front, with **Neo-Classical** influence, makes the building of mixed style. The main part of the house is built of local grey bricks with a pitched roof of Chinese tiles and gable walls which are decorated with a plain rendered and painted frieze. The rear part of the house has a flat roof with a simple decorative parapet wall and projecting chimney stacks. A protective roof structure has been erected over this part of the building. Windows are regularly spaced and fitted with modern aluminium framed units. The front portico is rendered and painted with a flat roof and also has a protective roof structure erected over it. The corner columns are square with simple bases and capitals. There are two classical style round columns at the first floor balcony level. There is an ornamental balustrade to the balcony level. There is an ornamental balustrade to the balcony with shaped balusters and an ornamental coping. There is a projecting cornice at parapet level. The parapet wall is formed of posts and panels with ball ornaments at the corners. Windows and doors have been modernised.

*Architectural
Merit*

Houses of mixed style are not uncommon in rural villages and this house is a good example. It is well maintained but its authenticity has been impaired by modern replacement windows and unsightly roof structures. However, as a piece of vernacular architecture with cross cultural influence it has built heritage value.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

As a typical village house of mixed style, it has social as well as group value. Together with its neighbour which is built in a similar style it has local interest.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

The best use for this old house is for it to continue to be used for residential purposes. Any adaptive re-use is likely to affect its authenticity.

Adaptive

Re-use