

Historic Building Appraisal
Cheung Village Houses
Nos. 16, 17 & 18 Tai Shui Hang, Sha Tin

Tai Shui Hang (大水坑) village is in the west of Ma On Shan (馬鞍山), Sha Tin, facing the mouth of Shing Mun River Channel (城門河道). It was established by Cheung Shau-hing (張首興), a Hakka (客家), moved from Datian (大田) of Wuhua (五華), Guangdong (廣東) province, in the early Kangxi (康熙, 1662-1722) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty. The village is separated by a stream in the middle which older part in the south is called Lo Wai (老圍) and the younger part in the north Kak Hang (隔坑). The block of house at Nos. 16, 17 and 18 was built by Cheung Ting-sung (張定崇) who worked in Jamaica in the 19th century who remitted money back home in the 1910-20s for the construction of the block. The block of four bays was constructed for his three sons and his nephew Fuk-hong (張福珪). The house was completed after he died. The house is still owned by the Cheungs.

***Historical
Interest***

The block of house is facing west with the hill at the back. The stream is on its right. A spacious forecourt is in front of the house. It is a Qing vernacular design building of five bays. Two recessed bays are each individually sandwiched by a projected bay on either side. An entrance is at each of the recessed bays. An entrance is at the projected bay on the far left. The building is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Lower courses of the front façade wall, doorframes and window frames are of granite. A fascia board of birds and flowers carving and wall frieze paintings of flowers, birds and rocks and calligraphy are under the eave of the recessed bays. Wall frieze plastered mouldings under the cornice are of auspicious treasures, unicorns and landscape. A kitchen and a bathroom are normally provided in the front portion of each bay. Behind them are the living room and a bedroom. A cockloft is above the living room used as the bedroom.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a residential building to witness the settlement of the Cheungs in the village.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

It has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with another block of historic building of the Cheungs in the village. *Group Value*

Fuk-hong worked in the U.S. and returned to the village and supervised the construction of the house. The stone used for the house construction was quarried from the hill nearby by the Hakka workers from Wuhua. Other craftsmen were from the mainland for the wall frieze with some local workers from Tai Po Market. The Cheungs were mainly farmers engaged in rice and vegetable growing and pig and poultry farming. They obtained their daily necessities from the old Tai Po Market (舊大埔墟) by taking boats across the Tolo Harbour (吐露港). *Social Value, & Local Interest*

During the Japanese Occupation, the village was one of the intelligence centres for the guerrillas fighting against the Japanese. The Japanese troop was stationed in village and occupied house No. 17. They kept warm by setting a fire in the house. The trace of the fire can still be seen on the floor.