

Historic Building Appraisal

Chung Old House

Yuen Tun, Tsing Lung Tau, Tsuen Wan, N.T.

Yuen Tun Tsuen (圓墩村) in Tsing Lung Tau (青龍頭) of Tsuen Wan (荃灣) was established by the Hakka (客家) Chungs (鍾) in the 1780s who originated from Tieluba (鐵爐壩) of Wuhua (五華), Guangdong (廣東) province. Chung Chun-lam (鍾春霖) is the founding ancestor. One of his sons, Ting-choi (廷彩), later branched out to set up a village called Tsing Lung Tau Tsuen (青龍頭村) further down south of Yuen Tun Tsuen close to the seashore. *Historical Interest*

Yuen Tun Tsuen was close to Tai Lam Chung Reservoir (大欖涌水塘) which was constructed in 1951-59. A tunnel for water pipes was built beneath the site of the village. Since the beginning of the project, the yield of the fields of the village declined. The government claimed that it would be improved after the tunnel was completed. It was that the irrigation water was drained away. The problem could not be improved after the tunnel was completed. The government then resettled the Chungs to a piece of land north of Tsing Lung Tau Tsuen to establish their new village in 1972. The old village was allocated to the Civil Aid Service (CAS, 民眾安全服務隊) for use as a training campsite named Yuen Tun Camp (圓墩營), which was opened in 1975. Four village houses were renovated for its use and the others demolished. The biggest house was converted for use as a folk museum opened in 1981.

The big village house (now a folk museum) is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a two-hall-one-courtyard plus one-side room (and chamber) plan of 7 bays. Three of the 7 bays are hall bays and the rest are side room and chamber bays. Each of the three hall bays is flanked by one bay of side rooms and chambers on its left and right. Each hall bay has an open courtyard between the entrance and main halls. The middle hall bay was the original ancestral hall of the Chungs called Lai Leung Tong (禮良堂). The ancestral hall was however moved to a separate village house at the back. The rest of the bays were for residential use. The building was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The entire house has a common roof at the back for the four side rooms and three main halls. Most of the walls are fair-faced and only parts of them are plastered and painted white. The entrance halls have recessed entrances. All the bays have their own entrances except the two side room bays in the middle. A set of red mouldings is at the two ends of the rear ridge. A bathroom is provided on the left of the entrance hall of the hall bay and the front chamber of the side room bay. The main hall is normally for the living room of the family. A cockloft is above the *Architectural Merit*

living room for use as a bedroom. A cockloft is provided above the side room also used as a bedroom. The front chamber on the left of the middle hall bay was used as a kitchen of the old house with a cooking stove and a chimney. Wall paintings of flower motif are under the front eaves of the hall bays.

It stands to remind the settlement of the Chungs in the old Yuen Tun Tsuen. *Rarity*

It has some built heritage value. *Built Heritage Value &*

The building is in good condition. Its authenticity is kept. *Authenticity*

The use of the old village houses by the Civil Aid Service as its camp though open to its members only does preserve the old houses of the Chungs. The site is for its training and as a camp site. The museum houses the old village furniture, cooking and daily use utensils and farming implements to demonstrate the agricultural life of the Chungs. *Social Value, & Local Interest*

Several ancestral graves that still have religious activities remain uphill at the back of the subject buildings. Another Chung Ancestral Hall (鍾氏宗祠) remains behind the subject buildings. After the Civil Aid Service's adoption, many other old buildings in Yuen Tun were demolished between 1973 and 1976; therefore the Chung Ancestral Hall and the building terrace under study are the only historical buildings still surviving in the village now. *Group Value*

The site has been adaptively re-used as a folk museum. *Adaptive Re-use*