

Historic Building Appraisal
Lau Village House
No. 63 Tung Shing Lei, Au Tau, Yuen Long

The Lau Village Houses (劉氏村屋) at Nos. 63, 65, 66, 67, and 68 Tung Shing Lei (東成里), Au Tau (凹頭), Yuen Long, are five unconnected houses built in 1919, 1926 and 1935. No.68, a communal hall called Hak Sut Tong (克述堂), was first built in 1919 by Lau Wai-chow (劉維疇) (1864 – 1933). The rest were for residential use by his eight sons, two for one block. No. 63 was built in 1935. Originated from Taishan (台山), Lau made his fortune in fish wholesaling before he moved to Tung Shing Lei which is in the eastern end of Yuen Long and was locally called Ma Fung Tei (麻瘋地), literally land of the lepers. Despite the unfavourable condition, Lau bought a large piece of land for building his houses, for cultivation and leasing use. Most of the land was for fish ponds, while the remaining for rice paddy, orchids and vegetables. His land at the peak period produced more than 20,000 catties of rice a year.

***Historical
Interest***

The two-storey house is in Qing (清) vernacular design having symmetrical layout, with rooms surrounding the open courtyard except the entrance direction. The building is constructed of grey bricks having its walls support the flushed gable roofs of timber beams, rafters and clay tiles. The recessed entrance has granite door frames, bases and a lintel. The house is with minimal decorations having bat mouldings and wall paintings of flowers and plants at its facade.

***Architectural
Merit***

The five houses are good examples of village houses. They have borne witness to the development of Tung Shing Lei from “land of the lepers” to a village with fish ponds and agricultural land around. No major alterations which may have diminished the authenticity of the exteriors can be identified.

***Rarity, Built
Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

The communal hall at No.68 among the five houses was first built for the family’s living studying, resting and congregation uses. After the rest of the houses were built for the sons, it ceased to be for their residential use. It was said that the hall was once for educational use before the Second World War. Such use of the communal hall served to enhance the social value and local interest of the adjacent four houses. After the war it was used for storage purpose.

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

The five houses at Tung Shing Lei have group value with other historic buildings, such as Pun Uk (潘屋), and Chun Yuen Pawn House (晉源押), Tai

Group Value

Wong Temple (大王古廟) and Yuen Kwan Yi Tai Temple (玄關二帝廟) at Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟) (all Grade 1).

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