

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 4 Ng Ka Tsuen, Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Nos.4, 5 & 6 of Ng Ka Tsuen (吳家村) in Pat Heung (八鄉) of Yuen Long was built by Ng Yuk-ching (吳郁青) in the 1930s. Yuk-ching was a Hakka (客家人) born in Jiaoling (蕉嶺) of Guangdong (廣東) province in 1869 and started his business in Indonesia in 1910. He had three companies with his father and brother and with himself a newspaper called Tin Shing Daily (天聲日報). Returned from Indonesia, he set up his home in Hong Kong and brought lands from the then renowned merchant Tang Pak-kau (鄧伯裘) of Yuen Long. Ng first built No. 5 in 1933 and No.6 two years later. No.4 was built for his friend in Malaysia. No. 5 is in the middle and No.6 to its right and No.4 to its left. Ng had a lot of business in Hong Kong with investment in real estate, clothing industry, medicine and department stores mainly in Sham Shui Po (深水埗). He had his own residence in Kowloon and his houses in Ng Ka Tsuen were for vacation use with his family and friends.

**Historical
Interest**

No.5 built in 1933 is a simplified version of a Hakka house of a two-hall-two-row (兩堂兩橫) plan making use of modern building materials of concrete and steel bars having spacious rooms with modern features. Nos. 6 and 4 were built as villas to complement No.5 in the middle. Both houses are of two-storey high with high ceilings, balconies and larger windows than the old Hakka houses. Whilst with modern materials, traditional materials of ceramic tiles, timber rafters and purlins were used for the roofs of No.5. A *fung shui* pond was constructed in front of the compound but has been reclaimed.

**Architectural
Merit**

No.4 and No.6 are almost identical whilst the latter was built in 1935, two years after No.5. No.4 was built after No.6. The two-storey building has a recessed entrance flanked by two rooms, one on each side. An enormous room is behind separated by an open courtyard. Service rooms including a kitchen, a bathroom, a bathroom and a staircase are on either side of the entrance hall. The building is constructed of bricks and concrete with its walls and columns to support its flat roofs and floors. Balconies are on its front, left and right elevations, Two circular windows are on the front balcony for *fung shui* benefits. Its floors are with cement screeding. The window openings are decorated with simple mouldings.

Nos. 4, 5 & 6 being a compound of modernized Hakka houses are rare to reflect the settlement of the Ngs.

Rarity

The houses are of high built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The houses though with later added fixtures are on the whole in authentic shape.

Authenticity

Nos. 4, 5 & 6 are having co-related group value.

Group Value

Besides being a successful businessman, Ng was an active philanthropist. He had sponsorship on the establishment of Kam Chuen School (錦全學校) in Pat Heung. He was a committee member of the Kwong Wah Hospital (廣華醫院) in 1926-28 and a founding director of the Tung Wah Eastern Hospital (東華東院) in 1929. One of Ng's daughter was once a member of the Hong Kong Independent Battalion of Dongjiang Column (東江縱隊) in her young age. The villagers no matter Hakkas or not had activities in Ng's house during Chinese New Year and at festivals. Villagers used to meet at the house for discussion of village matters. Rural representatives are still making use of the building for its activities. No. 5 was named Ng Ancestral Hall (吳氏宗祠) but the name was later cancelled.

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