

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 87 San Wai Tsuen
San Tin, Yuen Long, New Territories

San Wai Tsuen (新圍村), literally meaning “new walled village”, consists of Sheung San Wai (上新圍) and Ha San Wai (下新圍). Initially, the village was called Fuk Hing Lei (福興里), literally meaning “lucky and prosperous lane”. Most of the villagers of San Wai Tsuen acquired wealth by working overseas. The United States and Canada were their main destinations. *Historical Interest*

The exact construction year of No. 87 San Wai Tsuen (新圍村) is not known, but the house is believed to have been built around 1920. It was built by a family surnamed Yeung (楊) who originated from Duhu, Taishan (台山 都斛). Yeung Wan-lung (楊雲龍), who lived in No. 87 with his wife and two children, moved to this area with his father. Apart from living on farm rent, Yeung Wan-lung operated a grocery and took up appointment as a teacher at a study hall in San Wai Tsuen. Yeung Yiu-shing (楊耀星), a son of Yeung Wan-lung, was a representative of the village from the 1960s to 1994. Nowadays, No.87 is no longer used for residential purpose, but the Yeungs will meet at the house and go to worship their ancestors at the gravesites together at the Ching Ming Festival.

No. 87 San Wai Tsuen is a typical two-storey **Qing Vernacular** style village house with Western influence. The main part of the house is built of grey-green bricks with a pitched roof of Chinese tiles. Window openings with moulded window hoods for weather protection and metal window frames are regularly spaced in the flush gable side walls. The front of the house consists of a flat roofed portico and verandah supported on columns. The first floor verandah and parapet to the roof are richly decorated in Chinese style. The front façade displays an eclectic vocabulary of architectural features showing Chinese and Western classical influence. By contrast the rear façade is plainer with no window openings at all. Internally each floor is divided into three rooms and a bathroom cum kitchen is provided on the first floor. A straight flight wooden staircase of Western design connects the two floors. The construction of the first-floor is floor boarding laid on China fir pole joists. *Architectural Merit*

Village houses combining Chinese and Western architectural features are not uncommon in rural villages in the New Territories, so that No. 87 San Wai Tsuen is not rare but it is a well preserved example of this style with built heritage value. As far as can be seen it retains its authentic appearance. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

As the house only seems to have been used for residential purposes and family gatherings by the Yeung family, its social value to the local community is relatively *Social Value & Local*

low. The front façade of the house is particularly interesting with its motifs of Chinese coins and bas-relief decorations to the central pediment. *Interest*

The best use for this house is residential for which is was originally intended. Adaptive re-use would probably affect its authenticity. *Adaptive Re-use*