

Historic Building Appraisal
Nos. 191-197 Shan Pui
Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long, N.T.

Shan Pui (山貝) is in the south of Nam Sang Wai (南生圍), Yuen Long. It faced a large piece of fishing ponds in the old days. The village was founded by Lam Siu-yuen (林兆元), a 13th generation member of the Lam clan, who moved from Tai Wai (大圍) village in its south some 200 years ago. The Lam Ancestral Hall (林氏家祠) probably built 100 years ago is in the eastern part of the village. A row of seven houses, Nos. 191 to 197, was built by Lam Tsan-wan (林燦穩), an 18th generation member of the Lams. He was a member of the seventh branch of the village, a major one of the clan. The branch ancestor was Lam Kai-choi (林奇才), the seventh son of Siu-yuen. Lam Tsan-wan was a rich merchant who owned a money shop (銀號) called Shun Cheung (慎祥) in Ng Hop Street (五合街) in the Yuen Long New Market (元朗新墟). The seven houses were probably built in the 1930s for Tsan-wan himself and his sons.

*Historical
Interest*

Most of the houses in the village, including these seven connected houses, are on the west of the ancestral hall. An open foreground was originally built in front of the houses. It was then used to build another row of houses, i.e. Nos. 223 – 226 Shan Pui (Grade 3). The houses are Qing (清) vernacular buildings each having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. They are constructed of grey bricks with walls to support pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The typical layout of the seven dwelling units is that a cooking stove and a bath corner is respectively on the left and right of the open courtyard in front of the hall; the living room is in front of a bedroom at the hall, and the cockloft above the bedroom on the ground floor accommodates another bedroom. The lower courses of the front facades, doorframes and window frames of the houses are made of granite. Above the stone lintel of the entrance of each house is a projected eaves with plastered mouldings of auspicious treasures, floral patterns and calligraphy. Wall frieze mouldings of flowers and rocks are on the front facade. The two gable walls have frieze plastered mouldings of curling grass and bats, a basket with flowers and leaves in the middle.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is a row of seven residential houses to witness the settlement of the Lams in Shan Pui. It has some built heritage value. The plastered mouldings are of special merit. No significant alterations to the houses can be identified.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value
Authenticity &*

The houses were regarded as the ancestral estate of the Lams. The house at No.192 was owned by Lam Wing-lau (永流), the grandson of Chan-wan. Though he was residing in the town centre of Yuen Long, he often visited the house with his mother. Some ten soul tablets of the branch ancestors were worshipped at the altar of the house.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*

The houses have group value with the historic buildings in Shan Pui, such as No. 158 (Grade 3), No. 162 (Grade 3), No. 163 Shan Pui (Grade 3) and Nos. 223-226 (Grade 3).

Group Value

REFERENCES

Document Records at The Land Registry Office, Hong Kong

Property Particulars of DD115 1219 Sec. A.

Property Particulars of DD115 1219 Sec. B.

Property Particulars of DD115 1219 Sec. C.

Property Particulars of DD115 1219 Sec. D.

Property Particulars of DD115 1321 Sec. A.

Property Particulars of DD115 1321 Sec. B.

Property Particulars of DD115 1321 Sec. C.

Books, Articles, Newspapers and Other Sources

科大衛、陸鴻基、吳倫霓霞合編，《香港碑銘彙編》(香港：香港市政局，1986)。

馮志明、冼玉儀編，《元朗文物古蹟概覽》(香港：元朗區議會，1996)。

Oral history interview by the Antiquities and Monuments Office in 2004.