

## Historic Building Appraisal

Nos. 223-226 Shan Pui

Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Shan Pui(山貝) is in the south of Nam Sang Wai (南生圍), Yuen Long, facing a large piece of fishing ponds in the old days. The village was founded by Lam Siu-yuen (林兆元), a 13<sup>th</sup> 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 four houses, Nos. 223, 224, 225 and 226, was built by the 18<sup>th</sup> generation members of the Lams. They were members of the 7<sup>th</sup> branch of the village, a major one of the clan. The branch ancestor was Kai-choi (奇才), the 7<sup>th</sup> son of Siu-yuen. Nos. 224, 225 and 226 were built by Sin-cheung (善祥), an 18<sup>th</sup> generation member in the 1930-40s and a son of Hung-mau (鴻茂), the builder of Nos. 158-163 of the village. Sin-cheung resided at No.163 and moved to the new houses after they finished. The three houses were occupied by his grandsons and families until 1970s when they moved to Hung Tin (洪田) village, a short distance in the west. The houses have been left vacated since then. Sin-cheung had a rice store at the Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟, Yuen Long Old Market) and moved to No.17 Hop Fat Street (合發街) of the Yuen Long New Market (元朗新墟). The shop was called Wing Cheung (永祥米機). The shop was closed due to the urban redevelopment of the area in the 1980s.

*Historical  
Interest*

Most of the houses in the village are on the west of the ancestral hall. The row of four connected houses is on its west facing north like the others. An open forecourt is in front of the row of houses surrounded by a low boundary wall. A gateway is at its right close to the houses. The houses are Qing (清) vernacular buildings each having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of green bricks and concrete with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. 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. A cockloft is above the bedroom also for use as a bedroom. Lower courses of the front façade, the doorframe and the window frame are of granite. Above the stone lintel of the entrance of each house is a projected eave with plastered mouldings of auspicious treasures, floral patterns and calligraphy. Wall frieze mouldings of flowers and rocks are on the front façade. The two gable walls are with frieze plastered mouldings of curling grass and bats, a basket with flowers and leaves in the middle. The gateway is topped with a stepped pediment with a star and two buds mouldings for decoration.

*Architectural  
Merit*

It is a row of four residential houses to witness the settlement of the Lams in Shan Pui. **Rarity**

It has some built heritage value. The plastered mouldings are of special merit. **Built Heritage Value**

It has its authenticity kept. **Authenticity**

It has group value with the Lam Ancestral Hall and a number of village houses in the village. **Group Value**

Sin-cheung was a merchant active in local affairs. He was one of the managers (值理) of the Pok Oi Hospital (博愛醫院) in the 1920-30s. He also proposed to renovate the Tin Hau Temple (天后古廟) in Nga Yiu Tau (瓦寮頭) in 1938 and donated \$210 for its renovation. When Sin-cheung and his family moved to the new houses, soul tablets of his ancestors were moved to No.225 for worship at the altar of the house. The Lam Ancestral Hall is in the southeast of the row of houses. It was used as the classrooms of a school called Yan Hing School (仁興學校) for teaching village children in the 1920-50s. The school was named after Lam Siu-yuen's grandfather Lam Yan-hing (林仁興). It was then used as classrooms of a kindergarten in 1967-68. Martial arts classes were organized in the open space outside the hall for villagers until the 1960s. Offering of incense to the ancestors at the ancestral hall was made by the Lams in turn called *lun gung pai* (輪更牌) in the morning and at dusk until the mid-1970s but discontinued when more and more clansmen moved out of the village. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual is still held at the hall. The names of the new born baby boys of previous year will be registered in the Tai Wong Temple (大王古廟) of the Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟) and lanterns of the boys will be lit up at both the hall and the temple. **Social Value, & Local Interest**