

Historic Building Appraisal

So Ancestral Hall

No. 9 Hin Tin, Sha Tin

Hin Tin (顯田) village is a comparatively young village in Sha Tin as it was erected in the 1920s by the government to resettle three clans of villagers in the Shek Lei Pui Valley (石梨貝谷) for the construction of a reservoir. The Yeungs (楊), the Laws (羅) and the Sos (蘇) settled in the Valley for some 300 years. They were Hakkas (客家) from Nantou (南頭) of Shenzhen (深圳). They had been in close relationship for decades before they moved to Hong Kong. Another clan in the Valley, the Laus (劉), moved to Kwai Chung (葵涌) instead of Hin Tin at the resettlement. The cost of the removal and building of the village houses were borne by the government. The three ancestral halls of the three clans were built connected together to form a single block on the front row of the three rows of houses.

**Historical
Interest**

The block of ancestral halls has the same direction of the other village houses facing north. The ancestral hall of the Laws is in the middle with that of the Sos and that of the Yeungs on its left and right. The three ancestral halls are of the same design connecting together sharing a common wall between them and a common roof at their main halls and at their entrances. The So Ancestral Hall is a Qing (清) vernacular design building, each ancestral hall having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is in front of the main hall. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support the flush gable roofs of timbers, purlins and clay tiles. The external walls are plastered and painted with cream colour. The floors are cement screeded. The altar is at the end wall of each individual hall. A black painted frieze is under the cornice of the back external wall and at the gable walls for decoration. A pair of red *ruilong* (夔龍) mouldings is at two ends of the front ridge. The name of the ancestral hall is written above the lintel. A wall painting is on either side of the name board. The paintings are of flowers and birds motif.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a block of three ancestral halls of the three clans uncommonly built together to witness their special close relationship.

Rarity

It has considerable built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

The building was renovated in 1988 due to a fire broke out in the Law Ancestral Hall (羅氏宗祠) next door. The authenticity of the building is kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the ancestral halls next door.

Group Value

Ancestral worship has been held at the hall especially on the second day of the Chinese New Year and at the Chung Yeung (重陽節) and Ching Ming Festivals (清明節). Dim Dang (點燈) ritual by lighting up a lantern for each new born baby boy of the clan of previous year was held on the second day of the New Year up to the 1980s and has been discontinued. Wedding and funeral ceremonies were also held at the hall for the members of the clan.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*