

Historic Building Appraisal
Old Village Houses
Nos. 15, 16 & 17 Hok Tau Wai, Fanling

Hok Tau Wai (鶴藪圍) is a village in the east of Lau Shui Heung (流水響), *Historical Interest* Fanling. It is quite a distance from the main access road, the Sha Tau Kok Road (沙頭角公路), in its north. The village was inhabited by the Tangs (鄧) and Laus (劉), the former being the majority. The Tangs are Hakkas (客家). The three connected old village houses at Nos. 15, 16 and 17 and the watchtower by the left rear end of No.15 were built by two brothers, Tang Tai-man (鄧大文) and Tang Tai-woon (鄧大煥), in 1929. The watchtower was built as bandits and pirates from the mainland were active in the area in the first decades of the 20th century. Tai-man and his younger brother Tai-woon worked as an herbal doctor and a businessman respectively in Malaysia. At the age of around 50, they returned to the village and built the houses, Nos. 15, 16 and the tower belonged to Tai-woon and No.17 to Tai-man. The Tangs, including Ying-yin (應言), son of Tai-man, and Mau (茂), son of Ying-yin, lived in the houses until the 1960s when they moved to Ma Mei Ha (馬尾下), further north of the village near Ping Che (坪輦). The houses and the tower have been left vacated since then.

The row of three houses is in the rear row of two rows of houses in the village. The row is at the left end with another row of nine houses on its right. *Architectural Merit* The watchtower on the left end is a three-storey tall structure, the tallest in the village facing north. The row of three houses is of the same direction. The three houses are Qing (清) vernacular residential houses each having its own entrance. They are constructed of green bricks and rammed earth with its walls to support its pitched and flat roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The front façades of Nos. 16 and 17 are recessed whilst that of No.15 is flushed. The external side walls of the three units are plastered. Each house has a one-hall-one-room plan. No.17 has retained the pitched roof at its front room for used as the kitchen and bathroom. The living room is at the back with a cockloft above. The front rooms of No.15 and 16 are converted into flat-roofed ones. The front facades of the three houses are retained with fair-faced green bricks. The doorframes of the three houses are of granite. Under the eave of Nos.16 and 17 are wall paintings of landscape, flowers and birds and calligraphy. A fascia board is under the eave with carving of flowers and birds. A one-storey structure is by the front end of No.15 for service and storage use.

It is a row of three connected houses of the Tangs to witness their settlement *Rarity* in the village.

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the watchtower next to the house No.15.

Group Value

The Tangs had their family gatherings and celebrations at the houses for their weddings, birthdays and at festivals. They had their ancestral worship at the ancestral hall at the front row of houses in the village. They had their Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for new born baby boys of previous year on the 15th to 20th days of the first lunar month by lighting a hexagonal lantern at the ancestral hall. They would also have Yam Ding Jou (飲丁酒), a banquet for celebrating the new born baby, in the village. The ritual was discontinued after 1946. The Tangs had their guns and gunpowder kept in the tower. At the Japanese Occupation (1941-45), the houses and the tower were looted by the Japanese soldiers.

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