

Historic Building Appraisal
Lau Ancestral Hall
Tsung Pak Long, Sheung Shui

Tsung Pak Long (松柏朗) village in Sheung Shui (上水) is recorded as a *Historical Interest* Punt village in the Xin'an Gazetteer (新安縣志) of 1819. It was inhabited by six families including the Chans (陳), the Laus (劉), the Kwongs (龐), the Kans (簡), the Wongs (黃) and the Lees (李). It is said that the Laus, the Kwongs and the Kans were the earliest settlers. The Laus were from Kau Lung Hang (九龍坑) of Tai Po. A block of three ancestral halls built connected together is in the middle of the village, the Kwongs' in the middle and the Chans' and the Laus' respectively on the left and right. Two ancestral halls of the Kans and the Wongs separated by an open lane are on the right of the block. The government resumed land in the north-east of the village in the 1930-40s that the villagers had government compensation. They built five ancestral halls of their own with the money. The Lau Ancestral Hall (劉氏宗祠) was one of them built probably in the period.

The ancestral hall is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a *Architectural Merit* one-hall-one-courtyard plan. The open courtyard is in front of the hall. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The walls are plastered and painted in white colour. The floor is cement-screeded. The altar is in the middle of the end wall of the hall housing a big soul tablet of the Lau ancestors for worship. The name of the hall is moulded above the lintel of the recessed entrance. The door of the hall is at an oblique angle probably due to *fung shui* reason.

It is an ancestral hall of the Laus to remind their settlement in Tsung Pak Long. *Rarity*

It has little built heritage value.

Built Heritage Value

Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the other four ancestral halls next door.

Group Value

Before the Japanese Occupation (1941-1945), the villagers had an organization called Zap Shing Tong (集成堂) which had a building where all the ancestral tablets of the villagers were housed for worship. The building *Social Value, & Local Interest*

later collapsed and was rebuilt after the war. A soul tablet of three villagers is in the Tong for worship. They were killed in a battle against the Lius (廖) and the Haus (侯) in Yin Kong (燕崗). The Laus have the celebration of festivals and their village affairs dealt with at the hall. They had their wedding feast (basin meal) at the hall and in open ground in front of the hall. The Dim Dang (點燈) ritual for different clans would be held at the Zap Shing Tong.