

## Historic Building Appraisal

### No. 99 Hang Tau Tsuen

#### Ping Shan, Yuen Long

Ping Shan (屏山) was settled by the Tangs (鄧) in the late Southern Song (南宋, 1127-1279) dynasty. Tang Yuen-ching (鄧元禎) is considered as the first ancestor of the Tangs who settled there in 1216. Two villages were first founded including Hang Tau (坑頭) and Hang Mei (坑尾) villages, the former in the north and the latter in the south. The former was founded by Waai-tak (懷德, 1548-1622) and the latter by Waai-yee (懷義, 1529-1607), two brothers of the 14<sup>th</sup> generation. The building at Nos. 55 and 99 of Hang Tau Tsuen was originally one block of detached building which later divided into two belonged to two different owners. The block of building was probably built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tang Hin-ho (鄧獻可, 1777-1831), a 20<sup>th</sup> generation member of the Tangs, is believed to have lived in the building. He gained a *juren* (舉人) title in the 9<sup>th</sup> year of the Jiaqing (嘉慶, 1804) reign of the Qing (清) dynasty and served as a military officer in the Qing government. The block of building was probably divided into two houses not later than 1898. Siu-hei (兆熺, 1870-?), the great grandson of Hin-ho owned No.99.

**Historical  
Interest**

The residential block is among a group of bigger houses in the southern part of the village facing west. The Tang Ancestral Hall (鄧氏宗祠), the clan ancestral hall of the Tangs in Ping Shan, is three blocks further south. The block of building was originally a Qing vernacular building having a symmetrical one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It was constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The open courtyard was in front of the hall. A granary was on the left of the building (part of the present No.55) and a side room on the right of the hall. The building is facing west and two entrances are on the north and south side walls of the courtyard for *fung shui* benefit. The block of building is divided in the middle into two halves each with one room and a hall at the back. House No.99 has been partially altered. A cockloft is added at the rear portion of the hall. The open courtyard in the front is converted for use as a kitchen and a sitting room. The ground and upper floors of the side room and the upper floor of the kitchen are used as bedrooms. The interior of the building is modernized with its walls plastered and painted and the floors with ceramic tiles. Its external walls of green-brick and granite block are retained. The projected eave moulding above the lintel of the entrance and the weathered wall frieze mouldings still survive. The *wok yee* (鑊耳) gable wall of the house is intact.

**Architectural  
Merit**

It is a residential building to witness the history of the family of Tang Siu-hei in Hang Tau Tsuen. **Rarity**

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage  
Value**

The authenticity of the house is barely kept.

**Authenticity**

It has group value with the Tang Ancestral Hall, Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall (愈喬二公祠), Kun Ting Study Hall (覲廷書室) and other historic buildings of the village. **Group Value**

Siu-hei had a large lot of land rented to the farmers for cultivation. He also had much properties in the village and nearby. He had five sons and house No.99 was given to his fourth son Chuk-dong (祝冬) when he got married. Sze-lin (仕廉), son of Chuk-dong, inherited the house. Sze-lin was a farmer who hired over 10 villagers to work for him. Some of his land was leased to other farmers for cultivation. Sze-lin gave up cultivation in the late 1960s and his eldest son Tat-chi (達智), a renowned fashion designer, inherited the house for his own occupation. The Tangs have the soul tablets of their family ancestors worshipped at home. They were worshipped at the end wall in the middle of the hall and now displayed at the mezzanine since 1982. They also worship their distant ancestors at the Tang Ancestral Hall in the village especially at the Chinese New Year and at the Ching Ming (清明節) and Chung Yeung (重陽節) Festivals. They took part in the Da Chiu (打醮) organized by Ping Shan villages. Children of the Tangs studied at the Tang Ancestral Hall and Tat Tak Public School (達德學校). They had a security group called Ping Shan Village Vigilant Guard Group (屏山鄉更練團) established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century providing patrol and security services for the villages. The group was disbanded in 2003. **Social Value,  
& Local Interest**