

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 5 Nam Hang Tsuen
Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long, New Territories

Nam Hang Tsuen (南坑村), situated at Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉), branched off from the neighbouring Shui Tsiu Lo Wai (水蕉老圍) in the 1830s because of the village's expansion. Nam Hang Tsuen was mainly occupied by Shui Tsiu Lo Wai Cheungs (張) from Bolou (博羅) in China. **No. 5 Nam Hang Tsuen** was built by **Cheung Tsoi-mau** (張財茂) in 1933. Cheung Tat-tsoi (張達財), who moved to Nam Hang Tsuen from Shui Tsiu Lo Wai, was respected as the founding ancestor of Nam Hang Tsuen Cheungs. The land lot of No. 5 had been owned by Shing Wa Tso (盛華祖), literally the trust of Cheung Shing-wa (張盛華), the grandson of Cheung Tat-tsoi. In 1933, Cheung Tsoi-mau, who was the grandson of Cheung Shing-wa, inherited No. 5 from his father, Cheung Shiu-cheung (張詔昌).

*Historical
Interest*

Cheung Tsoi-mau was a seaman who worked in the United States of America between the 1910s and 1920s. After he had made enough money he returned to his native village to build a house and get married. Later he returned to the United States and settled down in New York. As it was uncommon for the villagers at Nam Hang Tsuen to work overseas, Mr Cheung was richer than other villagers. The construction of No.5 symbolized the wealth of Cheung Tsoi-mau and the social status of an overseas worker in the village. Portraits of Cheung Tsoi-mau and his wife can be seen today hanging up in the house.

No. 5 Nam Hang Tsuen was inherited by Cheung Tsoi-mau's second son, Cheung Kam-leung (張金亮). Cheung Kam-leung was the former village representative of Nam Hang Tsuen in the 1980s and 1990s. He also served on the committee of the Tin Hau Festival of Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long (元朗十八鄉天后寶誕) and was the Chairman of Nam Hang Tsuen Fa Paw Association (南坑村花炮會). Cheung Kam-leung's brothers, Cheung Kam-shing (張金勝), Cheung Kam-sung (張金送) and Cheung Chi-shing (張志成) emigrated to New York in the 1950s and 1960s where they opened a restaurant. Cheung Kam-leung had three sons who live in other houses of Nam Hang Tsuen and No. 5 is inhabited by their relatives.

This house is a two-storey rectangular elongated building of mixed Chinese and Western style probably best classified as **Chinese Eclectic**. A pediment engraved with "1933" can be seen on the top of the roof. The entrance to the house is on the southwest side via a side passage. The central part of the house is a two-storey rectangular block with a one-storey rectangular block in front. The rear part of the house is a traditional type pitched roof village house. The floor plans are divided into rooms by means of cross walls and partitions.

*Architectural
Merit*

There is a dog-legged staircase at the rear of the house. The bathroom and kitchen are situated on the ground floor at the front of the house. The external walls are rendered and painted with no decorations to speak of. Windows are steel framed divided into small glazing squares. The windows at first floor level of the rear part have curved hood mouldings, whilst most of the other windows have flat hood mouldings. There is a roof terrace over the kitchen and bathroom with an ornamental parapet consisting of cross-braced screen blocks in panels between square posts. There is an ornamental pediment in the centre of the building flanked by geometric ornaments and corner posts with pointed finials. The centre block has a flat roof and the rear block a pitched roof.

Most of the old village houses in the village have been rebuilt as new reinforced concrete residential blocks and No. 5 obviously has heritage value. The arrangement of the three portions of the house in stepped formation is quite unusual but it appears to be authentic. The side entrance is also uncommon. No noticeable alterations can be seen to the elevations.

*Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity*

The social value of the house stems from the elevated social status of Cheung Tsoi-mau and his successful accumulation of wealth from working overseas. The decorations applied to the house symbolized his success.

*Social Value
& Local
Interest*

The Cheungs, who branched off from Shui Tsiu Lo Wai, worship in the Cheung Ancestral Hall (張氏宗祠) in Shui Tsiu Lo Wai and the graves on Pak Fan Leng (栢墳嶺; named by the villagers, situated behind Nam Hang Tsuen) and in Lantau (大嶼山). There used to be a communal well in Nam Hang Tsuen that served the whole village including No. 5.

Group Value

To find an adaptive re-use for this little house would be difficult. It is best left as a village house and family residence.

*Adaptive
Re-use*