

Historic Building Appraisal

Law Uk

Shek Chung Au, Sha Tau Kok, N.T.

Law Uk (羅屋, Law's House) is a row of five connected houses in Shek Chung Au Tsuen (石涌凹村) in Sha Tau Kok (沙頭角) close to the closed area. It was built by Law Yik-fai (羅奕輝, 1885-?) in 1930 after he returned from Panama. He worked as a labourer when he was 12 in Panama in 1897 and he ran a shop after saving some money. Originated from Ninghua (寧化) of Shibi (石壁), Fujian (福建) province, the Laws settled in Nam Chung (南涌) south of Shek Chung Au Tsuen in the mid-18th century and established their village Law Uk Tsuen (羅屋村). The Laws worked as farmers in the area by constructing seawalls to reclaim land for farming. They bought their daily necessities at the Sheung Shui Market (上水墟) and in some other places. An ancillary block was built on the right of the row of houses for keeping livestock. Law Uk was occupied by the Laws until the early 1950s and has been left vacated since then. It is still managed by the descendents of Law Yik-fai.

*Historical
Interest*

Law Au-fung (羅歐鋒, 1923-), third son of Yik-fai, was an active cadre and a Vice Commander (副官) of the East River Column (東江縱隊) during China's War of Resistance. He later had guerrilla actions in south Guangdong (廣東) province. He settled in China after 1946 with his family working in the military department of the People's Republic until 1997 when he returned to settle in Shek Chung Au.

The block of Law Uk building is a short distance from Sha Tau Kok Road (沙頭角公路). It is a block of five houses facing southeast. A spacious foreground is in front of the building. It is a Qing (清) vernacular residential building having two entrances at the two recessed units flanked by the other three units on their left and right. It is constructed of green bricks and concrete with its walls to support its pitched and flat roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The one-hall-one-room plan of each unit has a flat-roofed room in the front with the pitched-roofed living room at the back. The five units share a common pitched roof at the back and a flat roof in the front. A kitchen is at the middle unit with a bath corner. Behind the living room of each unit is a bedroom. Above the living room is a cockloft also for use as the bedroom. The internal and external walls of the building are plastered and painted. Some of the internal walls are with ceramic tiles. The two doorframes are of granite. Under the eaves of the two entrances are wall paintings of flowers and birds and calligraphy. A fascia board is at the eave edge with carving of flowers and bird patterns. The two ridges at the two entrances are each with a set of red geometric mouldings.

*Architectural
Merit*

Frieze plastered mouldings of flowers and birds are running at the top end of the three projected front façade walls and the two side walls. Two red bat-shaped rainwater drain outlets are on each of the two side walls.

It is a residential block of the Laws to witness their settlement in the village. ***Rarity***

It has some built heritage value. ***Built Heritage Value***

It has its authenticity kept. ***Authenticity***

It has group value with the ancillary block on its right. ***Group Value***

Law Uk served as a guerrilla base and intelligence centre during the Japanese Occupation (1941-45). The centre had a vital role in strengthening the works of the East River Column (東江縱隊) in struggle with the Japanese. The family of Law Uk is closely related to the history of China's War of Resistance. ***Social Value, & Local Interest***