

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 37 Hang Mei 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 14th generation. It is not known when the house No.37 of the village was first built. Land record shows that it was owned by Tang Hin-ip (鄧顯業, 1837-1909), a 23rd generation member of the clan. The house was probably built before 1909. Hin-ip's grandfather, Gang-tong (賡棠, 1771-1841) was a military *xiuca* (秀才) and a naval officer in the Qing (清) dynasty. His father Kai-leung (驥良) was a *shengyuan* (生員) in the *tongshi* (童試, preliminary district examination). Hin-ip had no child that he adopted his nephew King-shui (敬瑞) as his son. King-shui had six sons including Ping-sou (炳壽). Pang-ying (鵬瀛), son of Ping-sou, inherited the building of No.37 in 1982.

**Historical
Interest**

The residential house is among a group of bigger houses in the western part of the village. The Tang Ancestral Hall (鄧氏宗祠), the clan ancestral hall of the Tangs in Ping Shan, is two blocks away on its right. It is a Qing (清) vernacular building having a one-hall-one-courtyard plan. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roof of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Two entrances are on either side of the courtyard for *fung shui* benefit. The courtyard has a flat-roof probably a later-stage alteration which houses a kitchen and a bathroom. The hall is a two-storey structure with a living room in its front backed with a bedroom and bedrooms on the upper floor. Above the lintel of each entrance is a projected eave with plastered mouldings of leaf patterns. The door frames, window frames and five lower courses of the external walls are of granite. The main ridge of the building is with curling ends.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is a residential building to witness the settlement of the Tangs in Hang Mei Tsuen.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The authenticity of the house is basically kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Tang Ancestral Hall, Yu Kiu Ancestral Hall, Kun Ting Study Hall (觀廷書室) and other historic buildings of the village.

Group Value

The Tangs were the majority of the village. Many of them however have moved out of the village to the urban areas and overseas since the 1960s. The Tangs worship their 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 (愈喬二公祠). They had a security group called Ping Shan Village Vigilant Guard Group (屏山鄉更練團) established in the 17th century providing patrol and security services for the villages. The group was disbanded in 2003.

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