

Historic Building Appraisal
Chi Hong Po Jai
Sha Kong Wai, Ha Tsuen, Yuen Long

Sha Kong Wai (沙江圍), literally meaning a walled village of sandy river, in northern Ha Tsuen (廈村) of Yuen Long was on the western bank of a branch of Shan Pui River (山貝河). The village was probably erected in the 17th century inhabited by four families of different surnames. It is not known when the wall was constructed. The enclosing wall no longer exists. The wall had the function to protect the villagers from bandits and privates. Judging from the existing positions of the village houses, the Chi Hong Po Jai (慈航普濟) temple should be the shrine of the walled village. It is on the opposite end of the entrance gate house on the central axis of the walled village. Kwun Yam (觀音) is the patron deity of the temple with other deities including Pak Kung (伯公), Tin Hau (天后) and others being worshipped as well.

***Historical
Interest***

The temple is on the higher level of the village. The entrance gate house at the other end of the village is at the lower level. The temple is a Qing (清) vernacular building of a one-hall layout. It is constructed of green bricks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. The rectangular temple has granite steps at its entrance. The internal and external walls of the building are plastered. The former is with false brick lines. Its altar is in the middle of the end wall houses two tablets for worship. In front of it is a furnace. The ridge is with curling ends. Its gables are with black-and-white wall friezes of *kuilong* (夔龍) pattern.

***Architectural
Merit***

It is a temple to witness the history of the village.

Rarity

The temple has some built heritage value.

***Built Heritage
Value***

The building was renovated in the 1950s, 1980s and 1991. Its authenticity is kept.

Authenticity

The temple also served as the ancestral hall for the villagers with their ancestors' soul tablets placed at the altar for worshipped. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual would be held on the 15th day of each first lunar month for new born baby boys of previous year at the temple. Other celebrations of festivals are also held. Da Chiu (打醮) would be held once every six years in the village normally in the tenth of eleventh lunar month. The temple serves as the centre for the villagers to deal with their village matters.

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