

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 173 Tai Kei Leng

Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

No.173 Tai Kei Leng (大旗嶺) in Shap Pat Heung (十八鄉), Yuen Long, *Historical Interest* was constructed in 1927 by the grandmother of a Lam Biu-ting (林彪庭). The Lams are Hakkas who came from Xinhui (新會) of Guangdong (廣東) province. It was said that Tai Kei Leng, originally called Shui Ta Ba Tsuen (水打壩村, village of water hitting the dam), was inhabited mainly by the Hakkas starting from the Tongzhi reign (同治, 1862-74) of the Qing (清) dynasty. The Lams came in the 1920s, starting with selling firewood and dry bean curd. Biu-ting's grandfather later moved to Vancouver of Canada and ran a restaurant there. With the money remitted from Canada, the Lams bought land in the village and built this No. 173. Most of the family members of the Lams are in Canada, leaving the house vacant.

The village house is a two-hall Qing vernacular building. It has two storeys. A skylight courtyard is between the two halls which has staircases for the upper floors. Its recessed entrance and the rear entrance are on opposite ends of the courtyard. The entire building is surrounded by a low boundary wall. The halls to the left and right of the courtyard have two rooms each with doors. It is said that the layout of the upper floor is identical to that of the ground floor. The building is constructed of grey brickwork with walls supporting pitched roofs of timber structure and clay tiles. The upper flooring is made of timber boards and joists, while the ground flooring is concrete screeding. The fascia board is engraved with "1927". Gable friezes and plaster mouldings with calligraphy and floral patterns can also be identified. *Architectural Merit*

The village house had witnessed the coming of Hakka settlement in Tai Kei Leng in the 1920s, and has built heritage value. Internal alterations and renovations had diminished the authenticity of the building. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

Lam Biu-ting and his father Lam Kwong (林廣) were educated in the Yuen Long Chamber of Commerce Primary School (元朗商會學校) and Shung Tak Catholic English College (崇德書院) in Yuen Long. No. 173 was one of the largest traditional village houses in grey brickwork in the village. The Lams had involved in activities like Tin Hau Festival (天后誕) and some of them were members of the Luen Fuk Tong Fa Pow Hui (聯福堂花炮會) in Tai Kei *Social Value & Local Interest*

Leng.

No. 173 Tai Kei Leng has group value with other historic buildings in the village, such as the houses at Nos. 26, 27, 112, 119, 186 and 188, Siu Lo at No. 643, as well as the Ji Yeung Study Hall (子養書室) at No. 23 of the village (all Grade 3). *Group Value*

REFERENCES

Document Records at The Land Registry Office, Hong Kong

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Books, Articles, Newspapers and Other Sources

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