

Historic Building Appraisal

Siu Lo,

No. 643 Tai Kei Leng, Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Siu Lo (筱廬) was built by Chan Mo-ching (陳慕青), a native of Meixian in Guangdong Province (廣東省梅縣). Chan had travelled to Indonesia to search for a livelihood. He moved from Indonesia to Hong Kong and settled in Tai Kei Leng (大旗嶺) where he bought a piece of land and constructed Siu Lo. Construction commenced around 1940, and was completed in early 1942 shortly after the Japanese Occupation of Hong Kong in December 1941. *Historical Interest*

Chan Mo-ching ran business in Indonesia. On his return to Hong Kong in 1940, he owned a shop in Yuen Long San Hui (元朗新墟), literally, Yuen Long New Market. He also donated thirty dollars for the renovation of Tin Hau Temple at Nga Yiu Tau (瓦窰頭天后廟), also known as Tai Shu Ha Tin Hau Temple (大樹下天后廟), before 1941. The Chinese characters “陳慕青捐銀叁拾大元” (literally “Chan Mo-ching donating thirty dollars”) are inscribed on a stone tablet of the year 1938 inside the temple.

During the Japanese Occupation (1941-45), Chan Mo-ching lived in his native place in Meixian and Siu Lo was inhabited by his relatives. After the war, Chan returned to Hong Kong and lived in Siu Lo until his death in the 1950s. Siu Lo was inhabited by the Chans until the late 1970s and owned by the family until 2017.

Shortly after the Japanese Occupation, at the request of the Hong Kong Government, the Hong Kong–Kowloon Brigade of the East River Column (東江縱隊港九獨立大隊) helped maintain social order in the New Territories. Self-defence units (自衛隊) were organized between 1945 and 1946. At the time, according to local inhabitants’ reminiscences, Siu Lo was a focal point of activities of the self-defence units.

Siu Lo comprises a two-storey main building with a single-storey annex block (which is a kitchen and a store) attached to the house at an angle. It is a house in mixed style, with Western influence in the open porch and verandah, as well as Chinese influence in the splayed *fung shui* corners, the design of the annex block, and the octagonal columns to the porch. The walls are rendered and painted with fading and flaking white-wash. Windows are rectangular in shape, regularly spaced and fitted with wooden jalousies and security bars. Most have blind segmental arched heads and projecting weather canopies. The first-floor verandah on the front facade corresponds with the design of the porch below. *Architectural Merit*

The roof appears to be flat with a fairly plain parapet wall and a triangular panel or pediment in the centre of the front facade.

The annex block is built in simple vernacular style with plain rendered and white-washed walls, wooden doors and windows and a Chinese tiled pitched roof with a wide overhanging eaves supported on rather heavy protruding brackets. Two chimney stacks project from the roof serving the kitchen below.

Siu Lo has built heritage value. The architecturally mixed style (both Chinese and Western) is a character attribute. It does not appear to have been altered. It is still largely intact with many of the original conditions and authentic architectural features retained. Another similar building with an annex is Shek Lo (石廬) at Lung Yeuk Tau (龍躍頭), Fanling (Grade 1). **Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity**

Siu Lo remains a testament and reminder of Tai Kei Leng as a multi-surnamed village inhabited by Hakka people. It has local interest and local significance. The first owner of the building, Chan Mo-ching, was entombed in Ping Shan. His descendants commemorated the annual grave-sweeping and paid their respect at their ancestor's grave. **Social Value & Local Interest**

Siu Lo provides an attractive presence of architectural form of days gone by. The small single-storey kitchen is situated in the annex block at the right-hand side of the main building. There were two large stoves which were used for preparing family food, and hay was the main fuel in the past. An old well located at the back of Siu Lo was the main water supply for the Chans. There are other historic buildings in Tai Kei Leng, namely, the Grade 3 residential buildings at No. 26, No. 27, No. 112, No. 119 and Nos. 186 and 188, as well as Ji Yeung Study Hall (子養書室) at No. 23 of the village. **Group Value**

REFERENCES

Document Records at The Land Registry Office, Hong Kong

Property Particulars of the Remaining Portion of Sub-section 1 of Section E of Lot No. 1695 in D.D. 120.

Property Particulars of Sub-section 1 of Section F of Lot No. 1695 in D.D. 120.

Books, Articles, and Other Sources

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Oral history interviews with a member of the Chang family of Siu Lo and villagers of Tai Kei Leng by the Antiquities and Monuments Office in 2004 and 2009.