

Historic Building Appraisal
Nam Ancestral Hall
No. 121 Sheung Wo Che, Sha Tin, N.T.

Sheung Wo Che (上禾輦) is a multi-surname village inhabited by the Nams (藍), the Chans (陳), the Wongs (黃) and the Cheungs (張). The Nam Ancestral Hall (藍氏家祠), which is also called Yu Nam Tong (汝南堂), was erected in around **1901** by the Nams to commemorate their founding ancestor Nam Yuan-choi (藍源財) who came from Bao'an (寶安) of Guangdong (廣東) province in the Daoguang (道光, 1821-1850) reign of Qing (清) Dynasty. The Nams were Hakkas (客家) and some of them worked in overseas and sent money back to the village. The construction of the Nam Ancestral Hall was funded by two Nams, namely, Mui-wah (梅華) and Tai-wah (泰華), who had worked as sailors and remitted money to their relatives in Hong Kong and entrusted them to erect the ancestral hall.

**Historical
Interest**

The ancestral hall is a Qing vernacular building of Hakka style having a two-hall-one-courtyard plan of three bays. It is in a *doulang* (斗廊) design having a ceremonial hall and an entrance hall with an open courtyard in between at the middle recessed bay. The two projected bays are on its left and right with side chambers rooms. An extended structure has been added on the right bay in its front façade. It is constructed of green bricks, rammed earth and granite blocks with its walls to support its pitched roofs of timber rafters, purlins and clay tiles. Granite is used for its doorframes, window frames and entrance steps. The altar is in the middle of the end wall at the main hall housing a soul tablet of the Nam ancestors for worship. The side chambers are with cocklofts for residential use. Internally the walls are plastered and painted, some of which are with ceramic tiles. A portion of the chambers' roof is with false ceiling.

**Architectural
Merit**

It is an ancestral hall of the Nams to depict their settlement in Sheung Wo Che of Sha Tin.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

**Built Heritage
Value**

After many renovations, the interiors of the ancestral hall have been greatly altered. The rooms have been converted into partitioned apartments. The use of the building as residence very much reduces the authenticity of the ancestral hall.

Authenticity

The ancestral hall is for the ancestral worship of the Nams. Its side chambers are leased to other villagers for residential use. The hall is also used for the Dim Dang (點燈, lighting the lantern) ritual for the new born baby boys of the previous year on the 15th of the first lunar month, “Tai kung distributing roast pork” ceremonies (太公分豬肉), and Spring and Autumn Equinox (春秋二祭). Special offerings are made to the ancestors during festivals at the Chinese New Year, Chung Yeung Festival (重陽節), Mid-Autumn Festival (中秋節) and others. Wedding ceremonies for the Nams are also held at the hall. The elders died after 60 are entitled to be enshrined at the altar for worship without their soul tablets individually on display.

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

Today, most of the houses in Sheung Wo Che Village are dilapidated, leaving the Ancestral Hall as one of the sole remnants of this historical village. The continued existence of the Ancestral Hall and the houses on Nos. 7-10 (an Antiquities Monuments Office recorded item), after many years of dynamic urban development in the immediate vicinity, including the KCRC terminus and modern commercial/residential complexes, is quite remarkable. The building is also close to the declared monument of Wong Uk (王屋村民宅), as well as other buildings graded by the Antiquities Advisory Board such as Tsang Tai Uk (曾大屋), Che Kung Temple (車公廟), High Rock Christian Camp (靈基營) as well as Lam Ancestral Hall (藍氏宗祠) in the neighbouring Pai Tau Village. All these buildings have good value from a heritage and cultural point of view.

Group Value