

Historic Building Appraisal

No. 158 Shan Pui

Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long

Shan Pui (山貝) is in the south of Nam Sang Wai (南生圍), Yuen Long, facing a large piece of fishing ponds in the old days. The village was founded by Lam Siu-yuen (林兆元), a 13th generation member of the Lam clan, who moved from Tai Wai (大圍) village in its south some 200 years ago. The Lam Ancestral Hall (林氏家祠) probably built around 1900 is in the eastern part of the village. A row of six houses, Nos. 158, 159, 160, 161, 162 and 163, was built by Lam Hung-mau (林鴻茂), a 17th generation member of the 7th branch. The houses were probably built around 1900. The five houses of Nos. 158 to 162 were built for Hung-mau himself and his four sons. No. 163 was added later. The six houses connected together are sharing a common roof at their back. Hung-mau was a businessman of rice and grocery.

*Historical
Interest*

Most of the houses are on the west of the ancestral hall. The row of six houses is on its east. The six houses are facing north like the other houses. No.158 is the last one on the left of the row. The houses are Qing (清) vernacular buildings each 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. The cooking stove and a bath corner is respectively on the left and right of the open courtyard in front of the hall. The living room is in front of a bedroom at the hall. A cockloft is above the bedroom also for use as a bedroom. Lower courses of the front façade are of granite blocks. Above the stone lintel of the entrance is a projected eave with plastered moulding of lotus. Wall frieze mouldings of geometric floral pattern and landscape are on the front façade and on the side wall.

*Architectural
Merit*

It is a residential house to witness the settlement of the Lams in Shan Pui.

Rarity

It has some built heritage value.

*Built Heritage
Value*

It has its authenticity kept.

Authenticity

It has group value with the Lam Ancestral Hall and a number of village houses in the village.

Group Value

Like the other houses on the same row, No. 158 was occupied by the descendents of the Lams. Many of them moved overseas in the 1960-70s leaving the elderly in the houses. After the death of the elderly, many of the houses are left vacated. The Lam Ancestral Hall is on the left of the row of houses. It was used as the classrooms of a school called Yan Hing School (仁興學校) for teaching village children in the 1920-50s. The school was named after Lam Siu-yuen's grandfather Lam Yan-hing (林仁興). It was then used as classrooms of a kindergarten in 1967-68. Martial arts classes were organized in the open space outside the hall for villagers until the 1960s. Offering of incense to the ancestors at the ancestral hall was made by the Lams in turn called *lun gung pai* (輪更牌) in the morning and at dusk until the mid-1970s but discontinued when more and more clansmen moved out of the village. Dim Dang (點燈) ritual is still held at the hall. The names of the new born baby boys of previous year will be registered in the Tai Wong Temple (大王古廟) of the Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟) and lanterns of the boys will be lit up at both the hall and the temple.

*Social Value,
& Local
Interest*