

**Historic Building Appraisal**  
**Nga Tsin Wai Village, Ng Ancestral Hall,**  
**Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon**

The Nga Tsin Wai Ng Ancestral Hall was built in **1962**. Nga Tsin Wai (衙前圍) literally means “a walled village in front of a yamen [office of a local bureaucrat]”. This place name suggests that the village must have been in the vicinity of a yamen. Indeed, the Kowloon area has other place names referring to a yamen, for example, Nga Tsin Long (衙前壟, literally, “fields in front of a yamen”) immediately south of Kowloon City, and Nga Yau Tau (衙右頭, literally, “The right-hand side of a yamen”) in the upper end of Ma Tau Wai. Both of the places are very close to Nga Tsin Wai. *Historical Interest*

There is a saying that the village of Nga Tsin Wai was founded by three men who came to the area with the exiled Song Dynasty boy emperor Bing (宋帝昺) (1271-1279). One, Ng Shing-tat (吳成達) was a civil official, another, Chan Chiu-in (陳朝賢) was a military official, and the third, Li Shing-kwai (李成規) was also attached to the Song court in some capacity. When the boy emperor fell in 1279, the three men jointly established the village. The village was rebuilt in 1724 after the Coastal Evacuation in early Qing Dynasty.

Originally, the inhabitants lived scattered through the area but, in 1724, a group of them built a walled village and came together to live inside the walls to defend themselves against bandits and pirate attack, whilst some preferred to settle elsewhere in the surrounding area. Later on, branches of the clans moved out of the area to Siu Lek Yuen in Sha Tin (沙田小瀝源), Tseung Kwan O (將軍澳) and Lamma Island (南丫島). Over time, most of the members of the Chan and Li clans moved out, and the village becomes almost entirely resided in by the Ngs.

Nga Tsin Wai was the head village of an inter-village alliance known as the Alliance of Seven in Kowloon (九龍七約) which was formed with the villages nearby for mutual defence against outside attack. This alliance in fact comprised nine villages, not seven. The reason for this is that originally the alliance was not of seven villages, but of seven *baojia* (保甲, a system of collective neighbourhood defence). Several of the villages included in the alliance are very tiny, and would certainly have been combined for *baojia* purposes with other, larger villages nearby. Nowadays, all the alliance member villages except Nga Tsin Wai had been cleared.

The construction of Nga Tsin Wai follows the traditional Chinese walled village layout. It consisted of a rectangular, almost square, walled enclosure with two-storied watchtowers at the four corners and an entrance facing the east. The walls, which stood about 12 feet high, were of bricks with stone foundations. The Entrance Gatehouse and the Tin Hau Temple are located at the western and eastern end of the central axis of the village. Nga Tsin Wai was bordered by a wide moat (between 30 and 35 feet wide) spanned by a bridge leading to the single gate, but the Kai Tak Nullah (啟德明渠) built in 1942 came so close to the village that the moat had to go – it was filled in with the debris from the construction of the new nullah.

**Architectural  
Merit**

At the western end of the old moat of Nga Tsin Wai which is long gone, there is a Ng Ancestral Hall managed by Ng Shing Tat Tso (吳成達祖), the ancestral trust of the Ng clan in Nga Tsin Wai. It was built in 1962 to replace an earlier ancestral hall which was taken down to make way for the construction of Tung Tau Estate (1960) and its access roads. The present ancestral hall is a traditional Chinese style vernacular building of a one-hall plan, fronted by a courtyard. It is constructed of concrete with its walls to support its pitched roof covered with green ceramic glazed tiles. The name board of the ancestral hall is above the doorway. The walls are plastered and painted yellow and white externally.

There are other ancestral halls in Hong Kong in this architectural style, but this Ancestral Hall is unique in its history related to Nga Tsin Wai, the last surviving example of the walled village in urban area. The Ng Ancestral Hall is a modern building built of traditional Chinese style.

**Rarity,  
Built Heritage  
Value &  
Authenticity**

The building is a place of ancestral worship of the Ng clansmen of Nga Tsin Wai, who had donated funds for the construction of the Kowloon City Hau Wong Temple (九龍城侯王廟). They were also important in the foundation (1880) and early history of Lok Sin Tong (樂善堂), a charitable organization founded with enthusiastic support from the Sub-Magistrate, the local Military Commander and merchants in the Kowloon City Market. For example, the Ng clan donated the land on which Lok Sin Tong stood at its foundation and they were prominent among the Tong's early Directors.

**Social Value  
& Local  
Interest**

The Ancestral Hall has group value with other old buildings in its environs, such as the Entrance Gate and Tin Hau Temple of the village. It is also related to the nearby Chi Tak Public School (至德公立學校) which was opened in 1962.

**Group Value**