

Historic Building Appraisal
Stone House, Central Kwai Chung Park,
San Kwai Street, Kwai Chung, N.T.

Located currently in the Central Kwai Chung Park, the Stone House was originally built as a residence for the Tsang family and is the only surviving building of the former Shui Fung Dairy Farm (瑞豐牧場). *Historical Interest*

The former Shui Fung Dairy Farm was at S.A. and S.B. of Lot No. 136 in D.D.448 (later renamed as KCTL 6) which was sold to Tsang Shui-yau (曾瑞有) by Irving Yeung (楊向榮), owner of the adjacent Leung Fat Dairy Farm, on 28 December 1949 at a cost of \$6,000, covering an area of 296,812 sq. ft. The two farms, separated by a stream, were the only dairy farms not just in the Ha Kwai Chung area, but also in the New Territories in the 1950s.

Tsang Shui-yau, apart from owning Shui Fung Dairy Farm, also owned Wah Hing Construction Company (華興建築公司), a contractor on the Public Works Department's List of Approved Contractors. The company participated in various major government projects, including the demolition of the Japanese War Memorial (忠靈塔) in 1947, the construction of the infrastructure works at Kai Tak Airport, government piers as well as social welfare projects such as the "Children's Village" in Wu Kai Sha, the predecessor of the present-day Youth Village. Tsang was an active member of the Building Contractors' Association between 1950 and 1980 and served as a committee member in the 1960s. He was also an active member of the Tsung Tsin Mission of Hong Kong (基督教香港崇真會), attending the Kwai Chung church from 1956 to 1965, and served as an elder for the Sham Shui Po church from 1958.

It is believed that Shui Fung Dairy Farm started operations in the early 1950s. With a herd of around 150 dairy cows in its heyday, the farm consisted of a number of major farm buildings, including cowsheds, living quarters for workers, an office building, a storage building for the daily milk production and sheds for farm machinery and equipment. Unlike the large dairy companies like Dairy Farm and Kowloon Dairy, which sold a variety of products under their own brands, Shui Fung Dairy Farm was a small-scale family business and produced only raw milk supplied to other dairy product manufacturers for pasteurisation, bottling and distribution. The milk was also available for sale at the family-run Shui Fung Café (瑞豐冰室) on Tung Choi Street in Mong Kok for some years.

According to the oral accounts by a grandson of Tsang Shui-yau, the farm was mainly run by Tsang's wife Lo Yan-ying (羅忍英) together with their second son Tsang Hon-fai (曾罕輝) who studied agriculture in Japan. Aerial photos suggest that Stone House was built around 1950, as before that, in 1949, only footprints, and no buildings, could be seen where the house later stood. The construction year is substantiated by the license for erection of building, which was issued in 1950. Originally built as a holiday villa for the Tsang family, Stone House later became Tsang Hon-fai's family home in the 1960s. Shui Fung Dairy Farm operated until 1982 when Tsang Hon-fai moved it to Ping Che and Tai Po. He closed down his dairy business when he migrated to Canada in the late 1980s.

The plan for a park in Kwai Chung was announced in the late 1970s, but

concrete planning only began in the 1980s. By 1983, all the structures at Shui Fung Dairy Farm, except the Stone House, the office building and one of the cowsheds were designated as ruins. The plot of land occupied by the farm, along with the adjacent land previously used by Leung Fat Dairy Farm, was surrendered to the government and permanently allocated to the then Regional Services Department in November 1984. The office building and the cowshed were demolished during the site formation works. The area was subsequently redeveloped into Central Kwai Chung Park which was opened to the public in 1986. Since then, the Stone House has been used as the park office. Since 2000, the park has been managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

Shui Fung Dairy Farm extended over the slope of a hill at Ha Kwai Chung, and Stone House was located at the top overlooking the rest of the farm. In addition to farm structures, it can be seen from the old plans and photos that a swimming pool and a number of wells were built in close vicinity to the house. According to Tsang Shui-yau's daughter, the house was designed and built by Tsang Shui-yau and his eldest son Tsang Wing-fai (曾榮輝) who also had a background in civil engineering but later became a Lutheran pastor and missionary.

***Architectural
Merit***

Stone House is a two-storey building with a flat roof terrace. As it was originally designed as a holiday villa for the family, the ground floor had guest rooms, a dining room, a kitchen and a full bath while the upper floor accommodated the living quarters of the farm owners, the Tsangs. Connecting the two floors is a staircase finished with terrazzo which is still intact. A chimney stack can be found on the roof, confirming the oral history accounts that there was a kitchen on the ground floor (where the dangerous goods store is now located).

The work to convert Stone House into the administration building for Central Kwai Chung Park in 1986 included several alterations that are readily visible. Part of the ground floor area was converted into a refreshment kiosk with counter, which is now used as a storeroom. The rest of the area was turned into offices, a general storage area, a dangerous goods store and lavatories with new partitions. The first floor was initially converted into offices with a large lounge in the middle, but has subsequently been developed into a classroom for the Training Section of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. New railings were added to the ground floor veranda and the roof parapet, while the balustrades on the first floor were replaced by galvanised iron pipe (G.I.P.) railings. The original steel windows were replaced by new galvanised mild steel (G.M.S.) windows and original doors were replaced by new doors and roller shutters. The open-frame system on the roof terrace was covered with a new pergola.

Stone House was built in a modernist style. Common features include the curved building façade, the simple and slender round columns of the verandas, the composition of rectangles such as small square openings in the roof parapet, a rectangular open-frame system on the roof terrace and rectangular window openings. The deep veranda is a typical feature of the colonial period intended to provide better ventilation and shelter from the sun. The elevation design makes use of stone blocks to contrast with the plastered and painted surfaces, another relatively common feature of post-war buildings in Hong Kong.

Stone House is a typical example of post-war modernist architecture in Hong Kong. The building features considerable authenticity on the exterior, where no

***Rarity,
Built Heritage***

significant large-scale alterations or additions have been made and nothing has been demolished. The terrazzo staircase has been kept as built in the interior. Shui Fung Dairy Farm and Leung Fat Dairy Farm were the only dairy farms in the New Territories in the 1950s, and Stone House is the last surviving building of the two farms as well as the oldest surviving dairy farm structure in the New Territories. The building bears witness to the dramatic changes in Kwai Chung between 1950 and 1980 as it was developed from an agricultural area to an industrial and residential district.

Value & Authenticity

In addition to the significant contribution it made to society supplying dairy products for the daily needs of the public, the farm was also a hub for community service in Kwai Chung. As devoted Christians, the Tsangs served the nearby community in different ways, using the farm as their base. As an active member of the Tsung Tsin Mission, Tsang Shui-yau erected a temporary structure on the farm to host church meetings for the Tsung Tsin Mission Kwai Chung church between 1964 and 1966 after the church building collapsed during Typhoon Ruby hitting Hong Kong in 1964. His daughter Mo-chung (曾慕忠) also set up the first Sunday school for the Kwai Chung congregation at the farm, and provided free schooling for children in nearby villages such as Ha Kwai Chung and Chung Kwai Chung. The farm was also open to church members and nearby villagers for other activities and festive celebrations. Old residents still remember being invited to Stone House for free milk and cookies. The milk was fresh from the farm, warmed up in a bucket and poured into mugs for the children.

Social Value & Local Interest

The government started to industrialise the Kwai Chung area in the 1960s and resumed a large area of farmland for the purpose, with several villages in the area subsequently resettled to make way for new factory buildings. One of these was Ha Kwai Chung Village, which was relocated to the foot of the hill at Shui Fung Dairy Farm in 1964 and became one of the nearby villages which benefitted from the Tsangs' community service.

All the inhabitants of the village used to be farmers and engaged mainly in subsistence farming or light industry in their new settlements. Low education levels and poverty among the villagers meant they had little medical knowledge. Tsang Shui-yau and his wife opened up their farm once a week for German and Swiss nurses from Basel Mission to provide free medical services for the villagers, including providing vitamins and drugs, and conducting hygiene talks for the public. Many villagers who had lived in the vicinity since the 1960s still remember Central Kwai Chung Park as a dairy farm where cows roamed the hillsides. A stone bull was erected during the construction of Central Kwai Chung Park to acknowledge the history of dairy farming in the area.

There are a number of graded historic buildings in the vicinity, including the Former The Salvation Army Kwai Chung Girls' Home (the main building, the garage and the corps hall are Grade 2 historic buildings), Law Ancestral Hall of Sheung Kwai Chung Village (Grade 3), nos. 4-5, 10, 14, 15, 30, 32, 39, 42, 42A and 43 Kau Wa Keng (all Grade 3), Yeung Ching Study Hall (Grade 3), the Tsang Residence (Grade 3) and Yiu Kung Ancestral Hall (Grade 3).

Group Value

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