

Historic Building Appraisal
No. 9 Kat On Street, Wan Chai

No. 9 Kat On Street lies within Inland Lot 784. According to the Government Gazette, Lot 784 was sold to George Reinhold Lammert on 8 January 1862. Lammert was one of the co-founders of Lammert Bros Limited (欖勿兄弟拍賣行有限公司), one of the oldest auctioneers in Hong Kong. The company is still in operation today. It appears that there were no buildings on the lot at the time of his purchase. Later, the lot contained Nos. 9 to 15 Kat On Street (odd street numbers). *Historical Interest*

Kat On Street is named in a Chinese newspaper as early as 1882, and this source also indicates that there were shops along the street. In a 1901 map, the buildings referred to as Nos. 1 to 7 Kat On Street (odd street numbers) are already seen, but the parcel of land which today is occupied by No. 9 Kat On Street is still shown as vacant. In 1913, Lot 784 was purchased by Wong Suen Wing (黃孫永) who proceeded to construct a building which was referred to as No. 9 Kat On Street. No. 9 Kat On Street first appears in the rate book for 1915 to 1916. This indicates that the building was probably completed by 1915. The rate book also remarks that the building was constructed for residential purposes, the same as its present-day use. The earliest available map which shows a building in this location dates from 1935.

Upon completion of the building, the lot was sub-divided, and No. 9 became Section A, which was sold to Li Ha Ching (李霞清), Wong Ting Kwong (黃庭光), Lam Cheong Kwong (林昌光) and Tang Wan Shan (滕雲山) in 1916. Records show that Li, Wong and Lam had left Hong Kong by the year 1941. Tang Wan Shan was appointed as the authorised representative of the three owners, dealing with matters related to the properties. He was a Taoist who was active in preaching during the period from 1949 to 1956 and he was also a Chinese medical practitioner who gave medicine and medical advice to the poor at no charge. He was regularly invited to present lectures on Taoist texts at different Taoist organisations such as Ching Chung Koon (青松觀) and Wun Chuen Sin Kwoon (雲泉仙館). He died on 2 December 1956 at the age of 89. On the day of his funeral, more than one thousand people came to pay their final respects, and a public memorial ceremony was later held in Sai Kung on 28 December 1956. The contact address of Tsai Yuen Tong (濟原堂), the Taoist sect to which he belonged, was given as No. 9 Kat On Street at the time of Tang's death. It is not known whether Tang preached or practised medicine at his flat at No. 9 Kat On Street. Tsai Yuen Tong relocated to Kowloon City in 1983, where it still is.

The ownership of the building changed hands later, and now has different owners.

The building is currently four storeys high (including G/F, 1/F, 2/F and 3/F), but according to the title deed of the House Registration Office of the Japanese Military Government in 1943, the building used to be three storeys. ***Architectural Merit***

Both red and grey bricks can be seen forming parts of the exterior wall, which is now painted white. Decorative semi-circular mouldings on the façade can be found above the staircase, as well as above the entrance and window of the G/F flat. The arched doorway leads to a staircase that gives access to the upper floors, and a gate has been added in the middle of the staircase to separate the first floor from the second and third floors. The concrete staircase is tiled, with a metal handrail, indicating it is likely that the current staircase is not original. It was observed in 1943 and recorded in the title deed of the Japanese Military Government that the building material was “reinforced concrete” reflecting that the main parts of the building might be constructed with reinforced concrete at that time. As reinforced concrete was not common in the 1910s when the building was completed, but was widely used in the 1930s and 1940s for the construction of shophouses, reinforced concrete might have been used for the alterations or renovations carried out in the building before 1943.

Cantilevered balconies were constructed on 1/F and 2/F, but they are now enclosed. In particular, the balcony on 1/F has been extended out from the original balcony slab, and all of the extended balconies are covered by corrugated metal sheets. At the back of the building, there is a narrow scavenging lane and an enclosed backyard, both of which are typical features of tenement houses built after the enactment of the Public Health and Buildings Ordinance in 1903.

As it is the only surviving pre-war tenement house along Kat On Street, the building is an important landmark for the local community. Besides, along with the adjacent Grade 1 Blue House and the Grade 3 tenement houses on Hing Wan Street, which were also built during a similar period, No. 9 Kat On Street forms part of the historic urban fabric of Wan Chai, bearing witness to the development of Wan Chai over the past century. ***Social Value & Local Interest***

Taken together, No. 9 Kat On Street with Nos. 72, 72A, 74 and 74A Stone Nullah Lane (Grade 1), Nos. 60A, 62, 64 & 66 Johnston Road (Grade 2), No. 18 Ship Street (Grade 2), Nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 11 Mallory Street (Grade 2), Nos. 6, 8, 10 and 12 Burrows Street (Grade 2), Nos. 2, 4, 6 and 8 Hing Wan Street (Grade 3), Nos. 186, 188 and 190 Queen's Road East (Grade 3), and Nos. 109 and 111 Lockhart Road (Grade 3) form a group of pre-war tenement houses in the area. It is within walking distance of other historic buildings including Yuk Hui Temple, Old Wan Chai Post ***Group Value***

Office (both Declared Monuments) and Former Wan Chai Market (Grade 3).

The building has been standing in the Wanchai district for more than a century. ***Rarity,***
It has undergone various alterations such as enclosing the balconies, adding a floor on ***Built Heritage***
the roof, and mixing use of different bricks and building materials during the past ***Value &***
maintenance or alterations. Although its architectural authenticity has been affected ***Authenticity***
to a certain extent, the building is considered a valuable piece of built heritage as
pre-war tenement houses have become rare in the district.

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Historic Building Appraisal
Wellington Street Public Toilet
Junction of Wellington Street and Queen's Road Central
Central, H.K.

The Wellington Street Public Toilet (威靈頓街公廁) was built at the junction of Wellington Street and Queen's Road Central (皇后大道中) in 1912–1913. It was built in response to the bubonic plague outbreak in May 1894 in Taipingshan District, demonstrating the government's efforts to improve the sanitary condition of City of Victoria and was part of an ongoing process since the first outbreak of the plague.¹ *Historical Interest*

The government began to provide public privies in 1867, following a cholera outbreak from 1865 to 1866. However, it was difficult for the government to find land to accommodate latrines in convenient locations as property owners objected to the construction of latrines near their properties because they considered that latrines would affect the values of their properties. Government latrines or privies were outnumbered by private ones established by businessmen who regarded them as collection points for night soil to be sold as fertilizer in the Mainland.² In April 1874, Dr. Ph. B. C. Ayres, Colonial Surgeon, completed a report on the sanitary condition of City of Victoria. He found that pigs were commonly kept in houses all over the town, such as in kitchens, in gullies at the back of houses and even under beds, and that Chinese dwellings had neither toilets nor bathrooms.³ He urged that such insanitary condition should not be tolerated any longer.⁴ Notwithstanding, both the local Chinese people and government officials were apathetic about housing and sanitary reforms because of concern about the cost and the potential need for higher taxes and rent.

Dr. Ayres submitted the “Medical Report on the Epidemic of Bubonic Plaque in 1894” to Stewart Lockhart, Acting Colonial Secretary, in March 1895. He pointed out that one of the most important factors in the spread of the disease

¹ The bubonic plague broke out in Taipingshan District again in 1896. From 1894 to 1923, Hong Kong was frequently hit by plague epidemics, which occurred almost every year before 1904 and every few years between then and 1923.

² For instance, there was only one public privy operated by the government, on Pound Lane, but about 10 privately run public privies can be identified from the rates records of Taipingshan District from 1868 to 1894.

³ Dr. Ayres conducted inspections of brothels in the Chinese community between 1873 and 1874. It was observed that generally there were one or more hutches used in the kitchens as privies. The hutches were composed of a few boards knocked together to form a screen, and from age and neglect, they were saturated with filth. There were no proper containers for night soil in the hutches (sometimes a broken pot, sometimes a leaky old tub, and sometimes nothing at all). Or the men went to public privies, while the women and children used covered pots, which were kept under their beds. Ayres stated that the very poor condition of the privies in brothels was equally applicable to private houses.

⁴ “Report of the Colonial Surgeon on His Inspection of the Town of Victoria, and on the Pig Licensing System. Hongkong, April 1874”, *Hong Kong Administrative Reports, 1879*.

was the poor condition of latrines. Both public and private latrines were used by the Chinese population because few Chinese dwellings had toilets. But there was practically no disinfection of the faeces in the latrines, and an abundance of the plague bacillus was found in the faeces. One remedial measure Aryes suggested was the provision of public latrines by the government in a clean condition on suitable sites throughout City of Victoria.⁵

Government Latrine Ordinance was passed in 1897 to regulate the erection of public latrines by the government on sites that did not receive objections or were approved by Legislative Council after objections were considered.⁶ The provisions of Government Latrine Ordinance were later incorporated into Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903.⁷ The policy for the provision of public latrines was reiterated by the government in 1912.⁸ But in reality, it was easy to recommend the erection of latrines but not easy to find sites for them.⁹

The Wellington Street Public Toilet (formerly referred to as the Underground Trough Closet, near the Fire Brigade Station in government records) was situated on a triangular piece of land at the intersection of the west end of Wellington Street and Queen's Road Central and was nicknamed the "triangular public toilet" (三角公廁).¹⁰ According to a 1911 plan showing the districts of City of Victoria at that time, this piece of land was situated at the southeast corner of Chung Wan District (meaning "Central District" in English), which adjoined the northeast corner of Taipingshan District at the junction of Gough Street and Aberdeen Street.¹¹ The rates records show that most of the private properties on Wellington Street were Chinese shops and dwellings.¹²

The original intention was to construct an ordinary latrine above ground on Wellington Street, but because of objections from the owners and occupiers of

⁵ "Medical Report on the Epidemic of Bubonic Plaque in 1894", *Hong Kong Sessional Papers*, 1895, pp. 211 - 212.

⁶ In the case of a government latrine that would be provided on Crown land, the proposal to erect a latrine would be published in the Gazette, so that the public could submit objections to the government. Also, the Sanitary Board had the control and management of all the latrines erected under this ordinance.

⁷ "The Public Health and Buildings Ordinance, 1903" (Ordinance No. 1 of 1903), *The Hongkong Government Gazette*, 27 February 1903.

⁸ Report of the meeting of the Legislative Council on 19 October 1911, *Hong Kong Hansard*, 1911, p. 196.

⁹ Report of the meeting of the Legislative Council on 27 February 1902, *Hong Kong Hansard*, 1902, p. 4.

¹⁰ 「地下公廁變形記」, PMQ 元創方 <<https://www.pmq.org.hk/leisureculture/the-underground-toilet-breaks-new-ground/?lang=ch>>, accessed on 24 August 2022.

¹¹ Public Records Office, "Plan in G.N. 231 of 1st August 1911" under Regulation of Chinese Ordinance (Ordinance No. 3 of 1888) (File Ref.: HKRS-1035-1-5).

¹² Public Records Office, Rates Records for 1895 – 1896, 1905 – 1906, 1908 – 1909, 1912 – 1913, 1915 – 1916 and 1920 – 1921.

the buildings in the immediate neighbourhood, an underground trough closet was proposed instead. This was a public latrine for men only, which would provide both latrine stalls and urinals. The only entrance would be by a staircase on the southwest corner of the then Fire Brigade Station.¹³ It was common to build latrines for men only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Hong Kong. One reason was that there were more males than females at the time. According to the 1911 population census, the Chinese population of males was double that of females on Hong Kong Island.¹⁴ Another reason was that only the houses of wealthy people were equipped with latrines. Working-class men used public latrines, while women and children used pots which were generally kept under their beds.¹⁵

The existing structure comprises toilet cubicles, urinals, an attendant's room, a room for flushing the water tank, a room for cleansing the water tank, and a meter room on a rectangular plan, as well as a staircase and a corridor in a rough "S" shape leading from Queen's Road Central. According to the government record and building plan, dated 1912, this public toilet was a concrete structure, with a cement concrete cove ceiling supported on concrete walls. Angle iron, angle plates and I-beams were used in the cove ceiling for reinforcement.¹⁶

*Architectural
Merit*

The existing entrance on Queen's Road Central was opened in 1965. In that year, the original entrance at the west end of Wellington Street was extended in a roughly "U" direction to the pavement along Queen's Road Central to improve traffic flow at the junction of Wellington Street and Queen's Road Central.¹⁷ In 2002, the typical roadside chain link fencing (a replacement in 1965) was replaced with the existing stainless steel patterned railing.¹⁸

¹³ Sources:

- (i) "Report of the Director of Public Works for the Year 1912", *Hong Kong Administrative Reports*, 1912, Appendix P, pp. 45 - 46;
- (ii) "Report of the Director of Public Works for the Year 1913", *Hong Kong Administrative Reports*, 1913, Appendix P, p. 53; and
- (iii) Public Records Office, architectural drawing of "Underground Trough Closet near Fire Brigade Station" dated 20 August 1912 (File Ref.: HKRS 913-1-722).

¹⁴ There were 200,160 males and 89,310 females in the Chinese land population on Hong Kong Island in 1911.

Source:

"Report on the Census of the Colony for 1911", *Sessional Papers*, 1911 (Table I on p. 103(10)).

¹⁵ Sources:

- (i) Annual Report for the Year 1874 from the Colonial Surgeon on 5 April 1875, "Sanitary Reports (Hongkong)" in *Hong Kong Administrative Reports*, 1879;
- (ii) Mr. Chadwick's Reports on the Sanitary Condition of Hong Kong, p. 18.

¹⁶ Sources:

- (i) "Report of the Director of Public Works for the Year 1912", *Hong Kong Administrative Reports*, 1912, pp. 45 - 46; and
- (ii) Public Records Office, architectural drawing of "Underground Trough Closet near Fire Brigade Station" dated 20 August 1912 (File Ref.: HKRS 913-1-722).

¹⁷ Chin Yung-ming, *The Wellington Street Underground Public Toilet: the Functional Relics from Trough Closet to Modern Toilet*. The University of Hong Kong, 2005 (MSc e-thesis), p. 65.

¹⁸ Chin Yung-ming, *op.cit.*, p. 35.

Internally, the toilet cubicles, urinals and automatic infra-red sensor water taps on vanity benches, as well as the wall tiles and floor tiles, were provided during the major renovation in 2002. There are some recesses in the ceiling, which were previous openings for the installation of sky-lights with glazed panels for natural light. The glazed panels were removed and the openings concealed with cement in 1975, as the former could withstand vehicular traffic only with the structural support with props and posed a potential danger to traffic.¹⁹

The toilet is situated in one of the earliest residential areas of the Chinese population on Hong Kong Island. It, therefore, contributes to the long and rich social history of the local community, from the years of the bubonic plague to the present day. Besides, as a century-old underground toilet that is still operating and situated at a convenient location, it has attracted the attention of the media, social media, historians, architects and heritage lovers.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The Wellington Street Public Toilet is within walking distance of other historic buildings, including 120 Wellington Street, 172, 174 and 176 Queen's Road Central (123, 125 and 127 Wellington Street) (all Grade 1), and Central Market (中環街市, Grade 3). They testify to the early development of the Chinese community in Central and Sheung Wan, and continue to serve the daily needs of the local community.

Group Value

This century-old Wellington Street Public Toilet is the oldest underground public toilet still operating in Hong Kong.²⁰ It bears witness to the government's continuing efforts to improve the sanitation of the city after the bubonic plague in 1894, and has been providing service to local residents for a century. The toilet underwent a major renovation in 2002 to upgrade its facilities. Although all of the original finishing, sanitary fittings and internal layout were modernised, the basic form of the toilet has remained intact.

***Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

¹⁹ Chin Yung-ming, *op.cit.*, pp. 55, 56, 78 - 81.

²⁰ The MacDonnell Road Public Toilet, situated at the top of Calder Path (歌老打路) and on the south side of MacDonnell Road (麥當勞道), is another operating pre-war underground public toilet. It has remained a public urinal since it was built in 1918.

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Historic Building Appraisal

Lee Ancestral Hall

No. 13 Lin Au, Tai Po, N.T.

Lin Au (蓮凹), also known as Lin O (蓮澳), is a Hakka (客家) village and one of the 23 villages in Lam Tsuen Valley (林村鄉), Tai Po. During the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911), Lam Tsuen was a member of Tsat Yeuk (七約, literally, “Alliance of Seven Groups of Villages”),¹ an inter-village alliance responsible for setting up the Tai Wo Market (太和市) in 1892 to break the monopoly of the old Tai Po Market (大埔墟) formed by the Tang clan. Of the 23 villages in Lam Tsuen Valley, only five are Punti (本地) while the others are Hakka. The history of Lam Tsuen Valley can be traced back to the Song dynasty (960 – 1127). Its early settlers were the Chungs (鍾氏), who still form a large proportion of the population in Lam Tsuen Valley.

**Historical
Interest**

The 23 villages of Lam Tsuen Valley were centrally managed by Luk Woh Tong (六和堂), an organisation based on the *baojia* system (保甲制) of the early Qing dynasty. The Chinese character “Luk” (“six”) refers to the six *jias* in which the 23 villages were organised. The grouping was done according to the geographical location of the villages, and also by the distribution of the population. The village of Lin Au belongs to the first *jia*. Luk Woh Tong served as the central administration for the 23 villages, assisting with the management of finances, land allocation, education, etc. In 1954, it was replaced by Lam Tsuen Valley Committee (林村鄉公所) which still functions today in a similar way.

Situated on the eastern side of Lam Kam Road (林錦公路) in Tai Po, Lin Au is a dual-clan village established by the Lees (李氏) and the Chengs (鄭氏). The Lees originated from Xingning (興寧) in Guangdong province (廣東省). The Chengs, who claim to be the descendants of Cheng Huan-gong (鄭桓公) in the Zhou dynasty (周朝, 1100 – 771 B.C.), originated from Wuhua (五華) in Guangdong. According to the oral history provided by both the Chengs and the Lees, the Chengs settled in Lin Au before the Lees. After they had settled there, they invited the Lees to join them, owing to the auspicious *fung shui* setting, with hills surrounding the back of the village and farmland in front. The latter used to be paddy fields where villagers grew rice for subsistence, and when there was a surplus, sold it at the market nearby. The village was formed by two rows of Hakka village houses facing the paddy fields, with three ancestral halls – one for the Lees and two

¹ Tsat Yeuk (七約), i.e. Alliance of Seven Groups of Villages, included Lam Tsuen Yeuk (林村約), Tai Hang Yeuk (泰亨約), Hop Wo Yeuk (翁和約), Zap Wo Yeuk (集和約), Cheung Shue Tan Yeuk (樟樹灘約), Ting Kok Yeuk (汀角約) and Fanling Yeuk (粉嶺約).

for the Chengs – located in the first row.

In the 1950s, the village was in its heyday with around 200 villagers and a shuttle bus travelling four times a day between the village and Tai Po Market. Starting from the 1960s, however, most of the male villagers went overseas to make a living, mainly to the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States and Belgium. Other male members who worked in the urban area gradually moved elsewhere, some to the centre of Tai Po. Nowadays, the village has around 90 residents, mostly Lees, the youngest of whom are members of the fifteenth generation of the Lee clan. In government records, Lin Au is divided into two smaller villages for administrative purposes, namely Lin Au Lei Uk (蓮澳李屋) and Lin Au Cheng Uk (蓮澳鄭屋).

According to oral history accounts given by the Lees,² the lineage of the Lee clan can be traced back to its first ancestor, Li Ho Kau (李可求, also known as 李珂球), whom they say moved directly from Xingning to Lin Au. As recorded in the clan genealogy, the son of the first ancestor was born in 1662, meaning that Li Ho Kau could have moved to Hong Kong with his son, at the earliest, after the Coastal Evacuation ended in 1683. If this is correct, the Lees have been settled in Lin Au for more than three centuries. Another record about the history of the clan suggests that the Lees might have arrived in Lin Au before 1755, and this is in line with their own oral history account. However, the same record says that the Lees originated from Tung Kwun (東莞), not Xingning as claimed.³

It is uncertain when the Lee Ancestral Hall was completed, but the earliest aerial photo available, dated 1945, shows the Lee Ancestral Hall (No. 13 Lin Au) flanked by two village houses (Nos. 12 and 14 Lin Au). The appearance of the buildings on the lot is the same as today. The aerial photo confirms that the ancestral hall was in existence before 1945. Another record suggests it is possible to ascribe an earlier date to the Lee Ancestral Hall. The Block Crown Lease dated 1907 shows that Lot 328 in DD 13 (which actually includes Nos. 12 to 14 Lin Au, i.e. the ancestral hall and the two houses on both sides) was a house lot co-owned by Li Ho Kau, Li Tso Shau (李灶壽) and Li Tso Shang (李灶生). It is, therefore, likely that the ancestral hall had already been completed by 1907.

The ancestral hall has a two-hall-one-courtyard layout in a traditional Hakka *Architectural* row-house setting. The rows of houses in the village face the farmland. The *Merit*

² Oral history interview with the Lees whose family members manage the Lee Ancestral Hall by the Antiquities and Monuments Office on 18 May, 29 June, 8, 13, 18 and 22 July 2022.

³ HKRS634-1-8. Clan Histories Tai Po Tsat Yeuk Area, 4 July 1955 to 9 May 1956.

entrance of the ancestral hall is framed by granite which, itself, is framed by red stone. “李氏宗祠” (Lee Ancestral Hall) is inscribed on the red stone above the entrance lintel and a couplet inscribed with the characters “猶龍啟瑞” and “鳴鳳朝陽” flanked both sides of the entrance.

The facade of the ancestral hall was built with grey bricks whilst the other walls were built with a mixture of grey and mud bricks. The rear wall of the main hall collapsed in the late 1980s and was completely rebuilt during the renovation of 1989.⁴ The brick walls of the ancestral hall have been plastered. Wall paintings with auspicious motifs are on the front elevation below the eaves as well as in the interior of the ancestral hall. They, however, have faded over time. The characters “庚午年”, painted on the facade refer to 1990, the year when the last renovation was completed.

The ancestral hall has tiled roof. The ridge of the front hall has curling ends with grass motif painted black and white in the middle, and two dragon-fish (鰲魚) mouldings beneath the curling ends. The ridge of the main hall is decorated with a pair of *kuilongs* (夔龍).

The ancestral altar which has a collective soul tablet representing the ancestors of the Lees in the village, and an earth god (土地龍神) shrine are at the main hall. To the left of the ancestral altar is a statuette of Kwun Yam (觀音). There are different stories to explain why Kwun Yam is worshipped in the ancestral hall. One view gives the reason that Hakka villagers adapted the customs of the locals nearby and worshipped some of the gods they worshipped. Others say that it was because their ancestors had a spiritual kinship with Kwun Yam (契觀音). To the right of the ancestral altar, there are a couple of soul tablets. According to the Lees, clan members who passed away before the age of 60, and deceased female members with their husbands still alive, are worshipped on the right of the ancestral altar.⁵

There are two beams underneath the roof purlins in the main hall carved with the auspicious phrases: “奕世其昌” (Prosperity from Generations to Generations) and “百子千孫” (Hundreds of Sons and Thousands of Grandsons) respectively, and these speak for the wishes of the villagers. The four granite slabs bordered the courtyard of the ancestral hall are original.

The Lee Ancestral Hall is one of the few surviving traditional Hakka buildings **Rarity,**

⁴ Oral history interview with the Lees whose family members manage the Lee Ancestral Hall by the Antiquities and Monuments Office on 18 May, 29 June, 8, 13, 18 and 22 July 2022.

⁵ Oral history interview with the Lees whose family members manage the Lee Ancestral Hall by the Antiquities and Monuments Office on 18 May, 29 June, 8, 13, 18 and 22 July 2022.

in the village as well as the only ancestral hall of the Lee clan in the village. It has witnessed the historical development of Lin Au, including the settlement of the Lees. It is true that the ancestral hall underwent a major renovation some 30 years ago, when the main hall was restored, the ancestral altar extended to the left wall, the collapsed rear wall rebuilt, the brick walls plastered, the termite-infested purlins and damaged roof tiles replaced and reinforced concrete supporting beams added all around the eaves to support the roof of the courtyard. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the renovation was carried out based on the original layout and appearance of the ancestral hall. As such, the layout of the ancestral hall remains unchanged and those original features which were still in sound condition at the time were retained and reused. For instance, the granite door frames and granite slabs bordered the courtyard, the ancestral altar in the main hall, the roof decorations etc. have been retained and old roof tiles reused although the walls were plastered. According to the oral accounts of the villagers, some of the furniture in the ancestral hall is historic, such as the pendant lamp hanging in the main hall (originally a paraffin lamp but now fitted with electric bulb), the wooden offering table, and the drums for festive rituals are some of the examples.

***Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

The ancestral hall is still used by the Lees today. Clansmen regularly worship their ancestors on the first and fifteenth days of lunar months, as well as at traditional festivals. According to oral accounts, the clan worships in sequence the God of Heaven, followed by Kwun Yum, the Earth God, and finally their ancestors. During the Chinese New Year, when the Lees who have moved out return to the village, they worship their ancestors at the ancestral hall before meeting relatives in the village. During their stay, they participate with village elders in the rituals held at the ancestral hall to pay tribute to their ancestors. The ancestral hall, therefore, is still a living heritage connecting clansmen and their ancestors.

***Social Value
& Local
Interest***

The Lees still practise the Hakka traditions of “Zou Se” (做社, literally “worship of the Earth God”) and the worship of Tai Wong (大王, usually a big tree or a stone). The related rituals are held at the Tai Wong near the village entrance instead of at the ancestral hall. Villagers will share their offerings – usually pork – and cook the pork on the stoves and then have communal meal in the open area near the Tai Wong.

The ancestral hall has group value with Cheng Ancestral Hall (Grade 3), which is only two houses away and also in the front row. The ancestral halls together testify to the development of the two clans which established Lin Au.

Group Value

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Historic Building Appraisal

Tai Long

Sai Kung, New Territories

Tai Long (大浪) is one of the five villages facing Tai Long Wan (大浪灣) in Sai Kung East and locally known as Tai Wai (大圍). The other four are Ham Tin (鹹田), Lam Uk Wai (林屋圍), Cheung Uk Wai (張屋圍) and Tai Wan (大灣). This group of villages was collectively referred to as Tai Long Tsuen (大浪村) by the local residents. “Tai Long Tsuen” cannot be identified in the 1688 edition of the *Gazetteer of Xin’an County* (《新安縣志》); but it was recorded in the 1819 edition of this gazetteer that it came under the management of *Guanfu* magistrate (官富司管屬村庄). The villagers of Tai Wai (today’s Tai Long in land records) are mainly surnamed Cham (湛), Lai (黎), Chan (陳), Cheung (張), Tai (戴) and Ngai (魏) whereas the other four villages are single-surnamed.¹ According to the village elders of the Chams, the clan migrated from Xintang in Guangdong province (廣東省新塘市) to Tai Long during the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911) and they believe that their village, Tai Wai (today’s Tai Long),² was established in the early eighteenth century.³

**Historical
Interest**

The story goes that a Tin Hau Temple once existed in the south of Tai Long.⁴ It was believed that the temple was abandoned after most of the villagers converted to Catholicism. The history of the missionary activities of the Catholic Church in Sai Kung can be traced back to the 1860s.⁵ The villagers were more ready to accept a new religion, hoping that the church would be a source of security against the challenges they were facing. The missionaries also acted as a communication bridge between the villagers and the government. In 1867, a chapel named Holy Family Chapel (聖家小堂) was first built in Tai Long. By 1879, almost all the

¹ According to the older generations, Ham Tin (鹹田) was also known as Wan Ka Tsuen (溫家村) whereas Tai Wan (大灣) was also known as Lee Uk (李屋). Tai Wan was established by the Lees who once lived in Lam Uk Wai in the 1930s.

² In 2022, the older generations of Tai Long and Ham Tin, including those in their sixties and seventies, still referred to Tai Long (大浪) or Tai Long Tsuen (大浪村, literally Tai Long Village) as a local area comprising the five villages, and called the village now known as “Tai Long” as “Tai Wai” instead.

³ According to a village elder of the Chams in 1999, the clan moved from Guangdong province to Tai Long Tsuen during the Qing dynasty, and it is believed that their village, i.e. Tai Wai (or today’s Tai Long), had a history of about 250 years in that year. Later, in 2022, another village elder of the Chams pointed out that Tai Wai has a history of about 300 years.

⁴ It was said that the temple was situated at a place known as Miu Kok Tau (廟角頭, literally “head of temple’s corner”) or Miu Ah Shan (廟亞山, literally “temple hill”).

⁵ In early 1866, a missionary station was established in Sai Kung Town (西貢墟傳教站), where a group of 19 villagers were baptized. By 1869, there were about 350 Catholics spreading across 12 villages in Sai Kung, including Tai Long, Yim Tin Tsai (鹽田仔), Chek Keng (赤徑), Wong Mo Ying (黃毛鷹) and Pak Sha O (白沙澳). 麥漢楷、梁錦松, 《西貢堂區百週年紀念特刊》(香港:西貢聖心堂百週年紀念籌備委員會, 1981年), 頁 8 – 11。

villagers in Tai Long were Catholics, with a congregation of 162, and by 1892, Tai Long had become one of the major Catholic communities in San On County before the New Territories came under British jurisdiction.⁶

In 1931, the Tai Long Parish (大浪堂區) comprising Tai Long, Chek Keng (赤徑), Pak Sha O (白沙澳), Sham Chung (深涌), Tan Ka Wan (蛋家灣), etc. was established. Later, in 1932, the former Holy Family Chapel in Tai Long was replaced by the existing chapel building at No. 18E, which was renamed as Immaculate Conception Chapel (聖母無原罪小堂, Serial No. 688) in 1954. It could accommodate up to 400 people and was the largest chapel in Sai Kung at that time. The Catholics of Ham Tin in the neighbourhood were also members of the chapel.⁷ The attendance rate of Catholics in the chapel was 300 in 1908, and 250 in 1920 and 1930, being the highest among the chapels in Sai Kung.⁸ Due to the remote locations and inconvenience in the transportation of the villages in the mountainous areas of Sai Kung, the priest came to Tai Long only once in two or three months. Despite that, the villagers would chant the scriptures (唸經) in the chapel every week. Besides, two sisters lived in the village to teach them to recite the scriptures.⁹ A village elder, who was in his seventies in 2022, recalled that some sisters lived in No. 30A (Serial No. N410) and taught the villagers (including himself) to chant the scriptures and sing hymns in the house, which is the only residence having an enclosing wall in the village.¹⁰

The priest hired a teacher to teach Chinese Language, Mathematics and Chinese History in the chapel before the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 1945). During the Occupation, the priests took great risks in maintaining their visits to villages. Unfortunately, Rev. Francis Wong (黃子謙神父), Rev. Renuis Kwok (郭景芸神父) and Rev. Emilio Teruzzi (丁味略神父), who served the Catholic communities in Sai Kung, lost their lives. On the other hand, while the Japanese troops were stationed at Sai Kung Market (西貢墟), the Hong Kong-Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column (東江縱隊港九獨立大隊), established Resident Localities of the Brigade (大隊常駐地) in the mountainous

⁶ Another three major Catholic communities were Yim Tin Tsai (鹽田仔), Chek Keng (赤徑) and Sham Chung (深涌).

⁷ Oral history interview with a village elder of Ham Tin by Antiquities and Monuments Office on 27 April 2022.

⁸ St. Joseph's Chapel (聖若瑟堂) at Yim Tin Tsai (鹽田仔) had the second highest attendance rate, which was 180 in 1908, 1920 and 1930. "Ecclesiastical Returns of Hong Kong", *Hongkong Blue Book*, 1908, 1920 and 1930, from Hong Kong Government Reports Online.

⁹ The interviewee was a villager of Tai Long, who was an altar server (輔祭) in Mass in the 1930s. The Catholics of Ham Tin also served as altar server there.

¹⁰ Oral history interview with a village elder of Ham Tin by Antiquities and Monuments Office on 27 April 2022.

areas in Sai Kung, among which included Wong Mo Ying (黃毛應), Chek Keng and Tai Long.¹¹

The number of church members in Tai Long increased to about 500 in the 1950s.¹² A primary school building having a capacity of around 100 students was also constructed by the church at No. 18D in 1958. The school was named Yuk Ying School (育英學校) (Serial No. N401). Two full-time teachers were hired to teach subjects like Chinese Language, Mathematics and Chinese History, and a part-time teacher to teach English Language on Wednesdays. The full-time teachers lived in the school building whereas the part-time teacher in Chek Keng. Meals were prepared in the kitchen block at the back of the school (Serial No. N401).¹³ A latrine block is situated at the side of No. 18E (Serial No. N401). The chapel (built in 1932), school (built in 1958) and the latrine (probably built in the 1950s) form a compound of the Catholic Church. This compound and the sisters' residence at No. 30A are historical reminders that Tai Long was a Catholic village.

In the past, the people in Tai Long mainly relied on fishing and farming (e.g. growing rice and sugar cane) to earn a living. They also raised livestock like pigs, cattle and chickens. Lives were simple and tough. They walked about five hours to Ngai Chi Wan (牛池灣) and Kowloon Walled City (九龍寨城) in order to sell their crops and fish. Some of them transported timber to Shau Kei Wan (筲箕灣) and Aberdeen (香港仔) by boat, and sold them in exchange for daily necessities. There had been ferry service since the 1950s. However, it was disrupted after the pier was destroyed by Typhoon Wanda in 1962. Today, the villagers still have to walk one and a half hours to Pak Tam Au (北潭凹), which is connected to the nearest motor road, Pak Tam Road (北潭路).¹⁴

In the 1960s, many younger male residents migrated to the UK to earn a living. From the 1970s to the 1980s onwards, their wives and children also

¹¹ Many residents in the Tai Long area were guerrillas or offered assistance to the Guerrilla. For instance, some villagers carried explosives and sent the information on the Japanese troops to the guerillas in Chek Keng; some others carried food and letters to the guerillas who were hiding themselves in mountains. The guerillas had also stayed in the chapel in Tai Long for a few days before moving to a nearby stone cave. According to historical records, Tai Loi (戴來) of "Tai Long" and Wan Yung-kiu (溫容嬌) of "Tai Long Wan" were two male residents and guerillas who had sacrificed their lives. As mentioned, the Tais and the Wans were the villagers of Tai Long and Ham Tin respectively.

¹² Yuen Chi-wai, *Follow in the Missionary Footsteps: The Evolution of the Catholic Mission in Sai Kung, 1841 – 2000*, p. 108.

¹³ Oral history interviews with the Village Representative of Tai Long on 23 March 2022 and a village elder of Ham Tin on 27 April 2022 by the Antiquities and Monuments Office.

¹⁴ It took an hour to reach Chek Keng first and then another thirty minutes from there to Pak Tam Au. Oral history interview with a village elder of Ham Tin by Antiquities and Monuments Office on 27 April 2022.

moved to the UK for family reunion. It was not until sometime around 1970 that electricity was available in Tai Long. Many houses have been left unattended over the years and some of them, including the building remains near the hillslope (Serial No. N399), structures near No. 30A (Serial No. N403), Nos. 22 to 26 and structures nearby (Serial No. N404) and No. 26A (Serial No. N405), had collapsed while some others, including No. 28 (Serial No. N407) as well as No. 30B and the structure nearby (probably built after the 1960s, Serial No. N411), had undergone unsympathetic intervention, whereas the structure near No. 18A (Serial No. N402) had been reconstructed. There are also a small group of humble buildings and structures near No. 39 at the entrance to the village. They are village houses and a generator house probably built between the 1950s and 1960s (Serial No. N415).

The village houses in Tai Long are plain and functional. All the buildings in the village face east and shares similar architectural features. They are traditional vernacular houses built of mud bricks, grey bricks and rubbles and covered with plaster. The tiles of the pitched roofs are supported on timber purlins and rafters. Most of the village houses still have timber doors installed in the main entrance. With reference to site visits and oral history interviews with village elders, three major types of building form can be identified. They are (i) houses with a cooking stove and a bathing alcove near the main entrance, (ii) houses with an annex serving as a kitchen, and (iii) single building each comprising two to three house units. The row of houses at Nos. 34 to 38 (Serial No. N414), No. 30 (Serial No. N409) and No. 31 (N412) are good examples of type (i). No. 34, for instance, has the interior fully utilized by installing a wooden structure overhanging as an attic for storage use. Besides, a wooden staircase was built straight running to the attic. Regarding type (ii), No. 27 (Serial No. N406) and No. 29 (Serial No. N408) are typical examples of the kind whereas Nos. 13 to 15 (Serial No. N398), Nos. 18A to C (Serial No. N400) as well as Nos. 32 and 33 (Serial No. N413) are typical examples of type (iii). These houses were probably built before the 1920s while No. 31 (Serial No. N412) having a parapet with a star motif at the rooftop was believed to be built around the 1920s.

*Architectural
Merit*

The buildings at Nos. 18D and 18E (Serial Nos. 688 and N401) form a compound of the Catholic Church which was guarded by an entrance gate. The school premise is a one-storey concrete building with a flat roof. The school's name (Yuk Ying School) and the year of construction (1958) can be identified on the front elevation. The kitchen block behind it was built of granite blocks, rendered with cement and covered by a pitched roof while the latrine is a humble concrete structure with a pitched roof. The compound can be accessed through a

concrete entrance gate bearing a cross and a panel engraved with “Gate of Heaven” (上天之門) in Chinese characters. It was believed that these ancillary structures were probably built around the 1950s. Besides, the sisters’ residence at No. 30A (Serial No. N410) is a two-storey structure made up of plastered walls and a pitched tiled roof, and is the only residence having an enclosing wall in the village.¹⁵

Apart from their built heritage value, Tai Long and the neighbouring Ham Tin are embraced by the serene view of Tai Long Wan and on MacLehose Trail Section 2. Both are well-known for historians, heritage lovers, hikers, beach lovers and photographers.

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

The buildings in Tai Long have group value with each other. Besides, the village also has group value with Ham Tin in the neighbourhood. The entire village serves as a reminder of the missionary activities of the Catholic Church in Sai Kung, the historical development of the village and village life in the old days as well as the guerrilla activities against Japanese Occupation in Sai Kung.

Group Value

The buildings in Tai Long have built heritage value and group value for preservation. Unlike other traditional Chinese villages where people are generally bonded by kinship system, the villagers in Tai Long had been bonded by a Western religion, Catholicism as well. While most of the villages in the New Territories celebrate the Spring and Autumn Rites and other traditional Chinese rituals and festivals, the biggest events in Tai Long were Catholic rituals and ceremonies. The entire village, including village houses, village setting and the environs of the village as a whole is a reminder of the missionary activities of the Catholic Church in Sai Kung as well as a good example to illustrate the historical development of the village and village life in the old days. No major alteration which may have compromised the authenticity of the appearance of the buildings having heritage value can be identified. Tai Long is one of the two surviving villages (the other one is Ham Tin) among the five villages facing Tai Long Wan in the east of Sai Kung. The overall historic ambience of the village is maintained.

***Rarity,
Built Heritage
Value &
Authenticity***

¹⁵ Oral history interview with a village elder of Ham Tin by Antiquities and Monuments Office on 27 April 2022. According to aerial photos, the building had collapsed in the late 1950s, and was rebuilt into the current form in 1961.

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Ham Tin

Sai Kung, New Territories

Ham Tin (鹹田) is one of the five villages facing Tai Long Wan (大浪灣) in Sai Kung East. The other four are Tai Wai (大圍, today's Tai Long (大浪) in land records), Lam Uk Wai (林屋圍), Cheung Uk Wai (張屋圍) and Tai Wan (大灣). This group of villages was collectively referred to as Tai Long Tsuen (大浪村) by the local residents. "Tai Long Tsuen" cannot be identified in the 1688 edition of the *Gazetteer of Xin'an County* (《新安縣志》); but it was recorded in the 1819 edition of this gazetteer that it came under the management of *Guanfu* magistrate (官富司管屬村庄).

**Historical
Interest**

Ham Tin is a single-surnamed village and locally known as Wan Ka Tsuen (溫家村, literally Village of the Wans).¹ According to the village elders of the Wans in Ham Tin, their ancestors moved from Taiyuan (太原) in Shanxi province (山西省) in northern China and settled in Tai Lam Wu (大藍湖) in Ho Chung (蠓涌) around the early eighteenth century. Later, while the eldest Wan brother stayed in Ho Chung, the second and the youngest spread out to Tai Po Tsai (大埔仔) and Ham Tin Wan (literally meaning Ham Tin bay) respectively. Wan Lin-ying (溫連英) was the founding ancestor (開基祖) of the clan in Ham Tin, and there was once a stone tablet that marked the restoration (重修) of his tomb in the second year of the Jiaqing (嘉慶) reign (1797) during the Qing dynasty (1644 – 1911). In 2022, the youngest members of the Wan clan in Ham Tin are the eighth generation.² Therefore, it is believed that Ham Tin was established around the mid-eighteenth century.

Similar to the villagers in Tai Long, the villagers in Ham Tin had once worshipped Tin Hau (天后). It was believed that a Tin Hau Temple once existed in the south of Tai Long;³ but it was abandoned after most of the villagers in Tai Long in the neighbourhood converted to Catholicism.⁴

¹ The villagers of Tai Long are mainly surnamed Cham (湛), Lai (黎), Chan (陳), Cheung (張), Tai (戴) and Ngai (魏) whereas the other four villages are single-surnamed. According to the older generations, Ham Tin is also known as Wan Ka Tsuen whereas Tai Wan (大灣) is also known as Lee Uk (李屋). Tai Wan was established by the Lees who once lived in Lam Uk Wai in the 1930s.

² Oral history interview with a Wan at Ham Tin by Antiquities and Monuments Office on 27 April 2022. Wan was born in Ham Tin and a Catholic. He, aged about 70 in 2022, is the seventh generation of the Wans in Ham Tin.

³ It was said that the temple was situated at a place known as Miu Kok Tau (廟角頭, literally "head of temple's corner") or Miu Ah Shan (廟亞山, literally "temple hill").

⁴ The history of the missionary activities of the Catholic Church in Sai Kung can be traced back to the 1860s. The villagers were more ready to accept a new religion, hoping that the church would be a source of security against the challenges they were facing. The missionaries also acted as a communication bridge between the villagers and the government. In early 1866, a missionary station was established in Sai Kung Town (西貢墟傳教站), where a group of 19 villagers was baptised. By 1869, there were about 350 Catholics spreading across 12 villages in Sai Kung, including Tai Long, Yim Tin

The influence of Catholicism in Ham Tin was not as strong as in Tai Long. Only some of the villagers in Ham Tin were Catholics. The converts attended Mass in the chapel named Holy Family Chapel (聖家小堂) which was built in Tai Long in 1867. By 1879, the chapel had a congregation of 162.⁵ In 1931, the Tai Long Parish (大浪堂區) was established. Later, in 1932, the former Holy Family Chapel in Tai Long was replaced by the existing chapel building at No. 18E, which was renamed as Immaculate Conception Chapel (聖母無原罪小堂, Serial No. 688) in 1954. It could accommodate up to 400 people and was the largest chapel in Sai Kung at that time. The Catholics of Ham Tin in the neighbourhood were also members of the chapel.⁶

Apart from Mass, the priest hired a teacher to teach Chinese Language, Mathematics and Chinese History in the chapel before the Japanese Occupation (1941 – 1945). During the Occupation, while the Japanese troops were stationed at Sai Kung Market (西貢墟), the Hong Kong-Kowloon Independent Brigade of the East River Column (東江縱隊港九獨立大隊) established Resident Localities of the Brigade (大隊常駐地) in the mountainous areas in Sai Kung, among which included Wong Mo Ying (黃毛應), Chek Keng (赤徑) and Tai Long.⁷ According to historical records, Tai Loi (戴來) of “Tai Long” and Wan Yung-kiu (溫容嬌) of “Tai Long Wan”, two male residents, were guerrillas who had sacrificed their lives. As mentioned, the Tais and the Wans were the villagers of Tai Long and Ham Tin respectively.

The congregation of the Immaculate Conception Chapel increased to about 500 in the 1950s.⁸ A primary school building having a capacity of around 100 students was constructed by the church at No. 18D Tai Long in 1958. The school was named Yuk Ying School (育英學校) (Serial No. N401). Two full-time teachers were hired to teach subjects like Chinese Language, Mathematics and Chinese History, and a part-time teacher to teach English Language on Wednesdays. The full-time teachers lived in the school building whereas the

Tsai (鹽田仔), Chek Keng (赤徑), Wong Mo Ying (黃毛應) and Pak Sha O (白沙澳). 麥漢楷、梁錦松,《西貢堂區百週年紀念特刊》(香港:西貢聖心堂百週年紀念籌備委員會, 1981年), 頁 8 – 11。

⁵ By 1892, Tai Long had become one of the major Catholic communities in San On County before the New Territories came under British jurisdiction. Another three major Catholic communities were Yim Tin Tsai (鹽田仔), Chek Keng (赤徑) and Sham Chung (深涌).

⁶ Oral history interview with a Wan of Ham Tin by Antiquities and Monuments Office on 27 April 2022.

⁷ Many residents in the Tai Long area were guerrillas or offered assistance to the Guerrilla. For instance, some villagers carried explosives and sent the information on the Japanese troops to the guerillas in Chek Keng; some others carried food and letters to the guerillas who were hiding themselves in mountains. The guerillas had also stayed in the chapel in Tai Long for a few days before moving to a nearby stone cave.

⁸ Yuen Chi-wai, *Follow in the Missionary Footsteps: The Evolution of the Catholic Mission in Sai Kung, 1841 – 2000*, p. 108.

part-time teacher in Chek Keng. The children of Ham Tin also studied there.⁹

The villagers of Ham Tin mainly relied on farming to earn a living. They also raised livestock like pigs, cattle and chickens. There had been ferry service since the 1950s. However, it was disrupted after the pier was destroyed by Typhoon Wanda in 1962. Today, the villagers still have to walk two hours to Pak Tam Au (北潭凹), which is connected to the nearest motor road, Pak Tam Road (北潭路).¹⁰

In the 1960s, many villagers of Ham Tin emigrated to the UK to earn a living. By the 1970s, almost all the agricultural land had been abandoned. Many houses have been left unattended over the years and some of them, including a group of new and ancillary buildings and structures, which were probably built after the 1960s with rubbles, muds or cement in very humble forms (Serial No. N422).¹¹

Most of the village houses in Ham Tin face west. They are traditional vernacular houses built of mud bricks, grey bricks and rubbles covered with plaster. The tiles of the pitched roofs are supported on timber purlins and rafters. With reference to site visits and oral history interviews with village elders, three major types of building form can be identified. They are (i) houses with a cooking stove and a bathing alcove near the main entrance, (ii) houses with an annex serving as a kitchen, and (iii) single houses each comprising two to three house units. The houses at Nos. 5 and 6 (Serial No. N416) and No. 9 (Serial No. N418) are typical examples of type (i) whereas Nos. 7 and 8 (Serial No. N417), Nos. 10, 11 and 12 (Serial No. N419), Nos. 14 and 15 (Serial No. N420) are good examples of type (ii). Regarding type (iii), Nos. 16 and 17 (Serial No. N421) are a typical example of the kind. These houses were probably built before the 1920s. The only exception is the houses at Nos. 10, 11 and 12, which were built in the 1960s. According to the Wan family who built the houses and lived there, their houses were originally situated at Nos. 2, 3 and 4, but were destroyed by typhoons. The building materials were salvaged and reused as much as possible to re-construct Nos. 10, 11 and 12, which are the only row houses decorated with parapets at the roof level in the village.

*Architectural
Merit*

⁹ Oral history interviews with the Village Representative of Tai Long on 23 March 2022 and a village elder of Ham Tin on 27 April 2022 by Antiquities and Monuments Office.

¹⁰ It took one and a half hours to reach Chek Keng first, and then another thirty minutes from there to Pak Tam Au. Oral history interview with a village elder of Ham Tin by Antiquities and Monuments Office on 27 April 2022.

¹¹ This group of buildings and structures include the houses at No. 1 and No. 24, the pig pens, cowsheds, chicken pens near No. 24 and a generator house at No. 29.

Apart from their built heritage value, Ham Tin and the neighbouring Tai Long are embraced by the serene view of Tai Long Wan and on MacLehose Trail Section 2. Both are well-known for heritage lovers, hikers, beach lovers and photographers.

***Social Value,
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The buildings in Ham Tin have group value with each other. Besides, the village also has group value with Tai Long in the neighbourhood. The entire villages serve as reminders of the missionary activities of the Catholic Church in Sai Kung, the historical development of the villages and village life in the old days as well as the guerrilla activities against Japanese Occupation in Sai Kung.

Group Value

The buildings in Ham Tin have built heritage value and group value for preservation. The entire village as a whole is a reminder of the historical development of the village, the missionary activities of the Catholic Church in Sai Kung, the village life in the old days and the guerrilla activities against Japanese Occupation. No major alteration which may have compromised the authenticity of the buildings' appearance can be identified. Ham Tin is one of the two surviving villages (the other one is Tai Long) among the five villages facing Tai Long Wan in the east of Sai Kung. The overall historic ambience of the village is maintained.

***Rarity,
Built Heritage
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