

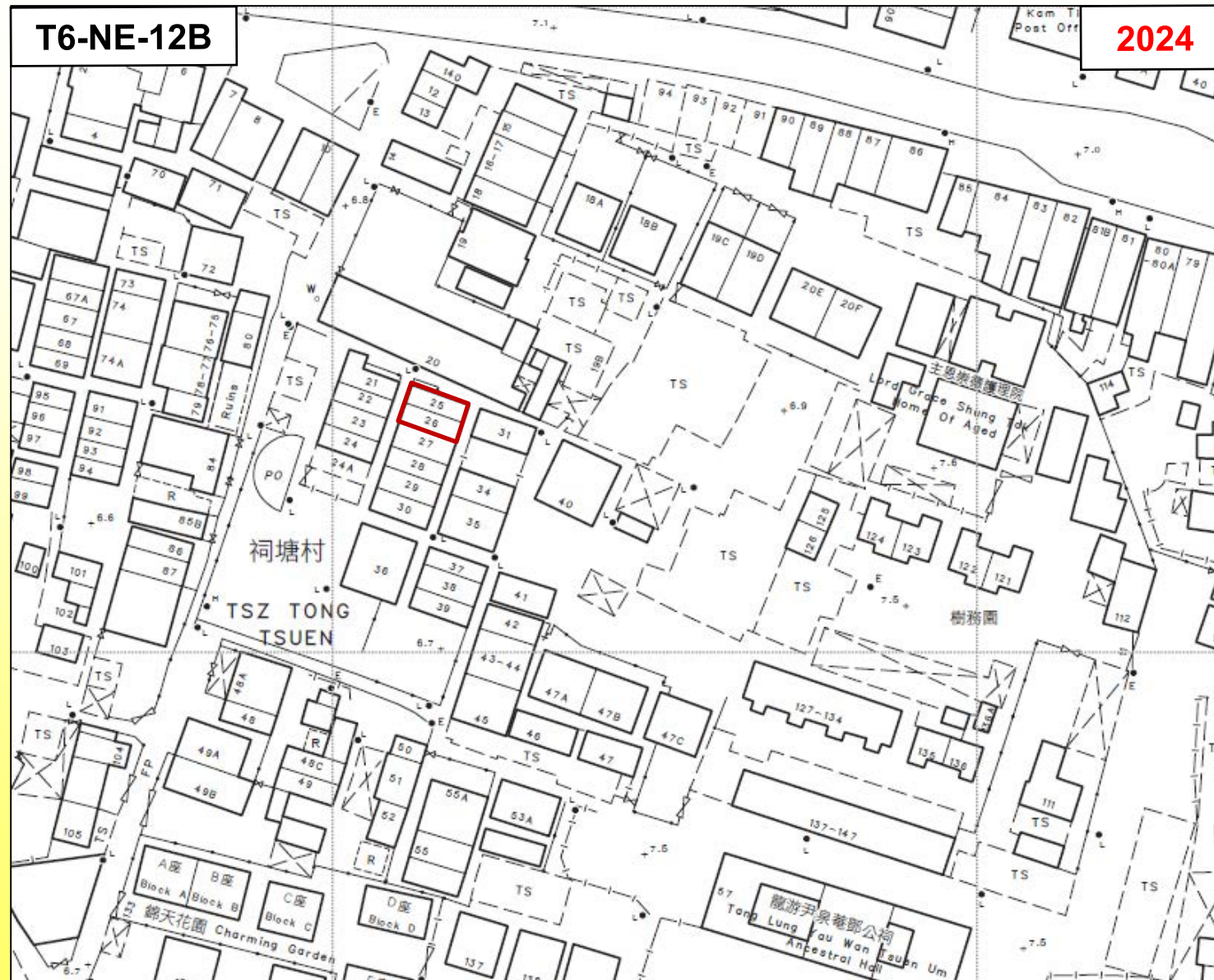
N433

新界元朗錦田祠塘村25-26號
Nos. 25-26, Tsz Tong Tsuen, Kam Tin, Yuen Long, N.T.

N433

新界元朗錦田祠堂村25-26號
Nos. 25-26, Tsz Tong Tsuen, Kam Tin, Yuen Long, N.T.

擬議二級歷史建築
Proposed Grade 2



建於二十世紀初
Built in the early
20th century

擬議評級範圍
Proposed grading
boundary

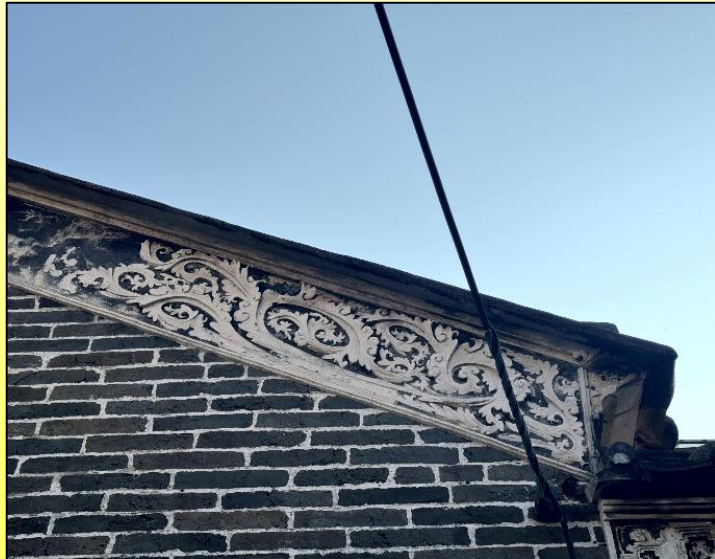
只用於識別位置，並非確實範圍 For identification of location only, not exact boundary



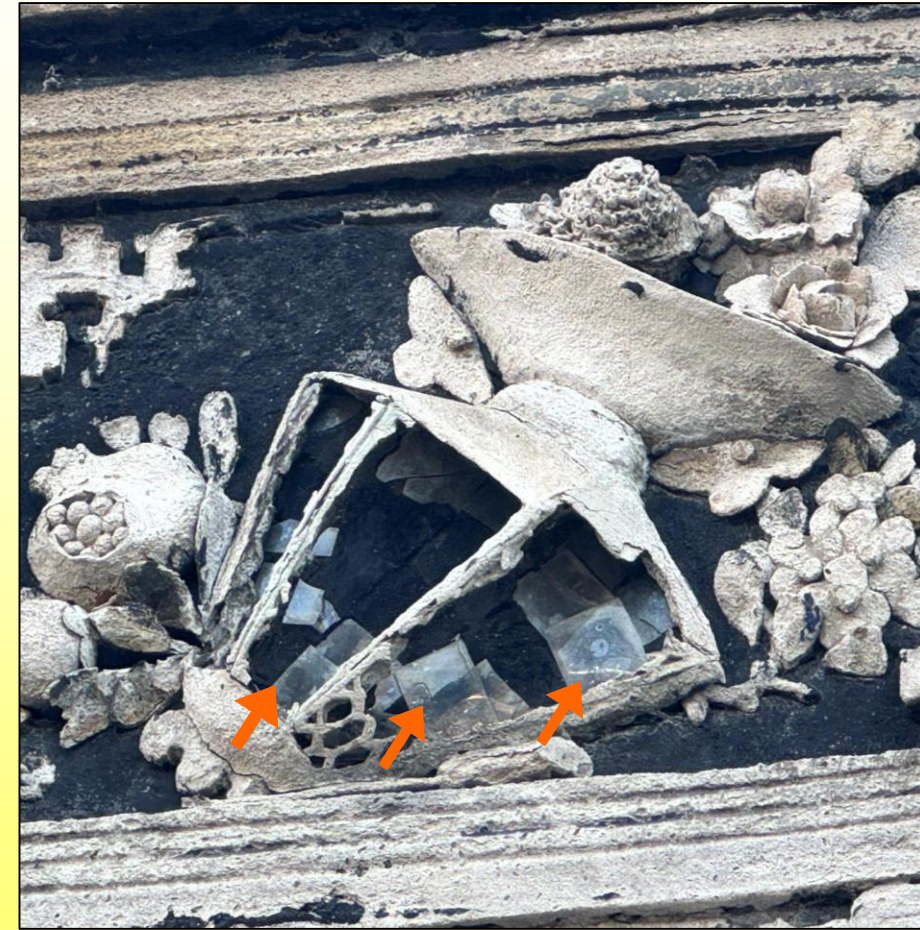
村屋的外部
Exterior of the Houses



村屋的屋頂
Roof of the Houses



飾有吉祥圖案的模塑
Mouldings in auspicious motifs



使用反光物料作裝飾
Use of reflective elements as decorations

Historic Building Appraisal

Nos. 25-26 Tsz Tong Tsuen, Kam Tin

Yuen Long, New Territories

Built in the early 20th century, the houses at Nos. 25-26 Tsz Tong Tsuen (祠堂村) (“the Houses”) in Kam Tin are a pair of traditional vernacular houses originally owned by Tang Pak Kau (鄧伯裘),¹ a renowned village elder and philanthropist in the New Territories. The Houses are some of the earliest structures built in Tsz Tong Tsuen and serve as a tangible witness to the area’s early development.

**Historical
Interest**

Tsz Tong Tsuen,² located in the southern part of Kam Tin, is literally translated as “the village of the ancestral hall”. It is commonly believed that its name was derived from the Tang Lung Yau Wan Tsuen Um Ancestral Hall (龍游尹泉菴鄧公祠),³ which was built in the village in 1768 to commemorate Tang Man-wai (鄧文蔚).⁴ In its early days, Tsz Tong Tsuen was sparsely settled. It was only in the early 20th century when the population of the neighbouring villages outgrew their walls that more people started relocating to the area. Among these new arrivals was Tang Pak Kau, who moved from Tai Hong Wai (泰康圍).⁵

¹ Tang Pak Kau (1876-1950) was a successful businessman who made significant contributions in the fields of education and medical services for the betterment of the communities in Yuen Long. Mung Yang School (蒙養學校) and the Cottage Hospital for women and children (錦田婦孺醫院) are examples of his many charitable endeavours. Of all his remarkable contributions, Tang is most widely recognised for his successful efforts in petitioning the government to return the iron gates of the walled village of Kat Hing Wai (吉慶圍) after they were seized by the British in 1899 and later sent to Ireland.

² Tsz Tong Tsuen can be written in two ways in Chinese, 祠堂村 and 祠堂村, and both versions are currently used by government departments.

³ Oral history interview with the Tangs of Kam Tin by the Antiquities and Monuments Office (“AMO”) on 10 January 2025.

⁴ Tang Man Wai was an influential figure in the Tang clan of Kam Tin. It was under his leadership that Yuen Long Kau Hui (元朗舊墟), which later developed into an important trade centre in the New Territories in the 18th and 19th centuries, was established in 1669. Tang was also known for his academic achievement in the imperial civil service examination, as in 1685 during the Qing dynasty he became Hong Kong’s first *jinshi* (進士), a scholar awarded the highest degree. A wooden plaque commemorating Tang’s success still hangs in the gatehouse at the entrance to Wing Lung Wai (永隆圍). See 〈龍游尹泉菴鄧公祠（三級歷史建築）〉，古物古蹟辦事處網頁，2024 年，
<https://www.amo.gov.hk/tc/heritage-trails/greater-bay-area-education-trail/theme-a/tang-lung-yau-wan-tsuen-um-ancestral-hall/index.html>，accessed on 9 January 2025.

⁵ Oral history interview with the Tangs of Kam Tin by AMO on 10 January 2025.

In addition to his own residence,⁶ Tang Pak Kau owned several other plots of land in Tsz Tong Tsuen, including D.D. 109 Lot 420 Section B (S.B), where the Houses were eventually built.⁷ The Block Government Lease of 1905 initially described this piece of land as a “threshing floor”,⁸ indicating that there were no structures on it at that time. The village houses at Nos. 25-26 Tsz Tong Tsuen can be identified earliest in an aerial photo taken in 1924,⁹ implying that they were built sometime between 1905 and 1924. The same aerial photo shows that most of the land in Tsz Tong Tsuen was used for agricultural purposes in the 1920s.¹⁰ With only a few structures visible, it suggests that the Houses were among the earliest structures to be built in the village.

In 1946, Tang Pak Kau subdivided the land on which the Houses stood into two parcels – D.D. 109 Lot 420 S.B sub-section 1 and D.D. Lot 420 S.B, and allocated one to his grandsons and the other to one of his sons.¹¹ After the transfer of ownership, the Houses were briefly occupied by family members and relatives in the 1950s before they were subsequently rented out.¹²

The Houses are two connected traditional vernacular houses, each designed in a one-hall, one-courtyard plan. The walls are built with fair-faced grey bricks on granite wall bases. The halls of the two houses are topped with one traditional flush gable roof laid with Chinese pan and roll tiles, which is supported by timber rafters and purlins. The courtyards in front of the halls are also built with roofs, and shed roofs laid with traditional Chinese pan and roof tiles are still retained at the courtyard of No. 26 Tsz Tong Tsuen.

*Architectural
Merit*

⁶ The Residence of Tang Pak Kau (鄧伯裘故居) is situated at No. 20 Tsz Tong Tsuen in Kam Tin. This rectangular single-storey grey brick building with a three-storey watchtower was probably built in the early 20th century and once housed a private school that Tang established. A testament to Tang’s achievements and his contributions to the development of Kam Tin and Yuen Long, the residence was declared a monument in 2024. See 〈兩座歷史建築列為法定古蹟（附圖）〉，香港特別行政區新聞公報網頁，2024年10月10日，<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202410/10/P2024101000190.htm?fontSize=1>，accessed on 9 January 2025.

⁷ Land Registry, Property Particulars of D.D. 109 Lot No. 420 S.B.

⁸ Land Registry, Block Government Lease of D.D. 109.

⁹ National Collection of Aerial Photography, “Ng Ka Tsuen; Hong Kong; Hong Kong S.A.R.”, PEGASUS/RN/H/0034, Frame: 0010, <https://www.hkmaps.hk/map.html?1924.1>, accessed on 8 January 2025.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Land Registry, Memorial No. YL114789, 4 November 1946.

¹² Oral history interview with the Tangs of Kam Tin by AMO on 10 January 2025.

The entrance to each of the Houses is flanked by granite pillars with a granite lintel above. On top of these lintels are projecting eaves that are intricately decorated with pottery sculptures and plaster mouldings depicting auspicious motifs. The projecting eave at No. 25 Tsz Tong Tsuen features birds and peonies symbolising fortune and wealth respectively, while the one at No. 26 Tsz Tong Tsuen presents goats, a bat, auspicious flowers, plants, fruits and Chinese characters “如意吉祥” that signify blessings in traditional Chinese culture. These exquisite decorations, some of which have retained their original colour, along with the plaster mouldings in scroll grass pattern on the gable wall frieze and the floral and plant patterns on the other wall friezes, exhibit elements and craftsmanship that are commonly found, and are also significant in traditional Lingnan (嶺南) architecture.

Another notable feature of the Houses is the use of reflective elements as decorations. The projecting eaves on the front elevation are adorned with small reflective plates around the mouldings and at the bottom, which create a sparkling effect when exposed to sunlight. In addition, the lamp-shaped plaster moulding on the wall frieze on the side elevation is also embellished with pieces of reflective plates. The unusual combination of elements is rarely seen in traditional vernacular buildings.

The Houses have undergone renovations over the years to adapt to daily use. The internal side of the brick walls and the underside of the tiled roof are currently painted white. Some original features, including the brick stoves and bathing alcove in the courtyards of the Houses, as well as the cockloft at the rear portion of No. 25 Tsz Tong Tsuen, have been removed. Several new openings have been made in the walls of the front, side and rear elevations to serve as windows and to install ventilation and drainage systems. The original Chinese tiled roof above the courtyard of No. 25 Tsz Tong Tsuen and the cockloft at No. 26 Tsz Tong Tsuen have been reconstructed with new design and materials. Despite these changes, the original form of the Houses and most of the decorative mouldings on the exteriors have been retained. The Houses are not only two of the few surviving traditional vernacular houses in the area, but also rare examples of the adoption of reflective materials for decorative purposes.

Authenticity & Rarity

Although the Houses are some distance from the main footpath in Tsz Tong Tsuen, they are situated in front of the main entrance of the Residence of Tang Pak Kau, which is a Declared Monument. This makes them an essential stop for anyone interested in touring Kam Tin’s historic buildings. In addition, their traditional vernacular appearance serves as a reminder of what Tsz Tong

Social Value & Local Interest

Tsuen looked like in its early days.

The Houses and the Residence of Tang Pak Kau next to them have significant group value, as they were both originally owned by Tang. Together, they bear witness to his life in Tsz Tong Tsuen, while also reflect the history of the Tang clan in the Kam Tin area. **Group Value**

Furthermore, the Houses, together with the Tang Lung Yau Wan Tsuen Um Ancestral Hall in the same village, and many other historic buildings in the vicinity, such as the shrine, entrance gate, watchtowers and enclosing walls of Kat Hing Wai (吉慶圍神廳、圍門、炮樓及圍牆) (all Grade 1), the entrance gate (Grade 2), Chung Shing Temple and Kang Sam Tong (both Grade 3) at Wing Lung Wai (永隆圍圍門、眾聖宮及耕心堂), the entrance gate and watchtower (northwest) at Tai Hong Wai (泰康圍門樓及西北角炮樓) (both Grade 3), Tang Kwong U Ancestral Hall (廣瑜鄧公祠) (Declared Monument), Yi Tai Study Hall (二帝書院) (Declared Monument), Lik Wing Tong Study Hall (力榮堂書室) (Grade 1), Cheung Chun Yuen (長春園) (Grade 1), Chou Wong Yi Kung Study Hall (周王二公書院) (Grade 2), Tang Chan Yui Kuen Ancestral Hall (鎮銳鋤鄧公祠) (Grade 3), So Lau Yuen (沂流園) (Grade 3) and Hung Shing Temple (洪聖宮) (Grade 3) in Shui Tau Tsuen, Tang Tsing Lok Ancestral Hall (清樂鄧公祠) (Grade 1) and Tin Hau Temple (天后宮) (Grade 3), form a heritage cluster reflecting the development of the Tang clan in the territory from the 11th century onwards.

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