

Historic Building Appraisal

Lung Yip Yuen

No. 198 Shan Ha Tsuen, Ping Shan, Yuen Long, New Territories

Lung Yip Yuen (農業園) was built by **Cheung Ting-po** (張丁保), a *Historical Interest* seaman who built it as a farmhouse and residence for his family. He worked on steamships before the 1940s and constructed Lung Yip Yuen in three stages in the 1930s and 1940s. There was a hut collecting manure on the right of the house. Some of the Cheung family members still occasionally visit Lung Yip Yuen nowadays.

The house was named “Lung Yip Yuen” literally meaning “the garden for farming”, since the Cheung family was engaged in farming. The roof of Lung Yip Yuen and a *wo tong* (禾塘) on the left of the house were used to dry the produce in the sun. Since the Cheung family owned lots of land, they let their land to other villagers for operating business; for instance, a Sze Wo Farm (四和農場) was run at the back of Lung Yip Yuen.

The Cheung family also operated a savings bank (money shop) for the villagers. Money was kept in Lung Yip Yuen. The family invested with the money to increase their revenue, such as raising pigs and buying cultivated land.

Most of the villagers of Shan Ha Tsuen worked on farming and cane sugar refinery. The latter was run until the 1950s-60s. The traces of grindstones and stoves of the sugar refinery can still be seen in the village. The Cheungs of Lung Yip Yuen refined cane sugar on the left of the house.

The house is the largest building in the village. It is set apart from the old part of the village with an open courtyard known as *wo tong* (禾塘) and fields around it. The house is a two-storey building with walls of grey bricks and rows of rectangular shaped windows at first and ground floor levels. There is a main entrance and a side entrance in the front façade. The main part of the house has a pitched roof of Chinese tiles and gable end walls with sharply pointed apexes. The front part of the building has a flat roof with an ornamental parapet wall and a triangular gable inscribed with the name “Lung Yip Yuen” in Chinese characters. The building shows some Western influence in the parapet wall and pediment, but with its pitched roof and grey brick walls, Lung Yip Yuen is basically a building of **Qing Vernacular** style. *Architectural Merit*

Lung Yip Yuen is quite large for a village house and having so many windows at ground floor level is also unusual. Perhaps additional windows have been inserted. It has quite an imposing appearance and has built heritage value in its uniqueness. Modern installations such as TV aerials, window *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

mounted room coolers and building services are evident. Overall the building has retained its original appearance.

The social value of the building lies in its role as family residence and farmhouse of the Cheung family. Its role as a money shop for the villagers was also important. As a prominent building of the village it has considerable historical, architectural and local interest.

Lung Yip Yuen is a large house but the internal layout is not known so that it is difficult to suggest an adaptive re-use. Possibly the best use for it is to continue to be used for residential purposes. With its farming background it would perhaps make an ideal venue for a small agricultural museum or organic farm.