

APPENDIX 3

HERITAGE APPRAISAL

Heritage Appraisal

1. Introduction

The applicant, namely, Si Mau Limited, proposes to develop a Social Welfare Facility (Residential Care Home for the Elderly) (RCHE) as a permitted use under the extant Approved Yuen Long Outline Zoning Plan No. S/YL/25 (the OZP) at the southern part of the site at Lot Nos.1695 S.E ss. 1 RP, 1695 S.F ss.1, 1695 S.H RP (Part) and adjoining government land in D.D. 120, Tai Kei Leng, Yuen Long, New Territories (hereinafter referred to as “the Site”). The applicant is the sole registered land owner of these lots.

A s.16 planning application is to be submitted the Town Planning Board (TPB) for proposed minor relaxation of Building Height restriction (BHR) on the Application Site from 3 storeys to 6 storeys for the permitted RCHE development. This Heritage Appraisal provides a thorough understanding of the site and buildings from a heritage point of view to support the s.16 planning application.

2. Project Outline

2.1 Site Particulars



Figure 1. Location of the Application Site

The Site is situated in the southern part of Yuen Long New Town, accessible via Tai Tong Road (Figure 1). It has an area of about 1,953 m² and falls within the street block bounded by Tai Tong Road to the east, Shap Pat Heung Road to the south, Tai Shu Ha Road East to the west, and Ma Tong Road to the north. The Site is situated in an area generally occupied by residential and village settlements. The Site, currently used as a temporary public car park, comprises a Grade 3 historic building known as “Siu Lo” (including its main building and annex block). This historic building is currently vacant and is located mainly within 1695 S.E ss. 1 RP, (No. 643 Tai Kei Leng Tsuen), Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long.

2.2 Proposed Development

A Conservation-cum-Development Scheme

The proposed RCHE is in line with the prevailing Hong Kong policies, including the Chief Executive’s Policy Addresses and the “HK2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (HK2030+), to provide self-financing elderly facilities to address the aging population issues and the severe shortfall in the provision of elderly facilities. It has a maximum gross floor area (GFA) of 5,400m² (excluding the covered car park and internal road), providing a total of 281 beds (or within a range of 260 – 300). As the proposed RCHE development is required to be 6 storeys tall, which exceeds the BHR of 3 storeys under the extant OZP, a s.16 planning application is prepared for submission to the Town Planning Board accordingly.

A conservation-cum-development scheme is proposed as the applicant intends to preserve the architectural and cultural merits of Siu Lo for the benefit of the general public. Siu Lo, including its main building and annex block, will be preserved entirely *in-situ*. To minimize the impact on Siu Lo, the new RCHE building is planned in the southern part of the Site, with no physical connection with the historic building. The new building will have a high headroom on the G/F; part of it (1/F and above) will be built over a portion of Siu Lo’s annex block without adding any structural load on it. The proposed new building will be built in a reversible manner, i.e., it will not affect the historic building when it is to be redeveloped in the future. The objective is to create a win-win situation in which both the public interest and the project’s financial viability could be properly attained.

Conservation of the Historic Building

Siu Lo was a private residence of an overseas Chinese family. In the proposed scheme, Siu Lo will remain as a freestanding building and the original use of Siu Lo as “House” will also be maintained. Siu Lo will be maintained and upkept in sound condition and allowed for free public visits with guided tours for appreciation of Siu Lo from the outside at regular intervals. As to whether the interior of Siu Lo will be open for the public visits as well, it will be subject to the owner’s further consideration at the CMP stage. The owner will check the existing sewerage, drainage, water supply, electricity systems of Siu Lo and its Annex Block and the potential works required on these aspects to meet the future use of Siu Lo with consideration of the works required for the proposed RCHE building. The detailed works for Siu Lo will be subject to agreement with the Antiquities and Monuments Office (AMO) and Commissioner for Heritage’s Office (CHO) and a Conservation Management Plan will be submitted to the satisfaction of AMO prior to commencement of any works.

Heritage Interpretation for the Public

The following measures, subject to agreement with AMO and CHO, are proposed:

1. The dilapidated parts of Siu Lo will be repaired to a better condition and safer state;
2. To minimize the need for internal alteration and changes, thus to best reflect its historical nature and appearances, Siu Lo will remain as its existing use of "house";
3. The Applicant would reserve the internal area for private use at this stage and glazed doors/windows will be partially provided at certain spot(s) to allow see-through of the internal area from outside; and
4. The Heritage Garden is available for free public visits through advance bookings, with display boards to allow public visitors to understand the background of Siu Lo, the original owner's family life, and the history of the Tai Kei Leng and Yuen Long. Guided visits can be arranged once per month subject to further agreements with CHO and AMO.

2.3 Project Implementation

The project implementation is generally outlined as follows:

Conservation and Management Plan (CMP)

A Conservation Management Plan for the conservation of the main building and the annex block of Siu Lo as required will be prepared and submitted prior to commencement of any works and implementation of the CMP to the satisfaction of AMO or the TPB. The applicant will engage a heritage consultant to prepare the CMP for submission.

Photographic and Cartographic Records

A full set of photographic and cartographic records of the main building and the annex block of Siu Lo will be submitted prior to the commencement of works to the satisfaction of the AMO or the TPB.

Tree Works

There are 3 nos. of existing, undocumented trees growing on the external walls of Siu Lo and 2 growing in close proximity to the building (Figure 2). Their roots have caused cracks in the building walls and will hinder the production and accuracy of the cartographic records. As these trees are not listed under the Register of Old and Valuable Trees, we propose to remove them before the commencement of the photographic and cartographic survey. The appropriate structural survey, general condition survey, or non-destructive tests will be carried out prior to the proposed tree removal works.



Figure 2. Existing undocumented trees on the external wall of Siu Lo

Construction and Repair Works

The whole project will be implemented under the supervision of appropriately qualified and experienced professionals. The necessary construction and repair work for Siu Lo will be carried out by a registered general building contractor/specialist contractor for the repair and restoration of the historic buildings.

3. Methodology

This historical appraisal references several international conservation charters and standards, including the Burra Charter and The Australia ICOMOS Conservation Plan.¹ Background study, baseline research, and field surveys have been conducted. Archival records, literature, old newspapers, historic photos, and maps, are collected, and analyzed. The significance of Siu Lo is evaluated in terms of its historical, social, architectural, and group values. Based on these analyses, general recommendations for the appropriate conservation of the significance of Siu Lo and the future use of the Site are proposed in Section 7 of this heritage appraisal.

¹ Australia ICOMOS, "The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance" (Australia ICOMOS, 2013); James Semple Kerr, "Conservation Plan, the 7th Edition: A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance" (Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

4. Historical Interest

4.1 Tai Kei Leung

The area where Siu Lo is situated was once paddy fields in the 1850s. It consisted of several clusters of farmsteads, which were then called Fook Yuen Farmsteads (福玄禾寮).² The village was renamed Tai Kei Leng (大旗嶺) in 1953 and recognized by the Shap Pat Heung Rural Committee (十八鄉鄉事委員會) as its member village.

Tai Kei Leng was a multi-surnamed village. The first clan that arrived at Tai Kei Leng was the Chan (陳) clan, who was Hakka people and has inhabited the area since the Tongzhi reign of the Qing Dynasty (1861–1874). More than ten other clans, such as the Tangs, Lis, Cheungs, Kongs, Poons, Shams, and Fungs, came to the Tai Kei Leng area in the following decades. The number of households in Tai Kei Leng reached about 1,800 in the 1980s, with about 700 households belonging to the original settlers' families.

There are several graded historic buildings in the vicinity of Siu Lo. Most of them are private residences located on the other side of Tai Tong Road, in an area known as Shui Da Ba Tsuen (水打壩村). The group values of these buildings are studied in Section 4.4 of this heritage appraisal.

4.2 The Chan Family

The original owner of Siu Lo was Chan Mo-ching (陳慕青), alias Chan Ah Yuk (陳亞旭) or Chan Yuk Hung (陳毓紅).³ Chan Mo-ching was originated from Meixian in Guangdong Province. He migrated to Surabaya (泗水), the capital of East Java, Indonesia, and opened a grocery shop there, selling rice, oil, and so forth. Chan Mo-ching made a fortune from businesses in the South Sea region. He brought back his wealth to Hong Kong and purchased some land and properties in Tai Kei Leng and other parts of Yuen Long. The land registry record shows that Chan Mo-ching purchased the land lot 1695 S.E ss. 1 RP in DD120 on 9 September 1937. The construction of Siu Lo commenced around 1940, and the building was completed in early 1942.⁴ According to the landowner, the residence's Chinese name, “筱 (siu)”, has the same pronunciation as the term “小”. The name of the residence reflects the humbleness of Chan Mo-Ching.

Aside from the farmlands and properties he had purchased, Chan Mo-ching owned a shop in Yuen Long San Hui. He donated thirty dollars for the renovation of Tin Hau Temple at Nga Yiu Tau (瓦窰頭天后廟), also known as Tai Shu Ha Tin Hau Temple (大樹下天后古廟). The Chinese words, “陳慕青捐銀叁拾大元”, were inscribed on a stone tablet dated 1938 inside the temple.⁵

² Antiquities and Monuments Section, USD, *Survey of Chinese Historical and Rural Architecture in Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long* (Hong Kong: Government Printer, 1984).

³ “Chan Mo Tsing (or Ching) Alias Chan Ah Yuk Alias Chan Yuk Hung,” 1956–60, HKRS96-1-5466-1, Public Records Office, Hong Kong.

⁴ Antiquities and Monuments Office, “Historic Building Appraisal: Siu Lo, No. 643 Tai Kei Leng, Shap Pat Heung, Yuen Long,” 2017, http://www.aab.gov.hk/historicbuilding/en/972_Appraisal_En.pdf.

⁵ Antiquities and Monuments Office.

After the end of World War II, at the request of the British who re-occupied Hong Kong, the Hong Kong-Kowloon Brigade of the East River Column (東江縱隊港九獨立大隊) helped maintain social order in the New Territories. Self-defense units were organized during the period from September 1945 to September 1946. According to local inhabitants' reminiscences, Siu Lo was a focal point of activities of the self-defense units at that time.⁶

Chan Mo-Ching passed away on 9 August 1953 at the age of 71. Following his will, Siu Lo was inherited by his wife, Yau Yin Yin, in 1955.⁷ Siu Lo remained in the hands of the Chan family until being sold to a private enterprise in 2017. The building has been vacant since around 2000.

4.3 Development of the Site

No building plan nor land grant document is available from the government. The earliest aerial photo of the area from the Lands Department was taken in 1949. It shows that the Site abutted an unnamed alley and was surrounded by farmlands, which were the predominant land use in Yuen Long at the time (Figure 3). The construction of Siu Lo commenced around 1940 and was completed in early 1942. There were not many built structures erected nearby, making Siu Lo an outstanding building in the area. Not many roads have been developed to serve the Tai Kei Leng area. Tai Tong Road was yet to be built at that time.



Figure 3. Aerial photo in 1949 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)

⁶ Antiquities and Monuments Office.

⁷ “Chan Mo Tsing (or Ching) Alias Chan Ah Yuk Alias Chan Yuk Hung,” 1956–60, HKRS96-1-5466-1, Public Records Office, Hong Kong.

The historic aerial photo taken in 1956 shows that the areas surrounding Siu Lo were continued to be dominated by farmlands. Tai Tong Road could be seen in this aerial photo, which means that it was built between 1949 and 1956 (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Aerial photo in 1956 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)

A series of aerial photos taken in the 1960s and the 1970s show that more and more low-rise houses were erected in the Tai Kei Leng area (Figures 5 & 6). The former Yuen Long Baptist Church was built adjacent to Siu Lo in 1963. It was demolished in 2000 and redeveloped into a new church, which remains until today.



Figure 5. Aerial photo in 1961 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)

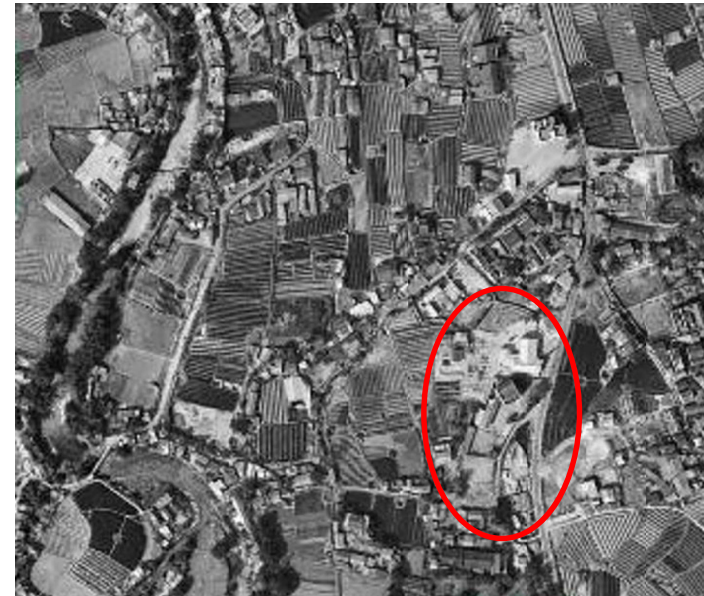


Figure 6. Aerial photo in 1963 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)

The natural stream that flew north to Yuen Long Town was re-diverted into a nullah in the mid-1960s (Figure 7). Most farmlands have vanished since the late 1970s. Low-rise and high-rise residential blocks had emerged in place of the low-rise village houses (Figures 8, 9, & 10).



Figure 7. Aerial photo in 1967 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)

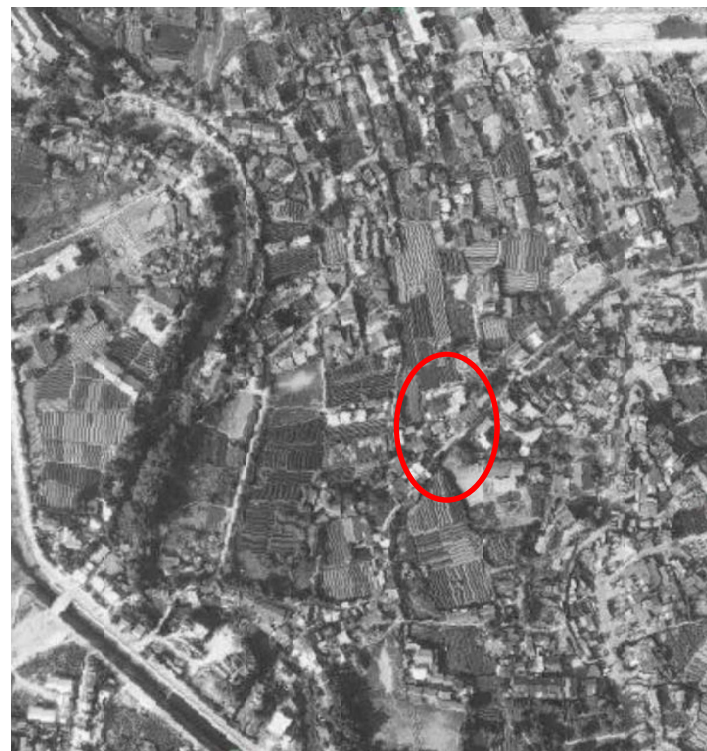


Figure 8. Aerial photo in 1973 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)



Figure 9. Aerial photo in 1977 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)



Figure 10. Aerial photo in 1979 (Survey and Mapping Office, Lands Department, HKSAR Government)

4.4 Graded Historic Buildings in the vicinity of Siu Lo

There are several graded historic buildings in the vicinity of Siu Lo (Figure 11).



Figure 11. Graded Historic Buildings in the vicinity of Siu Lo (extracted from GIS on Hong Kong Heritage on July 2021)

	Building	Year of Completion	Grading	Brief Descriptions
1	Ji Yeung Study Hall, No. 23 Tai Kei Leng	1924	Grade 3	The study hall was built by the Leung brothers to commemorate their father. The Leung family originated from Tai Shan, Guangdong.
2	No. 26 Tai Kei Leng	1920-1930	Grade 3	A private residence owned by the Leung brothers, who also built the Ji Yeung Study Hall.
3	No. 27 Tai Kei Leng	1920-1924	Grade 3	A private residence owned by the Leung brothers, who also built the Ji Yeung Study Hall.
4	No. 45 Tai Kei Leng	1926	Grade 3	Two Grade 3 historic buildings.

	Tsuen (Grade 3) and No. 45 Tai Kei Leng, Entrance Gate and Enclosing wall (Grade 3)			A private residence built by Fung Yin-yiu, an overseas Chinese from Canada.
5	No. 112 Tai Kei Leng	1924-1925	Grade 3	A private residence of the Chung family.
6	No. 119 Tai Kei Leng	1928	Grade 3	A private residence built by Lam Bing-tak, a native of Xinhua, Guangdong. Lam later returned to New York.
7	No. 173 Tai Kei Leng	1927	Grade 3	A private residence of the Lam family originated from Xinhua, Guangdong. Many members of the Lam family later moved to Canada.
8	Nos. 186 & 188 Tai Kei Leng	1931	Grade 3	Private residences built by Li Mau-kei, a native of Shenzhen, Guangdong. Li later moved to Brazil.

Most of these graded historic buildings are private residences located on the other side of Tai Tong Road, in an area first known as Shui Dai Ba Tsuen (水打壩村). Many of the original building owners were overseas Chinese or had connections abroad. Together with Siu Lo, this group of domestic architecture can show the life of the village people in the New Territories.

5. Architectural Merit

5.1 Architectural Description

Siu Lo comprises a 2-storey main building and a single-storey annex block attached to the house at an angle (Figure 12). The main building houses the living room and bedrooms. The annex block, connected to the southwest of the main building at an odd angle, comprises the kitchen, toilets, and workers' quarters. According to the previous owner and the historic aerial photos, the main building and the annex block were built simultaneously.

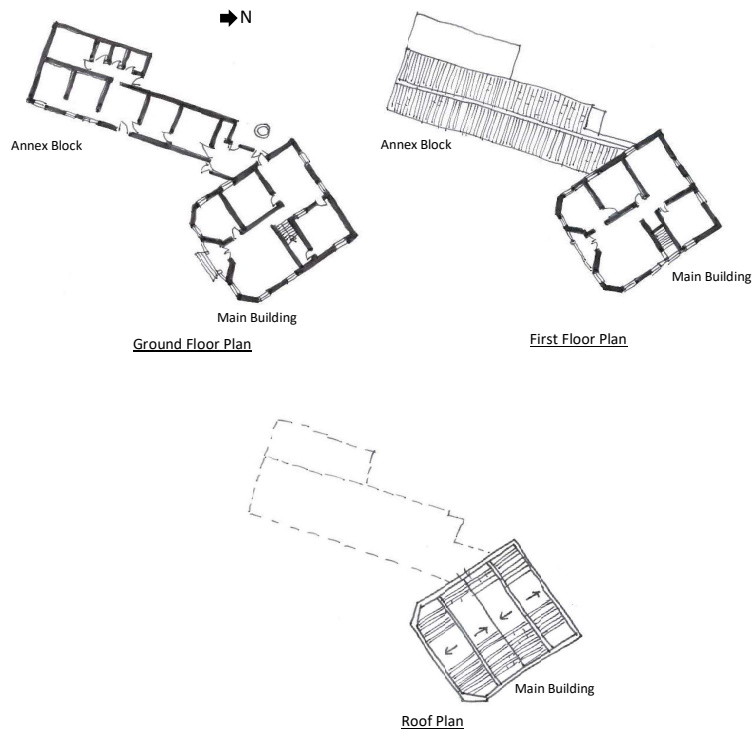


Figure 12. The existing layout of Siu Lo.

Siu Lo is a house of mixed style. The main building is designed with Chinese Eclectic style with Western architectural features. The front façade is highlighted by an open porch and the verandah above. Both the porch and the verandah are supported by octagonal columns with capitals. The pitched roofs, covered with Chinese tiles and supported by timber purlins, are surrounded by a low parapet wall with a small decorative pediment in the middle. The corners of the building are splayed, probably for both *feng shui* and decorative reasons. The main building employed traditional and modern materials at the time. The walls are made of grey bricks covered with plasters, but some building parts, such as the overhang above the windows, are made of reinforced concrete. Windows are fitted with timber shutters and a grid of iron security bars and are shaded by the gently inclined concrete overhang. The residence is built slightly above the ground and can be accessed through the steps to the main entrance.

The annex block is a simple, vernacular structure. The building is L-shaped. The longer part of the building, which accommodates a living room, two workers' bedrooms, and two kitchens, is covered by a Chinese tiled pitched roof supported by timber purlins. Six brackets are clearly seen from the eastern façades to support the projected eaves. Each of the two kitchens is installed with a brick stove that is connected to a chimney. In contrast, the shorter part of the annex block, which houses a bedroom and two lavatories, is flat-roofed. All the windows are timber-framed with a grid of iron security bars. The location of the doors and windows may have been changed over time.

A low boundary wall was constructed around the lots, with an entrance gate opened at the junction of Tai Tong Road and the unnamed alley (Figure 13). The entrance gate was not facing perfectly to the residence's door for *feng shui* reasons. In practice, this prevents outsiders from viewing directly into the residence for privacy concerns; the boundary wall can also protect the building from floods. At present, the entrance gate and part of the boundary wall have been eradicated.



Figure 13. Siu Lo with the original entrance gate and fence wall (left) and Siu Lo in 2021 (right), (left photo: My tour, Old Hong Kong, Yuen Long, <http://blog.terewong.com/archives/6304>).

5.2 Character Defining Elements



According to the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada, "Character Defining Elements" (CDEs) are the materials, forms, location, spatial configurations, uses, and cultural associations or meanings that contribute to the heritage value of a historic place.⁸ The CDEs of Siu Lo are classified according to three levels of significance⁹ to help future conservation decisions:

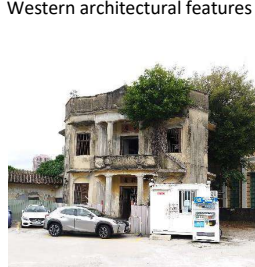




⁸ Definition extracted from *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, accessed on August 20, 2020, from Canada's Historic Places, <https://www.historicplaces.ca/media/18072/81468-parks-s-g-eng-web2.pdf>.




⁹ The definition of terms is developed based on Kerr, "Conservation Plan, the 7th Edition: A Guide to the Preparation of Conservation Plans for Places of European Cultural Significance."

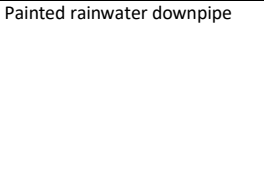
Level of Significance	Meaning
High significance	Elements which make a major contribution to the overall significance of the place. Spaces, elements or fabric originally of substantial intrinsic quality, and exhibit high degree of intactness and quality, though minor alterations or degradation may be evident.
Moderate significance	Elements which make a moderate contribution to the overall significance of the place. Spaces, elements or fabric originally of some intrinsic quality, and may have undergone minor or extensive alteration or degradation.
Low significance	Elements which make a minor contribution to the overall significance of the place. Spaces, elements or fabric originally of little intrinsic quality, and may have undergone alteration or degradation. Original spaces, elements or fabrics of some quality, which have undergone extensive alteration or adaptation to the extent that only isolated remnants survive.





The below table provides a summary of Siu Lo's CDEs and their respective level of significance:



Setting		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
S-01	<p>Sitting behind a boundary wall with an entrance gate, with the annex block oriented at an odd angle</p> 	<p>Moderate</p> <p>The lot was enclosed by a low boundary wall, with an entrance gate opened at the junction of Tai Tong Road and the alley. At present, the entrance gate and part of the boundary wall have been eradicated. The main building and the annex block are connected at an odd angle.</p> <p>(Photo: Google Map image)</p>
S-02	<p>Old water well</p> 	<p>Moderate</p> <p>An old water well is remained in the backyard behind the annex block.</p>



Main building		
External		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
ME-01	<p>Chinese Eclectic style with Western architectural features</p> 	<p>High</p> <p>The Chinese residence shows the influence of Western architecture. Several Western architectural elements, such as the open porch and the verandah, can be found in this residence.</p>
ME-02	<p>Open porch with octagonal columns</p> 	<p>High</p> <p>The front façade of the residence is dominated by an open porch, which is a common architectural element in Western buildings. The porch is supported by octagonal columns with decorative capital and column base. The beam above the columns is designed with a delicate profile, which adds architectural merits to the entrance porch.</p>
ME-03	<p>Verandah on the 1/F with octagonal columns</p> 	<p>High</p> <p>A verandah is built above the open porch. The verandah shares a similar design with the porch. It was supported by octagonal columns with capitals. The beam above the octagonal columns is designed with a delicate profile, which adds architectural merits to the front façade design.</p>
ME-04	<p>The name plaques</p> 	<p>High</p> <p>The name of the residence is carved on plaques that are put on both the porch and the verandah. The Chinese characters are painted in black on a red background. The name plaques show the identity of the building.</p>
ME-05	<p>Splayed building corners with decorative patterns</p> 	<p>High</p> <p>The building has splayed corners on the front façade. The corners are rendered with plastered decorations with vertical patterns. Unlike the colorful murals and motifs usually found in traditional Chinese buildings, the relief decorations of Siu Lo are designed in simple, geometrical patterns.</p>




Main building		
External		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
ME-06	Decorative parapets on the verandah and the roof 	High Parapets decorated with lozenge and rectangular patterns are installed on both the verandah and the roof. A small decorative pediment is placed at the center of the roof parapet, forming the focus of the front facade.
ME-07	Arched window heads and overhang 	Moderate The windows are topped with segmental arched window heads and are shaded by the gently inclined concrete overhang.
ME-08	Window shutters, security bars and timber windows 	Moderate Timber shutters are installed on the windows for shading and ventilation. A grid of iron bars is installed on the window for security reasons. Timber windows are installed at the back, facing the interior for weather protection.

Main building		
External		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
ME-09	Painted rainwater downpipe 	Moderate A painted rainwater downpipe with rectangular decorative patterns is found at the back of the building.

Main building		
External		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
		(Photo: Heritage Appraisal for Siu Lo- S16 Planning Application on 24 April 2019 prepared by Property Conservation)
ME-10	Address plate at the entrance 	Low An address plate with the Chinese words, “大旗嶺二區 15,” shows the old address of Siu Lo in the 1980s.
Internal		
MI-01	Main entrance door 	Moderate Two layers of entrance doors, with the door facing the interior, are installed with a traditional Chinese timber door latch, and the door facing the exterior is a pair of 6-lights timber panelled door
MI-02	The wall adjacent to the entrance door 	Moderate There is a cutaway on the wall to allow space for the door latch and handle when the door is fully opened.

Main building		
Internal		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
MI-03	Concrete floor slabs are supported by timber purlins and planks 	Moderate The floor slabs are made of concrete and are supported by concrete beams, timber purlins and planks.
MI-04	Old furniture 	Moderate Some furniture is left in the residence by the former owners. This includes several timber stools with the Chinese word “愚慮” marked at the back. According to a member of the Chan family, some of these stools were ordered to be made when they first moved into Siu Lo. There is also a portable toilet bowl, which was placed in Chan Mo-ching and his wife’s bedrooms for their use when they got older.

Annex block		
External		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
AE-01	Chinese pitched roof 	Moderate The Annex Block is an integrated part of Siu Lo, which once served a supporting function to the family in the past, and should be considered as a whole. It reflects the heyday of the family which forms part of the legacy of their ancestors. Most parts of the annex block are covered by a Chinese-style pitched roof with pan-and-rolled clay tiles. Its longitudinal form is a clear feature of the Annex Block. A part of the pitched roof has collapsed.
AE-02	Brackets supporting the projected eaves 	Moderate The pitched roof facing the east is protruded from the external wall and is supported by six brackets.

Annex block		
External		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
AE-03	Wavy patterns on the gable wall 	Low Some wavy patterns can be found on the gable wall underneath the plastering. These patterns may be wall decorations when the annex block was built and was then covered up in subsequent renovations.
Internal		
No.	CDEs and Photo	Significance and Description
AI-01	Kitchens 	Low Two kitchens installed with brick stoves and chimneys have remained in the building. Some parts of the stoves and chimneys are damaged.
AI-02	Timber windows with iron security bars 	Low Some of the timber windows were broken and removed from the building by former occupants. Only the timber frames and security iron bars have remained.

6. Statement of Significance

6.1 Historical and Social Value

The historical and social significance of Siu Lo lies in its history as a private residence of an overseas Chinese family in a multi-surnamed Hakka village. The first owner of Siu Lo, Chan Mo-ching, was originated from Guangdong and accumulated his wealth doing business in Indonesia. He returned to Hong Kong and built a residence in Tai Kei Leng for his family. The history of Siu Lo reflects the high mobility of the people and the complexity of the identity of the so-called Hong Kong people.

When Siu Lo was completed in 1942, Tai Kei Leng was largely filled up by farmlands. There were not many built structures erected in the area, making Siu Lo a prominent building in its vicinity.

6.2 Architectural Value

Siu Lo is designed in a Chinese Eclectic Style with Western architectural features. The hybridity in design was favored particularly by overseas Chinese. Private residences with similar hybrid Chinese and Western styles can be found not only in Hong Kong but also in other hometowns of overseas Chinese in South China. Siu Lo's hybrid design is similar to some other private residences in Yuen Long and other parts of the New Territories. The key examples are Shek Lo, a Grade 1 Historic Building in Lung Yeuk Tau, Fanling, and Lim House, a Grade 2 Historic Building in Shun Ching Sun Tsuen, Yuen Long (Figures 14 & 15). Siu Lo's similarity with other private residences in the New Territories hints that this kind of hybrid building design may be commonly adopted by a few builders at that time.



Figure 14. Shek Lo in Fanling (Antiquities and Monuments Office, https://www.amo.gov.hk/en/trails_lunq1.php?tid=10)



Figure 15. Lim House in Yeung Long (Antiquities and Monuments Office, https://www.aab.gov.hk/historicbuilding/photo/571_Photo.pdf)

Siu Lo is a Grade 3 Historic Building with a high level of authenticity. The main building has not been altered at all in the past 70 years. Most of the external architectural features can still be seen clearly. The internal layout also remains unchanged.

The sharp contrast in design between the main building and the annex block reflects the hierarchy between the owners and the servants. The two buildings, although having very different designs, are connected in an integrated manner. They allow us to understand how a rich family lived with their servants and workers in the past.

6.3 Group Value

Several buildings in Tai Kei Leng are ranked Grade 3 Historical Building status. Most of them are private residences like Siu Lo, and some of them were built by overseas Chinese families. Together, they form a group of domestic architecture that can show the life of the village people as well as the returned overseas Chinese families in the New Territories.

7. Recommendations

A conservation-cum-development scheme is proposed, which involves the conservation of Siu Lo and the construction of a new RCHE facility. This section provides recommendations for this conservation-cum-development approach.

7.1 In-Situ Conservation

According to AMO's definition, "Grade 3 Historic Buildings" are "Buildings of some merit; preservation in some form would be desirable and alternative means could be considered if preservation is not practicable." Despite the fact that a relatively less stringent control is imposed

on Grade 3 Historic Buildings, the applicant intends to preserve Siu Lo, including its Main Building and Annex Block, entirely *in-situ*.

7.2 Unaltered Building Usage

To minimize the need for internal alteration and changes, Siu Lo will remain to be used as a residential building. In compliance with all relevant statutory requirements, the proposed use of Siu Lo is "House". The detailed works for Siu Lo will be subject to agreement with AMO and CHO, and a Conservation Management Plan to be prepared and submitted to the satisfaction of AMO or the TPB prior to commencement of any works.

7.3 The Annex Block

Under the proposed scheme, the annex block of Siu Lo will be partially decked over by the proposed RCHE building. This would facilitate the applicant to preserve the entire Grade 3 historic building and, at the same time, gain the space needed for operating an RCHE in the proposed building. Despite this, the applicant should make sure that the public view from Tai Tong Road to Siu Lo, especially to the main block, will not be obstructed by the new building. The resultant built form should not reduce the visual interest in the existing building façade or generate adverse landscape impact.

Sufficient maintenance space and access should be allowed for the future maintenance of the annex block underneath the new building, and the visual impacts should be minimized with a lighter, sympathetic and sensible column design and use of materials. Every effort should be made to avoid any physical impact arising from the construction works to Siu Lo.

7.4 Interface with the Surrounding

Siu Lo was surrounded by agricultural land in the past. Now, the surrounding area has been redeveloped into modern residential estates. The proposed landscape design at the Site and the appropriate renovations of Siu Lo will blend in with the new-built and connect with the surroundings again. It will improve its appearance from Tai Tong Road and improve the appearance of the site. There is an old water well remain in the backyard. Subject to further landscape design, the well may be kept for interpretation, and the backyard will be tidied up to blend in with the new environment.

7.5 Management and Maintenance

Siu Lo has been vacant for a long time since the previous family members have settled in Northern America and have no plan to return to Hong Kong. With the proposed conservation-cum-development proposal, Siu Lo (including the main building and annex block) will be duly conserved, maintained, and renovated to higher structural integrity. Siu Lo is one of the iconic buildings in Tai Kei Leng, and the proposed conservation-cum-development will continue the life of Siu Lo and the history of Tai Kei Leng.

8. Conclusion

Siu Lo is a Grade 3 Historic Building with a high level of authenticity. Most parts of the buildings remain unaltered in the past 70 years. Unfortunately, the building has been vacant since around 2000. The interesting hybrid architectural design is hidden by unattended vegetation since then.

The proposed conservation-cum-development scheme provided an opportunity to revitalize Siu Lo. The applicant has committed to conserving Siu Lo (both the main building and the annex block) entirely *in-situ*. Siu Lo will remain to serve residential use. It will be repaired to ensure the building's integrity and safety. The external Heritage Garden will be provided for free public visits with guided tours at regular intervals and interpretational display boards for public benefits.

The proposed RCHE will provide a total of 281 beds (or within a range of 260 – 300) and help solve the shortage of elderly facilities in Hong Kong. It aligns with the governmental policies, including the Policy Addresses and the HK2030+. The proposed building will have no physical connection to Siu Lo to minimize any negative impacts and alternation to the historic building. Siu Lo will remain as a freestanding building.

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