

Historic Building Appraisal
Nos. 14-16 San Lau Street,
Sha Tau Kok, N.T.

The two-storey shophouses at San Lau Street were built on an unbroken terrace in 1933-1934 as part of the development of the Tung Wo Market (東和墟, literally, “Eastern Peace Market”) founded by a local inter-village alliance named Shap Yeuk (十約) more than one hundred years. Like many other typical shophouses in the territory, the ground floors of the shophouses at San Lau Street are mainly for commercial use while the upper floors are for residential purposes. *Historical Interest*

Nos. 14-16, San Lau Street (新樓街) are adjoining shophouses in a row of 22 shophouses in Sha Tau Kok which were built in 1933-34. According to the Government Administrative Report for 1932, a large area of foreshore was reclaimed as a site for the shophouses. The project also included a new pier and a fish market. It is believed that the shophouses were built by **Yip Bill Kee** (葉標記) and **Wan Lam Kee** (溫林記).

The shophouses are two-storey adjacent buildings sharing common party walls. They have narrow frontages and elongated plans to suit the rectilinear shape of the building lots. The main portions of the shophouses have pitched roofs of Chinese tiles. The first floor on the front elevation projects over the pavement and is supported on columns to form a covered walkway or arcade in front of the ground floor shops. The roofs over the front portions are flat with open balustraded parapets. The rear portions of the shophouses containing kitchens and WCs are treated in a similar way. The facades are rendered and painted brickwork. Windows are regularly spaced steel-framed or aluminium-framed casements. Most of the shops are fitted with latticed steel folding and sliding security gates. Modern additions include window mounted air-conditioners and temporary lean-to structures. The shophouses are a variation of the **Verandah Type Shophouse** and the architectural style can be classified as **Chinese Eclectic** since they incorporate local vernacular style with Western features. *Architectural Merit*

Although shophouses can be commonly found in urban areas, they are rarely found in rural areas. These shophouses at Sha Tau Kok therefore are valuable pieces of built heritage. In spite of the addition of modern installations, the shophouses retain much of their original authentic appearance. *Rarity, Built Heritage Value & Authenticity*

The social value of shophouses lies in the contribution they have made to urban development. These particular shophouses are a variation of the Verandah *Social Value & Local*

Type and are part of the historical development of Sha Tau Kok. They have *Interest* historical as well as social value and are well known buildings in the town.

The shophouses were intended for commercial-cum-residential use and *Adaptive* most of them are still used for these purposes. They are fairly adaptable though *Re-use* and could be converted for other purposes without too much alteration.