WANG WEIJEN

PARTICIPATORY STRATEGIES: THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CHOI YUEN VILLAGE

DESIGN FOLIO
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Project Details

Lead Architect and Planner:
Wang Weijen (Wang Weijen Architecture)

Project title:
Participatory Strategies:
The Reconstruction of Choi Yuen Village

Output:
Planning and Built Architecture Design with Awards and Publications

Function:
Community Housing

Location:
Yuen Kong, New Territories, Hong Kong

Floor Area: 4060 sm

Client:
Choi Yuen Village Co. Ltd.

Date of Design:
2010-2012

Date of Construction:
2013-2016
Summary of the Work and its Significance, Originality, and Rigor

The design of Choi Yuen Village is a community re-habitation project in the New Territories of Hong Kong. Started with a protest against village re-location by the construction of High-Speed Rail Link, the movement marks a turning point in formulating alternative planning strategies for bottom-up development and grass-root participation, as well as green architecture and organic agriculture in rural Hong Kong. The project receives three regional and national design awards based on its social and community significance, including 2016 CAMA Award, which the jury is chaired by Pritzker Prize winner Wang Shu.
Facing challenges in planning and design methodologies for effective community participations, the project developed rigorous methods of “Prototypes + Variations”, moderating the dilemma between Modern Design vs. Vernacular Process, as well as Collective Form vs. Individual Needs. By formulating a typological based design mechanism, with a series of participatory strategies including Design Clinic and Recycling Pavilion, the project adopts measures for establishing green architecture and public spaces, opening up new opportunities for community design against the mainstream mode of housing development in Hong Kong.

The project completed a set of designs for 50 low-cost eco-village houses with public facilities and communal spaces,
Concept of Village Public Pavilion for Architectural Biennale
Overall Layout of the Village
demonstrating sustainable design concepts including conservation of fishponds and orchards, allocation of 1/3 land for commune farming, establishing vehicular-free pedestrian system, natural ventilation and lighting with green roof for houses, as well as developing public infrastructures with rainwater collection and wastewater recycling systems. After a six-year-long process of negotiation, planning and design as well as temporary sheltering, the construction was finally completed in 2016.

With the support of HKU Knowledge Exchange Funding, the team is able to continue the design with villagers on improving various communal facilities, including the irrigation system for vegetable farming and planting trees for public patios. Through ten years
of extensive media reports and engagements from different social groups, the project makes significant impacts to the community and professionals, demonstrating an innovative

Follow up Design with Villagers after Re-construction
and alternative model for designing communal architecture in Hong Kong and worldwide.

Protecting Homeland
A grass-root Civic Movement

On Christmas Eve 2009, over thousands of farmers from rural Hong Kong, as well as social activists and supporters gathered at the government’s headquarters in Central, demanding their rights to stay in the land where they had settled for over 50 years, protesting against the relocation order which shall take away their farmlands due to the construction of High-Speed Rail linking Hong Kong and Beijing. Coming from a small village near Yuen Kong in Hong Kong’s Northwest New Territories, five kilometers away from the border of China,
these 200 villagers, for the first time since Hong Kong’s colonial and post-colonial era, rejected the government’s resettlement proposal for moving into high-rise public housing, insisting to continue farming and their long relationships with the land.

For Hong Kong, a city that economic growth and development had always been considered as higher priority under the efficient colonial administration, the protest of Choi Yuen Village not only draws public attention over the issue on, under what circumstances can development be justified to deprive the right of habitation, and it also opens up the public debate on how metropolitan Hong Kong can still maintain its sustainable agriculture for keeping a symbiotic relationship with its rural
Mapping Original Dwelling Patterns and Uses
environment. With the increasing civic concerns over the community and heritage conservation after handover in 1997, Choi Yuen Villagers’ voice of “protecting homeland” gained support from the media and the general public, particularly progressive civic groups, academia and professionals.

Voices from Vegetable Garden: Bottom-up Planning and Re-habitation Design

“Choi Yuen” literally means Vegetable Garden, this rural village named Vegetable paradoxically becomes the symbol of tying a grass-root based civic movement from rural vegetable farm to the green movement of urban middle class. Led by social activist YC Chan, Dick Chu and other volunteers, Choi
Yuen Village Concern Group, a loosely formed grass-root organization, started to work with the villagers to prepare for the long battle. The battlefield also quickly moved from metropolitan Central back to the village site in the New Territories. A workshop pavilion was set up in the village as the community center, while the original vegetable loading station was converted into an outdoor assemblage hall for villagers’ meeting.

Making a long term plan for village relocation was a hard decision after realizing the continuous protest and confrontation at the frontline is not getting anywhere. Centered around a dozen core members from the village, this multi-disciplinary team including academia and social workers, architects and planners, engineers and surveyors,
lawyers and advocators in organic farming, helps on advising various works - from purchasing land to acquiring permit to the planning and design of village houses and finally leading to the building of a new village at the site nearby.

Two types of works were identified for dealing with intermediate and long term issues. The former was mostly related to social political issues ranging from negotiation with the Transportation Department and KCRC on concerns such as the extension of demolition date to buy time for better preparation, the condition on the provision of temporary shelters and infrastructures before a new village can be settled. The intermediate measures also include confrontational ones like organizing community petrol team during the period of protest, preventing ambush bulldozing demolition from police and the railway contractor.
Conservation of Orchards and Allocation of Public Farmland
For the long term planning of village, even the land negotiation for a new village site was not an easy task mainly because local politicians and developers are concerned that these Choi Yuen village farmer’s moving in may change the ecology of regional politics. After some struggles, a long trip of land sitting along the foothill of Dai Lan Mountain was finally secured, with a small creek with clear water coming down from the hill, passing through woods with orchard trees, running into a fishpond at the village front. Judging from many standards, this irregular and narrow piece of land was by no means a perfect site for new village layout, but in the eye of villagers and
Natural Ventilation, Roof Garden and Water Recycling
their supporters, this is a utopia site of idealism: a new paradigm for Hong Kong exploring self-organized planning and architectural design with strong social and environmental position.

Planning Ecological Village: A Participatory Process

Invited by the Choi Yuen Village Concern Group, Wang Weijen Architecture was asked to take up the physical layout of the village planning and the architectural design of 50 village houses. Many were convinced by the visionary ideas and green commitment, while some others were under peer pressure or felt indebted to their progressive supporters, all villagers agreed to build their new village in an ecological sustainable manner. Through advocating campaigns and multiple debates, with many negotiations
Layout Plan of the Village

村入口
MAIN ENTRANCE
MAIL-WATERMETER BOX 1

電箱
TRANSFORMER ROOM

保留樹林
EXISTING FOREST

停車場村/集會廣場
CAR PARK/GATHERING PLAZA

東側入口水錶箱壘 2
EAST EMTRANCE
WATERMETER-LAMP BOX 2

公共耕地
COMMUNAL CULTIVATION LAND

魚塘
EXISTING POND

生態池
ECO-POND

規劃村公所
COMMON HALL FOR RESITEES

公共耕地
COMMUNAL CULTIVATION LAND

建村紀念亭
MEMORIAL PAVILLION

標準水錶箱壘 4
TYPICAL WATERMETER-LAMP BOX 4

公共耕地
COMMUNAL CULTIVATION LAND

土地廟廣場
COMMUNAL PLAZA

龍眼樹保育林
LONGAN WOODS PRESERVATION

標準水錶箱境 3
TYPICAL WATERMETER-LAMP BOX 3

水錶箱境 5
WATERMETER-LAMP BOX 5

水錶箱境 6
WATERMETER-LAMP BOX 6

大樹廣場
COMMUNAL PLAZA

標準水錶箱境 8
TYPICAL WATERMETER-LAMP BOX 8

標準水錶箱境 7
TYPICAL WATERMETER-LAMP BOX 7

公共耕地
COMMUNAL CULTIVATION LAND

生態池
ECO-POND

保留樹林
COMMUNAL FOREST
and workshops supporting various sustainable ways of planning and building their villages, few consensuses were reached among villagers and the following principles were set as guidelines for laying out the plan.

1. Commune Farm Land:
   With much less area of land allocated for typical vehicular access, it is agreed that 35% of the land should be designated for public use, including a large piece of commune land for agriculture. It will be, symbolically and functionally, the collective organic farm for the Vegetable Garden Village.

2. Car free Village:
   It is agreed that unlike typical suburban housing with car park and vehicular access road dominating the development, their village will only have
Clustering of Houses
car park spaces arranged in the village front. A pedestrian access road of one-and-a-half meter in width leading to each dwelling unit is agreed to be sufficient for daily use, like what their original old village had.

3. Fishpond and Orchard:
   Keeping the original (agri)culture landscape and existing land feature was put up for debate and it finally reached an agreement. Not only at the ideological level, it was also meant to be politically correct for respecting the history of land, and environmentally the best choice since the orchard at the village center and the fishpond at the lowest part of the village site become an ideal site for collecting filtered grey water before recycling.
Village Infrastructure for Water Recycling and Public Bath
4. Village Road:

The three-hundred-meter-long village road connecting village from the North Entrance to the South End is the infrastructure spine of the village, allowing the main sewage, power and cable line to be put under. A half-meter-wide rain water ditch is arranged in parallel to the one-and-half-meter-wide pedestrian road, filled with pebbles and water plants for filtering the grey water.

5. Water Recycling:

Along this three-hundred-meter-long roadside ditch, rainwater and grey water are gathered and gradually filtered by pebbles and plants into clean water while traveling down to the fishpond for collecting and
irrigation recycling. Black water is also collected separately at a large sewage tank specially treated by an organic filtering mechanism using oyster shell.

6. *Infrastructural Public Spaces:*
   The village is organized into the north, central and south sections, each with their own commons. In addition to arrange light posts and planting trees at the road junctions and patios for moderating the village sense of scale while creating public spaces. Through transforming small neighboring infrastructure nodes into public spaces, water meter boxes are designed to build on community benches to enhance the sense of community.
Transforming Infrastructure into Public Spaces
The layout of village master plan was developed in parallel to the establishment of the above principles. There are 50 family units, each with 1600 square foot of plot area to be allocated along the north-south main access road. With slightly different land prices set based on the location adjacency of each lot to the village entrance. Through open discussions and small group negotiations, three groups of communities were formed each taking the north, central and south sections.

Houses at the north section will either face the large commune farmland or adjacent to a linear greenery stretching toward a patio park near the secondary village entrance, connecting to a short cut foot trail leading to the bus stop. Houses at the central section will be
sharing an orchard of Longyan tree. They will also have a large old Banyan tree sit along the middle of their part of the main road. Houses at the south section will be adjacent to the foothill of mountain with woods and also the creek taking natural water down to the village.

The three-hundred-meter-long main pedestrian road is carefully animated from the village entrance to the back mountain. Starting from the entrance mailbox patio and the village grocery shop nearby the parking lot, the road leads to the commune farmland with a village pavilion in its center. Passing the orchard junction, with an array of public nodes of big trees, benches and patios arranged alongside the pedestrian road, leading us to the South Woods and foothill of the mountain. With the
southwest prevailing summer breeze sliding down from the mountain taking the fresh moisture along, the village is considered to be of good Fengshui standard: embracing the comfort of wind and water.

*Designing a Design Process: Prototypes + Variations*

When architects started the design work of the village houses, in addition to overcome the low budget and tight schedule, the major challenge that lay ahead was: How can we develop a design process that will lead to build
Prototype and Variations of Dwelling Facade
Prototype and Variations of Dwelling Units
天井型

正方型
up village consensus and neighborhood collation rather than divisively amplifying the differences? How can this process sustain the original vernacular quality of Choi Yuen Village and yet can be designed by architects and be built by contractors under the contemporary mechanism of building practice? Three types of dialectic relationships were identified, each with their potential dilemmas to be resolved in an integrated way during the design process.

1. Modern Design and Vernacular Process:

Under the mode of modern architecture practice, how can an architect design fifty village houses within three months of time that are still able to maintain the organic quality of vernacular houses normally developed through a long period of time? How can
we transform the model of “Prototype + Modification” in the theory of vernacular architecture into a design model that is applicable in the mode of modern housing design?

2. Collective Form and Individual Space Needs:
   Under the mode of contemporary construction process, how can an architect meet the different needs of each individual household while still able to develop a set of manageable working drawings that facilitates a manageable tendering process? Instead of ending up with making 50 different units of single family house design, how can we develop a design system that allows flexibility yet still be considered by contractor as a housing project for managing the cost of construction?
3. Interactive Bottom-up and Effective Top-down:

Working with the model of contemporary decision-making process in design, how can we moderate a participatory process that accommodates a variety of inputs from different houses, and still be able to maintain professional knowledge be effectively coordinate the design into a holistic entity? Rather than adopting convenient participatory design tactics like user-design workshop for making doll house-like models, or standard procedure of group discussion with roundtable conclusions, what are the other innovative ways that we can develop
Three Dwelling Prototypes Developed for Re-construction
in an interactive design process to accommodate sufficient feedback in a manageable manner?

After mapping out different patterns of existing village houses, and survey functional expectations of each household, two key measures were formulated for designing the design process: Prototype + Variation and the arrangement of Design Clinic. These two measures were critical to address the dilemma of collective vs. individual, as well as top-down vs. bottom-up. The final house designs not only ensure most houses face the prevailing summer wind and all rooms have windows on both sides for cross-ventilation, but also encourage most of them to be able to equip with rainwater collection pond and green-roof facilities.
1. Prototype + Variation

The first key measure is the establishment of three basic house prototypes, each was tailor-made for different site dimensions, orientations and layout expectations: A), the symmetrical three modular-bay horizontal block developed from the basic unit of Chinese traditional dwelling, with public hall in the central bay and kitchen on the side bay; B), the rectangular atrium block developed from the prototype of Chinese traditional shop-houses with public hall on the front and kitchen/dining space at the back; and C), the square shape block popular among villages houses developed in Hong Kong’s New Territories after the 1970s.

After a fixed structure dimension was set for exterior form, stairway and service
Participatory Handbook for Villagers Engagement
location, each prototype can be mirrored in plan for producing another twin type, and each type can also be further developed into more sub-types due to partition variations made for different user’s expectation on bedroom numbers or living room modules. After selecting their preferred prototypes from the three basic A, B and C types, workshops were arranged with each household to refine their partition preferences which will lead to the final adjustments on their doors, window patterns, color and material options. At the end, with the model of “Prototype + Adjustments”, the A, B and C prototypes were eventually developed into nearly 50 different variations but yet similar to three houses forms.

Different tactics were launched to facilitate the identification of villagers’ preferred types and to follow up the
design process. Three types of color pamphlets were delicately printed out like developer’s sale booklet to make villagers felt like they were making their choices with great respect. Each type of pamphlet was also laid out with plans of axiomatic renderings, model images as well as tick boxes for villagers to choose from. Although the design decision was finally made in the workshop session, the pamphlets and images prepared them for the design decision-making and opened up their imaginations about spaces.

2. Design Clinic: the method of participation

Before the final production of tendering drawings, three major two-day weekend workshops were arranged for design consultation. Normally, four neighboring households were invited together at one
time to take part in a one-and-a-half-hour-long workshop session. Sitting around a large table with the large-scale site model of the village and everyone’s houses placed in front of them, architects demonstrated possible building layouts within each house lot, while their future neighbors were all sitting around, giving friendly suggestions as well as making subtle negotiations on matters regarding potential blocking of views or winds. Conflicting issues were usually resolved and public interest was well-protected in this open mode of consultation.

Villagers will usually arrive early or stay behind to sit in other session’s discussions for trying to know more about the nationhood. With the six-session per day arrangement, 24 household design consultations can be completed within a day. The architect and villagers were
almost behaved like making medical doctor’s clinic consultation and attending appointments. With intensive, productive and interactive workshops which last for 3 to 4 weekends, although the architects were completely exhausted, the design decision for 50 village houses were eventually confirmed for moving forward to the final drafting.

Based on the agreed layout plans and the selected house types for each house, one set of working drawing which accommodates design of 50 units’ variations was developed for the tendering process. Parallel to the architectural design, with the help from expert team members, Choiyuan Village Concern Group and villagers held meetings nearly every once a week to resolve issues concerning site formation, drainage and infrastructures including
A VILLAGE PROCESS:

1. Installing Infrastructure  
2. Placing Temporary Shelter  
3. Housing Construction  
4. Resume Communal Farming
water and power supplies, waste, sewage and water recycling systems. Up to that point, even though it was challenging with various difficulties in front of us, it was an optimistic and rewarding process for the team - considering that we were about to build the first bottom-up ecological village in Hong Kong. The real challenge for the villagers to overcome in the next two years, was the village relocation and the frustration of long-awaited construction in the temporary shelters.

*Shelter Communal Space for Public Forums: Village Process I*

After nearly one year of struggles in demonstrations and protests, with support from press reportings and television documentations, the
government finally decided to take action to remove the village by the end of 2010, before the new village site is ready to be moved in. Not only the architectural design had to consider the location and layout for temporary shelters in the new village site before the construction can start, including the logistics of material moving for the house construction as well as the moving out of shelters after the completion of new village, the layout plan also strategically allows the reuse of infrastructures for temporary shelters provided by the government plan, to become the permanent ones for the new village.

In January 2011, all villagers finally moved into the temporary shelter in their new site, for the first time, spending their Chinese New Year away from the old home where they grew up in. In order not
Study of Vernacular Construction and Pavilion Concept
to affect the future house construction, the shelters were sub-divided into north and south sections, each occupying the future open spaces in planning. Common spaces were also arranged for the temporary shelter with the first courtyard used for vegetable garden and the other courtyard used for public gathering, meeting, commune lunch and village banquet party.

In the coming two years during the village construction, this open courtyard patio became the site not only used for village public activities, but also as a classroom for facilitating Hong Kong’s community movements: weekend guided tours for rural engagement, workshops for organic farming, experience-sharing sessions for sustainable planning strategy. Through the internet website, the temporary shelter of Vegetable
Installation by Villagers for Exhibition Pavilion of Hong Kong Biennale
Garden Village not only hosted visitors coming from different districts in Hong Kong, but also attracted scholars and progressive community groups from Taiwan, China, and other cities in Asia, building a platform in sharing experiences for alternative living.

*Pavilion Recycling from Architecture Biennale: Village Process II*

The village construction did not really get to start until April 2013, due to the unsettling negotiation on village access road, sewage disposal, and the construction cost and terms with contractors. To boost up the village spirit during the slow awaiting process, with the help of villagers, the architects designed a pavilion in Kowloon Park for the 2012 Hong Kong Biennale. In order
Exhibition Pavilion for Hong Kong Biennale
Notes on Recycling the Pavilion

The objective of building a pavilion in Kowloon Park for the Biennale is to recycle the pavilion back in the village after the exhibition, and this ecological pavilion will become the first construction project of public spaces for the village re-habitation. The pavilion also intends to become a public platform among the villagers, supporting groups and all citizens, for sharing ideas of organic farming, self-organized bottom-up approach, and sustainable design/construction process for rural Hong Kong. Through the action of dismantle, relocate and assemble, it also aims to consolidate differences and building up consensus for everyone over the idea of sustaining the green environment and protecting the homeland.

The building components are mostly coming from recycling wastes or renewable materials: plastic-bottle and recycle-cement wall, recycle wood panel and steel construction, shading-fabric used for rural agriculture. It also demonstrates experiments on solar panel, rainwater-collection for fishpond and irrigation use. Above all, it is an opposition against the typical procedure-rationale in decision making for Hong Kong's urban and rural environments, kicks-off an alternative design and planning for a democratic and grass-root process for shaping our city.
Notes on Recycling the Pavilion

The objective of building a pavilion in Kowloon Park for the Biennale is to recycle the pavilion back in the village after the exhibition, and this ecological movement is supported by the villagers, supporting groups and all citizens, for sharing ideas of organic farming, self-organized bottom-up approach, and sustainable development among the people. The building components are mostly coming from recycling wastes or renewable materials: plastic-bottle and recycle-cement wall, recycle wood panel, concrete foundation, steel poles are slotting instead of welding for the ease of disassembly of all building materials.

The building components are mostly coming from recycling wastes or renewable materials: plastic-bottle and recycle-cement wall, recycle wood panel, concrete foundation, steel poles are slotting instead of welding for the ease of disassembly of all building materials.

Disassemble of pavilion parts delivery towards Cai Yuen Village

Re-assemble of pavilion parts at Cai Yuen Village

Cai Yuen Village Pavilion Design

菜園村在九龍公園建亭的主旨之一，是示范生態回收的理念：在展覽展結束後，將九龍公園的村亭搬到元崗的菜園新村，成為居民新村建設的第一個公共空間。建亭的主旨之二，是希望透過建築雙年展，將九龍公園的菜園村亭，成為市民和村民的公共平台：透過生態亭的展示和活動，分享我們菜園建亭的理念，和新界有機耕種的心得。建亭的理念之三，是經由建亭、拆亭、遷亭、重建的過程，凝聚居民和支援社區團體的共識：在居民財政緊迫的條件下，如何以節約的方式，堅持對保衛家園與環境生態的理想。

生態亭的建築大部分來自回收或可回收材料和鄉村的做法：回收塑料瓶牆、水泥渣再生磚、可組裝鐵構件、菜園用黑紗網、回收木壓縮板；生態亭也同時同時也示範了實驗性的了太陽能發電板，以及雨水收集的魚池和澆灌裝置；生態亭更展示了人本而草根的民主參與過程，以及有別於香港一貫的由上向下、程序理性的規劃決策模式。
to promote the idea of sustainability, the pavilion will be recycled back to the village after the exhibition. Most of the pavilion components come from recycling wastes or renewable materials: plastic bottle and recycled cement wall, recycled wood panel and steel construction, shading-fabric used for rural agriculture. It also demonstrates experiments on solar panel, rainwater-collection for fishpond and irrigation uses. Through the public event of installation, it is hoped that this ecological pavilion will become the first construction project of public spaces for the village re-habitation.

The pavilion building also intends to become a public platform for the villagers, supporting groups and all citizens, in sharing ideas of organic farming, through a self-organized bottom-up approach, and sustainable
design/construction process for rural Hong Kong. Through the action of dismantling, relocating and assembling, it also aims to consolidate differences and build up consensus for everyone over the idea of sustaining the green environment and protecting the homeland.

Construction and Post-construction

The village construction finally started one year after the pavilion exhibition of Architecture biennale. After six-year-long negotiations, planning and designing, temporary sheltering and construction, the building of village houses was finally completed before the Chinese New Year of 2016. Through media reports and participations of social groups over nearly ten years, the project had made significant impacts to the
Exhibition Pavilion for Hong Kong Biennale
potential community designs in the region.

After two years of building completion, with the support of Knowledge Exchange Funding from HKU, the architects now continue their involvements with the villagers on shaping the communities’ spaces, including the infrastructural planning of vegetable farming, water irrigation systems and tree plantations. The making of new Choi Yuen Village is not only a struggle for the grass-root in protecting and building their new home, but also a collective opposition against the typical procedure-rationale in decision making for Hong Kong’s urban-rural environments. It introduces an alternative design-planning for a more democratic and bottom-up process in shaping our city.
Originality

How can we develop a design process that will build up village consensus and neighborhood collation rather than divisively amplifying the differences? How can this process sustain the original vernacular quality of Choi Yuen Village and yet can be designed by architects and be built by contractors under the contemporary mechanism of building practice?

The project demonstrates participatory planning strategies with originality, including Design Clinic and Pavilion Recycling. It also promotes innovative sustainable planning concepts including allocation of commune land for farming, conservation of existing cultural landscape, vehicular-free village
with pedestrian system, as well as public spaces and infrastructures with rainwater collection and wastewater recycling.

By formulating a typological based participation mechanism, as well as a set of architectural measures for facilitating green architecture, the project opens up new opportunities for community architecture against the mainstream mode of housing development in Hong Kong.
Rigor

Facing major challenges of design methods in this particular context, the project developed a rigorous design method and process of “Prototypes + Variations”. Accordingly, three types of dialectic relationship were identified, each with their potential dilemma to be resolved with in an integrated way during the design process.

1. Modern Design and Vernacular Process:
   How can we transform the model of “Prototype + Modification” in the theory of vernacular architecture into a design model that is applicable in the mode of modern housing design?

2. Collective Form and Individual Needs:
   How can an architect meet the different needs of each household while s/he can
still be developing a set of working drawing to facilitate a tendering process? How can we develop a design system that allows flexibility yet be considered as a housing project for feasible construction management?

3. Interactive Bottom-up and Effective Top-down:
   How can we moderate a participatory process that can accommodate a variety of inputs and still sustain a professional design practice? What innovative ways we can develop for an interactive design process accommodating manageable feedbacks?

   After conducting extensive mapping of village houses and functional surveys, three key strategies were formulated in designing the design
process:

1. Prototype + Variation
2. Design Clinic as a participatory mechanism
3. Architecture Biennale Pavilion Recycling

These three issues and three strategies were critical to address the dilemma of collective vs. individual, as well as top-down vs. bottom-up. The method of planning and design developed for the project demonstrated the rigor and originality of design research.
Significance

As a community re-habitation project in Hong Kong, the design of Choi Yuen Village marks a turning point in formulating alternative planning strategies for a bottom-up community development with grass-root participation, as well as shaping low-cost green architecture with organic farming in rural Hong Kong.

Starting as a protest against village re-location by the construction of High-Speed Rail, the movement marks a turning point in formulating alternative planning strategies for bottom-up development as well as green architecture with grass-root participation in rural Hong Kong. By formulating a typological based participation mechanism, as well as a set
of architectural measures for facilitating natural ventilation and lighting, the project opens up new opportunities for community-based green architecture against the mainstream mode of housing development in Hong Kong.

Through media reports and participations of social groups over nearly ten years, the project had made significant impacts to the potential design community in the region. The making of new Choi Yuen Village is not only a struggle for the grassroots to protect and build their new homes, but also a collective opposition against the typical procedure-rationale in decision making for Hong Kong’s urban-rural environments. The project kicks off an alternative design-planning for a more democratic and bottom-up process in shaping our city.
Dissemination and Evidence of Peer Review

The research project has been well disseminated through exhibitions, media reports, as well as peer reviewed awards and publications, including:

2016 WAACA Social Equality Award: Jury Chair: Cui Kai.
Exhibition

Choi Yuen Ecological Village, Hong Kong Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism, Kowloon Park, Hong Kong, 2012

Choi Yuen Ecological Village, HKIA Green Architecture Exhibition "Build4Green" at Build4Asia 2012, Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Center, Hong Kong, 2012

Award

2019
HKIUD Merit Design Award, Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design.

2016
CAMA Community Contribution Award: 4th China Architecture Media Award, PRC, Jury Chair: Wang Shu.

2016
WAACA Social Equality Award: WA Award for Chinese Architecture, PRC, Jury Chair: Cui Kai.
Publications


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Book Chapter:


Bibliography


第四届中国建筑传媒奖入围名单揭晓：年轻建筑师应坚持自己
的特有语言

2016年11月10日 17:52
来源：新成立

原标题：第四届中国建筑传媒奖入围名单揭晓：年轻建筑师应坚持自己
的特有语言

中青报快讯（记者李延军）  “人在哪呢？是藏哪的？怎么用？那么多的建筑就是一个场景，是一个空洞
的场景。”普利兹克建筑奖得主王世瑞在发言，这是第四届中国建筑传媒奖前会的讨论话题。

11月10日，经过8个小时的讨论，第四届中国建筑传媒奖的入围名单全部产生，中国当代建筑师的代
表刘家琨、张永和、张雷高票入选项目成就大奖，普利兹克建筑奖得主王世瑞，作曲家，朱小地（香港）则因延续中国建筑的品
质与建筑实践，跻身青年建筑师奖：吴辉建筑、大都会艺术博物馆等作品在国际影响力和创新力具备的建筑作品，获
得技术探索奖和文化贡献奖入围资格。

中国建筑传媒奖由生态环境，按照《第四届中国建筑传媒奖章程》，中国建筑传媒奖对中国两岸
三地的建筑及建筑从业者进行评选（包括港、澳、台、海外的建筑师），本届通过申报与提名两个渠道，收到共计135个
作品（人），经委会、评委评选，最终88个作品（人）进入初评，其中，项目成就大奖12个，青年建筑师奖10个，技术探索奖22个，文化贡献奖22个。

初评会在中国美术学院杭州校区举行，两位评审在评委网络提交初评意见后，评委委员会主席
吴国强建筑奖评委主席，中国工程院院士、香港中文大学工程学教授、建筑学教授、中国科学院院士、吴国强（Eric Chen），
东南大学建筑学院教授、前任院长赵蔚，中南大学建筑与城市规划学院教授、副院长李宁，台湾知名建筑
评论家黄世仁、清华大学建筑学院院长王世瑞出席初评会。

第四届中国建筑传媒奖主办单位为评委会，本由王世瑞担任评委主席，并由王世瑞对评委名单做出“自然建筑”作为评奖
的参考概念。中国当代建筑的影响力及创新力有所加强，本身在一个特殊的时期也应去思考。”王世瑞
说，“要做一个有比较明确的价值观的奖，而不是奖项的评选”。10日傍晚，来自台湾的建筑主持参与评选
项目的颁奖礼时，一度感叹，“这次名单太强了。”

从首届到第四届连续担任评委的吴国强也对此次建筑作品和评选意义予以了极高评价：“今年是一个
新的开始，很多建筑师，包括新锐建筑师群展示了优秀作品，他们都在不断努力，未来中国建筑的自然

2016
CAMAZ Community Contribution Award:
4th China Architecture Media Award,
Jury Chair: Wang Shu.

http://news.ifeng.com/a/20161116/5267324_0.shtml
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- Tugou village is a typical farming village on the Jiaozuo Plain. The villagers, artists, architects and students continuously develop the village within more than 10 years through the art interventions. Yunnan Elementary School is the most specific project within the whole project (see, coverpage, photo by Guanrong Liu). This page, below, the new houses for Dongtiguan villagers, designed by gsd, the design was made through the communications with residents and detailed researches, aiming to create a low-cost and re-producible Beautiful Village.

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Wang Weijen Architecture

菜园村 / 
CHOI YUEN ECO-VILLAGE
Keeping the existing pound and trees, constructing the road using the hedges from every house, and encouraging the public land policy are not only because they are the tradition of the old village, but more importantly, because we respect the existing land, hoping to reconstruct the value of environment through the goodness from everyone who wish to preserve their home.
菜园村新村是在2009年中环反高铁抗争失败之后，在没有政府扶持又不具备原住民建房土地的情况，村民选择自主觅地，生态建村的一个结果。在2010-2011年间，王维仁建筑师及其团队，在教授陈允中和香港土地正义联盟朱凯迪的介绍下，对村民进行了生态建村的知识普及，帮助其进行了新村规划和设计。

新村位于新界八乡元岗新村及大窝村之间，场地面积约为13,500平方米，呈长形，由北向南延伸开来，从头到尾走完大约20多分钟。居民都是1949年之后的移民，只能跟政府租土地耕种，不享有原住民的土地政策。在2010年春天，村民意识到搬迁势在必行，剩下的47户居民决定突破政府传统搬迁公屋的“拆村上楼”动迁模式，以自主方式觅地并生态建村。使其世代保留的农耕模式和村落居住状态得以永续的同时，开启了香港有机农业的新契机，让我们对香港的耕地政策进行了重新审视。

其项目的三大亮点在于：其一，王维仁建筑师团队为了让居民可以自如地参与新村建设，为他们定制了《居民完全手册》，使得居民可以了解设计相关的环保建材的选用、废水利用系统、房屋构造原理等问题，与其以建筑师的专业判断对村落设计进行决定和控制，建筑师选择了通过向居民传播生态建村的专业知识，使得使用者对新建过程进行了解和学习，让之后的建筑过程更加顺畅；其二，建筑团队也将此次迁村视为是对过去居住环境的一个改善，在保留菜园村传统生活状态的同时，结合了现代生活方式的新需求，为村落安置了新的服务设施。其三，宏观来讲，菜园村新建项目作为香港设计师们对于“生态建村”的一次实验，探讨了“有机耕种公田”模式在香港发展的可能性。

这或许可以算得上一次村落“自上而下”与“自下而上”共同发展实验的开始。建筑师作为整体规划风格的把握者，通过居民完全手册的定制以及数次会议后对居民意见的收集，使得居民们可以“自下而上”地设计他们未来的家。在设计过程中，建筑师与使用者处于完全平等的地位。双方在设计期间的每一个周末都聚在一起“像看病一样，一家接一家地进行开合讨论，既保证了设计的独立性，又让他们相互了解”。最终，从最初的三种基本房型衍生变换出47种不同的模型，让每户村民都拥有其“筑造的权利”。
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菜园村,新界,香港

设计/Design
王维仁建筑设计研究室

石岗菜园村关注组/Choi Yuan eco-Village Team

设计成员/Design members
王维仁、谢菁、谭咏雯、张思婷、阮颖彤、张羽、徐翥、谢民富

委托人/Client
香港菜园村/Choi Yuan eco-Village

场地面积/Site area
13,500 m²

建筑面积/Building area
4,060 m²

设计阶段/Design phase
2010

竣工/Completion
2011

时间轴/Timeline
2008年11-12月
政府宣布2010年清拆菜园村,村民组成“菜园村关注组”争取不拆不迁

2009年1月
政府首次进行高铁刊宪咨询,村民自发组织签署反对

2009年2-3月
村民举行义卖会,吸引外援人士,组成“菜园交接组”

2009年6月
政府第二次进行高铁刊宪咨询,村民再次收集逾一万份反对书

2009年10月
政府提出修订特惠赔偿方案,在村民坚持不迁不拆的情况下,政府仍在行政会议上通过了高铁拨款

2010年2月
菜园村宣布与政府达成共识,向政府集体登记并领取赔偿,以“农耕复兴计划”取得建屋牌照重建家园

2010年8-9月
村民初步决定购入大窝村与元岗新村之间的农地

2011年4-5月
村民分批迁入菜园新村临时屋

holding meetings to decide the placement of houses; above right, the study models through the design process; left, the distant view of the village; below, the old tree and the farm of the village
菜园村，新界, 香港
Choi Yuen Eco-Village, New Territories, Hong Kong

设计/Design
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石岗菜园村关注组/Choi Yuan Eco-Village Team

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2009年6月：政府第二次进行高铁刊宪咨询，村民再次收集逾一万份反对书
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2010年8月-9月：村民初步决定购入大窝村与元岗新村之间的农地
2011年4月-5月：村民分批迁入菜园新村临时屋

This page: above, the elevation; below, the view of the village; bottom, a child is biking along the shared alley which connected the whole village from the entrance to the end

This page: above left, the architect and villagers are holding meetings to decide the placement of houses; above right, the study models through the design process; left, the distant view of the village; below, the old tree and the farm of the village.
Yuen Eco-Village was constructed at the bottom of the mountain; left and below, the front garden not only brings the greenery to the village, but also provides the daily food and living funds for the villagers.
**Domus China:** 您觉得原来菜园村中最吸引您的地方是什么？
**王维仁:** 菜园村最吸引人的地方其实也就是“菜园”和周边菜园的一条小径。它们代表了最直接的人与人、与自然协商形成的生活和共享空间。村子里的上百户人家在战后逃离家乡来到香港，因为菜园为生活集结而成。来自各方不同的移民，因与共同的公共事务而协合同心。加上九十年来的修路灌溉以及人烟的聚落，共同创造了这个村落。每个村落的聚落形式就是由一条一米见宽的小径将每户人家的菜园和家屋串联起来。村民们大多来自广东潮州或客家，他们可能有各自的方言习俗却异中求同。原来的家屋前多半搭出棚架，成为舒适的日常生活场所，小径的两侧或是覆盖着茅草和菜蔬，或是果树或蔬菜。在村路上，白天看到的是远山大树，村口南北两处各有近来没有路灯的菜园。晚上看到的则是满天星斗，耳边是蛙叫虫鸣。此外，令我感慨的是这里的“民主”。菜园村的入口是位于公路旁的菜站，它是一个盖于卸货台上的大约200平方米的建筑。建筑是开阔式的遮棚，后方则是厢房和储藏室。菜站是为了货车运输新鲜菜蔬到香港岛市场以及村民在清晨贩卖的公共空间，同时也是村民会办公事的公共事务所。每当节庆和假日，附近学校的小学生也会到菜站来上课。

**Domus China:** 在设计过程中，您为团队制作了《菜园村完全手册》，您觉得这种重建能够成为村里公共空间叙事的一部分。
**王维仁:** 《菜园村居住完全手册》其实是过程中念头一动的即兴想法，希望发展出一种类似传统民居工匠和屋主间“原型”加“调整”的空间模式。最初的想法是要在九龙公园展场与村民搭建一个菜园村生态亭，展览完毕后拆下来搬到村里，便建成了菜园村的第一个公共空间。如今，我希望在未来一两年里策划一节设计课，带领学生继续完善这个公共亭。现在我好像成了菜园村的故事讲述者，过去五年里，居民等建新村，住在政府提供的临时铁皮屋里。记得在松阳平田村的四合院餐厅、民宿，以及最近界首村会堂、禹宫和卓庐的设计里，无论委托方是村民还是乡镇府，其共同目的都是挽留住这些吸引人的特点，大家共同参与的民主程序理性与发展至上的思维，是香港市民继天星码头、中业区警署、蓝屋和石塘咀的程序理性与发展至上的思维，是香港市民继天星码头、中业区警署、蓝屋和石塘咀之后的继续传承。我们在不同角落设计了不同的亭子和座椅，村民其实并没有太认真地看待这些公共空间，反而视之为一种环境的过渡性，而不是永久性。在《菜园村完全手册》中，我们为村民建立的是一种类似传统民居空间架构，可以从《菜园村完全手册》中看到，菜园村的入口是位于公路旁的菜站，它是一个盖于卸货台上的大约200平方米的建筑。建筑是开阔式的遮棚，后方则是厢房和储藏室。菜站是为了货车运输新鲜菜蔬到香港岛市场以及村民在清晨贩卖的公共空间，同时也是村民会办公事的公共事务所。每当节庆和假日，附近学校的小学生也会到菜站来上课。在设计过程中，您为团队制作了《菜园村完全手册》，您觉得这种重建能够成为村里公共空间叙事的一部分。

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**王维仁:** 在菜园村的设计中，我们强调“车不入村”。这不单是为了保留这样一条小径贯穿整条村的空间特色，更重要的是，它是一种可以发展的环境架构。菜园村是一个长期的环境调控计划，希望十年以后大树成荫，能有类似当年菜站一样的公共建筑得到实现，使新旧菜园村的入口是位于公路旁的菜站，它是一个盖于卸货台上的大约200平方米的建筑。建筑是开阔式的遮棚，后方则是厢房和储藏室。菜站是为了货车运输新鲜菜蔬到香港岛市场以及村民在清晨贩卖的公共空间，同时也是村民会办公事的公共事务所。每当节庆和假日，附近学校的小学生也会到菜站来上课。在设计过程中，您为团队制作了《菜园村完全手册》，您觉得这种重建能够成为村里公共空间叙事的一部分。

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香港新界菜園村重建

作品 | 1596

新界建築設計研究室有限公司

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南公共耕地
村南生態池

公共設施空間3
保留龍眼樹林

東入口/公共設施空間2

大樹/公共設施
村南保留樹林

溪流
土地廟/公共設施

大帽山麓
2015菜園村重建 - 香港新界

菜園村是2010年香港高層工程發展居民社區後的重建項目，也是於濰海的香港市民重返城市及田園空間實踐的案例。村民以自建方式為社區發展成功開創了先河，挑戰傳統的農業生產方式。菜園村的「菜園上層公寓」設計模式，也提供了香港市民一種發展新環境的實踐。本項目結合了社區、環境保護和經濟發展的三項目標，表現了社區如何在面對新環境的挑戰時積極發展自立的方式。

菜園村的規劃設計在歷史資料的基礎上，保存了原有地段的大樹魚塘和植樹的農業習慣，確立了規劃上「菜不入村」以及村內百分之四十的用地作為菜園公園和公共使用的空間；配置利用一米五寬的南北向沙壩，安排基礎設施與公共雨水和灰水的收集系統；以不同尺度的廣場節點，公共亭子，農產品樁，設置離的序列安排，沿著南北步徑形成村內北中南三個地段的公共空間特色，與整體的社區關係。在長達六年重建過程中，規劃配合了政府有關安置房安排基礎設施，並保留了未來的公園用地；政府有關安置房安排基礎設施，並保留了未來的公園用地；政府有關安置房安排基礎設施，並保留了未來的公園用地。也利用安置房的廣場教室定期舉辦生態農業工作坊，以及參與香港建築雙年展的生態亭展示，作為民眾社區及回顧社會的行動。

建築的設計則模擬傳統民居「原型加調整」的思考過程，以三開間、天井和路階的環節概念發展出ABC三種基本樣型。設計出一套參與的制度和過程，依居民的選擇和調整逐漸成四十七座戶型。完成施工圖面，建築的朝向圍呈引入季節的東西南北風，提供溫暖和調整元素的成長機會，以經濟和地性的材料組織合理的建築邏輯和美學。建築設計同時結合維持養生和醫學的雨水收集池，家家有水榭和樹，形成以屋為單位的小生態系統，全村再以每戶排除的中水灌溉和生態池，以及雨水收集的有機堆肥，提供村內的公共使用，並從遠處收集的雨水收集及雨水集水，形成以村為單位的大生態系統。（文：王維仁建築設計研究室有限公司）

![菜園村重建 - 香港新界](image)

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NEW CHOI YUEN VILLAGE
ECO-HOUSE DESIGN

菜园新村生态住宅

2009 年 12 月在香港中环的反高铁抗争，延续了 3 年前天星码头保育运动的精神，是后殖民时代的香港市民、投身城市及田园空间自主权运动的再次高潮。2010
年春天，抗争运动的主体成员菜园村村民和支援的民间关注团体化成行动，决定突破政府搬迁公屋的安排模式，以自立的方式觅地生态建村。这个运动在维系
社区的存续的同时，挑战了（程序理性的香港官僚体制数十年来一贯“拆村上楼”的动迁模式，更进一步地让我们重新审视香港新界的耕地政策，期时开启香港有机
农业的新契机。

菜园村的实质规划在居民社区行动与生态建村的基础上，保存了原有地块内的大小鱼塘和两组龙眼树林，确立了规划上“不拆村”，以及村内 40% 的土地作为集
体公园与公共使用的共识；配置以不同尺度的广场节点、公所亭宇、墙体廊椅、灯具配套的序列安排，沿着南北步道形成村内中轴三个社区的公共空间与特色，
强化村民对社区和地点的认同。

建筑的设计则模拟传统民居“原型加调整”的思考过程，以三开间、天井和院落的围合概念发展出三种基本原型，设计出一套参与的机制与过程。设计进一步依居
民选择的原型加以调整，发展出生后适应每家使用的 47 个户型，完成施工图发包文件。每户的配置结合耕作和邻里建筑，形成具有关系的院落系统；建筑的朝
向开窗引入夏季的南风穿堂风，并提供日间遮阳和遮掩束的加建可能，构造以使用经济和地域化的材料为原则，建立合理的建构逻辑和地域美学。

生态建筑的理念同时获得村民的一致认同与支持。除了每个房间都有双面采光和自然对流通风之外，设计同时结合屋顶覆草和庭院的雨水收集池。除了形成降温储
水的庭院环境，更强调家家的宅院都有大树和菜园，形成以房屋为单元的小生态系统，全然再集中每户排出的灰水。在 2m 宽的村路一侧设置生态过滤水渠，以
及时雨村北两个生态储水池和黑水收集的有机堆肥系统，灰水和黑水的过滤除了提供村内的公所灌溉使用，还促进大区域的水循环以及防洪集水，行成以村为单元
的大生态系统。

设计从规划到建筑，分别表现下列 12 个重要的主题：
1. 社区意识：由高铁动迁的抗争和生态建村的民主参与，形成村民的社区共识；2. 公田公社：由村民有机耕种的公田和合作社经营，开启香港农业复耕的起点；
3. 不拆村：以村口停车场和 2m 宽的村内道路，控制低碳排放的乡村整体环境；4. 鱼塘果树：利用已有的鱼塘设施和龙眼树林，保存新界原有的地域文化背景，
5. 养风聚水：结合背后的山势和贯穿全村的溪水，掌握风水原则与地域感官地景；6. 大小中：利用不同设施需求，营造大小中不同尺度的广场和多样的公共空间；
7. 宅院形态：发展基本建筑形态组合和变化，体现“原型加调整”的民居设计模式；8. 合建天井：以建筑的围合以及天井空间的安排，形成中国传统聚落的院落空间；
9. 南风穿堂：利用建筑的朝向和开窗，形成对通风和自然采光的室内物理环境；10. 开间模型：以经济的结构和空间关系，促成模型化的营建系统和建构的诗意；
11. 水不漏：以雨水、灰水和黑水的循环利用，形塑有机耕种自给自足的生态系统；12. 村民参与：以简易 ABC 建筑手册和工作坊，建立居民参与和修改机制。
Voices from the Vegetable Garden

‘New’ Choi Yuen Village: Planning and design

The planning and design for Choi Yuen Village – “Village of Vegetable Garden”, – was a major community rehabilitation project in Hong Kong’s North West New Territories. Spread over nearly a decade, it was conducted in parallel with a large civic movement concerning issues of land justice, agriculture policy, patterns of rural housing and sustainable farming.

The project had its origins in a protest against the village’s relocation due to the construction of the High-Speed Rail Link, when 200 villagers rejected the government’s resettlement proposal to move them into public housing and instead fought for maintaining their long relationship with the land through farming. With the help of social activists, professionals and academics, the movement marked a turning point in the formulation of alternative planning strategies for bottom-up development, organic agriculture, green architecture and grassroots participation in rural Hong Kong.

After an eight-year period of planning, design and construction, the project completed 50 low-cost village houses featuring a range of sustainable design concepts including conservation of fishponds and orchards, allocation of communal land for organic farming, arrangement for a vehicular-free pedestrian system, as well as provisions for public spaces and infrastructure.

By formulating a typology-based participation mechanism, as well as a set of architectural measures for facilitating natural ventilation and lighting, the project opened up new opportunities for alternative community architecture different from mainstream housing developments in Hong Kong.

Planning the village

In the planning stage, through workshops and discussion, consensus was reached among villagers on the following principles:

- **Car-free village**: with car park spaces in the village front, a vehicular-free pedestrian road was set for the main access to each dwelling unit.
- **Commune farm land**: with 1/3 of the land for public use, two large pieces of communal land were designated for collective farming.
- **Conserving landscape**: with the original fishponds and orchards preserved as public facilities, the original (agri)cultural landscape was conserved.
- **Village road**: the main village road connecting north to south was to accommodate infrastructure including sewage, power and cabling, integrating with rainwater ditch for future grey water recycling.
- **Public spaces**: with large, medium and small village commons across different sections, ideas for using lamp posts, tree patio, benches and road junctions as communal spaces were adopted to enhance the sense of community.

The main pedestrian road is carefully animated all the way from the village entrance to the mountain at the back. Starting from the entrance patio and grocery shop near the parking lot, the road leads to communal farmland with a pavilion in its centre. Passing the “orchard” junction, public nodes of big trees, benches and patios have been arranged nearby the earth shrine. With the woods and communal farmland at the end,
the road leads to the foothills and freshwater streams coming from the mountain. With the southwest prevailing summer breeze coming down from the hill bringing fresh moisture, the village is considered to have good feng shui: the 'wind' and 'water' of comfort.

**Designing a modern vernacular**

The major challenge in designing the village houses was to develop a process that could sustain the vernacular quality of the original Choi Yuen Village while also being built by a contractor through the contemporary tendering process. How can an architect incorporate the needs of 50 different households with one set of standardised working drawings? How can we develop a design system that allows flexibility yet still can be considered as one housing project for managing the cost of construction? How can we moderate a participatory process that can accommodate a variety of inputs and still be able to effectively coordinate the design drawings? How can we transform the model of "Prototype + Modification" in vernacular architecture into a design model that can be applied to modern housing design?

For the 50 house units, after intensive discussions and explorations, three prototypes A, B and C were established to fit different programme needs and site conditions:

- **A** symmetrical three modular-bay block adopted from Chinese traditional dwelling;
- **B** rectangular atrium block adopted from the traditional shophouse type;
- **C** square block popular among contemporary New Territories village houses.

Three design pamphlets were produced for each type with plans, axonometric models and renderings to facilitate the villagers' spatial imagination and decision-making. Each household selected its preferred prototype A, B or C, which was then transformed into a detailed layout. Each prototype had fixed structural dimensions for its exterior form, stairway and services location, but was then developed into several sub-types with variations set by different user needs.

Additional workshops were arranged to finalize the site plan of each house lot. The 50 houses were divided into several neighbourhood groups based on their location adjacency. Sitting around a large-scale village site model, the architects demonstrated possible site layouts for each house lot. Rather than having a clinic appointment with a doctor, each household had a time slot scheduled for design consultation and decision-making. Often with their neighbours sitting around making suggestions, people resolved conflicting issues through negotiations in order to guarantee they got the best shared outcome. After several rounds of intensively productive interactions, the final designs for all houses were settled between architect and villagers. Based on the selected house types and agreed layout plans, one set of working drawings accommodating 50 unit variations was completed for tendering and construction.

**Village-making continues**

Parallel to the architectural design, and with the help of experts arranged through the Choi Yuen Village Concern Group, the architects and villagers resolved issues for arranging temporary accommodation, construction sequence, site formation, drainage and infrastructure including water and power supplies, waste, sewage and recycling systems. The villagers faced a challenging few years in temporary accommodation throughout the construction period. Besides arranging the public patios and farmland for the shelter layout, the architects also engaged the villagers in events such as community design workshops and building an ecological pavilion in Kowloon Park for the Hong Kong Biennale in 2012.

The final completion of village houses in 2017 marked another point of departure for improving the village environment in the next ten years: planting trees, planning farmland and an irrigation system, building patios and benches, a public kitchen and a community hall, and setting up the water recycling system.
Beyond Choi Yuen Village

Weijen Wang and Chu Hoi-dick on the right of living

Background

Choi Yuen Village could be an alternative model for village redevelopment in Hong Kong. It also provides us an opportunity to rethink beyond a village the larger context on the way we could plan and manage our rural land better. Between development and conservation, the fundamental questions are, what is our position over the rural-land policy and agriculture? How are we able to sustain a better symbiotic urban-rural relationship?

But to me, this 37% has a lot to do with villages, which are unfamiliar even to New Territories residents if they live in new towns. For example, if you live in Tin Shui Wai, you may not be aware of the ‘soil dumping’ issues (耕墾地).

Choi Yuen Village belongs to the second-generation villages that were found by immigrants after WWII but later declined together with agriculture in Hong Kong. When the government planned to clear the village for the High Speed Rail, the dying village became the focus of public concern. On one hand, people cared about the fundamental right of living, whether one can decide on his lifestyle. On a broader level, they rethought the nature and future of the New Territories as a major part of the city. In this context, the relocation of Choi Yuen Village was
perceived as a re-creation, i.e. an experiment in new accommodation and way of living.

**WW** The beginning of the Choi Yuen Village action was about rehabilitation and social justice: how could we help those villagers continue their farming and stay with the land? If they have to be relocated, how to find a piece of new land for rebuilding a village and how to build village houses better?

When we acquired the land started to lay out the plan, we soon realized that we needed to make a strong proposition on maintaining a portion of the farmland as communal farmland, as well as promoting a vehicular-free village in order not to be another suburban housing development. Village houses in Hong Kong originally followed the traditional village layout pattern of southern China, a grid system with courtyard houses and ancestral halls, and a pond in the village front facing the fields. This village pattern has been completely changed by the Small House Policy, which destroyed the basic relationship between humans and land. The 3-storey Ding House provides 2,100 sq. ft, which becomes the floor area capital that is beyond a family’s necessity. In Choi Yuen Village, we provided much less, 300 sq. ft per family in a 2-storey house, to see if they could still have a base for developing quality living environment with their adjacent vegetable plots. We have to continue the Choi Yuen Village project by planting trees and building communal spaces. However, one thing we couldn’t achieve was the vision for an eco-village with grey and black water recycling. At the time everyone was enthusiastic, but the concept was gradually toned down by the tight budget and other practicalities.

**Debates and difficulties in the process**

**CH** Both professor Wang and I projected idealistic thoughts to the village. I remember his initial idea was to plan the new village compactly to save more land for the communal farm. However, people felt uncomfortable to live closely as they were not in the same clan as the indigenous villagers were. This is what we call ‘the process’, in which we had to choose between decisions made by the community and those by ourselves. Sometimes idealistic thoughts would win, and sometimes we had to make compromises. For instance, many male villagers wanted to drive home, because their land lots were big enough for parking. But we argued that driving would hinder interactions between residents, like what happens in housing estates. We debated and voted, deciding to have no car access in the end. The car-less main road became a key feature that provides a lot of communication among residents.

**WW** There are other issues like grey water recycling, public spaces, tree planting, as well as the height of fence-wall, originally designed to be only 4 feet high, but is now out of control.

**CH** Decisions were made collectively; some villagers who respected Professor Wang would follow the designed height, but others decided to build a 6-feet high wall out of their own vision of a better life. It is interesting that there are all kinds of people here.

**WW** For instance, we offered several patterns of cheaper simple bricks to build, at the end many preferred tiles like those on luxury houses. I also have to admit that I am a bit disappointed by its architectural appearance, which looks very different from our original design. But all in all, I think the overall environment is still much better than the surrounding village developments. Some earlier planning and design decisions were crucial to the final outcome. During site planning stage, we respected the existing trees, water pond and the overall Feng Shui, and reserved some areas for conservation and public use, rather than dividing up the land into equally sized lots. We also developed house prototypes with variations and a mixture of combinations for different site conditions. Therefore, the village is different from a generic, cookie-cutter-like model. The issue is, can the new Choi Yuen Village be a reference for the government to review village house regulations, or to open up design possibilities for new village housing?

**CH** The village houses are built under the Agricultural Land Rehabilitation Scheme, so we have 40% farmland. Now my mission is to demonstrate its possibility for other developments. For instance, in many NDAs, the government is against the relocation of villages. However, taking Choi Yuen Village as example, 1.6 ha of land was compensated for the resumption of 27 ha of land, which is quite reasonable.

**Distorted relations between humans and land**

**WW** Yes, considering the future of rural villages in Hong Kong, the
focus should be agriculture and nature, as well as building up a healthy model for “farming living,” rather than just expanding suburban housing or maintaining the Small House Policy offering building rights to indigenous males. This issue involves huge interests of indigenous villagers and developers which need tremendous efforts to resolve. However, it is also a critical issue as the current village model is not sustainable, and we cannot afford to continue consuming the remaining land.

CH As I observe, houses and farmland were closely linked in the past. Farmland was the place for production, while producers lived in farmhouses. The two should be balanced. The commodification of Ding Houses broke that relation, so everyone is concerned about maximising village houses and expanding their own villages. I think houses built in the future should not be a commodity but about everyday needs and the right of living. It can be an indigenous right, or a right for agricultural producers. The revival of agriculture in Hong Kong is a critical issue because there are 3,000 hectares of abandoned farmland. It is also an opportunity to explore an alternative form of dwellings and think about the right of living.

WW This is a critical issue. What would be the relationship between the underused farmland and the village? What is the percentage of villagers that are still farming? Can we draw a plan to link farmland to each existing village? How can we activate the land subordinated to each village to close the gap between farming and living? Through policy and planning, how can we reorder the population of villagers to accommodate those willing to farm? How can we develop an alternative village model to coordinate dwellings and farmland for rural Hong Kong?

In the current model, most people living in the village don’t need to farm. Can we set a minimum requirement for village living by involving, even indirectly, some agriculture production or tax contribution? Can we have new regulations and housing types to encourage more farmers live in the village?

CH In Yuen Long New Village (元朗新村), which I am also working on, none of the total 500 villagers are actually farmers. They live there for more space or cheaper rent, but they commute to the city for work every day. What should be their roles in the village? First, they are consumers of agricultural products. On the other hand, I have to introduce the possibility of agriculture to them, because they treat the place simply as their bedrooms, disconnected from the surrounding natural landscape. In recent years, I have a responsibility in mind to transform their identity as residents of Pat Heung (八鄉), with unique food culture that links to agriculture. By doing so, I can let this group of people rethink the New Territories.

WW The question also includes: How can we engage residents of luxury village houses to care about their village community or to contribute to the rural environment, instead of the number of houses possibly built? How can we re-build an identity for all villagers, farmers or not, that can always relate to the conservation of rural land, nature and agriculture. Should we set up a new type of village houses for new farmers? Can we encourage potential farmers to buy the land by granting them minimum rights to build houses?

CH It’s too idealistic to think about village revival if land investment is so profitable in Hong Kong. Farmland is so dissociated from agricultural production that you can never own the land by farming. If land is owned by investors, what can the government do? Now, the government is implementing two policies, the agriculture park and Agricultural Priority Area which encourages landowners to rent the land to farmers.

WW In Switzerland or Japan, the government sustains the rural landscape by subsidizing agriculture, allowing farmers to continue maintaining the farmland. In Taiwan, the regulations are requiring owners of the new farmhouses, often rich urban dwellers, to maintain farming or employ others to farm. That may sound funny but it is the same way how traditional rural landlords maintain the productivity of farmland. If new young farmers cannot afford to own a piece of farmland, landlords can work with the farmers as the managers, or simply collect rent for the farmland. On the planning of New Territories...

CH That depends on the government’s attitude. It will only intervene in the free ‘land’ market if it has a strong will for an issue. The land in the N.T. is really our legacy to deal with global issues such as sustainability and food self-sufficiency. However, the ‘Land Debate’ has skipped these aspects, forcing you to think with an industrialized mind that there are no other needs than housing needs, and that these needs have to be fulfilled by more land, but not better allocation and distribution.

WW I personally think the land supply issue for housing, and the rural-agricultural land issues in the New Territories should be addressed separately. If you believe in the symbiotic balance needed between city and countryside, and consider agriculture is crucial to nature,
ecology and food supply, there should be debates and legislation to guarantee the maintaining of over 30% farmland in the countryside.

CH To choose between reclamation and development in the New Territories, we should actually choose the former if we want to revive the villages. You cannot duplicate the natural environment in the reclaimed areas. It is hard to imagine reviving villages there. It is paradoxical that reclamation and destruction of villages are happening simultaneously, and all our possibilities get ruined. That’s why Hong Kong people feel so hopeless even if they spot the problem.

WW I believe we should keep the countryside the way it is. If the government recognizes the value of agricultural land and villages in Hong Kong, we should find a way to renew our village patterns, just like how the URA is renewing our urban architecture, creating a good mixture of village housing type and market. If we sacrifice 1-2% of the current rural land, we can explore a type of better sustainable and ecological community. We can lower the density of some village houses, and increase the height and density of other village houses, testing how to accommodate more people while maintaining the sense of rurality. If some people in the current villages want to farm, we can think of how to re-organize the farmland with the new village house typology.

At the same time, a small percentage of farmland can be reserved as agricultural housing, with restricted use condition and transaction, probably one or two storeys high, for those who are willing to engage in farming and care of the rural land. All these can help shape a future vision of diversified village patterns with rural land.

CH First, we have a model of agricultural production in mind, one that is small-scale and domestic.

However, what the government is introducing is the capital-intensive, commercialized model from mainland China, where a lot of agriculture corporations are swallowing up small-scale farming.

On the other hand, how do we bring rural issues back to the public eye? Now, the political system from Helena Yee Kuk (the Rural Council, 宍廈) Rural Committee, to Village Representatives is all dominated by vested interests. People are resigned to the condition, but we must open up the political space and re-capture the future of our city, letting the public decide, instead of the rich or the landowners.

When I talk to those indigenous leaders, they have no idea why the public hates them so much. To them, Ding House is the right they won after fighting with the British army and sacrificing the lives of many ancestors. But in my opinion, we need different parties to make concessions and take collective responsibilities when considering the city future.

Land justice and the choices of living

WW Going back to the concern of land justice when we help Choi Yuen Village, I don’t know whether your concerns are still in line with other Land Justice League members, regarding visions and key agendas of concern.

CH Our subject matter is democracy. Speaking of the rural environment, who owns the land and who has the right to decide the use of it, a tenant farmer who has rented and worked on the land for years, or the absentee landlord? Questions of land justice are often neglected in Hong Kong. For the NENT development, the public is confronted with two choices, either to support the villagers, or the government’s dispossession plan. Both are too superficial. We need to think in a deeper way i.e. what kind of city are we going to build? In Hong Kong, even if you have a hundred million dollars to buy a luxury house, you can only chose from what developers have built. When people talk about a new town with a 200,000 population, their concerns are not about living better lives but whether they have their place there.

WW These are questions on how to ensure sufficient diversity and mechanisms of control for people, land and houses. The situation is overly simplified now in Hong Kong, which is the government builds public housing, developers build private housing, and the remaining goes to Ding houses in the villages. The system cannot address the increasing complicated situation which needs much more sophisticated resolution, plus we don’t have enough choices and are losing control on how we live and manage our land.

CH It is strange that everyone fights for democracy, but no one has the sense of belonging to the land or proposes any alternative to conventional city planning. So issues are always thought in two extremes. Activists would only protest to the golf course and claim that it should all be re-planned for public housing. Such protest is ineffective and their claim is too shallow. Sometimes, I wonder why the golf course can’t be a park. Objection to retaining the golf course doesn’t mean building more houses on it, right?
菜园新村生态住宅，香港，中国
Choi Yuen Eco-village Redevelopment, Hong Kong, China, 2015

建筑设计：王维仁，谢菁/王维仁建筑设计研究室
Architects: WANG Weiren, XIE Jing/Wang Weijen Architecture

The project consists of a set of detailed designs for a low cost eco-village and its buildings, demonstrating sustainable design concepts including conservation of fishpond and orchard, allocation of commune land for organic farming, arrangement for a vehicular-free pedestrian system, as well as development of public spaces and infrastructures with rain water collection and waste water recycling.

项目信息/Credits and Data
客户/Client: 香港菜园村/Choi Yuen Village
地点/Location: 香港锦田/Kam Tin, Hong Kong
主创建筑师/Principal Architect: 王维仁/WANG Weijen
设计团队/Project Team: 阮颖彤, 谭咏雯, 张思婷, 张羽, 邢等, 谢民富/TAN Yongwen, ZHANG Siting, RUAN Yingtong, ZHANG Yu, XU Zhu, XIE Minfu
建筑面积/Floor Area: 4060m²
设计时间/Design Period: 2010-2011
建成时间/Completion Time: 2015
CHOI YUEN ECO-VILLAGE
REDEVELOPMENT

香港新界菜园村

设计者：王维仁建筑设计师研究室 + 石东菜园村关注组
地点：香港新界元朗
委托人：香港菜园村
设计成员：王维仁/谢隽/谢东麒/张思樱/胡其麟/张锦/徐嘉/谢春富
场地面积：13,500 m²
建筑面积：4,060 m²
设计时间：2010年
完成时间：2011年

新桥菜园

2009年12月在香港中环的反对铁抗争，延续了三年前天星码头保育运动的精神，最后成功推动政府立法保护。这个运动在维园村的推进的同时，也推动了香港新界东北部青衣岛，从而开启了香港新界未来的发展。

菜园村的建筑形态和规划在居民区和生态村的基础上，保留了原有地块内的大小鱼塘和山脉的龙脉山林，确立了规划上“不拆村”原则，以及村内40%的水体作为集体公共使用。配置以不同尺度的广场空间，公共泳池，体育休闲，灯具照明，步行道路，游步道，小径以及阶梯。沿山南下，漫步在山中，感受自然与人文的和谐。

考虑到设计的灵活性和未来发展的需要，这个项目在设计时考虑到不同的需求，例如公共空间、居所、商业，以及与周边环境的和谐共存。设计团队在建造过程中，也积极与当地居民互动，以确保设计符合他们的需求和期望。

The re-habitation project helps 200 villagers in rural Hong Kong to build their new home as the result of relocation due to the new construction of High-speed Rail between Hong Kong and Mainland. Three housing prototypes are developed for activating participations as well as developing a shared building pattern, social value. Local materials and tectonic principles are explored to ensure a low-cost and environmentally sustainable project.
The Department of Architecture educates students in an active culture of service, scholarship and invention. Uniquely situated at the crossroads of China and global influence, the Department takes the approach that design is best explored from a sophisticated understanding of both. With a multidisciplinary curriculum emphasizing technology, history and culture, students gain broad knowledge and skills in the management of the environmental, social, and aesthetic challenges of contemporary architectural practice. With opportunities for design workshops, international exchanges, and study travel, graduates of the Department of Architecture are well prepared for contribution to both international and local communities of architects and designers.