

Extending the Value of Participatory Workshops in Hong Kong and China: Service, Teaching, and Research

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INTRODUCTION

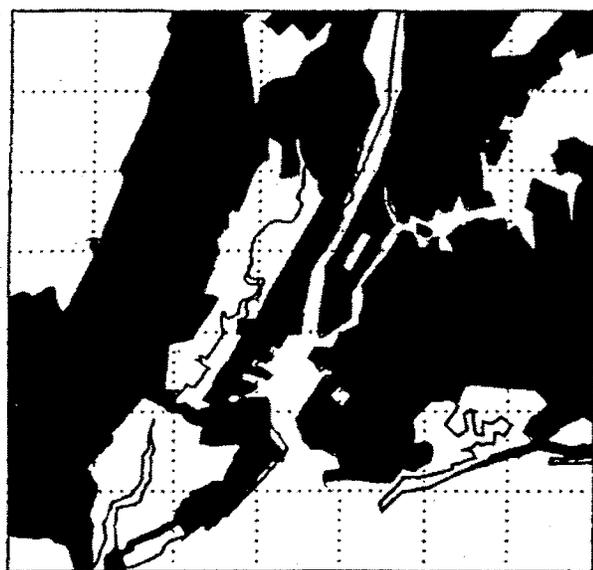
Participatory design and planning, in which designers act the role of facilitators rather than protagonists, was formalized in the United States and the United Kingdom as far back as the 1960's (1). As an activity, it has roots in social housing movements of the 1930's, even as far back as town meetings in the American colonies. While some experienced practitioners in the United States feel the activity as it has been practiced may have reached its limit as a socially valuable methodology (2), Asia has a large unmet need for such activity. In Hong Kong, only after colonial style top-down planning was open to change after the Handover, has the public been able to express their feelings, other than as Objections to government plans in a formal way.

This paper describes the setting of Hong Kong as a planning and design context, and an annual activity called "Designing Hong Kong" (DHK), initiated in the fall of 1997,

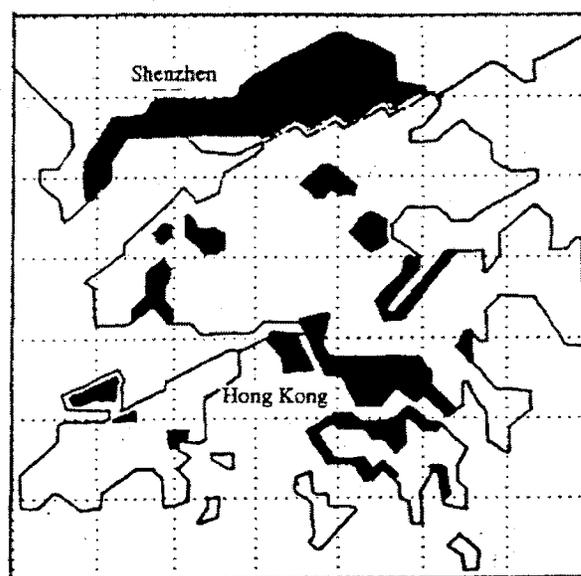
soon after the Handover of Hong Kong's sovereignty from Britain to China took place. Its origins, its first two major workshops, follow-on workshops, and its influence in Hong Kong and China are described. For the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), its most lasting value is as a catalyst in terms of teaching, service, and research. The extensions from the primary activity are described and diagrammed as they presently exist, and projected into the near future.

THE SETTING: HONG KONG AND THE PEARL RIVER DELTA

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a geographical extension of the hilly eastern rim of the Pearl River Delta, which has its head near Guangzhou (Canton). It is a small place, 1000 sq. km. comprising a peninsula and an island, on which sits the intensive central districts. Nearly 7 million people live on only 20% (200 sq. km.) of that land, the



New York 11 million



Hong Kong/Shenzhen 11 million 8 km.

Fig. 1. Comparative Urban Land Coverage for 11 million people

rest being mountainous watershed and country park. Another 4 million people live just across the now-internal border, in the city of Shenzhen.

Hong Kong, partly because of land constraints, has already developed into one of the world's most dense and vertically oriented cities. Residential densities in older neighborhoods such as Mong Kok average over 3000 people per hectare, and in the new towns over 1500. The city is now predicted to grow from just over 6 million people in 1997 to over 8 million people over the next 15 years. Limitations on future developable land, particularly with public sentiment growing against maximizing reclamation, will likely force Hong Kong to become even more compact and vertically oriented than it is today.

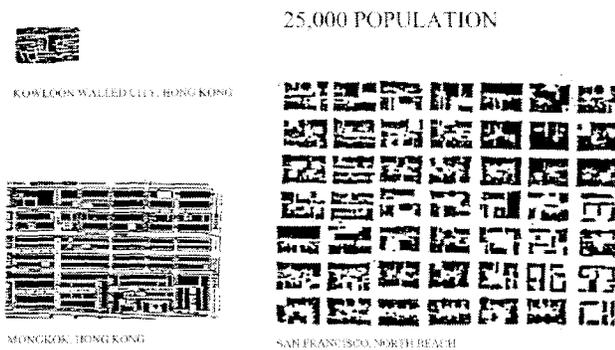


Fig. 2. Comparative Neighborhood Footprints for 25,000 people

Hong Kong is truly one of the world's first truly 3-D cities, with large numbers of people squeezing into a land-scarce colony. Much of the central district has a second-floor layer of shops, pedestrian flyovers, interconnected walkways, and hillside escalators and moving sidewalks. Fitness centers have been one of the first to recognize the value of glass-fronted shops three and four stories high to take advantage of the multi-layered pedestrian flow.

As a former British colony, Hong Kong has an infrastructure of top-down planning, and almost no history of community involvement. A typical example is that of redevelopment, concentrated in the Hong Kong Government's Land Development Corporation. In Wanchai, for instance, the objective of clearing slums to be replaced by office centers has been under way for several years without any community meetings.

DESIGNING HONG KONG — THE PROCESS

Designing Hong Kong started with a young architect, a politician, and an academic concerned about the domination of urban design in Hong Kong by government and large development corporations. An action committee was formed in the summer of 1997, comprised of members of the Young Architects League, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and several local financial and architectural firms.

The format chosen was aimed at maximum engagement of the public (and minimum professionalism) in the generation of design. Each year, a challenging focal site is chosen, one

which "makes visible" several design issues under discussion that year in Hong Kong. DHK 98 focused on issues surrounding large-scale government land reclamation, DHK 99 on government redevelopment impacts on an older neighborhood. DHK 00 has just this past spring focused on issues of tourism and sustainability in an outlying part of Hong Kong island.

The process includes the following steps:

- 1) Selection of challenge site and focus issues by organizing committee;
- 2) Background research by CUHK student team (fall semester);
- 3) Interviews with residents, street information-gathering workshops;
- 4) Preparation of briefing booklet, including background, issues, site maps as required;
- 5) Preparation of public exhibition focusing on issues, residents, community, summaries of research findings, and catalysts to involvement (Christmas break);
- 6) Selection of potential team coordinators (not leaders)
- 7) Briefing Session for explanation of the challenge, the issues, background research (early February);
- 8) Brainstorming workshop (charrette) in an open public setting (February or March);
- 9) Public symposium with community, corporate, legislative, and design-profession speakers and panelists to discuss the results of the design workshop;
- 10) Followup organization for specific projects, publication, public outreach.

DESIGNING HONG KONG 1998

Designing Hong Kong in 1998 focused on issues of what the public was beginning to perceive as excessive large scale government reclamation, with more benefit to developers than to the public (3). It is important to note that there was no intention to produce plans at a level to compete with government plans, only to create illustrated concepts to raise public awareness of the issues.

The soon-to-be-vacated site of the present Kai Tak airport was selected as a challenge site. The 350 ha. Kowloon Bay/Kai Tak site, the Challenge Site for the charrette, is highly visible and contains most Hong Kong issues: polluted water, rail extensions, neighboring industrial and residential land in need of redevelopment, and dramatic view and waterfront possibilities. The site is the center of controversy about reclamation - the government proposes that the bay be filled for a new town of 350,000 people. Participants were to consider an urban complex which would accommodate the projected new population of up to 300,000 people and their community institutions, would be less demanding of reclaimed land than the Government scheme, and more compact and vertical while maintaining a rich streetscape and sense of community.

The teams were as well asked to produce creative concepts for structuring ownership, finance, regulations, and infrastructure, as well as urban design or architectural concepts, for



Fig. 3. Designing Hong Kong Charrette teams at Pacific Place Atrium

a more compact and complex three-dimensional urban future. Earlier, students at The Chinese University had proposed a no-reclamation concept with up to 300,000 population being compacted onto the present Kai Tak runway, which turned out to be representative of the work of the later charrette teams.

In Pacific Place, a large in-city shopping centre, workspaces were created by exhibition panels in the midst of its largest atrium, which serves as one of the major crossroads of the city. The exhibition was designed and executed by students from The Chinese University of Hong Kong's Architecture Department, and illustrated the transitions from two-dimensional city of the 60's to the three-dimensional environment of Hong Kong today. The images, particularly hundreds of photographs of Hong Kong people in all walks of life, were compelling and highly successful in drawing people to stray from their hurried paths and see what was going on.

The charrette, the brainstorming workshop, then took place in the four cubicles created by the exhibition. Surrounded by the activity of shoppers and others, the design teams worked all of a Friday and Saturday. This event, unique for Hong Kong, was extremely public, and the students polled passersby as to their feelings about Hong Kong today and tomorrow. With easels, paper and marker pens handy, many members of the public took advantage of the opportunity to put their ideas onto a "democracy wall" (4). Some, especially children, contributed sketches and drawings.

At the followup symposium several speakers discussed the challenge site and the team presentations, generally agreeing that the modern city has put too much emphasis on "private" — uninviting buildings, forbidding spaces — and not enough on the "public" realm, and they praised the charrette teams for

their emphasis on creating do-able ideas for community in the face of hyper-density. Perhaps because this symposium was so open, and purposely structured to attract non-architects, the discussion quickly shifted from design to implementation, to policy, how to shape the city, how to get issues before government, how to effect positive change in the urban environment.

The panel recommended that the charrette organizers seriously address the means to put the issues raised before government and the public, and to find the means for implementation steps, however small, towards a more livable urban environment. This took place through discussions with some government department heads, and through followup publication in local magazines and newspapers (5).

The basic format was felt to be successful in terms of events and content. What was missing was representation by community groups, social work agencies, and participation by government planning and other departmental staff. Both the organizers and several observers were aware of the academic and designer dominance of the teams and the content, so work started in earnest soon after the symposium to reach out and broaden the participatory base.

DESIGNING HONG KONG 1999

By spring of 1999, Designing Hong Kong had matured and expanded to include on its organizing committee a social agency, the St. James Settlement. The focus of the efforts was to be upon people and community, the impact of ongoing imposition of redevelopment actions, and development of resident-focused alternative options. Through a series of street and indoor workshops, average residents of Hong Kong would be polled as to how they feel about community and livability, the environment in which they live, and to discover how they view it and its past, present and future, before initiating sessions on design brainstorming.

Wan Chai is a community which is representative of inner Hong Kong and its problems and issues. Already several CUHK class and research projects had focused there, and there was a social agency active in working with residents to help mitigate the effects of LDC actions which were already underway, to redevelop Wan Chai. Social workers from St. James' Settlement, and their consultants from HK Polytechnic University, agreed to participate as full members of the organizing group.

Wan Chai's people, a mixed population of 170,000 people or more, has even for Hong Kong a high percentage of people living in poverty conditions, and at very high densities. In the heart of Wan Chai, densities approach the 3000 or more per hectare typical for Mong Kok, and twice that of the high-rise new towns, in crowded conditions. Many 40-60 square meter flats contain up to 6 families, and up to 16 people, in two rooms. Wan Chai is also home to many people known as cage-home dwellers, renters of bedspaces in double-decked dormitories which are enclosed with wire mesh.

Wan Chai is dominated by mid-rise buildings (8-20 stories), older buildings which are in disrepair, and provide no communal space except dirty washrooms and cooking areas. Residents rely on television or nearby public spaces for relief from noise, peeling walls, and ever-present flatmates. Many of the bedspace units are in metal additions on podium decks, rooms, even cantilevered from 1930's facades, which visitors and architects find interesting for their variety and "self-expression". The organizers of DHK 99 set out to find out if residents found them equally interesting, and whether the community had a sense of itself as a community, and a livable place.

The process began in the fall, with participation by student teams in several World Day of Architecture housing workshops organized by the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA). This gave the organizers and a group of dedicated students, including those from CUHK and St. Paul's Secondary School, some experience in both interviewing and interactive design-game-playing.

The process of interactive working continued through the spring of 1999 with a series of street workshops, door-to-door interviews, and focus-group discussions with elderly residents and mainland immigrant teenagers, respectively. Discussions and interviews focused upon residents' reasons for living in Wanchai, the sense of community, job and transportation conditions, and interest or intention to remain throughout the redevelopment process. In the first activity, in March, 100 students from CUHK and secondary schools, guided by St. James Settlement, conducted a door-to-door survey, to get a data base of general and specific issues. The second activity took place in April, and involved about 40 professionals in addition to the students. Tables were set up outside the Wan Chai MTR (subway) entrance, and next to the Wan Chai Temporary Market, and people were polled as they walked by. In addition to more surveys, people (especially children) were invited to leave their wishes and ideas on paper. The discussion groups followed, in St. James Settlement meeting rooms.

Designing Hong Kong discovered, in working within the community of Wan Chai, that people were very aware of their identity as Wan Chai people, that while there were problems, Wan Chai is a livable place, and that there is a strong sense of community which they hope will not disappear under the steamroller of renewal, private or public.

Hong Kong residents, particularly the newer immigrants from the mainland, feel a need for cultural identity, for a sense of community, for local control over the environment. Early discussions with Wanchai social workers and residents pointed to this issue as central to concerns about redevelopment. Questions of personal or group identity also lead to questions about identity of place, and community. What are those things that remind us of where we are? How do we preserve those things, yet continue to grow and progress as a city? If people are relocated, perhaps to return to a renewed community, can the cohesiveness of the community survive?

Besides the interview process, two other Designing Hong Kong task groups were active in Wan Chai. These groups,

focusing on the state of the natural environment in Wan Chai, and business issues and opportunities, met periodically and presented their conclusions as part of the Background Briefing material for the Charrette Concept teams.

The exhibition, produced by CUHK students and set up at the Hong Kong Arts Centre on the Wan Chai waterfront, was about Wan Chai as a place, its people, its past, and its hopes. It featured photographs of Wan Chai people at work and at play, and attracted many residents to make their way to the HKAC near the waterfront. A major feature was a model of central Wan Chai with loose building blocks and bright colors, which attracted children to participate in modifying their environment.



Fig. 5. Children's Vision of a Green Wan Chai

The charrette, the intense brainstorming and design workshop where three teams worked in the public's eye, also took place in spaces contiguous to the exhibition.

Designing Hong Kong proposed that participants imagine a "village in the city," even though the district is to be further bisected by major traffic arteries in both directions, is eyed by

office developers for the next wave of office core expansion, and is a key target area for government redevelopment. DHK Teams were challenged to pose ideas for preserving Wan Chai's livability and sense of community, while also allowing for incentives for private developers to improve the residential and commercial environment, and accommodation of more people.

As in 1998, a symposium immediately followed the charrette, and was the forum for sharing the concerns and ideas that have come out of the interviews, the workshops, and presenting the concepts put forward by the charrette teams.

The teams were disappointingly dominated by urban designers, and focused upon open space and pedestrianization, without ever getting to issues of residence, employment, and community. The symposium participants, with one exception, focused upon their own experiences as planners or redevelopment officials, or broad issues of scale in modern cities, and side-stepped considerations about issues relevant to the residents of Wan Chai.

The one issue-focused speaker was Christine Loh, a member of the Legislative Council of Hong Kong. Ms. Loh, born and raised in Hong Kong, told of having her eyes opened during the DHK street workshops period, on a tour led by social workers from St. James' Settlement. Visiting cage-home flats for the first time, she notes that not only do most of us with college educations not look up and see what's behind the "interesting" facades, we have no idea how profitable these flats are to their owners. Rents per square foot are equivalent to mid-level units, which have much higher capital investments. She offered a new challenge to Designing Hong Kong and all architects: she promised to help find funding sponsors to work with a specific property owner demonstrate what can be done to inexpensively upgrade a real building which is presently primarily occupied by bed-space dwellers.

CONCLUSIONS

Most people, whether panelists, government employees, designers, students, or residents of Wan Chai, agreed during interviews and symposiums that there was a great deal of resident identity with Wan Chai as a place, that it is a livable community, and that government should work in a more sensitive manner to improve the quality of housing and public spaces without massive clearance.

Designing Hong Kong 2000

The organizers decided that the fall of 1999 was a time to regroup, redefine objectives, begin to formalize the structure of DHK into a non-profit corporation, and to undertake several small activities rather than a major event. The group joined with the Hong Kong Institute of Architects in carrying out a somewhat traditional design charrette in Aberdeen on Hong Kong Island's southern coast.

Aberdeen figures in the world's image of Hong Kong as the home of sampan-dwelling Hanka and Hakka fisherfolk and

the Jumbo Floating Restaurant in which James Bond and others have had famous liaisons. The fishing community has long been land-dwelling in highrise estates, but the wholesale fish market is an on-going operation, a messy but interesting tourist attraction.

An architect-directed participation process, based on a scaled-down Designing Hong Kong model was carried out in the spring of 2000, to proved design ideas and guidelines



Fig. 6. Aberdeen Charrette

intended to supplement studies by the Hong Kong Tourist Association and the Hong Kong Government Planning Department.

Street surveys and surveys of interested developers found consensus for preservation and enhancement of the market as an attraction, but little interest in private investment partnerships with government. Nonetheless, the HKIA convened a design charrette, and three design teams spent a day producing useful planning and design concepts which have been donated to the government planning effort. Finally, government representatives actually participated in a DHK event.

Adding Value to the Architecture Department through Designing Hong Kong

A recent academic visitor to CUHK from the US, when shown a summary of the Designing Hong Kong activities, said "that seems a waste of time, it's old hat". The arguments in defense of the participation exercises as valid for Hong Kong are several: first, in transitioning from an autocratic (colonial) model of non-participatory government or Confucian top-down governance, its introduction as an exercise devised and conducted by members of the university is a valuable service to the community. Second, participatory planning and design has particular value as a teaching and research activity in academic architecture departments, which also traditionally follow a more Confucian top-down model. Third, it has unique value in educating the public (and government de-

YEAR	1997		1998			1999			2000	
	SUMMER May-Aug	FALL Sep-Dec	SPRING Jan-Apr	SUMMER May-Aug	FALL Sep-Dec	SPRING Jan-Apr	SUMMER May-Aug	FALL Sep-Dec	SPRING Jan-Apr	SUMMER May-Aug
TEACHING		LIVABILITY DENSITY SEMINAR ↓ ESQUISSE: COMPACT KAI TAK COMMUNITY		WANCHAI CLASS PREP	MARCH 2 WANCHAI PROJECTS ARC4802 STREET STUDIES SEMINAR: COMMUNITY SURVEY TECHNIQUE ↓ ESQUISSE: COMPACT VILLAGE / 3-D	WANCHAI ↓ AGE COURSE WANCHAI STUDIES		ARC4804/5802 COMMUNITY STUDIES ELDERLY MARCH VERTICAL PROJECT MARCH 2 ELDERLY RESOR		MARCH 2 ELDERLY HOSTEL
SERVICE		EXHIBITION PREPARATION	⊙ KAI TAK WORKSHOP SYMPOSIUM EXHIBITION ↑ CONTRIBUTE TO PUBLIC DEBATE ON RECLAMATION	WORK WITH ST JAMES & POLY-U	HKIA HOUSING ESTATE WORKSHOP ↓ EXHIBITION PREPARATION	⊙ WAN CHAI WORKSHOP SYMPOSIUM EXHIBITION ↑ WANCHAI STREET WORKSHOPS FOCUS WITH ST JAMES	⊙ C LOH BUILDING CODE SEMINAR ↓ ZHONGSHAN CHARRETTE	HKIA ELDERLY WORKSHOP ↓ BEDSPACE PROJECT SEMINAR W/ DC PLANNING DEPT FOE PLANNING DEPT TAI O	⊙ ABER DEEN STREET SURVEY CHARRETTE ↑ MEETING WITH PLANNING BUREAU TAI O WORKSHOP AT GOVT REQUEST	LEI YUE MUN COMMUNITY PLANNING
RESEARCH	ELDERLY HOUSING GRANT ↓ 3D CITY STUDY ↓ PHD TOPIC ↓ DHK KAI TAK BRIEFING DOC EXHIBIT PREP	COMPAR DENSITIES ↓ AREA OF EXCELLENCE PROPOSAL		CROWDING STUDY-K C LAM CROWDING MITIGATION Y K CHAN PUBLIC'S WORKSHOP METHOD COMMUNITY PLANNING HANDBOOK CHAPTER ↓ COMPARATIVE DENSITY ARTICLE	WANCHAI MARKET STREET STUDY ↓ WANCHAI BRIEFING DOC EXHIBIT PREP	CROWDING WANCHAI ↓ ABODE MITIGATION STUDY	SUSTAINABILITY ↓ SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DESIGN	PUBLICATIONS ON TEACHING METHODS ACSA ↓ HKIA POLICY RECOMMENDATION ON ELDERLY	ACSA CONF ↓ SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF TOURISM ↓ ELDERLY HOUSING WORKSHOP ARTICLES	

Fig. 7. Chart of Research and Teaching Extensions from Designing Hong Kong

partments than the Planning Department) to issues of architectural and urban design.

These arguments are made below with specific reference to activities associated with the Department of Architecture, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, and are illustrated below in Fig. 7, a matrix which shows the extensions and flows of activity from the service function, into and from teaching and research.

Service

Urban planning, from regional and urban scale to community planning, and particularly redevelopment, have for over 150 years been the province of government and private development companies in Hong Kong. Land is all (and still called, after the handover) Crown Land; private developments are done with purchase of leaseholds or development rights. There has historically been very little consultation, much less constructive engagement, with the public at large. Plans are made, notices published, and the only dialogue is in the form of filed "objections", which rarely, until recently, had any effect.

Designing Hong Kong was established to specifically rectify that dialogue gap. For faculty and students at The Chinese University, several specific service activities have evolved out of Designing Hong Kong activities. First is the event itself. Department faculty and students have contributed the background material, public exhibitions, and par-

ticipation on charrette teams and symposium panels. Perhaps more importantly, faculty have been key facilitators of both the workshops, charrettes, and the symposiums. In addition, students and faculty have been active participants in HKIA World Day workshops at housing estates and elderly care facilities, and in St. James Settlement House and Council of Social Services surveys with residents, all of which contributed to DHK background data.

Other non DHK activities which have drawn directly upon the DHK model, faculty and students, are a Sustainable Community charrette in Zhongshan, China, and an initiative to renovate a bed-space building in Wan Chai. Under way in the fall of 1999 is a potential community workshop in Tai O, an outlying island community of Hong Kong. This is one of the most significant offspring of DHK, in which the organizing committee is essentially asked by the HK Government Planning Department to help them organize a public workshop, which they've never done before. The inspiration is direct and acknowledged.

DHK 98 contributed significantly to the debate on the scale of reclamation; the Government has responded by reducing the scale of reclamation proposed initially at the Kai Tak airport challenge site.

Teaching

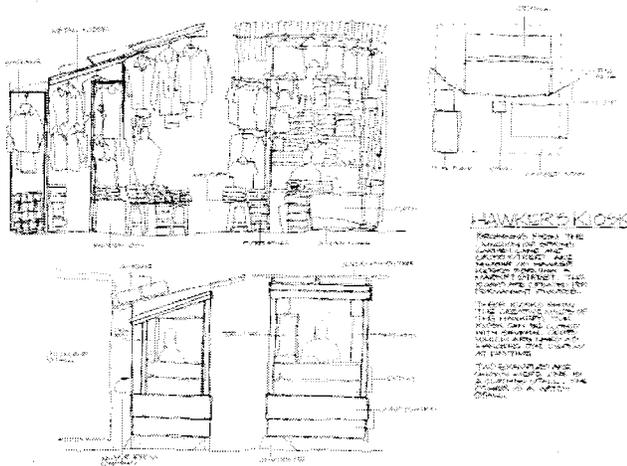


Fig. 8. Typical Hawker Stall in Wanchai

The Department of Architecture at CUHK, with a young and necessarily somewhat traditional architectural program, is very aware of its setting in a major cosmopolitan city (with 200 students, including only a handful who were raised in buildings less than 20 stories high). It has no program defined as urban design, however, and the recent Designing Hong Kong events have provided a powerful vehicle around which to organize studio problems, seminar research topics, and hands-on participation with “users”. Three seminars and three masters class studios have had significant portions

dedicated to providing background material for DHK; others have been built upon the issues identified. The two seminars have focused upon creating an atlas of comparable archetypes of community plans, emphasizing their density and livability. Additionally, one seminar has been instrumental in helping students in describing the nature of street life, and the design of the streetscape as habitat for typical Hong Kong hawker markets and small industries. This material has been absorbed into briefing materials for the charrettes, but the most value has come from providing a setting within which students have been able by themselves to identify significant issues which can form the basis for studio problems and particularly thesis problems.

One example is a thesis problem which focused on a bed-space building which housed several immigrant families in tin structures illegally added on a podium roof. This structure, which housed something like thirty-six people in a very small space, was the kernel of a successful exercise in developing, first, a simple conversion technique for creating more generous housing for elderly persons. In addition, it was successful as a model for the addition of “crowding mitigation” spaces and devices, architectural interventions in the semi-public spaces and adjacent public spaces which offered residents an opportunity to socialize and otherwise relieve the pressures of living in a crowded situation.

Hands-on participation by students in the HKIA World Day activities has had an unexpected teaching bonus. The CUHK students have become teachers of survey methodol-

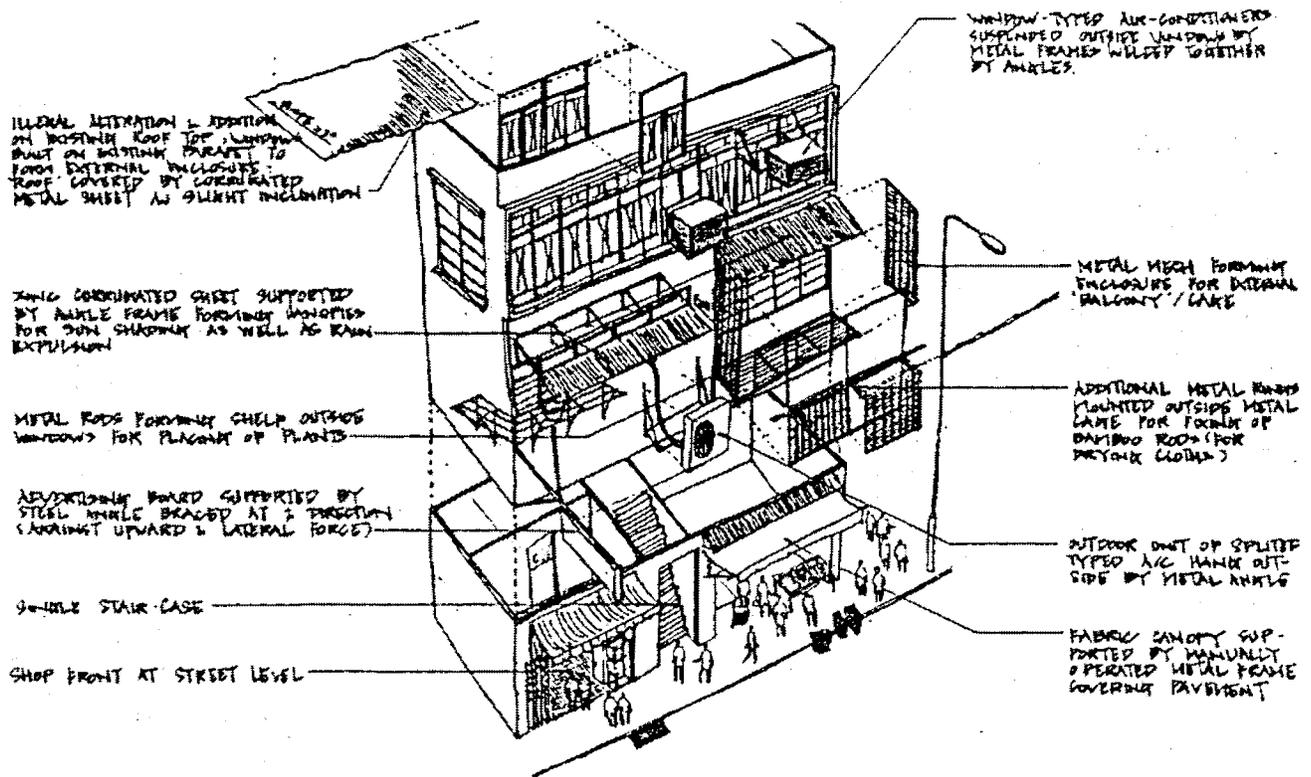


Fig. 9. Typical Bed-Space Building in Wanchai

ogy for secondary students (and untutored practicing architects), and have followed up surveys and interviews with documents which have become central to the briefings for future design and planning charrette teams.

The exercises leading to identification of issues have also led to Ph.D. and Masters Thesis topics. CUHK's first Ph.D. candidate is constructing his dissertation around the methodologies developed which are particularly suited to Hong Kong and China. Masters Theses have developed around elderly housing (noted above) in Wan Chai, reclamation issues, and participatory design methodology.

Another teaching function, extending to the elementary and secondary schools of Hong Kong, began with the World Day workshops at housing estates in 1998, and continued through interview focus groups in Wan Chai in 1999. University students constructed survey forms and procedures, and set up the interactive models and drawing boards, and then trained the secondary school students in their use. This year, a program is being planned for extension to the elementary schools through interactive visits.

Finally, there is the function of educating the public to be aware of design issues. Through multiple articles in the popular as well as the professional press, many of the issues affecting Hong Kong's urban environment have been "made visible" to the public, adding considerably to a vocal wave which is beginning to affect government actions (6).

Research

The Dean of the Faculty of Social Science, which includes the departments of Sociology, Psychology, Geography, and Architecture, has noted that the DHK activity has far-reaching value, particularly in his eyes, as an integrative activity to encourage collaborative research and teaching within the social science faculty.

The background research noted above as a teaching activity on density, community scale, and streetscape in Hong Kong is all part of separately funded faculty research, ultimately to result in monographs. Some of it has appeared as articles in local and regional journals.

More specifically, two pieces of the work are part of ongoing research jointly undertaken by the Architecture Department and other departments within the Faculty of Social Research. These are research into mitigation of crowding, in which interviews with residents under DHK activities have contributed to the data base, and research into ways in which community and residential design can mitigate transitional problems for new immigrants to Hong Kong from mainland China. Additional research is under way in the department of Sociology in the levels of perceived influence community members feel after such workshops, on the Governments plans for their environment.

Others more peripheral, but under study for expanded research, involve the provision of elderly housing units in new housing estates in redevelopment areas, and urban housing and open space design guidelines within redevelopment areas.

Aspects of all of these research activity have been made publicly accessible through something on the order of twelve articles in local design journals.

CONCLUSIONS

Lessons for Hong Kong and Asia

Some of the lessons learned for Hong Kong can be summarized as follows. First, Hong Kong's culture is that of China, in which public involvement and dialogue are new. People have been used to Confucian leadership models; DHK has helped them to release a repressed eagerness to express themselves and be able to affect what happens to their urban environment.

Second, and more mundane, the organizers have learned that briefings both of participants and symposium speakers have to be extensive and teaching oriented. Participants are eager to push their own agendas, their own design ideas brought from elsewhere, or to relate their personal histories. Facilitators have to intercede and to diplomatically focus attention on community, rather than on designers', needs. Nonetheless, one of the values is to unlock the energies of self-expression among participants, particularly lay participants.

Third, followup surveys by Designing Hong Kong have found a relatively high percentage of people, partly because of the DHK activities, optimistic about their ability to influence government. Almost 50%, in the spring 2000 surveys, indicated that they felt their views were being taken into account to some extent, as opposed to the less than 20% who thought so in 1970, thirty years earlier (7).

Fourth, the organizers have learned that government agencies are made up of people who are ready to move from authoritarian planning to western openness, and are looking both for models and teachers. The University has both an opportunity and an obligation to provide the models, and is currently expanding that role. The Hong Kong Government Planning Department has now seen DHK in process, and has expressed a desire for presentations which would be directed towards helping their staff learn how to conduct similar public workshops.

Lessons for North America

Participatory planning in some parts of North America may be old hat, but the number of students educated in North American universities who will practice, teach, and do research in Asia is large. The interdisciplinary and inter-generational nature of DHK has proved to be a way for American-educated returnees to immerse themselves back into the community and culture of Hong Kong in a positive way.

NOTES

1. See Davidoff, Paul, and Reiner, Thomas: "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 31:4 (1965), 331; also Hester, Randolph T., Jr.: "A Refrain with a View", *PLACES*, 12-2, 1999, p.12.
2. Hester, *op.cit.*
3. It should be noted that while there might be little on-site benefit, such as increased waterfront park frontage, the public benefits indirectly as private development on public land is the main source for government revenue, which translates into low personal income taxes.
4. This is a term used in Hong Kong which refers to the poster and slogan-covered walls near Tiananmen Square in 1989, with roots in villages. People have for years had this one avenue for anonymous free speech.
5. Sidener, Jack T.: "From the Bottom Up: Engaging the Public in Designing Hong Kong", *Dialogue Magazine*, Taiwan, April 1998. _____: "Designing Hong Kong", *HINGE Magazine* cover story, May 1998. Hong Kong. _____: "Designing Hong Kong - the Wanchai Urban Renewal Example". *SPACE*, Hong Kong, Vol. 7, July 1999. _____: "Housing Workshops by the Students". *HKIA (Hong Kong Institute of Architects) Journal*, Hong Kong, Vol. 19, Winter Quarter, 1999.
6. Loh, Christine, The Honorable: *Hong Kong, a Sustainable World City - An Alternative Policy Address 1999-2000*. In this "Shadow Address", Legislator Loh cited Designing Hong Kong as a multi-disciplinary pilot project which government departments should seek to emulate. Ms. Loh in recent weeks announced that she will no longer be "The Honorable", and will not seek re-election because the Hong Kong administration is not responsive to the views of the Legislative Council on which she has sat for 9 years. Instead she will be conducting public participation via the internet, having discovered in March that an email campaign in which ordinary citizens flooded government departments with complaints about air quality had an immediate response.
7. King, Ambrose Yeo Chi: "The Political Culture of Kwun Tong: A Chinese Community in Hong Kong". Centre Paper No. 8, Social Research Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, c. 1970.