

Learning to see

The most important thing to study Architecture is to see. Architecture gives forms to things. Therefore, to study Architecture is to see the forms.

Capture the key.

To see is to capture the key, interpret human's intention to build. People dig into the ground and build houses, but some people build house above the ground. This may probably because due to the location and climate difference. To see is to matters the priority things and leave out the second priority thing.

Form– some form changed but some remains constant

Form is composed by four parts: field, mass, outline and element. Let's use Hong Kong as an example.

Field means the ground, the area where buildings are placed. Mass is the substance, the materials. Outline is the line which surrounds all the buildings. Element is the buildings which placed outside the outline. Structure is the order of parts. Composition is the relationship between one building and the other.

When we moved some components, some form changed but some remains constant. For example, when a person moves from Hong Kong island to Kowloon, the mass is not changed, but the structure, the field changed. When a person speaks and walks, though the position changes, but he is still the same person. To recognize what things change is essential to see.

There is relationship between parts in a whole: rhythm and complexity. For example, 7 buildings arranged on a street, which are uniform and consider as a whole. If the 4th building is being destructed, it is separated into two parts, with 3 building each. The second one is more complex and the distribution is no longer uniform. The rhythm has changed.

Here is another example. When comparing a flying kite and a group of birds, they have the same structure. However, birds form a more complex structure. They can fly higher or lower, hence the rhythm changes. Birds form dynamic relationship while parts of kite form fixed relationship with one another.

Moreover, form is divided into two types: nature and human which share the same structure.

Something constant while other keeps changing can also be applied to us. We have been children, but we grow and study. However, we are still who we are. Similar to the situation in Pian Xian, though the buildings keep changing, but the culture remains unchanged. The temple is always the most important building.

In order to study Architecture, we have to practice greater sense of awareness. Be curious about people's intention. Though the society keeps on changing, but some form must remains constant.