

To study Architecture is not simply to see the FORMS.

To see is to capture the key, interpret human's intention to build. To see is to matters the priority things and leave out the second priority thing. If you cannot see, you cannot be an Architect.

Form

When we look at something is to study the FORM. FORM is composed by four parts: field, mass, outline and element. Let's use PING SHAN as an illustration.



Mass

Mass is the substances that make up PING SHAN. The hectares in PING SHAN are made of concrete, bricks and stone. The ancestral

hall's column is made of granite and sandstone to support the roof. Other than the buildings, PING SHAN also composes with plants, lakes and hill. Therefore, to see PING SHAN, we have to focus on the materials used to build it.

Outline

Outline is the boundary of the things we want to see. Taking PING SHAN as an example, it is bounded by Tin Shui Wai New Town in the north, Castle Peak Road in the south, Yuen Long New Town in the east and the Ha Tsuen in the west. To see something, we must know where the limitation of our focus is.

Field

Field is the ground where buildings are placed on. We may pay attention to the landform in PING SHAN. Hectares are built on a slope. This may affect how the buildings are allocated. As known from the people living in the village, between the hectares, there are some water pipes under the ground. However, because of the slope difference, the pipes cannot be covered. This shows that one of the way to see PING SHAN is to look at the ground.



Element

Element is the substances outside our focus. The buildings which are not in the boundary is consider as elements. When we are seeing PING SHAN buildings like Wong Tai Sin Temple, the Chinese University of Hong Kong are elements. We can compare the similarities and differences between these buildings, but they are not consider in a whole.

Some FORM could change while some remains constant. When a building is knocked down, the Mass of PING SHAN has changed. However, the Outline, the Field has changed. Buildings could be changed but the culture remains unchanged. To recognize what things change is essential to see.



Aspect of form

Structure

Structure is the rule of how buildings are arranged. For example in PING SHAN, all hectares are strictly forbidden to build higher than 27 feet. This allows all buildings to have the same height. Structure gives order to things. There is another way to see how PING SHAN is structured, pay attention to the streets. The houses are built in this way.



Composition

The relationship between parts will establish a composition. In PING SHAN, since most people have the same ancestor, Tang, they are closely related. Composition in PING SHAN could be the relative relationship of people, or could be the trading cycle among people. It could also be the symmetric ancestral hall. The relationship between light and space could affect where the shadow of wall, hence affecting the function of rooms.



Pay attention to details. For example, people like to gamble near the ancestral hall, playing mahjong in some houses and children play in the playground. In order to find the answer, we must search. Search until you get the answer. You must know the function before you can design houses to fit people's need.

Form

Outline

Field

Element

Mass

Rhythm

Rhythm is the pattern of how the buildings are arranged. The difference in height of the buildings could be a Rhythm. The function of buildings can also form a Rhythm. For example, when we look at a street, there could be 3 residential buildings, follow by 2 shops, follow by 3 residential buildings, repeating or not.

Complexity

Complexity means not simple. It could be the complicated relationship between people, especially people in PING SHAN are belong to Tang's. One could be the cousin and auntie of someone. A building could be a shops and on the other hand, being a living place of a family.

Part – whole relationship

There is relationship between parts and whole. In PING SHAN, all hectares are built with the two ancestral halls as the centre. Moreover, the two ancestral halls are two distinct groups from other buildings.

To see something is not only to see the FORM's appearance, but also to interpret its FORMS. When we see PING SHAN, we should study the history, whether we interpret from buildings or heard from the people. We may also study the life, what people usually do and where they gather.