Charlie Q.L. Xue

Hong Kong Architecture 1945–2015

From Colonial to Global

Springer

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Part III Backward and Forward Vision

Chapter 8
"Being Chinese in Architecture"—The Growth of Local Architects

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 of this book discusses the situation in the 1950s and 60s and the rise of local designers. During that period, many professionals who had escaped from China were cultivating in the colony. By the 1970s, HKU graduates had matured with years of practice. Students from overseas returned to Hong Kong and plunged into the increasingly booming construction industry. In 1990, there were around 1,000 registered architects; in 1997, this number jumped to 1,700.[1] The economy was resurging, providing ample opportunities both in the public and private sectors for these new practitioners. In the decades before the handover, the old British development companies tended to be conservative while the main building developers were emerging local Chinese capitalists who demanded exclusive, high-quality buildings. As a result of the highly commercial market and dense urban development, many new buildings were in-fills in the street blocks and projects tended to be big and pragmatic. In many projects, design was only one part of the long chain from development to construction to operation; hence, the designers remained anonymous behind these grand mansions.

At the same time, there was increasing awareness in society of the need to find roots. This situation enabled architects to consider the Hong Kong problem, face the local conditions and create architecture that belonged to this land. Several people and firms stood out in this wave. "Being Chinese in architecture" is a title for Rocco Design works' monograph (Rocco Design 2004). I borrow it to summarize the characteristics of these architects, who are consciously searching for identity. They were trained in English in Hong Kong or overseas. They speak, read and write fluent English, while they chat or may sometimes think in Chinese (Cantonese). They grow up in the Hong Kong community, are familiar with local society, people's habits and preference, and practice on the general conditions and market of

[1]The number of architects is from Wong and Cheng (1990) and Ho (2000).

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Hong Kong in the 1970s onward. Sometimes, they are Hongkongers; some other times, they are "Chinese in architecture". They connect not only to the ruling and elite class in the CBD Central, but also grass-root citizens in the marketplace. The local feeling and intuition sprung out naturally from their pens.

This chapter investigates these prominent people, links architects with the unique architectural projects that have evolved since the 1970s and explores how Modernism was applied in Hong Kong. The selected architects were prominent in different years from 1970 to the 21st century. Their design works have clear authorship and personal imprints, instead of obscure corporate products. They each won design awards and influenced their peers in many ways during their time. In the 21st century, a new generation emerged with different method and strategies. The author has followed their work for decades and has made acquaintance with most of them. This chapter depicts the spectrum of designers and will hopefully contribute to the forum on contemporary Hong Kong and Asian architecture.

8.2 Masters Since 1970

Chung Wah-nan (born in 1931) grew up in Hong Kong. The environment of Lingnan[2] and the New Territories nurtured his love of local culture. His father was a building contractor who once built the tallest building in Guangzhou—17 stories high steel structured Aiqun Building in 1934. During the Japanese invasion, Chung and his parents fled to Xinhui in Guangdong Province, the family's hometown. Living in the Cantonese countryside, he understood the cultural importance of country and nation. After the war, he studied undergraduate and Master's courses in the UK and graduated from the Bartlett School of Architecture at University College London in 1959. After working for three years in London, he returned to Hong Kong with his Swiss wife. In 1964, he opened his own office and in 1971 partnered with Alan Fitch, the designer of City Hall (see Chap. 2). The practice was named Fitch and Chung till 1985 when Fitch left. The firm Chung and Partners has run up to now. In the 1980s and early 1990s, Chung frequently traveled to the Chinese mainland, where he investigated heritage buildings and lectured in Beijing and other cities. During the early period of the open-door policy, his books and articles greatly enlightened his Chinese peers. He introduced the latest development of western modern architecture to the Chinese audience. In Hong Kong and traveling abroad, he is an enthusiastic advocator of Chinese culture (Fig. 8.1).

Chung's design activities were concentrated in the 1960s to the 1980s. Based on the analysis of clients' requirements, he tried to find solutions with a meaningful form. At the end of the 1960s, the Kadoorie brothers offered him the opportunity to

[2]"Lingnan" literally means "south of the mountain". It generally ranges in the Pearl River Delta. Several mountains in its north side block the cold air from the north. Its climate is very different from the north neighboring province Hunan.

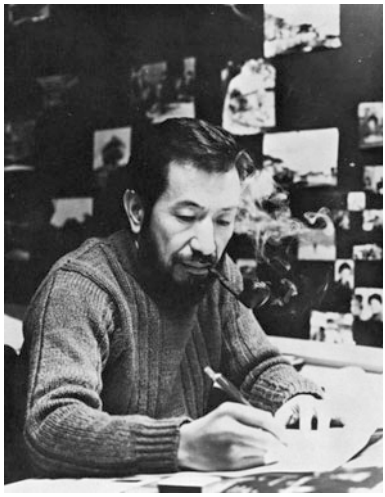

Fig. 8.1 Mr. Chung Wah-nan, pictured in the 1980s

design the Peak Tower above the tram station for Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd.[3] Drawing on his experience of ancient Chinese city walls and towers, he developed the principle of "solid bottom and floating top" and applied it to the design of the Peak Tower. In Chinese, Peak Tower is written *lu-feng*, which means the peak of a stove. Chung designed the tower in the shape of a stove supported by columns, floating in the sky, which can be seen through the column. Hong Kong people felt an emotional intimacy with the tower and gave it the name Peak Tower, which accompanied Hong Kong into the temporary looming years (Fig. 8.2).

The end of the 1970s saw a high wave of public housing construction. During this wave, Fitch and Chung designed the shopping arcade of the Lok Fu public housing estate. The shopping arcade was designed to sit within the housing blocks. There is a courtyard in the center and the housing blocks rise above the retail buildings. The entrance of the courtyard is decorated with a traditional portal (*pailou*) (Fig. 8.3).

In the municipal services building of Lockhart Road, Wanchai, designed by Fitch and Chung, car parking is in the basement, the first four floors are a market, followed by a library. The top floor houses an indoor basketball court. This design created the prototype for municipal services buildings and tried to make changes in the sections in a narrow land (Fig. 8.4).

Chung's largest and most sophisticated project was the City Polytechnic building, which he was awarded after winning a design competition intensely fought by six joint teams of local and overseas firms. In 1984, the second

[3]Kadoorie, a Jewish family, arrived in China in 1880 and made a fortune in Shanghai, following the Jewish capitalist Victor Sassoon. After the Pacific War, the family withdrew to Hong Kong and ran electric companies, hotels and real estate. It is one of the richest families in Hong Kong. See "Kadoorie—legendary family", http://info.ceo.hc360.com/2006/03/13101222267-2.shtml. Accessed 17 May 2015.

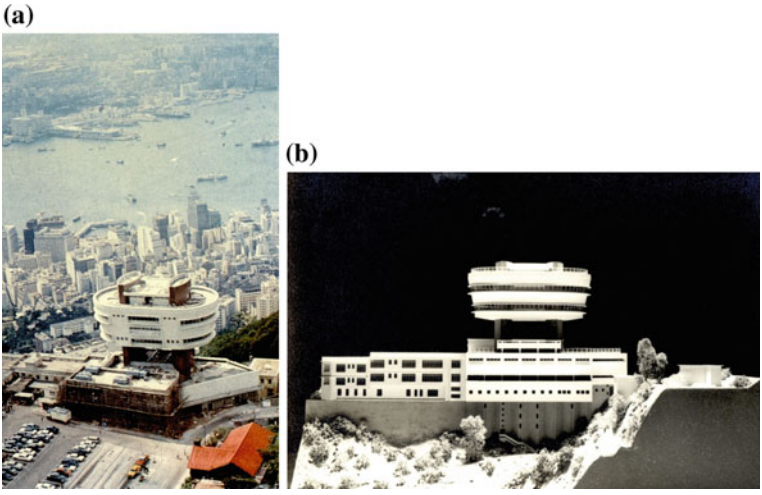

Fig. 8.2 Peak Tower, 1972. **a** Overlooking the harbor and Mid-level. **b** Model of Peak Tower. Courtesy of Mr. W.N. Chung

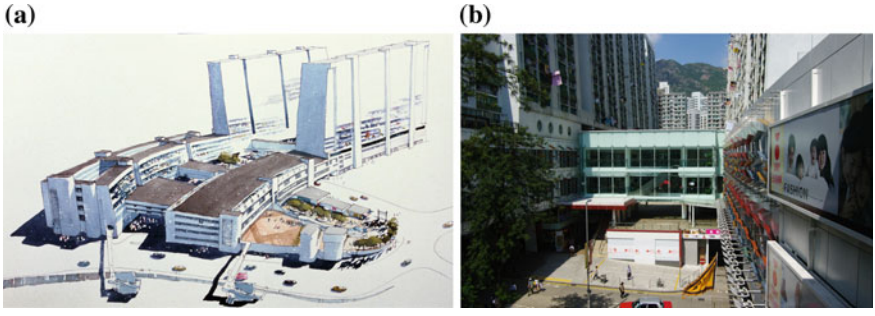

Fig. 8.3 Lok Fu shopping arcade, 1982. **a** Design perspective. Courtesy of Mr. W.N. Chung. **b** Public events taking place in the courtyard of arcade

polytechnic, City Polytechnic, opened (renamed City University of Hong Kong [CityU] in 1994). At its inception, City Polytechnic rented an office tower in Mongkok, while running a campus design competition. In 1985, Percy Thomas of London and Fitch and Chung of Hong Kong jointly won the design. Fitch and Chung had participated unsuccessfully in the design competition for the Hong Kong Polytechnic campus (1973). Chung Wah-nan was the Authorized Person for the City Polytechnic project[4] (Fig. 8.5).

[4]The competition to design the Kowloon Tong campus for City Polytechnic started in January 1983 and was reviewed on June 6–10. Six teams were shortlisted from more than 40 companies, including Alan Fitch and W.N. Chung in association with the Percy Thomas Partnership; Hsin Yieh Architects in association with the Colin St John Wilson Partnership; Ng Chun Men and

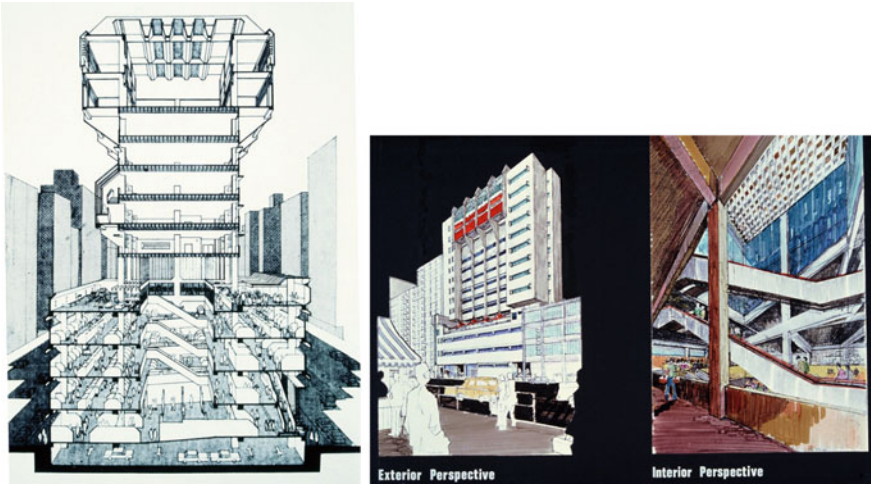

Fig. 8.4 Municipal service building, Lockhard Road, Wanchai, 1986. Courtesy of Mr. W.N. Chung

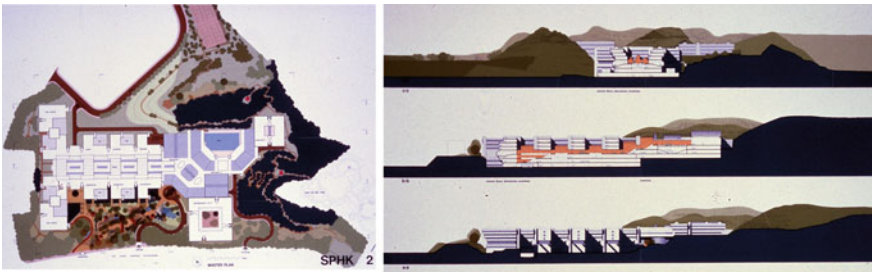

Fig. 8.5 CityU design competition, Percy Thomas and Fitch and Chung's winning scheme. The building complex sitting on the valley can effectively avoid wind blow and create many platforms permeated with natural surroundings. Courtesy of Mr. W.N. Chung

The CityU campus, with a gross floor area of over 100,000 m^2, is located in the valley of Kowloon Tong. The designer used a grid and modular design to control the large building mass. The building complex is horizontally zoned with atriums

(Footnote 4 continued)

Associates in association with Shepheard Epstein and Hunter; Kwan Ng Wong and Associates; Russell and Poon Group Partnership in association with Denys Lasdun, Redhouse and Softley of London; and YRM International (HK). The jury was chaired by D.W. McDonald, director of Land and Public Work; Director Sir Flowers from Imperial College London; Prof. D.J. Jones, Director of City Polytechnic; Prof. Eric Lye of HKU; Peter Y.S. Pun, Chair of Government Projects and Housing; and J. Lei, acting Director of the Buildings Department. The jury recommended Fitch-Chung and Percy Thomas for the work and the Planning Committee of City Polytechnic approved the decision. *Vision*, No. 9, 1983.

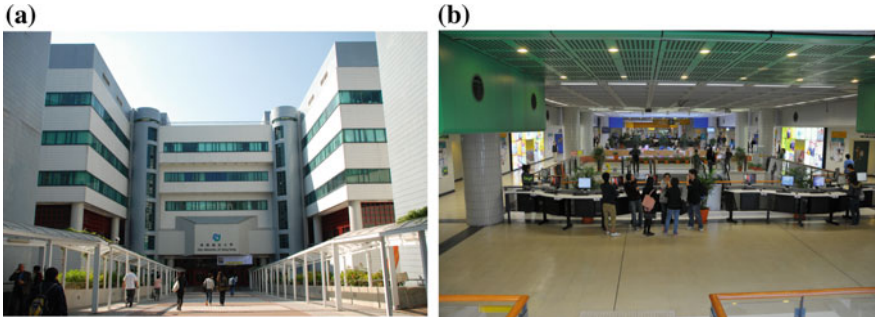

Fig. 8.6 CityU campus. **a** Pedestrian entrance. **b** Concourse is flanked by lecture theaters

and different colors. The seven story building is vertically divided by function. The whole of the third floor is the library (once the largest single-floor library in Asia). The fourth floor comprises the concourse and lecture theaters, with shops and flexible spaces for activities. In the mountain valley, the pedestrian and vehicular entrances are arranged in different levels. Therefore, the fourth level is used as circulation thoroughfare (Fig. 8.6).

In the traditional college, knowledge was delivered one-way from teacher to student. Classrooms with six-plane enclosure are enough. The big sky-lit space within building blocks encourages students to communicate out of class. The concourse is busy for students' daily life, exhibition and activities. The designer used huge skylight to illuminate the common space. Chung sees this as a modern adaption of traditional courtyard house. When the CityU campus was completed in the early 1990s, this type of concourse design had rarely been seen in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland. It became a prototype, copied by Chinese peers when building new campuses.[5]

The functional areas of CityU take up the full volume, while the staircases, lifts and toilets are packed into semi-circular tubes. This is similar to the design of PolyU and Louis Kahn's concept of "served and service" space.[6] For the past 20 years, the building has served over 20,000 students and staff, and is run all year round with high efficiency and at capacity (Fig. 8.7).

[5]Since 1999, Chinese government has rapidly expanded higher education and built more than 300 new campuses, funded by provincial and municipal government. From 2003, there are 5–7 million university graduates every year. The expansion of higher education has high demand on campus planning and academic building design. See Yuan Wei, Zhonghuo gaodeng jiaoyu dazonghua de xianzhuang, wenti he zhanwang (China's higher education: status, problems and prospect), Sino-Europe Social Forum, http://www.china-europa-forum.net/bdfdoc-996_zh.html. Accessed 21 May 2015.

[6]Louis Kahn's design method of "service and served" space was obviously adopted in the Hong Kong PolyU (completed 1980) and CityU's campus (completed 1990) building design. For the concept, see Goldhagen (2001).

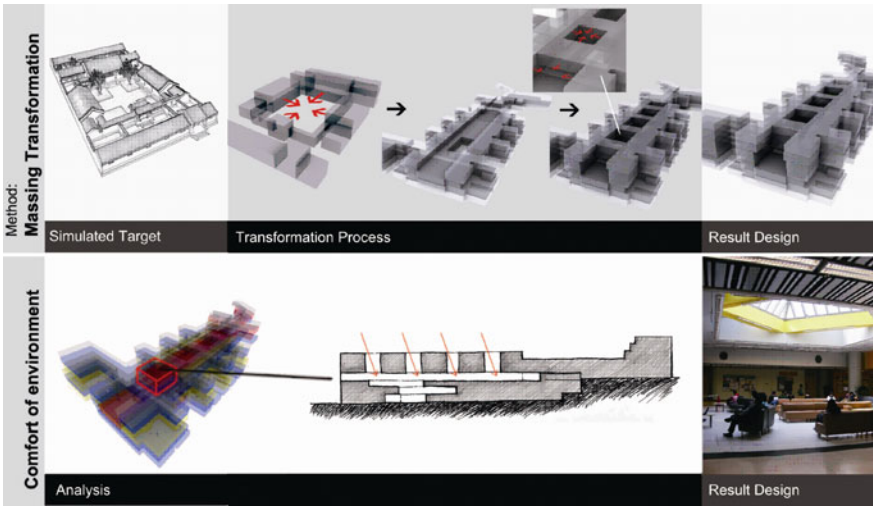

Fig. 8.7 Analysis of CityU academic building. Drawn by Vivian Lo

In the 1970s and 80s, Chung designed various park pavilions for the Urban Council. Traditional Chinese pavilion wan made by wood. Chung used concrete to design different symmetrical pavilions with either flying or long cantilevered eaves. This group of pavilions inherited the Chinese tradition, while also experimenting with modern materials. Chung presented the built and unbuilt schemes in an article and a seminal book, *Ting de jicheng* (Inheritance of pavilion). In the book, Chung considered that Chinese pavilion is a starting point to recall the Chinese taste. Peak Tower can be seen as the prologue to this set of pavilions (Chung 1989) (Fig. 8.8).

In the early 1980s, the Tsim Sha Tsui train station was demolished to give land for new construction. The clock tower, built in the early twentieth century, was also threatened by the bulldozer. Society was not yet aware of the importance of "conservation." Chung Wah-nan, David Russell, a lecturer in the Department of Architecture, and William Meacham, a lecturer in the Anthropology Department at HKU, carried on a marathon dialogue with the officials from the Urban Council. They suggested keeping the clock tower but building a new cultural center. Their suggestion was eventually adopted. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the clock tower is still bustling with activity inside and outside the cultural center. After a hundred years, the clock tower still stands, silently telling the story of this land (Fig. 8.9).

The design by Chung Wah-nan and his colleagues faithfully followed the principles of Modernism and absorbed the Chinese tradition, upon which Chung built a local culture. In Hong Kong, 95 % population is ethnic Chinese, but prevailing media in institutions, professionals and government is English. The voice of learning from indigenous traditions is frequently heard, but practiced superficially. Chung is among few people who dig deeply into the indigenous stratum and overtly voice out. He is a cultural architect and public intellectual. Philosophical, literate and with

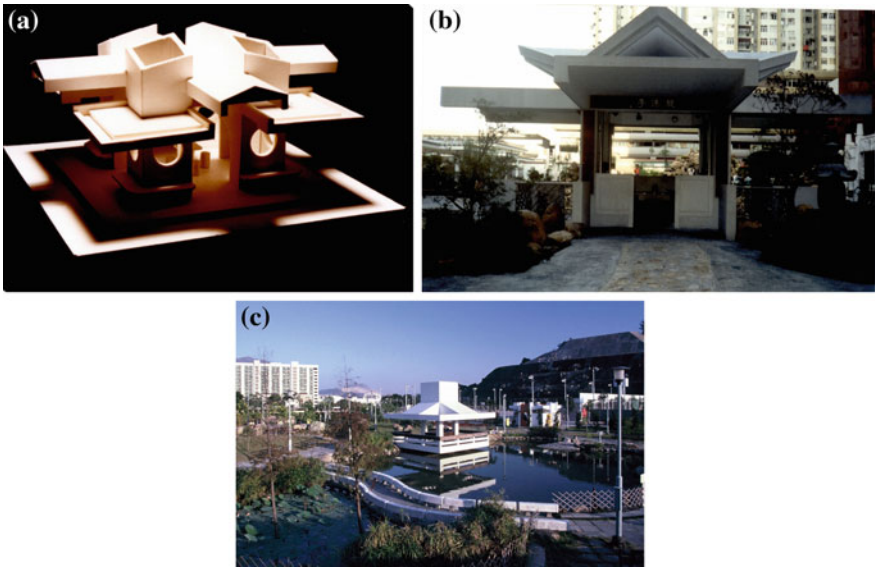

Fig. 8.8 Inheritance of Chinese pavilion, 1970s–80s. **a** Elaboration the form. Courtesy of Mr. W.N. Chung. **b** Pavilion in Wanchai. **c** Pavilion in Lok Fu

Fig. 8.9 Train station in Tsim Sha Tsui was demolished in the early 1980s. Only the clock tower was *left*. From HK Government Archive

broad horizons, his writings interrogate the reality in Hong Kong and China and look toward the future. Chung's books and writings have greatly influenced his peers and students for decades, and have moistened the once "cultural desert" (Chung 1982, 1991; Chung and Zhang 2007). He bravely criticizes capitalism which strangles the cultural growth and indigenous identity. However, the echo is few. He wrote

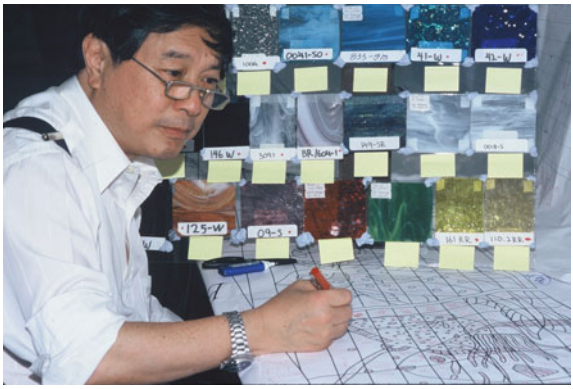

Fig. 8.10 Dr. Tao Ho, pictured in 1999

calligraphy with a brush, which was widely appreciated.[7] Chung made an appeal to strengthen architectural theory, localization and regional architecture, for three reasons: "First, we must understand our own cultural tradition. We can study foreign culture, but also know the culture of our ancestors. Second, relying less on other countries and reducing the economic erosion from outside. The third is identity and self-esteem, which is the most important. I hope that we can nurture our regional architectural culture and set up an example for the world"[8].

Dr. **Tao Ho** was born in Shanghai in 1936 and moved to Hong Kong to escape from the Communist rule in the 1950s (Fig. 8.10). He studied in the United States and graduated as a Bachelor of Art History from Williams College and as a Master of Architecture from Harvard University in 1964. In 1979, he was conferred an honorary doctorate from Williams College. During his study at Harvard, he was educated by Walter Gropius (1883–1969), a pioneer of Modernist architecture, and worked as a research assistant for Sigfried Giedion (1888–1968), a historian of Modernist architecture. At the end of 1964, he returned to Hong Kong and taught basic design with Bauhaus theory. In 1968, he opened his own office, Taoho Design, and was awarded commissions in architectural, interior and industrial design. Tao Ho's designs embraced Modernist ideas, expressed in his use of structure and materials.

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[7]The description of Chung Wah-nan in this chapter is based on the author's communication with Mr. Chung since 1989 and Lo (2011). For more details on the preservation of the Tsim Sha Tsui clock tower, see Chung Wah-nan, Preservation of the clock tower—Kowloon Canton Railway Terminal, *Hong Kong Institute of Architects Journal*, No. 1, 2013. Apart from *Ting de jicheng*, representative books written by Chung include *The art of Chinese garden*, 1982; *Chao yu chao, jianzhu sheji chengshi guihua sanlun* (Copy or surpass: on architectural design and urban planning), 1991; *Contemporary architecture in Hong Kong*, Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Ltd., 1989; *Quan qiu hua, ke chixu fazhan, kuawenhua sheji* (Globalization, sustainability and cross-culture design), Beijing: China Architecture and Building Press, 2007; *Chengshihua weiji* (Crisis of urbanization), Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 2008. See the references of this chapter.

[8]Chung Wah-nan, *Regional Culture and Modernity*. Keynote speech at the Architectural Symposium of Hong Kong, Taipei, Macau and Shenzhen. Hong Kong, 16 March 2013.

At the beginning of the 1970s, aware of the lack of cultural venues, Tao Ho and his friends set up the Hong Kong Arts Center, which was later supported by the Governor, Sir Murray MacLehose. The government allocated a plot of land on the Wanchai seafront, but the budget was only five million dollars.[9] The arts center is located on a street corner. The new building closely abuts older buildings and the two sides are cut at 45 degrees to reduce the bulkiness and follow the site coverage requirement. A theater, music hall, gallery and classroom are stacked from the basement to the fifth floor. On top of the theater, the gallery makes use of the height difference by splitting the space to create half a floor. This concept was quite new in the 1970s. In the center of the building there is a five story atrium. The big staircase spirals up the wall, linking to various floors and half-floor platforms. The box office and lift lobby are on the ground floor. Tuck stores and coffee shops are set in the open space of the upper floors. Art works or banners are hung on the railings of the stairs. This central space with a big staircase is light-hearted. Tao Ho designed the staircase carpet and ordered it to be made by a factory. The air-return tube was originally suspended from the tall ceiling. However, the carpet and tube were removed in the later refurbishment. The building volume and details are formed by a clearly edged triangle structure.

Over the past 38 years, the arts center has held numerous arts exhibitions of high and indigenous arts. The arts center school has run many visual and performing arts classes. The tower houses the offices for arts and cultural organizations. In the cultural desert of Hong Kong, a small tower in the downtown hustle sprays water droplets of Muse (Fig. 8.11). At the time of designing arts center, Tao Ho submitted scheme to the design competition of Pompidou Center in Paris, France.[10] Both Pompidou Center and Hong Kong arts center were completed in 1977. Piano and Rogers' design for Paris astonished the world with a frank high-tech gesture, while Tao Ho's design became a manifesto of Modernist architecture in Hong Kong.

St. Stephen's College on the Stanley seafront was a church-run school in the early twentieth century. The school was damaged in the Japanese invasion during WWII, but returned to tranquility after the war. In the early 1980s, Tao Ho was commissioned to design an arts and culture building, a school hall and an academic building. The group of buildings near the entrance forms a U-shape. The arts and culture building is a long strip-shaped building in the center, linked with the semi-circular open staircase. The buildings are in an upward trapezoid-shape, while the cantilevered balcony is at a reverse angle, making the form strong. Rooms are linked by long verandas and attract a breeze. The external walls are either fair-faced

[9]To visualize how much was five million dollars in 1972, a university graduate could earn 700–1000 Hong Kong dollars a month at the time. See Zhang (2005). A new unit of two bedrooms, 585 ft.^{2}, in Taikoo Shing asked for HK$124,500 in 1976, according to the Archive of Swire Group.

[10]In 1972, the design competition of Pompidou Center in Paris received 681 entries from all over the world. Tao Ho's design was published in *Asian Architect and Builder*, Hong Kong, March 1972.

Fig. 8.11 Hong Kong Arts Center, 1977. **a** The main elevation facing the street corner. **b** Stair along the wall is the main feature of design. **c** The staircase dialogues with inside and outside. **d** Section showing the flexible usage of level heights. **e** Gallery. **f** Design sketch. Drawings courtesy of Dr. Tao Ho

concrete or brick. The form, materials and texture are reminiscent of the buildings of Le Corbusier, Louis Kahn and Paul Rudolph (Fig. 8.12).

With the rising of his fame, Tao Ho was awarded more big jobs later and adopted eclectic and decorative methods in some projects. Compared with his later works, Hong Kong Arts Center and St. Stephen College both explored structural

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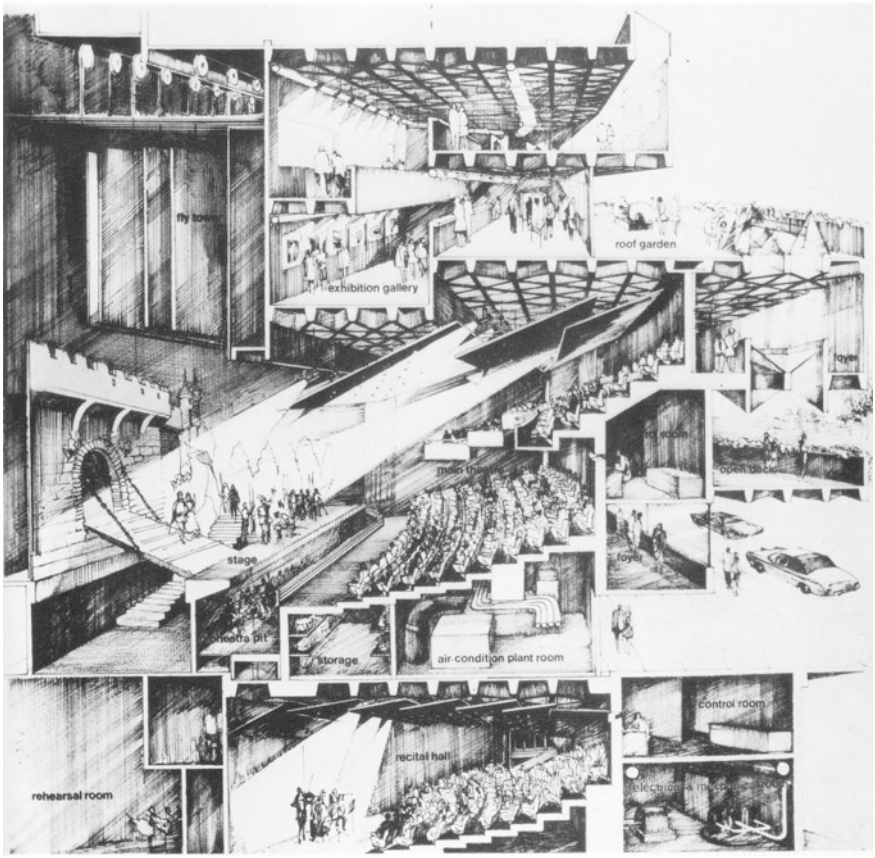


Fig. 8.11 (continued)

and material expression. These two early woks keep a robust modernist spirit from his teachers like Walter Groupius, Kenzo Tange and Fumihiko Maki. Few of his contemporary peers used modernist method so resolutely except the expatriate architects in the government.

In 1986, Hong Kong participated in the World Expo in Vancouver, Canada. Tao Ho's design for the Hong Kong pavilion won over 40 competitors. His scheme used bamboo to wrap the exhibition box, in a modular order. The details were delicately designed and later applied to his other projects. The implementation of Hong Kong pavilion was helped by Bing Thom, a Chinese Canadian architect in Vancouver (see Chap. 10). In the late 1980s, as colonial rule was coming to an end, there was a rising awareness of conserving local traditions. Tao Ho collaborated with the Land Development Corporation (the predecessor of the Urban Renewal Authority) on two projects—Sheung Wan Market and Li Chit Street. Completed in 1905, Sheung Wan Market was an Edwardian style building with a brick arch and patterned brick

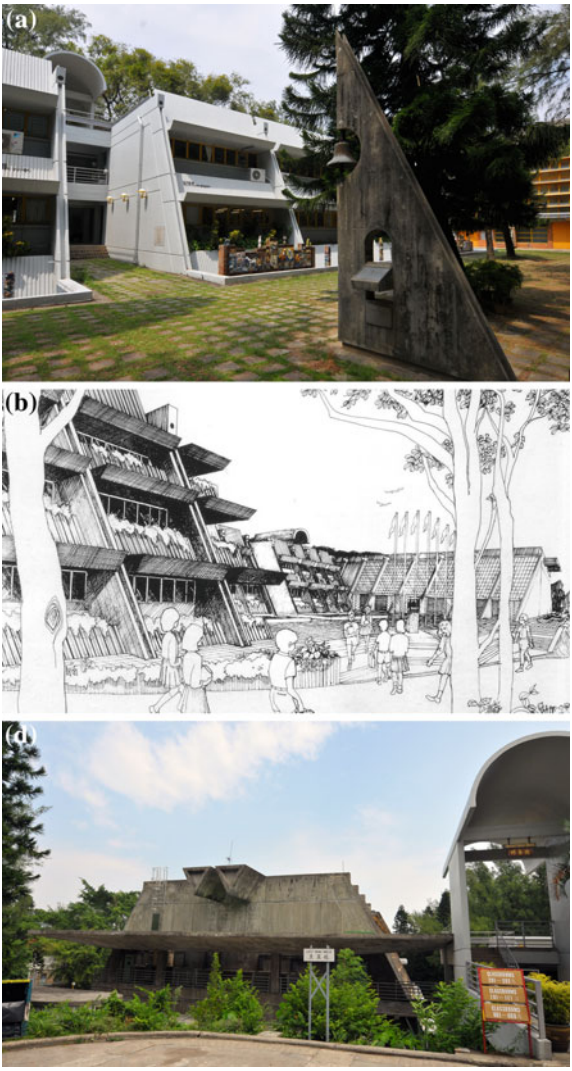


Fig. 8.12 St. Stephen's College, 1983. **a** Arts and cultural building. **b** Design sketch. **c** Design drawings showing the relationship of parts. **d** Sport building with fair-faced concrete. Drawings courtesy of Dr. Tao Ho

wall. The renovation repaired and kept the external wall. All of the original internal floors were removed and replaced with three floors of steel structure. The atrium and internal stairway were designed to cooperate with the skylight from the roof truss. The old building became a landmark of Sheung Wan (Fig. 8.13). Li Chit Street is an old part of Wanchai. High-rise residential towers occupy the street. In the small garden, Tao Ho designed a "shop-house" facade, to remind people of the

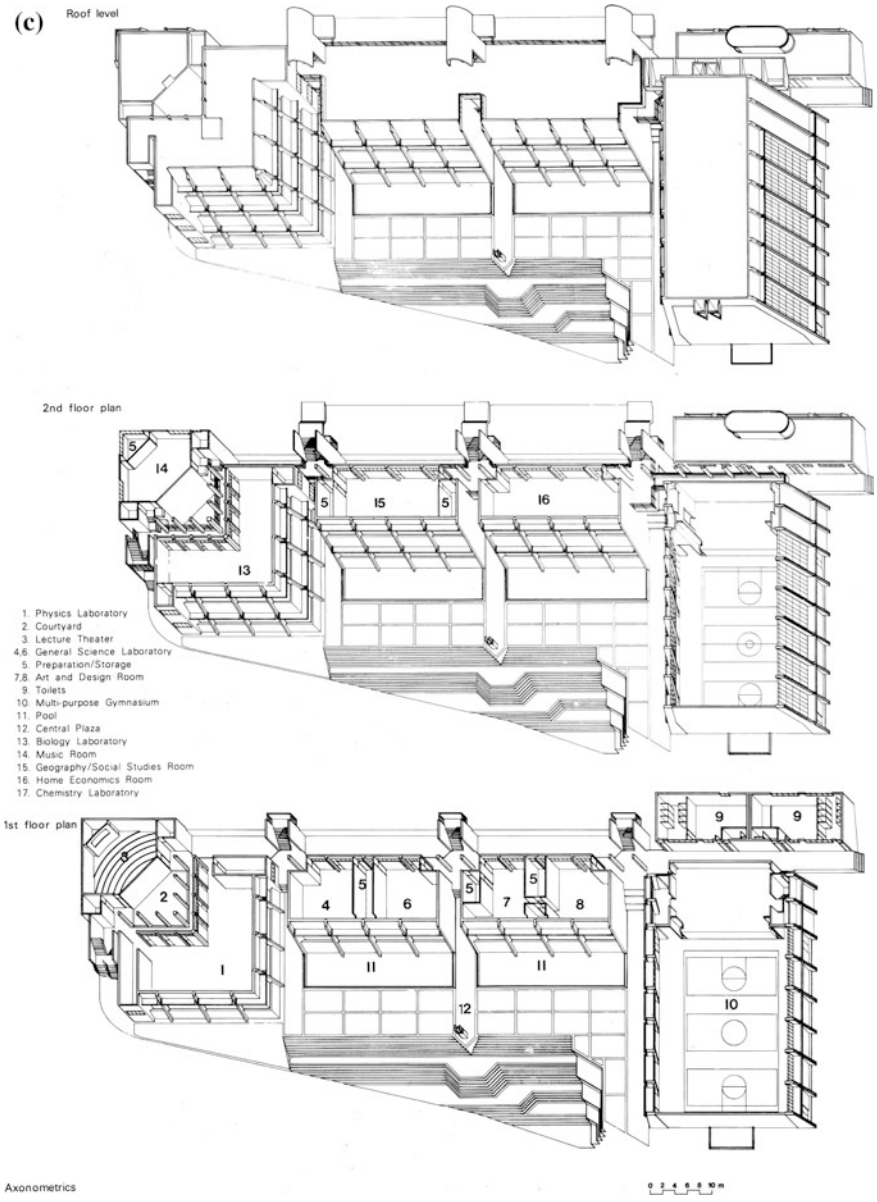


Fig. 8.12 (continued)

indigenous tradition in the area (Fig. 8.14). The two projects set examples for the conservation movement in Hong Kong, which attracted more enthusiasm and involved more projects in the 21st century, and were loved by local people.

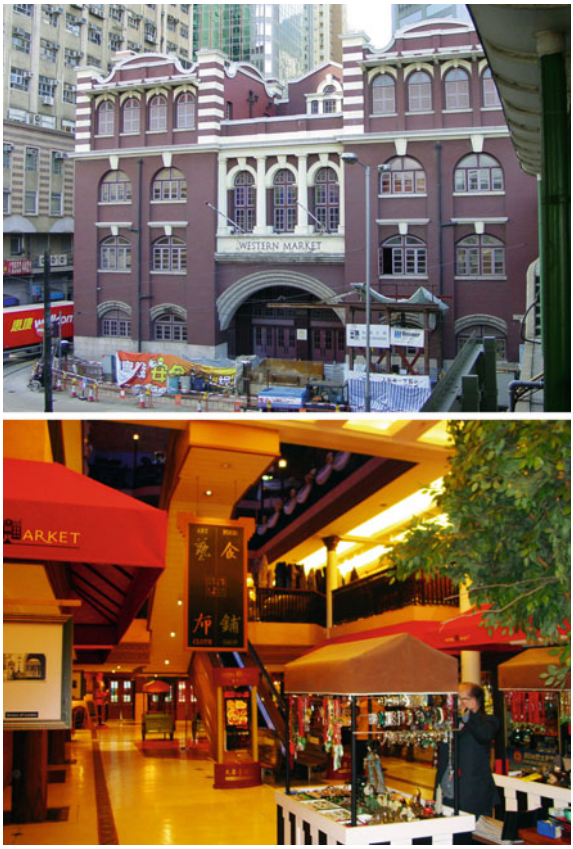


Fig. 8.13 Sheung Wan Market, 1905, renovated in 1992. The interior was completely remodeled

Fig. 8.14 Li Chit Street, only a "façade" of shop-house is *left*

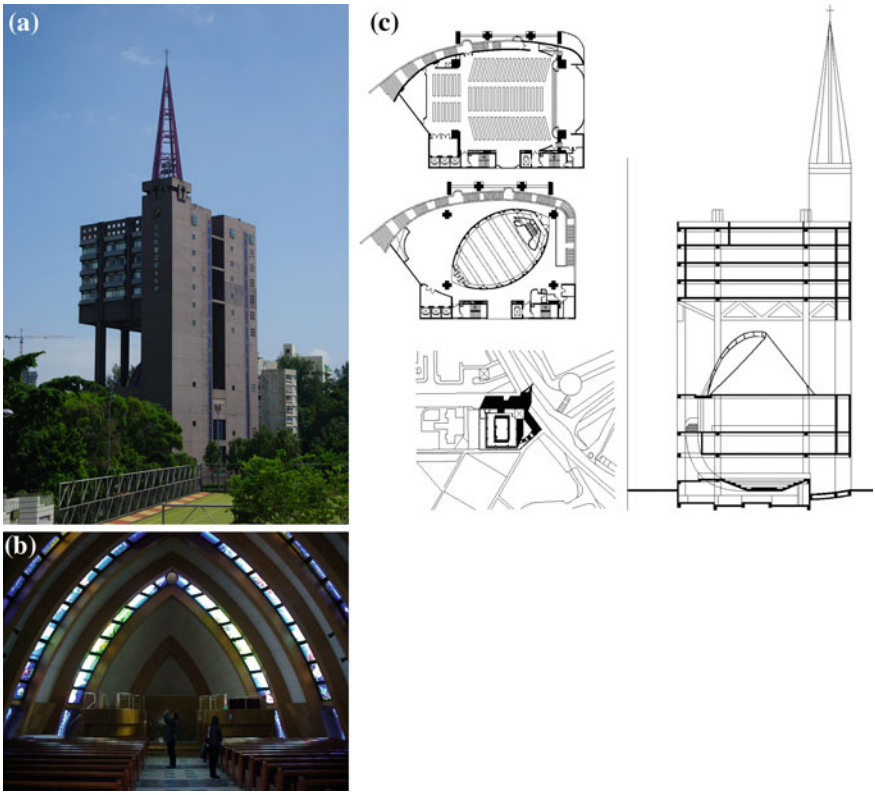


Fig. 8.15 Wing Kwong Pentecostal Holiness Church, 2000. **a** In a small site, the church rises up with a "bookshelf" manner. **b** Inside the church. **c** Drawings by Kwok Wing Sang

At the end of the 1990s, the Christian Church invited Tao Ho to design Wing Kwong Pentecostal Holiness Church. The site is located on the public housing estate of Lok Fu, with a plot area of 1,500 m^2. On this limited site, Tao Ho stacked an activity room, chapel, classroom and office in a 10 story tower, and designed the structure like a bookshelf. This structure allows the roof of the chapel to be free form. A "pilgrimage" external staircase leads to the chapel. A color striped skylight was embedded in the structure. Tao Ho drew the colored windows himself. Part of the offices and classrooms are on the upper floor. Only in land-short Hong Kong could such a church be produced; Tao Ho found inspiration from the constraints (Fig. 8.15).

In addition to the above projects, Tao Ho designed the campus and academic building at Baptist University (1989), the Ho Sin Hang Engineering Building at CUHK (1994), the Construction Bank headquarters in Beijing (1998), the Gold Bridge Building, Pudong, Shanghai (1997) and other important buildings. He consulted for the governments of several Chinese cities and private firms, introduced the technology and experts for the construction of Shanghai's metro subway.

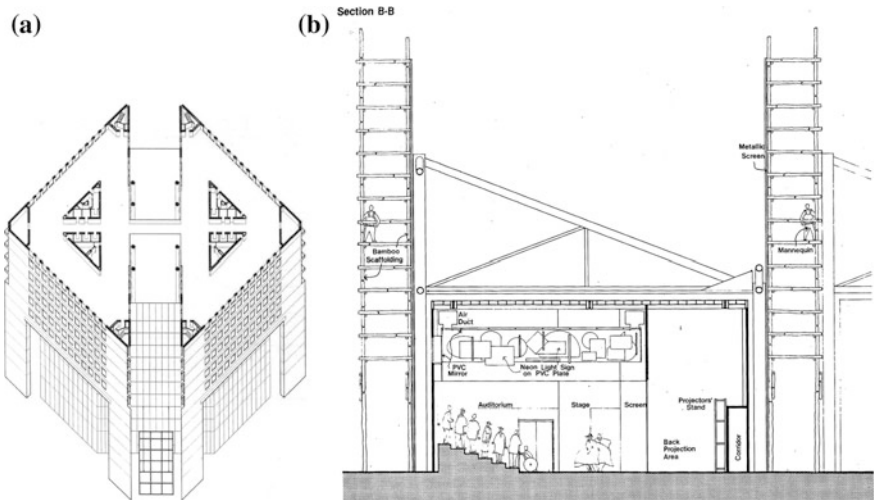


Fig. 8.16 Other works of Taoho. **a** Construction Bank of China, Beijing, 1997. **b** Hong Kong Pavilion, World Expo, Vancouver, 1986. Drawings courtesy of Dr. Tao Ho

In particular, when the open door policy was implemented in China in the early 1980s, Tao Ho contributed to the establishment of "Great Earth," an experimental incorporated design firm in Beijing, at a time when state-owned design institutes were prevailing.

In architectural design, Tao Ho remained rooted in modernism. He was fond of using structure and technology to express his buildings. These methods contrast sharply with many mediocre and compromised buildings in Hong Kong. Besides architectural design, Tao Ho created many art works. In the 1980s, he used containers to construct his office in Kowloon Tong, which was full of artistic atmosphere (Fig. 8.16). His steel sculpture was hung in the terminal of Hong Kong airport. In 1997, Hong Kong's sovereignty was returned to China, and Tao Ho designed the Bauhinia flag of the Special Administrative Region. His "Explosion" sculpture, made from crystal and optical fiber, was collected by the World Economic Forum in Geneva, Switzerland. His sculptures, paintings and installations were displayed and collected in airport, university campus and museums in China and abroad. With his talent and hard work, Tao Ho practiced the integration of architecture, interior, product and art design like a Renaissance master, which has often amazed and energized the society.

Apart from his design work and business, Tao Ho was an active thinker and social activist. After his formative years in the United States, he met and was influenced by the great thinkers and scholars in the 20th century, for example, Greek urban planner C. Doxiadis (1914–1975), anthropologist Margaret Mead (1901–1978), geographer Jean Gottman (1915–1994), social scientist Barbera Ward (1914–1981) and architect Buckminster Fuller (1895–1983). He lectured in Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland, Europe and the United States, and made presence in

Fig. 8.17 Dr. Simon Kwan (*right*), with Prince Charles, in the construction site of HKUST, 1989

magazines, newspapers, TV and radio talks. He advocated the integration of Chinese traditional thinking, modernity and cosmological theory, and criticized the capitalist greedy. Through his relationship with Harvard University, Tao Ho introduced the famous Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki to Hong Kong and collaborated with William Lim of Singapore and Sumet Jumsai of Thailand. Together, they pushed forward modernity in Asia.[11] In terms of introducing macro theory and communicating with the Western world, Tao Ho's ideas and actions were similar to those of the Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa (1934–2007), who worked during the same period. They both knew and influenced each other. Through design practice and social activities, Tao Ho realized his life goal of "Renaissance man".[12] Unfortunately, Tao Ho suffered a stroke while busily working in Wuhan in 2002. Otherwise, his contribution to the design in Hong Kong and China would have been even greater[13].

Unlike the first two architects, **Simon Kwa**n is a local trained architect. He graduated from HKU in 1967 and opened his own firm in 1973. Later, he was awarded a Ph.D. in Chinese fine art history from HKU. Kwan is not only an architect but also an artist, art historian and collector. His sketches and perspective drawings vitally convey his imagination of the buildings and atmosphere of the future ambience. The appreciation of Chinese arts lends him a tool of conceiving architectural design, especially the relationship of figure and ground (Fig. 8.17).

In 1981, the government allocated a plot of land in Wanchai and the Jockey Club donated a sum for the development of an Academy for Performing Arts. Simon Kwan's design won first prize. Beneath the site lay sewage pipes that drained into

[11]William Lim particularly calls his and Asian peers' practice as "non-western" modernity, see Lim and Chang (Ed.), 2012. For the relationship of Tao Ho with his Asian peers, see Xue and Xiao (2014).

[12]The term "Renaissance man" repeatedly appears in Tao Ho's speeches, see Ho (2000).

[13]The description of Tao Ho's career in this chapter is based on the author's communication with Dr. Ho during 1985–2001, Ho (2000), Kwok (2010), Lim et al. (1980) and Khan (1995).

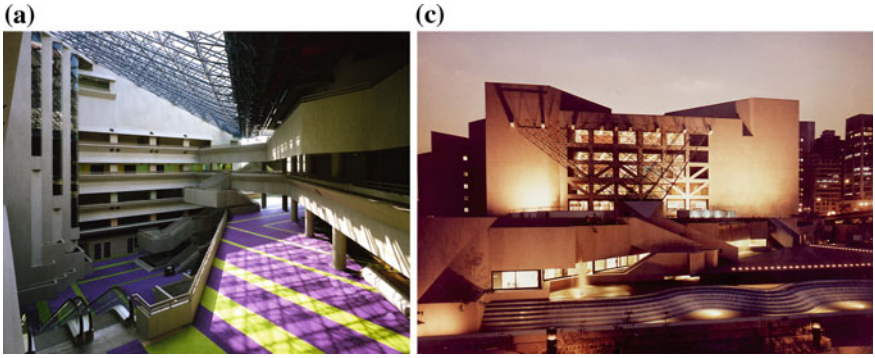
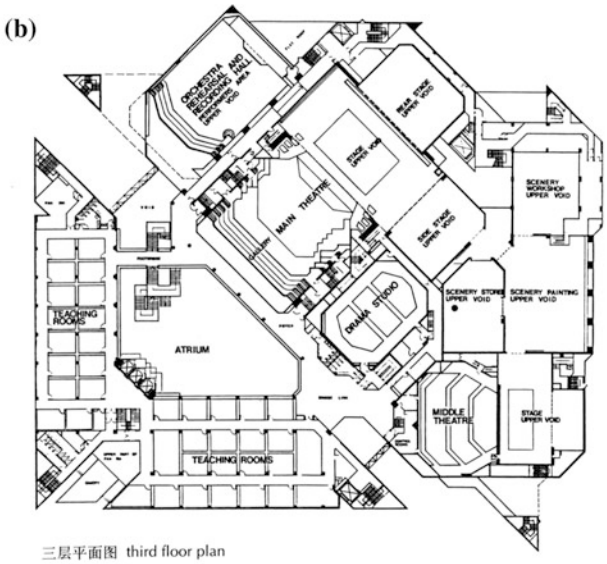


Fig. 8.18 Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, 1985. **a** The atrium gathers waiting and social functions for all theaters. **b** Plan drawings. **c** The outdoor space serves for open performance and social events. Courtesy of Dr. Simon Kwan

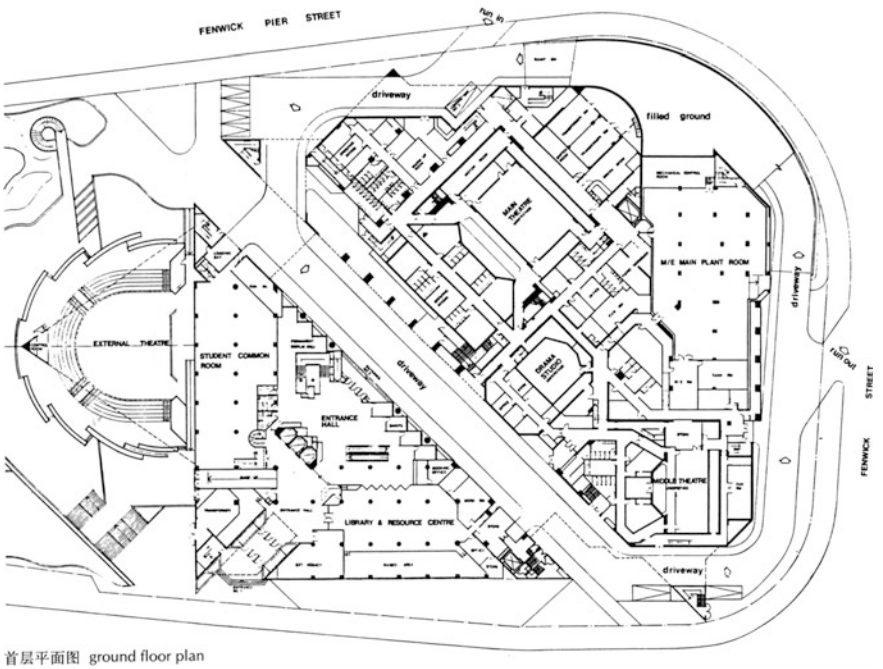
the harbor. The buildable area consisted of only two triangles. The design placed a vehicular drop-off area between these two triangles. Entering the lobby, visitors take the escalator and arrive at the huge atrium, from where they can reach the concert hall, grand theater, chamber hall, dancing hall, recording studio and experimental theater. According to the program brief, all of these performing venues were to have their own lobby. The design gathers them together and lets them share a big atrium, which expresses the spatial order and sequence, and also provides a social and communication area. The variously sized performing spaces are all woven into the modular grids of a triangle. The acute angles are used for stair shafts or storage, while the functional parts are rectangular. The building was completed in 1985 and echoed with I.M. Pei's design for the East Building of the National Gallery in Washington, 1978 (Fig. 8.18).

Kwan's design for the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) campus was a brilliant milestone in his career. In 1987, the government decided to establish a third university, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). The government allocated a plot of mountain land in Clear Water Bay, Sai Kung, and the Jockey Club donated money for the construction. Five teams participated in the campus design competition, judged by a committee consisting of presidents/provosts of US and other universities. Fifteen jury members recommended the scheme proposed by Simon Kwan Architect and Associates and Percy Thomas Partnership Ltd.[14] The HKUST campus sits on a hill and faces the sea. The level difference from the hill top to the sea is around 100 meters. The buildings were built according to the varying topography. The main academic

[14]The design competition committee of the HKUST campus first announced that the first prize went to a rectangular plan designed by Eric Lye, Patrick Lau and other HKU faculty members. But for some reasons, Simon Kwan's plan was recommended for implementation. See Hong Kong Institute of Architects, 2007, the part of Patrick Lau; and also from the interview with Professor Patrick Lau, 9 May 2013.



三层平面图 third floor plan



首层平面图 ground floor plan

Fig. 8.18 (continued)

Fig. 8.19 HKUST campus, 1991. *Left* master plan. *Right* entrance plaza. Courtesy of Dr. Simon Kwan

building is situated along the ridge to reduce the level difference. When students change class, they can easily get to their next classroom (Fig. 8.19).

The campus entrance features a semi-circular plaza, like the prologue to a grand symphony. Walking through the semi-open lobby and standing on the balcony, a visitor is faced with a spectacular view of the sea and the sky, with islets appearing indistinctly in the sea like a Chinese ink painting. From the central axis, people can go down to the student halls on the east side through a series of corridors and pavilions, flanked by the green mountain and blue sky. The route from an academic building to a dormitory becomes a poetic journey. The academic blocks are linked by a north-south axis, frequently enriched by rest areas and plenty of light from the glass wall. The academic and student-staff quarters cascade to the sea from the east and north (Fig. 8.20).

The huge HKUST complex comprises three design vocabularies: square, equilateral triangle and semi-circle. Through the composition and contrast between these primary forms, the designer facilitated the perception of various spaces and sequences. The openings and windows, aligned along the solid shadowed wall, produce a strong effect. The whole building uses 6 × 6 inch grey tiles, mingled with a few white tiles. Some areas are highlighted by primary red, blue and yellow coloring. From a distance, the light-grey appears to be white, which creates an obvious shadow effect. The few white tiles are a reminder of the graduation between grey and white. Window openings are adjusted to fit with the integers of tiles, thus avoiding the need to cut the tiles. The design of HKUST was a milestone in the design of Hong Kong campuses. The entrance plaza, with its big red sundial, presents a typical picture postcard of Hong Kong's new generation of higher education buildings.[15]

[15]The description of the HKUST campus is taken from the author's own investigation, ongoing since 1995; an interview with Simon Kwan, December 5, 2011; and Charlie Q.L. Xue, Modernism is coming to Hong Kong—A Tale of Four Architects, *The Architect*, No. 156, April 2012, pp. 69–75.

Fig. 8.20 Volume, geometry, solid and void manipulate the spatial effects. **a** Semi-open hall as a pausing spot in the long corridor. **c** Transition between building and plaza. **d** Long corridor linking the academic building and students' halls. Courtesy of Dr. Simon Kwan

Following that project, between 1988 and 1997 Kwan's firm designed three buildings in Tat Chee Avenue in Kowloon Tong for semi-government organizations—the Hong Kong Productivity Council, the Inno Center of the Hong Kong Science Park and the Jockey Club environmental building. These buildings range from 5,000 to 15,000 m^2. In these buildings, Kwan's design dug a tall atrium within the building bulk and used the crisp geometry of a square and a circle. The various functional usages were unified in tidy modules and window openings. There is a level difference between the street front and the back of the buildings. In the Inno

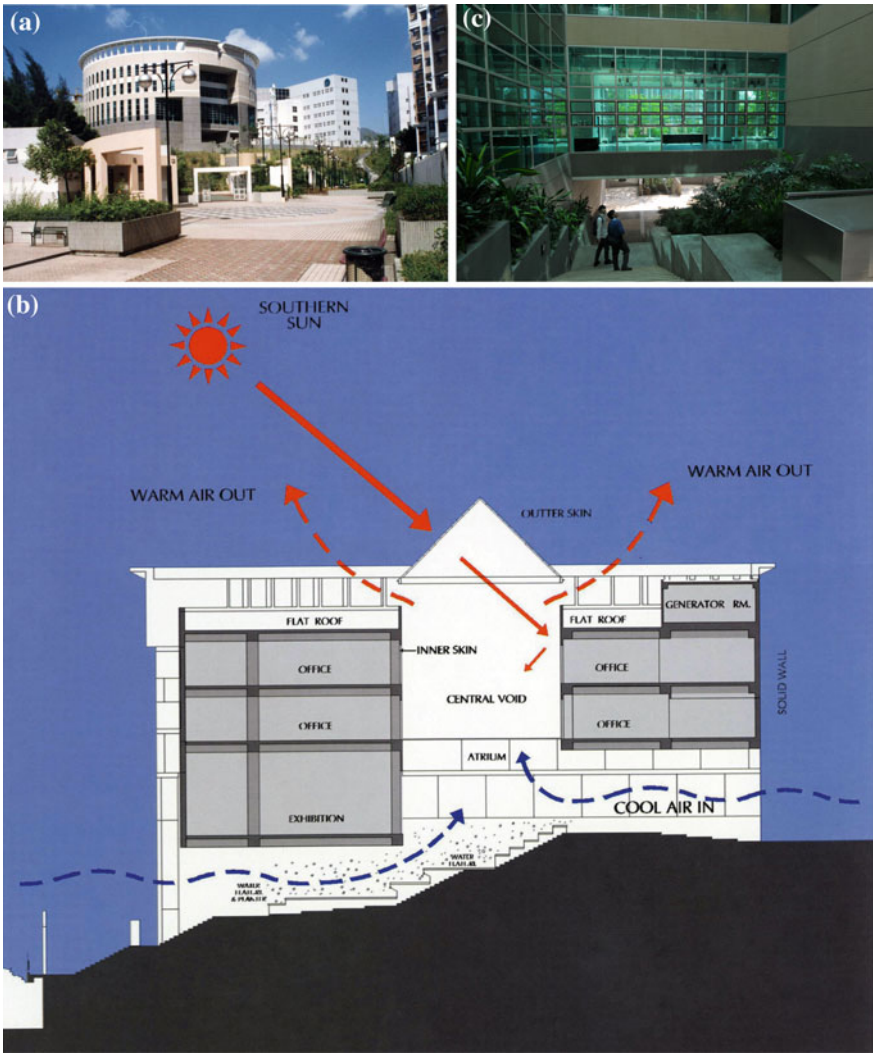


Fig. 8.21 Jockey Club environmental building, 1997. **a** Seen from street park. **b** Diagram of green measurements. Courtesy of Dr. Simon Kwan. **c** From street down to the garden

Center, the lower part at the back is a machine room and sunken exhibition space. In the Jockey Club environmental building, under a semi-open atrium, a big central landscaped staircase leads people from Tat Chee Avenue down to the park through lush trees and shrubs. The circular building is rooted in the earth and draws energy from the ground to the upper-level entrance (Figs. 8.21 and 8.22).

Kwan's designs for public and office buildings are always clear, crisp and tend to be minimal. The atrium space is comforting to people inside. The long glass atrium

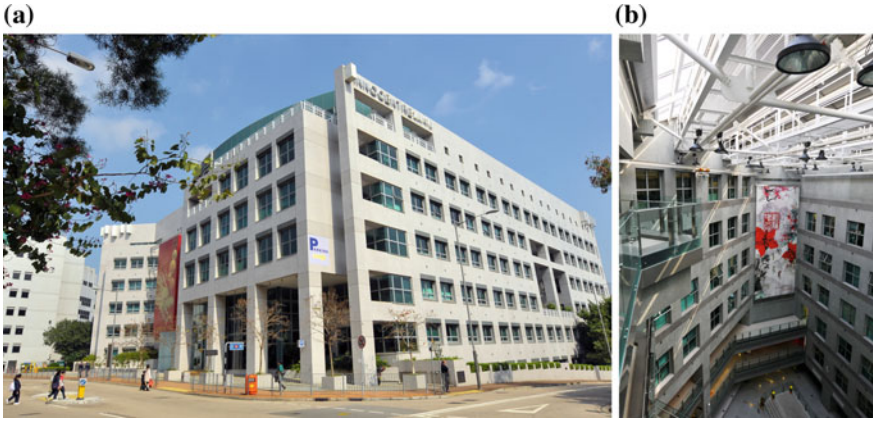


Fig. 8.22 Inno Center, Kowloon Tong, 1995. **a** Square and alignment are the main elevation treatments. **b** Atrium

in the Science Park links many building blocks and forms pleasant indoor and outdoor leisure spaces (Figs. 8.23 and 8.24).

As gentle as Dr. Kwan is, artistic creativity upsurges in his heart. He is fond of painting and using modern (abstract) language to express concepts. Although loving the tradition, Dr. Kwan never directly uses symbols like pitched roof or pavilion. He studies tradition and understands the importance of "line" in the Chinese arts. Most of his designs manipulate geometry or form a curvilinear plane (the HKUST entrance and Ma Wan Parken Shop, for example, see Chap. 5). Many vertical lines appear in the Hong Kong Custom Headquarters building. He studies calligraphy and seal cutting, which elaborates the stroke of the cutter in white jade. "Minimal" and structural layout is the spirit of Chinese seal. Applying the same principles to architecture, he treasures every movement in the design of a facade. In key parts such as the entrance, his use of one or two big openings highlights the hierarchy. Kwan's design is spectacular, delicate, modern, elegant and thoughtful[16].

Patrick Lau graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1969. During his studies, he was deeply influenced by Professor Gustavo da Roza, who was among the first cohort of graduates from HKU in 1955 and later taught in North America. The University of Manitoba is located in Winnipeg, Canada, where it is cold for almost half of the year. One of the educational concepts of Manitoba was to design according to the climate. Lau was trained with this climate-sensitive idea in school. After graduation, Patrick Lau worked in a design firm and later on the planning committee of the Vancouver municipal government. He participated in the renovation of an old industrial area. Amid the rising movement of the local community, he prevented an

[16]The description of Simon Kwan in this chapter is partly based on an interview conducted on 5 December 2011 and *Rhythm of Space, Selected Works by Simon Kwan & Associates Ltd*., Jiangxi Fine Arts Publishing House, 2001.

Fig. 8.23 Hong Kong Science Park **a** Master plan. Courtesy of Dr. Simon Kwan. **b** Management building. **c**, **d** Lobby of management building

expressway from cutting through China Town. He and the China Town community built Dr. Sun Yat-sen Park and the Chinese garden in Vancouver (Fig. 8.25).

In 1973, Patrick Lau returned to Hong Kong and taught at HKU, where he has been head of the architectural department since 1996. He worked as vice-chairman

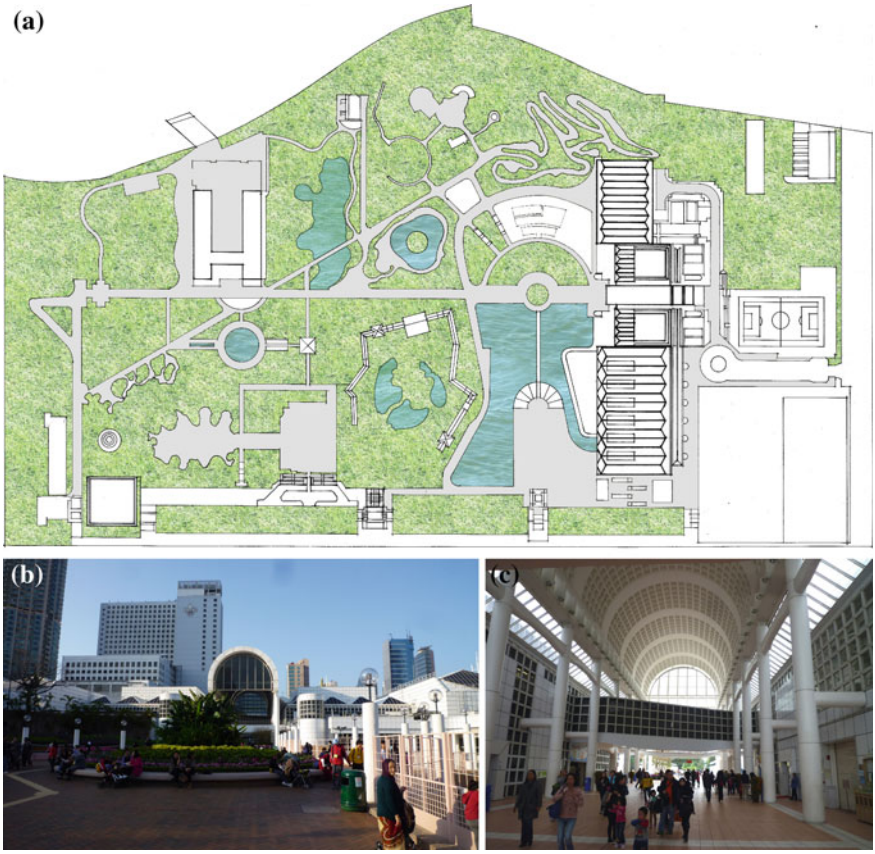


Fig. 8.24 Kowloon Park, 1989. **a** Master plan. Courtesy of Dr. Simon Kwan. **b** Park building, mainly for sport and swimming. **c** Park building acting as a passenger route from Austin Road to the Kowloon Park

of the town planning board and Legislative Council member, organized the professional green building council and appealed for the protection of the harbor and the creation of sustainable building.

Lau continues to find questions through his practice and brings these inquiries to architectural education. Besides his busy teaching, administrative and societal duties, he has continued his building design and practice. Although he has only a couple of employees, he has fulfilled a series of impressive projects, especially school buildings, and reaped many awards.[17]

[17]The information about Patrick Lau is based on the author's communication with Lau since 1999; Hong Kong Institute of Architects, 2007; Patrick Lau, Future Architecture, *Hong Kong Institute of Architects Journal*, No. 2, 2013. pp. 88–89; and an interview conducted on 9 May 2013.

Fig. 8.25 Professor Patrick Lau, pictured in 2013

In 1975, Lau restored Sam Tung Uk, a clan house during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), to a vernacular life museum. In 1979, he planned the first university campus in Macau—East Asia University (now Macau University). Its academic and administrative buildings stand above the mountain of Taipa and face the sea. He designed the buildings and courtyard and laid down the skeleton of the campus. Some buildings are fare-faced concrete with ventilated openings, reminiscent of the CUHK buildings constructed at the same time.

For a long time, all schools in Hong Kong were designed according to government standards, so they were almost all the same. In the 1980s, several international schools located on the hill found that their small hilly sites could not accommodate the standard plan. For the new buildings of these schools, Lau's design used columns to support the building block. The large, elevated deck is light and breezy, with a long vista of mountain and sea. The public spaces are in the arms of building. Students can carry out activities on the high and low podiums. The buildings are faithful to their structure without extra decoration, but with contrast in their shape, size and geometry. These methods are reflected in several school projects— the French School, the International School at Tai Tam and West Island School of ESF (English School Foundation) (Figs. 8.26, 8.27 and 8.28).

At the end of the twentieth century, Lau designed the Australian International School in Kowloon Tong. In this school, classrooms open on to the veranda. The ends of the veranda vary on each floor. The different sizes and openings create spatial interest and airy holes. There is a swimming pool on top of the roof. A big metal umbrella covers the atrium opening, both symbolic and functional. The Australian school and the above-mentioned international school buildings won awards from the HKIA (Fig. 8.29).

In the 21st century, the government allocated land for social organizations to run private college. The HKU SPACE community college gained a plot of land in the industrial area of Kowloon Bay and commissioned Lau to design the building. HKU community college is larger than an ordinary primary or secondary school. The central sky-lit atrium is surrounded by classrooms, the library and various other rooms. Outdoor terraces on each floor are linked to the atrium, which creates natural

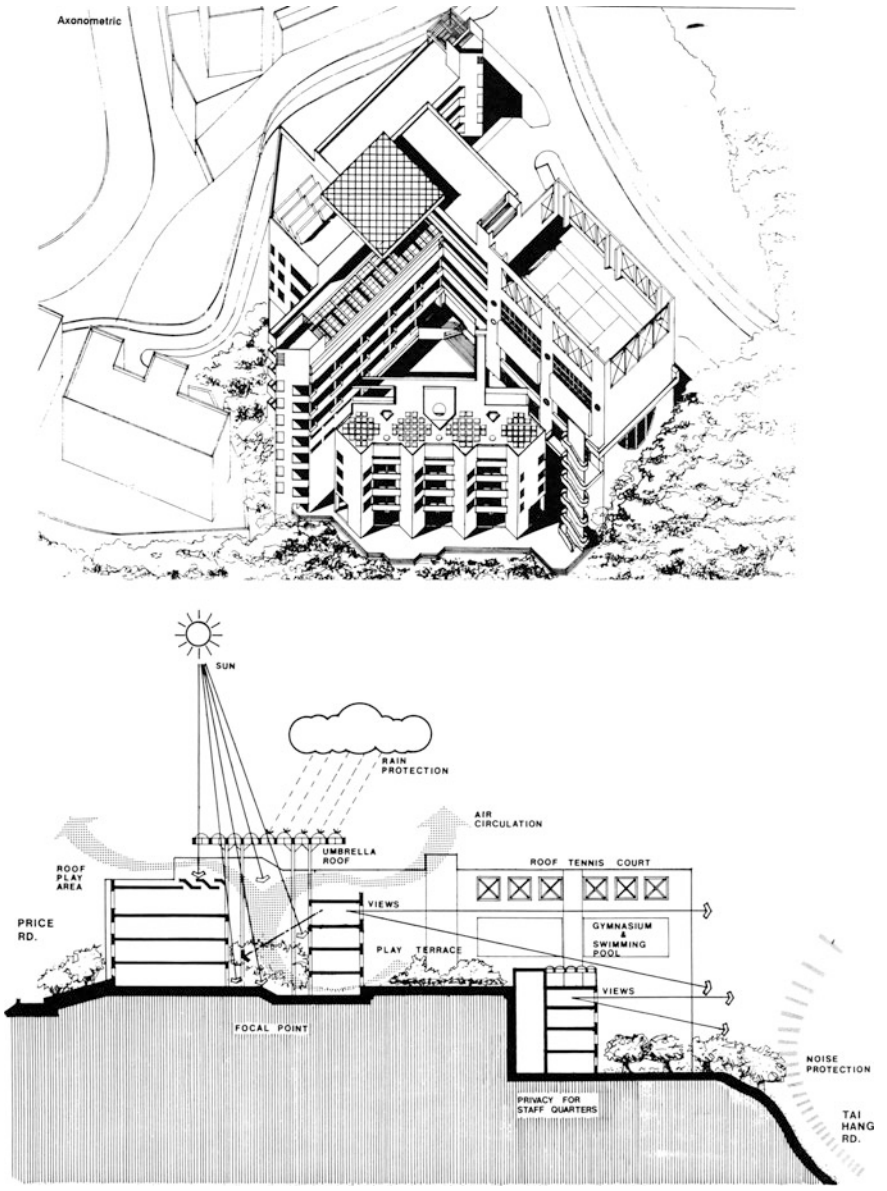


Fig. 8.26 French International School, 1984. Courtesy of Prof. Patrick Lau

ventilation. Unlike other school buildings, this atrium is naturally ventilated without air-con, allowing a breeze to be felt in the summer. Most building complexes in Hong Kong—deep plan shopping malls and academic buildings—are like huge refrigerators and only rely on artificial lighting and ventilation. Buildings like HKU community college, with a naturally ventilated atrium and indoor public space, are

Fig. 8.27 International School of Tai Tam, 1986. **a** Master plan. **b** The school standing from valley. **c**, **d** Playground skillfully uses hilly topography. Courtesy of Prof. Patrick Lau

rarely seen. For decades, Professor Lau has responded sensitively to the climate in his building designs. In the 21st century, this sustainable concern is expressed in a new technology and fresh form (Fig. 8.30).

Anthony Ng received a Bachelor of Architecture degree from HKU in 1972 and later studied in Rome and the UK. In 1977, he returned to Hong Kong and in 1979 became a partner at Kwan, Ng and Wong. The company grew from around 10 to 230 staff, and in 1991, Ng led 27 people to found Anthony Ng and Associates.

St. John's Building in Garden Road, Central, is the property of Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Ltd. Its ground floor is the tram station. In the early 1980s, Ng produced the design for its reconstruction. The site's buildable area is 47 × 14 meters and is surrounded by roads. The design is a regular plan sitting on a slope. Its aluminum-clad facade is made up of a window frame, spandrel wall, corner

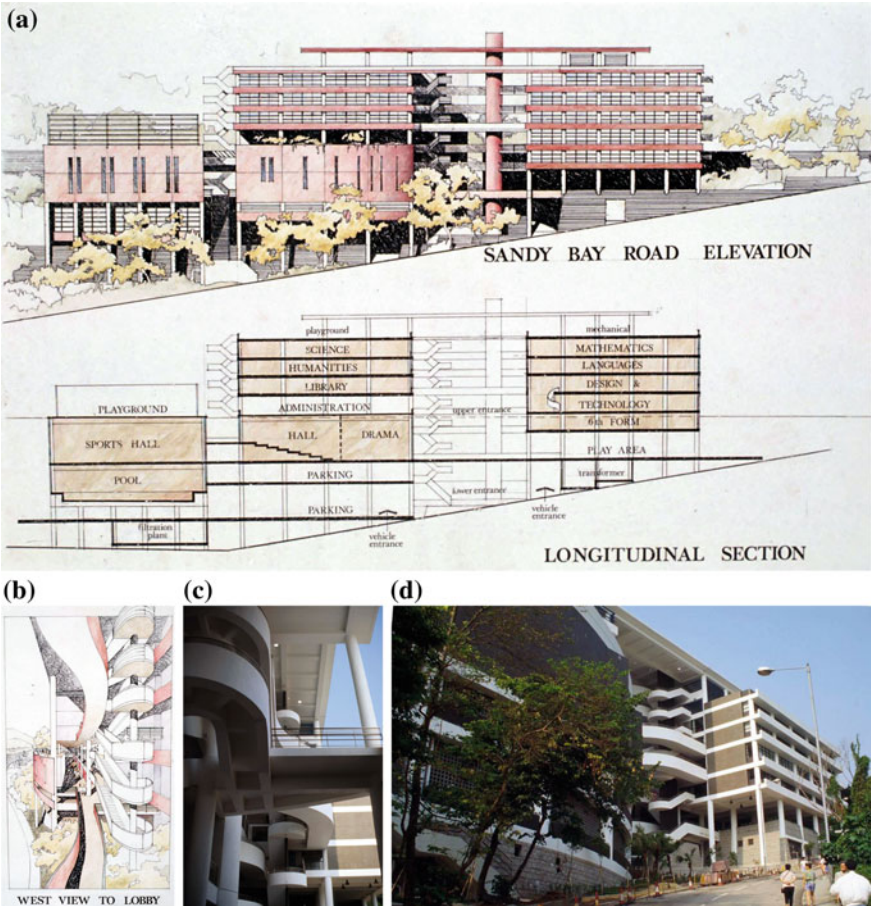


Fig. 8.28 Western Island School, English School Foundation, 1990s. **a** Elevation and section. **b** Curvilinear interests in staircase and corridor. **c** Semi-open public space. **d** Street view. Courtesy of Prof. Patrick Lau

window, corner spandrel and other prefabricated components. The aluminum slab is 6 cm thick and the aluminum slabs are set in dark colored silicon. The window frame sits on the corner of the building, which is rounded. The ground floor is the entrance lobby, and the ceiling and six round columns are clad with stainless steel sheets. A circular fountain and granite steps are in front of the entrance. Although constructed in the early 1980s, 30 years later, people still feel its exquisite quality and sleek gesture (Figs. 8.31 and 8.32).

Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Limited built the Repulse Bay Hotel in 1920 and it once attracted foreign celebrities and artists. In 1982, the owner planned to build an apartment block on the site. The original hotel podium was kept for shops, restaurants and a club house. The huge flag-shaped apartment building, "The

Fig. 8.29 Australia International School, Kowloon Tong, 2000. Courtesy of Prof. Patrick Lau

Repulse Bay," sits above the podium with the units cascading down toward the bay. Every ten stories there are terraces and large holes through which the green mountain and blue sea can be viewed. The external walls are clad with a wavy horizontal frame, which unifies the windows, balconies and holes behind. The first apartment buildings with large openings were designed by Arquitectonic in Miami, USA, in the 1980s. Borrowing from their experiences, The Repulse Bay created a new prototype in Hong Kong. The architect started to pay attention to ventilation. The external frame found its early use in Hong Kong (Fig. 8.33).

In 1997, Verbena Heights, a Housing Society project, was completed in Tseung Kwan O. The development comprises six 35–50 story blocks for sale, a 36 story building for rental and six facilities for the community. This was the first project completed by Anthony Ng and Associates. It was also an experiment in green architecture: influenced by the "eco skyscraper" designed by Ken Yeang of Malaysia, Ng and his colleagues aimed to respond to the climate of Hong Kong.

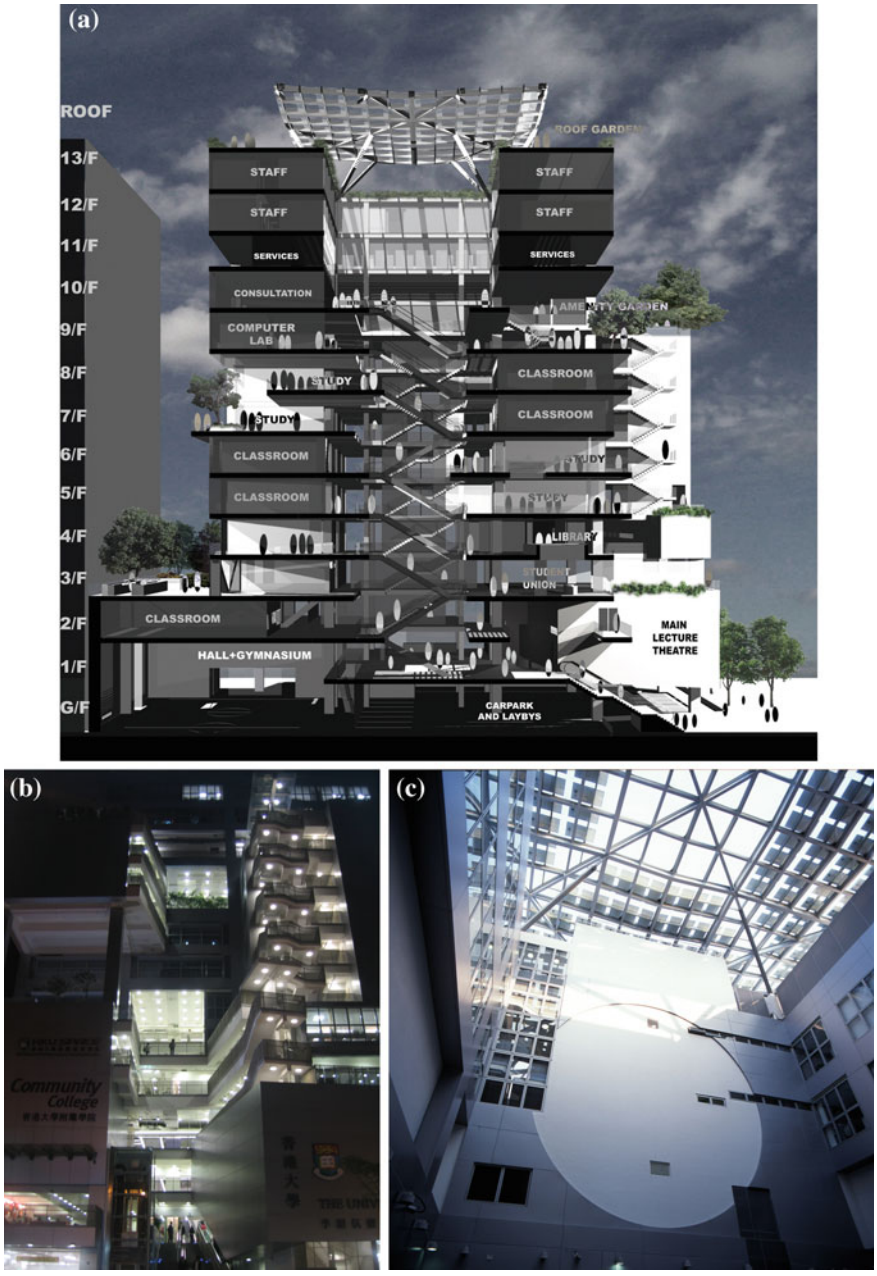


Fig. 8.30 HKU SPACE, Kowloon Bay, 2006. **a** Sectional view. **b** Entrance **c** Atrium. Courtesy of Prof. Patrick Lau

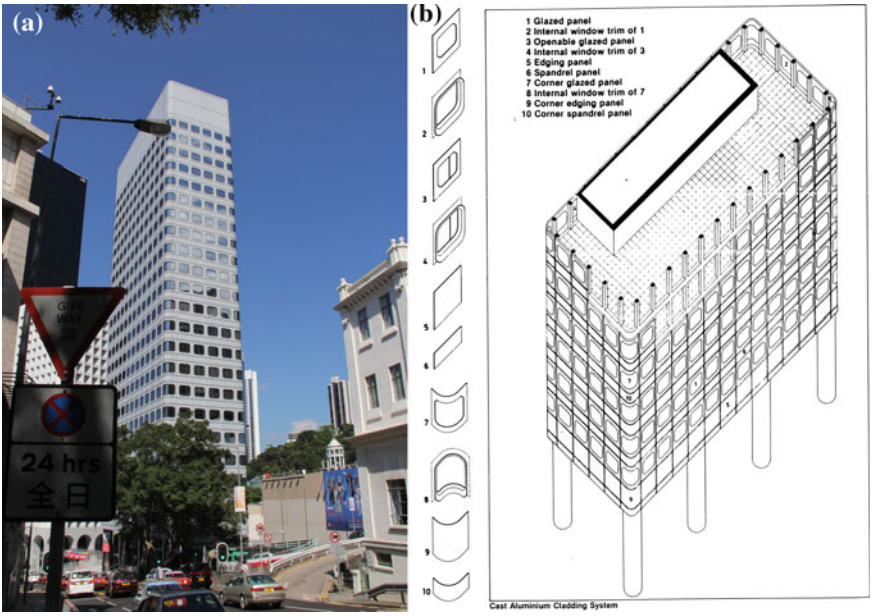


Fig. 8.31 St. John's Building, Garden Road, 1982. **a** View in the Garden Road; **b** Components of cladding; **c** Plan. Drawigs from Vision, 1982

K.S. Wong of Anthony Ng and Associates was the project architect.[18] In completing this design, the architect referred to wind tunnel tests and the solar path. The buildings are set high or low according to the view and the noise from street. A noise barrier is installed on the external wall and a tensile fabric wind canopy was erected. Low-flush water tanks are installed in every unit (Fig. 8.33).

For better ventilation, the floor plan uses a linear form rather than a cruciform. Blocks are hollowed to enable the wind to flow naturally through the building. Sky gardens are installed on every third floor, which were sold to the flat buyers.[19]

Verbena Heights was an early experiment in the use of green technology for mass housing. In subsequent developments, Ng and his colleagues introduced other green features, such as in Tung Chung Crescent, completed in 1999. The estate comprises two crescent towers, with the units arranged from high to low to welcome the dominant wind. The two crescents are connected by a bridge with a

[18]K.S. Wong became a leading figure in the green architecture movement in the twenty-first century. He was appointed Director of the Environmental Protection Department of the Hong Kong government in 2012.

[19]The description of the design of Verbena Heights is based on materials from the Hong Kong Institutes of Architects, http://www.hkia.net/en/Events/action.do?method=detail&mappingName=AnnualAwards&id=4028813c24c36d2d0124c3ba5304001b; and Wikipedia http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E8%8C%B5%E6%80%A1%E8%8A%B1%E5%9C%92. Accessed 8 March 2015.

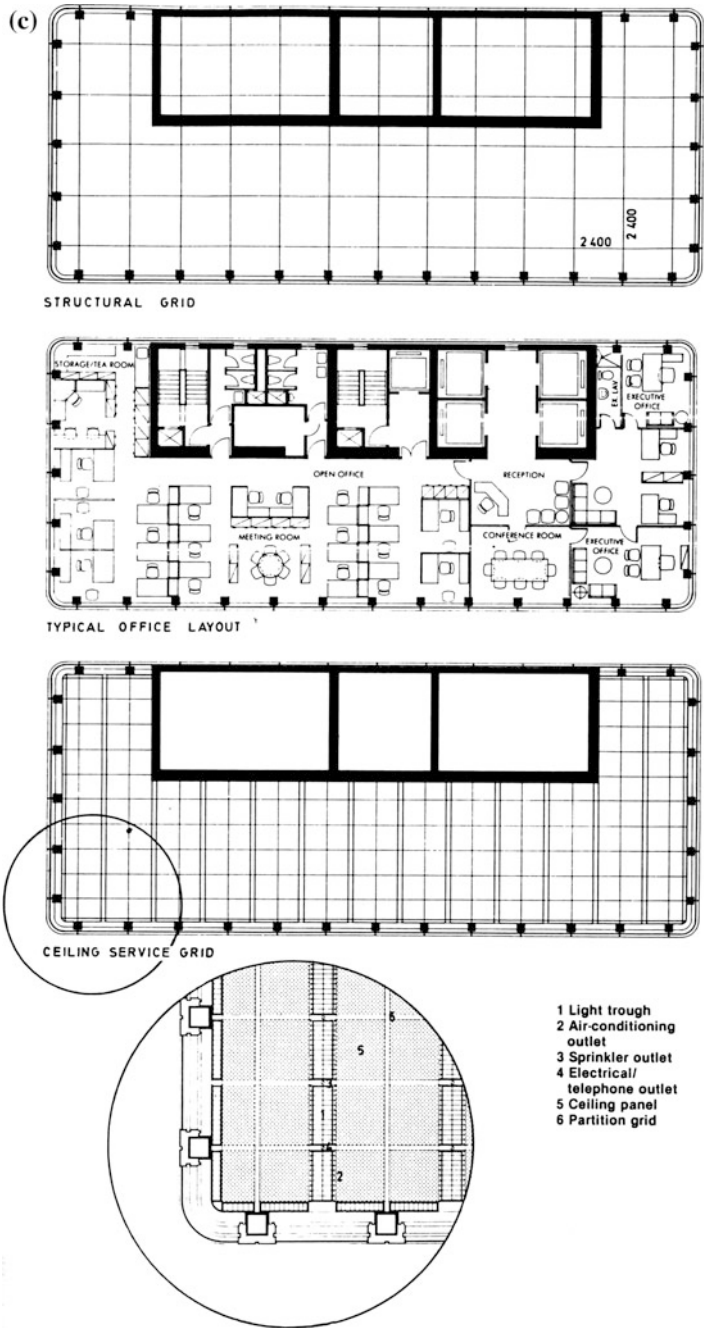


Fig. 8.31 (continued)

Fig. 8.32 The Repulse Bay apartment, 1989

Fig. 8.33 Verbena Heights, Tseung Kwan O, 1997

pedestrian road underneath, leading to the estate. These housing projects created a new architectural language for high-density conditions.

In the Tsing Yi community building, Ng and colleagues attempted to give a new form to this type of building. The ground floor houses a wet market. The podium is a broad platform for people to transit from the residential estates to the street opposite and the MTR. The sports hall and library on the upper floors provide a contrast in space and volume and generate beautiful scenes.[20]

Anthony Ng's design method transformed from sleek wrapping in the 1970s to more concerns on ventilation in the 1990s, which changed his design languages and building form. Compared with Patrick Lau who also emphasizes the response to

[20]The description of Anthony Ng is partly based on Kvan et al. (2000).

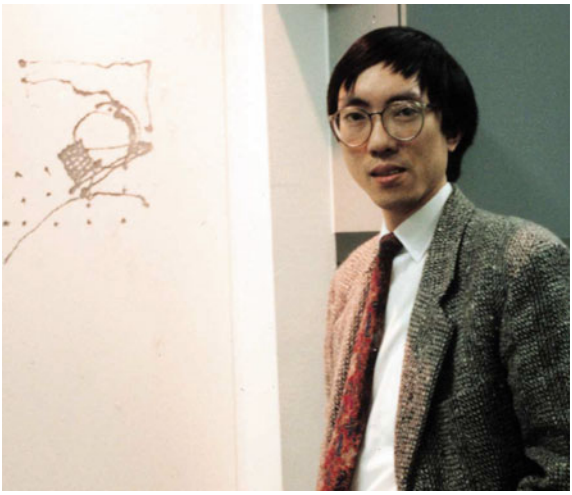


Fig. 8.34 Dr. Rocco Yim, pictured in the early 1990s

climate, Ng designed in a larger scale and broader building types—apartment blocks, office buildings, shopping malls and MTR stations, with the support of his company and capable colleagues. His modernist aesthetic vision is fully implemented in plan, space and structure. In the early 1990s, his office experimented paper-less operation and electronic filing, which made the first step in the information age.

Rocco Yim graduated from the University of Hong Kong in 1976, and was conferred an honorary doctorate by the HKU in 2013. The architectural education at HKU emphasized technology in the 1970s, therefore Yim was trained with a pragmatic attitude. In 1979, he and his schoolmates opened Rocco Design, which has grown from several employees to more than 200 (Fig. 8.34).

In 1983, Yim's design was one of three shortlisted schemes in the international design competition for the opera house in the Bastille, Paris. His design dialogued with the street context of Paris (Fig. 8.35). Carlos Ott from Canada eventually won the competition and his design was built. However, through his debut in Paris, Yim was commissioned to design the Tianjin Exhibition Center. At the same time, he designed Park Lane and the gate of Kowloon Park along Nathan Road, the north-south thoroughfare of the Kowloon peninsula (Fig. 8.36). The design emphasized the portal form of a gate. In these designs, Yim elaborated building geometries and volumes. In the early 1980s, Postmodernism prevailed around the world and also permeated Hong Kong. Yim felt that although the US and Japan had culture and context that architects could tap, Hong Kong was not sensitive to history and culture. When the Japanese and American masters considered stylish "-ism" in their designs, Hong Kong architects had to work out how to produce more residential units and saleable floor areas on a small plate. The chaotic and dense city had little interest in culture and history. There was a huge distance between the ideal and the reality, which made him feel helpless. He was influenced by Japanese

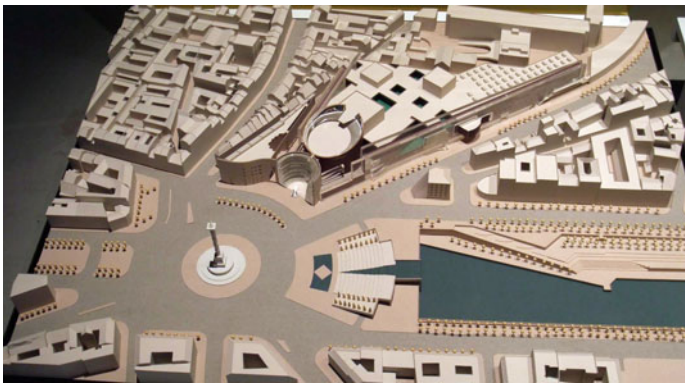


Fig. 8.35 Competition scheme for Paris Opera House, Bastille, Paris, 1983

Fig. 8.36 Park Lane, Kowloon Park, 1986 Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim

architects, especially Kisho Kurokawa, and was eager to cultivate seductive fruit in the barren land of Hong Kong.[21]

Yim's designs pay close attention to circulation and traffic—how people arrive at a building, how people move from the building to other places and how the building connects to other buildings. Yim's work has continuously tested these questions. The twin towers of the Citibank headquarters (1992) sit on the podium, the upper and lower floors of which contain various restaurants and coffee shops. When people arrive at the building, they can see the artistic waterfall and the Mid-level landscape through the curtain wall. From the Citibank building, people can cross the street or walk to Hong Kong Park using pedestrian bridges (Fig. 8.37).

Hollywood Terrace (1999) was designed for the Hong Kong Housing Society. The design includes stairs and a lift for passers-by from Queen's Road to

[21]Rocco Yim's words on Hong Kong and overseas; see Rocco Yim, Architalk, *Vision*, No. 7, 1983.

Hollywood Road on the upper level. Passers-by arrive at the higher level and walk across the pedestrian bridge to Hollywood Terrace. They can see the courtyard of the residential estate without disturbing the residents. The design creates the pleasure of passing by and viewing other people's lives, but with no interference (Fig. 8.37). The new addition to the Lok Fu shopping mall (1991), designed by Yim, connects on the fourth floor to the old part, designed by Chung Wah-nan in 1981. The new part links to the MTR and Junction Road at the higher level (Fig. 8.38). The International Finance Center is located in Central. People can arrive at the building from the MTR, Airport Express, bus station, piers and pedestrian system of Central. The podium part is designed in a circular form, with a central opening for the bus station and traffic to pass through (Fig. 8.39).

Compared with other cities, Hong Kong has a severe shortage of buildable land and 80 % of residents use public transportation in their daily lives. High-rise and high-density are the main solutions. Rocco Yim grew up in Hong Kong and deeply understands the importance of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. When designing a building, he always integrates the functional aspects with various pedestrian routes. The circulations inside and outside his buildings weave an artistic pattern and end-users appreciate the convenience and the intimate and relaxed feel of the space.

Convenient circulation and pedestrian accessibility make such buildings an organic part of the city. Based on a rational circulation design, Yim pays more attention to the elaboration of the building's form—the juxtaposition of solid and void, high and low, horizontal and vertical, and exposed and shaded. A cantilevered glass box (or clad on one side with metal or tiles), horizontal sun-shading fins and a long, thin single column often feature, in different versions, in his designs, such as the Shek Kip Mei Sports Center (1997), the new wing of Lok Fu (1991) and the Far East Mansion on Nathan Road (1998).

The Peninsula Hotel was built in 1928 in Tsim Sha Tsui to accompany the train terminal of the Kowloon-Canton Railway. The hotel saw the surrender of the Hong Kong governor to Japanese troops in 1941. It has long been one of the landmarks of colonial Hong Kong. Yim was engaged to design the alterations and add a tower. He elaborated the proportion of the new tower while respecting the original symmetrical form. In adding the new tower, he aimed to embody a classical composition. The window openings, division of wall lines and other details were derived from the old building. This was partly learnt from the Postmodernist method. The alteration of the Peninsula Hotel respects the old building, adds the colors and values of a new era and graces the Tsim Sha Tsui area (Fig. 8.40).

The podium of Hong Kong University's Graduate House (1998) contains a lecture theater at the lower level and a lobby/activity room on the higher level. The rise in the lecture theater floor echoes the hilly topography outside (Fig. 8.41). The two directional axes meet in the lobby of Graduate House, creating dynamically interesting spaces. His several academic building designs in the CUHK and other institutions experiment many spatial effects. The Icon Hotel of Polytechnic University (2011) used the method of hollowing volume and pushing in glass box. The building allows circulation from two sides, with a separate entrance for school teaching (Fig. 8.42). iSquare (2009) is a shopping mall focusing on young

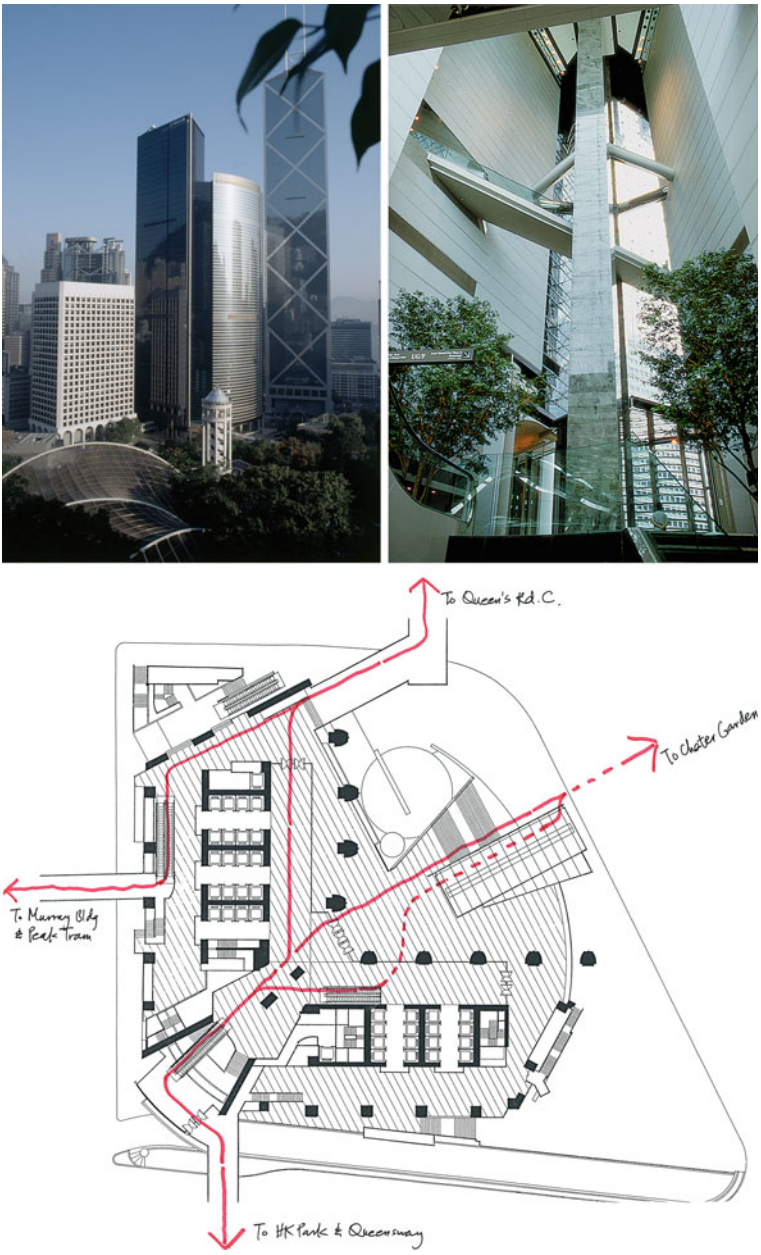


Fig. 8.37 Citibank headquarters building, 1992. The lower part acts as a traffic transition from street to the hill and park. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim

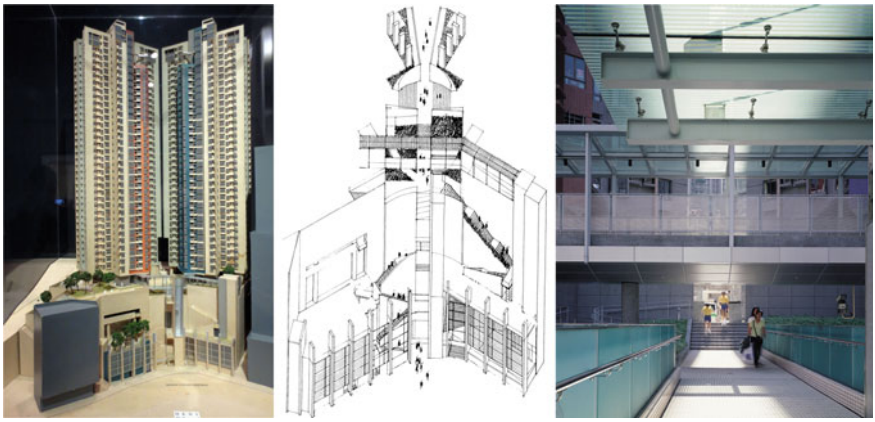


Fig. 8.38 In Hollywood Terrace, passers-by can go from Queen's Road up to the Hollywood Road through the building. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim

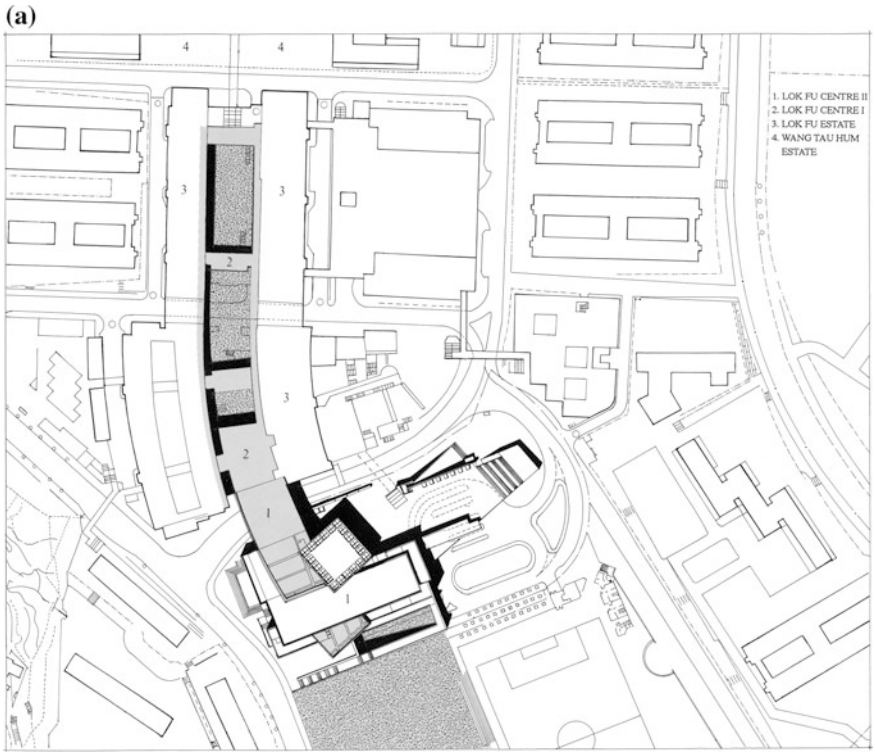
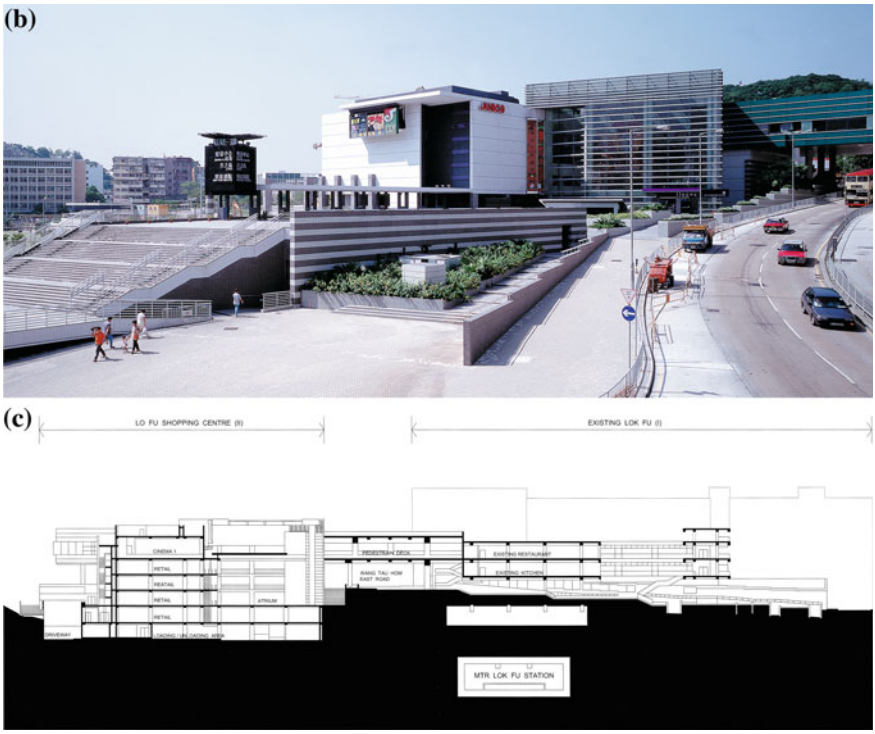


Fig. 8.39 Lok Fu Shopping Mall, 1991. **a** Master plan showing the new "head" adding to the old linear shopping arcade. **b** Big platform and steps leading to the upper floor of shopping mall. **c** The old and new parts connect above the road. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim



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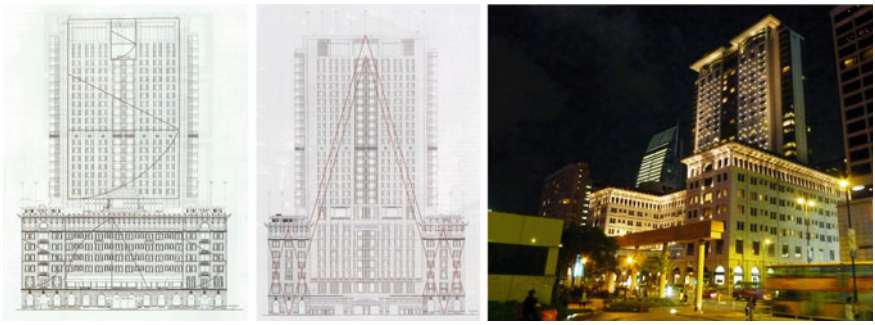

Fig. 8.40 New addition to the Peninsula Hotel, 1994. The proportion of shape and windows was elaborated. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim

customers. The design places a long escalator crossing three floors adjacent to the external glass wall. In addition to several big escalators climbing three floors, and one directly piercing the busy MTR station of Tsim Sha Tsui, there are many

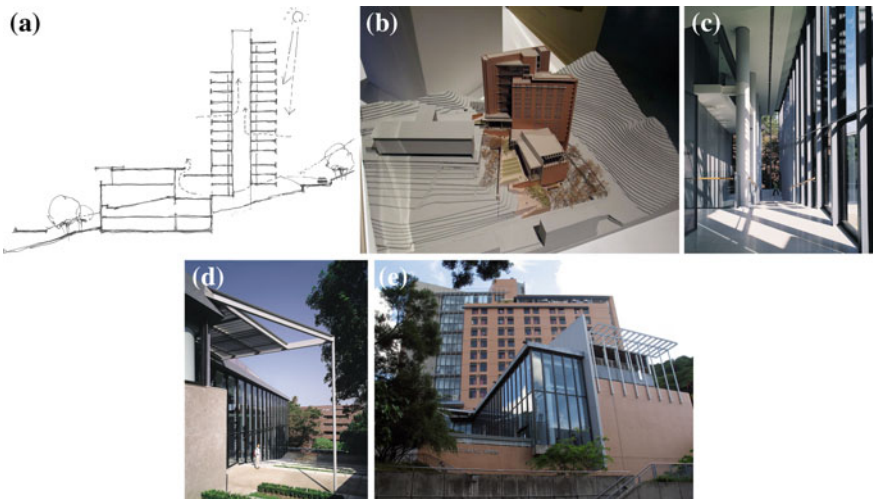

Fig. 8.41 Graduate Hall, HKU, 1998. **a** Ideas on sketch. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim. **b** Model shows how the buildings work with the hilly site. **c** Corridor next to the theater. **d** Hall entrance. **e** Building mass

Fig. 8.42 Icon Hotel, PolyU, 2011. **a** The building in Hung Hom. **b** Manipulating the mass. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim. **c** Interior. **d** Hotel entrance

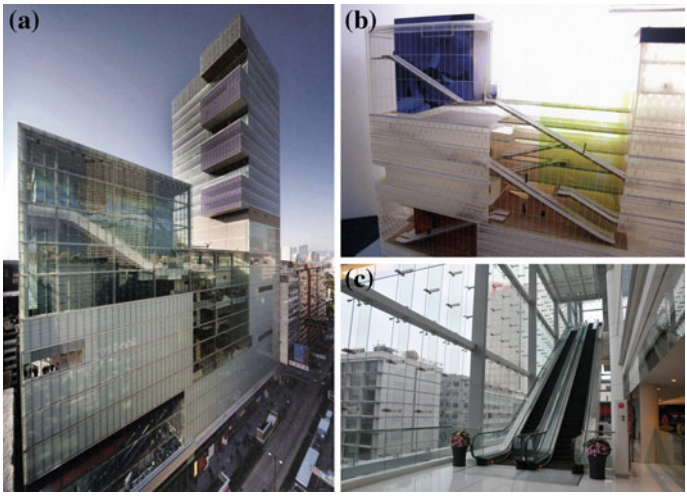

Fig. 8.43 iSquare, Tsim Sha Tsui, 2009. **a** Building mass. **b** Interaction of traffic space. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim. **c** Long escalator rises along the glass wall

escalators between floors. The nine-floor podium and the upper tower are skillfully integrated. The designer exposed the long escalator and thus implied the characteristics of Hong Kong architecture. However, the escalators are located in different places from floor to floor, making it difficult for visitors to find their way around (Fig. 8.43).

Since 1983, Rocco Design has engaged in design projects in the Chinese mainland, where "design creation" is encouraged and many public buildings are also provincial or municipal landmarks. Practicing in China has given Yim the opportunity to contemplate "Chinese-ness" and "being Chinese in architecture." He poses questions for himself and the peers, "What is expected of a Chinese person in his work? Will 'Chinese-ness' come about by the architect being Chinese, or by the context being Chinese? Is 'Chinese-ness genuinely discernable, a quality that can be consciously pursued? Or is it something that comes from within, a subtle reflection of personality conditioned by ancestral mentality and taste, and therefore incidental rather than intentional? While I put forward my belief, back in 1989, that in order to ponder the future of Asian (Chinese) architecture, we have to come to terms with who the modern Asian (Chinese) is" (Rocco Design 2004, p. 1). This query shows his concerns of local end-users.

In the compact city of Hong Kong, the physical environment is the main context, whereas in the Chinese mainland, cultural context is the crucial consideration. In the design of the Boao housing estate on Hainan Island (2002), the building blocks extend from high to low. Many gaps are generated between the blocks to provide a narrow or open sea view. Yim's design of a single family mansion in "Nine Houses" in Shanghai (2006) demonstrates his taste for a "Chinese lifestyle." Moving to the multi-family scale, "17 Mile" is a high-class residential area on Shenzhen's east

coast. The terraced houses face the sea and the penthouse is highlighted. The slab-wrapped penthouse is reminiscent of Yim's design for the IFC in Hong Kong. The Guangdong Museum (2010) uses a "treasure box" as its motif and holes were dug in the building facade. The box sits on a supporting cube and exhibits a floating gesture. The designer anticipated visitors' interactions with those holes; however, the management of the museum locked all of the openings for safety reasons, so Yim's idea was not realized. The Guangdong Museum is located on the central axis of Pearl River New City and faces the Guangzhou Opera House, designed by Zaha Hadid. There is no dialogue between either the buildings or the physical context. The designers of these landmark buildings spoke only to themselves. Using the similar method of Guangdong Museum, Rocco Design made Yunnan Museum in 2014 and paid tribute to the famous "stone forest" in Yunnan. These buildings on the Chinese mainland embody Yim's sensitivity to "Chinese-ness" and cultural symbolization. The beauty glowing from these buildings is also related to the tastes of the clients and the architect[22] (Figs. 8.44 and 8.45).

Rocco Yim works hard and has had tremendous opportunities in practice and business, which are coveted by his peers. His designs add a modern sense to the streets of Hong Kong and express a possible delicacy in a high-rise, high-density environment. Since 1981, Rocco Design has won around 20 awards from the Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) and the company has won the most awards since the award system was established in 1965. In addition to design, Yim is involved in many seminars and events in Hong Kong and China. His explorations push the boundaries of architecture and reinterpret the meaning of Chinese architecture.

According to Fumihiko Maki, Rocco Yim sensitively responds to the density of Hong Kong and Chinese culture. Maki himself focuses on the density and proposed collective form and mega-structures since the 1960s (see Chap. 6). Kenneth Frampton describes Yim's design as coinciding with the dramatic pioneers of the Modern Movement, especially Le Corbusier and Hannes Meyer. Yim's design in dense Hong Kong "totally surpasses Koolhaas's more limited notion of the 'culture of congestion', a term that he coined to characterize the post facto polemic of his *Delirious New York* of 1978." The task in the city of Hong Kong is denser and more complicated than the situation of New York in the 1970w. For the new Chinese architecture represented by Yim, Frampton continued, "we will have to recognize that there will be no truly authentic new Chinese architecture without acknowledging the brilliant yet fragile triumph of Japanese modern architecture, dating back to the second quarter of the last century."[23]

[22]The description of Rocco Yim in this chapter is based on the author's communication with Yim since 1989, Rocco Design (2004, 2012), DeHoff (2013), and an exhibition of Yim's work at the HKICC Lee Shau Kei School of Creativity, June 2009.

[23]For more comments on Rocco Yim by Fumihiko Maki and Frampton, see Fumihiko Maki, "Globalization and floating modernism," and Kenneth Frampton, "Beneath the radar: Rocco Yim and the new Chinese architecture," in DeHoff (2013), pp. 8–13. For the "Culture of congestion," see Koolhaas (1994).

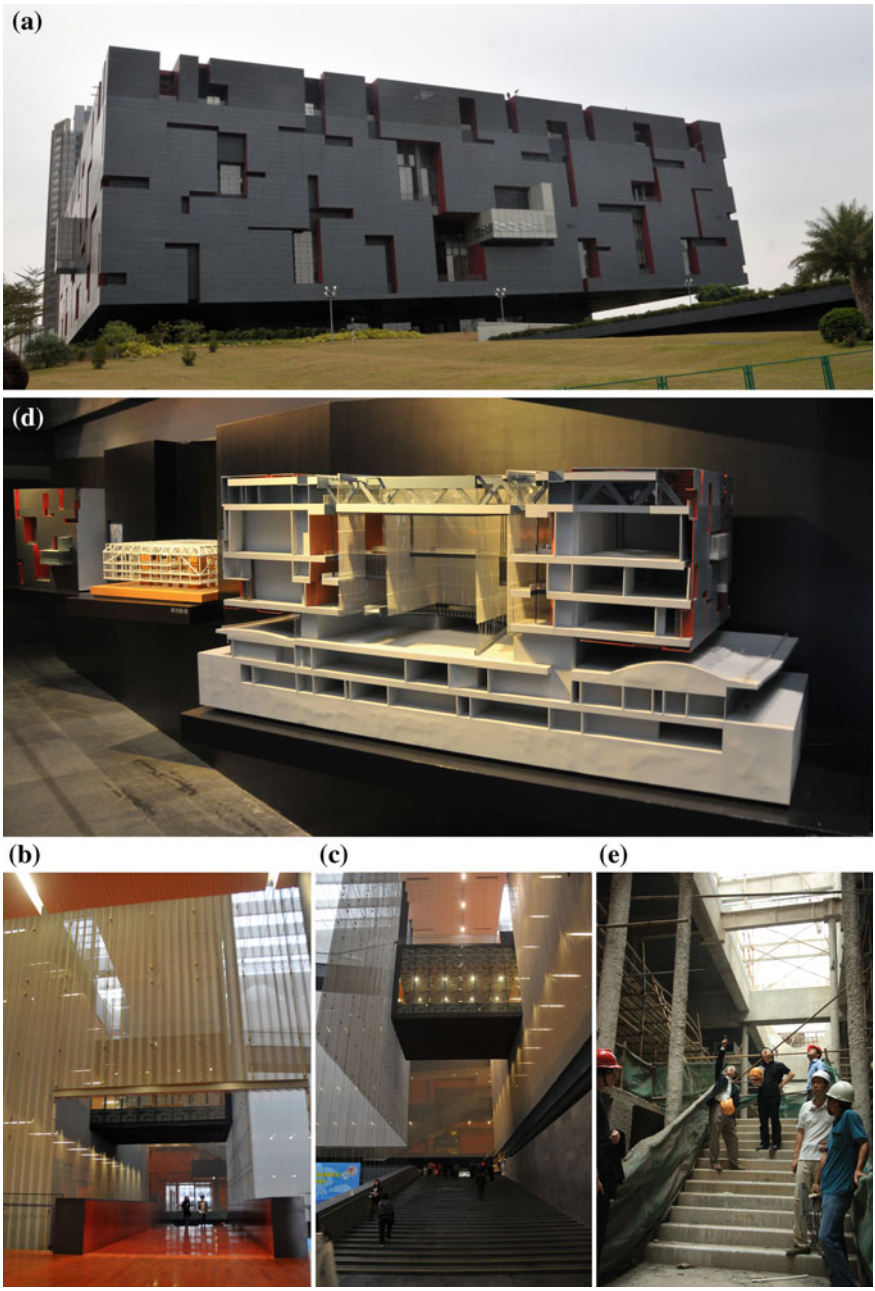

Fig. 8.44 Guangdong Museum, Guangzhou, 2010. **a** The building is shaped like a jewelry box. **b**, **c** Interior atrium is partitioned by steel net, creating a translucent effect. **d** Model. **e** Yim (*left*) and colleagues on the site. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim

Fig. 8.45 Yunnan Museum, 2014. Courtesy of Dr. Rocco Yim

8.3 Generation of the 21st Century

Generations are evolving like surf. In addition to these highlighted architects, a new group has emerged that possesses a strong desire for creativity, keeping indigenous characteristics and discovering new potential, including Chris Law (Oval Partnership and Integer), Winston Shu (IDA), Bernard Lim (AD + RG), Gary Chang, Weijen Wang, Vincent Ng (AGC Design), William Lim (CL3 Architects), Barrie Ho and Gravity Partnership. Compared to their predecessors, the generation in the 21st century was born in a relatively wealthier, open and less-bumpy society. They absorb the prevailing design method in the world. They are more influenced by the democratic and sustainable trend, and are more accustomed to face the society and public. Many people themselves are involved in promoting civic movement. They prepare drawings in office and also appear in public forums. They design buildings not only in Hong Kong, but in Greater China and other places. This gives them opportunity to explore different method and design language.

Graduated from Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London in 1983, **Chris Law** has actively contributed to the urban, architectural, interior design and social movement. He established Oval Partnership in 1992, an "elite" firm focusing on the delicate quality of design, and purchased Integer of London, a green-design-oriented firm. His design of Taikoo Li Sanlitun, Beijing (2010), created a new shopping landscape in addition to mall complex. Following the success in Beijing, Swire Property continued the "Taikoo Li" model in Chengdu of Southwest China, which was also designed by Law and his team. Taikoo Li in Chengdu integrated more southwest China flavor. In Star Street of Wanchai, Law designed buildings and street improvements, making the dilapidated community a lovely living and SOHO environment in the old Mid-level (Fig. 8.46).

Winston T. Shu (born in 1955) studied at Kingston University and AA in London. Under Terry Farrell and Bernard Tschumi's tutorship he was particularly

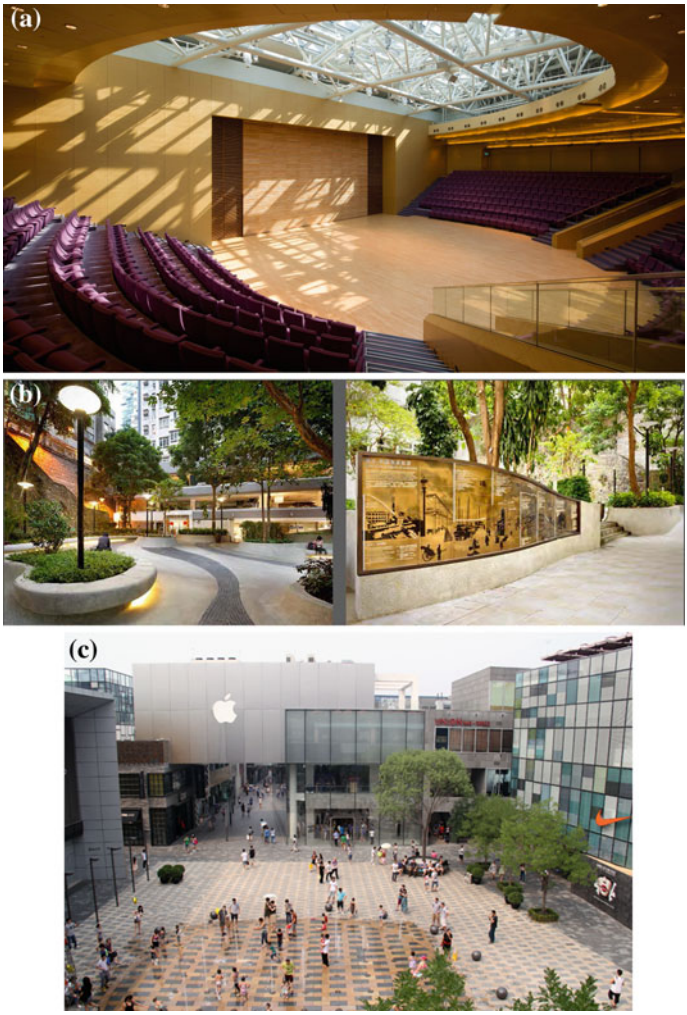

Fig. 8.46 Works of Chris Law and Oval Partnership. **a** New performing space for the Academy of Performing Arts. **b** Renovation of Star Street, Wanchai. Courtesy of Mr. Chris Law. **c** Sanlitun Taikoo Li, Beijing

influenced by the free-thinking of the school and Tschumi's manifesto on space and human behavior. From 1980 to 1999 Shu worked at Foster and Partners. Through Stansted Airport of London, Shu learnt the skills in the design of highly serviced buildings, a holistic approach to integration of building technologies, systems and functions In 1992 he played a pivotal role in bidding the job and designing the Hong Kong airport. In 1999, supported by the brilliant achievements and lessons gained from leading large scale projects and Foster, Shu opened his own firm Integrated Design Associates Ltd. (IDA).

In the 21st century, IDA designed projects in Hong Kong, Chinese mainland, India and Middle East, but none of the projects can be compared with the Parkview Green in Beijing, whose design and construction lasted for 12 years. Shu helped the client to initiate the program in the business center of Beijing. Over 120,000 sq.m. office and hotel space and a 55,000 m^2 retail mall are packed in four buildings sited in a sunken garden to the surrounding street level. All buildings are designed with atria spaces, sky-gardens, terraces, and link bridges, and together are shielded from the external environment by an outer building envelope that is constructed of steel, glass and ETFE cushions. The skin is essentially the weather protection layer that controls the microclimate of the entire development by way of a thermal insulation layer formed in the airspace between the skin of the internal buildings and the outer skin. Therefore air-con is not needed in the atrium. The building mass is two triangles cut from a square cube with a slanted top. This on the one hand allows daylight to reach every window in the neighborhood, and on the other hand creates a sharp image in the city center.

The boutique hotel is located at the highest floors of the development accessed exclusively via glass shuttle lifts from the hotel entrance foyer at street level. The hotel has 44 luxury rooms, each ranging from 72 to 100 m^2 in area, and a presidential suite which is 500 m^2 in area. Each room has its own expansive terrace, individual swimming pool, jacuzzi, sauna and entertaining facilities. A Sky-lounge is located at the pinnacle of the whole development. A wonderful stroke in design is a suspended pedestrian bridge, connecting the opposite site, piercing diagonally through the atrium. Visitors can stroll on bridge and watch the atrium and building complex in an optimal angle. The bridge has little "commercial function" except occasional fashion and sculpture shows. But the client generously supported this design with hundred millions of dollar to erect the bridge. In traditional atrium, such a location is usually void, but Parkview Green provides such a vantage trail of watching and being watched.

The unique space stimulates diverse activities inside: shopping, office working, eating, dating, taking escalators and lifts … According to Shu, easily comprehend layout, well oriented circulation, visible people activity and unobstructed line of sights are basic strategies for shopping mall space. "We set up the movements by locating activities so that people transgress space, and the activities are clearly visible from inside as well as outside of the building. We want the building to come alive, so we make sure the activities that create the movements are places people want to go." In the tide of E-commerce, most shopping malls in Beijing suffer from quiet business. Parkview Green stands out with its hustle and bustle "urbanity" scenes all year around.[24] Architects in Beijing visited the building by fulfilling their needs of continuing and professional development (CPD).

[24]The situation of IDA and Parkview Green project is from an interview of Winston T. Shu on 4 March 2016, and from special issue of Parkview Green, Beijing, *Architectural Creation*, No. 1, 2015.

In Shu's career, the first decade was involved in Stansted Airport; the second decade dedicated to the Hong Kong airport; and in the third decade he set up the milestone work—Parkview Green in the capital city of China. From this "defining project", Shu received commitments from other airports and institutional clients, for example the Cebu airport in The Philippines, airports in India and the Maldives, and mixed-use developments in countries from Asia to Europe (Fig. 8.47).

Bernard Lim (born in 1956) is scholar, architect and organizer of various social activities. Through his teaching at CUHK and leadership of HKIA and HKIUD (Hong Kong Institute of Urban Design), Lim advocated high-quality building for the society and public engagement in urban redevelopment. Lim has long surveyed the living environment and actual needs for elderly and created new details to facilitate the ideal indoor and outdoor space.[25] He and colleagues found that the round corner in corridor can avoid clash. People in wheelchair or pushing cart will have more confidence in moving in such round-corner area. This has been applied to the interior of several hospital and health facility designs. His practice AD + RG aims to integrate design with research to improve the community architectural design. These ideas are reflected in his design of Hong Kong Community College in West Kowloon (2007, collaborated with AGC Design Ltd.), rehabilitation of Mei Ho Building (2013, see Chap. 9), Bishop Walsh Primary School at Kowloon City and many other school and community buildings. In the school buildings, he extensively uses sharp color; while in the elderly caring houses, he still uses color, but sedate. The Learning Common of Institute of Education is light-hearted by color, lighting and smooth flowing of line and plane (Fig. 8.48).

Weijen Wang (born in 1958) designed buildings in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland in addition to his teaching at the University of Hong Kong. Through the practice in high density Asian city context, Wang develops an idea of "sectional or vertical courtyard", where public patio space is created outdoor, indoor or in-between in the multi-level tall buildings through interlocking, offsetting and overlapping building blocks. This is particularly reflected in his design of Hong Kong Community College building in Hung Hom Bay (2005, collaborated with AD + RG and AGC Design). In a tower of over 20 stories, every four floors of classroom cluster are organized into modular blocks to create their own semi-outdoor public/activity spaces linked by the open stair. The changing volume of such public spaces is expressed in the building facade as a sequence of rotating vertical voids and also a movement system. Such a small indoor-outdoor "public" space is morphed and enriched in other projects, for example, Community College Building of Lingnan University (2007), Taiwan Merchants' School in Dongguang (2008) and Shenzhen Campus design of CUHK (2014, collaborated with Rocco Design and Gravity) (Fig. 8.49).

[25]Professor Bernard Lim's study on public engagement and community buildings is reflected in the following books, Lim et al. (2005), Department of Architecture, The Chinese University of Hong Kong (2003).

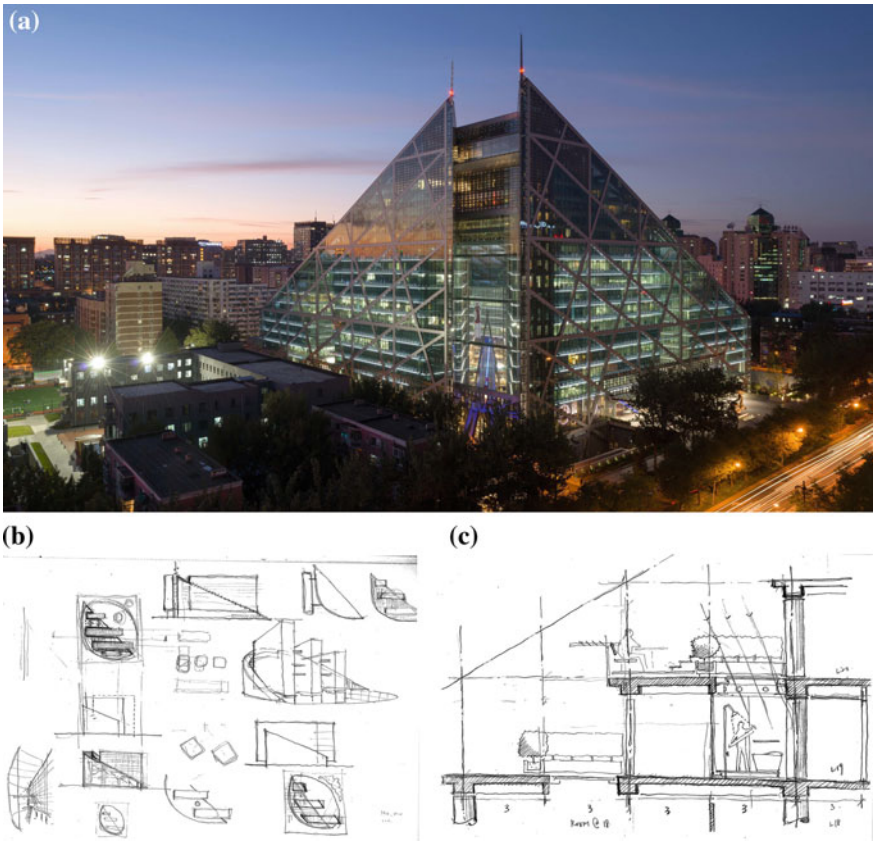

Fig. 8.47 Parkview Green, Beijing, 2012. **a** The building and its surrounding; **b** Elaboration of building mass; **c** Concept on hotel; **d**, **e** Pedestrian bridge piercing the atrium; **f** Winston T. Shu. Courtesy of IDA

Barrie Ho was trained at Polytechnic University and University of Hong Kong (M.Arch, 1996). He started his career from interior design. Details and materials are given more attention in his projects. His designs of "pencil" apartment building and community building under the flyover bridge are tasteful (Fig. 8.50).

Some architects in this generation consider the new model of practice. For example, Gravity Partnership abandons the conventional model of top designers served by job-running team. In Gravity Partnership, staff members are motivated by participating competition, scheme, design development and running job for their own designs. Some academics contribute to design with their expertise niches, for example, Zhu Jingxiang's light-weight assembled building for disaster-relief site and Jia Beisi's exploration of energy conservation especially in building envelop. The above mentioned architects and their works account for only a small

Fig. 8.47 (continued)

percentage of building practice in Hong Kong, but they are trying to push the boundary of architecture.

Compared with the architects grown up in the 1970s, the generation of the 21st century is inevitably influenced by its era, when democratic, sustainable and fair-society oriented trends dominate the society. More contemplation voices were issued, evidenced in TV documents (RTHK 2000), newspaper/magazine articles and books written by architects themselves, as mentioned in Preface (Chan and Choi 2005; Ng and Chu 2007) and the publication of a quarterly magazine *Hong Kong Institute of Architects Journal* (starting from 1996). The *HKIA Journal* is run by architects in their spare time, and remains as building report and the organization's bulletin. Ideally, it should shoulder both the professional and academical tasks.

Fig. 8.48 Works of Bernard Lim and AD + RG. **a** Hong Kong Community College in West Kowloon, 2007. **b** Institute of Education, Learning Common, 2014. Courtesy of Prof. Bernard Lim. **c**, **d** Polytechnic University, Phase 8 academic building, 2013. **d** Professor Bernard Lim

Fig. 8.49 Hong Kong Community College building in Hung Hom, 2005. Courtesy of Prof. W.J. Wang

Fig. 8.50 Works of Barrie Ho Architecture Interiors Ltd.—Mercer serviced apartment. Courtesy of Mr. Barrie Ho

In 2005, Hong Kong Architecture Centre was founded to create interaction between architecture and the general public. The organizer believes that an enhanced appreciation of the built-environment around people from various aspects can help cultivate a deeper understanding of the art of architecture, culture, and subsequently to build collectively for the betterment of the city. The activities launched by the centre concentrate on preservation of city's collective memory and engage many members of the public. It is a professional consciousness of appealing for total quality of society and environment.

Moreover, Shenzhen-Hongkong bi-city urban architecture bienalle has been run since 2007. The old Central Police Station (built in 1915), West Kowloon Cultural District, Kwun Tong Pier and Kowloon Park were used as event venue in the past years. The bienalle serves as a incubator for fresh ideas of young people and firm.

8.4 Conclusion: Different Directions

The architects introduced in this chapter typify the architectural trends in Hong Kong since the 1970s. Their works represent landmarks in this process. Chung Wah-nan's Chinese concept, Tao Ho's expression of structure, the space and volume of Simon Kwan, the climatic responses of Patrick Lau and Anthony Ng, and the circulation and geometry manipulation of Rocco Yim hold tightly onto the rationale of Modernism, but personal expressions are varied and have a human touch. In the 1960s, Modernist architecture had a colorful development in the US and Europe. Architects designed many masterpieces with the available materials, local context and personal skills. Tao Ho's design coincided with the works of the

second generation of Modernist architects in the US and Europe. Ho was also pivotal to link Hong Kong with the overseas peers. Simon Kwan further developed the geometric forms with a simplified aesthetics. Patrick Lau and Anthony Ng discovered new ways of attracting ventilation in high-rise buildings. Rocco Yim's design emphasized lightness and slimness and the contrast between solid and void. Yim's designed buildings, no matter how proudly standing in the skyline, humbly connect to the city's vehicular and pedestrian transportation systems. Except Chung and Ho, the other four architects were active in practice and continuously refining designs in the 21st century.

As Hong Kong is an integral part of China after 1997, the generation in the new millennium faces competition not only in Hong Kong, but also from their motherland. They could tap sources not only from this southern China island but also the vast hinterland. They should not only run business in Hong Kong and the Chinese mainland, but make themselves visible in China and Asia. Architects in Hong Kong are rarely burdened about "identity", but some architects have awareness on finding their own identity. This is the proposition in the beginning of this chapter "being Chinese in architecture", which is an ultimate discourse in Rocco Yim and some other people's eyes. Essy Baniassad commented on Yim, which may also be suitable for tradition and all works mentioned in this chapter. "We regard that (Chinese) tradition with admiration but it seems so narrow a scope for us individuals, for our self-expression, and for this time of increasing dimension and diversity. That tradition describes a world of governance, beliefs, and a daily life of artisan technology which, compared to the present, is a world of relatively simple institutional structure, a limited vocabulary of forms, and a culture closer to the ground. It seems so distant. Yet it endures in its simple composition in the depths of the emerging contemporary Chinese culture." "The (Yim's) works touch on the total scope of architecture, the house and the city, and each one is a complete work of architecture in itself. None of the designs set out to be Chinese. They are what they become" (Baniassad 2004, pp. 8–11).

If we view Hong Kong architects' evolution from the 1950s, there are several salient directions of pursuance. When facing a building task, architects will approach the solutions with various means. A total design concept is necessary. However, sharp characters were reflected in some people's designs. They can arguably be categorized as Table 8.1.

Architects in Hong Kong were educated and trained locally or from foreign countries. Except a couple of people bring in strong imprints from their education origin (for example Tao Ho), most people are challenged and adapted to perform in Hong Kong's special constraints and context. These architects' works are naturally formed by many forces in Hong Kong, and differentiate themselves with the western counterparts and are "what they become." They enriched Asian and world architecture in the late 20th century (Lim and Chang 2012). In Hong Kong, the project managers of many development companies are also architects. The developers and these project managers usually have clear and strong ideas of their building products. After many rounds of design improvement and amendment,

Table 8.1 Categories of architects' pursuance and tendency in Hong Kong

Trends	Representatives	Other people
Structural expression ("Brutalism")	Wai Szeto, Tao Ho, James Kinoshita (P & T)	Patrick Lau, Eric Cumine, Winston Shu
Chinese taste	Chung Wah-nan	Rocco Yim, CL3
Climate sensitive	Luke Him Sau, Patrick Lau	Anthony Ng, Ronald Lu, Oval Partnership, Winston Shu
Commercial	Eric Cumine, Wong and Ouyang	P & T, DLN, Andrew Lee, WCWP…
Geometry and simplicity	PWD (Alan Fitch, Ronald Phillips…), Rocco Yim	Simon Kwan, Oval Partnership
Traffic and pedestrian oriented	Rocco Yim, Aedas	AECOM
User-friendly	Bernard Lim (AD + RG)	Andrew Lee
Design and interior design driven	Gary Chang	Barrie Ho

design firms eventually fall to only act like a draftsman. The room for "creativity" is much more limited in Hong Kong than in the Chinese mainland.

The 1970s saw the taking off of Hong Kong's economy, with the change from handicrafts, light and home-based industries to a center of finance and services. Compared with those glamorous, world-renowned architects, Hong Kong architects fully understand the needs and budgets of government and private clients. Buildings in Hong Kong are silently solving the daily and technical problems of the city and the New Territories. The designs produced by Hong Kong architects reflect the pragmatic attitudes of the city. They humbly satisfy the functional requirements while following the aesthetic principles of geometry, abstract, mass, light and shadow, contrast, alignment, order and sequence.

In the Chinese mainland after the open-door policy was adopted, a number of international "celebrity architects" have occupied the market. Some buildings were built at the expense of the environment, rational structure and future budgets, regardless of people's complaints.[26] In this sense, the works of Hong Kong architects have particular significance. Inside China, a group of young architects have returned to the formal game and architectonics since 1996. Their works are labelled as "experimental architecture" and frequently appear in the international stages like exhibition and forum.[27] This trend is culminated by the appointment of a couple of Chinese architects as dean and chair of architectural schools of the top US universities and the awarding of Pritzker Architectural Prize to Wang Shu in 2012.

[26]For the importation of foreign designed architecture into the Chinese mainland, see two books of Charlie Q.L. Xue, *Global Impact: overseas architectural design in China*, 2006b; *World Architecture in China*, 2010.

[27]For the experimental architects in China, see Charlie Q.L. Xue, *Building a Revolution: Chinese architecture since 1980*, 2006a, particularly its Chap. 8; and Zhu (2009).

As ethnic Chinese, architects in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) are obviously marginalized in this trend. The spirit of "creation" trickles to Hong Kong through exchange activities like bienalle and seminars. However, the capitalist soil and cramped land in Hong Kong give little opportunity for "experiment." The serious academic journal of architecture does not exist (Xue, Tan and Xiao 2016). Any "experiment" beyond the commercial parameters will be lonely and helpless.

Rocco Yim's design of Bastille Opera House in Paris was selected as one of the three shortlisted works in 1983. The next year, Yim came to Shanghai and lectured at Tongji University. He spoke Cantonese, and Professor Luo translated his words into Putonghua. In 1989, I visited Yim in his office at Hopewell Center, Wanchai. An endless supply of fresh ideas sprung from this thin man. Tao Ho was also active in the 1980s and 1990s. He lectured at Science Hall of Shanghai on cosmopolitanism, Chinese culture and architecture. His office was made out of containers and located in the courtyard of a villa. The interior was lighthearted and bright. I visited Tao Ho in his office one autumn morning in 1989. The sudden rainfall splashed tiny water droplets on a window of sandy glass, beyond which could be seen the faint image of bamboo blowing in the breeze outside. It was as touching and unforgettable as a Chinese ink painting. Tao Ho was hit by stroke and now sits on armchair. It was as touching and unforgettable as a Chinese ink painting, this hero who survived so much, only to be brought down by the stroke that has so severely limited his existence over the past decade.

Professor Patrick Lau seemed akin to a movie star. With his strong energy, he was able to unite people and represent the design industry on the Legislative Council. He was the external examiner for our program for a long time. I had many opportunities to listen to him on how to teach. Of course, Mr. Chung Wah-nan's writing was full of energy and his Chinese ink calligraphy full of a patriot's enthusiasm. The people described in this chapter were high caliber and proactive people who were "successful" in their careers and lifestyles.

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