

# PUBLIC SPACE DESIGN & MASS TRANSIT IN HIGH DENSE DISTRICTS: SAI YING PUN

2012-13 1st Term, Mondays & Thursdays 1:30-6:30 pm

Instructor: Prof. Hendrik Tieben

(Inputs: Essy Baniassad, Colin Fournier, Sujata Govada, Daniel Paetzold)



## Statement

Confronted with the global challenges brought about by climate change, mass migrations and decreasing energy resources, policy makers, scholars and designers are studying Hong Kong as one potential model for a more sustainable future. The attraction of the Hong Kong model is based on its highly compact urban areas, their efficient connection by public transport networks and the conservation of large land resources as country parks. A central question which policy makers, planners and designers face when they consider this model is, how under the condition of extreme density a positive living quality can be achieved. This question is crucial as it is linked with costly and controversial long term decisions such as the change of established land use plans, building and public space guidelines, as well as the layouts for New Development Areas. The views on Hong Kong as a model are strongly divided and reflect the contrasting experiences of the city as well as conflicting values. The 2011 Mercer Quality of Living Survey ranked the Chinese Special Administrative Region on place 70, far behind Vienna (1), Zurich (2), and its main Asian competitor Singapore (25). The outcome could be different with “spatial adjustments” as proposed by architect Filippo Lovato from the Economist Intelligence Unit. In his “Spatially Adjusted Livability Survey” of 2012, Hong Kong reached the first place, after including aspects such as the “lack of sprawl” and social connectivity. The survey argues that living in a green environment might be more pleasant but is potentially more problematic than in a high dense city regarding the higher land and energy consumption and less social connectivity. Similarly, economists Edward Glaeser in 2011 presented Hong Kong as one of the examples for the Triumph of the [high dense] City. In addition to these views from outside, there are the experiences of people living and working every day in Hong Kong. In recent years, they became increasingly concerned about the condition of the city and demand better heritage protection, public spaces, lower property prizes, less pollution, and especially more political participation. The MSc in Urban Design Programme will address their important arguments by exploring the condition of Hong Kong’s public spaces “on site”.

## Studio Description

Hong Kong's unique culture is deeply linked to its extreme density and intensity. This culture developed first along the northern shore of Hong Kong Island. The first studio of this academic year explores the district Sai Ying Pun, one of Hong Kong's oldest districts and example of its local culture. The studio will learn from the particular character of the district and its public spaces and then develop strategies for their regeneration. Since the early 1990s, the Land Development Corporation, followed 2001 by the URA, made attempts to upgrade older districts. These attempts were often based on the replacement of existing fabric. With the demolition of the older buildings also traditional businesses and low income residents were replaced. After growing critique, documented in the 2008 Urban Strategy Review, HKSAR Government made first steps towards a new regeneration strategy which includes more community participation and should lead to individual district plans. The studio will develop strategies based on observations of the people living and working in the district and aims to respond to capture their needs and aspirations.

Sai Ying Pun was picked also as the study area of the studio, as it currently faces strong forces of transformation due to the ongoing construction of the West Island Line and a public escalator system. Hong Kong's role as sustainable urban model is closely linked to its highly efficient metro system (MTR) which boosts its vitality and helps to reduce vehicular traffic and carbon emission. Major investments are made to construct the new metro lines which offer the rare opportunity to fundamentally upgrade old districts, reorganize their traffic system and improve their public spaces. At the same time the construction of the new infrastructure increases development pressure and affects the spatial routine, social life and identity of the district. The redesign of the public spaces in context of the construction of the new MTR stations should respond to the needs and aspirations of the community and increase the livability in this dense district.

The studio is organized together with the URBD Elective Course Urban Processes which offers the opportunity to engage directly with different stakeholders and residents in the district. Students of the MSc in Urban Design Programme should therefore register for this course.

## Objectives

- Increasing living quality, social interaction and economic vitality in high dense urban districts
- Learning and responding to existing local culture, heritage and social routines
- Recognizing and enhancing sense of place
- Developing design strategies to respond to community needs and aspirations
- Developing district plans for better community benefit
- Developing strategies for community empowerment

## Learning outcome

- Understanding forces and impact of urban transformation by studying existing urban conditions
- Understanding the challenges and opportunities of urban density
- Understanding the complex relationships between environmental, economic and social sustainability
- Learning to communicate efficiently with different stakeholders and community members
- Developing advanced urban design skills
- Developing methods for critically assessment of own design proposals in view of their effects on community life

## Studio Output

Students develop individual strategies and designs for the improvement of public spaces and building interfaces based on prior identified issues. Drawings and models in 1:500 / 1:200, plus detail studies, montages and perspectives should show the intended qualities of public spaces in various seasons and times of the day. Statements of addressed issues and design intentions should be formulated in text and drawings. With progression of the design project they should be revised and updated. Research findings and projects will be gathered in a joint studio booklet. All students have to submit a digital documentation.

## Deliverables

- Group studies according to defined issues
- Site model
- Written description of addressed issues and design intentions (500 words)
- 1:500 group drawings and models with strategic propositions
- Phase evolutions of urban development
- 1:500 / 1:200 public space/building design drawings and models
- 1:50 / 1:20 detail study of public spaces
- Montages and perspectives study of public spaces
- Joint studio booklet

(Digital documentation of group and individual work is compulsory after final review)

## Assessment Scheme

- Group Research 30%
- Final Design 70%

## Course Format

The course is organized in a research part (group work) and design part (individual). The research encompasses field and precedent studies. The studio is linked to the course Urban Processes which offers the opportunity of community workshops and presentations of the design schemes in the Sai Ying Pun district.

## Required readings

Shane, David Grahame, *Urban Design Since 1945 – A Global Perspective*, Wiley, 2011

Shelton, Barrie, Karakiewicz, Justyna & Kvan, Thomas, *The Making of Hong Kong – From Vertical to Volumetric*, Taylor & Francis, 2010.

Whyte, William H., *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, New York: The Conservation Foundation, 1980.

Ng, Edward, *Consultancy for Air Ventilation Assessment Services for Sheung Wan and Sai Ying Pun*, Hong Kong: CUHK, 2010.

## Recommended readings

Arendt, Hannah, *The human condition*, University Of Chicago Press, 1998.

Aureli, Pier Vittorio, *The Possibility of an Absolute Architecture*, MIT Press, 2011

Busquets, Joan, *Barcelona: The Urban Evolution of a Compact City*, Rovereto: Nicolodi, 2005.

Dovey, Kim & Wood, Stephen, *Public/Private Interfaces in the Inner City*, State of Australian Cities Conference, Melbourne November 2011.

Gehl, Jan, *Life between buildings: using public space*, New York: Von Nostrand Reinhold, 1987.

Glaeser, Edward, *The Triumph of the City. How our Greatest Invention makes us Richer, Smarter, Greener and Happier*, New York: Penguin Books, 2011.

Habermas, Jürgen, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article" (1964), *New German Critique*, 1974, 49-55.

Hassenpflug, Dieter, *China's Urban Code*, Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010.

Huang Philip, "Public Sphere"/"Civil Society" in China? *Modern China*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (1993), 216-240.

Hou, Jeffrey (ed.), *Insurgent Public Space, Guerrilla Urbanism and the Remaking of Contemporary Cities*, Routledge, 2010.

Marshall, Stephen, *Streets & Patterns*, Spon Press, London and New York, 2005.

Rowe, Peter G., *Emergent Architectural Territories in East Asian Cities*, Basel: Birkhauser, 2011.

Shelton, Barrie, *Learning from the Japanese City*, Taylor & Francis, 1999.

Tieben, H., Woo P.L. & Yuet T.C., "Development or Destruction? The Transformation of

Sai Ying Pun", in V. Pearson & Ko T.K. (eds.), *A Sense of Place: Hong Kong West of*

Pottinger Street, Hong Kong: Joint Publishing, 168-183.

## Schedule

### Group Research

Mo Sep 10	<i>Arrangement of studio space and studio introduction</i>	
Thu Sep 13	<i>Group research</i>	<i>Desk critiques (DC)</i>
Mo Sep 17	<i>Group research</i>	<i>(DC)</i>
Thu Sep 20	<i>Group research</i>	<i>(DC)</i>
Sat Sep 22	<i>Urban Processes Course Day 1</i>	
Mo Sep 24	<i>Group research</i>	<i>(DC)</i>
Wed Sep 26	<i>Urban Processes Course Day 2</i>	
Thu Sep 27	<i>Group research</i>	<i>(DC)</i>
Fri Sep 28	<i>Conference on Community Engagement</i>	
Sat Sep 29	<i>Urban Processes Course Day 3</i>	
Mo Oct 1	<i>Mid-Autumn Festival</i>	<i>(DC)</i>
Wed Oct 3	<i>Research review</i>	

### Individual Design

Thu Oct 4		<i>(DC)</i>
Mo Oct 8		<i>(DC)</i>
Thu Oct 11		<i>(DC)</i>
Mo Oct 15		<i>(DC)</i>
Thu Oct 18	<i>No studio</i>	<i>(DC)</i>
Mo Oct 22		<i>(DC)</i>
Thu Oct 25		<i>(DC)</i>
Mo Oct 29		<i>(DC)</i>
Wed Oct 31	<i>Review Design Project</i>	
Thu Nov 1		<i>(DC)</i>
Sat Nov 3	<i>Urban Processes Course Day 4</i>	
Mo Nov 5		<i>(DC)</i>
Thu Nov 8		<i>(DC)</i>
Sat Nov 10	<i>Urban Processes Course Day 5</i>	
Mo Nov 12		<i>(DC)</i>
Thu Nov 15		<i>(DC)</i>
Mo Nov 19		<i>(DC)</i>
Thu Nov 22	<i>Layout Review</i>	
Mo Nov 26		<i>(DC)</i>
Fri Nov 30	<i>Final Review</i>	
Fri Dec 14	<i>Submission of digital documentation</i>	

## FIELD TRIP

(please check the boxes)

Yes  [ ] Local;  Overseas  Date(s): TBC Destination(s): Taipei (TW)

No

SAME COURSE OFFERED BEFORE (please check the boxes)

Yes  Offer year [ ]  Term [ ]  Course code [ ARC]

No

## IMPORTANT NOTE TO STUDENTS:

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.