

# CHAPTER 2

## History and Interior Design – The Orient and the Occident. by Dr.ir. Gerhard Bruyns and Dr. Tung Kwok-wah, Henri

### History and Design

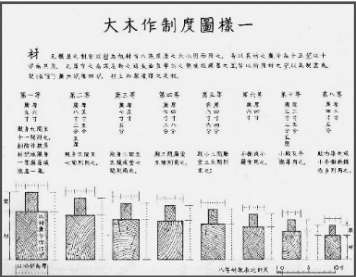
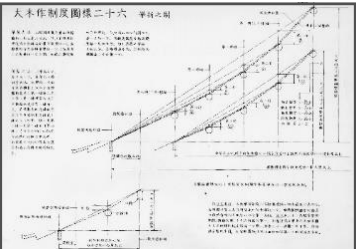
History is part and parcel to the discipline of design. History of design or the history of the environment remains central to foundational knowledge of any design discipline, interior or exterior in nature. In a broad sweep, the position of history has over years and decades changed from, on the one hand, being a mirror of the past, whilst on the other, an instrument to formulate future tendencies and a source from which designers draw inspiration.

To understand the history of interior design, one should understand the history of its context, or in other words, the history of the city. The city provides a context by which one can understand how social and technological factors influence interior styles. The interior is as much part of the city as the city is to the interior. Everything that the city produces, documents or designs, is either made within, or is drawn into the lived interior. Interior and exterior is therefore indisputably fused into a coherent whole.

In the beginning, human settlements consisted of singular one or two room dwellings, fenced in for protection. Interiors in this sense were multi-functional spaces, serving several uses at any given time. Gradually, single houses became collections of dwellings, generating the first cohesive settlements, villages, towns and, in time, fully fledged cities that we recognize today. In a similar light, the interior's development was from a sparse space, minimal in nature, to intricate spaces molded from volumes, sculpture and geometries, off-set with specific effects of light and mirroring. In its present format, interiors have returned to either a minimalist setting or as spaces that have become obsessed with excess and opulence.

Architecture and interior design developed in tandem in the East and West, evolving according to the changing needs and prevailing cultural influences. The chart below offers a comparative perspective on the development in cultural, architectural and design in both the Orient (East) as well as the Occident (West). Contextually aligning the history of the interior to both European and Asian narratives offers a parallel understanding of history that allows for cross referencing mutual conditions within the historical streams. Global events may cause certain transformations to occur in design, but the actual response within both cultures may differ in significant ways.

The overview provided here, however brief, steers clear from stylistic emphasis of one style over another. Each stream is to be read in relation to design development occurring in three distinct periods; the pre-industrial (1500 -1800), industrial (1800 -1900) and post-industrial period (1900- present).

Pre-industrialization		
West/European	East/Chinese/Vernacular Lingnan/Canton	
<p><b>Antient Greece: (900 – 30 BCE)</b></p> <p>A cultural style expressed in painting, art and architecture that has had fundamental impact on Western cultures and their approach to the built and decorative arts.</p>	<p><b>East – Chinese wooden frame construction (more than 4000 years ago)</b></p> <p>Common Chinese wooden frame systems include the <b>post and lintel construction</b> (抬梁式木結構), which was more popular in North China, and the column and tie construction (穿斗式木結構), which was a more vernacular practice in South China. The latter was similar to Tudor Revival style in terms of material and structure.</p> <p>The mainstream wooden frame construction involved a relatively fixed set of architectural vocabularies and grammars (especially in the case of the post and lintel construction) for a very long time. It thus contributed to similar/coherent built circumstances (both interiors and exteriors), which were rare in other civilisations.<sup>1</sup> Due to its permanence and prevalence, the wood structural system became a prominent representation/icon of Chinese culture.</p>	 <p><i>Fig. 2.1 The drawing of large wood production, no. 1<sup>7</sup></i></p>  <p><i>Fig.2.2 Drawing of large wood production, no. 26</i></p> <p><i>Source: Liang, Yingzaofashizhushi (營造法式註釋), 265.</i></p>
<p><b>Spatial layout:</b></p> <p>The geometric periods gave rise to the canonical typologies of the Greek temple, with double portico's and central 'Cella/Naos' surrounded by a series of single row columns. Stylistically Greek spatial layouts followed the Egyptian post and lintel method of construction.</p>	<p><b>Spatial layout:</b></p> <p>Building complexes are characterized by groups of individual buildings connected by courtyards, covered walkways and porches, resulting in rich layers and transitions of interior spaces. The corresponding spatial hierarchy is socially and politically significant as it reflects the house owner's family structure and social status.</p>	
<p><b>Architectonic:</b></p> <p>Most noticeable is the development of the and Ionic orders of construction, with the later addition of the Corinthian Order.</p>	<p><b>Architectonic:</b></p> <p>The wooden frame construction gives the freedom in walling and fenestration, which is comparable to Le Corbusier's Dom-ino system (1914). By adjusting the proportion between walls and openings, the wooden system can adapt to different climates.<sup>2</sup></p>	

### Aesthetics:

Interior detailing is richly detailed in full colour palette, off-set with the use of translucent marble roofs and prominent buildings.

### ROMAN PERIOD: (753 BC – 337 CE).

### Spatial Layout:

Taking precedence from the Greek building orders, the Roman added to the spatial oeuvres with the development of Roman Concrete. The construction of vaults and arches typified Roman technology and the construction of Barrel (Tunnel) Vaults, Groin (Cross) Vaults and Hemispherical Domes.

In addition, the possibilities of fenestration and clearstory windows improved light qualities, with friezes, wall murals and sculptural development influencing both the civic and domestic interiors.

Civic buildings such as forums and public baths became larger in scale, forming complex spatial arrangements.

Domestic interiors followed the courtyard or atrium layout with peripheral spaces arranged around central yards and water features.

### Aesthetics:

The post and lintel construction was well documented in *Yingzao Fashi* “The State Building Standards” of the Song dynasty (1103). Known as the official pattern book, it is a systematic document characterized by rules and formulae based on a modular system (i.e., the *Cai* system) for determining the positions and modellings (e.g., dimensions, shapes, forms and details) of wooden elements, which essentially express the unique aesthetics of Chinese buildings. For example, the rule of *juzhe* determines the elegant curvy and up lifting shape of the Chinese roof (which is the quintessential symbol of Chinese culture).

The bracket system/dougong, which is a complexification of the Chinese corbel invented more than 2,000 years ago, also deserves attention for its aesthetic quality:

*The dougong was originally conceived as a structural element, but its decorative potentiality was soon discovered and exploited to the utmost degree.*<sup>3</sup>

Functionally, the bracket system acts as a cantilever system for the roof eave. Aesthetically, it borrows the natural form of a flower to express the pleasant visual effect of ‘a flower coming into bloom’,<sup>4</sup> which is comparable to the visual effect of Greek/Roman capitals. All in all, the bracket system involves a significant synthesis of functional and aesthetic considerations.<sup>5</sup> Its modelling relates to an appropriate composition of well-formed parts, exemplifying the fact that the architectural and interior design is essentially “an art of the ensemble”.<sup>6</sup>

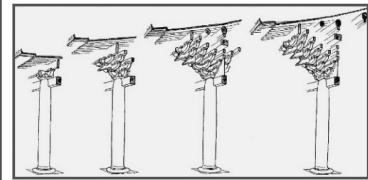


Fig.2.3 - Chinese column orders<sup>8</sup>



Fig 2.4 & 2.5 Chinese Dougong Column detail.<sup>9 10</sup>

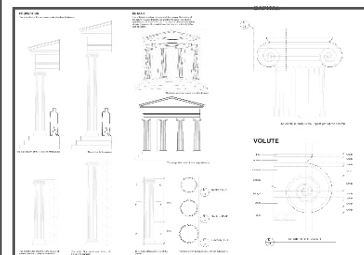


Fig 2.6 Greek classical orders, Ionic column analysis<sup>11</sup>

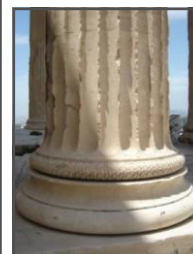


Fig 2.7 & 2.8 Doric and Ionic column footing, Athens, Greece.<sup>12</sup>

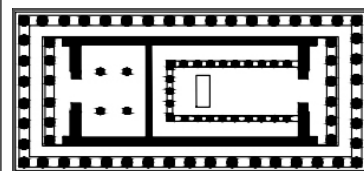


Fig 2.9 Typical Greek peripteral temple plan.<sup>13</sup>

**Aesthetics:**

Although dimly lit in some instances, rooms have sufficient ventilation. Geometric proportioning is emphasized within the paneling and decorative aspects of the interior, in rich colour usage and detailing. Apart from the panels and murals depicting nature, sculptures and relief friezes added to the aesthetic quality of spaces.

Period of importance following the Roman period include:

Early Byzantine Period  
(324–726),

Middle Byzantine Period  
(843–1204),

Late Byzantine Period  
(1261-1453),

Early Medieval Period  
(1261-1453),

Romanesque Period  
(1000 -1200),

Gothic Period  
(1140 – 1500),

Later Medieval Period  
(1200-1400),

The Renaissance Periods  
(1385–1500),

The Baroque Period  
(1600 – 1700),

Rococo & Neo Classical Periods  
(1700 – 1800),

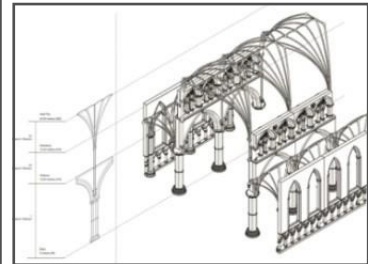


Fig 2.10 Elemental analysis, Gothic church interior. <sup>14</sup>

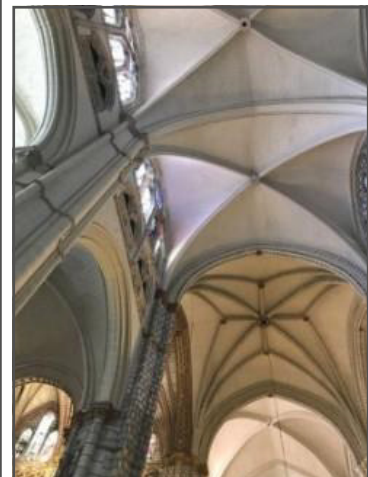


Fig 2.11 Groin vault, Gothic interior, Spain. <sup>15</sup>

## Industrialization

### Modernism

With the refusal of ornamentation in Architecture, modernism's stylistic tone exiled excessiveness in interior and architectural design. With the mass scale production of steel, concrete and the further development of reinforced concrete, the ideals were to strip buildings bare to their essence and material 'nakedness'.

Adolf Loos' essay "Ornament and Crime" (1908) formulated the stylistic minimalism mantra for spatial design. Working across the decorative and spatial arts, the minimalist agenda advocated an honesty of materials, primary colours and a return to the platonic shapes.

In an urban sense, the spatial grid delivered a universal design instrument. As developmental tendency, especially in the USA, the grid become a unifying factor across space and time. In due course, what was meant to act as unifying elements resulted in the functional separation of urban functions, architectures and spaces.

### West + East (juxtaposition) - Chinese Renaissance style:

The modernization of Chinese architecture was first conducted in North China against the political background of attempting to strengthen China's national power through Westernization after the Opium Wars. Chinese craftsmen and builders, when exposed to modern knowledge from the West via different channels, began to speculate that Chinese architectural practice 'might benefit from technical and engineering innovations made beyond China's borders'.<sup>17</sup>

Since then, mergers between Chinese and Western building techniques/elements of different extents had been attempted. The key issue was how the Chinese identity can be retained during this process. This resulted in the Chinese Renaissance style in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

According to its methodologies and features, the Chinese Renaissance style can be subdivided into two categories: the adaptive approach of concrete construction and the stylistic adaptive approach (or revivalist style).



Fig.2.12a & 2.12b Adaptive approach using concrete construction: Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall of Miu Fat Buddhist Monastery, Tuen Mun, Hong Kong.

### Spatial layout:

With functionality being the driving force, spatial and interior design saw a simplification based on either Loos' spatial (Raum) plan or on Le Corbusier's Free plan. The spatial plan opened all spatial layout to focus on the interior, with limited fenestration within the perimeter walls. The free plan opened all aspects of the design, layout, structure, fenestration and functional arrangements. Principles of the free plan was later formalized by Le Corbusier in his treaty of Architecture under the 5 points of Architecture: pilotis, free ground plan, free façade, horizontal windows and roof garden principles.

### Architectonic:

Influence of reinforced concrete opened architectonic expression of buildings and spaces. The return of platonic shapes and volumes delivered cubic volumes in architectural sense, with interiors being spare and open. Windows became expressive features opening all perspectives into as well as out of the spatial forms. Furthermore, the 'free' plan brought a new sense of design freedom to space. Both the spatial and architectonic expression of the free plan delivered unsymmetrical layouts, emphasised by the functional qualities of each part and its elemental arrangements: columns, ramps, staircases and building edges.

### The adaptive approach of concrete construction:

This approach mainly involved the realization of the spatial layout and form of traditional Chinese wooden frame construction in Western concrete construction. This approach is comparable to the Beaux-Arts' attempt to integrate Classical styles with engineering. Key examples of the adaptive approach of concrete construction include the campuses of Yenching University in Beijing (1919) designed by Henry Murphy, and Ginling College for Girls in Nanjing (1921) and Ten Thousand Buddhas Hall of Miu Fat Buddhist Monastery in Tuen Mun (1973).

### Architectonic and aesthetics:

This approach may not be quite successful because it was conceptually inconsistent to use reinforced concrete on the outset as concrete buildings were not "Chinese throughout" from a structural viewpoint.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, aesthetically the change of material and the corresponding craftsmanship often lead to the distortion of proportions, detailing, visual appearances and compositions of building parts of traditional Chinese wooden frame construction.



Fig. 2.13 Stylistic adaptive approach: Morrison Building of Hoh Fuk Tong, Tuen Mun, Hong Kong



Fig 2.14 Le Corbusier, Villa Savoye, France, 1929.<sup>30</sup>



Fig 2.15 Frank Lloyd Wright, Robie House, 1907 - 1909.<sup>26</sup>



Fig. 2.16 Frank Lloyd Wright, Robie House Stain Glass Detail, 1907 -1909.<sup>27</sup>

**Aesthetics:**

With most buildings painted white, their characteristics were of light filled interiors, accent of colour and the openness of flow of the interior plan. Columns varied in scale but were circular in preference and of reinforced concrete. A strong influence in the approach to the free plan was the mechanistic approach (automobiles, airplanes, and ship liners) to design, giving expression to all functional components of the space.

**Bauhaus School:**

Founded by Architect Walter Gropius in Weimar (1919), the Bauhaus School of thought reconceptualise the all forms of art, architecture, graphic design, interior design, industrial design and typography.

As one of the most influential schools in Europe of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Bauhaus' ideas and concepts was an off-set against the Beaux-Arts movement, free from historical reference or precedent.

Documented in its official manifesto, the school advocated strong basic design – which included strong principles of composition, the development and application of colour theory and two and three-dimensional explorations.

With the 'simplification' of design, new materials were explored, with the infusion of disciplines with one another. Or rather "*the coordination of all creative efforts*"<sup>16</sup>, as for example pottery, weaving, painting and the design of space was seen as a "collective work of art...in which no barriers exist between the structural and the decorative arts" (ibid).

(cf. Bauhaus Weimar 1919 – 1925, Bauhaus Dessau 1925 – 1932, Bauhaus Berlin 1932 – 1933)

**The stylistic adaptive approach (Revivalist style):**

This approach is characterized by a juxtaposition of a Western-style main body (e.g., the classical revival, classical eclecticism, Art Deco, modern/ International Style) with a Chinese-style roof structure (which represents the Chinese identity). This kind of composition was first introduced and practised by forerunners including Western missionaries and educationalists in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the intention of expressing their respect for the Chinese culture. Key examples include the Main Hall (1879) and Science Building (1923) of St. John's University in Shanghai). This approach was then practiced by foreign and local architects.

Since the 1930s, the stylistic adaptive approach has been continued and modified particularly by the Beaux-Arts design method (of the American Tradition) practiced by the Beaux-Arts trained Chinese graduates who studied abroad. Significant examples include the Yale-in-China campus in Changsha designed by Murphy (1914), the Friendship Hotel in Beijing designed by Zhang Bo (1954) and the Morrison Building of Hoh Fuk Tong in Tuen Mun (1936).

**Spatial layout:**

The Western-style main bodies of buildings constructed according to the stylistic adaptive approach did not necessary follow the interior layout of the traditional wooden frame construction.



Fig 2.17 & 2.18 Walter Gropius, Bauhaus, Housing complex and balcony detail, Dessau, 1925 -1926<sup>28</sup>

Key buildings and interiors representative of modernism include: Robie House, Chicago designed by Frank Lloyd Wright (1907 – 1909), The Bauhaus, Dessau designed by Walter Gropius, (1925 – 1926), Villa Savoye, Poissy-sur-Seine designed by Le Corbusier (1929) and Schröder House, Utrecht designed by Gerrit Rietveld (1924).

Other influential European school of thought of the period includes: Suprematism, Constructivism, the Art Deco Movement, Surrealism and De Stijl.

### Aesthetics:

It seems as though most of the buildings of this approach wear “a Western suit and a Chinese skullcap”.<sup>19</sup> The two parts simply do not match – the approach ‘had not succeeded... in giving to the lower portions of the buildings a sufficiently Chinese look to be in harmony with the strongly defined Chinese character of the roofs’.<sup>20</sup> Since then, many practitioners of this trend have gradually shifted their design approach by adopting the modern style/International Style.

### West/East(synthesis) -Vernacular Lingnan architecture

The geographic condition of South China or Lingnan region (including Canton and Guangxi provinces) gave birth to an ocean culture, which had an “open and inclusive” attitude toward overseas cultures. This resulted in the intended and active syntheses of overseas elements, and hence a cultural process of “glocalization”, upon which the cultural identity of the Lingnan region largely depended. This “glocalization” relates to “a complex interaction of global [Western] and local [Lingnan vernacular] elements”, leading to a cultural/architectural ‘hybridity’ that “cannot be reduced to clear-cut manifestations of a total ‘sameness’ or ‘difference’”<sup>21</sup>— neither mere East nor West.



Fig 2.19 & 2.20 Walter Gropius, Bauhaus, Curtain wall and window, Dessau, 1925 -1926.



Fig 2.21 Walter Gropius, Bauhaus, Door handle detail, Dessau, 1925 - 1926.<sup>29</sup>



Fig 2.23 Aligned arcade buildings on West Embankment Street, Chikan Ancient Village, Kaiping<sup>31</sup>



Western styles were commonly appreciated in the region. The import of Western building and interior elements were mainly caused by trade and emigration: i) contact with Western (building) culture via the Ocean Silk Road; ii) building precedents in the region, e.g., the Western style buildings of the Thirteen Hong of Canton built for foreign traders in the 1820s; iii) architectural knowledge brought back by overseas Chinese workers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These contributed to the emergence of the vernacular Lingnan architecture, which was mainly designed and built by the local people and builders.

Vernacular Lingnan architecture was characterized not by direct copying but innovative syntheses of various building elements, which were largely driven by the aesthetic sense of the locals. The syntheses involved distinctive execution of details, skilled craftsmanship (such as moulding) and harmonious compositions of elements by breaking established architectural rules. Its aesthetic achievement is thus comparable to that of the architectural eclecticism that was adopted in the West from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, its preference for plants, flowers, leaves and fruits for the pattern design adopted on the interiors and exteriors is similar to the practice of the Arts & Crafts movement.

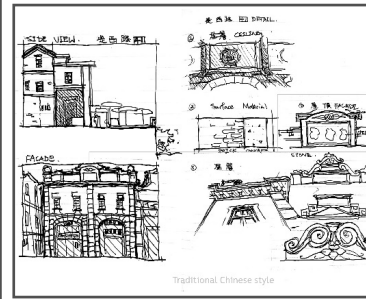


Fig 2.24 Façade details of the arcade building at 41 West Embankment Street, Chikan Ancient Village, Kaiping  
32

Three typical examples of the vernacular Lingnan architecture are listed below.

### 1. Arcade buildings (1920s-1930s) Typology

The Lingnan arcade building type is well represented by the aligned arcade buildings of the Chikan ancient town, Kaiping. The type is characterized by a modification of the existing narrow bamboo houses via the addition of a Western arcade structure (may be inhabitable) at the front façades. It served as the means for urban development (as adopted by the Canton government as early as the 1910s) by introducing rich layers of space from exteriors (public) to interiors (private) for communal and commercial activities.

#### Aesthetics:

The interiors of the arcade buildings are mainly characterized by Western-style fanlight windows (often covered by colourful Manchurian glass panels), Western artefacts (e.g., imported clock), Lingnan-style partitions and furniture (which are well articulated by Lingnan patterns). The exteriors featured harmonious and eclectic compositions of Eastern (e.g., Manchurian glass panels, Lingnan-style patterns and column-niche pediments) and Western elements (e.g., Baroque-style pediments, Palladian arches, Islamic arches, Doric and columns).

#### Materials:

The 'three carves' of Chinese construction tradition (i.e., wood, brick and stone) and imported concrete and steel (e.g., from Britain, Netherlands and Germany) were used.



Fig. 2.25 The typical structure system of arcade buildings on West Embankment Street, Chikan Ancient Village, Kaiping.<sup>33</sup>



Fig. 2.26 The interior spaces of the arcade building at 15 West Embankment Street, Chikan Ancient Village, Kaiping.<sup>34</sup>

## 2. Watchtowers (1910s - 1930s).

### Typology and aesthetics:

Kaiping, Canton is representative of the Lingnan watchtowers, which consists of the bottom part, cantilevered part and roof. It relates to the modification of traditional Chinese watchtower type (which were highly functional defensive structures) via the incorporation of Western elements. The articulation of the bottom part is mainly two-dimensional due to functional considerations – a plain surface with fewer projections can probably prevent bandits from clambering up and invading the building. The watchtower type thus involved a prominent synthesis of functional and aesthetic considerations. The watchtowers' exteriors often involve harmonious eclectic compositions among various Western elements and a few Eastern elements (e.g., Lingnan-style patterns). The interiors of the cantilevered parts of the watchtowers are often characterized by rich Western elements (e.g., Greek/Roman colonnades). The interiors of the lower parts (which were regularly used as living areas) are relatively plain and may be articulated by fanlights, Western artefacts, Lingnan-style partitions and furniture (which are articulated by Lingnan patterns).

### Materials:

Imported concrete was largely used for defensive reasons. The concrete walls were often made thick (from 0.3 to 1m) and served more than load-bearing function.

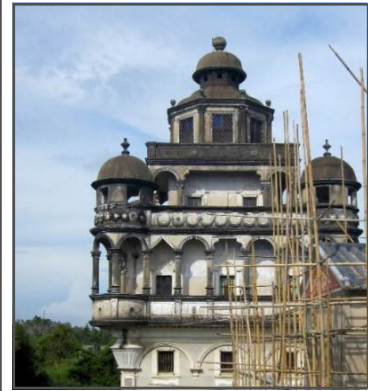


Fig. 2.27 Rui Shi tower, Kaiping. <sup>35</sup>



Fig. 2.28 The (modified) Ionic colonnade on the 6th floor the Rui Shi tower, Kaiping. <sup>36</sup>



Fig. 2.29 The retreated (modified) Ionic colonnade on the 7th floor of the Rui Shi tower, Kaiping <sup>37</sup>

### 3. Ancestor hall

Feng Chai Ancestor Hall (in San Bu Town, Kaiping), which was built from 1906 to 1914, is a prominent example of the Lingnan ancestor hall type.

#### Typology:

The spatial arrangement of Feng Cai Ancestor Hall is a three-row-of -three-block planar layout (similar to the traditional Chinese courtyard house setting), with a lane between every two rows.

#### Aesthetics:

The interior and exterior of the ancestor hall are characterized by an outstanding synthesis of different elements – harmonious eclectic compositions of Eastern (e.g., ‘horse-head’ walls, Chinese tile roofs, Lingnan-style murals) and Western elements (e.g., Greek/Rome colonnades, pediments, balustrades and Victorian cast iron pavilion). Moreover, innovative adoptions of elements are found in the interior. For example, on the interior walls of the inner halls, embedded composite-order capitals replace Chinese beams and posts in such a way that the function of the composite-order capitals is transformed – they are now serving as Chinese corbels to provide space for wooden beams of the roof structure to sit on.

#### Materials:

The ‘three carves’ of Chinese construction tradition (i.e., wood, brick and stone) and imported concrete and cast iron are used.



Fig 2.30 Feng Chai Ancestor Hall, Kaiping<sup>38</sup>

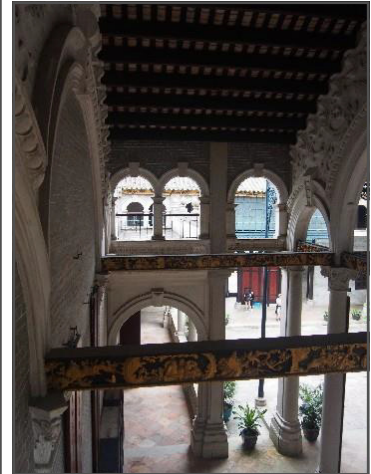


Fig 2.31 Embedded composite order capitals of Feng Chai Ancestor Hall, Kaiping<sup>39</sup>



Fig 2.32 Gable walls of Feng Chai Ancestor Hall, Kaiping<sup>40</sup>

## West - Hong Kong as a colony

From the 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, the mainstream building and interior design of Hong Kong depended on the import of Western building types (e.g., the arcade building type) and styles (e.g., Victorian and neo-classicism), mainly expressed in a kind of revivalism of Western styles in the context of Hong Kong with some spatial modifications, e.g., the adoption of veranda of the Colonial style. Examples include the arcade complexes along Queen's road in late 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>22</sup> and the 'Government Offices, St. John Place' constructed from 1847 to 1848, which was a two-storey high and fifteen-bay wide building largely influenced by the Italian renaissance style. The interior and exterior of the first floor featured classical elements such as the veranda, which was articulated by 'classical columns and a stone balustrade'.<sup>23</sup>

## Aesthetics and Cultural Identity

The buildings in Hong Kong mainly related to the aesthetics of Western classical architecture. As a colony, Hong Kong had no explicit cultural identity of its own being expressed by architecture in its early colonial era.

## 'Minus' West

Since the mid- 20<sup>th</sup> century, buildings in Hong Kong largely adopted the modern style/ International Style/Art Deco/ brutalist style, which replaced Western classical elements and aesthetics.

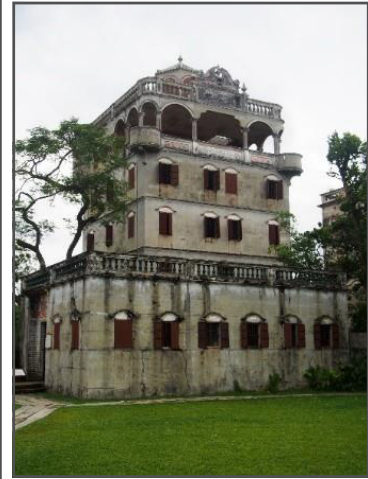


Fig 2.33 Ming Shi Tower, Kaiping<sup>41</sup>

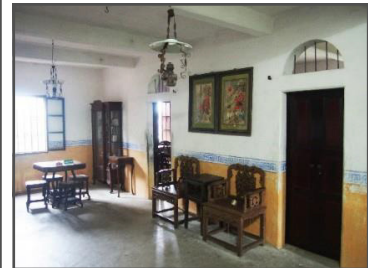


Fig 2.34 The living room on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Rui Shi tower, Kaiping<sup>42</sup>



Fig 2.35 City Hall in Central, Hong Kong epitomizes the International Style

### **Aesthetics and Cultural Identity**

The modern style expresses “the spirit of the modern age” – progress and marching into the future. Against this background, the design of interiors and exteriors in Hong Kong generally identified the functional beauty of the modern style as its cultural expression, representing/symbolizing its economic progress since the 1970s.

Key examples include: i) modernstyle exterior and modular interior design (i.e., the mass-produced logic of industrialization) of the Central Government Office complex built at the Government Hill, Central in the 1950s <sup>24</sup> and ii) the public housing block types of Hong Kong (both interiors and exteriors), <sup>25</sup> which mainly adopted brutalism (largely for low cost construction) or functionalism.



*Fig 2.36 Government offices, Central*

## Post-industrialization

### Post Modernisms:

No attempt to understand the post-modern can be made without deeper understandings of post-industrialization of the late 1900's. The global move, in economic terms, saw the transformation of industrial dependency gradually deindustrializing, transforming production economies into knowledge and service industries. What were industries now became centres of information technology or services to other industries.

Design had to accommodate professionals and technical workforce, and their emphasis of information systems and artificial intelligence. In this light, the urban context witnessed greater diversity in types of urban settings, ranging in the gentrified city, the suburban city, the tenement city and the luxury city.

Stylistically, Postmodernisms took a similar course, as a reaction against the philosophies of Western Modernism.

Best summarized under the term 'counter culture,' the movement produced a radically different take on philosophy, human rights, social movements, literature, art, and spatial design.

### (.....)<-(re-infusing) 'Chinese-ness'

Since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, many dominant modern-style forms are informed or modified by concepts related to 'Chinese-ness', which seems to result from the search for the historical root– a longer-lasting value being upheld in the fast-changing postmodern world. <sup>43</sup> People are indeed seeking more symbolic or cultural associations from our built environment as part of their cultural identity, resulting in the “aesthetic fictions” (storytelling) of interiors and exteriors. <sup>44</sup>

Key building and interior examples include:

i. The Boao Canal Village houses in Hainan, China (2002), designed by Rocco Yim– its form and spatial composition are informed by traditional gable/“horse-head” walls of vernacular houses in Chinese water villages.

ii. Guangdong Museum in Guangzhou, China (2010), designed by Rocco Yim – its spatial layout is inspired by/associated with the layering of traditional Chinese treasure boxes. The apertures of the museum façades are thought to be the abstraction of motifs/patterns of traditional Chinese treasure boxes. <sup>45</sup>

iii. Tin Shui Wai Leisure and Cultural Building in Hong Kong (2013), designed by Architectural Services Department – the surfaces (exterior and interior) of the modern-style building relate to the surrounding contexts. They are modified by materials/patterns/textures associated with the traditional Chinese village houses and ancestral halls of Ping Shan Village (e.g., bricks and timbers) and the surrounding recycling yards (e.g., rusty iron bars, nettings and plates).



Fig.2.37 The Boao Canal Village houses, Hainan, China <sup>46</sup>

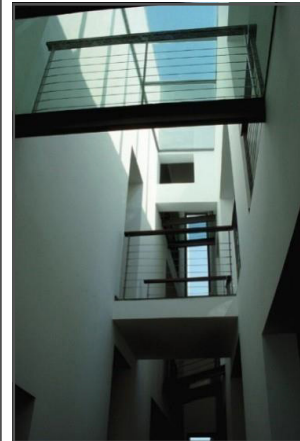


Fig.2.38 Interior of the Boao Canal Village houses, Hainan, China <sup>47</sup>



Fig.2.39 Guangdong Museum <sup>48</sup>

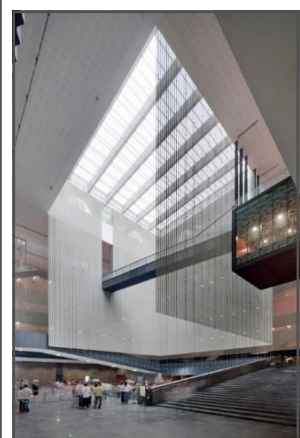


Fig.2.40 Guangdong Museum <sup>49</sup>

As a refusal of modernism's 'certainties', postmodernism is seen to operate through possibility, sorting through the wealth of complexity that emerges in each option and each direction. The substitution of "less is more" with the phrase, "less is a bore" gave agency to rethink the bland design proposition so characteristically of modernism.

**Spatial layout:**

In rejection to modernisms functional sterility, postmodern design advocated site specific and designs generated from within the local context of city, neighbourhood, street or culture. Unlike modernism's unifying take on design, the postmodernism approach diversified style, taste and interpretation. Where modernism advocated purism, postmodernism called for plurality, eclectic expression and complexity, setting the tone for an inclusive period of design.

The emphasis of eclectic expression, brought together pre-modern and modern stylistic devices, merged through form, shape and colour. Although still functional in nature, postmodernism and its interiors took artistic freedom in any capacity, scale or form deemed fit.

**Architectonic:**

Architecturally, postmodernism had no rules. Reinforced concrete used in the modernisms articulated divisions of beam, roof, window, column, or door, in the same manner gave freedom of expression within postmodernism. In the deliberate break from typologies, walls became waves, windows doors and columns mere decorations. Contrasting heavy elements with those of light weight stylistically challenged the understating of what designs were meant for or how it was meant to operate.



Fig.2.41 Tin Shui Wai Leisure and Cultural Building, Hong Kong <sup>50</sup>



Fig.2.42 Interior space of Tin Shui Wai Leisure and Cultural Building, Hong Kong <sup>51</sup>

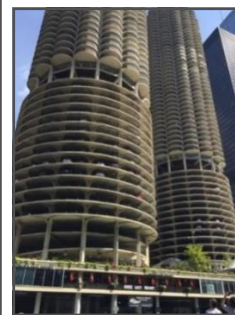


Fig.2.43 Marina City, 1968, Bertrand Goldberg, Chicago. <sup>52</sup>

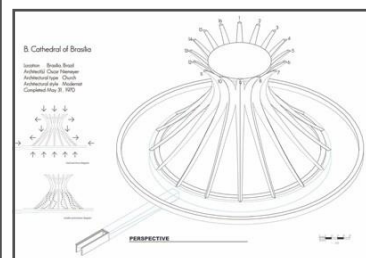


Fig.2.44 Cathedral of Brasília, Brasília, Oscar Niemeyer, 1970 <sup>53</sup>



Fig.2.45 Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, Richard Rogers, 1977 <sup>54</sup>



## Aesthetic:

Architectonic 'rules' meant for either civic or domestic use were muddled within design assemblages. Domestic roof shapes on tall skyscrapers, the use of Egyptian or classical stylistic elements were means to a 'playful' end. Oversized features as keystones two stories in size, exaggerated elements of windows ten stories high, or the symbolic referencing of Roman and classical stylistic elements, resulted in critics referring to designs as "humorous", "camp", "an oversized Christmas package", "marzipan monstrosity", or a "histrionic masquerade".

Colour-wise, designs represented technicolour and reflective surfaces. Natural and manmade was placed side by side. Complementary and monochromatic colours employed in one perspective. To this effect the result of colour, shapes and material collectively contributed to the playful and illusionary aspects of design in all scales or formats.

Key building and interiors representative of post modernism include:

Venna Venturi House, Chestnut Hill Pennsylvania, designed by Robert Venturi, (1962), Pizza d'Italia, New Orleans, designed by Charles Moore (1976 – 1980), Sony Building, New York, designed by Philip Johnson and John Burgee (1978 - 1984) and Portland Building, Portland, designed by Michael Graves (1980).

Other influential European school of thought of the period includes: Metabolism, Deconstructivism, New Urbanism and Neo-Historism.

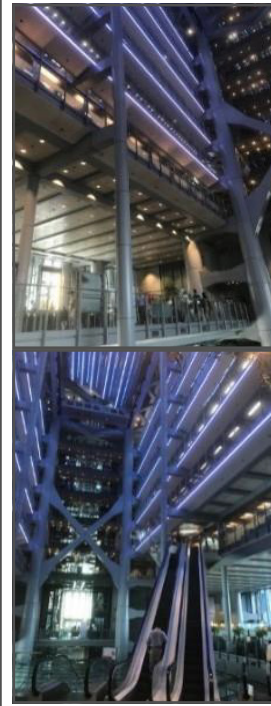


Fig. 2.46 The Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, Hong Kong, Norman Foster, 1979 -1986. <sup>55</sup>

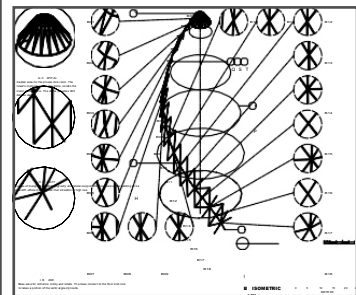


Fig. 2.47 30 St Mary Axe, London, 2004, Foster and Partners <sup>56</sup>

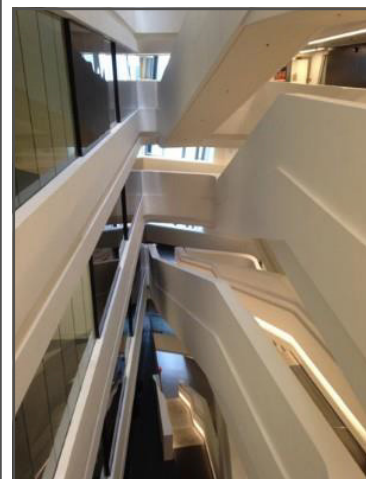


Fig. 2.48 Jockey Club Innovation Tower, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Zaha Hadid. 2013. <sup>57</sup>