

Rural Urban Framework

REDEFINING THE TULOOU IMPACT REPORT



September 2020

Contents

Rethinking the Tulou, Lantian, Fujian

- About
- Collaborators
- Workshop Format
- Student Evaluation (after the revisit trip)
- Impact Evaluation
- Project Assessment

Dissemination

- Exhibition at PMQ
- Videos
- Award
- Media Coverage

RETHINKING THE TULOU, LANTIAN, FUJIAN
Summer 2019

About the Tulou Interventions

Location: The University of Hong Kong and Lantian Village, Fujian, China

Workshop dates: 17th June 2019 - 2nd July 2019

Revisit trip dates: 2nd November 2019 - 4th November 2019

Over a 1000 years ago, large introverted earthen buildings (tulou) of the Hakka culture emerged in Southern China as a traditional form of collective housing in the rural. Extended families built thick earthen walls for collective defence, while maintaining a shared open space in the centre. As the tulous are now surrounded by a new urban context and are not corresponding with contemporary desires of dwelling, many of them are experiencing individual transformations or becoming abandoned. Responding to the changing relationship between individual/collective and rural/urban, these prototypes, built in 2019 with 40 architectural students from different institutions, radically rethink the tulou through programmatic, structural and spatial transformations towards a new commons - finding new reasons for living together.

We propose two strategies: the Plug-in on the outside and the Tower on the inside of the tulou. The Plug-in project rethinks the defensive wall by taking the tulou inside out, opening it to the new surroundings. Individual transformations such as plug-in of toilets already occurred in the tulou, that was previously renovated into a children school by the Government. This prototype transforms a small window in a new entrance, adding a public reading room to the already functioning school. The funnel staircase plugged into the opening invites people to sit, read and rest in the shadow, while serving as an open amphitheatre for activities in the courtyard. The Tower project rethinks the public space of the tulou raising up the traditional collective courtyard, connecting each floor to a circular stairway to the sky. The upper corridor of the tulou will become a public reading room; the changing rhythm and dimension of the steps encourage people to sit, and read, drink tea, walk on the bridges or contemplate the view from the upper balcony.



The Tower in Zhenchun Lou, Lantian Village

Collaborators

LIU LANDSCAPE ENGINEERING LTD.

Small contractor specializing in timber construction. Has an interest in combining modern technology with traditional techniques. Also has experience with similar design and build projects working with students.

Contact Person: Liu An Hai (Owner)

SHIZHONG COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Local government with an interest in renovating Tulous to improve the prospects of the county. They provided assistance in selecting and securing of the Tulous, as well as logistical support throughout the project.

Contact Person: Wan Zhen Zhang (Head of Shizhong County) and Gui Zhu Ren (Officer in charge of Tulous in Shizhong County)

HONG KONG DESIGN INSTITUTE

<http://www.hkdi.edu.hk/en/>

Partnering institution for the Jockey Club HKU Rural Urban Design Project. 16 Students from their Higher Diploma in Architectural Design programme participated in the design and build workshop that was held in Summer 2019.

Contact Person: Jason Tang (Senior Lecturer/ Programme Leader)



The Plug-in in Yude Lou, Lantian Village

Workshop Format

There are three parts to the workshop:

Design Work (Design) – done in Hong Kong

- Each group has a different design task. Half of the students work developing programmatic transformations for the tulous to understand the relationship between the building and its context, the second group looks at how to turn a massing idea into a structural concept.
- The students take their design ideas to Fujian and get feedback from the local residents
- The students have tutorials and design reviews at HKU

Site Work (Construction) – done in Lantian

- Working in either Zhenchun Lou or Yude Lou to realise the design interventions for the tulous.
- Working with local carpenters on site to learn about wooden construction techniques and traditional building knowledge.

Field work (Research) – done in Lantian

- Surveying local residents and different tulous – learning about the lives of those in less privileged communities
- Mapping the programs, status, and future plans of the village where the interventions are located.



Design Work

Designing through the making of models and testing ideas. And presenting findings from field work and design strategies after visiting the site.



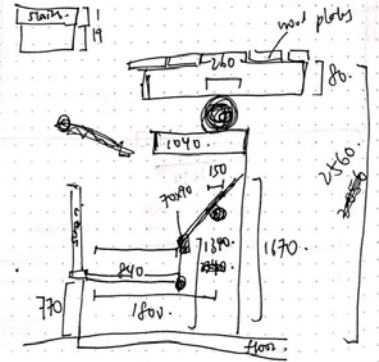
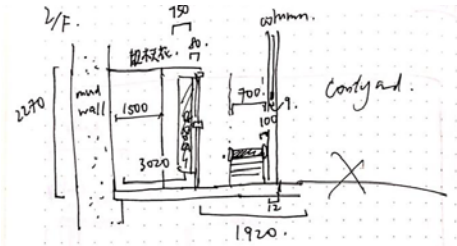
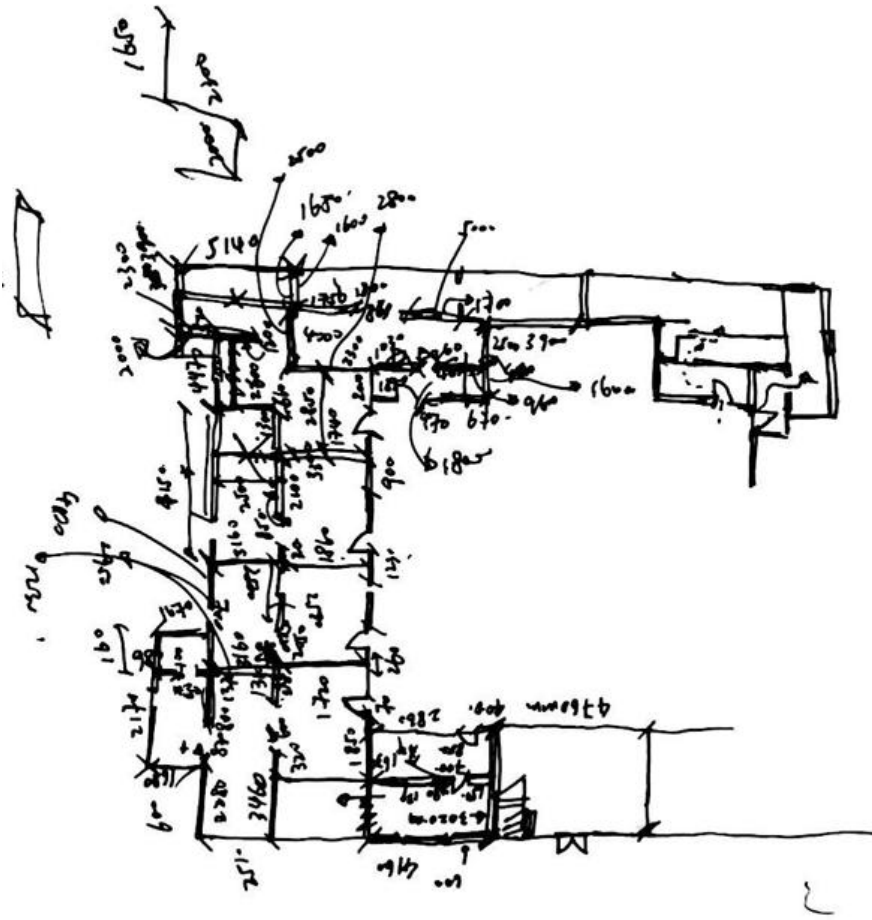
Site Work (Construction)

Learning to read construction drawings and translate them into reality.

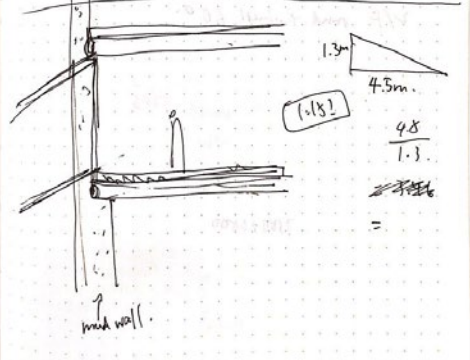
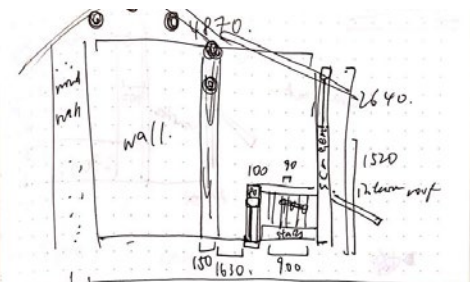
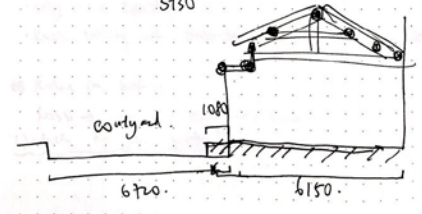
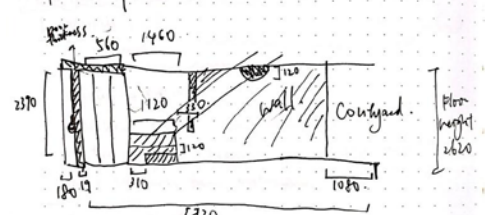


Field Work

Survey drawings produced by students after interviewing the local residents and visiting their homes.



$\frac{G}{D}$
Thickness wall
mm $\frac{19+560}{mm} = 579$



Revisit Trip

2 November – 3 November 2019

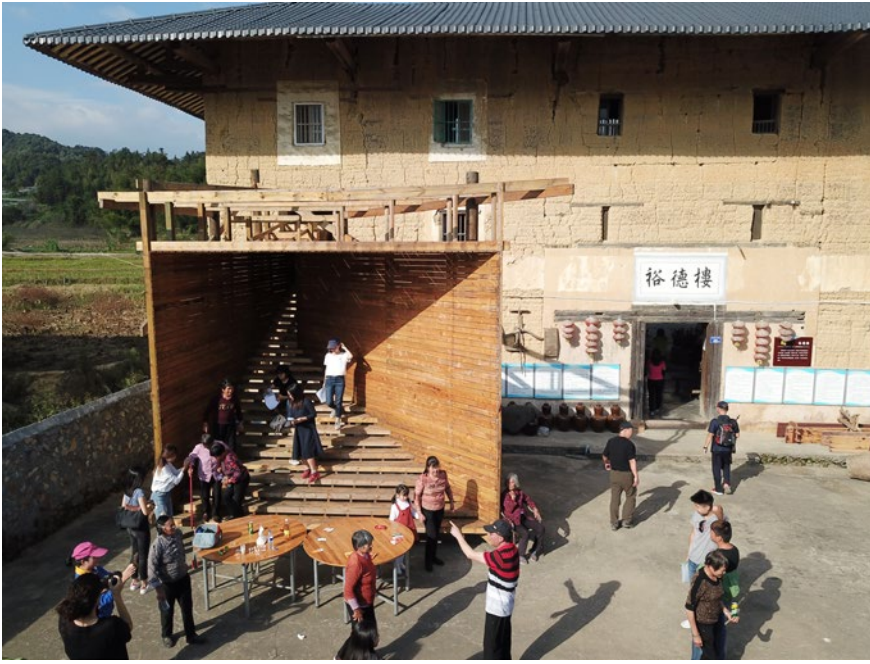
The local village government arranged a gathering for students and villagers to celebrate the opening of the library in the Plug-in. The aim is to provide opportunity for students to demonstrate the new public space in the village and celebrate the completion of the two structure.

DAY 1: VILLAGE CELEBRATION AND AFTERNOON TEA TIME (2 November 2019)

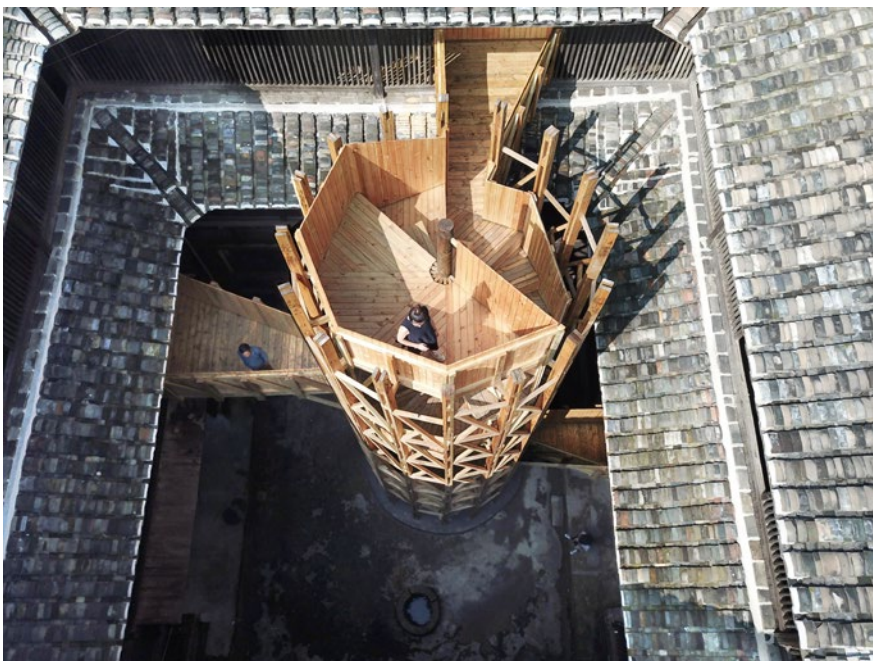
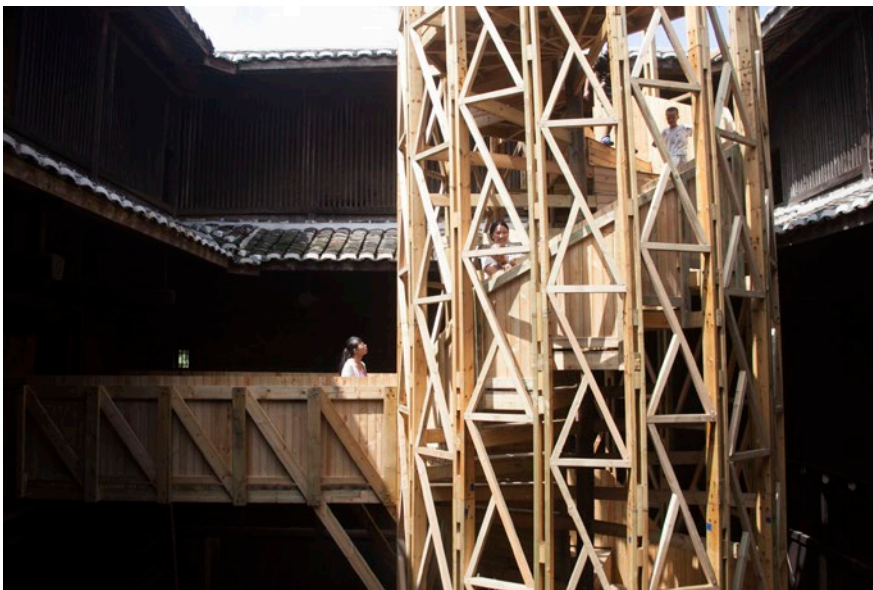
The celebration was set up on the stair of the Plug-In. Villagers and students sat on the step while having snacks during afternoon tea time. The conversations were mainly about exchanging ideas and thoughts towards the two newly-built structures in the village and how to utilize the new public space. Villagers and students were discussing the future development of Plug-in which can become an open theater while Tower will become a museum. Students also danced and sang to demonstrate how to use Plug-In as a stage.



Revisit Trip (Student and Local Resident Engagement)



Revisit Trip (Conditions of the design)



Student Evaluation

Feedback from students after the revisit trip

What did you gain from the workshop? / Did you apply anything that you have gained to your work or design projects?

“I have known more about Tulou, the village planning in China and wood construction.” - Vivien Lee Chum (BAAS 2, HKU)

“Being involved in the process of designing and building and seeing the finished product made me rethink on what design and architecture is.” – Helen Ng (BAAS 1, HKU)

“I experienced about it’s nice to be on a construction volunteer trip. I learned about the process of preparation, construction and also of the relationship and communication with the village, site and residents.” - Jasmin Chan (BAAS 2, HKU)

Do you think that your design approach or work has changed because of the workshop? / Have you been inspired to do something specific as a result of the experience from the workshop?

“I have been shown that architecture could be more than just constructing a building.” - Vivien Lee Chum (BAAS 2, HKU)

“I believe interacting with the locals allowed me to value the importance of understanding the context of a place.” – Lily Lu (BAAS 1, HKU)

“I become more open-minded to design. I also learned the importance of site and context considering in materiality with the existing structure.” - Jasmin Chan (BAAS 2, HKU)

Is the experience of revisiting important? How does it compare to a typical design studio or project at work?

“It’s pretty important for me not only know about the final design, but the process of carrying out the design is also important, as the designer’s approach could be realized or not.” - Vivien Lee Chum (BAAS 2, HKU)

Impact Evaluation

Extracted impact evaluation from an Impact Report compiled by Rural Urban Framework on the Plug-In in November 2019.

Interviews with local residents (Conducted between 2nd -3rd November 2019)

Do you like the new structure? Its size and design? Why?

- “Yes! It feels nice! It makes the tulous become something like a monument and attract people to visit.”
- “Yes. It’s always nice to have new stairs where we can sit and chat.”
- “I like it very much. It looks very beautiful and attractive.”
- “The structure is well detailed and designed. Much better than before”

Do you think the tulou has improved? How and Why?

- “Yes. More awareness and provide a place to hang out.”
- “Yes and it provide new function and will potentially attract more investment.”
- “The stairs are much better and stronger. Before it was quite dangerous to walk up.”
- “It makes tulou more lively and create very interesting program better than before.”
- “Yes. Before this tulou has some broken part. This structure make it look fresh and will improve tourism.”
- “Yes. It provides a place to encourage kids to play.”

Do you think the area has improved? How and Why?

- “Yes. Tulous feel more alive and more people come to visit them.”
- “More people probably will come to visit this place and it can also become an education base.”
- “More development is happening in village and summer camps also increase.”
- “The new structure has increase the awareness of Lantian and it makes the village more beautiful.”

Impact Evaluation

Impact of providing alternative renovation strategies

- Plug-in is situated in Yude Lou, which is a part of Shanfu Ecological Agriculture Science Base, a venue for experiential educational programmes for elementary school students. Yude Lou has been renovated into a dormitory for the programmes. The Plug-in transforms a small window into a new entrance, introducing a public library to the existing dormitory. Between October 2019 and January 2020, 8 educational camps have been taken place in the Plug-in which offers a space of creative play for 635 students. The Plug-in is also high beneficial to local residents, who use it as a gathering space to sit and rest in the shade and also an open amphitheatre for activities in the exterior courtyard.
- Zhenchun Lou has been abandoned for decades until Tower was built. The Tower rethinks the public space of Tulou by raising up the traditional collective courtyard and connecting each floor through a spiral stairway to the sky. New public programs are introduced along the way. The changing rhythm of the steps encourage people to sit, read, or drink tea inside the tower. The bridges connect to the upper corridor of the tulou, which becomes a public reading room, whilst the top of the Tower becomes a place to contemplate the view. The Tower is not only provide new public space for the villagers but also repurpose Zhenchun Lou for new function. Shizhong County Government has received a donation of 1 million RMB to continue renovate Zhenchun Lou as a museum for Chinese telegram Technology since Zhenchun Lou was used as telegram station during civil war in 1930s.

A selection of comments from the general public demonstrates a surprising shift in attitude towards Tulou:

- *“(the designs) provide changes during preservation. A new thinking is born from a very interesting conflict, which is similar to the progress of human social civilization.”*
- *“The project is just like acupuncture. Tulou is active with a finest touch.”*
- *“Some people advocate the restoration of old buildings as if they were, which an act is focusing on tourism rather than local inhabitants. While those two adaptations take consideration of villagers’ daily lives.”*

Impact of changing views of the local community about the value of their Tulous

- The impact on the inhabitants of the project continues to evolve as more and more people visit the village for study and tourism. A significant impact is the change in perception towards reutilizing the Tulou rather than simply abandoning them. 18 villagers of Lantian Village were interviewed. 18 of them agreed strongly that visitors have increased and their business has been benefited. According to the villager head, the visitor’s number has increased 7500 in two month after the construction completed.

Impact of increasing public awareness towards Tulou

- After completion of two built Tulou adaptations in Lantian Village, the project has created significant impact of increasing public awareness towards Tulou. Since July 2019, the coverage of the Rethinking the Collective in the mainstream media has been extensive, including newspaper, TV and online publication. Yitiao, a Chinese original short video company which has 20 million daily viewing, produced a short video dedicated for this project and its article also has reached more than 100,000 viewers on WeChat. The project is also High Commended for Architecture Review New Into Old Award.

Project Assessment

- This project addresses the activation of abandoned Tulou in Fujian Province, by implementing new collective programs into the historic buildings. Responding to the changing relationship between individual and collective, rural and urban, a series of possible intervention are proposed that radically rethink the tulou through programmatic, structural and spatial transformation towards a new commons. To transform the old house for collective living into a new house for collective experience, two strategies have been built: The Plug-in and the Tower.
- The impact arising from the construction of two newly built Tulou adaptive structure in Shizhong, China can be demonstrated by measuring the impact of alternative renovation strategies, change the views of the local community about the value of their Tulous, increase public awareness towards Tulou and potentially influence policy on Tulou preservation.
- The Tower rethinks the public space of Tulou by raising up the traditional collective courtyard and connecting each floor through a spiral stairway to the sky. Zhenchun Lou has been abandoned for decades until Tower was built. The Tower is not only provide new public space for the villagers but also repurpose Zhenchun Lou for new function: a museum.
- The Plug-in challenges the thick defensive wall traditionally characterized by a small openings by turning the tulou inside out. Opening it to the new surroundings. The Plug-in transforms a small window into a new entrance, introducing a public library to the existing dormitory in Yulou Lou.
- The plug-in and tower were built by students in collaboration with local carpenters. The students from HKU and The Hong Kong Design Institute engaged with both carpenters and local residents to learn about both traditional timber craftsmanship and the challenges that villagers and their Tulous face when confronted with urbanization. Students met with local government and local residents to present their designs to learn directly from the stakeholders



DISSEMINATION

Exhibition at PMQ - workshop and sharing sessions

Videos

Award

Media coverage

PMQ Exhibition: BUILDING A COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

Exhibition: 2 days, PMQ Main courtyard. October 26-27 2019.

To demonstrate the impact design can have and that the process of building itself is a method to bring people together for collective action.

Showcase of the project and the 2 project videos produced.

Participating students shared experiences with visitors.

Number of visitors: Over 300 people








Engagement event: 4 hours, PMQ Main Courtyard. October 27 2019

Public workshop with participating students to invite people to design their own community spaces.







Video Screenshots - Rethinking the Tulou (Fujian)










Video shown at PMQ and shared through mainstream and architectural media channels, and is also publically accessible via vimeo and the project page - <http://www.rufwork.org/index.php?/project/lantian-village/>

	Rural Urban Framework
	Rethinking the Collective
	ZOOM IN
	The <i>tulou</i> existed in southern China for over a 1000 years. Extended families built thick mud walls for collective defense .
	PAN LEFT TO RIGHT
	The <i>tulou</i> with its shared open courtyard has become a prime example of collective living in the rural.
	ROTATING LEFT TO RIGHT
	Over time, the <i>tulous</i> have been swallowed by a new urban context.
	FLYING UP

	People now build their own individual houses using concrete frame and brick.
	PAN UP
	Many <i>tulous</i> are gradually being abandoned, as they do not meet contemporary desires of dwelling.
	PAN RIGHT TO LEFT
	How can we rethink the Collective House?
	The thick mud wall of the <i>tulou</i> allows for very small openings STILL
	but people are already extending their house beyond it PAN TO THE RIGHT
	plugging-in toilets, for example. STILL
	What if we start to plug-in collective programs? STILL

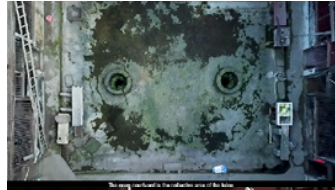




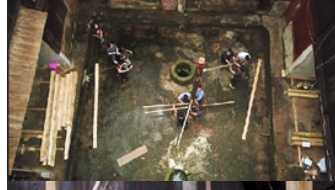
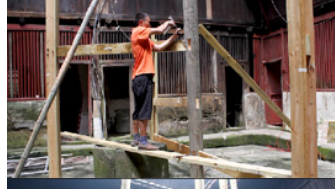


Video Screenshots - Rethinking the Tulou (Fujian)

	STILL
	ANIMATION VIDEO
	STILL (animation video fading into it)
	A small window can become a new entrance... ZOOM OUT
	...and give the <i>tulou</i> a new public program. STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL


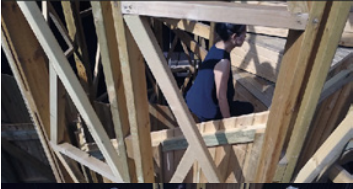








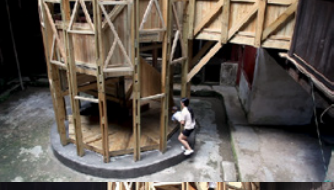
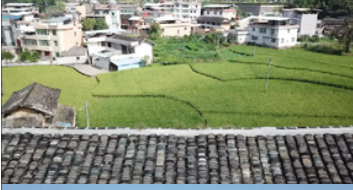



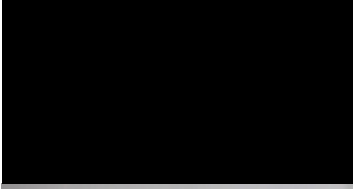




	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	ZOOM OUT
	STILL
	ZOOM IN

Video Screenshots - Rethinking the Tulou (Fujian)

	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL (than pan to right)
	CAMERA FOLLOWING THEM
	CAMERA FOLLOWING THEM
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL

	The open courtyard is the collective area of the <i>tulou</i> ZOOM IN
	What if it could be experienced differently... STILL
	...raising up the ground to the sky? STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL
	STILL

Video Screenshots - Rethinking the Tulou (Fujian)

	STILL		PAN UP + ROTATION DOWN + ZOOM OUT
	STILL		
	STILL		
	ZOOM IN		ROTATION UP
	STILL		
	STILL		
	STILL		
	STILL		
	STILL		FADE INTO BLACK
	ROTATING LEFT TO RIGHT		ANIMATION VIDEO

Video Screenshots - Rethinking the Tulou (Fujian)

	<p>Can we find new reasons for living together?</p>
	<p>STILL</p>
	<p>Rethinking the Collective Rural Urban Framework John Lin and Joshua Bolchover EDITOR Chiara Oggioni MUSIC COMPOSER Vincent Lin PROJECT MANAGER Sun Yi DESIGN TEAM Lau Bo Yee - Chiara Oggioni PROJECT YEAR 2019 LOCATION Lantian, Fujian, China CONSTRUCTION Liu Landscape Engineering Ltd. SUPPORTED BY The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, Shizhong County Government, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Design Institute AS PART OF THE Jockey Club HKU Rural Urban Design Project.</p>

Awards


Chu, Jaime: in Architectural Review, Issue 1467, Dec/Jan 2019/20
<https://www.architectural-review.com/awards/new-into-old/breathing-new-life-tulou-tower-and-plug-in-lantian-village-china-by-rural-urban-framework-university-of-hong-kong/10045647.article>

The Architectural Review

TODAY ESSAYS BUILDINGS PLACES ARCHITECTS ANDRYE COMPETITIONS PODCASTS AWARDS STUDENTS MAGAZINES SHOP SUBSCRIBE

NEWS/OLD

Breathing new life: Tulou tower and plug-in, Lantian village, China by Rural Urban Framework + University of Hong Kong



8 DECEMBER 2019 BY JAIME CHU

New into Old 2019 Highly Commended: with their tulou renovation projects, Rural Urban Framework alongside students at the University of Hong Kong are transforming ideas about urbanising the rural

AR New into Old awards 2019: winners announced

2 DECEMBER 2019

The winner of the 2019 AR New into Old awards, alongside two Highly Commended and three Comended buildings, for sustainable alternatives to building anew have been revealed.

Sala Beckett by Flores & Prats has been announced the winner of the AR New into Old awards 2019.

The 'magical and inventive' winning Spanish project was selected by our panel of judges, consisting of Roz Barr, director and founder of Roz Barr Architects, Hugh Strange, founder of Hugh Strange Architects, and Catherine Slessor, writer, critic and former editor of *The Architectural Review*.

AR New into Old 2019 results

Winner
 Sala Beckett, Spain, by Flores & Prats

Highly Commended
 Renovation strategies for the ancient tulou, China, by Rural Urban Framework, The University of Hong Kong

Comended
 OMR Art Gallery, Mexico, by Max von Werz, Mateo Riestra & José Arnaud-Bello
 Qingshan Young Professors' Club, Zhejiang University, China, by the Architectural Design and Research Institute of Zhejiang University
 Estació Ecològica, Spain, by Aulets Arquitectes

MOST POPULAR

- 'You leave the pages open near where you are drawing and it is very inspiring' Flores & Prats' AR Bookshop!
- All Reading List Old: City Portraits part II
- A sea of paper: Niall McLaughlin on practice, process, and sketching sublimely
- The open sketchbook: collecting ideas
- Fugitive thought: Sam Jacob on the sketchbook
- Living in a bubble: smooth surfaces to shield
- AR Awar 2020 on inside
- Peers toward an architecture

New into Old 2019
 Highly Commended

The Architectural Review

Rural Urban Framework + University of Hong Kong Tulou tower and plug-in Lantian village China

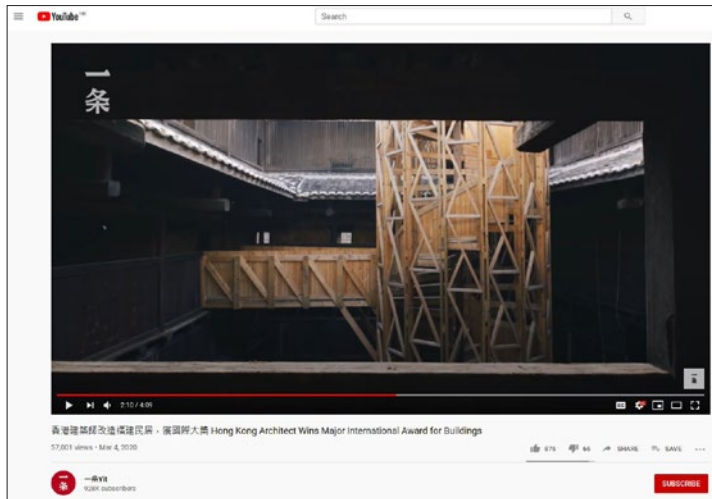
NEW INTO OLD AWARDS

Mainstream Media (Rethinking the Collective)

Yitiao

Yit , March 4th 2020 (Viewers on YouTube: 56,815)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oa78y5gD4R8>

一条 2020年3月6日 March 6th 2020 (Viewer: 100K+) <https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/WIV4s99exRWElu8MjJTodw>



澎湃

土楼建筑艺术节 2020年1月04日

Tulou Architectre & Art Festival, January 4th 2020 https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_5428438



今日头条, 2020年3月6日

March 6th 2020 <https://www.toutiao.com/>



Architectural Media (Rethinking the Collective)

GOOOOD.cn

集体生活的再思-福建土楼改造,

October 28th 2019 (Viewer: 14,900) <https://www.gooood.cn/tulou-renovation-china-by-rural-urban-framework.htm>

The screenshot shows the Gooood website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Series', 'Type', 'Tag Search', 'About & Submissions', 'Jobs', and '找设计师/找项目'. The main content area features a large black header with the title 'Tulou Renovation, China by Rural Urban Framework' and the subtitle 'Rethinking the Collective'. Below this, there is a 'Project Specs' section with the following details:

- Design: Rural Urban Framework
- Location: China
- Type: Architecture
- Materials: Wood Timber structure system
- Tags: Fujian
- Category: Rural reconstruction of China Tower Educational Architecture Staircase

At the bottom of the project specs, there is a note in Chinese: '非常感谢 城市架构 于gooood分享一下内容, 更多请至: Rural Urban Framework on gooood' and an appreciation message in English: 'Appreciation towards Rural Urban Framework for providing the following description:'.

designboom

May 16th 2020. <https://www.designboom.com/architecture/rural-urban-framework-tulou-interventions-ancient-building-typology-china-05-16-2020/>

The screenshot shows the Designboom website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'designboom' and a menu icon. Below the navigation bar, there is a text block: 'the tulou section by section each with individual style and layout, but retaining the collective footprint.' Below this text is a large image showing an aerial view of a traditional tulou building with a grey roof and a modern wooden structure attached to the side. Below the image, there is a text block: 'in response, RUF has developed two interventions that rethink the programmatic, structural and spatial characteristics of tulous. The aim is to give a new life to the tulou, making it once again center for a new form of collectivity,' explains the design team. 'to transform the old house for collective living into a new house for collective experience, we designed different prototypes in relation to different tulous. two of these strategies have currently been built: the plug-in on the outside and the tower on the inner courtyard of the tulou.'

Archdaily,

Rethinking the Collective/ Rural Urban Framework, The University of Hong Kong, June 2020 https://www.archdaily.com/office/rural-urban-framework-the-university-of-hong-kong?ad_name=project-specs&ad_medium=single

The screenshot shows the ArchDaily website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Advertise', 'World', and the ArchDaily logo. Below the navigation bar, there is a search bar and a 'Save this project' button. The main content area features a large image of a tulou building with a wooden structure attached to the side. Below the image, there is a text block: 'Rethinking the Collective / Rural Urban Framework, The University of Hong Kong'. Below the text block, there is a social media sharing section with icons for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Email. At the bottom of the page, there is a text block: 'Curated by 韩爽 - HAN Shuang about a month ago'.