Holcim Awards 2005

Acknowledgement

Five Scattered Houses, Ning Bo, China

Project data

Type of project
Five Scattered Houses - Single

Start of construction
April 2005

Author
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Name
Architect

City, Country
Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China

Public utilities


description by author

In January 2004, I was commissioned to design five small structures for the city center park. The park is 25.7 hectares of typical southern hill region.

Calendar (floor area 950m) - one wave and three twists: Designer uses a modernized traditional building concept. Roof slope is consistent with the "post-tension" curve, also implies the traditional roof of the rainy region to express water and covers the southern China region spirit. Wall has used local method of "tile mixed wall".

Teahouse (floor area 405m) - broken shadow in the traditional garden making, shadow is often emphasized over structure, because seasonal changing makes it more poetic. Exterior uses a "cracking ice" traditional pattern and covers all walls and ceiling. House is a traditional southern three-side court to overlap shadowing effect. Six doors of different shapes open into the Yard. Its design is transformed from scholar cases of the traditional gardens, in which they stayed for contemplation. Two large trees are planted on a high brick platform to elevate wind and change of sun, to cast a sense of time. Wall is prefabricated and roof is site site-cast concrete.

Teahouse (floor area 910m) - single sand random garden: To reflect Zen spirit, "Random garden" randomly twist and turn. These concepts are embodied in the turning space, or the packed clay wall and the twisting wood teahouse. Small pond is created at south, and visible from a small bridge. Roof is steel and glass structure, used to protect people and mud wall from rain.

Café (floor area 390m) - lotus leaf in wind Café: Concept takes the waving lotus leaf as the symbolic abstract for the site cast concrete roof. Floor and roof curves and column is silted as if waving in wind. Roof slides down from south to north, a sloped way connects to roof, creating a surprise interior space. Floor is also curved like a lotus leaf, new structure accommodates it. As a design detail, all café table and chairs are hand-made into different tilt positions and variations, to reflect the changing sense when you sit down. Floor and roof use hollow core reinforced concrete to achieve smooth concrete surface. Colored aggregate cement is applied on floor and wall.

Office building (floor area 650m) - twisting & undulating: The architecture is made with recycled brick patterned as bamboo mats looks as if slopes according to the site. The straight line cubic volume is transformed by the sloping site into a curved form. The elevated part is used as entry canopy and viewing axis across building and thru to the lake. Storage and utility function are hidden in the sloping volumes. Roof is smooth concrete. Floor material is the same brick and interior is all white.

Relevance to target issues (by author)

Quantum change and transferability

In a contrast to the current Chinese building method, we learn from the vernacular construction. Use of low cost material, low tech handmade tradition, and recycled materials are seeking to develop into an important transformation. We emphasize in combination the traditional vernacular method and modern professional technology, to push the improvements on them for future study and implementation.

Ethical standards and social equity

To keep the balance of nature and dwelling space, Morality is an important consideration in creating small structures. Large population is currently migrating into cities, whom are often good craftsmen and can be good workers for the new constructions. The promotion of indigenous material and craftsmanship would additionally push for more social justice and equality between urban and rural area.

Economic performance and compatibility

Large scale of urban renewal brings large scale of demolition, and produces large amount of debris. They can be recycled and reused in the experimental buildings. Natural materials like clay also can reduce cost in rural area. These suggestions are well received by the client. Prior to construction, the economical aspects are proven through 1:1 scale tests on site. Under the direction of designer.

Contextual response and aesthetic impact

The adaptation and learning of indigenous architecture requires a profound respect for the local culture. It is not only technical but fundamental to spatial and environmental creation. In contrast from modern Chinese architects whom almost all use western models, The FHS are experimental and reflect an aesthetic that is unusually non western and idiosyncratic, should serve as a reference for future.

Comment of the Holcim Awards 2005 jury for Asia Pacific

With a compelling case made for reinterpreting the concept of harmony between human occupation and nature, this project materializes as a unique translation of a traditional house typology into a modern dwelling. By promoting the use of indigenous materials and traditional craftsmanship, the work takes an ethically acute stance to the environment as well as its inhabitants, to reflect an aesthetic that is unusually non western and idiosyncratic, should serve as a reference for future.

Further authors

Prof. Lu Wenya