

Future City: A Parametric Cinema [Site analysis + ethnography with text & photos]



People at Cheung She Wan mostly live in old tong buildings, and government subsidised housing. There are small pockets of new residential high rise apartments, newly built these few years and then the shopping malls and public markets that supplies the daily needs of the neighbourhood.

What comes as an impression of the place is that people seem all out on the street. The street with all kinds of shops seem still vibrant with people. The street really make up the live of the people living there, may be their apartments are small and not so comfy, may be many people living in one place, on a regular weekday, people are out shopping, eating at cafe and fast food restaurants.

To the old folks who live in So Uk, an old government subsidised housing, they find it helpful to have the hospital around the corner and that there are restaurants nearby for morning tea.

It takes some walk from the subway to reach So Uk, it is not easy for old people to buy their food from the market and walk back home there because it is a bit uphill still, they have to take the lift from the main road and walk some corridors to reach their units.

Yet the place is relatively airy and quiet compared with the old apartments buildings near the main road.

There are neighbourhood support centres inside the housing blocks, probably there are one of these support bureau for two blocks, they are like small shops with supplies that help the residents with small items of maintenance or help with living issues, yet the government decide to close them as of this year. Folks with have to seek convenient help elsewhere.



In Cheung Sha Wan we see different types of public housing, there are the older types and the newer recent one. These housing are built with prefab concrete units that can be put together rapidly. The SO Uk estates was rebuilt in 2016 and the environment looks new and clean, yet there are not

immediate shopping at ground level, only resting places and kids playground and walkway. There are some green and planters but generally the housing are still dense compared with other parts of West Kowloon.

It does feel like the government had make many attempts to improve housing condition of the area, with So Uk, Lei Cheng Uk, and Yuen Chow Estate all around the corner, each is slightly different design and configuration. Still they are packed high rise that accommodates many families, probably low income and grassroots.



As there are many private residential blocks inserting into the area, the living expenses are not exactly cheap and affordable, locals will have to endure increasing living supply costs like area in Kwun Tong, where attempts has been made to revitalise the are into second CBD of Hong Kong.

Although Cheung Sha Wan is not heading into that direction of development, still developers are infiltrating that area with new slender high rise apartments that will eventually raise the living cost of this older district of Kowloon.

Still we believe that as long as the street is maintained and the walking accessibilities are maintained, the street will remain a major public sphere that see the vital needs of the locals met. A sense of the social is really at street and shop level, whereas planned housing is just that, the sense of community and neighbourhood is not strong. How to bring street life near the estates and brings community life around the estate still remains a challenge as the remaining support centres are to be closed.

The government, the developer, the commercial venues, the media all has agenda to describe the low income neighbourhood that are targeted for help and social economical change and yet people in such conditions are still living their live the way it is, they have their daily worries and issues, when there are always broad and sweeping ideas to improve the conditions of the living in the area. Each seem to be living in different universes and realities. This is in a sense the abstraction and absurdity one felt with visiting the area. Therefore the abstract forms generated by AI around the real image of the street life is a good reflection of the happening reality in Cheung Sha Wan that we have observed.

