

Preservation and Conservation of the Old Floating Market: A Case Study of Talad Phu Market, Western Bangkok, Thailand

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Abstract

Many historic communities in Western Bangkok are in jeopardy of becoming neglected due to infrastructure development. Historically, recent facades are not valued and faux elements are used to keep historic identity of built fabric, or such diversity is lost by replicating a selected type of architectural form. This research attempts to generate a historically derived exterior style and form by examining samples from a group of representative buildings to gain an understanding of the styles employed in the old market of domestic architecture and to recommend a new design for conservation planning process. The research also aims to consider options on how to improve the state of preservation and conservation of the old floating market district and to establish a framework of conservation plan for the old market.

The architecture of the old floating market district called Talad Phu has been investigated previously; however, the research should address the symbolic and aesthetic expression of architectural form and styles through formal architectural analysis. Particularly, the shop houses that are very distinctive of their styles form, and materials play a fundamental role in architectural expression influenced by Western architecture, but their salient features are often overlooked in the preservation perspective. There has also been limited architectural research completed to record those architectural elements, and the buildings are frequently studied as isolated entities, but rarely as a group, addressing styles and form across a building settlement.

Therefore, this research applies the vernacular architectural drawing technique as a tool to record and analyze the existing buildings. There are also preliminary assessment of conditions, comparative analysis of decorative trends and investigation of architectural elements.

From the study, it is found that there are a number of shop houses and vernacular houses in different locations, built in the reigns of King Rama IV, King Rama V, King Rama VI and King Rama VII influenced by Western architecture. The study reveals that the canal still has traditional settlement patterns. The existing temples, houses, environment, way of life, and culture have made the community structure and elements of the area accordingly unique. The proposed conservation guidelines for the community are the following : 1) the

conservation of water-based environment which supports cultural and tourism activities ; 2) the conservation of settlement patterns and elements of the community along the canal using city planning regulations ; and 3) the conservation of architectural identity and its environment by regulating height and building style controls.