HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY

- A Memory Lesson in Architecture -

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Hong Kong Twin Factory
A Memory Lesson in Architecture

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AFFIDAVIT

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Graz, 17th October 2017

für meine Eltern

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PROLOGUE

- Reflections on Architecture -

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What is architecture? It appears to be a supreme, life-long task for each architect to find a most solemn answer to that question. All of them like to think of architecture to a greater or lesser extent as a sublime discipline.[1] By doing so, however, they only blind themselves and others to the hard fact that architectural relevance is seemingly in decay.

Certainly, architecture is a social practice. As such it is confronted with a reality that is determined by the dynamics of late capitalism, which tries to identify and market everything, including architecture, as a commodity. Its consumption-orientated society permanently longs, consciously or not, for identity and differentiation, and demands steady innovation. Architecture and design, thereby, have come under the pressure of facing ever more rapid obsolescence. Additionally, the conditions of architectural productions are subjected to the interests and speculations of both profit-making real estate market and construction industry. It seems, today, architecture and urbanism primarily conduce to the continuous flux and accumulation of capital.

Against this backdrop, the need for permanence clearly arises, accompanied by some initial tendencies to counteract this "speed and ephemera of the contemporary"[2] with an architecture of timelessness. The question is how to bring back or manifest relevance in architecture without creating ever-new forms. To that end, an ideological switch from re-thinking architecture (again and again) to changing the way architecture is perceived appears to be of fundamental importance. Contextualism is red-hot.

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As metropolis that only emerged during the last century, Hong Kong is arguably both product and beneficiary of globalization and free market philosophy. Furthermore, it has the world's most expensive and speculative property market, and still is one of the most densely populated regions, worldwide. This given reality of condensed challenges provides a particularly tempting context for architectural contemplation.

1 Cf. http://www.whatisarchitecture.cc/ [30.06.2017]

2 Schrijver, in: Engels/Grootveld 2016, 22.

Without the intention to give answer to the pathetic opening question, the objective of this master's thesis is to examine and debate the relevance and potential of architecture in this very complex context of Hong Kong. Based on a local architectural vocabulary, its aim is to continue a dialogue within the built structure of the city; between the city's past, its present and its future.

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Seen as resume of long and intense years of study, this master's thesis provides both reason and ideal backdrop for reflections on architecture, for a reflective examination of the learned and acquired essentials. It is, eventually, an attempt to formalize a certain perception of architecture.
The work comprises two closely interrelated parts. Starting with a descriptive outline of Hong Kong's cityscape, its characteristics and its determining specificities, followed by an analytic study of exemplary relicts in order to unfold and understand the city's architectural substance and complexity, up to the definition of a specific typological potential and setting, the first part is an attempt to implement a certain theoretic approach to the city that is inspired by Aldo Rossi, Oswald Mathias Ungers and Rem Koolhaas. It furthermore serves as indispensable reference and basis for the second part, the architectural intervention.
Without any claim to universality or viability, this master's thesis is intended to illustrate an architectural idea that is to expand urban practice; a model designed to provoke further thinking, not only in the context of Hong Kong.

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The work was preceded by a six-month long study abroad at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2013/2014, as well as an intense field trip in fall 2016, funded by a research scholarship of Graz University of Technology. Each stay was of essential importance for understanding Hong Kong, and formative for the work.

I.

HONG KONG

- descriptive -

- Victoria Harbour -

I.I
METROPOLIS

Metropolis of millions and one of the densest urban agglomerations, worldwide. Global financial market and China's haven of western liberty and lifestyle. Asia's World City.[3]

Hong Kong as Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the People's Republic of China gains from its exceptional rights as democracy with a liberal jurisdiction, executive as well as legislative powers, particularly in terms of international trade. Apparently, "Hong Kong is the world's freest economy."[4] Until today, and at least for further 30 years, the SAR formally acts with a high degree of autonomy, quasi as city state within China. This condition not only brings Hong Kong its exceptional positon within Asia, but also qualifies the city as one of the most attractive location for the world finance market and international trade.

The image of the city is characterized by an architecture of density. Hong Kong is known for its specific urban form, with a seemingly none-descending density of uniform housing towers framed and contained by the steep green hills of its topography. Yet, Hong Kong SAR has a distinct (financial) centre: Hong Kong Island. Once found by the British as seaport, the island has been a centre for world-trade ever since. Over the years, it has transformed into a Mecca for consumerism and the continuous flow of capital. The rest of the urban terrain, in no or little less density, is a juxtaposition of various sub-centres and suburbias, including Hong Kong's New Towns that are spread over the flat land of the territory.
Since Hong Kong, as economic metropolis, not only provides a promising labour market, but, with its liberal system, also presents a certain living standard and lifestyle, its population has, over the last 60 years soared ceaselessly and keeps pushing the already significantly high urban density. As a result living space is constantly getting further optimized and compressed, while continuously increasing in value on the real estate market. Today, Hong Kong is the most expensive property market; land is its rarest good.

3 Hong Kong Brand Identity [20.04.2017]
4 Ibid.

TRADE

The city's wealth and its successful economy are fully based on trade within the globalized market, made possible by its unique geopolitical standing as China's gate to the rest of the world. Hence, Hong Kong is basically built on containers – anonymous, generic boxes, and the steady stream of goods (=capital), entering and leaving the city.

China was, for a long time, a continental society, focussing on inland matters without interest in maritime trade. The situation changed after the Open-Door policy of 1978, when China's focus shifted to encouraging and supporting foreign trade. Hong Kong, then, transformed from a manufacturing industrial port into an almost exclusive trading port, soon to become one of the world's largest and most important ports of transhipment.
Ocean shipping is the essence of our globalized world. As such, it was founded on cheap foreign labour; workers that are not complaining nor demanding, but driven by the idea of acquiring a better life for themselves and their families. Hong Kong's population is primarily constituted by such ambitious people, who mainly immigrated from mainland China. The city has always welcomed them, as it is economically (=fundamentally) dependent on them. It was a combination of "British organization, Chinese dedication, and cheap labour"[5] that founded Hong Kong as we know it today. In analogy to the stacked boxes on its container ports, the city itself is physically built up with boxes: Countless generic concrete modules, stacked like Lego bricks, are housing Hong Kong's population in an unmatched density.

ARCHITECTURE OF DENSITY

Hong Kong's cityscape is determined only by a hand full of architectural types and they share the same dogma in planning, land use, and construction, which is efficiency. This tendency already generated Hong Kong's earliest housing typology, the colonial Chinese Shop-House; continued in the earliest Public Housing Estates [see II.I SOCIAL ENGINEERING] and initiated Hong Kong's expansion sky-wards [see II.III EXPANSION TOWARDS THE SKY]. Essential in the development of Hong Kong's typologies and what all

5 Rappaport 2015, 272.

of them have in common, is the systematic modular stacking of a more or less universal housing unit. In private as well as in public sector, living space in Hong Kong is adopted to the spatial compulsions, optimized and reduced down to the last millimetre, resulting in a fixed catalogue of multiple variations of a generic basic unit.

By now Hong Kong has become famous for its façades of countless identical windows, which are not only captured on photos available throughout the internet[6], but also merchandised on postcards and refrigerator magnets. Categorically, the façades are probably halfway between a punctuated façade and a curtainwall. Rows of identical windows in a very dense arrangement create a regular grid in a way that makes it quite hard to differ from a typical curtainwall. However, the use of such standardized windows is just a logic consequence of Hong Kong's unit-based architecture, as is the dominant use of precast concrete walls.
With increasing tendency, buildings are painted for better differentiation and identity formation. Moreover, drying wracks, air-conditioners and other informal appropriations and extensions on housing estates create three-dimensional façades, making them even more colourful and diverse, as a Hong Kong-specific ornamentation.
Standardized units as well as their windows are representative for the social class of their inhabitants; the façade of a building therefore indicates who lives inside and communicates the social structures within the urban fabric openly. Curtainwalls and other types of façade are exclusively used on office and commercial buildings. Hence, the façade is index as well as display for the coding of the city.

6 see, i.e., photo essays by Michael Wolf: http://photomichaelwolf.com/

"The Generic City is fractal, an endless repetition of the same simple structural module; it is possible to reconstruct it from its smallest entity, a desktop computer, maybe even a diskette. Golf courses are all that is left of otherness."[7]

7 Koolhaas, Generic City (3.3), in: Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 1251.

- Repulse Bay -

TRAFFIC

Hong Kong's urban space is almost completely dedicated to traffic. Rem Koolhaas' definition of a Bastion[8] perfectly describes a Hong Kong characteristic, namely the ongoing process of the evacuation of the street from any activity but traffic – be it motorized, pedestrian, goods, or monetary traffic.

Yet, Hong Kong is, compared to other metropolises, highly independent of cars, thanks to its excellent and comprehensive public transport system. Today, according to Hong Kong Government's Travel Characteristics Survey (2014), over 90% of daily commuter journeys within the city are on public transport, which is "by far the highest share in a city worldwide",[9] while only 14,4% of Hong Kong households own a private car.[10]

Alike the previously described housing sector, public transportation is yet "another important aspect of the instrumentalization of public infrastructure."[11] The first metro line started to operate in 1979, enhancing public transportation with one major advantage for the emerging economic power: the smooth and fast carriage service for workers from their homes to the factories. An asset which in turn pushed the ongoing areal expansion of the city. Today, the Mass Transit Railway (MTR), as the railway system is called, operates ten main commuter lines serving Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories with 91 stations and 68 Light Rail stops, and covers a total route length of 220,9 km.[12] As Corporation Limited, MTRC has gained a key role with major influence in the urban development process of Hong Kong [URBAN ISLANDS (222–226)].

Besides its outstanding transport network within the city, Hong Kong, as major player within the global trade network, is particularly well connected to the world. Thanks to its strategically exceptional position at the heart of Asia, Hong Kong is "one of the world's busiest container ports and premier regional hub port, served by 340 container liner services per week to about 470 destinations worldwide". Its comprehensive maritime network is complemented by a busy air-traffic via Hong Kong International Airport and by a constantly developing network of roads, railways, tunnels and bridges to Mainland China.

8 Cf. Koolhaas, Bigness, in: Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 514.
9 Jenni, in: ETH Studio Basel 2015, 184.
10 Cf. Travel Characteristics Survey, Final Report 2014 [24.04.2017]
11 Jenni, in: ETH Studio Basel 2015, 184.
12 Cf. MTR Business Overview 2016 [24.04.2017]

PROSPECT

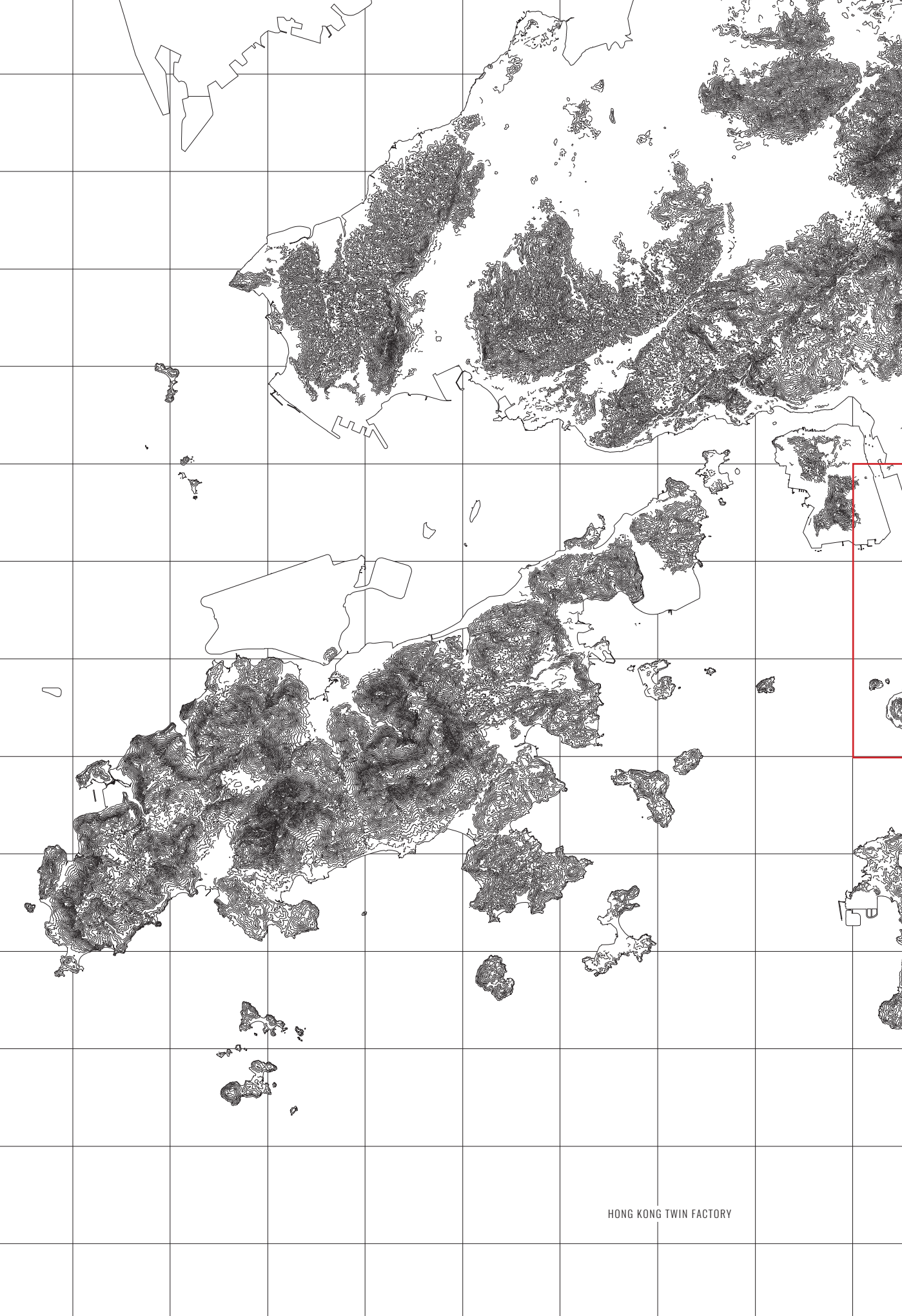
The People's Republic of China presently is "the world's most populous consumer market and largest manufacturing base."[13] Hong Kong's position at the tip of the boosting Pearl River Delta is a strategical asset for both China and the SAR: As long as Mainland China gains from Hong Kong, with its low tax rate and market liberalism, as a gateway to the global market, the SAR can (or may) retain its exceptional status and governmental form within the People's Republic, according to the principle "One Country. Two Systems."[14]

However, presently Hong Kong is literally run over by Chinese tourism, immigration and investments. This (probably initiated) process slowly but steadily transforms Hong Kong's social, ethnical and intellectual structures on the quiet. Hong Kong's days of unconditional liberties are numbered after all.

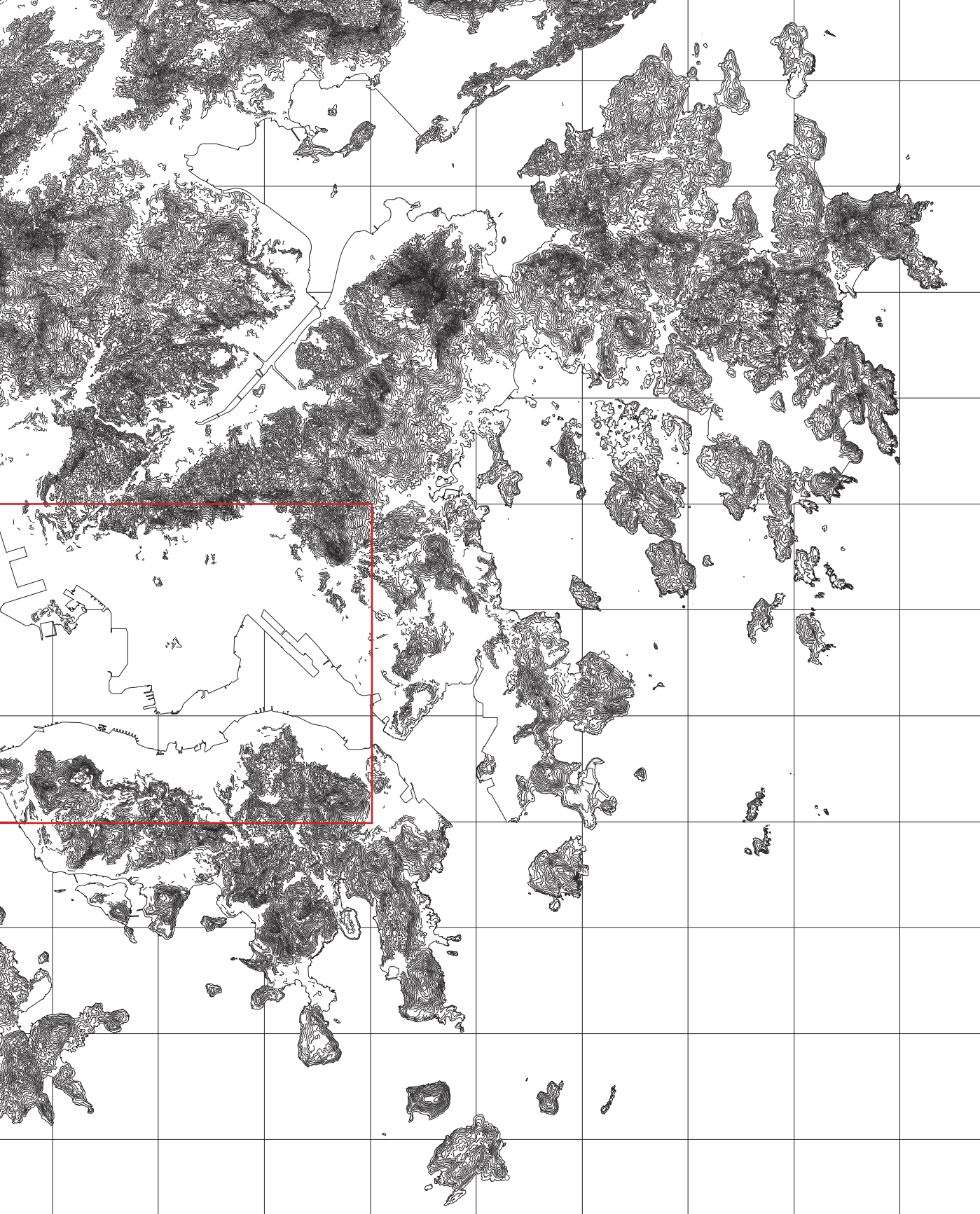
13 Hong Kong Brand Identity / Connected Hong Kong [20.04.2017]
14 Hong Kong Brand Identity / One Country Two Systems [20.04.2017]

- Epochal Collage—Man Mo Temple, Hollywood Road -

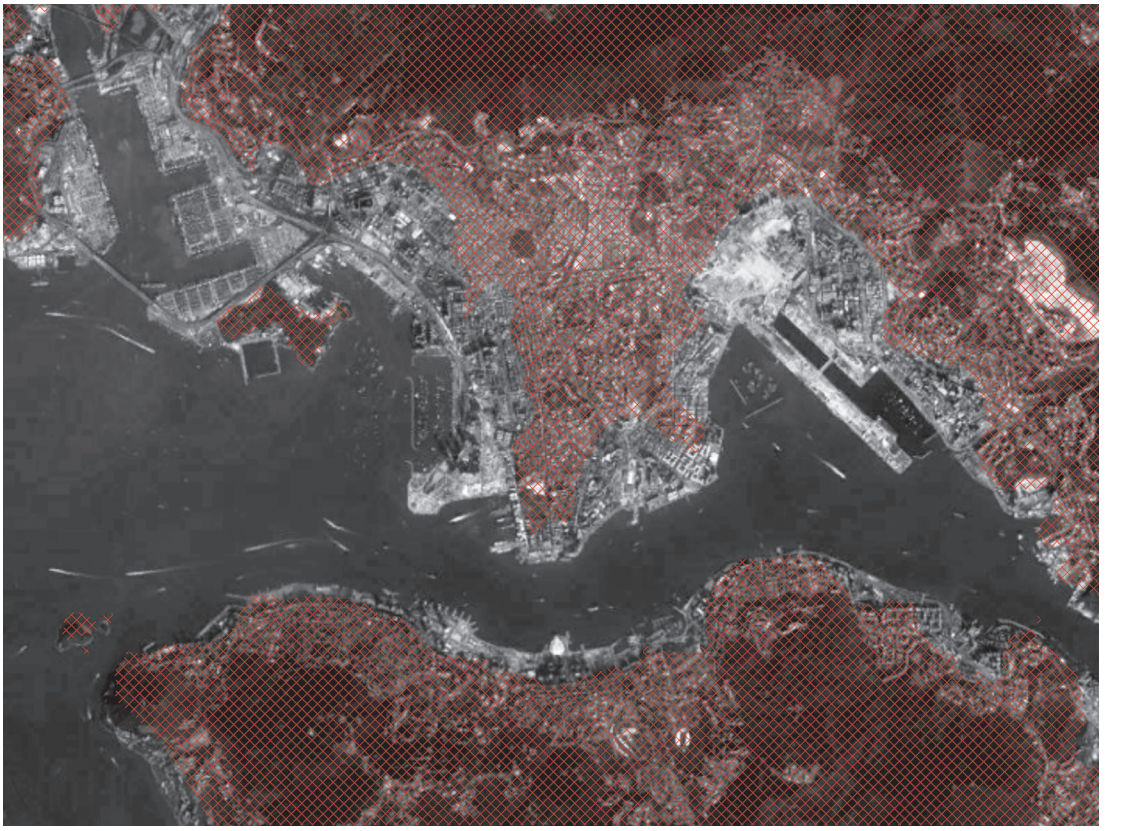
- Genericness—Amoy Gardens, Ngau Tau Kok -



HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY



- Hong Kong Territory, Altitude -



- Hong Kong's original coastline -

1.

- Tung Chung Bay, Lantau Island -

I.II
TERRITORY & POWER

Hong Kong territory is a peninsula with a surrounding conglomerate of islands at the tip of China's Pearl River. Its topographic nature forms a natural harbour in the South China Sea, and makes Hong Kong to what it is: one of the most attractive spots for trade on global market.
Hong Kong Island once had been a mere fishing village, until the British found in it, as natural harbor, the perfect geopolitically strategic spot for enlarging and consolidating trade and power of East Indian Company within South-East-Asia after the Opium Wars. The Treaty of Nanjing (1842) legitimated Great Britain's claim on Hong Kong Island, an area of about 80 square kilometers. In the following, the territory was expanded further by two more treaties: As early as 1860, the First Convention of Beijing declared Kowloon Peninsula as Crown Land, adding a mere 9 square kilometers. With the Second Convention in 1898 the New Territories were finally integrated and thereby the shape of Hong Kong that has remained to the present was defined.

Today, Hong Kong covers an area of 1.106[15] square kilometers; a heterogenous land of rocks and steep hills with dense vegetation, of grassland and water. Being a peninsula, or rather a conglomerate of islands, it is mostly surrounded by the sea, while to the north, its outline is confined by the boarder to Shenzhen. The territory's geological condition, consisting of granite and volcanic rock by 85%, is another natural benefit for the metropolis, as it is almost anti-seismic. However, from a physical point of view, its exceedingly hilly landscape makes it quite difficult and partly impossible to urbanize the territory.
The result is that Hong Kong's 7.375[16] million inhabitants (by 2017) are concentrated on a built-up area of only 24,4 percent of the total territory, with a density of 57.360 people per square kilometer in its densest district Kwun Tong, or an average of 27.314 on built-up land.

15 Hong Kong Geographic Data Sheet [23.04.2017]
16 Census and Statistics Department / Hong Kong in Figures [23.04.2017]

1.

- Geological condition -

ARTIFICIAL SOIL

The climate in Hong Kong is subtropical and very humid. Being affected by monsoon and typhoons, the city has to face several intensive rainfalls every year. Landslides and soil erosion on Hong Kong's hilly terrain with its sandy type of soil therefore have caused major problems for the city and its preconditioned extensive steep development ever since. To handle this constant risk, Hong Kong's terrain was covered with a second skin; a highly-technologized landscape of manmade slopes and artificial forest. In fact, before the British began to afforest the conquered land, Hong Kong was badland. Today, "the original vegetation of Hong Kong no longer exists;"[17] as Hong Kong Hebrarium, a governmental institution, states.

The protective skin on Hong Kong's hillsides is a "technological shell with integrated controlling systems, drainage channels, and a network of pathways and stairs."[18] Simultaneously, manmade flora is used to camouflage these technological shells, as well as "all kinds of infrastructural facilities […] that assure the existence of Hong Kong and make the city work."[19] Hong Kong's soil is not only artificial, but highly engineered.

TERRITORIAL ENGINEERING

The tight and precise engineering of the territory not only affects the available surface, but also includes the expansion of the same. The few flat land resources Hong Kong has along its coastline are squeezed between mountain and sea. Under the pressure of its constant rapid growth of population, the city has to either further develop the steep mountains – a method with limited confines – or expand into the sea through reclamation. The latter offers a way to avoid natural obstacles, to choose the best locations and to develop the same in an ideal manner.

The first reclamations already took place in the early colonial age, when Hong Kong Island, formerly City of Victoria, was extended by one-fifth of its natural area.[20] Ever since Hong Kong territory has continuously been extended by reclamation. Today around 7 percent, or 77 square kilometers, of its total area are reclaimed land.[21] Removing or flattening

17 Hong Kong Hebrarium/The Vegetation of Hong Kong [30.11.2016]
18 Jenni, ETH Studio Basel 2015, 171.
19 Ibid, 173.
20 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 41.
21 Wong, in: South China Morning Post, 29.03.2013

entire mountains is now done on a twofold approach of building-land expansion: gaining an eligible topography on the one hand, while at the same time producing rocks and soil for further reclamation on the other. The two methods in combination, therefore, are a machinery for creating land – which means for creating profit.

In order to use the newly created land resources as efficient and profitable as possible, Hong Kong government strictly controls and monitors the development of these. Land has been used as a "strategic tool for the development of the territory and the governance of its inhabitants"[22]; a strategy that is a combination of market liberalism and state control: by leasing land to the highest bidder, the government is generating as much revenues as possible to concede the free market-philosophy and its low taxation [see *transcript* next page]. As a result, the development of reclaimed land nowadays is preferably, if not exclusively done in alliance with the MTR as main urban developer and other big investors [II.III.IV—ADAPTATION]. Reclaimed land, therefore, is not developed slowly by a steady growth, but very abrupt; Hong Kong's urban development is consequently following an up-front plan, leaving no space for uncertainty and continuously creating a constructed, artificial urbanity. Every square meter of Hong Kong's crown land is designed, constructed and organized.[23]

LANDLORDS

Before statutory controls were introduced, lease control was the most efficient, if not only tool of the colonial government to monitor the territory's development. All of the territory's land, therefore, first belonged to the British Crown and has been in public hand ever since. There is no 'private land' in Hong Kong. Instead, available land can only be accessed by lease agreements, which, today, are granted for an average period of 50 years. However, the free market philosophy, favouring the highest bidder, has pushed the current market value of land in Hong Kong to an exceedingly high extent. This makes Hong Kong the most expensive property market, worldwide.

22 Jenni, ETH Studio Basel, 162.
23 Cf. Ibid, 171.

Housing in China is, by tradition, quite basic and pragmatic. Yet, unlike European housing standards, living in dense communal confines is not questioned, but an integral part of housing culture. In Hong Kong, however, this cultural background, together with the lease control as legal basis for land speculation, is translated into a profitable business. Housing throughout the city is solely dedicated to profit – living space is rare, most coveted and therefore highly overvalued. Every square meter is a potential source of income, every unused square meter a luxury.
In fact, Hong Kong has, from its beginning as British colony onwards, struggled with the accommodation of an always bursting population on its limited land resources. This constant demand for housing soon allowed and motivated landlords, especially after the first major immigration wave in the early 20th century, to let tenement buildings not per floor or flat, but per small-sized cubicles to make maximum profit. Hence, people were forced to house in enormous density, with hardly any privacy, under cruel hygienic conditions. Apart from the latter, housing has not changed, noticeably.

"In 1957, the University of Hong Kong conducted an extensive survey which found that half of Hong Kong's inhabitants were living in cubicles. It showed that some 118,000 tenement floors were shared by 1,265 million people: each floor supported an average of 2.26 households on less than 11,15m², and each household averaged 4,7 people." [24]

Long airless corridors, lined with rented beds such alike have not disappeared, but continued to exist in Hong Kong's commonly known cage dwellings.

24 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 69.

Cubicle — a Hong Kong "cage dwelling"

WHY IS HONG KONG HOUSING SO EXPENSIVE?

- a transcript -

The average price for a 430sq flat (40m²) in Kowloon is HK$ 4.8mio (€580.000), or HK$11.147 per square foot. With HK$ 4.8mio you can afford to buy a 17th century French castle, 300 times the size of that flat. So, how do we get here?

Hong Kong is one of the most densely populated places in the world. With a population of more than 7.3 million people that's equal to 6.777 people per square kilometre. The proplem is that residential land use only accounts for 7% of Hong Kong's land, while country parks, which are off limits, comprise some 40%.
In principle, all land in Hong Kong belongs to the government, but all plots of land are sold to developers through tender process each year. Developers are granted leases for a term of 50 years to build private flats, hotels and offices. For years, the government has followed a policy to sell land to the highest bidder. This is to ensure the government earns enough money and that it upholds the philosophy of a free market. Because of a wind fall in land revenue the government hit a surplus of HK$92.8 billion last year, much higher than its original forcast of HK$ 11 billion. Recently, land in Hong Kong has been snapped up by rich mainland Chinese developers. In 2013, they won one out of every 10 residential land sales. Last year, they won one out of three. In February, two Chinese developers paid a record of HK$16 billion for a plot of residential land, or HK$22,118 per sq ft, making it the most expensive land sale to date.[25]

25 Transcript of Shirley Zhao: Does Hong Kong's land sale system need a new lease life?, in: by South China Morning Post, 19.04.2017

SQUARE METERISM

As a reaction to the fatal living and health conditions – a consequence of the bursting population – Hong Kong government set up parameters for a "healthy living" in form of Building Ordinances. All of these are related to the floor-space, by setting up minimum-requirements (number of persons, windows, etc.) per certain square meters. Since then, these principles, though slightly changed and adopted over the years, have formed a set of rules by which housing layouts are defined.

The public housing sector, led by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), has observed these standards, which, in the end, resulted in a catalogue of highly efficient standardized housing units for every possible household configuration. Hence, public housing developments provide a decent, although compact form of living, which, at least, meets minimal standards. There is no official 'standard living size per capita' in Hong Kong, but with LSITS – Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme that allows all public rental households "below 7m² internal floor area per person"[26] to apply for transfer to a larger flat – the public hand set an unofficial guideline. Today, HA offers an average living space of 13m² per person.[27]

But then again, only lower income groups of Hong Kong citizens are eligible for public housing, as access to public housing is regulated by monthly income. Private housing, on the contrary, is subjected to the free market and its pressure on the scarce contingent of floor area. Thus, the private sector is constantly under attempts of further optimization, where every square millimeter needs to be directly transformed into money. Young middle-class citizens are left with no choice but to encumber with debts, while several architectural competitions are held by The Hong Kong Institute of Architects (HKIA) on the purpose of further optimization of the already minimal spatial confines.

The configuration of floor layouts in Hong Kong is no longer a matter of spatial quality, but a matter of efficiency and profit-maximization. The building sector, both public and private, is not about architecture but about stacking of ready-mades.

26 Hong Kong Housing Authority / Living Space Improvement Transfer Scheme [21.05.2017]
27 Cf. Hong Kong Housing Authority / Housing in Figures [21.05.2017]

INFORMAL LIVING

Under these circumstances, it is rather unsurprising that informal living is rooted, since early colonial days, as a characteristic one of Hong Kong's many facets, beginning as a consequence of the immigration waves. Through the 1950s, following the Chinese Revolution, it was estimated that some 25 per cent of Hong Kong's population was living in informal settlements on the city's outskirts, as well as on roof tops.[28] Over time and as a response to the persistent lack of room, Hong Kong people have learned to perfect the utilization of even the smallest amount of residual space.

28 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 69.

1.

- Amoy Gardens, Ngau Tau Kok -

I.III
IDENTITIES OF A GENERIC CITY

"The Generic City is the post-city being prepared on the site of the ex-city. [It] is held together, not by an over-demanding public realm [...] but by the residual. [...] Its identity: a hybrid of politics and landscape. At the same time refuge of the illegal, the uncontrollable, and subject of endless manipulation, it represents a simultaneous triumph of the manicured and the primeval. Its immoral lushness compensates for the Generic City's other poverties."[29]

The urban everyday life, especially in inner-city areas of Hong Kong, brings its citizens above all stress. Many of them, however, are so used to the permanent condition of overcrowded streets and to the uninterrupted high velocity within the city that they have accepted it as ideal state. On its main urban arteries, the city offers hardly any welcoming qualities of stay, but instead quantity in any sense. An increasing number of Hong Kong citizen relates to the city mostly or even exclusively through packed streets, underground routes or led above-ground footbridges. One may assume, Hong Kong citizens bear little relation to their city.

Only recently, in the course of the pro-democracy demonstrations for a self-determined Hong Kong, the obvious lack of urban space within the city became manifest: The city offers its citizens seemingly no space for appropriation, for encounter, for confrontation, for voice, for democracy. A new awareness of the real needs for a city is spreading especially among young Hong Kong people. This nascent politically active generation calls for urban space.

29 Koolhaas, Generic City (6.1—6.2), in: Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 1252f.

- Admiralty, Gloucester Road — ordinary -

- Admiralty, Gloucester Road — September 2014 -

PAVEMENT

"The treshing floor [...] was a bit of hardened or paved ground for stamping, trashing or grinding grain, often located in high ground to catch the wind. Form Neolithic times onward, in cultures all around the world, the treshing floor was a place of work but also a place of gathering, dancing, ritual and worship. It evolved into the square or plaza – the meeting ground of the demos. A place of assembly and negotiation, it is then perhaps the first 'floor', as that word is used in 'the floor of the parliament' or 'the floor of the stock exchange'."[30]

The pavement, even if in decline area-wise, still is *the* collective surface in Hong Kong. Only by being hardened or paved, in concrete or in asphalt, Hong Kong ground is developed and promptly dedicated to utilization. Green space – the raw ground – on the contrary, is supposed to remain residual and pristine; hardly any green space is truly accessible.
Paved ground, in general, defines the available surface of a city; a universal, common good that can be appropriated by anybody for almost anything. Needless to say, it is as well the surface of constant movement, of meeting and of confrontation. As this very generic and rough surface, it tolerates or even provokes to get dirty.
Paved ground, as common surface, has been adopted ever since to compensate the traditional, socio-cultural lack of indoor-space in Chinese housing culture. Hong Kong people, however, have perfected to exploit the potential of the street for their daily life routines and diverse needs. Street-life in Hong Kong is dense, crowded, fast and loud. It bears Hong Kong's true identity.

RESIDUAL SPACE

People in Hong Kong have learned to adapt to the lack of domestic space and found strategies and opportunities to extend their private sphere beyond the confines of their dwellings by utilizing the residual.
Residual spaces can be found throughout the city; to a great extent in the form of back lanes. Canopies or the like (e.g. rainbows) are often used to occupy outside spaces and to create hybrid interiors, where activities overlap – sometimes public, sometimes private, sometimes both.

30 Easterling 2014, 108.

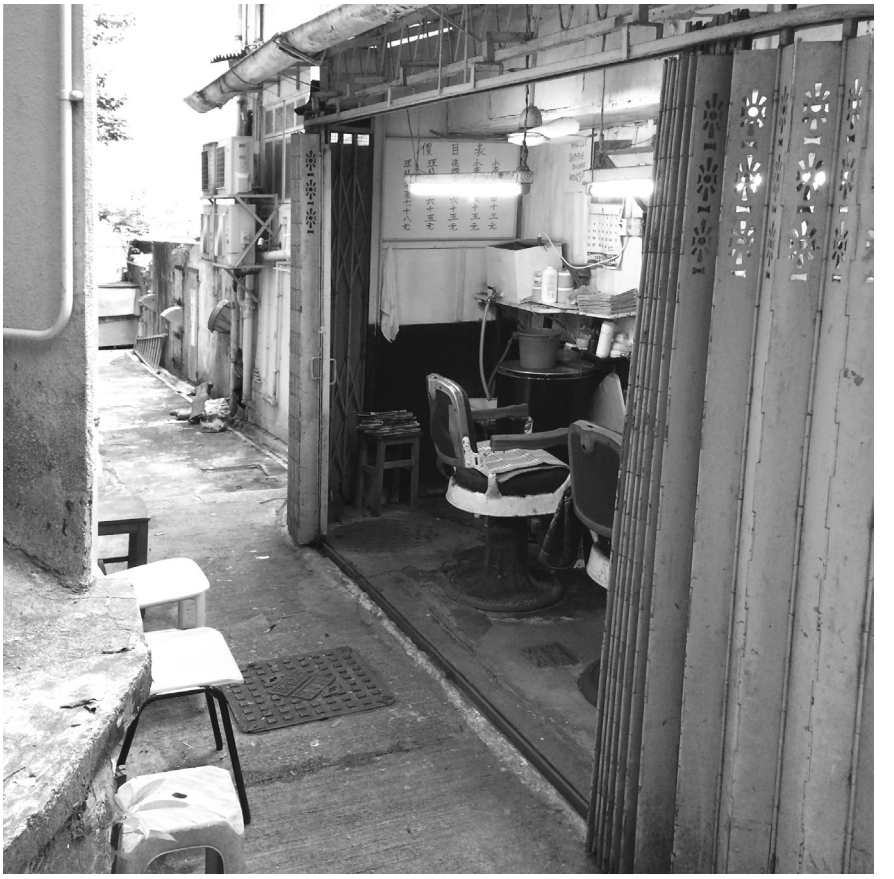
Hong Kong people's way of appropriating space "reflects a precise interpretation of the context. Each construction is individually adapted to the specific conditions in an economy of space, material, and means. Each construction is built to be used and nothing is standardized. The designs found in the back lanes are unique because they follow pragmatic rules of economy, lightness, and adaptability, not rules of trends, fashion, or aesthetics."[31] As such, these informal constructions are the very opposite of Hong Kong's executed (='formal') building culture of standardized efficiency.

In the large planning scheme of the city, with its ever-higher skyscrapers, the network of small alleys and residual space crawling around in-between has become almost invisible. Yet despite, or precisely because of their rising invisibility, these in-between spaces are flexible and tolerating, leading to a peculiar spontaneity and, in fact, carry Hong Kong's identical atmosphere and vitality. Residual spaces still enable Hong Kong citizens to interact with their city. Perhaps these spaces are not even residual or arbitrary, but rather consciously left aside; a parallel network acting as pressure cooker within the generic fabric of Hong Kong, granting its people this hidden piece of identity.

STREET FOOD

Hong Kong's typical street food culture was born out of necessity. However, it has been part of the city since its early days as fire stoves were soon placed along the street, due to the lack of indoor space. Thereby, cooking and eating were outsourced and became a given social event in public. Likewise, selling (street) food became a profitable business. This tradition was passed on to early housing estates, but has also always remained throughout the city. Today, street food market stalls can still be found on almost every corner and characterize the image of Hong Kong's streets.

31 Borio/Wüthrich 2015, 104.



- Barber, Shing Wong Street, SoHo -

- Ming's Service, [backlane], Central -

- Central Market — resting on a Sunday off -

COLLECTIVE MEMORY

"As an urban society of migrants – a city that was built on its immigration history of the last sixty years – this urban identity can resort to colonialist architecture, rationalist modernism of the 1960s, or the spontaneous and ephemeral character of the physical and social structures of the street markets and the adventurous illegal constructions of the dwellers."[32]

Hygiene: The threat of epidemic disease in this city built on density is constant. The government, therefore, set up strict principles for a hygienic public behavior, to monitor the physical condition of the citizens in order to secure a healthy society. Antiseptic as well as breathing protection is ready to hand at all times. It seems, together with its neat and clean surfaces gaining ground, Hong Kong is gradually evolving into a sterile, anti-bacterial city.
The constant striving for cleanliness and order, however, not only affects societal norms and behavior, but also the physical city. "The economic pressure unleashed upon the existing urban fabric […] manifests itself in growing efforts of the government to increase the efficiency in the use of the territory and to promote and impose urban renewal projects."[33] For that purpose, the Urban Renewal Authority of Hong Kong (URA) continually demolishes historical building structure – after twenty years an ordinary tower has usually amortized and is already assumed historic (=soon to be gone). Simultaneously, the URA dismantles informal urban phenomena of the city under the banner of hygiene and safety. Amortized properties and the so typical spontaneous, both physical and social structures of Hong Kong's streets and rooftops and back lanes are "wiped away like antiseptic clears bacteria."[34]

The projects of URA, disguised as heritage and preservation purposes are, of course, no exception to Hong Kong's dogma, and are primarily profit-orientated. As such they foster the ongoing "gentrification processes in inner-city areas in order to attract real estate development"[35]. Simultaneously, history is commercialized and served in form of artificial

32 Jenni, in: ETH Studio Basel 2015, 194f.
33 Ibid, 169.
34 Borio/Wüthrich 2015, 45.
35 Jenni, in: ETH Studio Basel 2015, 194f.

landscapes and (re-)constructed historic sites. Like amusement parks they are supposed to satisfy people's natural need for collective memory and identity. Seemingly, Hong Kong is a city devoid of built cultural heritage, especially when judged from an European point of view.

"The Generic City breaks with this destructive cycle of dependency: it is nothing but a reflection of present need and present ability. It is the city without history. History returns not as farce here, but as service."[36]

However, in Chinese tradition, architecture and urban planning have always been obliged to pragmatic applications at the appropriate time and subject to constant change, which was seen as 'will of heaven' and constituted a crucial part of Chinese philosophy.[37] In this context, Hong Kong's lack of built heritage appears in a different light. Unlike European cities, Hong Kong is not made of inertial mass, but based on constant change. Maybe its true urban identity lies within its lack of identity. It *can* produce a new identity every Monday morning.[38]
But then again, what is architecture, if not a product of the collective and a built reference to collective memory (=identity)?

—

The described characteristics of Hong Kong draw an image of a city that I consider as exemplary for today's globalized world and its urbanism. Hong Kong, within its territorial confines, mirrors globally ongoing urban processes and the concomitant transformation (=loss?) of urban qualities in a condensed form. However, the city is undeniably unique, inevitably specific[39] *in many aspects and a most exciting location of cumulative challenges for architecture.*

36 Koolhaas, Generic City (1.6), in: Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 1250.
37 Cf. Bielefeld/Rusch 2006, 18f.
38 Cf. „You cannot invent a new Architecture every Monday morning", Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, quoted in: Kempe/Thill, 24.
39 Cf. ETH Studio Basel 2015, title.

II.

„Erst wenn man in der Lage ist, die Phänomene der Umwelt auf Typisches und Archetypisches zu reduzieren und in Bildern, in einer Anschauung von Grundtypen zu strukturieren, erst dann kann man die wirklichen Eigenschaften, Möglichkeiten und kreativen Ansätze in den Dingen, Zwängen und Forderungen erkennen und in einem Prozess der phantasievollen Verwandlung verändern, künstlerisch oder intellektuell überhöhen, vergeistigen und in Elemente der Kultur verwandeln."[40]

40 Ungers, in: Klotz 1985, 36.

ARCHETYPICAL COLLECTION

- analytic -

II.I SPECIFICITY

- Archetypical Collection -

"Ultimately, the proof that the city has primarily itself as an end emerges in the artifacts themselves, in the slow unfolding of a certain idea of the city, intentionally."[41]

In the face of globalization, it appears that cities are becoming more and more indistinguishable – ruthlessly compelled to follow the global market and the commercial force of global brands.[42] Against this background it is likewise a challenge and a potential for architecture to highlight specificities of cities, especially in a city as dense, complex and contradictory as Hong Kong. According to Aldo Rossi, "the city is a totality that constructs itself and in which all the elements participate in forming the [soul of the city]."[43] Accordingly, the key to grasp Hong Kong's specificity (=totality) behind the generic face of a global city lies within the architecture of the city itself. Exemplary architectural artefacts are, therefore, chosen to unfold this very specific profile of the city and to understand its architectural substance and complexity. The four chosen examples are monuments in Rossi's terms that "persist the city both symbolically and physically;" with a "persistence or permanence [as] result of its capacity to constitute the city, its history and art, its being and memory."[44] The fragmented analysis of the urban fabric, illustrated in this chapter, only gives selected insights but still is an attempt to illustrate a hermeneutic of the city.

As built witnesses of time, the selected relicts, in chronological order, reveal a permanence within the city's structure, which is, however, only tangible in context of specific, both cultural and political, both national and international circumstances (=events). Accordingly, each study is supplemented and related to its greater context by a contextual *Insert*.

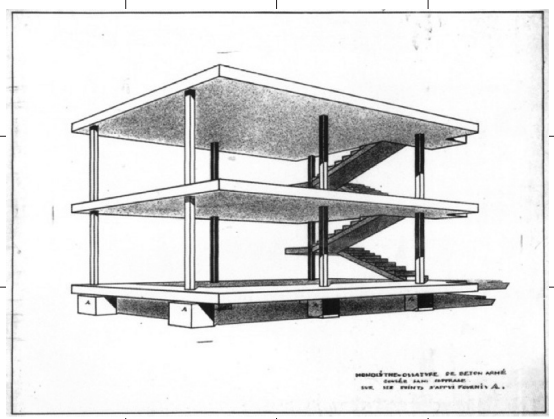
41 Rossi 1984, 131.
42 Cf. Herzog/de Meuron, in ETH Studio Basel 2015, 9.
43 Rossi 1984, 55.
44 Ibid, 60.

Frequently, Hong Kong is referred to Modern urbanism as a laboratory for several Modernist ideas: "Le Corbusier's slab blocks and cruciform towers complete with indentations for increased light and ventilation; Ludwig Hilbersheimer's podia topped by tall residential blocks; and Team X's extensive pedestrian 'second ground' decks above vehicle dominated streets."[45] Indeed, Hong Kong's urban development is essentially relatable to Le Corbusier's concept of Maison Dom-Ino – the reduction of architecture to a self-referential basic model composed by columns and slab – as it is obviously founded on mass production of housing (=the Modern legacy). The following analysis of the artefacts, however, is not as much about the seriality of their, more or less ident, construction "model", but about typology that "presents itself as the study of types of elements that cannot be further reduced, elements of a city as well as of an architecture."[46]

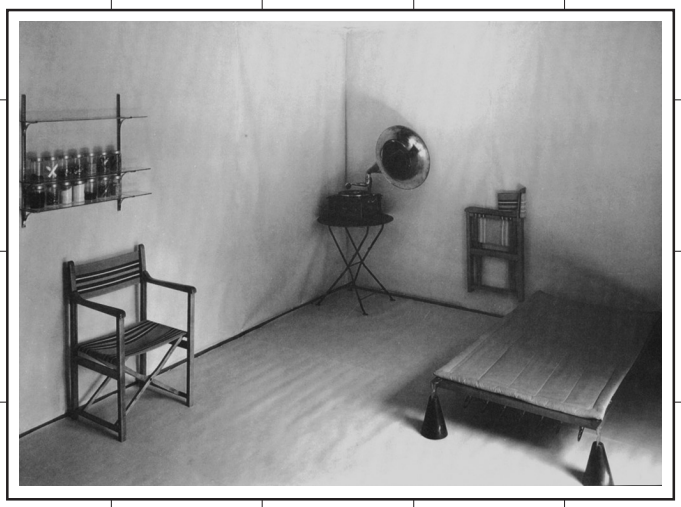
"By looking through a microscope, [one] demystifies the perception of [a city] as a static entity [...] while offering an interpretation of architectural elements as products of cultural and political shifts."[47]

To further breakdown these types to very basic elements of (Hong Kong) architecture – namely: unit, corridor, fireplace, window, podium, roof, stair, elevator, escalator – is chosen as method to discover and gain a better understanding of the inherent permanence of the city's architecture. By study and comparison in chronological order, the evolution of the architectural elements is revealed – some of them remain, some become irrelevant, some are new – as is the history of the city and the complex interrelation of architecture, culture and power.
According to Robert Venturi, "conventional elements of architecture represent one stage in an evolutionary development, and they contain in their changed use and expression some of their past meaning as well as their new meaning."[48] The result of this study is a (subjective) catalogue of Hong Kong architecture, and a deeper understanding for the city's locus, its history and its collective memory, which, eventually, serves as foundation for the design process and the approach to re-think Hong Kong's architecture of the city.

45 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 157.
46 Rossi 1984, 41.
47 Koolhaas, Foreword, in: Foscari 2014.
48 Venturi 1977², 38.



“Baukunst oder Revolution.
Die Revolution lässt sich vermeiden.“[49]



above: Le Corbusier, House Dom-Ino, 1914—1916
below: Hannes Meyer, Co-op Interieur, 1926

49 Le Corbusier, 1922, 215.

ANONYMOUS/AUTONOMOUS — MEYER/LECORBUSIER

The use of standardized layouts and units to meet the allegedly universal needs of men is a major call of Modern architects. Hannes Meyer and Le Corbusier, chosen here as examples, both pushed these principles forward, but with quite different attempts.

Hannes Meyer, with his Co-op Interieur, proposed an anonymous, generic cell for a single dweller, necessarily affiliated to a communal house with shared facilities. Le Corbusier, by contrast, with his machine for living, rather imagined an autonomous (all-inclusive) home for a family household. While Meyer's conception is based on communist ideologies and the concept of use, of sharing and of community, Le Corbusier's idea of a private home relates to the concept of ownership and capitalist structures. While the former, with his proposal for a nomadic way of living, offers an alternative and thereby a threat to (capitalist) power structures, the latter approves of the established system and interprets retreat and domesticity as a necessary refuge.
'House Dom-ino' illustrates that Le Corbusier's (=the modern) idea of a city and large scale urbanism is, in its essence, based on the micro-politics of the individual unit, the domestic space.[50] In this sense, 'Vers un Architecture' can be interpreted as a city of multiple retreat, resulting in the abolition of public space and urbanity.
With the transformation of a city into a system of semi-autonomous cells, the subtle mechanisms of urban life slowly disappear, weary of a communal society. Anonymous cells like Co-op Interieur, however, are very much dependent on and thereby provoking a stable communal life.

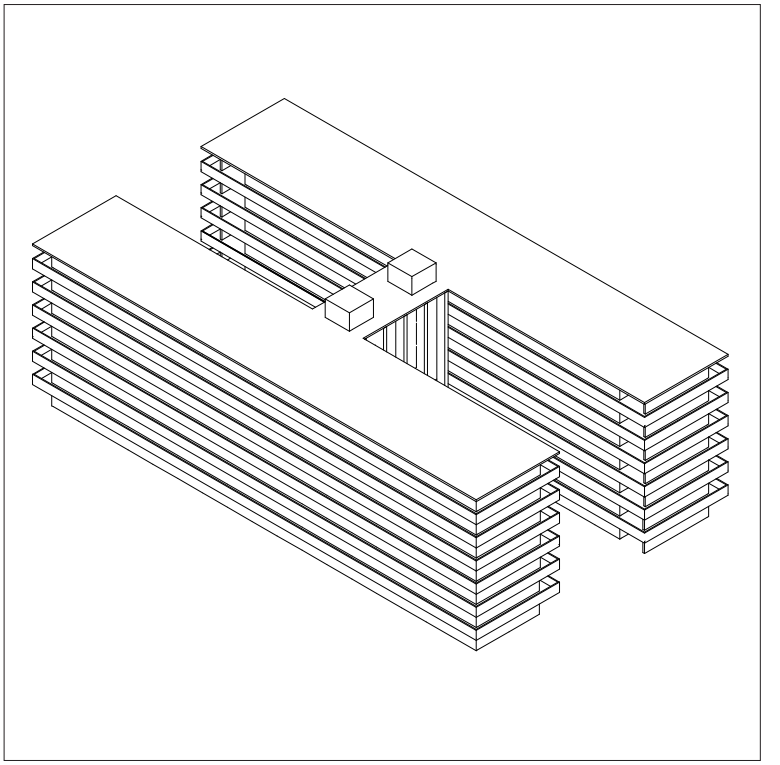
Both concepts may be found in Hong Kong to some extent. The Shop-House cubicles as well as Mark I typology [II.I.II GALLERY TYPOLOGY] with its generic units obviously reveal a concept of communal living similar to Co-op Interieur.
Anyhow, due to the pressure of scarce space and economic interests, Hong Kong is currently transforming more and more into a network of anonymous, isolated units – from micro-scale furniture-loaded, domesticated tenements, sealed off from (even though part of) a stack of hundreds of its sort, through to big-scale artificial urban islands. Hong Kong's (social) space has become, to a maximum extent, an object of control by the hegemonic power of the city:

"The control over the population by providing basic infrastructure for everyone is as such inextricably linked with the modernization and subsequently with the economic success of Hong Kong."[51]

50 Aureli, in: Aureli 2013, 38.

51 Jenni/ETH Studio Basel 2015, 178.

II.

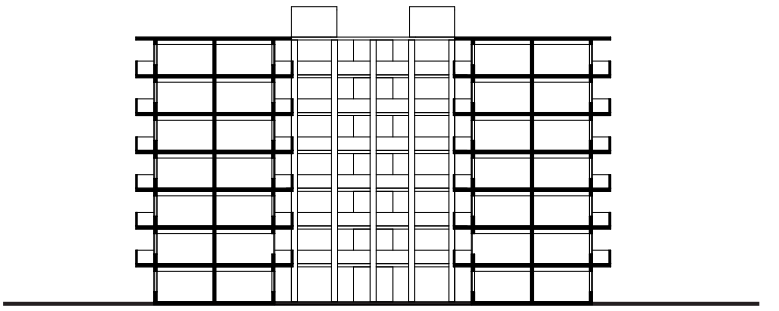


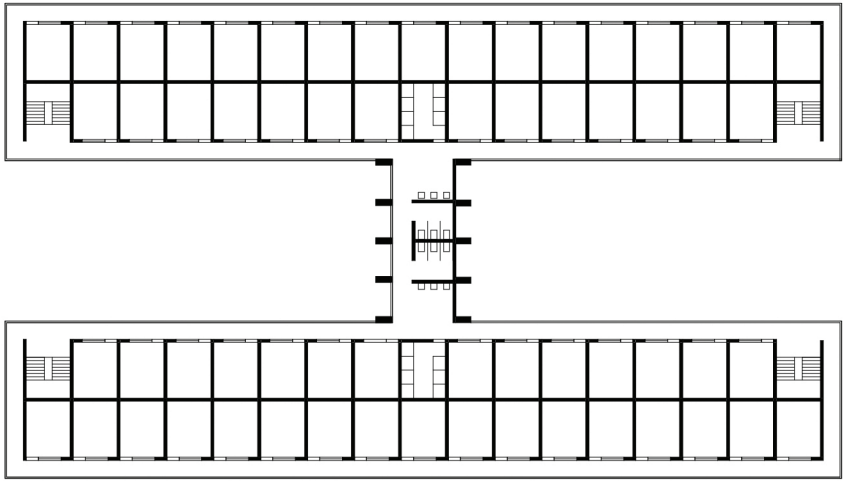
II.II
SOCIAL ENGINEERING

MEI HO HOUSE
- Typology -

Address: 81 Berwick Street, Shek Kip Mei
Year of completion: 1954
Client: Hong Kong Housing Authority
Floors: 6
Typical floor area: 1,195m²
Units per floor: 60
Residents: 1,800

II.





- 石硤尾 Shek Kip Mei -

II.I.I CONTEXT

After the Second World War and the Japanese occupation, Hong Kong's population increased by one million every decade, to reach seven million people today.[52] The immigration wave after the Chinese Revolution in 1949 finally lead to fatal housing conditions that forced the government to set up rules and guidelines to regulate the construction of buildings in order to improve living quality, health and hygiene within the city. Besides adjusted leasing terms to effect a more intensive and efficient use of land resources, the government also initiated long-time strategies, to get control over Hong Kong's urban development – beginning with a massive resettlement scheme for squatters and resulting in the foundation of a public housing programme for people in need.

This social attempt was triggered in December 1953 by a disastrous fire in Shek Kip Mei, an area mainly consisting of squatter settlements, making about 25,000 people homeless overnight. To house these victims, Hong Kong government starts to build pilot resettlement blocks in the form of eight H-shaped buildings, known as Mark I, at the Shek Kip Mei fire site. It marks the beginning of Hong Kong's public housing programme and the beginning of a unique form of social engineering.[53] As main organisation in control over this production of low-cost flats, the Hong Kong Housing Authority was set up in 1954 and became a key actor for urban development.

„Mei Ho House is the only surviving resettlement block. Its design is efficient and rational, providing minimal yet sufficient facilities for tenants' daily lives. Its spatial arrangement created a unique living style of the working class of 1950s to 70s who provided necessary labour force to underpin Hong Kong's economic flourishment."[54]

Today, Mei Ho House accommodates a youth hostel and a very popular museum of the 'Heriage of Mei Ho House' and the history of Sham Shui Po district.

52 Tieben, Hendrik in: Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 16.
53 Jenni/ETH Studio Basel 2015, 176.
54 Mei Ho House Museum of Heritage, Info-Folder

- Resettlement Block (Mark I), Shek Kip Mei, 1954 -

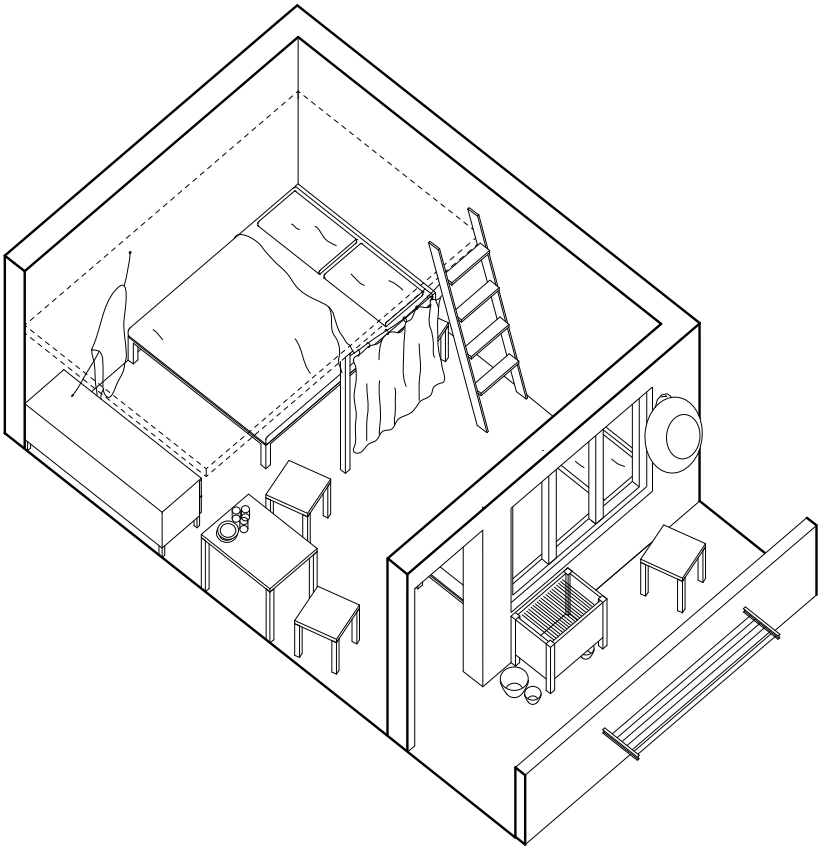
II.II.II GALLERY TYPOLOGY

Mark I is divided into 6 levels. Each of its wings consists of thirty back-to-back single-room dwellings of 11m², accessed and joint together by a perimeter corridor, which used as collective space. The two wings are linked by a central block – a service bridge containing the shared sanitary facilities. The ground floor, as well as the roof top are used for further community facilities; the latter acting as a second ground in a Le Corbusier sense. For Mark I, a standard living space of 2,2m² per adult - children under 10 were counted as half an adult[55] - was set. As a result, each of the six-storey-blocks with sixty units on each floor, which were to house at least five persons per unit, would accommodate about 1800 people.[56]

Over time, Mark I typology and the Unit itself were constantly developed and adapted to meet ever new regulations aiming not only to improve social conditions but also economic efficiency. The result was an evolution of the initial H-shaped block to a slab block (Mark III), to more height (Mark IV), to more mass, and finally to a Star-Shape that is expanding ever-higher. With Mark I, Hong Kong government set a row model for future public as well as private developments, and thereby cemented the city's high level of density. The relatively low standard of the Units given by public developments made it possible for the private sector to maximize its residential property purchases by setting low standards alike public housing in the form of minimal sized, most optimized and efficient flats.
The driving force in Hong Kong's ongoing transformation of its typologies is the constant striving for spatial efficiency and profit maximization, as a result of the high-price land strategy pursued by the government. However, the one consistent element, in public as well as in private developments, is the Unit as basic modulus – even if slightly but constantly re-organized and adapted in size, it still determines the structure and organization of every development in the city. Hong Kong's Social Engineering is a mixture of the attempt to provide social stability and accommodation for its labour force on the one hand and of profit maximization on the other.

55 Mei Ho House Museum of Heritage, Info-Folder
56 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 72.

II.



- typical Mei Ho—Unit for 5 persons -
(based on a re-staged scene and photographs at Mei Ho-exhibition)

UNIT

As aforementioned, each unit of Mark I is of the same 2,90mx4,70m–size, which is related to standardized dimensions of furniture, doors and windows, and thereby guarantees a most efficient use of space. Its construction is highly pragmatic, almost trivial and exclusively consisting of reinforced concrete frames – a method that is till most common all over Hong Kong.

After a while, back-to-back units were connected, occasionally, to expand living space. Though early H-blocks were intended to be residential only, the ground level was soon adapted for shops with several home-based light industries following to spread over all levels. The originally residential units, hence, turned out to be highly neutral – or 'universal', in a Modern sense – in its utilization.

Hong Kong government, then, obviously registered a big potential in the gallery typology and translated it into an industrial typology, which was basically shaped as its predecessor and made of the same universal units and construction methods [III.I.II HONG KONG FACTORY].

CORRIDOR

Social Housing in Hong Kong, with its origins in Mark I typology, was initially inextricably tied to the use of corridors, as the alignment of units, like prison cells, simply required it.

The technique of isolation and compartmentalization has been practiced since the beginning of the 18th century and perfected in prisons, before it was subsequently used on society.[57] In this context, Mark I, alike modernist social housing that approached throughout the 20th century, may as well be seen as a grouping of cells in order to maintain social discipline and secure social control. "Visibility is a trap."[58]

Back then, the tangential corridor of Mark I was an entirely new element. In Chinese tradition, a typical corridor was either a sheltered gallery, a frame surrounding a courtyard or a direct route through a series of courtyards. It was transversal, not tangential. Furthermore, there was no need, or rather no space for corridors in Hong Kong's dwellings before. Unlike European standards, Hong Kong could never afford the spacial luxury of corridor-accessed, separated and private "Rooms of One's Own", nor was the "theatricalization of domesticity"[59] part of local culture.

57 Cf. Trüby 2014 (Corridor), 41.
58 Foucault, 1978, 200.
59 Trüby 2014 (Corridor), 63.

However, despite the supposed similarities, there is one major aspect differing Hong Kong's early social housing from Modern paradigm: the utilization of the corridor as common space to be occupied. Unlike its post-war European relatives, it was neither meant to be a sole safety device, nor an anonymous, blank and lonely passage. On the contrary, as collective space it was a chaotic, busy, semi-private area, appropriated by all inhabitants.

The corridor was concepted as such a common additional area, in analogy to and by taking advantage of the existing patterns of use of Hong Kong's streets and back alleys. Complemented by shared sanitary facilities, the corridor allowed the tangential units to be reduced to their absolute minimum.

In the end, this architectural element became the foundation of a unique cohesive community life. In this sense, Hong Kong's initial public housing is based on a highly social concept which may be interpreted as an unwitting implementation of Hannes Meyer's Co-op concept.

FIREPLACE

The fireplace as architectural element is the basis of two major foundations of Hong Kong's culture: eating (fire) and social gathering (place). Heating, due to the warm climate, has never been of utilitarian need.

As everywhere, gathering around fireplaces initially was the context of social exchange and therefore the basis of family life or social communities. As aforementioned, since early colonial days Hong Kong's streets have been utilized for community gathering; they became places of an overlapped variety of domestic and public activity. Cooking together with collective dining were one of the first and main activities to be extended onto the street. This domestic programming of the street was directly translated into the concept of the shared corridor of Mark I, as cooking facilities were provided along the corridor. However, with the further development of Mark I, starting with Mark II, cooking was integrated indoors, transforming the dwellings into autonomous units.

WINDOW

Before air-conditioning had taken over, Hong Kong had a very porous face of verandas and balconies and grand windows. Together with small openings to back alleys and the help of a fan, a cross ventilation through the long and narrow homes was provided, which became less and less sufficient as living density grew. With time, modern regulations required provision of daylight as standard for every room. Furthermore, a standard floor space per window was set as one of the first building regulations, as an early attempt to secure at least the very basic supply of fresh air in the overcrowded dwelling.

At Mark I, every Unit is provided one window, opening to the

balcony-corridor. Cross-ventilation, therefore, was not possible, but access to fresh air was secured. The latter has been a scarce resource in Hong Kong for a long time and will probably always be. Thanks to air-conditioning, which has taken over the ventilation function of the window in the 1960s, that is allegedly not a problem.
Drying racks and other informal appropriations and extensions on Mark I's rough outer walls transformed them into a three-dimensional façade, making the identical housing blocks more colourful and diverse.

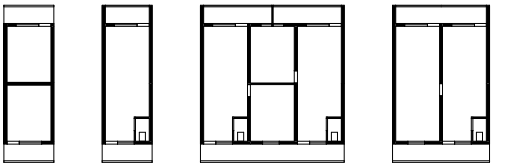
ROOF

The original Chinese shop-house had a pitched roof. However, practical reasons soon lead to a widespread application of the economically advantageous flat roofs, enabled by advanced technologies and the surrender to concrete and steel. A process that not only formatively changed the face of Hong Kong, but also boosted the speed of its growth.

In the congested Mark I settlements, and parallel all over Hong Kong by that time, people discovered the advantages of the flat roof, as Modernity predicted, by offering the rare opportunity to escape the chaotic street and domestic density, to enjoy the sunlight and breathe fresh air, and, most importantly, to use additional space. Like a parallel street-ground, the city-wide emerging flat roofs were promptly appropriated for outsourced household activities. Moreover, with a flat confinement, tenement houses were, from then on, easily expandable. Not long and the flat roofs became ground for informal roof top dwellings and a steady growth in height.

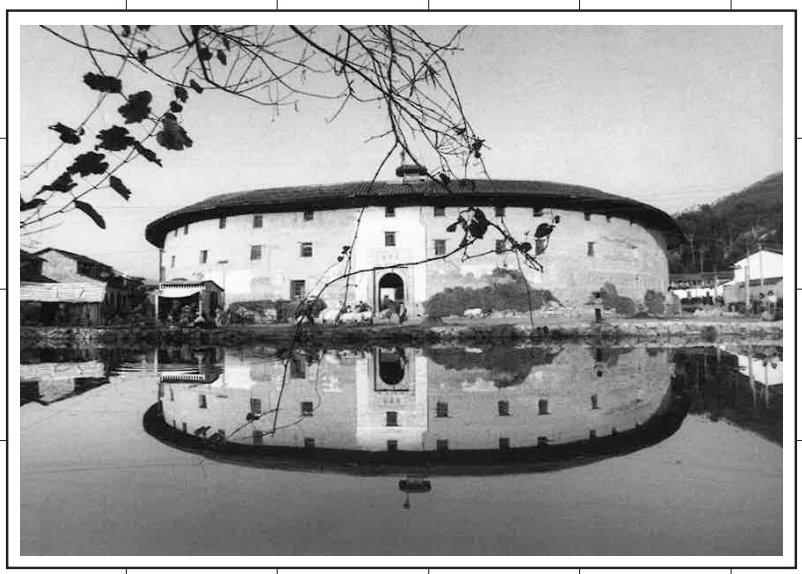
Roof top settlements are one of Hong Kong's most authentic characteristics, but have been almost successively abolished by now.

Mark I *Mark II*



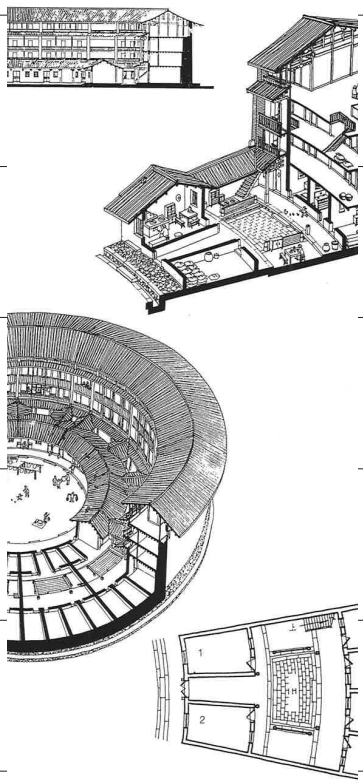
5p. *6p.* *9p.* *12p.*

- Evolution: Flexible Units of Mark II -



l: front view (above)/top view (below) of a tulou
r: sketch of a rammed earth building [in segment]

WALLED SETTLEMENTS



Unlike most western living traditions, it was, until recently, very common in China to live on minimal ground in congested community dwellings. In this context, Hong Kong's extreme housing condition appears in a different light; because of the culturally underpinned capacity of its Chinese population to cope with limited space, together with the people's constant striving for a better life, the constricting density may appear almost okay.
Walled settlements are a part of Chinese culture, with the courtyard house – an arrangement of enclosures (units) clustered around a courtyard – as its traditional form of dwelling. Furthermore, such houses, are mostly gathered together in clusters and forming enclosed neighbourhoods like Beijing's hutongs, with very few openings gaining access to family courtyards. These neighbourhoods and small villages are typically clan settlements. They are not only defensive structures but self-managed social units and therefore the foundation of Chinese society.[60] In southern China, including Hong Kong area, the Hakka culture was most common, who developed its own specific form of walled settlement. Instead of clustering individual dwellings, the Hakka created monolithic structures of three or more storeys to accommodate a whole clan. Similar to the succeeding Mark I typology they consist of mixed-used generic units, connected by a veranda-cum-balcony circulation around its courtyard.

60 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 23f.

- Kowloon Walled City, 1976 -

KOWLOON WALLED CITY

Kowloon Walled City was a congested and chaotic spatial structure, a hyper-walled settlement. As city within Hong Kong, it was in the peculiar position of being separated from its host city, yet joined with and dependent on it. Its outer walls, as means of separation and spatial difference, granted liberty beyond planning and its inhabitants may be regarded as true "voluntary prisoners of architecture"[61].

Initially an imperial outpost to oversee China's salt trade, it soon became a very important vantage point to monitor the cities interlopers and the only piece of Chinese land left after 1841. Following the expansion of British territory along Eastern Kowloon, the Walled City was soon isolated. However, it continued to be perceived as political no-mans-land, outside British rule, and accommodated mainly refugees. Despite several attempts, the British never succeeded in removing Kowloon Walled City until 1984, when Hong Kong's handover to China was decided and its territorial position became irrelevant. Both countries agreed on a demolition of the, by then, twelve to fourteen storeys high structure, in January 1987.

At its peak of density, Kowloon Walled City contained a three-dimensional connection network, with links between buildings at any level. There was not much space left on the ground floor, instead, circulation was enabled by a labyrinth of corridors as well as across roofs. No room of Kowloon Walled City could afford to serve only one function, but had to constantly transform in order to meet diverse use – be it manufacturing, food production, gambling, opium consume or simply a bed for the night.

After all, the almost autonomous city was a great example for mixed use and adaptability, ensuring that almost all needs of its inhabitants are covered within. "As organic megastructure [beyond planning, it was] constantly morphing to accommodate changes in population, opportunity and demand."[62] In this sense, Kowloon Walled City is a role model for the "volumetric intensity"[63] that is now defining Hong Kong. Hybrid structures like Chungking Mansions or Mirador Mansions, both located along Nathan Road, are still closely related to Kowloon Walled City. These early podium and tower typologies, today, house a variety of low-budget hostels, shops, restaurants and other services spread across the levels. Similar to the Walled City they function as refuge for immigrants of at least 120 different nationalities[64] and are considered as centre for drugs and other illegalities. Likewise, they embody a city within the city, accommodating a parallel society.

61 Koolhaas, Exodus (Title), in: Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 4.

62 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 30.

63 Ibid, 131.

64 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan, 30.

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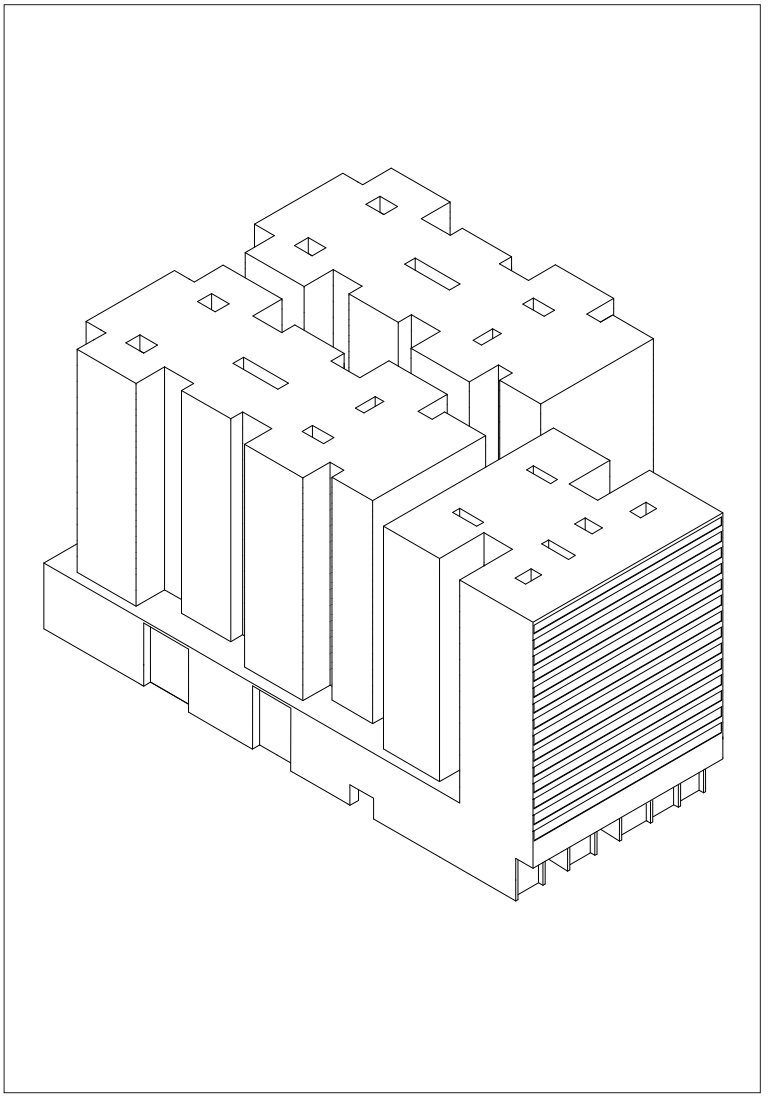
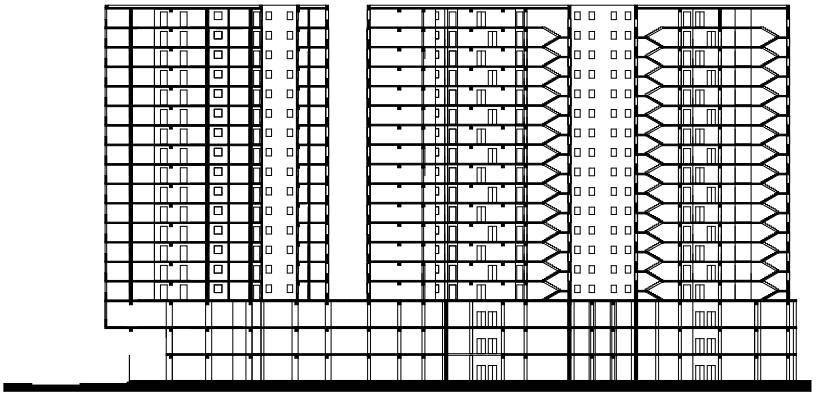


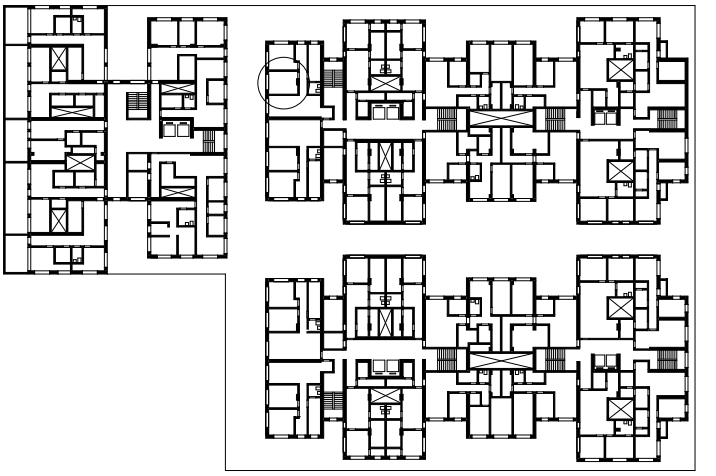
II.III
PODIUM & TOWER

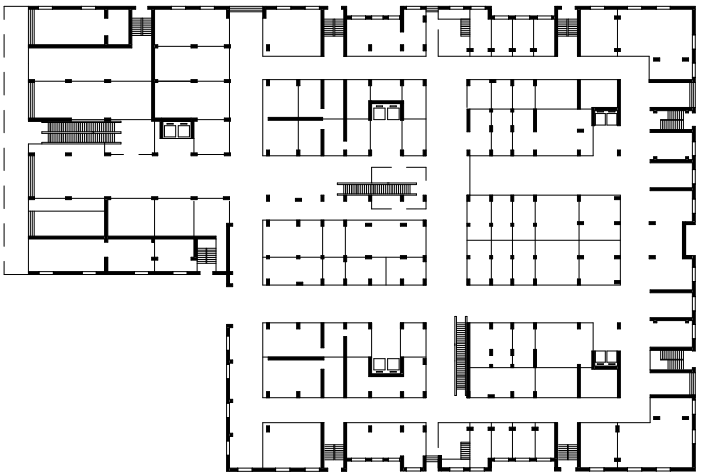
CHUNGKING MANSIONS
- Typology -

Address: 36—44 Nathan Road, Kowloon
Year of completion: 1972
Client: private
Floors: 17
Podium floor area: 4,812m²
Tower floor area (all): 3,350m²
Flats: 480
Residents: 4000

II.







- 尖沙咀 Tsim Sha Tsui-

II.III.I **CONTEXT:** ELEVATED PLATFORM

In many cultures all over the world, the initial floor was nothing but an elevated platform; a clean surface for sitting and sleeping, uplifted from the dirty ground underneath. This plane surface was re-interpreted by modern architects such as Le Corbusier or Ludwig Mies van der Rohe as tool par excellence for their propagandized tabula rasa. By laying such a second layer over Chicago's heterogenous urban texture, for instance, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe established an authentic, free base for the self-contained Campus of Illinois Institute of Technology, escaping at the same time the confines of the surrounding environment. Unlike these Modern architects, counter-culture architecture formations in the early postmodern years used the elevated platform in a cynical critique of the overpowering free market. Different from the Miesian universal space, Archizoom's No-Stop City (1969) i.e. was a repetitive field of market values, and Superstudio's Supersurface called Continuous Monument (1971) was the mere abolition of the initial ground, replaced by an uninterrupted, blank gridded strip, travelling around the globe.

The elevated plateau in form of a podium became a very important architectural element and a dominant tool for Hong Kong's urbanism. In a certain way, it is a combination of Archizoom's universal space inside the podium and the Mies'ian self-contained and released platform on top. As a typology, the combination of podium and tower is a result of a fundamental change in building regulations, restricting the site area coverage by buildings and plot ratio in 1962. The latter was determined by a site's class, depending on 3 factors: the street's width, the site's location and the proposed functions. For non-domestic functions, however, a 100% coverage was and still is permitted up to a building height of 15 meters, resulting in the very Hong Kong-specific, again highly efficient typology of Podium and Tower. The former fills the entire plot size, while thin and high towers are placed with a setback and without constraints from the surrounding built environment on top. The origin of this hybrid typology is simultaneously the beginning of Hong Kong's transformation into a city of towers.[65]

65 Cf. Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 16.

- Facing Chungking Mansions from iSquare, 2013 -

All at once, the space in-between the domestic towers on top of the podium is used as a paved, clean surface parallel to the street and free from motorized traffic. Thereby the initial ground level is released from any other use but traffic, while the Hong Kong-typical street-life is lifted up (in theory) on a podium as the new (plat)form of collective space. The podium, therefore, is programmed to host leisure-time and collective, as well as commercial activities.
Planning regulations have proven as the major tool to ensure modernity, hygiene and safety. By endorsing the use of a second layer parallel to the street, these regulations helped to replace the complexity, diversity and adaptability of the traditional heterogenous Hong Kong street life with a homogeneity, where private is clearly distinguished from public.[66]

II.III.II CHUNGKING MANSIONS

Chungking Mansions is one of the first podium and tower typologies, with a publicly accessible base full of shops, and three massive residential towers on top. Located at busy Nathan Road in the heart of vastly evolving Kowloon Peninsula, the Mansions were built as private residential development, "originally planned for 180 upmarket apartments."[67] With the ownership distributed to various persons with diverse interests, the building rapidly deteriorated and was transformed from upmarket 'Mansions' into an "emporium and living quarters for immigrants. The new higher rentability corresponds to an extreme density. In the three-storey podium maze are up to 200 shops, some of them slowly spreading into the residential towers which now also accommodate cheap hostels"[68] and a variety of commercial as well as industrial uses.

"Alike Kowloon Walled City, Chungking Mansions could be considered as a complete city within one structure. It managed over the span of forty years to transform from the original singular residential function to become a place of multiple programs that cater to a wide mix of cultures without manifesting the community tensions that so often emerge in cities of such cultural differences."[69]

66 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 111.
67 Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 37.
68 Ibid.
69 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 30.

II.

- Void -

A/C = WINDOW

"Air-conditioning completely changed the use of space in the city: Verandahs and balconies were enclosed, ceiling heights reduced, natural cross ventilation no longer seen as a necessity, and the shaded porous layers around the exteriors of the building which had once functioned as climatic buffer zones also disappeared. The border between indoor and outdoor space became more sealed, hermetic."[70]

Mechanical air-conditioning, today, is omnipresent throughout Hong Kong, and seemingly inevitable. It has allowed buildings to create immense windowless indoor spaces and artificial environments, for which Chungking Mansions are an early, but, with the complex inside, an exemplary illustration. "Along with the escalator, mechanically engineered climates enabled an explosion of depth of the interior, creating spaces increasingly divorced from the outside, increasingly inescapable, and increasingly able to accommodate virtually any type and scale of human activity, in almost any combination"[71] – but mostly accommodates shopping. Successively isolated from the natural condition outside, the artificial (shopping) environment and its climatic perfection have finally been accepted as ideal. Meanwhile the window, as architectural element, has been degraded to serve as retainer for the air-condition device and as additional wardrobe.

FIREPLACE

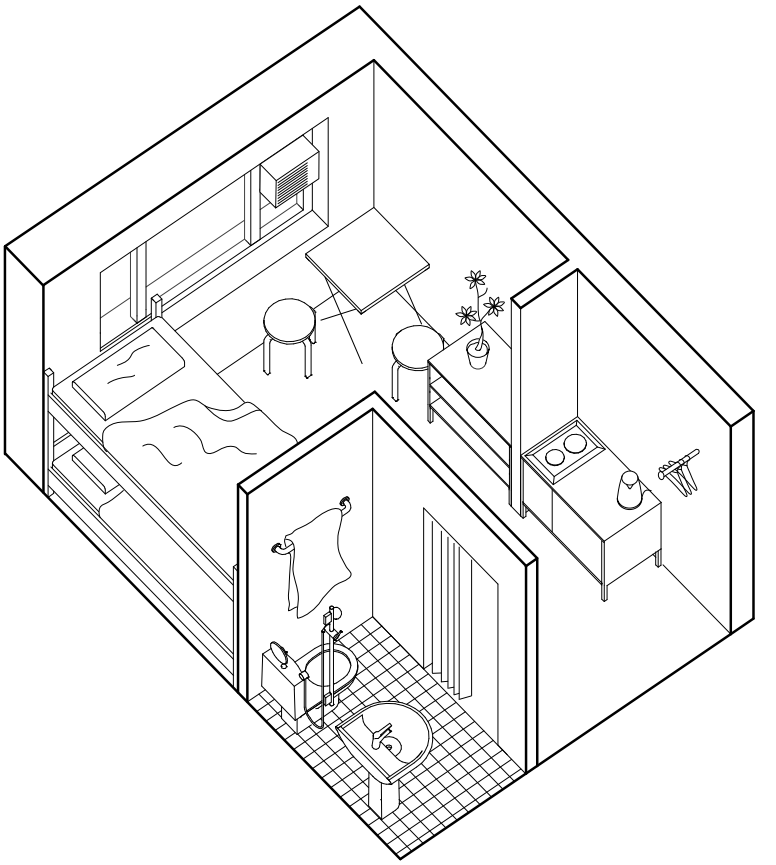
Hong Kong's typical street food culture was born out of necessity. However, it has been part of the city since its early days and probably become the major carrier of Hong Kong's identity.

The labyrinth-like floors of Chungking Mansion's podium are an extension or rather an extreme translation of Hong Kong street-life into an indoor space, without a perceptual spatial compound. It is a wild mixture of all kinds shops and services, informal and temporary market stalls, but also restaurants and food market stalls. This mix of functions has, over the years, spread throughout the building complex, so the line between private and public programmation is no longer visible. The accidental multi-level-activity may as well be interpreted as a role model for contemporary urban developments in Hong Kong, which is illustrated later on [II.IV CITY WITHOUT GROUND].

People, no matter their social standing, meet at places like Chungking Mansion and still carry on the tradition of eating in company outside home, most certainly because of their

70 Borio/Wüthrich 2015, 48.
71 Chung/Inaba/Koolhaas/Leong 2001, 123.

II.



- Typical 1-Room-(Hostel-)Apartment -
(drawn out of memory)

limited domestic space, but perhaps also because they simply enjoy what is left of gathering around a fireplace. It seems like the more hidden such a food place is, the more popular it is among Hong Kong customers.

TOILET

Toilets are commonly the only items drawn in a floor plan, determining their position, while leaving almost every other activity uncertain. In a standard Hong Kong-unit the toilet is the only room that has a defined, singular activity, especially since it is, in most cases, the only side room in the unit; the only true room of one's own. The rest of the unit has to be most flexible and economically equipped in order to absorb as many activities as possible. Yet, of course, the fixed position of the toilet originates from the essential need to stack as many units as economically as possible in favor of an easy supply system. The same is significantly defining Hong Kong's housing facades today, since supply pipes have to be lead outside – a consequence of the SARS pandemic of 2002.

The most intimate functions of washing, bathing and cultivating are compressed, together with the toilet – in Hong Kong to a maximum extend – into an all-in-one cell of intimacy and body cleansing: 1m² containing toilet, basin and shower. Thereby, ironically, the supposedly impure function of excreting and its counterpart hygiene are united in a spacial unity.

*The floor plan depicted on 82/83 is based on the original layout of Chungking Manison and, due to the many unregistered adaptations of the building complex, can no longer adequately represent the reality, but only give an idea where the main supply is located on each floor. Most certainly, many units plus sanitary boxes have been added over time.

II.

- Lohas Park -

"Not only in myths and ancient palaces but also in domestic, religious and court architecture, the floor as an elevated platform has been a universal technology for separating the clean from the dirty, the sacred from the profane, and the ruling from the ruled. (...) Architecture still internally organizes itself with a residual taste of hierarchy"[72]

72 Easterling 2014 (Floor), 125.

II.III.IV ADAPTATION

The podium, as architectural element of Hong Kong, may and often does emerge as an island within the urban sea, zoning a certain area and cutting the same off its surrounding fabric. By capturing almost every urban activity and providing every facility needed, it sucks in the life from the surrounding street and leaves it redundant. Moreover, the resultant roof space of the podium is constituted as an efficient tool to meet requirements for recreation and open space provisions. Therefore, the podium platforms are usually disguised as artificial landscape of plazas and diverse leisure-facilities including playgrounds and sports equipment, even swimming pools, while they are, on the inside, of commercial use only. Such an open space is, of course, producing an inclusive platform for community gathering with its shared facilities. It is, however, a priori a semi-public area, sometimes (with rising tendency) strictly restricted to its residents. In fact, the podiums exclusiveness is clearly communicated by its significant form and decoration.

The strategy of privately owned public space is crucial for the usage and occupation of the in-between spaces on the podium. Governmental incentives are being provided to developers in the form of a Bonus Plot Ratio if they co-invest in public service facilities on the podium. "The gradual privatization of public areas is a convenient option for the government to consign the expensive maintenance of public areas to private owners. This does not only apply for the spaces on the podium but also for a large number of areas in front of shopping malls and footbridges connecting commercial spaces in the interiorized world of system".[73]

The commercial inside of the podium, however, is necessarily publicly available. The typology is complemented with an exclusive in-site connection to the public transportation network, simultaneously guaranteeing a frequent number of potential customers from outside and connecting every such urban island with a homogenous, easily controllable, clean and safe network [to be continued on 222-226].

73 Jenni, in: ETH Studio Basel 2015, 188.

Upper Ngau Tau Kok Estate

"The Reproduction of the World

The elevator is the ultimate self-fulfilling prophecy: the further it goes up, the more undesirable the circumstances it leaves behind.
It is also established as direct relationship between repetition and architectural quality: the greater the number of floors stacked around the shaft, the more spontaneously they congeal into a single form. The elevator generates the first aesthetic based on the absence of articulation."[74]

74 Koolhaas 1994, 82.

EXPANSION TOWARDS THE SKY

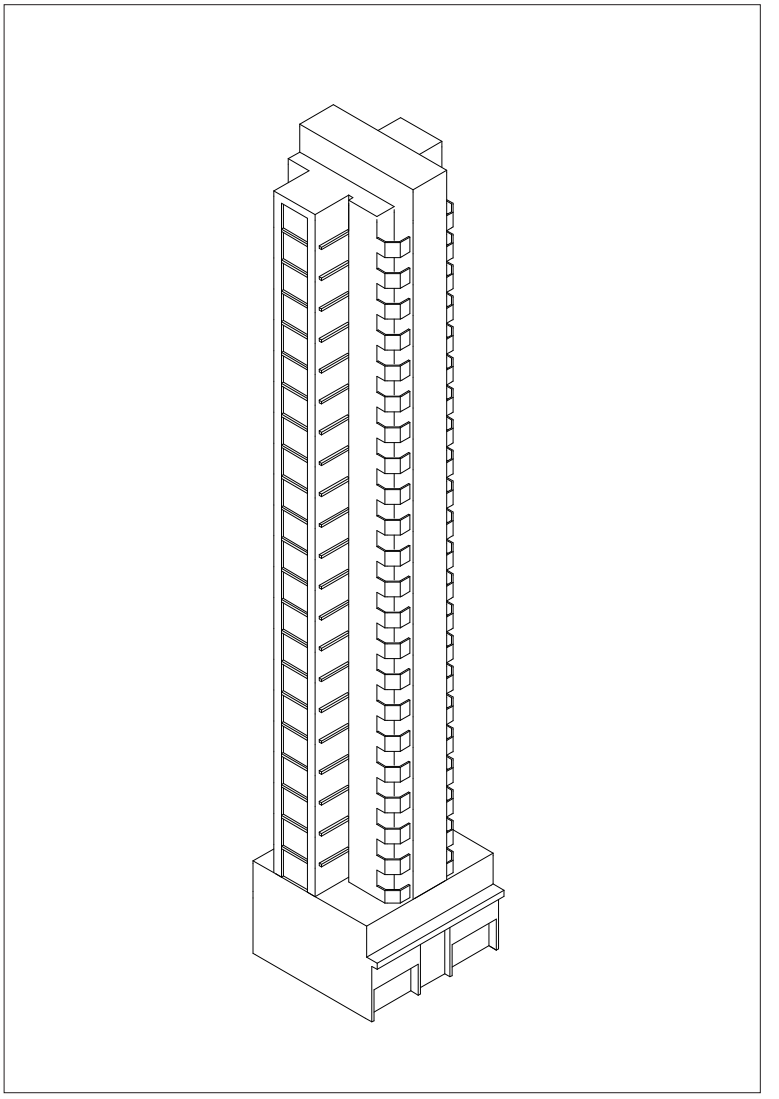
The skyscraper is commonly regarded as the enabler of the modern metropolis. Consisting of an iron rope, a safety brake, a motor, a core, a traction and a button, the invention of Otis shifted the architectural frontier skywards and served the long-desired purpose to "multiply the world"[75].

Hong Kong joined the unleashed international race for the tallest building quite late, but has, in the end, competed the top. With its highest building being Hong Kong Shanghai Bank, built in 1935 with 17 floors and a height of 70m, until it was eclipsed in 1950, by 76m high Bank of China, Hong Kong remained surprisingly low rise for many decades.[76] However, in the early 70s, with new building regulations and standards, Hong Kong's buildings rocket upwards in a quantum jump, passing the 200m marker with Hopewell Centre in 1980, when Koolhaas' *Retroactive manifesto for Manhattan* – the Ode to the skyscraper – was just on the zenith of its success. At first, the tallest buildings were exclusively accumulated around Hong Kong Central, articulating the international finance district and climaxing in the 413m high Two International Finance Centre, built in 2003.
In the meantime, developments on Kowloon peninsula were restricted by the Airport (Control Obstruction) Ordinance, whose task was to control and keep the airport corridor of Kei Tak Airport free. After its closing in 1998, however, Hong Kong performed another quantum jump in height with the International Commerce Centre which still is the city's highest building and currently (2017) ranking number twelve of the highest buildings in the world. It was built as part of the new Kowloon Station development in the west of the Peninsula, and thereby indicated not only the centrality and potential of Kowloon for high-rise developments, but also broke ground for the upcoming era of megastructures.

Today, the tallest buildings do not necessarily indicate centre. Since recent decades, especially since the New Town developments, clusters of very tall towers can be found all over the territory, in both centre and periphery. Hong Kong's built-up fabric is almost seamless without waning outskirts.

75 Koolhaas 1994, 78.
76 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan, 100.

II.



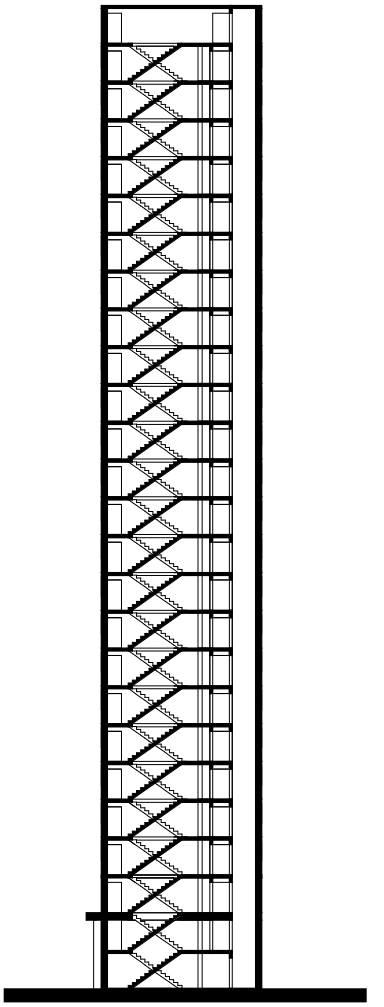
II.IV
PENCIL TOWER

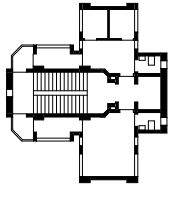
SUN HO COURT

- Typology -

Address: 29—31 Tung Lo Wan Road, Wan Chai
Year of completion: 1988
Client: private
Floors: 24
Typical floor area: 77m²
Net apartment size: 23m²

II.





- 銅鑼灣 Causeway Bay -

II.IV.I **CONTEXT:** PRE-FABRICATED UNITS

„Das sicherste Kennzeichen wahrer Gemeinschaft ist die Befriedigung gleicher Bedürfnisse mit gleichen Mitteln. Das Ergebnis solcher Kollektivforderung ist das Standardprodukt. [...] Ihre genormte Form ist unpersönlich. Ihre Anfertigung erfolgt serienweise."[77]

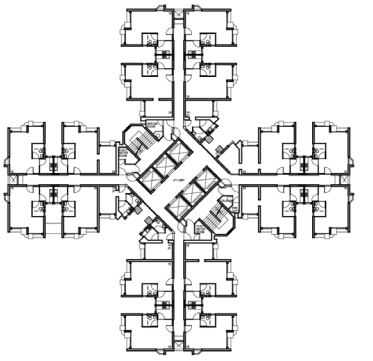
Pre-fabrication is a major basis of Modern Architecture's ideology and, today, the key of Hong Kong's urbanism, which in turn is a role model of generic city planning and a preview of a possible future global urbanity. The technological progress of precast building components or entirely prefabricated units may be initially based on the social ideologies of Modernism [ANONYMOUS/AUTONOMOUS], but capitalist interest soon prevailed. Nowadays the pre-fab technology is almost solely bound to efficiency, rationalization and economic profitability. Its use enormously fastened the construction time of buildings and made it possible to build up Hong Kong's New Towns, each of them hosting several ten thousand people, in no time. As a result, Hong Kong's face is constantly changing into a generic fabric of countless identical stacks of the ever-same unit. The underlying constructive system is a basic cross-wall-construction. "Since the housing plan is standardized, construction details are repeated to reduce cost. The surfaces remain unfinished and undetailed so that design time is reduced to minutes instead of hours or days."[78]

Springboard of prefabrication and housing units is, of course, the modern assumption of universal human needs [cf. *Sustainable Design Principles*] and of a generic architecture that is able to fulfill the same [cf. *The Harmony Series*]. Thereby architectural form is reduced to the mere multiplication of already defined floor plan layouts. In this context, the design of golf courses or other capitalistic luxuries, indeed, are a welcome diversion.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

To ensure the public rental housing (PRH) it builds is sustainable and meets the needs of the residents, the Housing Authority premises its construction developments on two basic principles: 'functional and cost-ef-

77 Meyer, Hannes: Die Neue Welt, in: Meyer-Berger 1980, 30.
78 Luebkemann 1996, 39.



- Precast Units/New Harmony 1 -

fective' and 'people-oriented'. PRH designs are rationalized to meet the basic needs – comfort, safety, health and pleasant living environment – of the residents without any extras or luxuries, while also emphasizing construction efficiency, low maintenance, energy saving and effective operations. Universal Designs are adopted to cater to the diverse needs of live in barrier-free and harmonious communities."[79]

THE HARMONY SERIES

"With the first of its kind completed in 1992, the development of the Harmony series was a technological breakthrough, with its extensive use of precast building components such as façades, staircases, drywall panels and semi-finished slabs."[80]

TOWER-(R)EVOLUTION

With the evolution of the podium and tower typology in the 1960s according to major changes in building legislations, building sites were consolidated and larger built masses were made possible. As a result, residential portions got bigger and led to ever-longer corridors. But as the type developed, the pressure for financial returns grew, leading official's and investor's attention to efficiency, and, in turn, forcing architects to radically rethink the standard floor layout – a circumstance that marked the beginning of the end of the corridor.

Space assigned to circulation was lost as usable net area and therefore caused additional cost which was no longer justifiable. Consideration was then given to the "net to gross" ratio in order to judge efficiency, resulting in the continuous reduction of corridor (=common) space and the evolution of the Star-Shaped Tower.

Hong Kong is frequently referred to as a built translation of the Modernist's spatial understanding of a city. It is, indeed, not too farfetched and almost obvious to compare Hong Kong's Star-Shaped Towers, proliferating on top of podia throughout the city, with Le Corbusier's Plan Voisin. The layout of the star shape is an arrangement of units according to requirements for ventilation and light, which dictated at least a two-directional orientation of each flat, along with a circulation space that is reduced to an absolute minimum. With this radical reduction of

79 Hong Kong Housing Authority, Exhibition Panel [Photo, 24.10.2017]
80 Ibid.

II.

- Happy Valley's Pencil Towers, photographed by Michael Wolf -

the corridor to a necessary minimum, the corridor as common, semi-public space got lost, constituting yet another development towards an isolated living and the abolition of public space.

II.IV.II PENCIL TOWER TYPOLOGY

"Pencil towers are slender residential buildings on narrow lots"[81]. This Hong Kong typology is a highly unique form of a skyscraper that has proliferated because of its profitability and the possibility to avoid long negotiations for land resumptions. "There are a few places in the world in which a seven-year rate of return could be made from 400 some square feet [37m²] flats that are extruded twenty-three stories into the air."[82] Alike all of Hong Kong's architecture, the typology is based on efficiency and maximum exploitation of the site. As a relatively small and save investment, the pencil tower reached its zenith in the early 90s, due to the changing political status and the uncertain future of the city, as the handover of Britain to China was to become reality.

Today, most of these types can be found in older districts with plots delineated well before the 1950s. Hong Kong's initial grid was dictated by the length of wooden timber, which was supposedly 10m, by a maximum plot length of 20m. After all, a pencil tower is the translation of these small plots into an optimal floor layout, containing either one or two units that is multiplied skywards with heights between twenty-three and thirty stories. Hence, Hong Kong's initial urban grid is still perceptible and likewise determining the image of the city.

81 Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 23.
82 Luebkemann 1996, 4.

II.IV.III ELEMENTS

CORE [=CORRIDOR]

The construction of these towers is kept very simple, according to Hong Kong's common aesthetics, with concrete frames, shear walls and a core in the middle. The circulation space of the core, illustrated well at Sun Ho Court, is, of course, reduced to a minimum, containing nothing but an elevator and a scissors staircase - the latter is another Hong Kong patented element for space optimization [illustrated on 102]. Hence, the design of the core highlights the increasing importance of vertical development. Sun Ho Court, "an 'aeroplane type' pencil tower, offers two units per floor, which together equal twice the circulation surface."[83] As a result, space for vertical access, here, though in its minimal form, covers one third of the total floor area. However, there are Pencil Towers in Hong Kong with only one unit per floor and a circulation surface bigger than the living space.

Since the revolution of the skyscraper, the corridor element has retreated to the background of Hong Kong architecture and serves as required, but not appreciated service and safety device. The contemporary corridor, if existent, is a "lonely, blank, interminable passage"[84] and no longer a space to stay, but a space to exit.

"As enclosed exit access component that defines and provides a path of egress travel. Means of Egress: A continuous and unobstructed path of vertical and horizontal egress travel from any occupied portion of a building or structure to a public way. A means of egress consists of three separate and distinct parts: the exit access, the exit and the exit discharge."[85]
(2012 International definition of corridor)

The corridor, today, is an instrument of transport and speed, to be continued in II.IV.II URBAN CONNECTORS.

FIREPLACE

Being so alike Hong Kong streets, the corridor as reinterpreted fireplace had to face the same fate as its forerunner, caused by ever-new planning regulations. The constant drive to establish order and regulation, hygiene and safety transformed Hong Kong housing. Units were to be fully equipped all-in-one homes, while corridors were emptied and the former heterogeneity of shared areas was replaced with anonymous homogeneity. With the sterilisation and reduction of the circulation space, the corridor as place for social gathering was, eventually, extinct.

83 Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 23.

84 Trüby 2014 (Corridor), 3.

85 International Building Code, International Code Council, Chapter 10: Means of Egress

The fireplace as cooking facility has yet remained, at least in theory. It underwent an intensive evolution from a hearth in the centre of community life to a stove on the street to a kitchen on the corridor to a standardized (minimized) kitchenette. Today only very few Hong Kong people still cook at home. In fact, the initial fireplace as architectural element seems to have become obsolete in the city.

STAIR

Scissor stairs are a Hong Kong patented invention to satisfy regulatory requirements for a second path of escape from every floor, while avoiding the need to duplicate the stairwell. Instead, two separated stairways are intertwined with each other within one stairwell enclosure and thereby offer two paths of egress for each floor, or, as in case of the Pencil Tower, for each unit.

"The device has been credited as a key invention to solving Hong Kong's housing problems"[86] and, as such, has gained reception worldwide. A mockup of the architectural element represented Hong Kong at Venice Biennale in 2006.

ELEVATOR

"Space speaks for proxemics." [87]
"Proxemics is the study of human use of space and the effects that population density has on behaviour, communication, and social interaction"[88]

Detachment and anonymity are most common behaviours in Hong Kong. It is a characteristic that is probably caused by the mass of citizens, as well as by the degradation of the public realm and the lack of real public space. Hong Kong people have learned to pass each other in the streets, as well as stand close to each other in trains without looking at, much less talking to, one another.

However, this habit of keeping maximal distance is highly endangered as soon as one enters an elevator. A specific advantage of this element is that it is always herding together strangers and forcing them, within its oppressive spacial confines, into contact. "In the elevator, fluctuation and hermetic isolation coexist in a unique relationship.[89] […] Here the greatest possible anonymity is conjoined with the greatest possible intimacy of contact. The utter randomness of encounters there, reinforced by the absence

86 David C.Lee, Chairman of the HK Housing Society, quoted in: Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 137.

87 Umberto Eco quoted in: Koolhaas 2014 (Elevator), 65.

88 Wikipedia/Proxemik [15.04.2017]

89 Bernhard, Alexander: Site Contingency. The Elevator as Organizer of City Narratives, in: Koolhaas 2014 (Elevator), 67.

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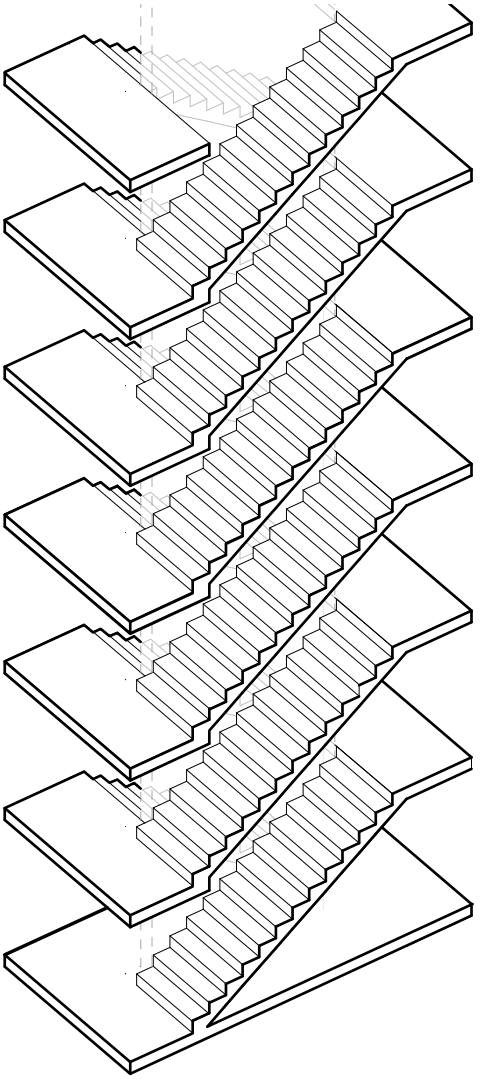


- Scissor Stair -

of class differences and schedules, collides with the complete enclosure that inevitably produces proximity and togetherness."[90]

"It is dreadful to ride up together with a stranger. You feel the duty to strike up a conversation and worry obsessively from floor to floor about what to say."[91] *(Peter Altenberg, 1906)*

Especially when the floor as potential eye-catcher disappears due to overcrowding, which is the norm in Hong Kong, people's gazes get lost. Constantly trying to avoid looking at each other, the gazes meet, at the very least in a shared focus: the display indicating the current position of the elevator – which, by the way, is a required part of every elevator in China. It so happens that neighbours finally get to know each other on an elevator ride and start a friendly conversation. A short intermezzo of un-detachment which is abruptly ended by the door beeps, indicating the opening of the elevator doors and releasing neighbours again into the secure world of anonymity.

—

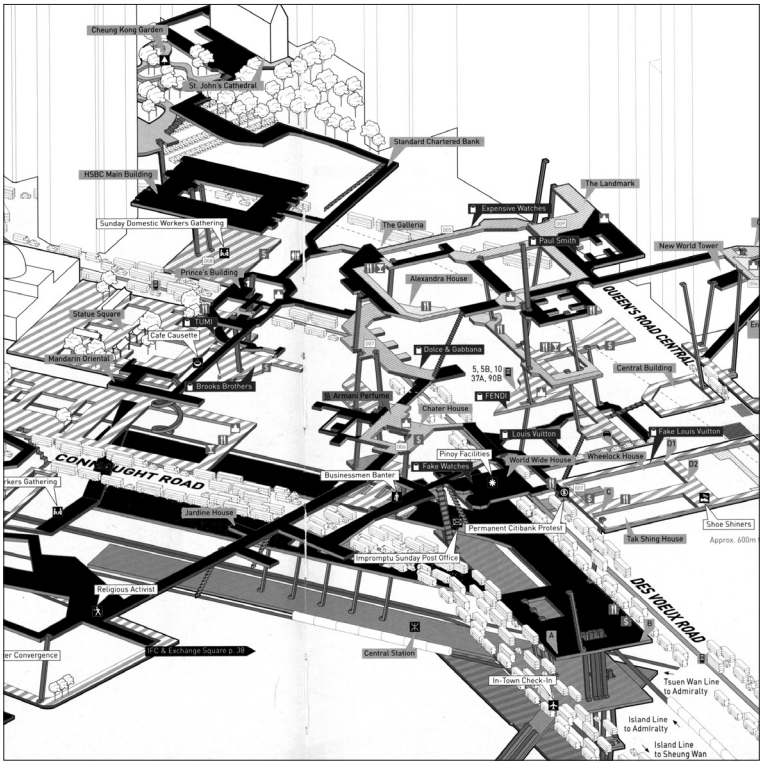
The dominance of the elevator as most important architectural element of Hong Kong's towers has not only degraded the stair to a secondary element, but also gradually demolished the role of the circulation space (=corridor) as place for encounter. A circumstance even more obvious in Star Shaped Towers than in the Pencil Tower, as people there, even though they live in close density and share the same floor, generally do not know the person living next door.

90 Bernhard, Alexander: Site Contingency. The Elevator as Organizer of City Narratives, in: Koolhaas 2014 (Elevator), 67.

91 Peter Altenberg (1906) quoted in: Koolhaas 2014 (Elevator), 68.

- Star-Shaped-Towers — Tin Chung Court, Tin Shui Wai -

II.



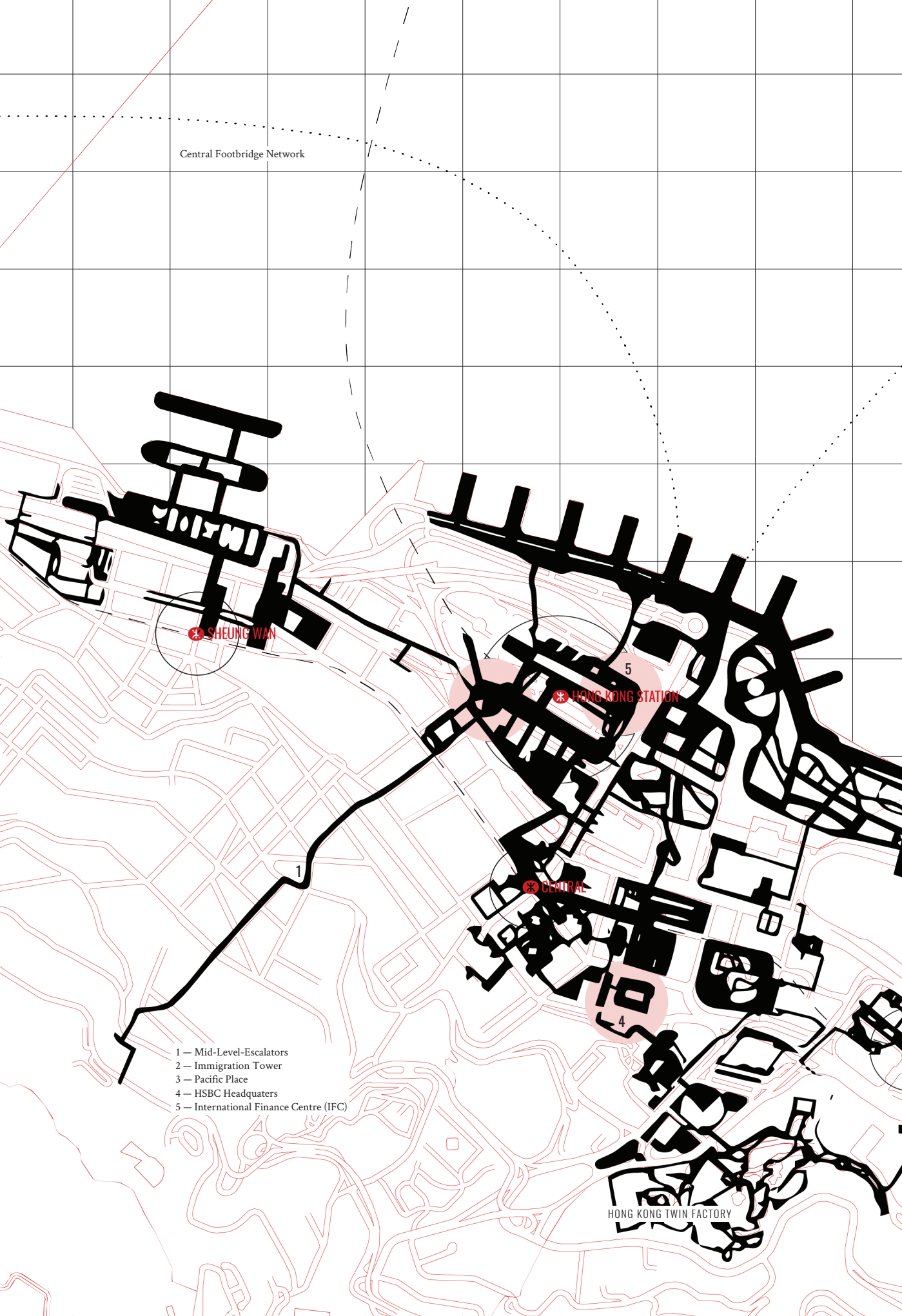
- Central's multiple levels -
(extracted from "Cities Without Ground. A Hong Kong Guidebook")

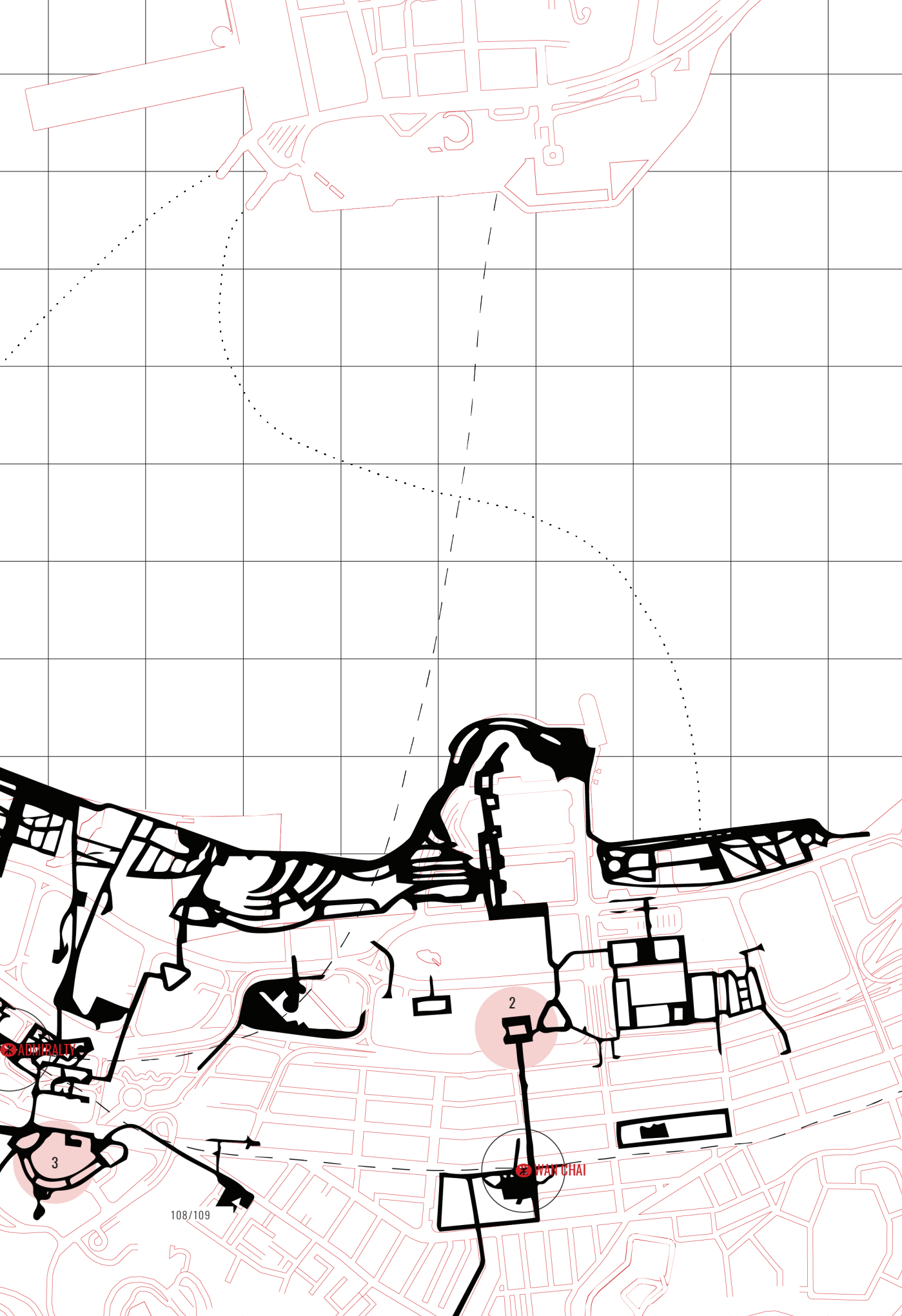
II.V
CITY WITHOUT GROUND

CENTRAL FOOTBRIDGE NETWORK

- Infrastructure -

Hong Kong Island
Sheung Wan—Central—Admiralty—Wan Chai


Central Footbridge Network
SHEUNG WAN
HONG KONG STATION
CENTRAL
1
4
5
1 — Mid-Level-Escalators
2 — Immigration Tower
3 — Pacific Place
4 — HSBC Headquaters
5 — International Finance Centre (IFC)
HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY


ADMIRALTY
WAN CHAI
2
3

- Festival Walk, Kowloon Tong -

"The escalator makes possible the transition from industrial to consumer capitalism, from the city to the metropolis by coupling the immense spaces of mass transit, the former street level and the multiple levels of new typologies such as the skyscraper and the mall. [...] the more standardized and optimized into the straight, seamless oath, the better to float modern subjects where they need to go – or just where transit officials and department store owners want them to go."[94]

94 Elements, Koolhaas, Escalator, 3.

II.IV.I MULTIPLE GROUND

To compensate the increasing lack of available surface, new grounds for activity were found on various levels above the street. Podia (of Podium and Tower Typology), as parallel layer, per se duplicate many aspects of street life, while, additionally, various levels inside the buildings are appropriated for public activity, as the example of Chungking Mansion shows. The pedestrian network around Hong Kong Central – the initial centre, and oldest part of the city on Hong Kong Island – interconnects these multi-level-activities, from underground MTR stations to roof-top bars, by a continuous network of urban corridors, footbridges, stairs, elevators and escalators with an unmatched extensity and complexity.

"In place of a spatial ground, Hong Kong has connectivity. On the north shore of Hong Kong Island it is possible to walk from the Macau Ferry at Shun Tak Centre through Central and Admiralty to Pacific Place 3 on the edge of Wan Chai without ever having to leave a continuous network of elevated or underground pedestrian passageways and interconnected malls and office lobbies..."[92] — *"Physical ground is equal parts elusive and irrelevant..."*[93]

Over the years, Hong Kong developed by public purse a self-sufficient specific building typology of multiple ground that is called *Municipal Service Buildings* for local community, accommodating various of activities that had previously happened on the street, such as fish-, wet- and fruit markets, street food corners, as well as libraries, fitness centres, kindergartens and administrative offices. All of these activities are stacked and generally inscribed in a single building and therefore more or less independent of an interconnected, multi-level network of corridors outside its confines. However, this chapter, exemplified by Hong Kong Central, is about interconnected public activities that happen on various levels in various buildings which are effected by and dependent on the proliferation of the pedestrian corridors and multi-level shortcuts through 'Split Ground' buildings. These mostly commercial activities are, unlike Municipal Service Buildings, constructed by private developers and specifically inserted in the connectivity network of public transport and traffic corridors, in order to gain from the continuous flux of potential customers.

92 Frampton/Solomon/Wong 2012, 25.
93 Ibid, 13.

- Ladder Street, Central, ~1930 -

II.V.I MID-LEVEL-ESCALATORS

STAIR

Founded by its occupants as "City of Victoria", the beginnings of settlement in Hong Kong took place in today's Central district, where the British found a relatively broad flat to establish their institutional center. Soon the development expanded along the coast line to Sheung Wan in the east, as well as to Wan Chai in the west, resulting in a thin linear harbor edge city. Long roads soon paralleled the coast line (some of them even built on already reclaimed land) or contoured the foot of Victoria Peak and facilitated the very fast and dense growth of the districts along the east-west string. In north-south direction, in contrast, the urban fabric could only expand slightly and much slower. The narrow streets between sea and the foothill slopes – many of them were rather alleys of only 2 or 3 meters' width – were and still are short and irregular, defined by countless stairs along the steeply sloping surface.[95] Hence, stairs on Hong Kong Island are a topographic necessity, as they only made the development of the hilly surface possible. External stairs are a ubiquitous and natural part of the city's network and its daily life. Hong Kong people, however, have learned to make good use of these given condition by expanding business and stalls onto the stepped streets, thus transforming them into always crowded, but neighborly environments. In spite of being less ordered, or precisely because of it, the north-south streets are still very local and enlivened, sometimes still flanked by shop-houses, colonial Hong Kong's first building typology.[96]

Needless to say, the dominance of stairs has determined the (speed of) traffic through Hong Kong Central. As a result of its stepped streets and the amount number of stairs in north-south direction, the fast majority of its early dwellers walked, or hired a rickshaw or a sedan.[97] Either way, Hong Kong's early traffic was foot based; a human-powered movement system. The number of cars and motorized traffic only rose slowly and were soon complemented by public transport – the Peak Tram to Victoria Peak opened as early as 1888 followed by a tramline along Victoria Harbor in 1904. Boat traffic and ferries, in the seaport, and connected Hong Kong Island with Kowloon Peninsula. Today, as aforementioned, Hong Kong has one of the world's best public transport networks, while motorized individual traffic has never prevailed.

95 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 50.

96 Ibid, 43.

97 Ibid, 47.

ESCALATOR

The escalator as architectural element, in a way, stands at the end of the evolution of the stair, but at the same time marks the downfall of the same. Like its predecessor, it allows vertical conveyance, but in a greater number of people, much faster and smoothly – probably most appreciated – without any effort of its passengers. As opposed to the elevator, which is similar in terms of comfort, but limited in terms of the number of passengers it can transport, the escalator continuously carries crowds of people smoothly and is vastly more efficient in facilitating traffic. At the same time the escalator, with its continuous flow, does not subject its passengers to any spacial confines like the oppressive atmosphere inside an elevator cabin. As it shows, the escalator can be considered as a combination of the elevator's comfort and the stair's unconfined, varied vertical conveyance. In this context, it almost seems like a logic consequence of Hong Kong's continuous progress to gradually replace the dominant stairs along the hilly topography by escalators, exemplified by Hong Kong Central's MID-LEVEL-ESCALATORS (1).

"The world's longest escalator system [...] began as an attempt to alleviate traffic congestion on the roads. In this it failed, but its 20 covered escalators and three inclined travellators convey [81.000][98] commuters daily. It takes 25 minutes to traverse the entire network, which spans 800 meters in all. Responding to commuter's flows, the system runs downhill from 6-10am, and uphill from 10:30am-midnight. The sheer scale of the Central Mid-Levels Escalators earns it a place as a rolling tourist attraction recovering a sense of wonder for the escalator through sheer scale..."[99]

Hong Kong's Mid-Level Escalators were completed in November 1996. Elevated onto massive columns the escalators are decoupled from street activities. Thereby they provide a faster movement, while the space underneath offers residual space for appropriation or rare occasions to rest. The aesthetic efforts of this open-air escalator-network, however, where kept quite low and the elements lack almost any attempt for adaption or integration into its surroundings. Their beauty, however, lies precisely within their appearance as alien structure. As a structure composed of this generic, standardized, element that is basically the same throughout the world, the Mid-Level-Escalators have found international recognition in as tool for urbanism.

"Just as [the escalator] connects different levels of architectural space seam-

98 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 138.
99 Koolhaas 2014 (Escalator), 38.

lessly, so does its steady typology connect the world aesthetically."[100]

As "band of vitality"[101] the network has induced an immense regeneration and gentrification process in hilly SoHo (South of Hollywood Road). Initiated by small shops, restaurants and galleries along the escalators that gained from the increased pedestrian traffic, SoHo has become one of the most popular, touristic and supposedly most authentic districts in Hong Kong, but also the most expensive one.

Within the ever-rapid and stressful central pedestrian network, "the escalator has become more and more an occasion for rest, even meditation, a rare space where real and virtual domains can be embraced in a single experience."[102] While people lose themselves in thoughts on their escalator ride, ever-more warning signs and safety-announcements pop up along the escalator to remind of the necessary attention and safety issues:

"Please hold the handrail, stand firm and do not walk!" - "Don't keep your eyes only on your mobile phones!"

Together with countless Travellator, inserted in corridor network, Hong Kong escalators create a smooth and ongoing passive transportation, continuously moving Hong Kong's crowds through its groundless, mazy network.

100 Koolhaas 2014 (Escalator), 3.
101 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 139.
102 Koolhaas 2014 (Escalator), 74.

- Mid-Level-Escalators, inside -

- Mid-Level-Escalators, underneath -

- Pedder Street, Central -

II.V.II URBAN CONNECTORS

SPEED (CORRIDOR)

The corridor has historically been an instrument of speed.[103]

Formerly, the street had accommodated traffic as well as community engagement. As Hong Kong grew, however, its capacity to carry the increasing flow of vehicles and people, while still providing space for other activities besides traffic on its surface was stretched to its limits. Hence, the street's function as transportation infrastructure has been separated into different corridors of speed, which are now led on top or underneath the ground.

These various corridors can be categorized by their speed of movement and their accessibility.[104] While the 'Street', for vehicles, as shared space and homogenous network, is relatively slow and may be crossed at any point, the 'Road' is a fast, directional connection between A and B, crossed only at indicated crossovers. The 'Motorway', however, is supposedly the fastest connection with no crossing at all and therefore mostly decoupled from 'Street'. The same can be said for pedestrian traffic infrastructure: in addition to the 'Street', pedestrian corridors were installed above the street-network ('Roads' and 'Motorways' included), in-between and through the middle of buildings in order to provide a faster, more efficient foot traffic. While some of them are part of a network of multiply access and somehow replicating the 'Street' below by hosting community engagement and informal activities as well as by serving commercial facilities along the path, others are direct connections (fast lanes) between specific points, with much fewer access points. In reference to the 'Motorway', the latter could also be determined as 'Pediway'.[105]

An early example is the footbridge constructed in the early 1990s that carries substantial traffic from Wan Chai MTR station to IMMIGRATION TOWER (2), a destination that must be visited by everyone obtaining or renewing their Identity Card, visas or Hong Kong travel documents.[106]

"The opposing forces of efficiency and profit-making collude to create a labyrinthine urbanism in which even locals are frequently lost. Pedestrian connections are capable of spanning the shortest possible distance whether they require a footbridge to be built over a government-owned public park or street, or passage to be provided through a privately owned corporate lobby. At the same time,

103 Cf. Trüby 2014 (Corridor), 111.
104 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 139.
105 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 139f.
106 Ibid.

- Motorway — Flyover Intersection, Hung Hom -

they can curl into seemingly inescapable and thoroughly disorienting sequences lined with shops as financial incentive dictates as many connections to surrounding retail opportunities as possible [...]"[107]

FLYOVERS

In order to provide a sufficient network for motorised vehicles across Hong Kong's challenging topography and to solve congestion problems at intersections, flyovers were firstly introduced in the 1970s. Motorways, elevated parallel to the street by massive columns, are now weaving across the topography and in-between buildings – so close to the latter that drivers are might get close-up views into flanking apartments.

At some points, flyovers are interwoven with each other as well as with crossing pedestrian bridges. Precisely there you might find yourself lost in the labyrinth of corridors. Even though you see the mere ground underneath, you are completely decoupled from it, without a way out.

"Hong Kong enhances three-dimensional connectivity to such a degree that it eliminates reference to the ground altogether. Hong Kong is a city without ground [...]"[108]

SPLIT GROUND (PODIUM)

Hong Kong Island's hilly topography, despite its challenges, offers one major advantage: it enables buildings to become urban connectors between different altitudes. Placed on a steep hillside, buildings can be accessed through different levels, making "ground floor" ambiguous. With the help of elevators, escalators or stairs such a building is then able to provide a public network of interconnection within and translate this circumstance into commercial benefits. This concept makes use of architectural elements to their full potential in dealing with topographic conditions, remarkably exemplified in Hopewell Centre (Wan Chai) and PACIFIC PLACE (3).

SMOOTHNESS (ESCALATOR)

With its continuous movement of transportation, the escalator has enabled and established a new way of perambulating the city and another way of using buildings as integrative part of urban infrastructure.

"With the escalator, previously disconnected realms can be smoothed into an uninterrupted experience, allowing different and even incompatible spaces to be taped onto each other almost ad infinitum and experienced as single continuum."[109]

107 Frampton/Solomon/Wong 2012, 28.
108 Ibid, 6.
109 Chung/Inaba/Koolhaas/Leong 2001, 358.

With the escalator, buildings are enabled to soak up life smoothly from surroundings whatsoever. HSBC HEADQUARTERS (4), an iconic bank tower designed by *Foster & Partners* and built in 1985, applies, in a paradigmatic way, the escalator's specific characteristics. Two distinctive, asymmetrically arranged escalators connect the fluid space underneath the building with the counter hall on the first floor and enable an equally fluid transition between the two levels – an analogy to the continuous fluctuation of money. Moreover, escalators are melted together with elevators into an interrelated network: "instead of stopping at every floor, elevators service banks of floors, or "zones", which are then interconnected by escalators - 62 in all."[110]

Paradoxically it is precisely this prestige place serving the fluctuation of traffic and money (=pure capitalism) all week long that is appropriated on Sundays by hundreds of Philippinas – nannies and housekeepers – for their well-known gathering.

INFORMAL ACTIVITY

In fact, in contrast to the formal multi-level-activities, initiated by developers and based on commercial interests, there are informal activities proliferating all over the city, too. Because of the lack of accessible or available street space, Hong Kong people, flexible as they are and used to adapting to the given conditions, have learned to appropriate pedestrian corridors as alternative to the street ground. Moreover, various activities are now occurring below, or beside the traffic corridors and elevated platforms, as the pedestrian network brings along an increasing amount of residual space as its by-product.

"Urbanism in Hong Kong is a result of a combination of top-down planning and bottom-up solutions, a unique collaboration between pragmatic thinking and comprehensive planning, played out in a three-dimensional space."[111]

110 Koolhaas 2014 (Escalator), 37.

111 Frampton/Solomon/Wong 2012, 6.

- HSBC Headquaters, weekdays -

- HSBC Headquaters, sundays -

Lei Yue Mun with Tuen Mun (1/9 New Towns) in the back

BIGNESS:
"If Bigness transforms architecture, its accumulation generates a new kind of city.
The exterior of the city is no longer a collective theater where 'it' happens;
there's no collective 'it' left.
The street has become residue, organizational device, mere segment of the continuous metropolitan plane where the remnants of the past face the equipment of the new in an uneasy standoff. Bigness no longer needs the city:
it represents the city; it is the city."[112]

112 extracts from Koolhaas: Bigness (Bastion), in: Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 512.

URBAN ISLANDS

—NEW TOWNS

As the population grew throughout the 1960s, discussions in the 1970s turned, in both private and public sector, to projects at a larger scale than piecemeal urban replacement.

While the development of identified brown field sites within the city was basically left to private investors, the public hand focused on the potentials of the New Territories, once the transportation network could break through the great barrier which separated Kowloon from the green fields to the north: the nine dragons peak. Governor Sir Murray Maclehose initiated, in 1972, an ambitious long-term housing strategy, with the aspiration to provide 1,8 million people with accommodation. It was his plan to develop and comprehensively construct self-contained New Towns, nine in numbers, throughout the New Territories.
As the hill barriers were breached, the development of the New Territories and the New Towns went on rapidly, parallel to the expansion of the transportation network. Tunnels and train lines became, in a short time, essential, as they bring these far-off developments closer together. The New Towns are characterized by a focus on high-rise forms with a small footprint, closely linked to the public transportation system. Alike podium and tower typology, but in tremendously bigger scale, such a New Town development functions as island, independent of the surrounding city. It is designed to allow people to live, work, shop and entertain themselves without leaving the development, without any need of the centre city.

"Hong Kong's new towns, especially Sha Tin, are perhaps the most extensive, faithful and longest running production of built forms anywhere to employ CIAM and variant Modernist principles and forms in such high concentration."[113]

—INFRASTRUCTURAL NODES

With the help of Murray Maclehose's strategy, the construction of public transportation infrastructure has finally become the key element in the city's urban development process, granting the MTR Corporation Limited exclusive influence, if not control over urbanization.

The direct relationship between infrastructure and property development not only founded Hong Kong's nine New Towns, but also led to a new and highly profitable typology within the existing city: the infrastructural node.[114] As a further development of the podium and tower typology it combines major interch-

113 Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 102.
114 Cf. Jenni, in: ETH Studio Basel 2015, 185.

Kowloon Station with International Commerce Centre (ICC) in front

ange stations with public facilities and authorities, all kinds of entertainment, luxurious plazas and at least one shopping mall, as well as offices and housing on top floors. On its air-conditioned, commercial inside, with its neat and clean, reflective surfaces it captivates due to the one luxury most Hong Kong people are missing: space. It suggests a dreamland, serving above all one purpose: consume.
With its accessibility and high density of vertically staggered programs the typology is used as a device to generate high land value. Today, the network-system with its typology is Hong Kong's main model and the perfect tool to hold control of urban development.[115] It is also the reason for Hong Kong's ongoing decomposition into self-contained urban enclaves. Simultaneously, this transformation has caused the lack of common interest in participation and collective activity. "Instead of network and organism, the new infrastructure creates enclave and impasse"[116], by providing self-sufficiency.

Since the handover in 1997, developments by the Hong Kong SAR government, together with the MTR and a handful of powerful tycoons have been concentrated on the branding of Hong Kong as "Asia's World City"[117] with megastructures of infrastructure hubs, theme parks and shopping malls, in order to attract foreign investments, and above all, Chinese tourist masses.[118] Because of that Hong Kong is turning into a city of collected islands.
Kowloon Station is probably the utmost form of an urban island, an almost dystopian place. As the most promising urban development of recent years, co-founded by Hong Kong government, MTR and some global players, the reclaimed land is transformed into a machinery producing maximum profit, commercialized out of scale and completely isolated from the urban fabric in every respect. This network of towers culminates in the ICC (International Commerce Centre), Hong Kong's tallest building so far.
Its exclusivity is communicated as plain as it can be, but can only be experienced through shopping. By providing shopping activity en masse, it is disguised as the new form of public space that is on the rise all over Hong Kong today.

115 Cf. Jenni, in: ETH Studio Basel 2015, 185.
116 Koolhaas, Generic City (15.1), in: Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 1994.
117 Hong Kong Brand Identity, 20.04.2017
118 Cf. Tieben, Hendrik, in: Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 16.

II.

- IFC—International Finance Centre, Central -

II.V.III INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CENTRE (IFC)

"...Taxis and ferries, as well as trams, double-decker buses and more agile 16-seat minibuses, helicopters, cable cars, cruise ships and airplanes all serve Hong Kong. It is not uncommon, as part of a daily commute, to take a bus to a ferry to a train to a taxi. Facilitated by elegant intermodal switches, such journeys, unthinkable elsewhere, are a hallmark of life in Hong Kong."[120]

Hong Kong, as mentioned before [TRAFFIC], has one of the world's best transportation networks. A fact that is the result of a longstanding development and optimization process of the citywide conveyance and its intermodal switches. INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CENTRE (5) is one of Hong Kong's mega-infrastructure hubs, as described in the insert before, that not only serves as hub of various pedestrian network routes, but also combines and interconnects various modes of transport: inner-city as well as international ferry piers, two MTR Stations (*Central* and *Hong Kong*) with in-town-check-in-service and a direct connection to *Hong Kong International Airport*, bus stops, taxi stands and tram stations in walking distance. No need to say that IFC was one of, if not the most successful and most profitable property developments on reclaimed land in the city, initiated by MTRC and Hong Kong Government and executed by IFC Development, a consortium of Sun Hung Kai Properties, Henderson Land and Towngas.[121] This prominent landmark consists of two office towers – one of them is the highest skyscraper on Hong Kong Island –, the IFC Mall and Hong Kong Four Seasons Hotel. With its programmation it is most representative for Central as centre for commerce, profit and exclusivity; it is a city within the city, reflecting its context, Hong Kong Central, like a Heterotopia as defined by Michel Foucault.[122]

SHOPPING (ESCALATOR)

IFC is a paradigmatic articulation of Hong Kong's merge of public transport with private retail infrastructure.[123] As urban connector, the escalator had an immense impact on shopping in general, but distinctively perceivable in Hong Kong. With its potential to create a network of continuous movement the escalator is able to provide the perfect condition for shopping. On the one hand, it enables unlimited physical expansion of shopping itself, resulting in ever-bigger and ever-more absurd artificial

120 Frampton/Solomon/Wong 2012, 26.

121 Wikipedia/International Finance Centre (Hong Kong) [24.04.2017]

122 Cf. Foucault, 1984

123 Cf. Koolhaas 2014 (Escalator), 78.

indoor environments by providing a smooth and fast circulation-maze within. On the other hand, it makes a seamless transition between diverse functions possible, which provides a blend of public activities with each other, and, above all, with shopping.
"The escalator's ability to blur the 'distinction between separate levels and individual spaces' identified in the Harvard Guide to Shopping has come together [in Hong Kong] to create a dizzying new form of urban fabric."[124]
As the escalator provides a steady flow of potential customers, it has become the key instrument of the one thing Hong Kong is built on today: consumerism.

Not only has the escalator – along with other mechanical inventions such as air conditioning – enabled a vast expansion in the physical size of shopping environments, it has also introduced a new way of inhabiting the city.

"The voracity by which shopping pursues the public has, in effect, made it one of the principal – if not only – modes by which we experience the city."[125]

Escalators, today, are all over Hong Kong; and so is shopping.
The proliferation of the escalator has led to the evolution of the Podium and Tower typology from a mere stack of separate components to a self-contained volume in which a variety of functions and activities are interconnected through a seamless maze. Once you get off the designated track, you are lost.

A/C

"People are led on rides (like in an amusement park), on promenades that lift them off the ground, then subject them to a catalog of exaggerated conditions – wind, heat, steepness, cold, interior, exterior, smells fumes – in a sequence that is a grotesque caricature of life in the historic city."[126]

Hong Kong people are, most time of the day, surrounded by an artificial climate of 21-degree Celsius, made possible by the omnipresent A/C. IFC Mall and alike, together with the Central Pedestrian Network illustrate the contemporary form of public space, that is more and more being moved inside. "Footbridges connect one commercial-building-cum-shopping-center to another. Everyday city life is being disconnected from Hong Kong's natural environment – many people seldom breathe in much natural air anymore, but live, work, and commute in spaces with recirculated air."[127]
Despite the fact that Hong Kong is sur-

124 Koolhaas 2014 (Escalator), 78.
125 Chung/Inaba/Koolhaas/Leong, Intro.
126 Koolhaas, Generic City (6.12), in Koolhaas/Mau 1995, 1254.
127 Borio/Wüthrich 2015, 48.

rounded by beautiful green as hardly any other metropolis, only a few choose landscape over artificial (indoor) space. To say Hong Kong people have lost direct connection to their city does not seem too far-stretched.

FREE WI-FI (FIREPLACE)

The gathering function of the fireplace in these new public spaces is taken over by free wi-fi zones and docking stations. Nowadays, people prefer to have a personalized fireplace in form of a notebook or tablet, warming the lap, or, in case of smartphones, the palm of hands. Gathering as such has become virtual and impersonal. It is likewise a duty and a challenge for architecture to adapt to and adopt this metamorphosed element accordingly. Yet the fireplace has always been a catalyst, whatsoever, of cultural evolution.

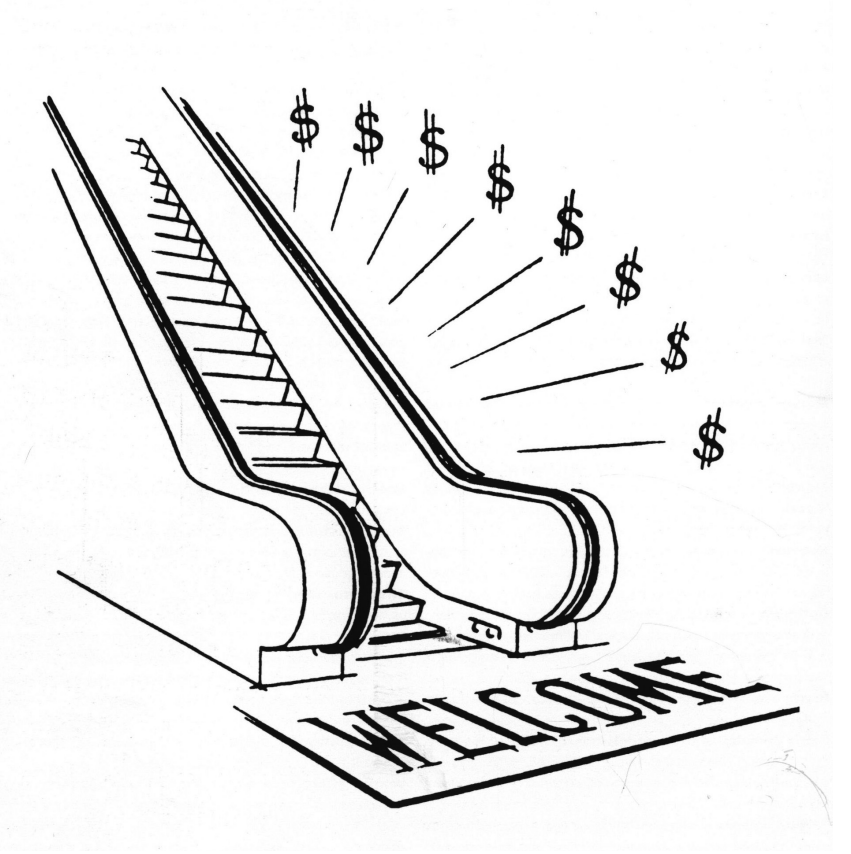
"Cleared of smoke and fumes, houses, apartments and offices are homogeneous thermostatic spaces providing an array of sockets for lamps, radiators, boilers, fridges, TVs, computers... Buildings function less and less as internal combustion engines, and more and more as switchboards, sockets and chargers. Basically, neotechnic architecture is about the design of output terminals and charging points."[128]

128 Marot 2014 (Fireplace), 110.

POLISH (FLOOR)

Along with the to the transformation of public space in Hong Kong, the surface of public space changed, too. The successive reduction of the raw ground's roughness and dirt finally lead to Hong Kong's most sterile, and today's most popular flooring: the polished floor. A truly artificial surface and the sheer opposition to natural ground. With its reflection, it connotes generosity and plentiful space.

High-polish floor is the utterly hygienic, sterile surface, tolerating no pollutant particle. Needless to say, it requires constant meticulous cleaning to keep its perfection – another hallmark of luxury. The one thing Hong Kong lacks the most is ground (=floor space). Using a high-polished, neat and clean surface and thereby classifying scarce floor as mere plane that tolerates no use but movement (and shopping) is an act of pure decadency. The frequency of polished floor is rising in parallel to the commercialization (=shopping mall-ization) of the city, replacing the former collective space of paved ground and the street-life with a sterilized, shiny indoor floor, conveying its users an impression of plentiful space, of luxury. In reality, by the continuous spread of this intolerant, unusable surface, the pressure on actual available ground is even increasing. Simultaneously this very luxurious surface is usually highly secured and controlled, ensuring its neatness in every sense.



- Maximum circulation = maximum sales volume[119] -

119 Chung/Inaba/Koolhaas/Leong 2001, 348.

III.

CONVERGENCE

- transformative -

- Aby Warburg, Mnemosyne Nr. 32 -

III.I CURATORIAL MANOEVRE

- Methodology -

„Architektur heißt nicht willkürliches Erfinden, sondern Entdecken, ein immer wieder neues Interpretieren von längst bekannten Begriffen, die die Welt mit anderen Augen sehen, neu erleben, wiederfinden und mit einem ungewohnten Inhalt beleben. Architektur erschaffen heißt auch, die Wirklichkeit mit einer Idee, einer veränderten, andersartigen Sicht erfüllen. Im kulturellen Bereich kann Neues nur entstehen, wenn Altbekanntes verwandelt und in veränderter Form weitergeführt wird. [...] Typologisch Denken ist hier Voraussetzung und Methode zugleich."[129]

Oswald Mathias Ungers' words describe in a remarkably adequate manner an essential aspect of this present work: Architecture is not about inventing ever-new forms, but about revealing and handling given realities; about concrete places and situations (=genii loci) and their transformation and evolution through consciously set interventions. However, this interpretation and implementation of architecture also requires a deeper understanding of the particular locus in terms of its cultural setting, its history and its permanence.

Accordingly, the previous study of Hong Kong types provides both an intellectual and a curatorial basis for the subsequent architectural project. The intuitive collecting and selection of architectural givens is, in fact, fundamental for the intended shift from designing a mere object to designing a context; a context as a way of reflecting and adding to the collective memory.

"Context is not what you find, but what you do to make the found visible."[130]

The following chapter is an exploration and illustration of the given realities of the chosen site, its greater context and its typological as well as topological history, present and prospect. It provides a steady theoretic convergence to the final design project.

129 Ungers, in: Klotz 1985, 34.
130 Kuehn/Malvezzi 2012, 4.

III.II URBAN FACTORY
- Typology -

III.II.I MODERN FACTORY

"Rather than a building, the factory resembles a system of relations that extends far beyond the limits of any enclosure. It is more than a metaphor: as the model of industrial logic in which raw materials become finished commodities, the factory functions as the concentrated form of the modern metropolis."[131]

The city has always been home to labour, resources, and consumers, combining a chain of production, consumption and reproduction.[132] Industrialization, the proliferation of factories and the subsequent establishment of Fordism reinforced this circumstance.

Today, cities and factories are in a "symbiotic relationship"[133], inextricably linked with each other. Like a Heterotopia á la Michel Foucault, factories simultaneously reflect and influence the societal sphere (or the 'spatial practice', in terms of Henri Lefebvre) they are a part of. As spatial confine of common labour, the factory not only comprises the most elemental logistics and economic structures of a city (=a society), it is most directly related to the common worker, who our capitalist society is basically built upon.

"Those wanting to find out about our past should dig in the ruins of factories. Those wanting to find out about the present day should study present-day factories. And those wanting to speculate on the future should ask questions about the factories of the future."[134]

With the proliferation of the modern factory, living and working were separated into two different spaces: a space of production (=work) and a space of reproduction (=domesticity), according to Henri Lefebvre's

131 Marullo, Francesco, in: Aureli 2014, 216.
132 Cf. Rapport 2015, 37.
133 Rapport 2015, 37.
134 Cf. Vilem Flusser, quoted in: Rappaport 2015, 6.

spatial theory. The principles of Modern Urbanism (keyword: CIAM), proved to be both result of and cause for this continuous fragmentation of the city into domestic space and work space [ANONYMOUS/AUTONOMOUS]. Conceptual backdrop of this urban transformation was the interpretation of domesticity as counterpart to modern labour, as both necessary retreat from and ultimate reward of the same. In fact, it is this very conception of the dialogic relation of work and living that the capitalist system – the American Dream – is based on. The house, and likewise the apartment, functions, in analogy to the productive factory, as "social factory, which, rather than producing objects for the masses, would shape masses for the objects."[135]

"While production outside of the house is paid for, reproductive labour inside the house is made invisible by the ideological character of the house as a place sealed off from the world of production. Yet the house produces the most important commodity for capitalist production: labour power."[136]

As both insatiable consumer and devotional worker, productive people (=homo faber[137]) sustain and grant capitalism constant drive for non-stop economic growth, progress and profit.

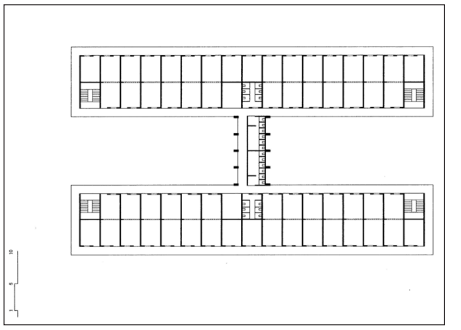
III.II.I HONG KONG FACTORY

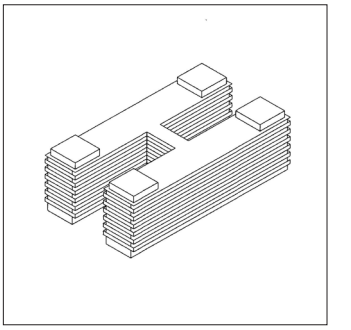
Unlike Western (= classic Modern) factory cities, the separation of living and working in post-war Hong Kong has never prevailed completely. On the contrary, domesticity of production and small-scale entrepreneurialism is an integrated part of both Hong Kong economy and culture. Certainly, due to the city's immanent lack of space, which means a lack of alternatives, many apartments in Hong Kong are a hybrid of household and production. The universal design of units [II.II.II—UNIT] is both product and trigger of this phenomenon.

As aforementioned in chapter II.II—SOCIAL ENGINEERING, Hong Kong government registered a big potential within the gallery typology of early

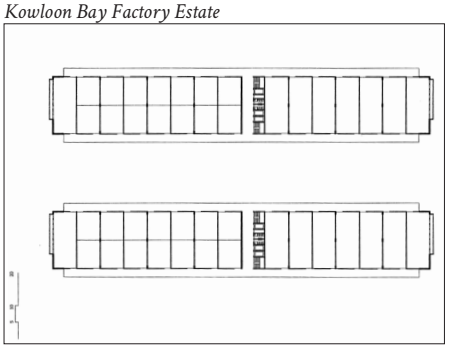
135 Marullo, in: Aureli 2014, 234.
136 Dogma, in: Volume 46, 27.
137 Vilem Flusser, quoted in: Rappaport 2015, 6.

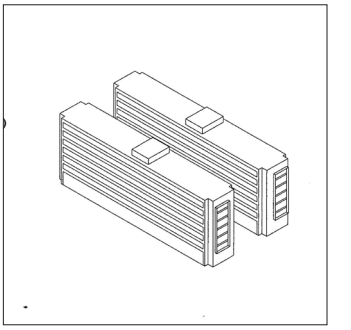
Mei Ho House *1954*



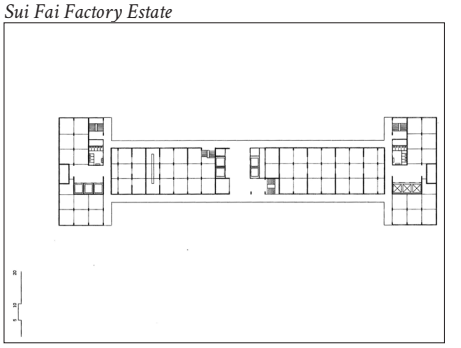


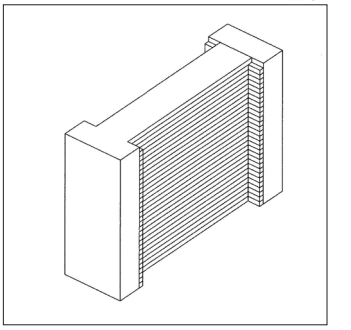
Kowloon Bay Factory Estate *1975*





Sui Fai Factory Estate *1982*





III.

- Typological Evolution of Hong Kong's Industrial Factory -

public housing and the hybrid utilization of its units. Hence, this generic architecture was translated into an industrial building typology, which was basically made of the same generic units and construction methods. The first of these factory estates – also termed as 'Flatted Factories', as derived from the British description of an apartment as 'flat'[138] – appeared in 1957. They were similarly shaped as its predecessor, but more spacious and sufficiently constructed for small-scale industries, with further access by stairs and ramps. Alike residential blocks, the industrial building typology, too, was gradually adapted, condensed and extended in mass as well as in height.

With land being such a scarce resource, multi-storey factories soon became standard and generated fast returns for their developers. Space within this typology could be rented by one or more units, implementing a highly flexible and adaptable floor layout for various and heterogenous use. "As Hong Kong industrialized after the 1950s, domestic industrial production became a common mode of employment,"[139] so the government extensively provided such flatted factories for these entrepreneurial activities. Even though these estates were not suitable for every industrial purpose due to its minimum construction standard, still they accommodated small industrial activities and small-scale-enterprises like printing works, plastic works and food production[140] to a remarkable extent.

"The layout of the factory floors, often accessed by outer corridors, allowed the high flexibility needed by the local light industry to react quickly to changing niches on the world market."[141]

Following China's Open Door policy, the demand for industrial space in Hong Kong dropped along with its industrial activity. By the end of the 90s "over 50% of the government industrial estates were empty". Today, most of them are gone. If not, they are facing conversion or even demolition in order to make space for Hong Kong's new urbanism.

138 Cf. Shelton/Karakiewicz/Kvan 2011, 144.
139 Ibid, 144.
140 Cf. Ibid, 144.
141 Hendrik Trieben, in: Christ/Gantenbein, 2012,

III.II.III PRODUCTION

Hong Kong's flourishing economy and its successful establishment as player within the globalized market is, certainly, attributable to its sheer inexhaustible access to labour-power — people flooding into the city and striving for success and a better living.

For many years of the last century, Hong Kong has provided a stable refuge within struggling Southeast Asia and promised ample business opportunities within its growing industry. Consequently, and especially after both World War II and the Chinese Revolution, a flood of immigrants from China and Southeast Asia packed into the city. In the 1960s, as a reaction to this bursting labour force, Hong Kong government built a large number of industrial estates, clustered with low-income (=public) housing for the new immigrants[142] in order to translate and exploit their inherent economic potential. Growth in both industry and population, thereby, became mutually related. As a result, the population more than doubled between 1949 and 1970, while the city established itself as an internationally renowned centre for manufacturing. "Together, in the heart of the city, they made everything from garments to car parts to plastic flowers."[143] 'Made in Hong Kong' became synonym for quality and the combined strengths of British organization and Chinese dedication.

When China proclaimed its Open Door Policy in 1978 along with its Special Economic Zones including frontier-city Shenzhen, the economic climate within Hong Kong changed. As boarders disappeared, Industrial production was gradually outsourced to the neighbouring areas of Pearl River Delta, while, in the end, only immaterial labour – controlling, management, financing, brain power – remained in Hong Kong. The economic focus shifted to global financial services, attractive due to the city's standing as tax-free-zone. Hence, Hong Kong transitioned into a centre of capital flows and economic transactions; 'Made in Hong Kong' became 'Made by Hong Kong.'[144]

"Because of today's prolific production of "non-things", like financial instruments representing other things such as stock bonds, or "immaterial la-

142 Cf. Rappaport, 272.
143 Rappaport 2015, 199.
144 Cf. Rappaport 2015, 272.

bor", a new hegemony of virtual production altered the factory and the way of working. In the final decades of the twentieth century, industrial labor lost its hegemony and in its stead emerged 'immaterial labor', that is, labor that creates immaterial products, such as knowledge information, communication, a relationship, or an emotional response."[145]

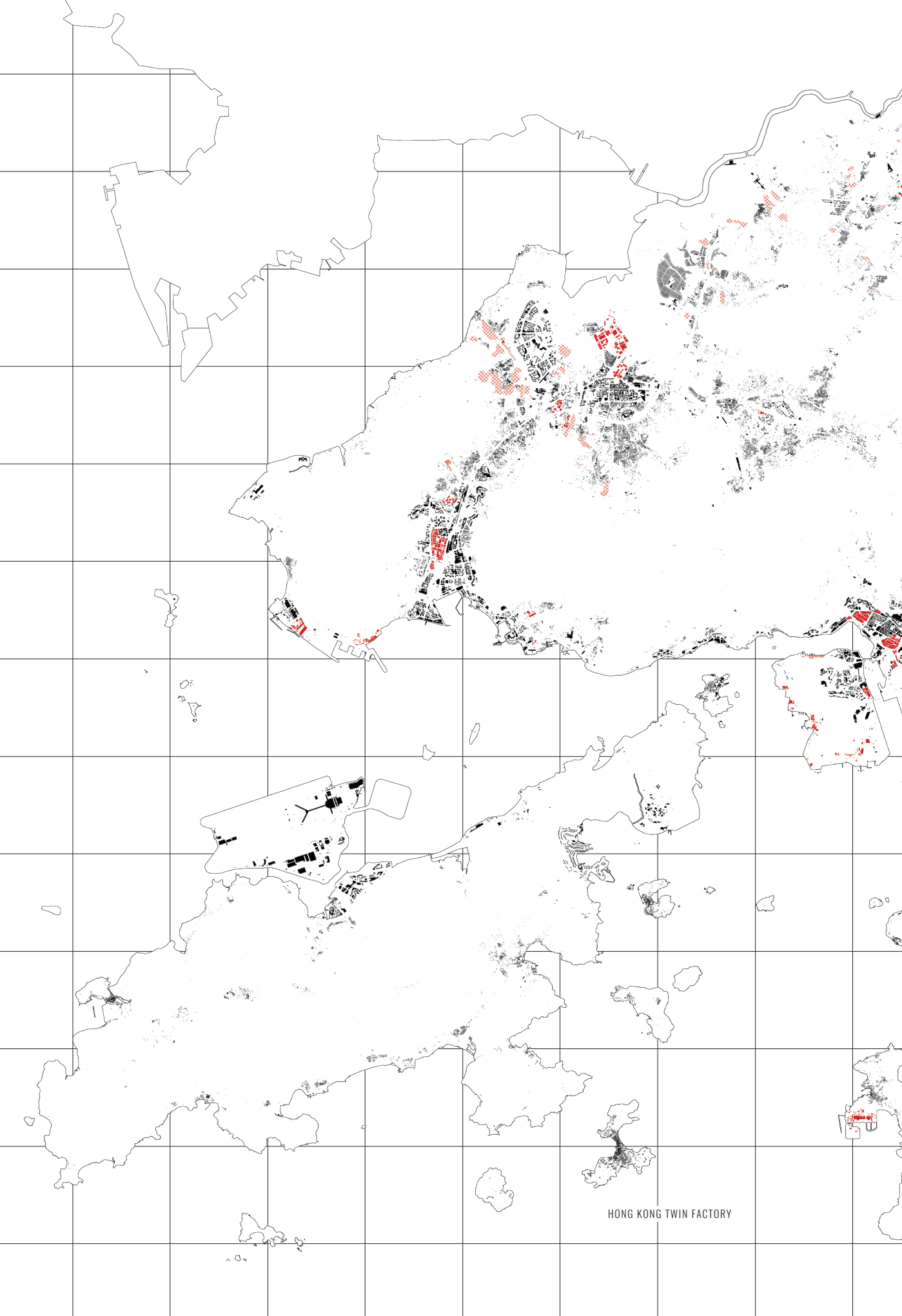
Hong Kong, today, is one of the world's major financial centres, on a par with New York, London and Tokyo. It is not a place of production anymore, but a place of command and control - of immaterial labour -, providing both network and organizational system for production. This transformation of Hong Kong is, to a large extent, resulting from the proliferation of a global economy that is based on malleable patters, known as 'flexible accumulation' — "The use of innovative industrial technologies, adaptable inter-firm relations, variable organizational structures, and flexible consumption, in response to competition"[146]

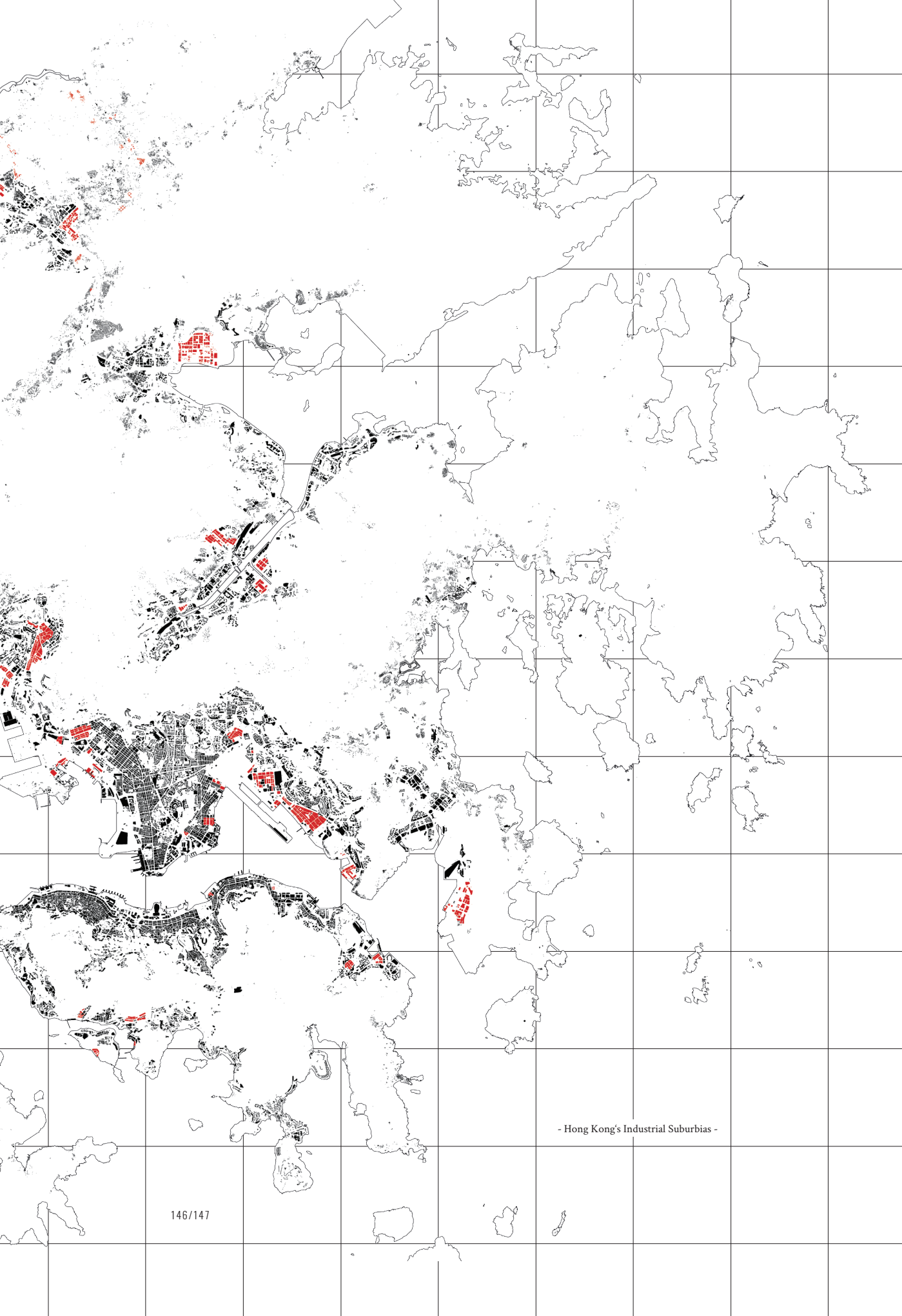
In this globally dominating productive system, mobility and flexibility are the guiding physical as well as philosophical principles for workers in order to follow the flow of jobs, resulting in the globally "rising culture of nomadism, both outside and within the factory, and in terms of production itself."[147]

—

Hong Kong, with its previously introduced flexible factory layouts, offers a suitable architectural basis for this rising nomadic entrepreneurialism.

145 Henri Lefebvre, quoted in: Rappaport 2015, 205.
146 Oxford Dictionary of Geography
147 Cf. Rappaport 2015, 202.


HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY



III.III
KOWLOON BAY—INDUSTRIAL SUBURBIA
- Topology -

III.III.I HINTERLAND

As aforementioned in I.II—TERRITORY, the functioning of Hong Kong is absolutely built upon the meticulous planning, construction and organization of space. With its territorial engineering, the city clearly conveys space as a product; a product of value, primarily monetary value. The interdependency of space (as product) and profit is probably nowhere manifested as clearly as in Hong Kong.
Zoning regulations are both an integral part of Modern urbanism and a logical consequence of the ubiquitous capitalist drive for efficient spatial organization that particularly determines Hong Kong. "However, industry as land use […] was never a primary theme. It was tangential in terms of the recognition to set aside space — it was outlined but not filled in, leaving a void both intellectually and pragmatically."[148]
Zoning ordinances, executed by the Hong Kong Town Planning Board, are used in the form of 'Statutory Plans' as a top-down spatial strategy, to organize urban land resources and determine the use of space. Industrial areas, at the beginning of statutory planning, were assigned to the hinterland, neighbouring, for example, Hong Kong harbour front or old Kai Tak Airport, or placed on strategically reclaimed land. Even though perfectly connected to infrastructure in order to provide the flux of both import/export as well as of workers, it was mainly land of second-choice quality. Together with associated public housing estates, the emerged clusters of factories resulted in a specific form of land that could be termed industrial suburbia [see map on previous page].

Kowloon Bay, strategically located north of the runway of former Kai Tak Airport, is exemplary for such a land. Planned in 1953 by Hong Kong government as 'industrial satellite'[149], it is entirely reclaimed land [28/29] that was formally known as Ngau Tau Kok Industrial Area. The initially low integration of this industrial suburbia into the rest of the urban

148 Rappaport 2015, 95.
149 Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 29.

fabric – left aside without detailed spatial or architectural considerations –, resulted in a exceptional planning freedom and heterogeneity in terms of utilisation; a circumstance that has even increased since the decline of industrial activity. "Originally built for manufacturing, the use of [these 'flatted factories'] is being increasingly replaced by service because of production outsourcing. Inside, different needs give rise to a wild mix of interior architecture, corresponding to the heterogeneous users (fashion trade, printing, chemicals, express courier)."[150]

III.III.II CONCEPTUALIZED SPACE

"Conceptualized space (l'espace conçu), the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist which a scientific bent — all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. [...] This is the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)."[151]

Today, Kowloon Bay is facing, or rather is in the middle of radical urban change, caused by a totally new spatial programmation (='conceptualization'), as the whole areal of former Kai Tak Airport, brownfield since 1998, plus surrounding industrial and residential areas are designated to transform into and flourish as a second Hong Kong Central. This massive urban transformation is pushed by an immense top-down marketing machinery and labelled as 'Central Business District 2', or abbreviated CBD2. Certainly, it marks a crucial point in Hong Kong's urban development and its conceptualized space, again relating to Lefebvre's theory, is, in every sense, of immense value, and as such it offers a great potential as laboratory for architectural contemplation.

150 Christ/Gantenbein 2012, 29.
151 Lefebvre 2016, 335/337.

九龍灣 Kowloon Bay 1:20.000


黃大仙
Wong Tai Sin
鑽石山
Diamond Hill
彩虹
Choi Hung
九龍灣 Kowloon Bay
牛頭角
Ngau Tau Kok

- CBD2 | Kwun Tong Public Pier -

- Inbetween CBD2 -

HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY

- Arising Monotony -

HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY

- Telford Gardens -

HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY

- Wai Yip Street / Foodbridge to Kowloon Bay -

- Wai Yip Street / Footbridge to Kowloon Bay -

- Corner Market -


迷你倉
P

- Industrial factories, ground floor -
r: Metro Centre II — garage driveway

HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY

- Kai Cheung Road Rest Garden -

- Lunch tables -

- Concrete -

HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY

- Metro Centre II -

IV.

TWIN FACTORY

- a memory lesson in architecture -

"One can say that the city itself is the collective memory of its people, and like memory it is associated with objects and places. The city is the locus of the collective memory. This relationship between locus and the citizenry then becomes the city's predominant image, both in architecture and of landscape, and as certain artifacts become part of its memory, new ones emerge. In this entirely positive sense great ideas flow through the history of the city and give shape to it."[154]

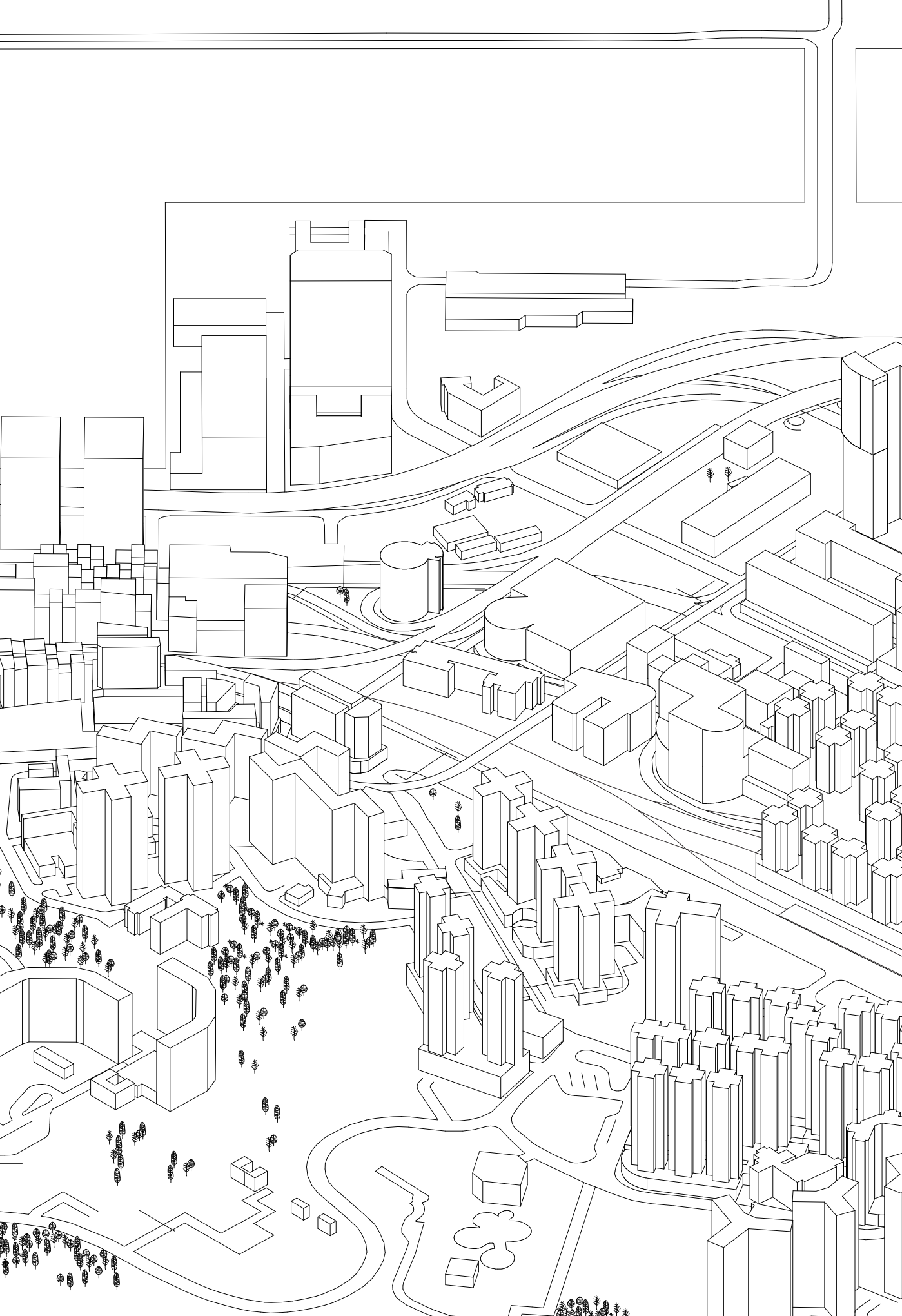
154 Rossi 1984, 130.

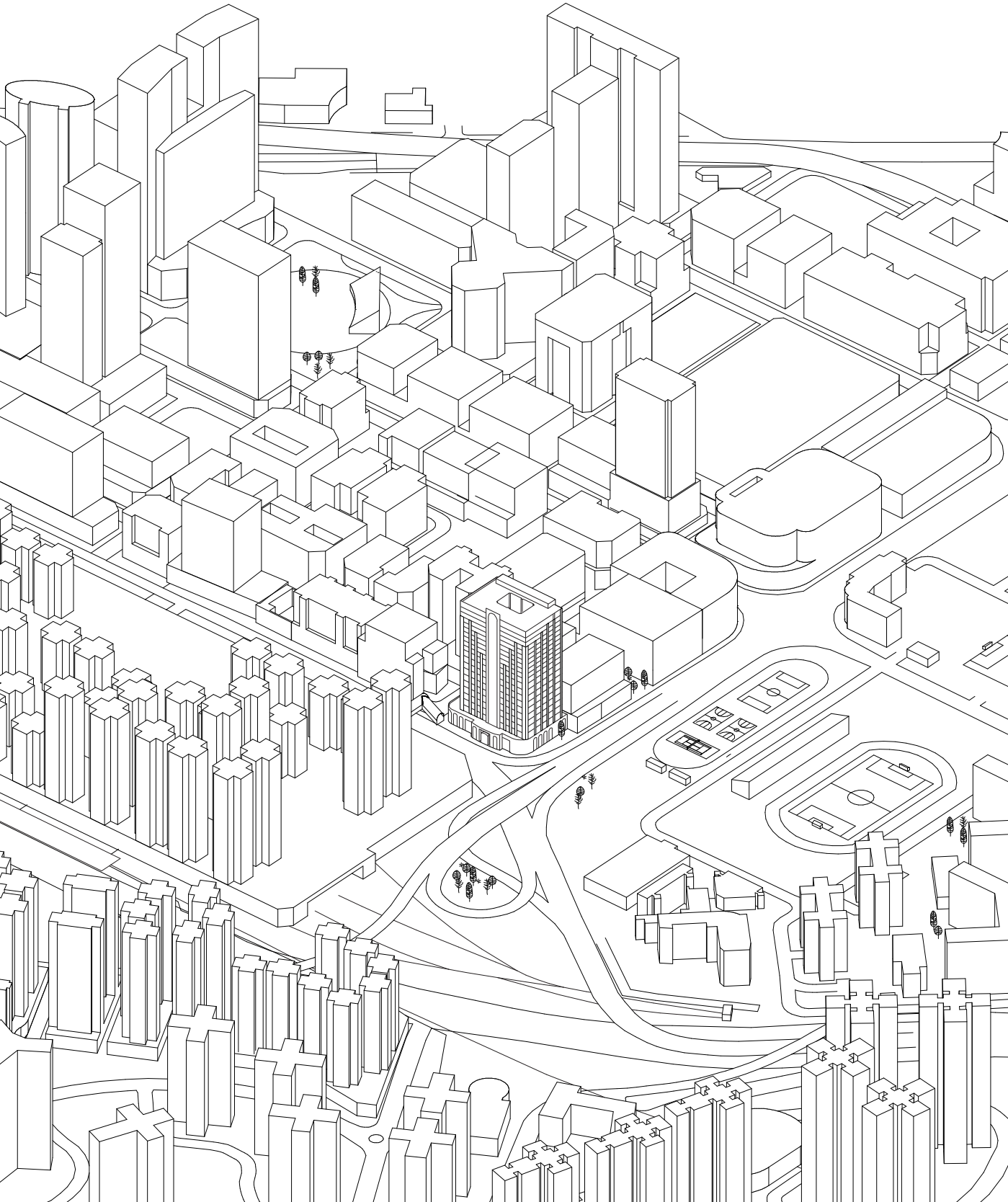
IV.I
TRANSFORMATION, OR THE DIFFICULT WHOLE

Steady change is inherent to every city. Yet, it is its extraordinary pace and its ruthlessness that distinguishes Hong Kong's urban transformation, to the extent that permanent change supersedes identity. The ongoing processes in Kowloon Bay are an exemplary implementation of Hong Kong's current purely economic approach to architecture and its city structure, regardless of the inherent intangible value that is collective memory.
Yet, architecture, in principle, is obligated to collective memory. Its duty is to provide permanence within the continuous transformation. As Robert Venturi argues, architecture is complex and contradictory; a "difficult unity of inclusion rather than the easy unity of exclusion;"[152] "evolutionary as well as revolutionary. As an art, it will acknowledge what is and what ought to be, the immediate and the speculative."[153] In this sense, architecture is a manifestation of both collective memory and evolution. The challenge, especially in an 'espace conçu' like Kowloon Bay, is to translate this contradiction in architecture; to enrich existing elements and their inherent associations with new meaning, instead of haunting for the ever-new.

The following project approaches the ordinary, the seemingly obsolete in architecture. Its intention is to examine and debate the relevance and prospect of architecture in this very complex context. Based on a re-interpretation of the existing and its architectural vocabulary, the aim is to maintain or rather establish a continuous dialogue within the built structure of the city; between past and future, permanence and evolution, collective memory and constant change. Accordingly, the selection of METRO CENTRE II as venue and basis for the architectural intervention and implementation of the theoretical preliminary work was almost intentional. It is one of Hong Kong's decaying Vertical Urban Factories.

152 Venturi 1977², 16.
153 Ibid, 42.





IV.

Address: 21 Lam Hing Street, Kowloon Bay, Kowloon
Year of completion: 1992
Stratified Ownership
Floors: 22 / Height: 101m
Structural material: concrete
Typical Floor area: 1.995m²
Rent/m²: HK$ 160/month
Use: commercial office, light industry, warehouse

IV.II
METRO CENTRE II

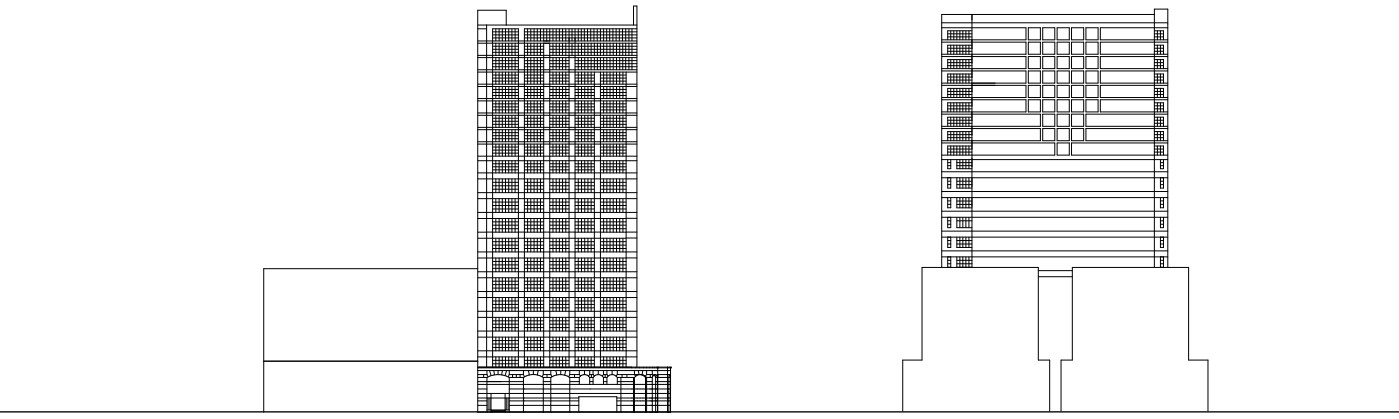
URBAN SETTING

Ngau Tau Kok Industrial Area, with its light as well as heavy industry next to office towers, schools and parks, is heterogenous in use and built form. Its urban structure has gradually grown and constantly, yet in parts, transformed since its development in the 1950s. Today, the area displays both a lively neighbourhood and an exemplary cross section through Hong Kong's recent architectural history.
This heterogeneity is contrasted by the monotony and bigness of the emerging housing developments surrounding the area. Built in 1979, Kowloon Bay Station with Telford Gardens – the first residential property developed by the MTR Corporation[155] – on top, marks the beginning of this now dominant and increasingly generic building culture that is only progressing in terms of height and bigness.

Since the declaration of the development plan for 'Central Business District 2', with new zoning ordinances and height regulations for the industrial neighbourhood, the speed and ruthlessness of urban transformation has increased. Under the pressure of real estate market, impelled by the highly promising prospects for the area, the few still remaining architectural evidences of a past are, in fact, all facing eradication and in order to be replaced by a most innovative, still most insignificant high-rise tower.

As opposed to the surrounding "genericness", the relatively small scale urban fabric of Ngau Tau Kok Industrial Area – soon to be called Kowloon Bay Business Area – with its grid of urban blocks, however, still bears great potential for a more sensitive architectural intervention.
Metro Centre II is strategically well located at the intersection of both two highways (Kai Chung Road and Wai Yip Street) and a footbridge network, connecting the neighbourhood with Kowloon Bay Station and Kowloon Bay Sports Ground. Moreover, Lam Hing Street, as an impasse ending at Metro Centre II has promising potential for further pedestrian developments.

155 Wikipedia / Kowloon_Bay_Station [25.05.2017]



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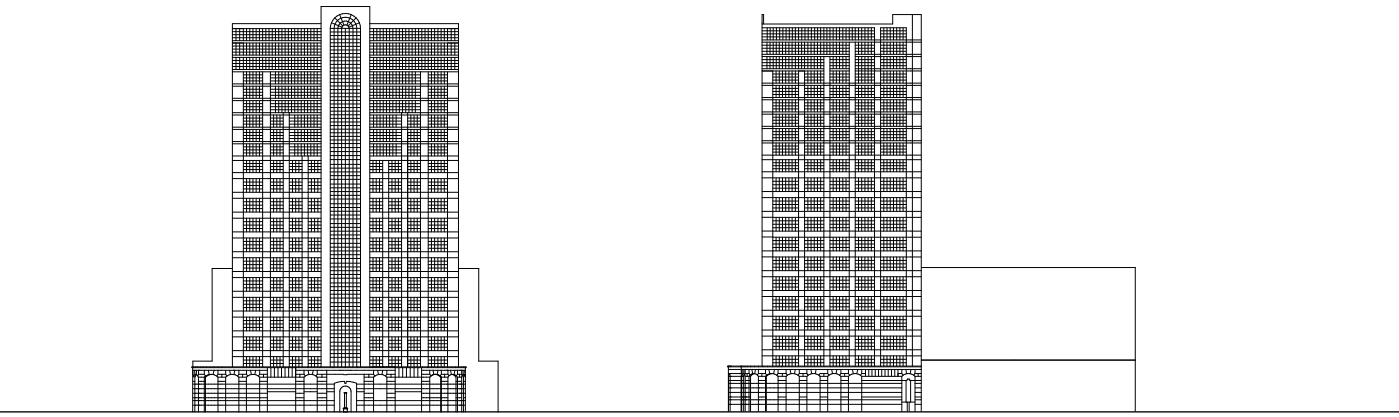
- Metro Centre II — Elevations 1:2000 -



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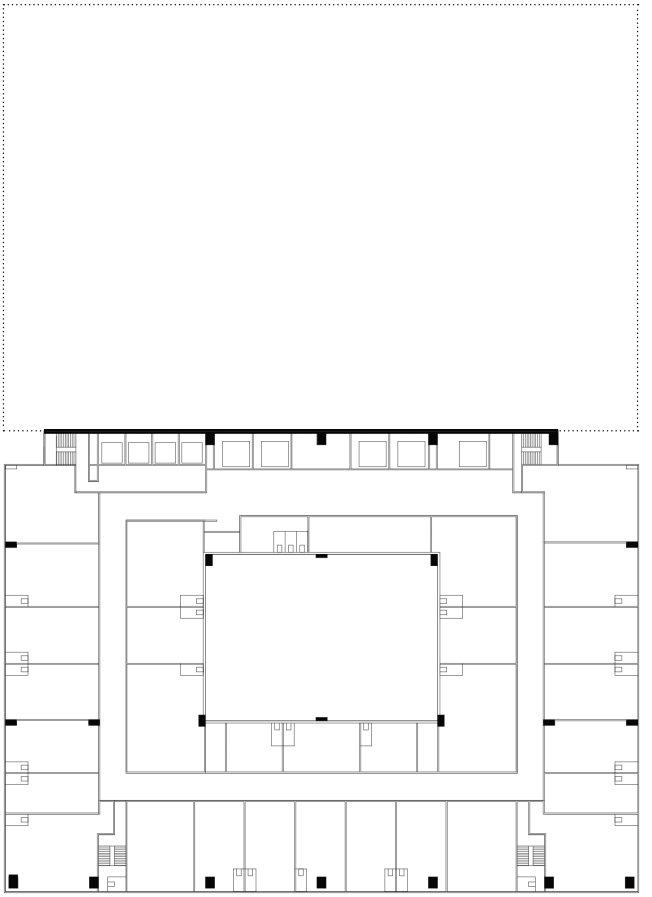


- Metro Centre II — Standard Floor -

BLOCK

Completed in 1992, Metro Centre II together with Metro Centre I were the first vertical factories (=towers) in the otherwise low-rise industrial area. By replacing one of the resembled factories within the grid, Metro Centre II split its block, which originally consisted of two more or less equal buildings, into two unequal, unrelated parts. The exposed concrete slab, which contains the tower's vertical access, is denoting the ambivalent state of the block and connoting a void at its opposite side.

TYPOLOGY

The building itself is a hybrid of both a massive block, alike its neighbouring factories, and the previously introduced podium and tower-typology.

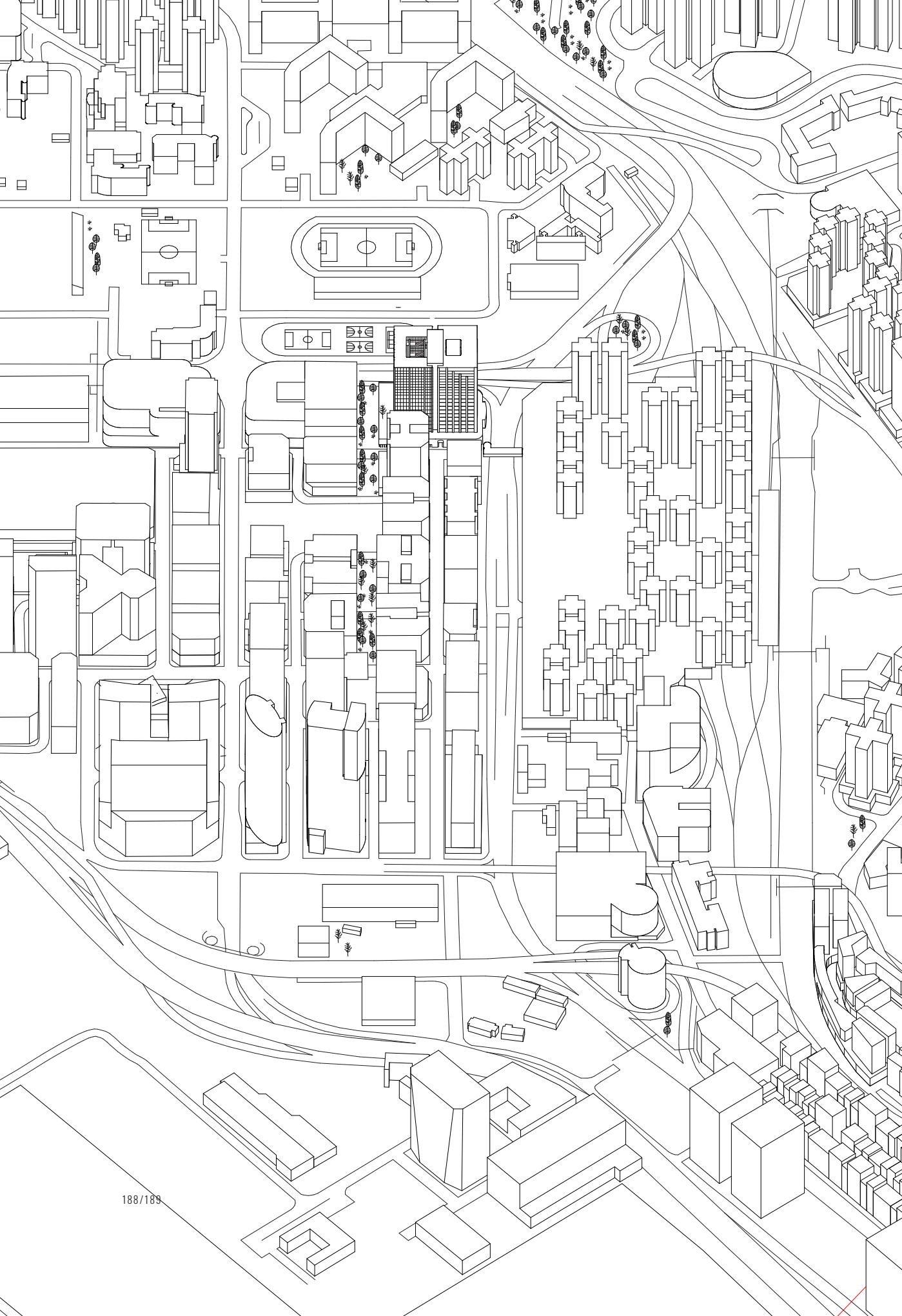
It is composed of three clearly distinguishable parts: a podium with a massive tower on top, and the almost autonomous slab of vertical access. The podium is very atypical: it is, in fact, a disguised parking garage, while public access is limited to the lobby, guarded by a concierge. The tower and main component of the building, in contrast to most other high-rise towers [II.III PENCIL TOWERS] in Hong Kong, is massive, even for a vertical factory, and its consequential atrium is not less a rarity throughout the city. Covered with a façade that is seemingly an unintentional mix of contradictory ornaments and architectural features, the factory's apparel speaks for itself as well as for the specific time it derived from.

PROGRAMMATION

Metro Centre II was built, when Hong Kong industry was already halfway through outsourcing its production. In this sense, its kind might be considered as a second-generation of vertical factory; designed to serve, if any, only light industry, as well as the arising business sector and small-scale entrepreneurialism. Accordingly, Metro Centre II contains a heterogeneous mix of use and a variety of both industries and businesses that resulted in a diverse spatial appropriation of each floor. The programmation of the building and its façade are in no direct relation to each other, quite the contrary: the subdivision of space is totally detached from the façade grid. As a neutralized, anonymous shell it is exemplary for an architectural lobotomy[156], as determined by Rem Koolhaas.

156 Cf. Koolhaas 1999, 97.

HONG KONG TWIN FACTORY



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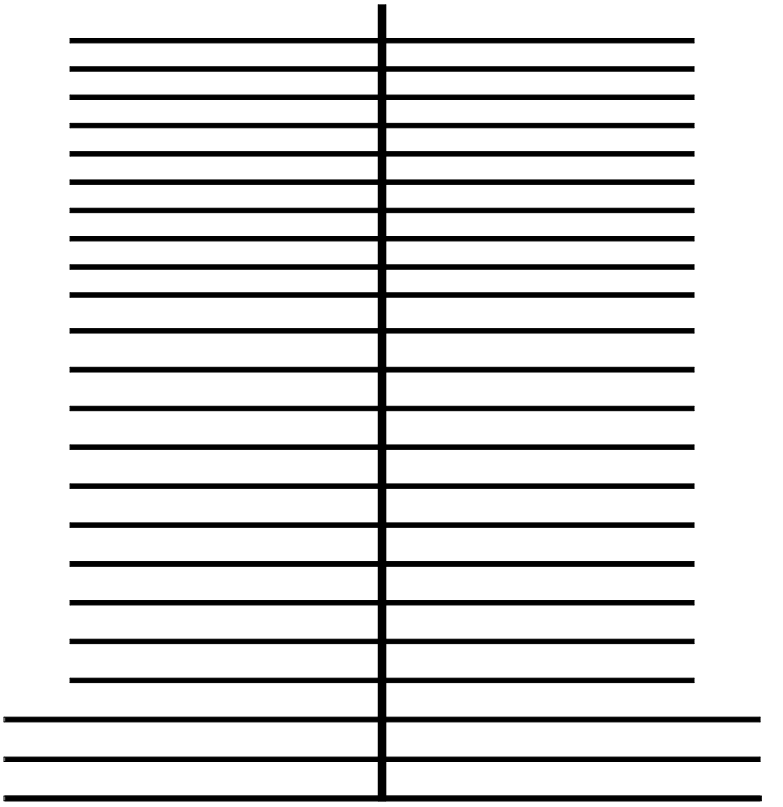


- Sectional Diagramme -

IV.III
TWIN FACTORY

DISPLAY

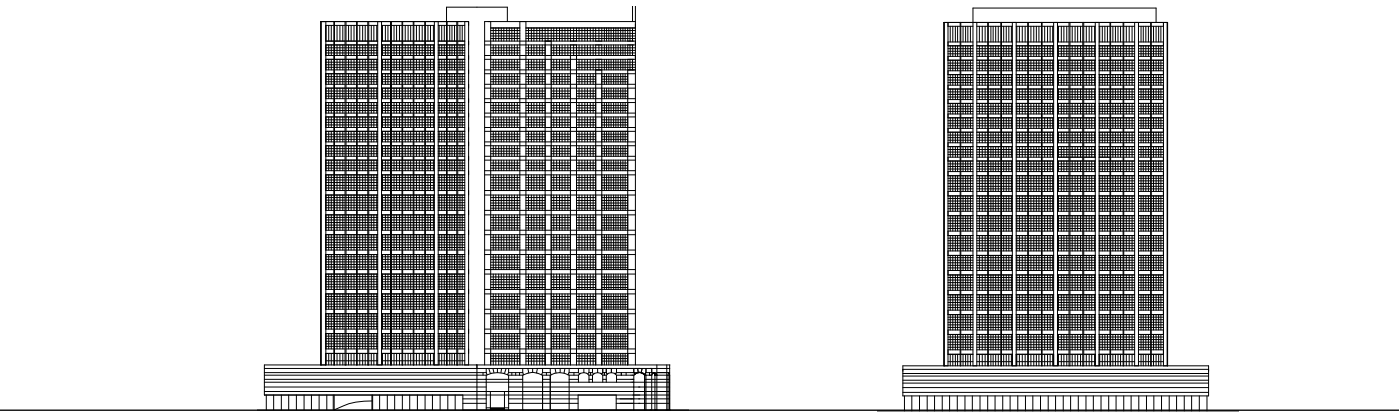
The concept and architectural essence of Twin Factory is to display and re-frame Metro Centre II as it is. Instead of intervening the existing, the project provides a display that changes the way the existing is perceived. In this sense, contextualism is used as a preservative tool: By interpreting the existing, even if ordinary, as culturally significant, the used method is an approach to save architecture from obsolescence. The preservative aspect of the project relates very much to John Ruskin's belief that *"restoration is impossible. [...] let a building ruin, and by doing so, respect it as much as possible."*[157]

TWIN

Instead of an architectural upgrading, the existing building is complemented by an almost identical twin – a contemporary interpretation of its typology in form of a mirrored copy, reduced to its essential architectural statement. Referring to Marcel Duchamp's 'Ready-mades', monumentality is suggested by reproduction.
This resulting assembly of old and new provokes a direct comparison, which reveals both historical and contemporary, architectural as well as cultural contexts. It relates to both typology and topology.
While each of them speaks for a specific time, as inseparable couple both buildings form, from here on, a dialogic entity. The relevance of each of them is directly dependent on the other and only tangible in relation to the other. However, the preserved object itself is (still) not defining, nor is the new. Each of the twins inflects toward a greater whole outside itself, analogous to Piazza del Popolo's twin churches, as analysed by Robert Venturi. Each of the fragmental twin towers is complete at the level of programme but incomplete in the expression of form.[158]

"An architecture that can simultaneously recognize contradictory levels should be able to admit the paradox of the whole fragment: the building which is a whole at one level and a fragment of a greater whole at another level."[159]

157 John Ruskin quoted by Van Gerrewey, in: Engels/Grootveld 2016, 33.
158 Cf. Venturi 1977², 102.
159 Venturi 1977², 102.



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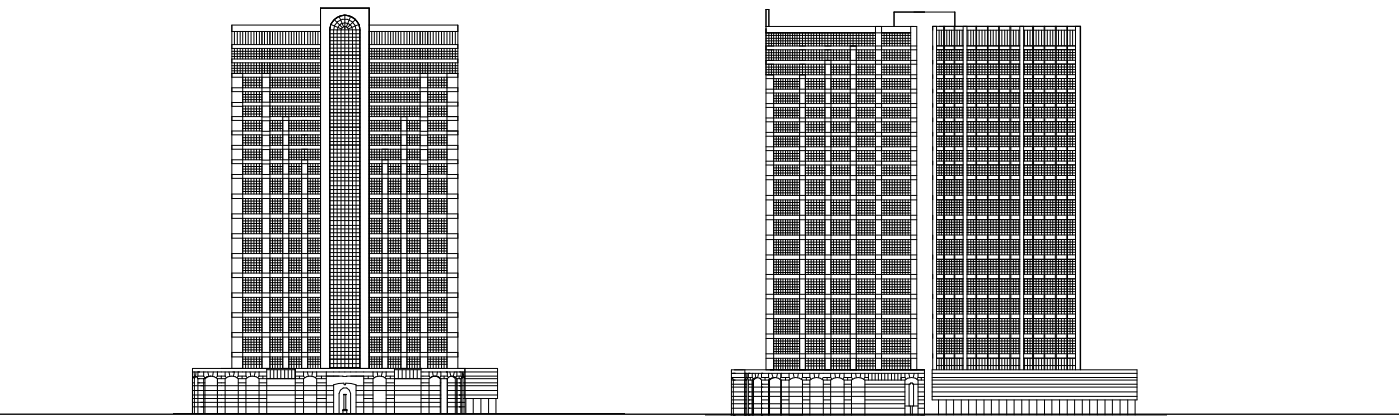
- Twin Factory — Elevations (Structure & Detail) 1:2000 -



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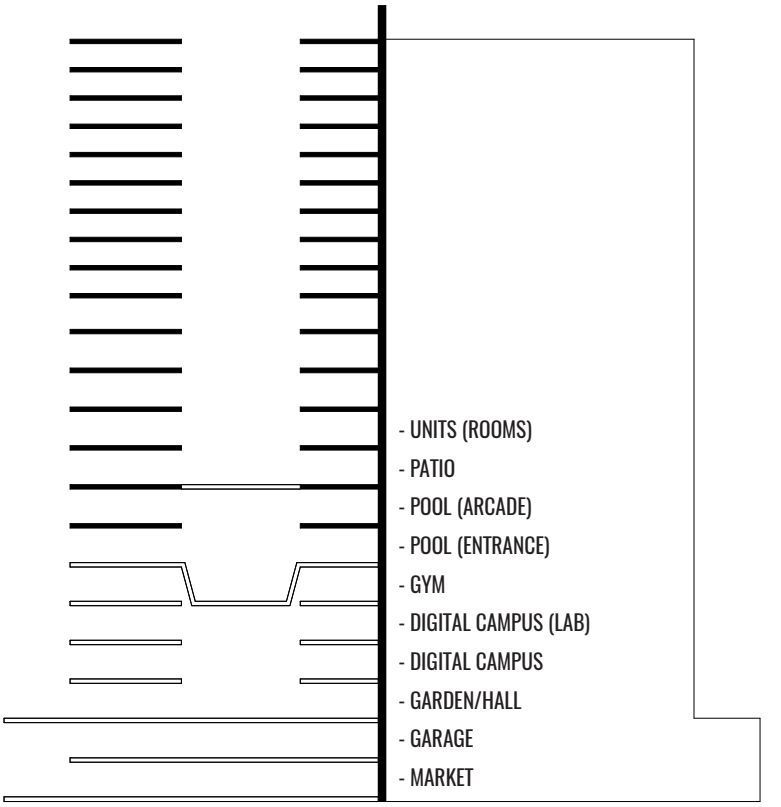


- Programmation -

REFERENCES

#podium+tower #gallery typology #flexible layout #entrepreneurialism #interconnection #multi-level-activity #market #street-life #free-wi-fi / #unit #corridor #fireplace #escalator #elevator

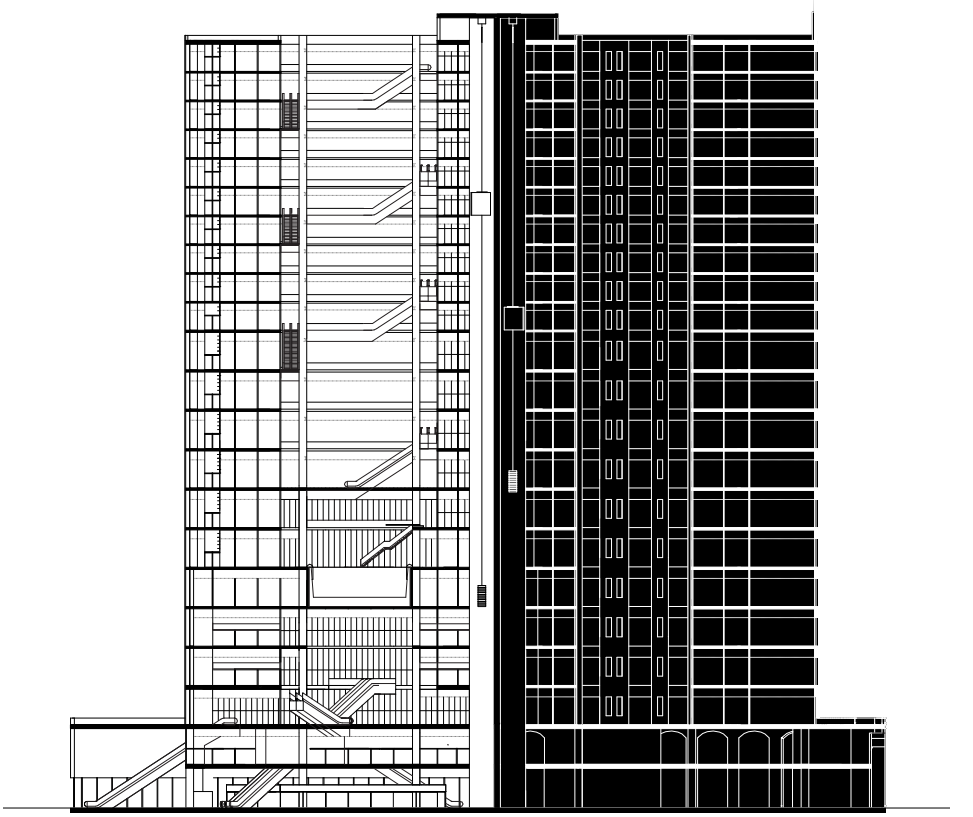
RE-INTERPRETATION/PROGRAMMATION

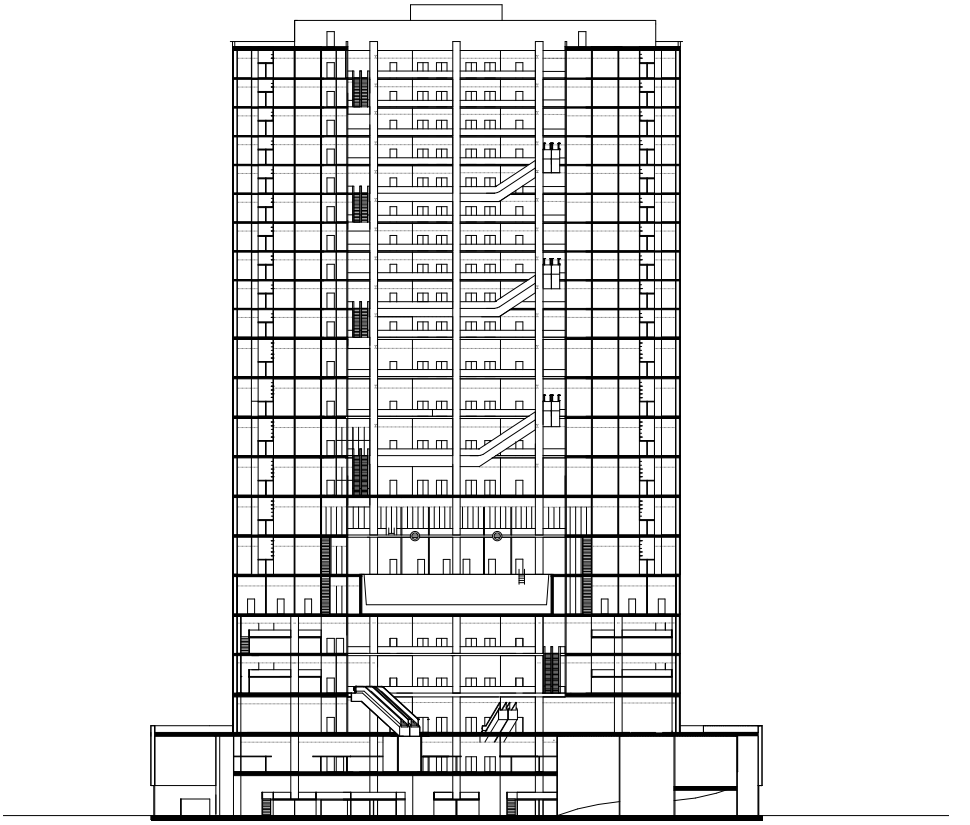
The contemporary productive factory is automated, and commodities are produced by machines and robots. At the same time, the common man's work has become independent in terms of space, but his professional success is dependent on knowledge, information, and constant innovation. Most importantly, he has to be flexible enough to follow the steady flow of jobs.
Thanks to automatization, spaces of (human) production can or do not have to be separated from spaces of reproduction anymore, as human production is no longer dependent on the equipment and spatial confines of a factory. The worker can 'produce' from everywhere. Time has become his own, too, which means he can work all the time or part-time. However, this freedom of automatization also implies "that leisure time is spent on the same machines (computers) as those used to perform work activities."[160]

A suitable environment for the rising culture of nomadism and entrepreneurs is one that offers space for both production *and* reproduction[161] within the same spatial confine; a flexible social factory, or – to use another Koolhaas-term – a "social condenser"[162] that is in a symbiotic relationship with its cultural context (the city), as an active part of the chain of production, consumption and reproduction.

Domesticity of production as well as entrepreneurialism, as previously argued [III.II HONG KONG FACTORY], already is an inherent part of Hong Kong's society and culture. Twin Factory simply re-thinks the (local) concept of living and working in symbiosis that is based on the modular layouts, and adapts it for contemporary use.
Accordingly, in terms of spatial programme, the re-interpreted factory floors — UNITS that merge living and working — are complemented by re-creational facilities (GYM and POOL) as well as a public DIGITAL CAMPUS that offers informal office space and diverse multimedia facilities like a photo- and video-lab. FREE WI-FI, the new basis for both work and social interaction, is provided throughout the building.

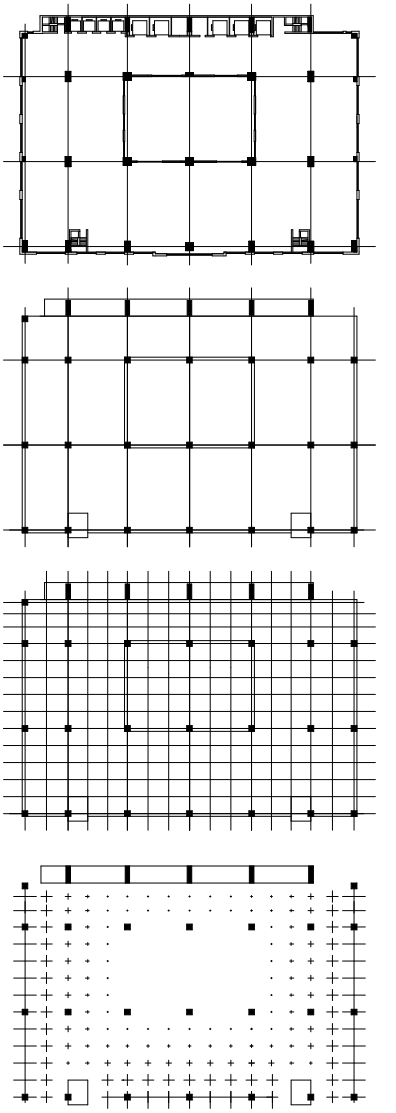
160 Rappaport 2015, 199.
161 referring to Hannah Arendt's terminology of production vs. reproduction; Cf. Arendt 1958
162 Koolhaas 1999, 155.





- l: Longitudinal section, 1:750
- r: Cross section, 1:750

IV.



- Layout-(De-)Composition -

ABSTRACTION

Twin Factory is, essentially, the mere reflection of Metro Centre II. However, the mirrored form is decomposed by a radical abstraction, that reveals its most basic architectural essence: columns and slabs. Through this abstraction, the formerly ambiguous and contingent form is translated into a structure that is resolutely valid in itself, but, at the same time, translates the adjacent Metro Centre II into something readable. The resulting grid, subsequently, serves as basis for both horizontal (plan) as well as vertical (façade) spatial organization.

REFLECTION

"The mirror is, after all, a utopia, since it is a placeless place. In the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself. That enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy. From the standpoint of the mirror I discover my absence from the place where I am since I see myself over there. Starting from this gaze that is, as it were, directed toward me, from the ground this virtual space that is on the other side of the glass, I come back toward myself; I begin again to direct my eyes toward myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am. The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived, it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there."[163]

Together, the two factories, or rather their projection, display an almost symmetric formal synergy, even though differing in programmation. A threshold in form of a decent opening in the mirror-plane provides an interconnection between the two factories on selected floors. With this mirrored threshold, the concept of reflection becomes physical. In this way, both factories can perceive themselves in analogy to the introspection declared by psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's "Mirror stage."[164] Or – referring to Michel Foucault – each factory is a heterotopia of the other.

163 Foucault (1967), in: Barck 1992, 40.
164 Cf. Wikipedia/Mirror Stage [31.08.2017]

P1—Market

P2—Garage

P3—Garden/Hall

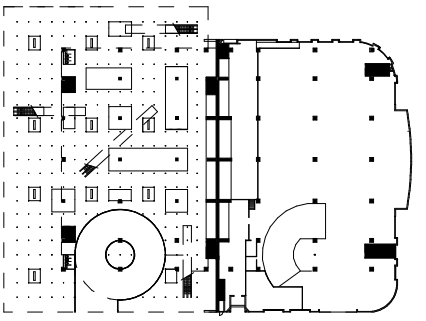
T1—Digital Campus

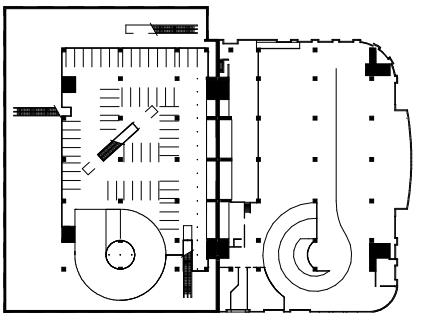
T2—Digital Campus (Lab)

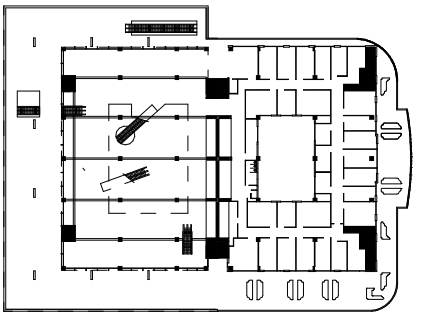
T3—Gym

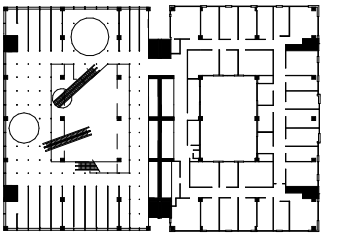
T4—Pool

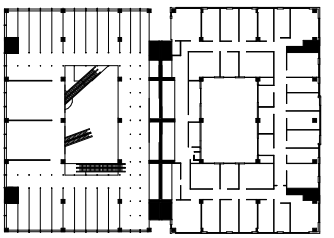
T6^—Units

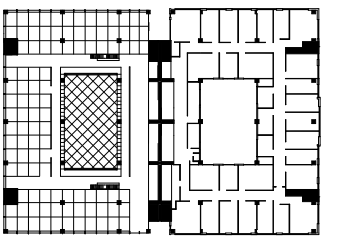


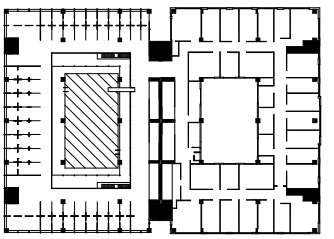


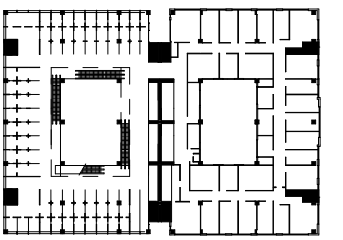




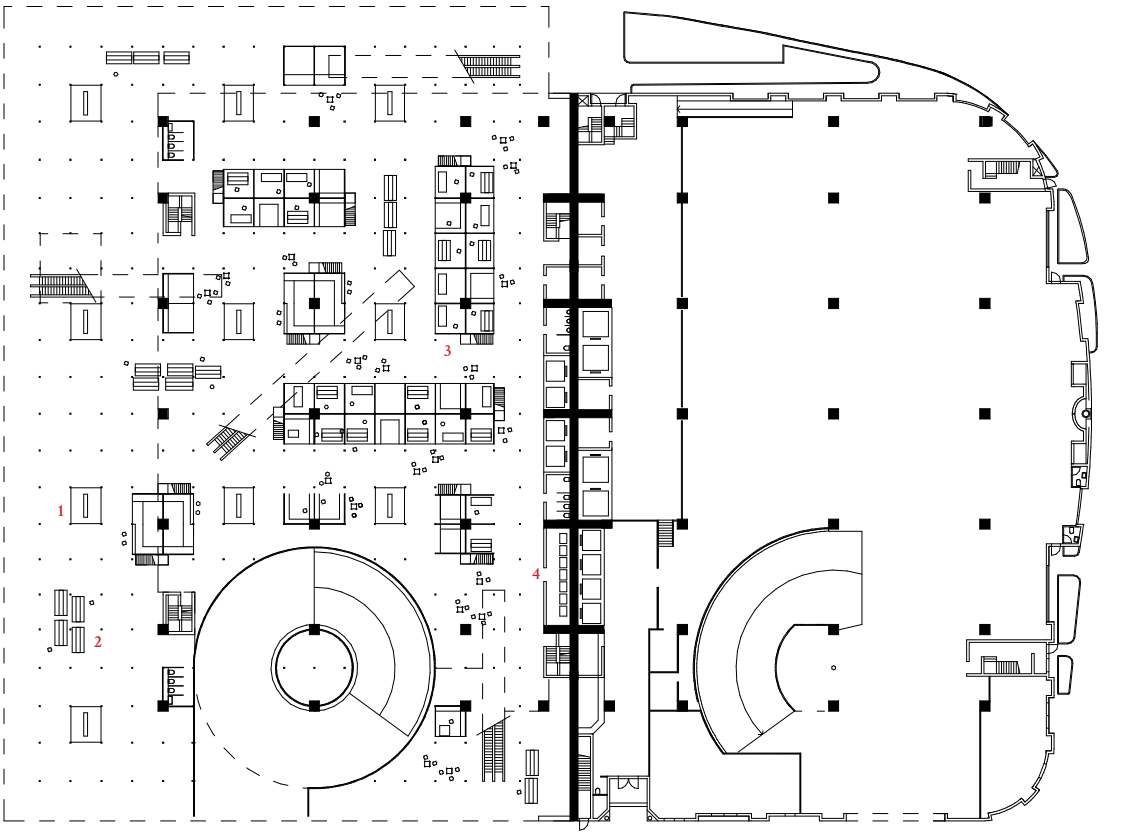






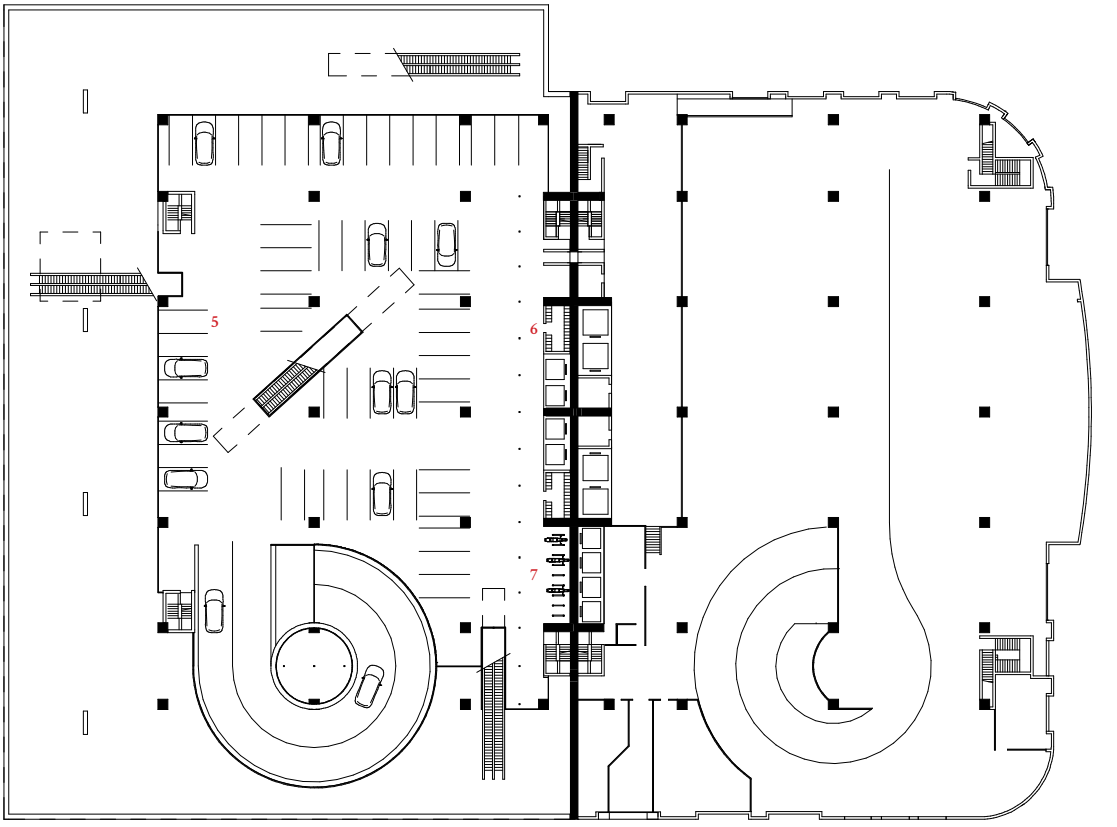


„Twins“ — Conceptional Floor Plans 1:2000

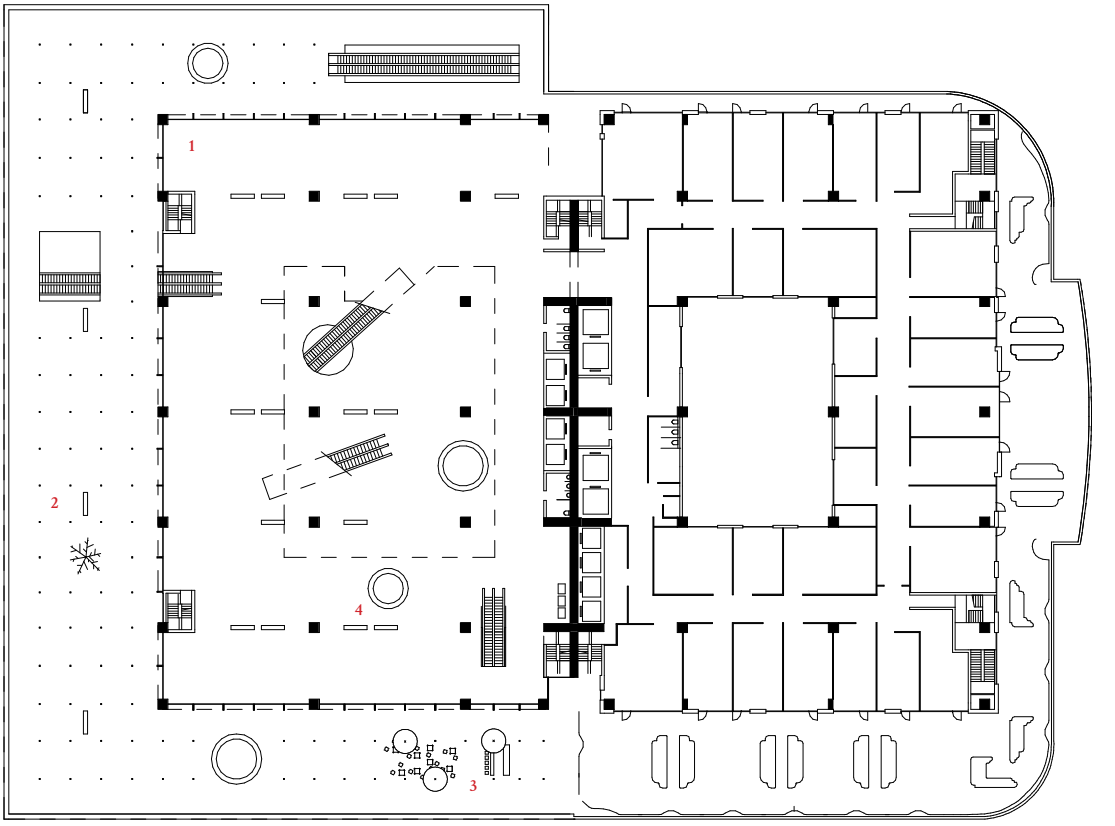


P1—Market (+0.00)—1:750

programme key:
1 benches
2 rack stalls
3 fixed stalls with terrace on top
4 recycling zone
5 multi-parker
6 storage
7 bycicle/e-scooter station

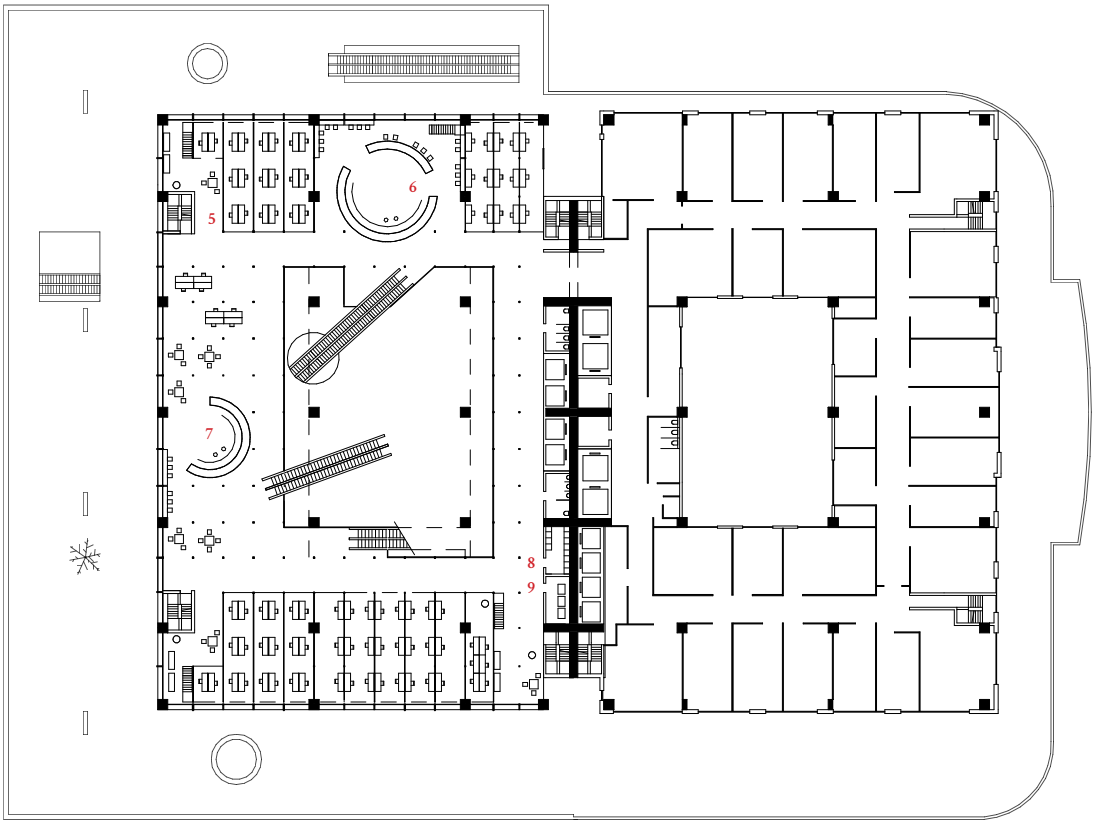


P2—Garage (+5.50)—1:750

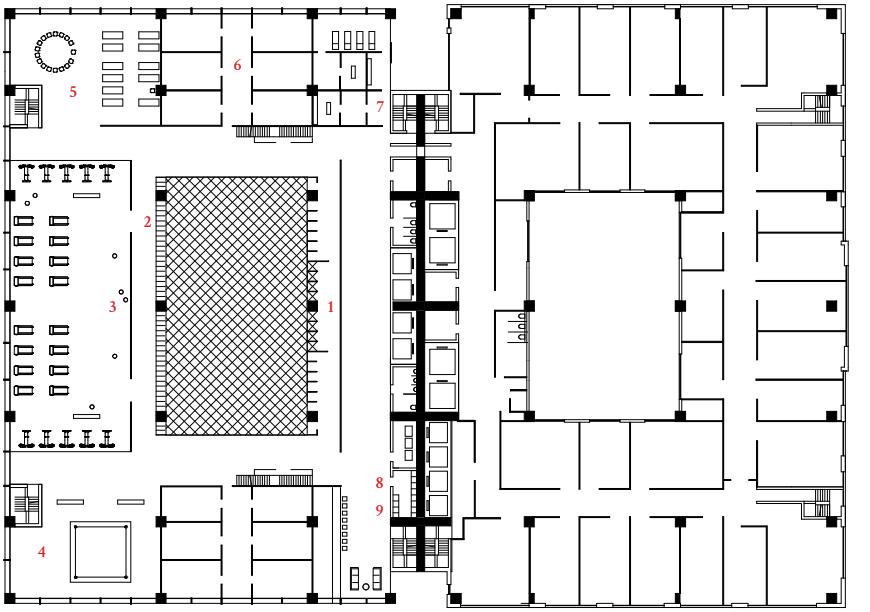


P3—Garden/Hall (+11.00)—1:750

programme key:
1 multipurpose hall/exhibition space
2 garden
3 bar
4 benches
5 work-spaces, two-storeyed
6 exchange café
7 infopoint
8 lockers
9 recycling station

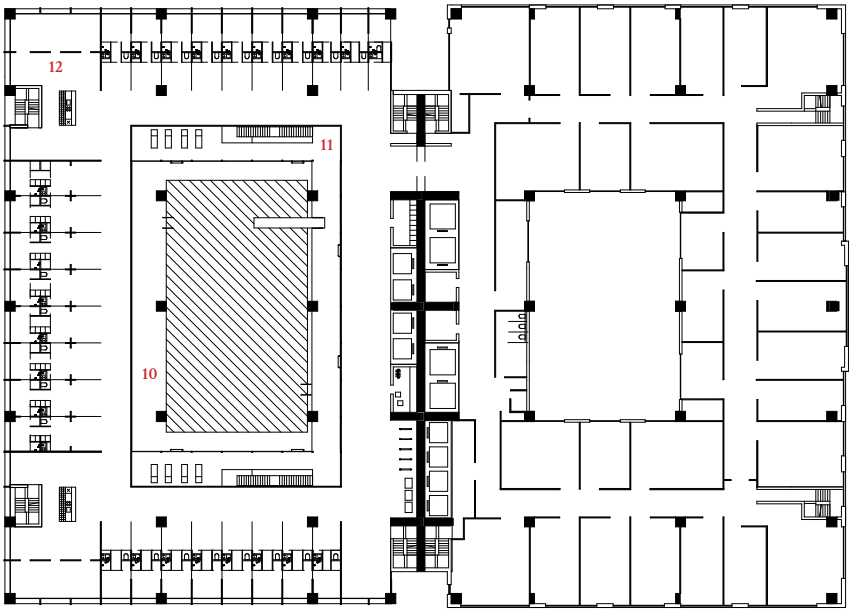


T1—Digital Campus (+15.25)—1:750



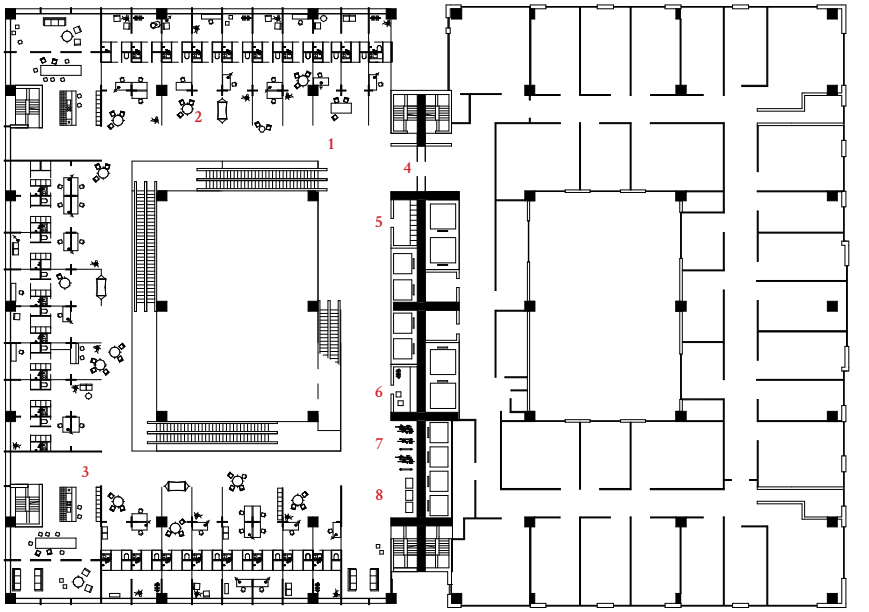
T3—Gym (+25.75)—1:750

programme key:
1 showers/changing rooms
2 lockers
3 gym
4 boxing ring
5 yoga studio
6 gymnastic rooms
7 sauna/spa
8 storage
9 oyster bar
10 pool (below)
11 arcades
12 common area

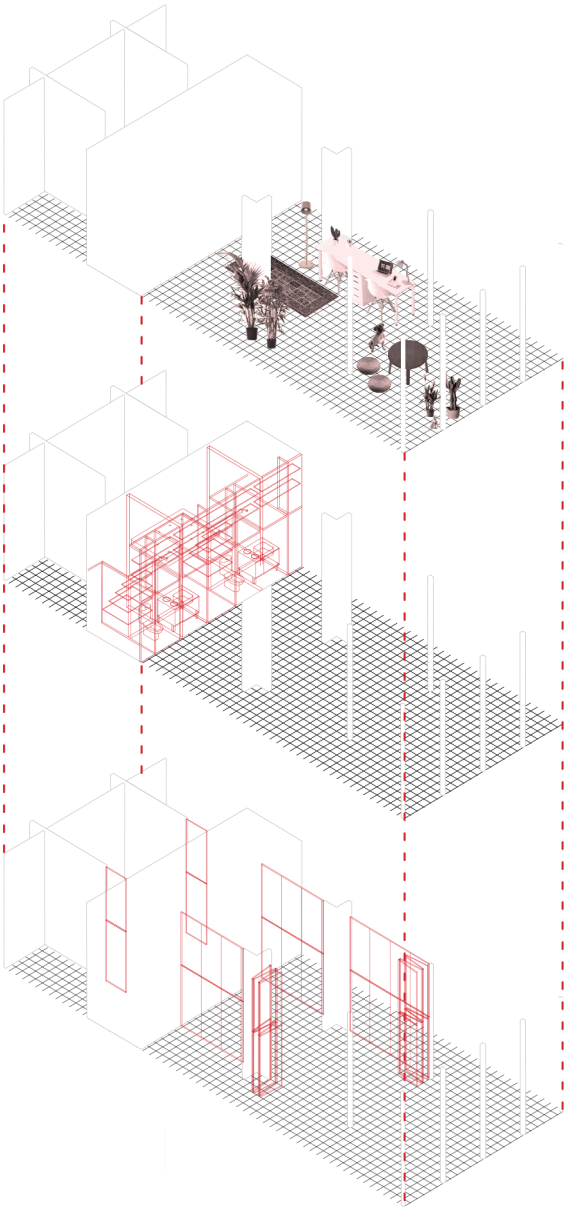


T5—Pool, arcades (+36.25)—1:750

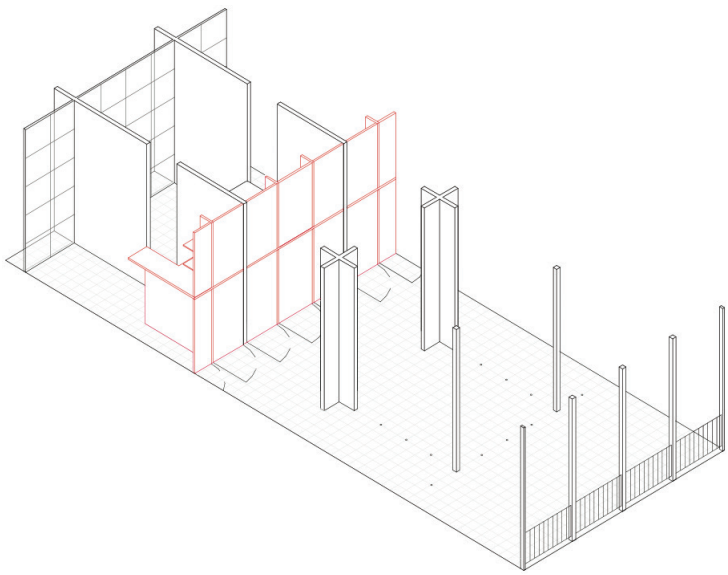
programme key:
1—corridor
2—units
3—common area
4—mirrored treshhold
5—storage
6—laundry room
7—bycicle/e-roller station
8—recycling zone



T6^—Units, Standard Floor (+41.50^)—1:750

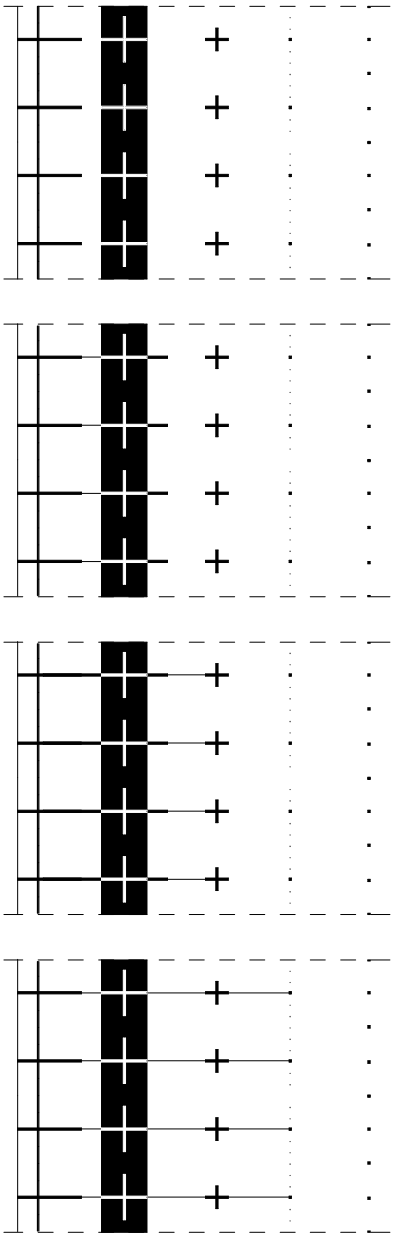


UNIT



[Fragmented] Isometry

IV.



- Levels of Privacy -

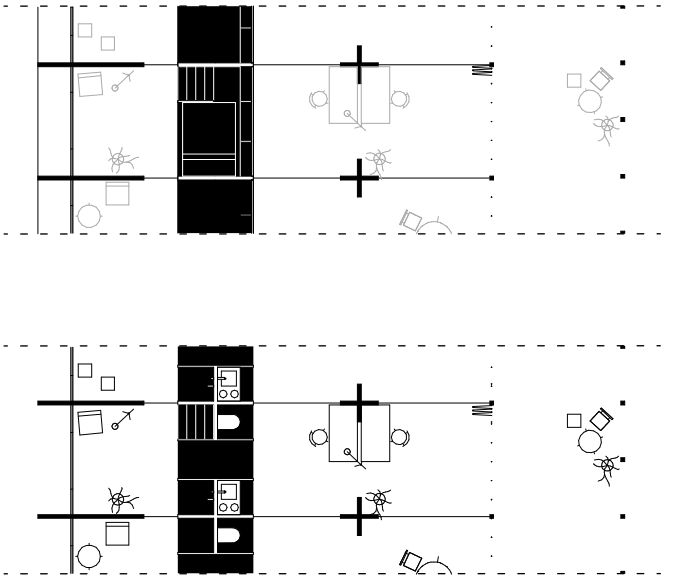
WORK—EAT—RETREAT

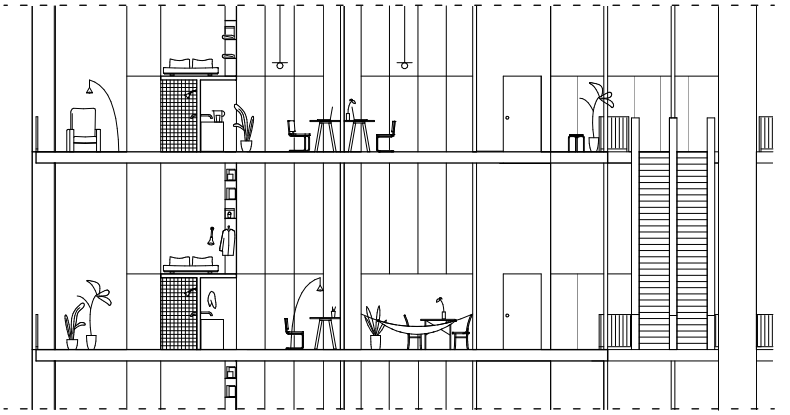
The offered space of the actual factory goes beyond the distinction between living and working, but merges them. Divided by spatial claps that open-up towards the centre, the reorganized factory floor consists of three conditions: an individual space (room) facing the outside, a workspace in-between (office) and a shared space towards the corridor, namely and in order of enclosure: retreat-work-eat. The level of physical enclosure by the structure simultaneously represents the level of offered privacy.

Despite the organizational idea, the given architectural structure is still reduced to a minimum, in order to provide an (almost) universal space. The layout is, indeed, highly flexible, and not rigidly defined, as units can be interconnected or separated, allowing inhabitants to appropriate space according to their needs. Accordingly, it can be adapted for different living structures, be it a single person, a couple or a family, depending on the combination of rooms.

—

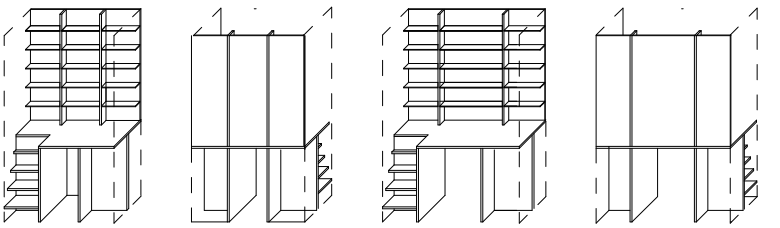
The programmation of Twin Factory is inspired by a handfull of contemporary pioneer concepts on present or future living and/or working environments. These references and images are consciously re-used and appropriated as tool for the design process, but also as tool to communicate content on a semantic level. However, Twin Factory is, above all, result of the intense examination and interpretation of Hong Kong, of a specific typology within a specific topos.



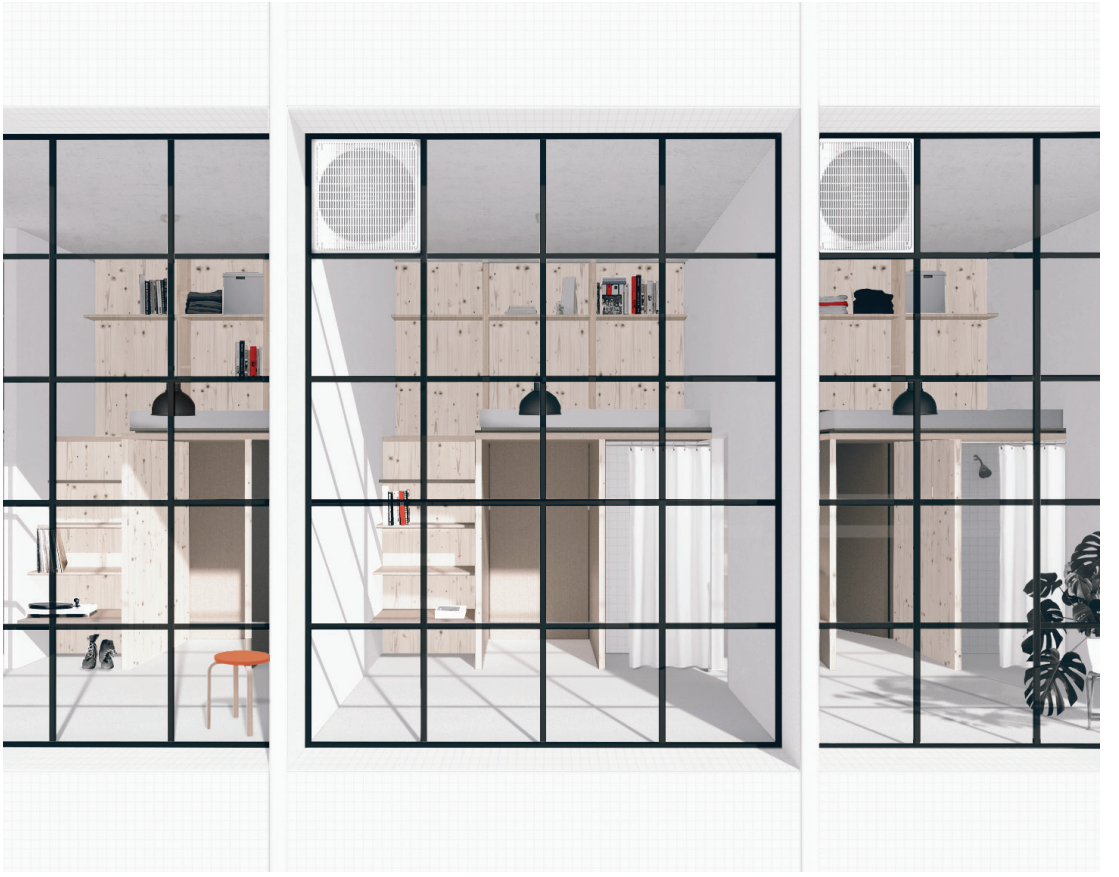


l (above): Unit/Two-storeyed Layout 1:200
r: Unit/Section 1:200

Retreat



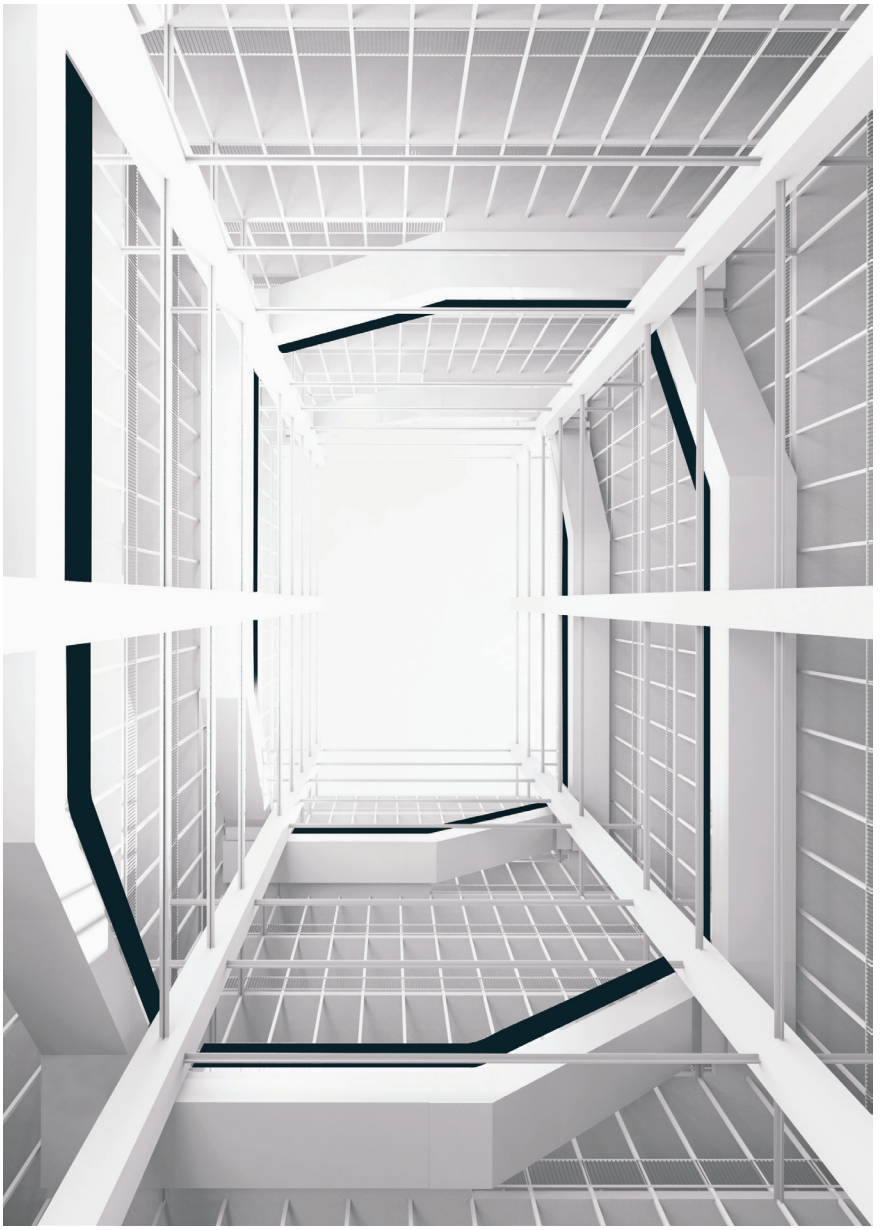
Furniture



Work+Eat

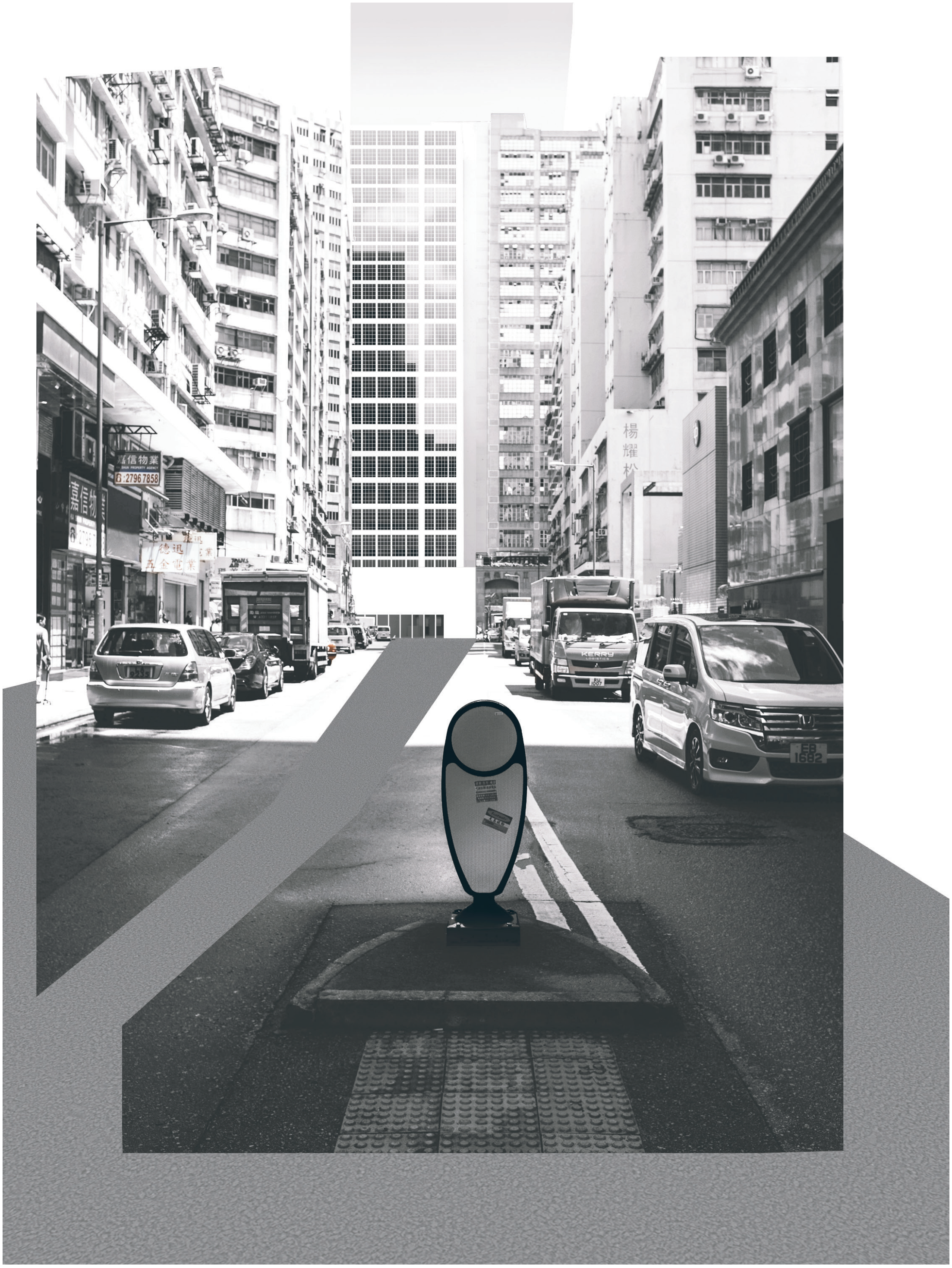
Escalator band

Patio



Market

Twins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APPENDIX

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80/81 ***Plans of Mei Ho House***
are drawn on basis of measurements and photographs taken by the author and at Mei Ho House, October 2016

66 ***Resettlement Block (Mark I), Shek Kip Mei, 1964:***
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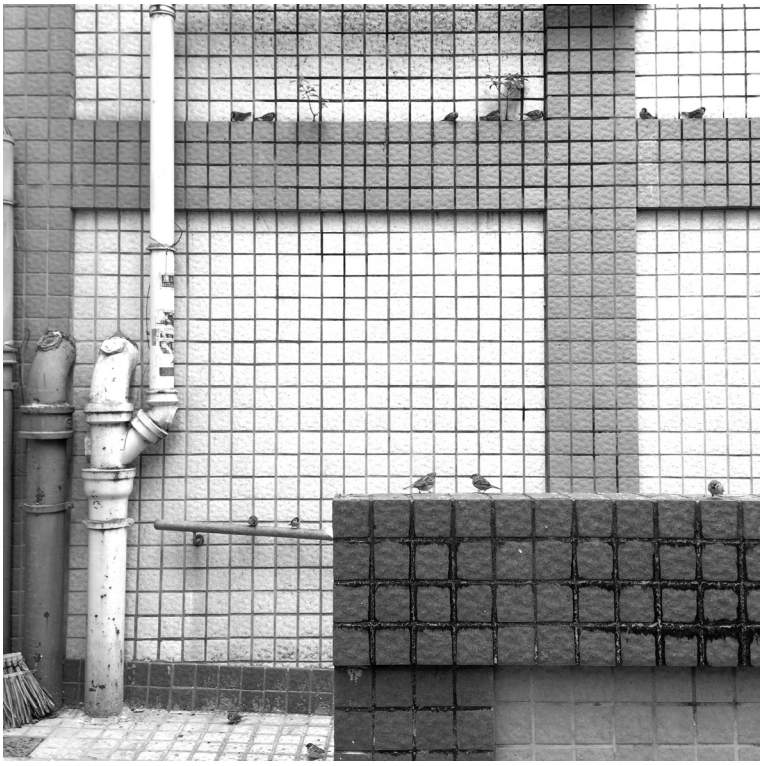

118 ***Festival Walk:***
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120 ***Ladder Street:***
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124 ***Mid-Level-Escalator, inside:***
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130 ***IFC International Finance Centre, aerial view***
Google Earth [04.09.2017]

135 ***Maximum Circulation = Maximum Sales Volume***
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146 ***Typological Evolution of Hong Kong Industrial Factories***
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155—163, 165—175 ***Ngau Tau Kok Industrial Area / Photo Essay***
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186 ***Aerial View of Metro Centre II***
Google Earth [04.09.2017]

190 ***Floor Plan of Metro Centre II***
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