

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

In Chapter 5, the compatibility of eight modern landscape design techniques and Feng Shui applications was supported by the results from the questionnaire survey. Most of the results revealed a similarity between the respondents' answers of the eight techniques questions and the solutions developed by Feng Shui applications.

This demonstrates that collaborations of Feng Shui application and modern landscape design, could result in: 1) satisfying the clients' insistence that Feng Shui be used in the design; and 2) enhancing the spiritual quality of design by architects using modern landscape design techniques.

This chapter has three parts.

Part One is the summary of the results. In this part, the applicability of Feng Shui is addressed including the limitations of this research due to the possible errors arising from the questionnaire survey, sample or the drawings design used in the questionnaire.

Part Two is the recommendations of this research, which are divided into two options. The options are based upon the level of willingness of architects to include Feng Shui applications in their designs.

Part Three is the conclusion of this research and suggestion for further research.

6.1 Summary of the Results

It is believed that natural geographical features can induce prosperous *Living Qi*, especially, mountainous landscape, which is considered the most favorable environment with respect to a traditional belief. However, in the current context, many of the landscapes are not mountainous. Therefore, it is necessary to increase *Living Qi* where the geographical forms and features are not the best. As civilization

grows and people continue to reshape the landscape with roads and buildings, traditional Feng Shui practice has to adapt in the modern context of a landscape design while maintaining the ancient values. For this reason, solutions based on Feng Shui application that conform to the practice of modern landscape design are necessary.

The aforementioned reasons led to the consideration of contemporary applicability of Feng Shui practice in this research. The compatibilities of both modern landscape design and Feng Shui practice have been studied, seeking alternative strategies to induce *Qi* in garden landscapes using modern approaches. Nonetheless, the applicability of the results from this research depends on the reliability of and validity for this research, which are:

- The representation of the solutions that were mainly based on the layout and arrangement of traditional Vietnamese garden. Since, the researcher and all the respondents are Vietnamese; there might be common cultural understanding among all people of the same locale and culture. Therefore, the compatibility may partly be a result of familiarity for the traditional environments.
- The interpretations of the Feng Shui application into the diagrams for each question were done by the researchers who were trained as modern architects. Therefore, the solution might be biased toward the modern solutions.
- The respondents, although not trained in Feng Shui, may be frequently exposed to the Feng Shui solution. Therefore, they may tend to select Feng Shui solutions rather than modern techniques.

The results from the analysis of the questionnaire have also revealed some unexpected discrepancies in the results, some with different ranking of answers from the expected patterns of Feng Shui rank (question 4, 8, 9, 12, 16, 19, 20, and 21). Some questions may be unclear by either the description or the solutions. Moreover, some questions proposed more than the normal three-choice questions. More choices

increase the confusion leading to a variety of ranking patterns (question 12, 20, 21, and 22).

Notwithstanding some minor discrepancies in the results, this research has proven successful in the compatibility test. 16 out of 24 questions yielded a complete match between the rank of the respondents and the Feng Shui rank, while 8 questions showed a partial match. The satisfactory results from the exploration of the compatibility using the preferences of practicing architects represent current practices in the context of Hué. The findings of this research helps formulate recommendations for architects to apply in their practice of modern landscape design. However, the recommendations from this research will be limited to the principles of the Form School in Feng Shui, since this research only dealt with and supported the compatibility of Form School applications.

6.2 Modern Landscape Design and Feng Shui Practice Recommendations

Architects are trained to practice modern landscape design based on the contemporary standards, practicing and using techniques which are at wide variance with Feng Shui applications. However, as demonstrated in Chapter 5, the compatibility between modern landscape techniques and Feng Shui applications supports the possibility of architects using modern landscape design techniques to achieve the effects of Feng Shui applications. Doing so, they can meet their clients' demands for Feng Shui values in their garden landscape projects.

The simple implementation for an architect is to cooperate with a Feng Shui consultant who would work alongside the architect as projects were designed and implemented.

The more advanced position regarding Feng Shui application is where an architect would study and understand basic Feng Shui applications and could achieve them using modern landscape design techniques such as the eight techniques discussed in this research. This position will satisfy the clients' demand for Feng Shui

solutions and at the same time gives the architect more freedom in the working conditions.

6.2.1 Cooperation with Feng Shui consultants during the design process

Normally, a Vietnamese architect works independently in the design process without reference to any Feng Shui consultant. When the design is completed, the plan is then reviewed by a Feng Shui consultant, who modifies it to achieve compliance with Feng Shui application. In many instances, the result can become a compromise or a dysfunctional uncoordinated garden. This leads to re-organizing or even re-designing the landscape plans.

In other cases, the client may discuss a project with the Feng Shui consultant before consulting the architects. Clients might give specific Feng Shui requirements such as a specific pond (*Water*) in the front or specific representations of *Four Emblem Animals* in the garden. The architects would have no flexibility in satisfying the requirements in the design.

In both situations, the architect becomes compromised or passive in the design process. The architect may decline to modify the design since it seems to be driven by unprofessional instruction.

To resolve this conflict, cooperation with a Feng Shui consultant from the beginning of the design process is recommended. It is also helpful to recognize common agreements between architects and Feng Shui consultants, in order to attain the optimum solution of both modern landscape design and Feng Shui application while reducing design time. This collaboration is possible since the techniques of modern landscape design can satisfy Feng Shui applications. However, the architect should believe in the possibility of achieving a better solution through cooperation.

It is again noted that, this collaboration, would be limited to the Feng Shui master of the Form School practice that was explored and demonstrated in this research. Moreover, both the architect and the Feng Shui master should be open to the possibility of collaboration. The client should also be informed on the reasonable

condition of the practice. Such explanation will enable the architect to cooperate with A Feng Shui consultant to better serve the client with minimum obstacles in the design process.

6.2.2 Architects using modern landscape design technique to achieve Feng Shui applications in garden landscape design

Modern landscape design techniques including *Emphasis, Sequence, Simplicity, Interest, Balance, Proportion, Harmony, and Unity* ensure that the landscape design is attractive, visually compatible and has a “sense of fit” in the surrounding landscape. As seen in the previous chapter, Feng Shui applications can be achieved by the modern landscape design techniques to facilitate a Feng Shui theme in the modern context.

It is beneficial for an architect to understand the objectives and elements of basic Feng Shui applications and be able to identify the appropriate use. Although, the architect may not be an expert or skillful in applying Feng Shui application, the architect can use the techniques of modern landscape design to obtain the appropriate Feng Shui applications.

The intent in a Feng Shui garden is to create a harmonious environment for visitors by conducting the flow of *Qi* represented by the balance of *Yin-Yang*; the productive and destructive relationships of the *Five Elements*; and the presence of the *Five Geographical Elements*. A Feng Shui garden can be achieved by applying the techniques of *Emphasis, Sequence, Simplicity, Interest, Balance, Proportion, Unity and Harmony* in the best possible way to achieve the objective of each technique.

Doing just that can also induce adequate *Qi* flow, a *Yin-Yang* balance, *Five Elements* and *Five Geographical Elements* that are considered essential to life by Feng Shui principles. Through the combination of natural elements such as water, rock, trees and flowers and manmade elements such as architecture, road and bridge, an architect can influence the flow of *Living Qi*. The uses of modern landscape design

techniques are supported by the findings of this research; therefore they are recommended as a means for manifesting *Qi* in a garden landscape.

❖ ***Use Emphasis technique to achieve Water feature***

It is demonstrated by the results from questions 1, 2 and 3, *Emphasis* can achieve *Water Mouth*. The heart of a garden should be a water feature such as fountain or pond. In fact, a water feature is recommended to be in the centre of the front garden and to maintain the flowing stream of water. This can be done by using a water feature such as fountain, waterfall on a rockery, or symbol of water waves such as dry sand garden, to represent *Water Mouth* of Feng Shui. The bubble sounds and a reflection of water flowing over a stone or rock in a water garden are not only decorative items but also the elements that permit the wind or air to change its circulation, creating movements in the garden.

In summary, the practical points are to:

- Placed water feature or a symbol of water in the front garden following the emphasis technique.
- Emphasize the focal point by creating a flow of water and maintain the lively characteristic of water.

❖ ***Use Sequence technique to achieve Qi element***

As demonstrated by the results from questions 4, 5 and 6, *Sequence* can achieve *Qi* element. The quality of the connecting elements that allow flowing of the slow wind (and *Qi*) is required; while a hard and rigid barrier such as wall and solid fence that blocks the wind (and *Qi*) is prohibited. Similar to water, wind or air, *Qi* follows the paths of least resistance. If circulation is beneficial, flow should be reduced, rather than blocked or redirected. *Sequence* technique can be implemented with paths that follow natural contours allowing wind and *Qi* to flow easily. Gently curving paths leading around and through several spaces with minimum

redirection and clearly delineated exit encourage visitors to linger and experience the landscape.

In short, the practicing points are to:

- Create the meandering footpath thorough the scenes of the landscape;
- Facilitate the clearly defined footpath with relevant entries and exits.

❖ **Use *Simplicity* technique to achieve *Bright Court* and *Four Emblem Animals* elements**

As demonstrated by the results from questions 7, 8 and 9, *Simplicity* can achieve *Bright Court* and *Four Emblem Animals* elements. Complex systems of spatial arrangements confuse both *Qi* and visitors. It is strongly recommended to follow *Simplicity* technique to reduce any unnecessary elements and to enhance important features. This can be done by the use of an open space or courtyard representing the *Bright Court* in front of the building to keep the garden wide, open and simple.

Other essential elements in a Feng Shui garden are *Four Emblem Animals*. *Red Phoenix* can be represented by a screen made of plant or brick in front of the building. *White Tiger* and *Green Dragon* can be represented by a statues or sculpture, trees or rock combinations on both sides of the open space. The arrangement of the front open space with a screen in the middle front and trees or rocks on both sides creates a simple organization of the Feng Shui garden.

In summary, the practical points are to:

- Leave open space in the front of the garden for common activities.
- Avoid monotony by placing two decorative items (such as trees) at both side of the open space;
- Place a screen in front of the house, at the footpath to obtain privacy from the outside public.

❖ **Use *Interest* technique to achieve *Yin-Yang* element**

As demonstrated by the results from questions 10, 11 and 12, *Interest* technique can achieve *Yin-Yang* element. In Feng Shui gardens, everything should be in *Yin-Yang* balance in order to induce *Qi*. *Qi* can be derived from the balance of two opposite but complementary characteristics. In garden landscapes, the contrast of shape, form, texture and line can be achieved with a series of garden scenes to create interest. A frame element can be used to create the contrasts of concealed and open; spatial arrangement in the landscape encourages discovery.

In short, the practical point is to:

- Use the opposite characteristics of elements to create contrast and variety.

❖ **Use *Balance* technique to achieve Feng Shui site plan**

As demonstrated by the results from questions 13, 14 and 15, *Balance* technique can achieve Feng Shui site plan. The overall goal in Feng Shui garden is to situate in an *armchair* landscape that surrounds and supports the residence and its occupants. The hills, or back of the chair, provide support. The arms of the chair are represented by smaller hills; and a small mound at the front represents the footstool. To achieve balance in Feng Shui gardens, three layers of Feng Shui layout—the outer environment, the front environment and the inner environment—can be applied.

In summary, the practical points are to:

- Use different elements to create the asymmetrical balance in both vertical and horizontal axis;
- Create the symmetrical spatial arrangement in the whole structure of the site plan.
- Apply three layers of environments to the design; and keep each layer in balance.

Table 6-1: Three layers in Feng Shui schematic

Layer	Traditional monuments	Modern monuments	Characteristic
<i>Layer 1 The outer environment</i>	Buildings were constructed with mountains behind and a watercourse in front, with hills on either side for protection.	Buildings or tall trees are mountains; smaller trees, shrubs or neighborhood buildings are hills; roads or ponds are watercourses.	Harmonious and balanced
<i>Layer 2 The front of the house</i>	<i>Bright Court</i> allows <i>Qi</i> to come to the house, slows the <i>Qi</i> flow over the front small hill before entering into the building. <i>Bright Court</i> ensures no enemy can sneak up at the front and attack sight-unseen	Lawns, park or parking is open space, shrubs or brick screen, security walls which guarantee privacy for the dwellers and mark the territorial boundaries, replace the small hills	Asymmetrical
<i>Layer 3 The inner environment</i>	<i>Four Emblem Animals</i> are the <i>Green Dragon</i> on the left; the <i>White Tiger</i> on the right, the <i>Red Phoenix</i> in the front and the <i>Black Tortoise</i> at the rear	Specific trees, or shrubs, statues and accessories in garden can replaced these four inner animals	Harmonious and balanced

❖ **Use *Proportion* technique to achieve harmony of *Five Elements***

As demonstrated by the results from questions 16, 17 and 18, *Proportion* can achieve harmony of *Five Elements*. Everything in the universe is believed to comprise *Five Elements* (*Water, Metal, Fire, Earth* and *Wood*). Plants and flowers, following the *Proportion* technique, can be used to achieve *Living Qi*. Flowers and colorful plants could be used in harmony with the environment and the production cycle of *Five Elements* through shapes, colors, textures and materials and in harmony of size and number. Small-scale design is also recommended for decorative items such as rockeries, ponds or artificial replicas of a larger scale object. The human-scale of spatial arrangement can be used to retain harmony between human and nature.

In short, the suggestions are to:

- Maintain appropriate proportion of both quality and quantity of elements in landscape, not too sparse neither overwhelmed.
- Use human scale to design residential landscape.
- Create the concord between the elements with the surroundings.

❖ **Use Unity technique to achieve theme of each of the *Five Elements***

As demonstrated by the results from questions 19, 20 and 21, *Unity* can achieve the theme of *Five Elements*. *Five Elements* are manifestations of *Qi* through shape, color, texture and material of objects in a garden. Repetition of one element creates the theme of that element, leading to a unity in Feng Shui landscape. *Wood* is represented by green, tall columnar shapes, and the vertical lines of plants and trees. *Metal* is characterized by circular and arched shape, white and soft patio furniture, and circular table. *Earth* is identified in terracotta, ceramics, bricks, tiles and earth tones, and square shape. *Fire* is clarified with red, triangles, pyramids and conical shapes. *Water* is shown by deep blue or black, lotus pond, birdbaths and circulating fountains and aquariums.

In summary, the suggestions are to:

- Group the relative elements or comparative qualities of elements together in order to create the theme of the scene.
- Add some more different qualities of elements to make the garden landscape scene appear attractive.

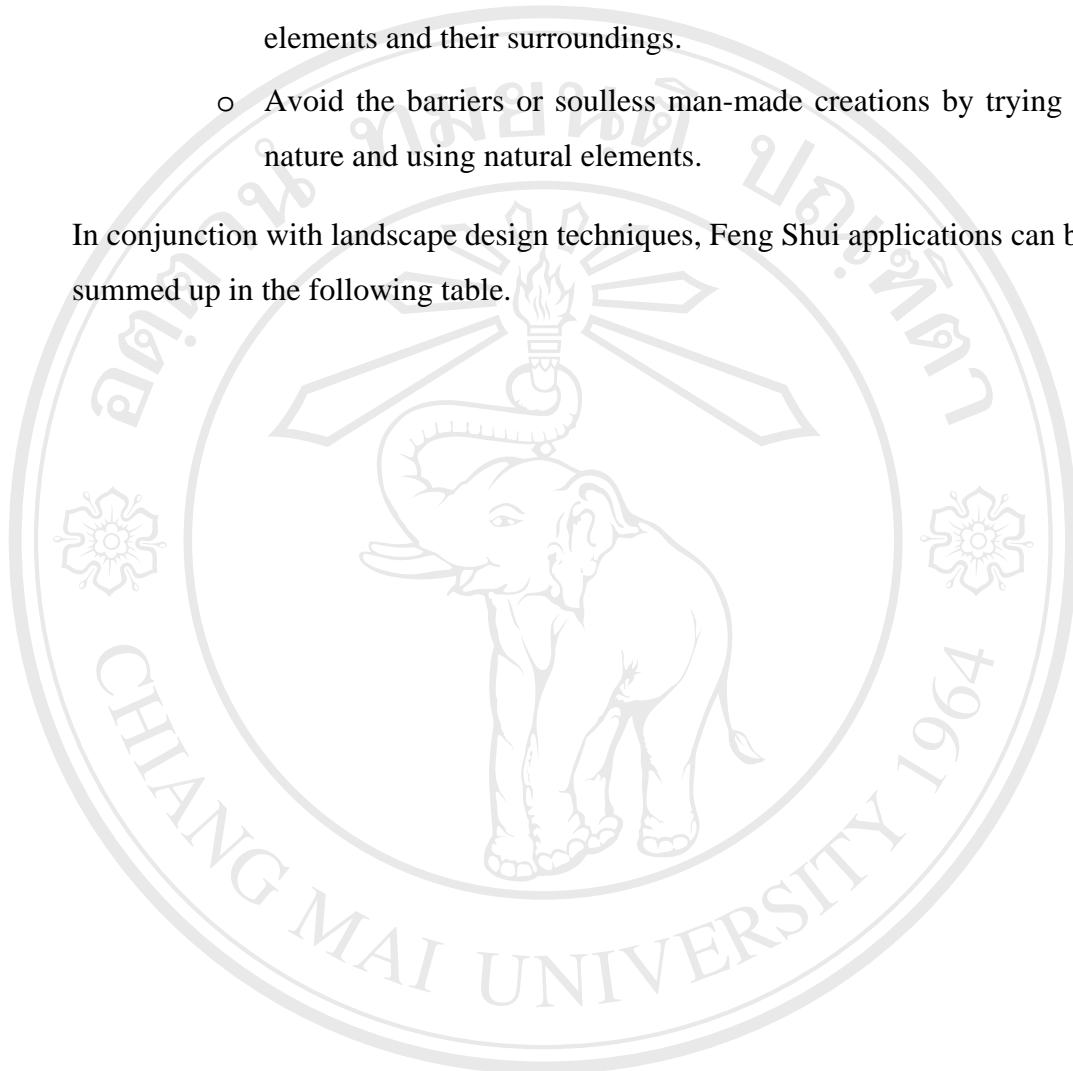
❖ **Use *Harmony* technique to achieve *Qi* prospect**

As demonstrated by the results from questions 22, 23 and 24, *Harmony* can achieve *Qi* Prospect. For the flow of *Qi*, a garden landscape should be in harmony with nature with smooth transitions, strong connections with sufficient buffers between elements and between elements and their background. Symbols and signs of *Qi* should be added in garden landscape such as green grass, flowers and verdant trees. This can be done by harmonizing the elements and using the similar and relating elements in the garden.

The suggestions are to:

- Make the garden in harmony with nature, by using the accord between elements and their surroundings.
- Avoid the barriers or soulless man-made creations by trying to reach nature and using natural elements.

In conjunction with landscape design techniques, Feng Shui applications can be summed up in the following table.



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Table 6-2: Summary

Criteria	Define	Feng Shui applications	Form-making Recommendation	Avoidance
Emphasis	The heart of garden	Water features such as pond, fountain, waterfall in a rockery, waves in a dry sand pond, colored fish	Should locate in front of house; Maintain the flowing stream of water	Cramped pond Dead fish Fetid water
Sequence	Series of spaces or events	Unblocked sequence of spaces makes <i>Qi</i> flow smoothly and thoroughly	Gently curving paths leading around and through several spaces, with a few clear choices of direction	Dense clusters or untrimmed plants; Dead-end corners; Single entrance/exit; Exit opposites entrance
Simplicity	Reduction unnecessary elements; enhancement reasonable elements	Open space, courtyard, green lawn	Locate in front of the site/building; Enclosed by the <i>Four Emblem Animals</i> ; Have the plain courtyard; Keep a short distance from house	Many trees or elements can block the view; Void desolate space
Interest	The contrast of physical characters of elements; Discovery	<i>Yin-Yang</i> balance	Should be balanced in terms of shape, form, texture, line, color; Use the opposite characteristics of elements Create the privacy and mystery	Too much <i>Yin</i> Too much <i>Yang</i>
Balance	Symmetric view Asymmetric view	Spatial arrangement layout, including outer layer, open space in front and inner layer	Inner layer, which includes four animals features, should be symmetrical Open space on the axis of house; Create sense of naturalistic, tranquil, solemn and traditional	Lack of one animal <i>Red Phoenix</i> in front too high <i>Black Tortoise</i> at back too short
Proportion	Correspondence of height, length, area, volume, mass, number, size of all elements	Combination of the <i>Five Elements</i> ; Proportion of small-scale and human-scale	All elements agree in the sense they convey of the size of the whole; Small-scale at the design of rockery, pond and artificial spectacles symbolize micro universe ; Human-scale design of the whole garden, spatial arrangement	Elements or features overpower all of the others in terms of size and number
Unity	The theme of all elements for overall looking and perception of the whole as one	Theme of one element of <i>Fire, Metal, Water, Wood and Earth</i>	Using a theme of one element, such as colors, forms, or textures; Follows the productive circle of five elements; Add the complement elements	Using opposite element The destructive circle
Harmony	The concord of elements and surroundings	Good omens of <i>Qi</i> appearance	Smooth transitions, strong connections with enough buffers between elements; Reality signs such as verdant plant, water stream meanders, nimble animals	Ill omens: waterless, arid soil, withered trees, billabong or fetid water

6.3 Conclusion

Throughout this research, the compatibility of Feng Shui applications and modern landscape design techniques has been introduced, supported, discussed and finally formed into recommendations for the architects to practice in the context Feng Shui requirements.

Architects can benefit from the use of the recommendations in practice; they can also gain from an increased understanding of Feng Shui that can extend the design vision to the spiritual dimension. Feng Shui applications can help add a spiritual realm in the modern garden landscapes, while maintaining the basic standards of modern landscape design requirements.

Although not discussed as a theme of this research, the traditional garden and architectural design appear in the examples, the proposed lay outs as well as the comments from the respondents. Therefore an area for further investigation could be the origins and persistence of traditional garden and architecture designs.

According to Yu (1998), the selection of a human residential domain was related to the development of human race where nature was most compatible and met minimum criteria for sustenance of life. Notwithstanding the optimum selection for residence, humans chose to modify the landscape. The experiences of selecting and improving the landscape for residence accumulated through subsequent generations, illustrating an appreciation of landscape effects on living standards.

With the understanding of the traditional landscape, Vietnamese architects can apply the traditional structure of Vietnamese landscape and architecture to achieve Feng Shui and modern landscape requirements. Therefore, to facilitate this practice, further research can be conducted to prove the potential use of traditional landscape and architecture to achieve Feng Shui and modern landscape design requirements.