

## Chapter 6

### PRELIMINARY GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION OF HTGHs INTO CONTEMPORARY USE

This chapter firstly mentions the present context of the conservation of Hue heritage and HTGHs in the citadel area. Then the conflict between the conservation and contemporary use of HTGHs under the influence of urbanization is discussed for arriving some suggestions and ideas for the conservation into contemporary use.

#### 6.1 The Context of Conservation and Protection of Both Hue Heritage and HTGHs

According to the article 32 of the Law on Cultural Heritage in 2001 that:

*“Zone 1 covers the relic and the area(s) determined as the relic’s original constituents, which must be protected in original state. While zone 2 is the area surrounding the conservation zone 1 of the relic, where works can be constructed in service of the promotion of the relic’s values, provided that they do not affect the architecture natural scenery and ecological environment of the relic”.*

The site of Hue Heritage could be divided into two zones for conservation as shown in Fig. 2-10 of chapter 2. In term of Hue citadel area, zone 1 includes the enclosure walls, the Imperial City, the monuments and the group of pools, while Zone 2 consists of four precincts within in the citadel where these surveyed HTGHs are located. Thus, the conservation of these HTGHs should follow the law for conservation and protection of zone 2.

Up till now, many projects have been provided for conservation and protection of Hue heritages and about 80 monuments of the relics have been preserved and conserved such as Thai Hoa Shrine, Temple of Literature, Thien Mu pagoda, and Ngo Mon Gate. However, these projects have not covered in several aspects. For example,

the project for upgrading the street system has not done, the plan for reducing the population density has been interrupted when there are many dwelling houses that have still been constructed on the enclosure walls of the citadel even though the enclosure walls are in Zone 1 (Fig. 6-1). In addition, the preservation of the urban vernacular heritage, in reality, is not properly covered by the notice of “The protection of the setting of a Historic Monument”. Whereas some areas in Zone 1 have been conserved carefully, the areas in Zone 2 are unable to control. Although the government have the protection right for buildings, which are individual possession, most residents prefer to leave their titles to land unregistered in order to avoid incurring tax when they sell their property<sup>1</sup>. In the absence of any control over the transfer of land tenure, individual house plots with gardens are subdivided quickly and they have been deteriorating in order to solve their purposes such as promotion of their living condition, earning improvement, and solution of population growth. After 1998, when the Principal features of the provisional regulations was applied, the above mentioned condition has been reduced but it still appears. For example, the subdivision of land plot still happens, and there is appearance of the new flat roofs, which have replaced the pitched roofs in several areas of the citadel.

HTGHs also face the same problem as mentioned above. They are the cultural heritage that should be conserved and protected; however at the sometimes, they are the people’s living houses, which are gradually altered due to the needs for contemporary uses. The conflict between conservation of this cultural heritage and the adaptation for contemporary use is the problem that the research aims to solve.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Protection Plan for Hue Heritage, the protected areas covered by zone 2 extends beyond the perimeter of zone 1 by 100m to 300m. The construction of premises for solution producing businesses is prohibited. It is intended that the height of new buildings should be limited, the population density be reduced and HTGH and green spaces be protected.



**Figure 6-1:** Dwelling house located on the Enclosure Walls of the citadel

## **6.2 Conflict between the Conservation and Adaptation for Contemporary Use of HTGHs under the Influence of Urbanization**

When controlling factors that influence the transformation of HTGHs such as the need of space for doing business, the growth of family members, the purpose for clan worship, and public purpose, the conflict between their conservation and adaptation for contemporary use under the urbanization can be solved.

- 1) The conservation HTGHs in the citadel area; and
- 2) The promotion and adaptation for contemporary use of HTGHs

This part will discuss the state of problem of the two factors and the relationship between them and urban development.

### **- Conservation – Contemporary Use**

At present, there is significant number of people living in HTGHs who want to alter the spatial organization and living style in their houses to suit the modern use because the conservation of their HTGHs is one of the causes that make some disadvantages in daily activities of family members. For example, family members want to enlarge functional spaces in their HTGHs but wooden structure of the house is

not supported. The type of open spaces of HTGHs can also restrict the creation of new enclosed private spacious rooms.

In contrast, the conservation of HTGHs will be difficult when the spatial organization and living use in those houses are altered following the modern living style. In some surveyed HTGHs, for example, the owners cut away columns (*Tron Cot*), which are located near the enclosure walls for getting spacious rooms (Fig. 6-2). Other owners built new enclosed space for sleeping within the house (Fig. 6-3).



**Figure 6-2:** The condition of *Tron Cot* in HTGHs



**Figure 6-3:** The newly built enclosed room in a HTGH

### ***- Conservation – Urban Development***

The urbanization can lead to the difficulty for conserving cultural heritage. For example, when the cultural heritages are used for tourism without proper control by government, unsuitable style and scale hotels and guesthouses could be constructed, while traffic system will be increased. Consequently, the whole environment in the cultural heritage area will be worsen.

In the case of HTGHs, they may not well be conserved if the family members do not have financial ability and/or supported expenditure from the government or responsible organizations. Thus, the expenditure for conservation should be derived from the development of socio-economy such as the use of HTGHs for tourism, a possible way according to the principle 2 of the International Cultural Tourism Charter adopted by ICOMOS in 1999.

### ***- Living use – Urban Development***

The influence of urbanization can narrow the living space of family member because some functional spaces in their houses are converted for business purpose. Thus, a possible solution should be provided for creating the equilibrium between living use and the development of socio-ecology.

## **6.3 Preliminary Guidelines for Conservation of HTGHs in the Citadel Area and Their Application for Contemporary Use**

Needless to say, the most benefit of the study is the whole understanding of historical information, physical configurations, formation, and transformation of HTGHs obtained from the surveys as the basic data for satisfying the requirement of recording according to the Principles for the Recording of Monuments, Groups of Buildings and Sites ratified by ICOMOS in 1996. Moreover, the above obtained result is the rationale for proposing preliminary guidelines for conserving of HTGHs and their applying into contemporary use.



In priority, the conservation of cultural heritage should be followed thoroughly the principles issued by the international conventions adopted by ICOMOS and the rules for conservation and use of cultural heritage assigned by the law of Vietnamese government. According to the Article 6 of Venice Charter: "...the conservation of a monument implies preserving a setting, which is not out of scale", so that, the value of those HTGHs is represented not only by themselves but also by their surrounding environment, the citadel area.

Moreover, as Rapoport, A. (1969, p. 46) has elaborated:

*"The house is an institution, not just a structure, created for a complex set of purposes. Because building a house is a cultural phenomenon, its form and organization are greatly influenced by the cultural milieu to which it belongs. ... If provision of shelter is the passive function of the house, then its positive purpose is the creation of an environment best suited to the way of life of people - in other words, a social and cultural unit of space."*

*"The idea of a settlement as a social control mechanism, so strong in traditional cultures at least, may no longer apply with as much force in a society with the formalized and institutionalized control systems of today. Under such conditions the link between culture and form is weakened, and it may no longer be possible to destroy a culture by destroying its physical setting".* (Rapoport, 1969, p. 49)

Thus, the link between culture and form has gradually weakened due to the rapid development of technology and widely application of them without particular concerns to a given context. As a result, housing forms and patterns are internationalized, neglecting the local culture that has accumulated indigenous customs and habits. The HTGHs are not only physical containers of Hue people but also psychological embodiments of activities of family members, dweller's culture and religious belief, etc., which are more fundamentally rooted in life than the architectural form. Therefore, the significance of the conservation of these HTGHs in

the citadel area is to conserve the unique characteristics of dwellers' culture in Hue. The recommendations for HTGHs are:

### **1) To create tourist route for HTGHs in Le Thanh Ton St**

The trend in which the cultural heritages are used for tourist attraction could be observed in other regions of Vietnam such as in Hoi An ancient town and Hanoi ancient town. The profit derived from the tourism is very significant for widening the values of cultural heritages and is the source for contributing to the conservation of them as mentioned in the International Cultural Tourism Charter adopted by ICOMOS:

*“Since domestic and international tourism is among the foremost vehicles for cultural exchange”<sup>2</sup>.*

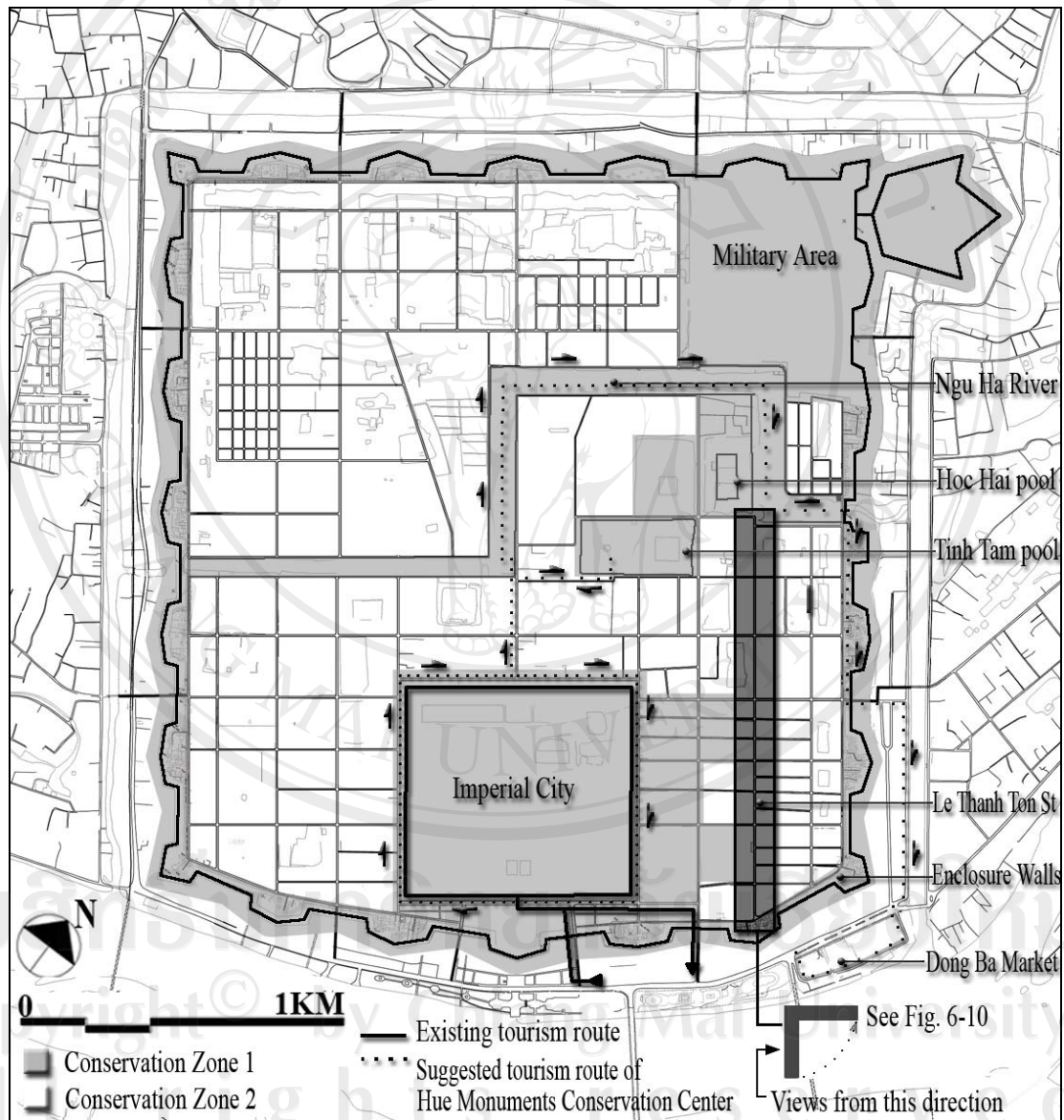
These conditions are similar to Hue, where the tourism has been strongly developed. At present, the Imperial City is the only place in the citadel area, which is used for the tourism route, even though there are many cultural heritages and monuments that still exist in it such as Lau Tang Tho, Don Mang Ca, Tinh Tam pools and Ngu Ha River (Fig. 4-3). Several previous studies have suggested different tourist routes in the citadel, such as the tourist project on the waterway along the moat around the Imperial City and Ngu Ha River provided in 1998 by Hue Monuments Conservation Centre. However, all of those suggestions are not materialized (Fig. 6-4).

Until now, the use of HTGHs in the citadel area for tourism has not established except several well-known HGHS such as Lac Tinh Vien and Y Thao Vien garden houses. The field survey shows that the Le Thanh Ton St and its surroundings are an area that can promote to be a new tourist spot due to a large number of HTGHs clustered in the area (Fig. 6-5). This implies that the Le Thanh Ton St with various existing HTGHs can be a new tourist route.

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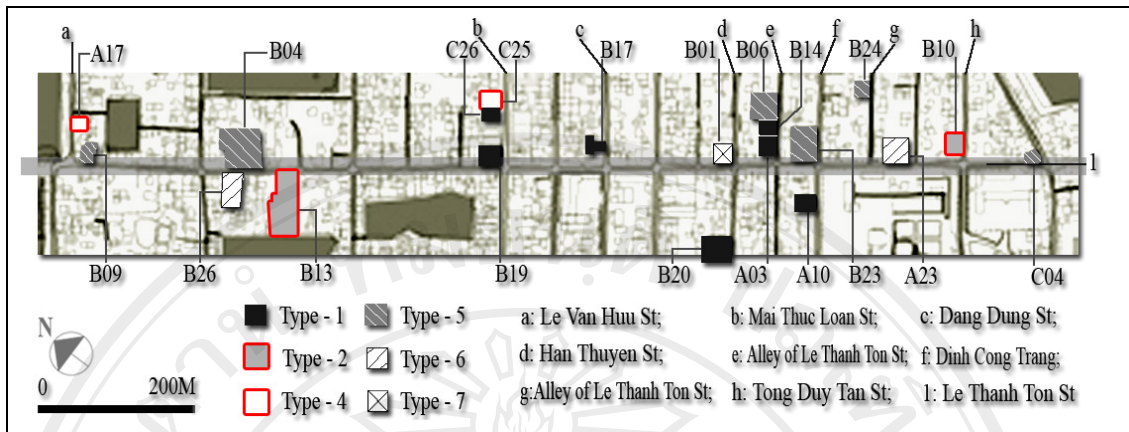
<sup>2</sup> Principle 1 of the International Cultural Tourism Charter adopted by ICOMOS in Mexico, October 1999

According to the International Cultural Tourism Charter, tourism is increasingly appreciated as a positive force for Natural and Cultural Heritage conservation. Thus, the new tourist route with the various types of HTGHs will help visitors to appreciate the variety of HTGHs in the citadel area and also the value of them.



**Figure 6-4:** Tourist routes in the citadel area





**Figure 6-5:** Distribution of HTGHs along Le Thanh Ton St

However, we cannot force the people living in these HTGHs if they do not want to participate the tourist route as mentioned in the Principal 4 of the Cultural Tourism Charter:

*“The rights and interests of the host community, at regional and local levels, property owners and relevant indigenous peoples who may exercise traditional rights or responsibilities over their own land and its significant sites, should be respected”.*

In reality, most private HTGHs are difficult to conduct some conservation and preservation activities in because they need approval from the owners beforehand. However, unlike the other private HTGHs in Le Thanh Ton St, the HTGH B04 is Thuan Loc Popular Committee belonging to the government. Thus, the HTGH B04 can be the first HTGH for pilot project for conservation of HTGHs into contemporary use. Up till now, however, the research has not found its relevant historical records. Within its compound, all important elements; gate and hedge, alley, *Binh Phong*, *Be Can*, symbols of White Tiger and Green Dragon can be reconstructed, while functional spaces can be conserved as a representative for other HTGHs.

## **2) To restrict the height and type of roofs and provide the use of HTGHs in the citadel area**

The height of HTGHs in the citadel area should follow the rules applicable to the four precincts in the citadel area also approved by the decision No. 624.

According to this decision, the height of dwelling houses located in the areas around zone 1 should not more than 6.5 meters, while 12 meters is the limitation of the blanket height of dwelling houses in the other areas in the citadel (Zone 2).

In term of HTGHs, the pitched roofs, naturally, are more suitable than other kinds of roof shape, and the pitched roofs tiled with *Liet* should be encouraged for using in HTGHs.

HTGHs located in open streets bounding the Imperial City, the enclosed walls, and the Tinh Tam groups of pools should be prohibited the height of 6.5 meters with pitched roof and must be set back 3 meters from the red line. These HTGHs should be also preserved the inherent original elements of their historic-cultural values with the minimum changing.

The blanket height limit of 11 meters is applied to HTGHs located in residential streets and alleyways. For the contemporary use, HTGHs located in these streets could be restored and renovated for modern use following the Article 5 of the Venice Charter.

In contrast, the rules applied to traditional shopping streets are intended to foster their use for commercial purpose. Therefore, HTGHs located in shopping streets such as Mai Thuc Loan St and Nguyen Trai St do not need to set back from the red line. If possible, these HTGHs should be moved and relocated to other areas because the influence of the business purpose may reduce the values of them.

### **3) To maintain the “green” layout of HTGHs**

The religious belief of Hue people and Feng Shui principle show that HTGHs and Hue citadel have an intimate relationship when *Binh Phong*, *Be Can*, and symbols of White Tiger and Green Dragon in layout of HTGHs are *Ngu Binh* Mountain, *Huong River*, *Hen* and *Da Vien* Sandbanks respectively. Moreover, there is a large number of HTGHs in the citadel area with *Nha Chinhs* face towards Southeast, the same direction of the citadel, when the Southeast orientation is believed as the best

orientation that can bring back the health and prosperity for family members. This relationship has created the unique characteristics of HTGHs showing the miniature scale of the citadel. This is the reason why the rectangular shape of layout of HTGHs should be preserved.

At present, the undergone land subdivision of HTGHs makes the original rectangular shape of layout of HTGHs has been gradually altered into various configurations. In addition, the elements in the site plans of these HTGHs, which are the gates, green hedges, *Binh Phongs*, *Be Cans*, White Tigers, and Green Dragons, have been disappeared due to the needs of more living space in the compound. New permanent materials such as grille, barbed wire, and brick have replaced the green hedges, while the alleys and symbols of White Tiger and Green Dragon have also been destroyed. The disappearance of these elements in the layouts breaks the relationship between the citadel and HTGHs and further on, can reduce not only the beauty of these HTGHs but also the hidden charm namely “Garden City” of Hue. Therefore, the elements in the compound of HTGHs in the citadel area should be preserved

The 12 HTGHs, which do not have either gate and fence (HTGHs A08, A16, A17, A20, A30, B09, B13, B15, C03, C06, C15, C25, C26, and C28) should be equipped new gates along with pitched roof and green hedges, while those of the other HTGHs should be maintained (Fig. 6-6).

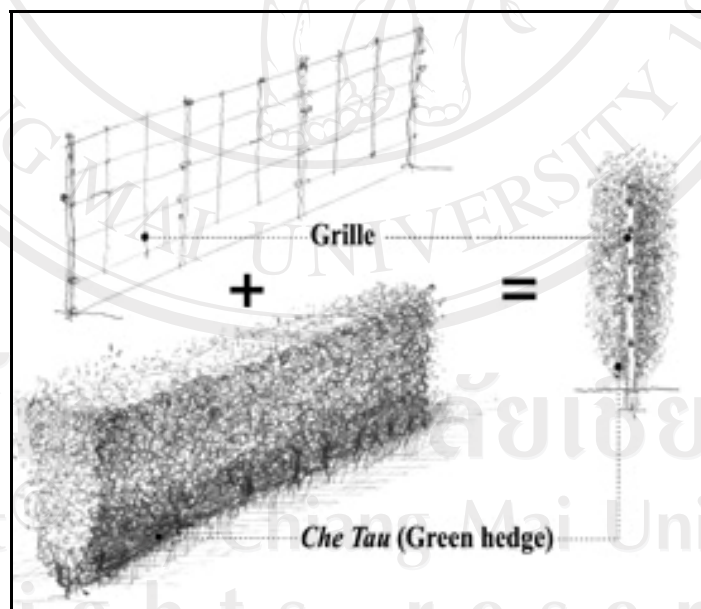


**Figure 6-6:** Green hedge should be maintained in HTGHs

From the interview with the dwellers, one of the causes that make the owners replaced the green hedge by other fences such as grille and brick is the secure ability of the green hedges. One of the alternatives proposed by this research for solving that problem is the new fence that is raised by the combination between grille and *Che Tau* (Green hedge) as illustrated in Fig. 6-7.

In the Fig. 6-7, a grille can be used as a fence for HTGH, and then the owner can plant *Che Tau* under the grille. When *Che Tau* grows, the fence will be a new green hedge with the grille inside (Left right picture in Fig. 6-7). Consequently, the new green hedge can solve the above problem and get back the greenery beauty of the house.

Original *Binh Phongs* and *Be Cans* in HTGHs should be maintained and they may be built for other HTGHs which originally do not have them in order to ascertain the religious belief of Hue people (Fig. 6-8).



**Figure 6-7:** Green hedge created by the combination between *Che Tau* and grille





**Figure 6-8:** *Binh Phong* and *Be Can* should be maintained and restored

#### 4) To preserve nuclear family

It is known that nuclear family is the traditional living style of Vietnamese people. In HTGHs, this living style has contributed the beauty of the houses because the attraction of those HTGHs is derived from not only the architectural features, but also the living culture of people in the houses.

At present, the condition of disappearance of that nuclear family can be observed in several HTGHs such as HTGH B09, B12 and B13. However, some HTGHs still keep that style of a nuclear family such as in HTGHs A06, A19, and B14. In these HTGHs, when the family members increase, *Nha Phus* are usually converted into living space for new family. These *Nha Phus* consist of private *Phong An*, *Phong Bep*, and *Phong Ngu* of each household, while *Nha Chinh* is used as *Phong Tho* and *Phong Khach* functioning as *Phong Sinh Hoat Chung* for all family members in ceremonial days such as *Tet*.

Although the style of living use is decided by each family in the HTGHs, the research would like to propose that, the characteristic of nuclear family should be preserved and encouraged. It is necessary to educate and persuade the family members living in those HTGHs to follow the living style of nuclear family because that living style can preserve some cultural values of Hue people and also maintain the relationship between each generation of the family.



## 5) To use local and natural materials for constructing and restoring HTGHs and appropriate colour

At present, most HTGHs in the citadel have conserved and restored at least once due to the influences of the factors as mentioned in the previous chapter. In term of HTGHs, the use of local and natural materials such as *Liet*, local brick, bamboo, stone, wood, and sand for construction should be encouraged. By contrast, the use of modern industrial materials should be restricted as much as possible (Fig 6-9 and 6-10).



**Figure 6-9:** The use of natural and local materials such as stone, wood, and greenery should be encouraged in constructions of HTGHs



**Figure 6-10:** The use of industrial materials such as concrete and iron should be restricted in construction of HTGHs

When comparing with modern materials, natural and local materials can express the effect of historical values, which is called in Vietnam: “*Mau Thoi Gian*” (Historical color), while the use of modern materials cannot express the unique local characteristics. Therefore, the local and natural materials such as *Liet* and green hedge should be encouraged for the construction and restoration of HTGHs (Fig. 6-11 and 6-12).

Each house type has its own unique colour. In general, the basic colour of HTGHs is warm and natural expressing the natural colour of the materials, while the strong colour should be limited to apply for some critical points in the houses.



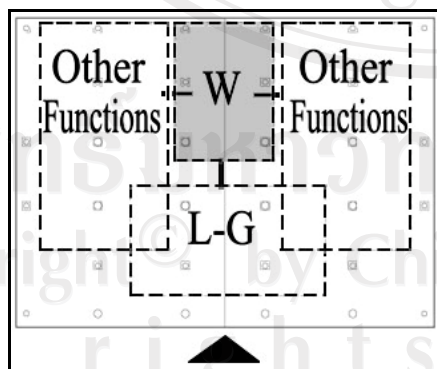
**Figure 6-11:** Roof of HTGHs should be tiled with *Liet*



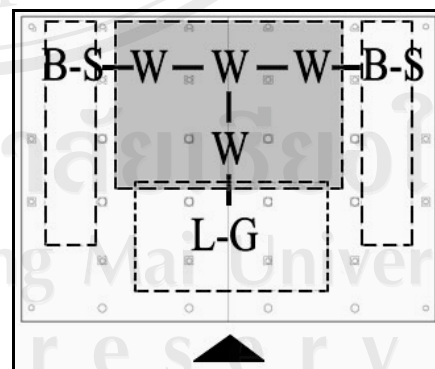
**Figure 6-12:** Fence of HTGHs should be equipped with natural material (Green hedge)

**6) To apply the preliminary suggestions for conservation of *Nha Chinh* and *Nha Phu* in HTGHs**

In *Nha Chinh*, *Phong Tho* is always located on the rear part of *Gians* in almost all of HTGHs. Thus, the research suggests that the space for *Phong Tho* should be preserved in the original position because the position in the rear part of *Gians* is the most solemn space in *Nha Chinh*. The space in front of *Phong Tho* should be *Phong Khach* which can also be functioned as *Phong Sinh Hoat Chung*, while two sides of *Phong Tho* can be used for other functions such as *Phong Ngu*, *Phong Kho*, and *Phong Lam Viec* as illustrated in Fig. 6-13.



**Figure 6-13:** Recommendation of arrangement in *Nha Chinh*



**Figure 6-14:** Recommendation of arrangement in *Nha Chinh* for clan worship

When *Nha Chinh* is used for clan worship, the original *Phong Tho* can be extended to its front and/or two sides for more space of *Phong Thos*. Space in front of *Phong Tho* can also be used as *Phong Khach* (also functions as *Phong Sinh Hoat Chung*) of nuclear family in ceremonial days. *Phong Ngus* and *Phong Khos* will be in two *Chais* of *Nha Chinh* (Fig. 6-14).

In *Nha Phu*, the spatial functions can be used as serving spaces for *Nha Chinh* such as *Phong An*, *Phong Bep*, and *Phong Kho*. *Phong Ve Sinh* originally located outside in the garden, should be moved inside *Nha Phu* for the convenience of daily use. When the family members increase, the style of nuclear family should be maintained for preserving the unique cultural characteristics of Hue people, while *Nha Phu* can be altered for living space of the new household. At that time, the front part of *Nha Phu* should be used as *Phong Thu Gian*, *Phong Khach*, and/or *Phong Ngu*, while *Phong Bep* and *Phong Ve Sinh* should be located in the rear part.

Due to the flood protection, according to the religious belief of Hue people, “*Nha Chinh*” means principal (Main-house), while “*Nha Phu*” means accessory (Out-house). Thus, the harmonious arrangement between *Nha Chinh* and *Nha Phu* should be preserved, in which the importance of *Nha Chinh* should be mainly emphasized. However, the expansion of *Nha Phu* or its part into two-storied structure for creating shelter in case of flood in several HTGHs may break the harmonization of their arrangement. For example, a newly built two-storied part of *Nha Phu* for flood disaster in HTGH B03, which is located in the front of the left side of *Nha Chinh*, destroyed the elegance of *Nha Chinh* (left side of Fig. 6-15).

On the other hand, there is only HTGH C05 among 59 surveyed HTGHs in which the mezzanine for providing shelter in case of flood can be found in *Nha Phu*. In this house, except the mezzanine (also incorporates *Kho*) for using when flood, the other spatial functions remain on their original functions and the mechanism, which shapes its built form, has not changed.



**Figure 6-15:** New two-storied structure for flood protection in HTGH B03 has broken the emphasis representative of *Nha Chinh*

Thus, the case of HTGH C05 would be a useful example for other HTGHs in solving the problem of flood. In contrast, the extension of *Nha Phu* or its part into two-storied structure due to that problem should be restricted. If a part of *Nha Phu* compels extending into two-storied structure for using when flood, position of new structure should be located in the rear part of *Nha Phu* for preserving harmonious beauty of arrangement between *Nha Chinh* and *Nha Phu*.

One-story *Nha Phu* with pitched roof should be encouraged, while a mezzanine can be built when a shelter is required in case of floods. If *Nha Phu* (or a part of it) require vertically extension into two-storied structure, it should be located in the rear part of *Nha Phu* and/or *Nha Chinh*, which can reduce the adversely influence on the harmonious beauty of their arrangement. HTGH A19 is a good example for demonstrating the above suggestion when *Nha Chinh* and greenery hide the height of the new structure of *Nha Phu* (Fig. 6-16).

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**Figure 6-16:** Newly built two-storied *Nha Phu* hid by *Nha Chinh* and greenery in HTGH A19

The use of the space in front of *Nha Chinh* for commercial activities in several houses such as HTGHs A05, A12, A13, A20, B19, and C12 should be restricted because it can decrease the beauty and value of the houses (Fig. 6-17). Due to the need of space for doing business, the space in and/or adjoining *Nha Phu* can be the solution. In some HTGHs such as A03, A10 and B06, the owners use a part of *Nha Phu* for rent, which do not much influence on the physical characteristics of the houses. The alterations of these HTGHs are also possible solution for solving the need of space for doing business.



**Figure 6-17:** Business activities in the front space of *Nha Chinh* should be restricted

Using of Chinese characters in arrangement between *Nha Chinh* and *Nha Phu* should be encouraged for the construction of HTGHs because it can express the harmonious arrangement between main structure and subordinates structure of *Nha*



*Chinh* and *Nha Phu* respectively. The elements and designs of the front façade of *Nha Chinh* should be kept in symmetrical manner for preserving the unique characteristic of *Nha Chinh* façade. The architectural style of *Nha Phu* should not override the style of *Nha Chinh* and should harmonize with *Nha Chinh* by equipped with pitched roof and natural-local materials. The space in front of *Nha Chinh* should be used as buffer space for connecting public space with the private space inside, and it can also be *Phong Thu Gian* or/and *Phong Khach* in which the inhabitants can do daily activities such as reading book, playing chess, and drinking tea. The unique ways that Hue people use the front space of HTGHs can be observed in HTGHs B05, B14, and C03, should be encouraged for other HTGHs.

The column system and the floor should be elevated for protecting the house from floods. From the survey, several HTGHs do not use *Da Tangs* (Foundation stones) supporting the columns to protect moisture (Fig. 6-18). Possible *Da Tang* is encouraged to use for protecting column system from the moisture (Fig. 6-19).



**Figure 6-18:** Column without *Da Tang*



**Figure 6-19:** Column with *Da Tang*



**Figure 6-20:** *Tron Cot* in veranda columns

*Tron Cot* should be restricted except the veranda columns. Those veranda columns always sustain the influence of harsh climate of Hue so that, their original wooden material can be replaced by local permanent materials such as brick and concrete. On the other hand, the roof should straightly extent to the front as its possible ability for protecting the veranda columns (Fig. 6-20).