

GIAP THI MINH TRANG

LIVING SPACES

THE INTERACTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF LIVING SPACES AND THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE IN HANOI

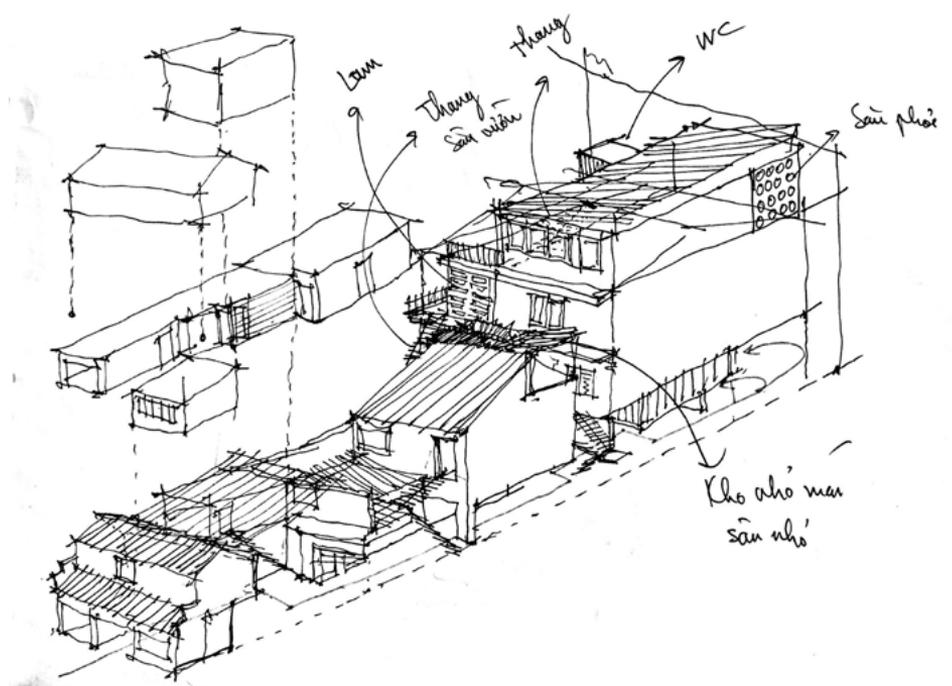
THESIS STATEMENTS

Budapest University of Technology and Economics | Doctoral School of Architecture

Supervisors: György Major DLA

Consultants: Béla Kerékgyártó PhD

2019



Lam

Thang

Sân vườn

Thang

WC

Sân phơi

Kho nhỏ
sân nhỏ

ABSTRACT

Hanoi, currently a capital city with over seven million inhabitants, is a result of merging numerous small villages. Traditional customs therefore still have a strong influence on the city's residents' lives. After the 1986 Vietnam perestroika – which, among other things, ushered in a free property market –, the number of people moving to the city from the countryside increased drastically.

The city provides a different environment, different opportunities to its inhabitants. Population increase, economic development, modern lifestyle and outside influences all affect the development of housing solutions. Their goal, however, is mainly to cater to the increasing number of people promptly and to maximize financial gain.

My goal for this dissertation is to study the design and changes of different types of homes in Hanoi. Through case

studies, I would like to present how elements of the traditional lifestyle are present in the urban environment. I drew a parallel between the transformation process of different dwelling types and factors from the rural lifestyle influencing spatial design and spatial use habits. This illustrates the importance of the traditional lifestyle in the everyday lives of today's Vietnamese people. My observations include the wider living environment, where the structure and operation of communities is still very important.

The dissertation offers readers an overview on the changes of residential buildings in Hanoi and in the Red River Delta in light of traditional factors of spatial design and space use; raising awareness and providing evidence for the designer community to the fact that cultural background and customs should play a more significant role in designing living spaces.

BACKGROUND AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

I have been interested in the spatial use habits of people, and the correlation of lifestyle and the design, remodelling and use of spaces since my university years, and these questions have influenced my vision as a designer and architect.

The fact that I am part of two different cultures only strengthened my interest in how people move in space, what their relationship to space is. I realized we use space differently in Budapest than in Hanoi. It made me wonder what the reasons and underlying factors are. This raised several further questions concerning the form of spaces, social and commercial needs, cultural background etc.

I began working on this topic in 2015 at the doctoral school of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) in Budapest. During the first year of my research I reviewed literature, this gave me a framework for issues such as the correlation of architecture and culture, of culture and space use. Besides architectural literature I studied research projects and theories by anthropologists, (environmental) psychologists, sociologists and other social scientists.

I had the fortune to spend the next two semesters in Hanoi. That was when I began to assess different types of living spaces in Hanoi and in the Red River Delta. In addition to architectural assessment, conversations with residents gave me great help

in understanding the process how their living space changed or transformed (including their plans for the future), not to mention the reasons behind these changes.

The focus of my interest was primarily on cultural background: I was interested in the spatial effects of the traditional lifestyle, religion and belief system. I chose Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam as the location of my case studies. The elements of traditional lifestyle are visibly present in everyday life here, they can practically be felt in the air. The focus of my research were Hanoi homes, Vietnamese living spaces, which display a development direction that is different from what I have observed in Budapest.

In my dissertation I studied the changes in different Hanoi homes and living spaces, why and how these changes occurred. I performed my analysis along eight important factors that I recognized, which all influence Vietnamese people's space use and spatial design due to traditional lifestyle, customs and cultural backgrounds: most of all I examined how these factors are present in an urban living environment, and how they influence modern architectural trends. The conclusions drawn from the results of the case studies answered the questions I raised at the beginning of my research. I regard this to be the most important result of my project.

I have attempted to use my experiences from my immersion into the topic – theoretical and field work – in two areas. Working with residential building design students at the Hanoi University of Architecture, I had them incorporate the questions raised in the course of my research into their work and designs, and I tried to instil a certain sensitivity to tradition and culture into their design vision. Furthermore, I incorporated my newly found knowledge into my own work as a practicing designer. This left its mark and can be observed in the family homes I designed. In my dissertation I will show two buildings: one comes from the period before the research, the other was built late in the course of my research, while I was writing my dissertation.

In its current form, my dissertation is part of a long-term process, far from being complete. In order to complete it, further research is needed. I see three potential directions for future research:

1. Continuing the current research and expanding it to include different buildings and other municipalities in Vietnam. This would enable us to collect even more evidence, which could confirm or refute my present results. Such a research could provide more reliable, more compelling evidence for researchers and practicing architects.

2. Assembling a “design handbook” for architects, designers and housing policy decision-makers. This could provide a summarizing review on the topic and its importance in light of the Hanoi case studies. In addition to its architectural aspects, the topic could also be extended to other branches of science and could be linked to them (anthropology, environmental psychology, urban studies). This way my research, completed with further forms and reasons of space use and design, could help us gain an even more profound understanding of the relationship between people and space.

3. Conducting a research project in Budapest similar to the research and living space assessment done in Hanoi, and comparing the results of the two. Beyond the differences of the two very diverse cultures, there could be deeper similarities in space use, and vice versa, seemingly similar modes of spatial use may have different underlying needs and lifestyles that can result in different changes even in buildings constructed with similar models and ideologies – e.g. in block housing units built in the same period (~1954–1986) in the two cities.

CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION

INTRODUCTION

MOTIVATION – CHOICE OF TOPIC

SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT AND IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

RESEARCH PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

I. THE CHANGE OF HANOI LIVING SPACES DUE TO THE TRADITIONAL WAY OF LIFE

1. THE BACKGROUND OF DESIGNING LIVING SPACES IN VIETNAM

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND PEOPLE

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DESIGN AND USE OF LIVING SPACE IN THE RED RIVER DELTA

SUMMARY 1. - 1ST THESIS

2. THE TRANSFORMATION OF LIVING SPACES IN HANOI

HANOI'S URBAN STRUCTURE

A COMPARISON OF THE SPATIAL ORGANISATION OF THE FOUR TYPES OF LIVING SPACES – 2ND THESIS

THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS OF THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS EXAMINED – 3RD THESIS

FACTORS INFLUENCING SPATIAL DESIGN AND SPACE USE IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF HOMES – 4TH THESIS

SUMMARY 2.

II. THE TRANSFORMATION OF COMMUNITY SPACES FROM RED RIVER DELTA VILLAGES TO HANOI

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY

THE STRUCTURE AND COMMUNITY LIFE OF VILLAGES IN THE RED RIVER DELTA

COMMUNITIES IN THANG LONG, THE DRAGON CITY

MOTHER VILLAGE AND OLD TOWN: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITIES OF CHÂU KHÊ VILLAGE AND HÀNG BẠC STREET

COMMUNITY LIFE IN HANOI'S SOCIALIST HOUSING BLOCKS

NEWLY ERECTED RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOODS AND THEIR MODERN COMMUNITIES

SUMMARY 3. - 4TH THESIS

BACKGROUND AND FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

LITERATURE

III. RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE HOMES I DESIGNED AND TRADITION

IV. CASE STUDIES

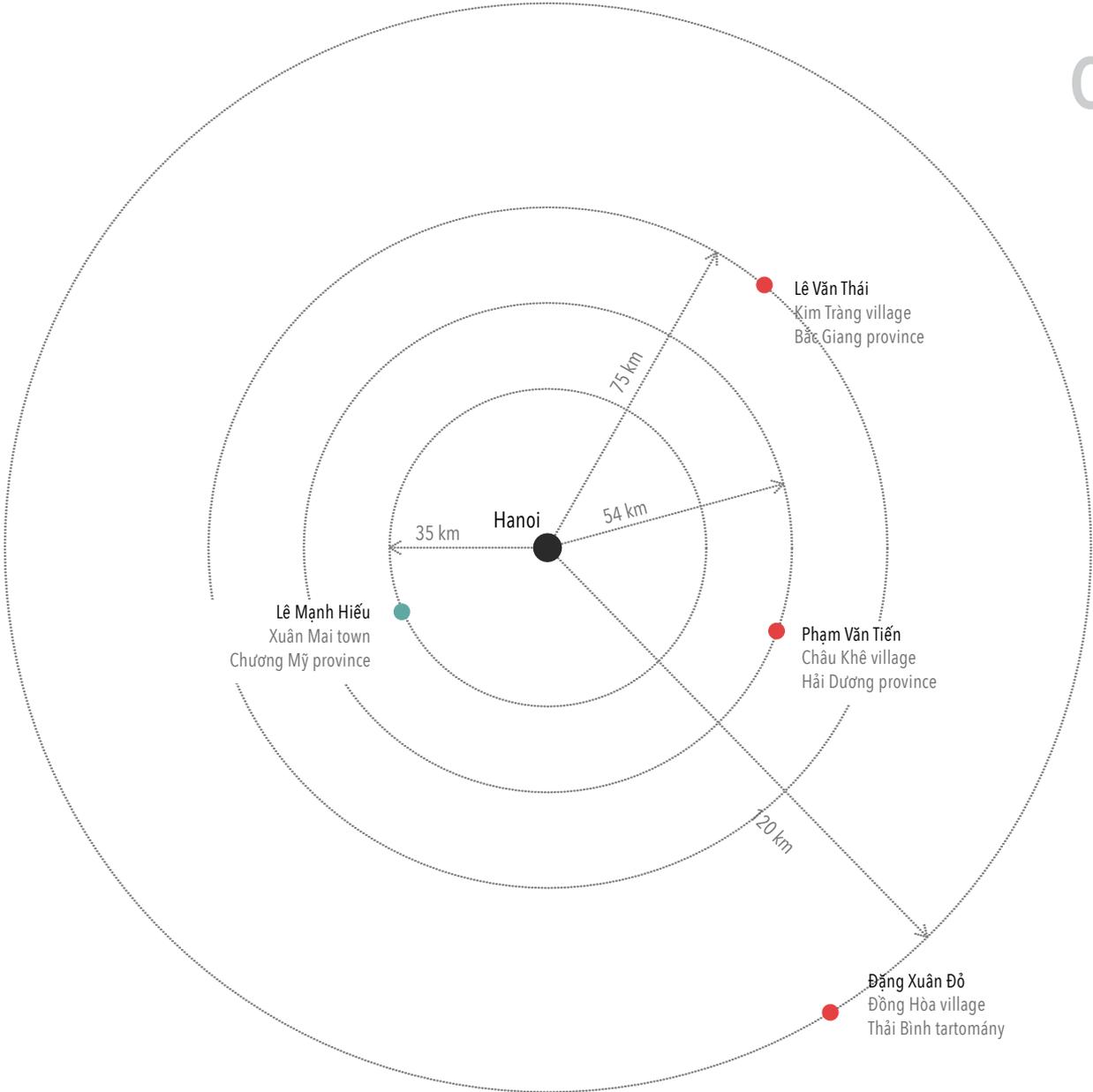
FIELD ASSESSMENTS L INTERVIEWS L PHASES OF CHANGE IN BUILDINGS

THE RURAL ARCHITECTURE OF THE RED RIVER DELTA REGION

HANOI OLD TOWN

HANOI SOCIALIST HOUSING BLOCKS

CASE STUDISE



Lê Mạnh Hiếu
Xuân Mai town
Chương Mỹ province

Lê Văn Thái
Kim Trảng village
Bắc Giang province

Phạm Văn Tiến
Châu Khê village
Hải Dương province

Đặng Xuân Đò
Đồng Hòa village
Thái Bình tartomány

- Case studies
- Design home

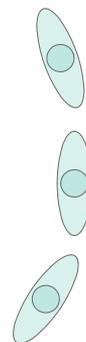
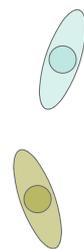
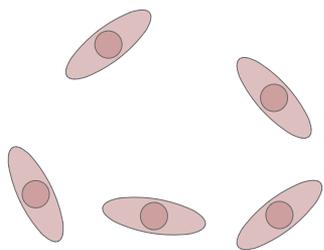
● B2.211, Mai Dịch KTT

● Nguyễn Thái Bình house

Giảng Võ lakótelep
B2.110, Giảng Võ KTT
B2.145, Giảng Võ KTT
C4.205, Giảng Võ KTT
D6.212, Giảng Võ KTT
D2.1123, Giảng Võ KTT
Emm's cafe, Giảng Võ KTT
B4 földszint, Giảng Võ KTT

● ● ●
Hàng Bạc utca 47.
Mã Mây utca 87.
Hàng Bạc utca 86.

● Dũng house, Nguyễn Công Trứ KTT



THESIS

MIRROR IMAGE

PRESENCE

CONTINUOUS CHANGE

ADAPTATION

COMMUNITY LIFE

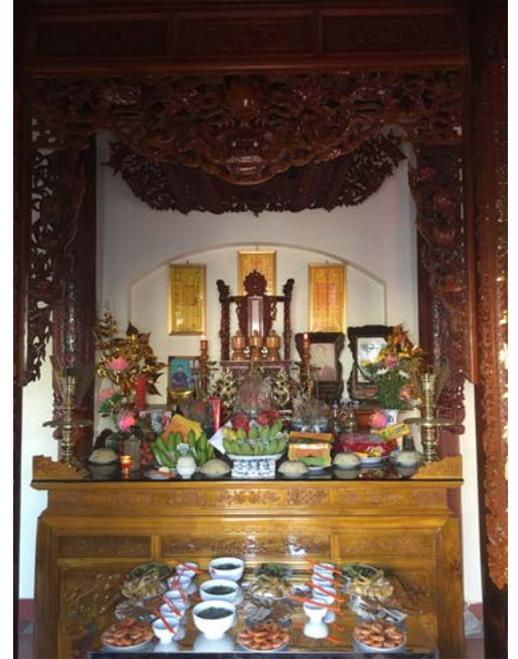


1st thesis

MIRROR IMAGE

The living spaces of Vietnamese people reflect the traditional cultural background, local customs, everyday activities of their residents.

If we know the factors influencing the space use and spatial design of Vietnamese people, we can observe their traces and use in almost every single residential building. And vice versa: if we know the family members, we can predict the traces of tradition (space usage forms and spatial arrangement of functions) relatively precisely, without seeing the house.



2nd thesis

PRESENCE

In an urban setting, the spatial design and space use factors originating in Vietnamese tradition are still present and influence the lives of inhabitants and the design and use of living spaces, regardless of the type of home.

Hanoi was populated by people from the Red River Delta in the 14th and 15th centuries, and immigration has not ceased since then. While they moved to new homes, people brought their local customs, their ways of life, their construction techniques and forms with them. Despite adapting to the urban environment and a new lifestyle, the most important elements of traditional customs still play an important role in the lives of city residents, the signs of which are clearly observable in Hanoi residences.

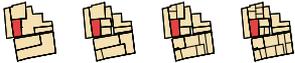
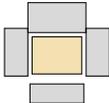
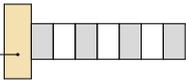
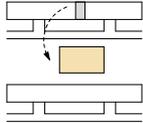
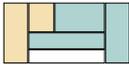
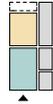
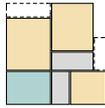
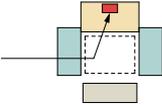
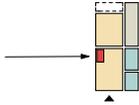
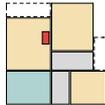
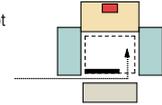
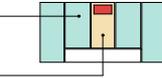
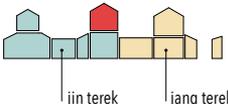
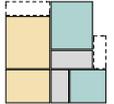


3rd thesis

CONTINUOUS CHANGE

Hanoi living spaces are continuously rearranged to follow the changing lifestyles. These changes can be clearly observed in the transformation process of spaces.

People redesign and expand houses for several reasons. A house in Hanoi gives room to several generations living together, throughout ages. If we retrace the changes of homes in time and space, we (can) get an overview of the process how family life changed over time, which can help us understand the actual needs of the living.

	<p>hagyományos népi építészet</p>  <p>a családi telket felosztják az új lakóház építésére</p>	<p>óváros hagyományos építésze</p>  <p>a csőházat ráépítéssel bővítik, az új lakóhely kialakítására</p>	<p>szociális lakótelepi lakások</p> <p>lakótelepek a homlokzat bővítik</p> 	<p>lakónegyed lakások</p> <p>a család bővüléssel új nagyobb lakásba költöznek vagy két egymás melletti kis méretű lakást vesznek meg</p>
<p>generációk együtt élése</p>	<p>nagy központi udvar szolgálja nagy létszámú vendégek fogadására</p> 	<p>utca elfoglalás</p> 	<p>az épületek közti területet használják</p> 	<p>a nagyobb események lebonyolítására a családnak helyet kell bérelni</p>
<p>családfő szerepe</p>	<p>a családfő kezében van a család sorsa, tőle függ minden családtag, a születés évének számaiból számolják ki a lakás építés fontos lépéseinek idejét és a főépület méreteit</p>		<p>továbbra is fontos a családfő szerepe, a születés évének számaiból számolják ki a lakás megvásárlását, beköltözés idejét</p>	
<p>férfi - nő viszonya</p>	<p>"nők tere" "férfiak tere"</p>  <p>férfiak és nők eltérő tereket használnak</p>	<p>"férfiak tere" "nők tere"</p>  <p>férfiak és nők eltérő tereket használnak</p>	<p>a lakás tereit együtt használják, csak éjszakára vélik külön az alvóhely használat</p> 	<p>a lakás funkcionális tereké válnak, közös és egyéni saját használatú szobákkal</p> 
<p>"bàn thờ" családi-oltár</p>	<p>családi-oltár a főház középső részében helyezkedik el</p> 	<p>a családi-oltár a második blokkban, külön helységben található</p> 	<p>családi oltár a nappali szobában, a falra szerelve</p> 	<p>a családi-oltár a közös használatú térben</p> 
<p>"khi" szél-víz</p>	<p>az épületeket és a bejáratot úgy helyezték, hogy a kedvezőtlen szél-víz áramlatokat kerülte</p> 	<p>a kedvezőtlen szél, víz és szellemek járásának kivédésére a városi környezetben a vietnami emberek sokféle megoldást eszeltek ki: elhárító tárgyakat helyeznek el az áramlások eltérésére, tükröt vagy ba-gua-t tesznek a főbejárat fölé azok visszatükrözésére</p>		
<p>"âm-dương" jin-jang</p>	<p>jin terek: befelé irányuló, jyang terek: kívülvilág felé nyíló,</p> 	<p>jin terek jyang terek</p> 	 <p>a modern lakóhelyek esetében a jin-jang felfogás a hagyományos módon átalakult, ma a közös használatú és magán tereknek tekintjük</p>	
<p>építő mesterek</p>	<p>kedvesen kell bánni az építő mesterekkel a kedvezőtlen kívánságaik elkerülése érdekében</p>		<p>a lakók kész, megépített lakást kapnak az építőmesterek szerepe a társas házak és lakónegyedek esetében nincs jelen</p>	

4th thesis

ADAPTATION

The factors traditionally influencing the design and use of living spaces are flexible: in an urban setting they are transformed or redefined.

The fourth thesis is one of the most interesting and possibly most surprising conclusions of this research: despite the numerous obligations, unwritten rules and restrictions influencing spatial design and space use originating from the traditional lifestyle, nothing is as rigid and written in stone as we would initially assume. The eight factors or aspects I have listed were able to adapt to change even in the villages; in an urban setting they took on forms even more suited to the new way of life. Their single goal, of course, is "staying alive", maintaining tradition in a modern urban setting, or even despite it.



5th thesis

COMMUNITY LIFE

In new urban homes, there is just as much demand for communities connected to and rooted in the neighbourhood as in villages. Appropriate spaces have to be provided for community activities.

In Vietnam, the community of a village is a very important social unit. The village is not only a place of residence, but a closed, tight-knit, interdependent community. Significant architectural spaces cater to community activities. The question arises: Are there such neighbourhood communities in cities, and if there are, how do they operate and what forces keep them together? Based on my research we can show that in Hanoi – in the cases studied – neighbourhood communities exist, regardless of the types of homes, and they have set shared activities. But there is not always a suitable space for these community activities.



CONNECTING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

I have been interested in the spatial use habits of people, the correlation of lifestyle and the design, redesign and use of spaces since my university years, and these questions have influenced my vision as a designer. After graduating, I was travelling back and forth between Budapest and Hanoi. The two fundamentally different cultures that I am sometimes part of, sometimes I see from the outside, define my world views and influence my vision as a designer.

We designed Nguyễn Thái Bình's house with my designer partner, Nguyễn Bình Minh in 2012. This was the first small family home in Hanoi I had the opportunity to work on. Given my roots and family connections, I still have ties to Vietnam. Therefore I have always known what an important role traditional customs, lifestyle, beliefs and religion play in the lives of Vietnamese people. While designing the building, I stumbled upon a lot of interesting "obstacles". A great number of new but old, indispensable unwritten rules presented themselves, and demands were made concerning space use that seemed odd at first, and we had to adhere to them all. My designing partner, Minh was more experienced in this field at the time.

The house was constructed two years before my independent doctoral research. The experiences I gained in the course of the design work raised numerous questions. This was one of the reasons I chose this dissertation subject. I was also keen on using the experiences acquired then and since, as well as the (local) home building customs I learned of during my research, in a new project. I was hoping if I have success in practice, I could confirm or refute the questions and statements I came across in the course of my research. The opportunity came in 2018 when I designed Lê Văn Hiếu's home. I followed the construction process all the way through, documenting each step and detail, with special attention to the traditional elements influencing spatial design and space use listed in the dissertation.

The two buildings are closely connected to my research. One of them is from the period before my research, which was one of the main reasons for my choice of subject. The other was constructed while I was writing the dissertation as the end result of my work, incorporating the essence of years of research.

