



香港建築師學會  
The Hong Kong Institute of Architects

The Hong Kong Institute of Architects Annual Awards 2007



ronald lu  
& partners

## An experience with nature

Designed by Ronald Lu & Partners, the YWCA Guesthouse and Facilities won the Merit Award of Hong Kong in the Hong Kong Institute of Architects Annual Awards 2007 with its architectural novelty and exceptional contributions to sustainable development.

The youth camp involves the redevelopment of a 30-year-old campsite. Located on a scenic one-hectare site in San Shek Wan, on the south coast of Lantau Island, the HK\$42 million project is designed to enhance the facilities in support of the organization's expanded program.

Four components make up the project boasting a gross floor area of 2,010 square meters: outdoor activity areas, dormitories, function rooms/canteen, and staff/utility facilities. The actual construction took about two years to completion in August 2007.

### One of a kind

With unique elements in its design, the award-winning YWCA Guesthouse and Facilities is more than an architectural assignment, it is a creation that combines utility, natural beauty and sustainability all in one.

"When YWCA approached us, they wanted us to upgrade the existing old camp site to meet today's standards. On our first visit to the site, we could see the variety of the organization's training programs and found distinctive

natural platforms in the site," explained Lemuel Cheng, Associate of Ronald Lu & Partners.

"We hence immediately came up with two ideas: How to utilize the natural topological features to create multiple venues for training and recreation, and how to integrate the architecture into the surrounding landscape given its advantageous position in a lush natural setting," he said.

In response to the ecology of the camp site, a linear approach is adopted to tie each platform together in a series of distinctive yet interconnected activity areas with a climbing wall at one end, providing a vertical link between various levels. To add interest and minimize the amount of cut-and-fill required during construction, a universally accessible loop is generated along the flow of the terrain.

To take full advantage of space, central to the design are green roof tops not only doubling the activity area in the building, but also offering superior thermal insulation for the dormitories and capturing the breathtaking sea view visible at the higher level.

"The green roof tops serve both practical



Green rooftops that maximize space



A green roof with steps uniquely-designed adds interest to the architecture



A subtle cross found on the concrete wall representing YWCA as a Christian association. Underneath is a multi-purpose hall

and aesthetic purposes - to maximize space for indoor and outdoor activities of the camp site, and as a matching element to the rural landscape. What's more, when it comes to repair and maintenance, a green roof top poses less difficulties than a tiled surface," said Director Andy Leung.

### Environment-friendly contributions

In the climatic sense, the building is designed to optimize daylight penetration while minimizing solar heat gain, featuring all windows facing east or south. A variety of concrete canopies, aluminium trellises and extensive landscaping occupying 65% of the site area provide cooling within its micro-climate.

"Energy conservation was taken into account when conducting this project. The sloping green terrace roof linking various parts of the youth center provides ramped connection between levels, avoiding the need for an elevator, thus saving costs as well as operational energy," Andy elaborated.

Additionally, the design of open balconies makes for good natural ventilation, thereby replacing the use of air-conditioners.

The design's commitment to sustainability

extends to the use of construction materials.

Apart from non-toxic (VOC-free) paint and recycled timber used throughout the project, the finish on external concrete walls is employed as a conscious attempt to minimize unnecessary use of finishes. Materials retrieved from the original camp building and granite boulders excavated from the site as landscape features lend creativity to the architecture and evoke reminiscences of the 30-year-old camp site.

### Essence of successful architecture

The project team shared insightful views on what makes successful architecture.

They believed that successful architecture does not necessarily have to be an iconic creation or one that carries a particular statement, but its sustainability and intrinsic values to society, the ability to cater for the end-users and integrate into our daily lives, are essential. Dai pai dong open-air cooked-food stalls becoming scarce today and traditional wet markets are vivid examples.

They also stressed the importance of striking a balance between the heritage and development in Hong Kong as a modern metropolis.



Project team from Ronald Lu & Partners: (Left) Andy Leung, Director; Lemuel Cheng, Associate; Anthony Cheung, Associate Director; and Wilson Lee, Architect