

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter included the background information of Hue Traditional Garden Houses and the problem statement. The objectives of the study, the usefulness, the scope, the research structure, and the term definition of the study were presented in this chapter.

1.1 Emergence of Hue Traditional Garden Houses and Significance of the Challenge

Hue, the capital of Nguyen (1802-1945), the last Dynasty in the history of Vietnam, is known as a garden city because of its landscape formed by green landscape, garden tombs, garden royal palaces and especially, traditional garden houses. House in Hue, especially the traditional houses, always connected closely with gardens, which are metaphorically utilized as spaces for linking human with heaven. Gardens could be found everywhere from the urban space to people dwelling houses and contribute to the gracefulness and attractiveness of Hue city. Therefore, Hue Traditional Garden Houses (HTGHs) are the integral element of Hue people's life and spirit.

Whereas Nguyen Lords (1558-1774) lived in their palaces and Nguyen Kings (1802-1945) lived in the Purple Forbidden City¹, other members of royal family and high-ranking mandarins lived in HTGHs constructed around the palaces of Nguyen Lords and the citadel of Nguyen Dynasty. The result is that those HTGHs are widely distributed in the inner areas of Hue Citadel and areas around in ancient villages of Hue province such as the Kim Long, Vy Da, Phu Cat, and Nguyen Bieu.

¹ The third wall of Hue Citadel

Many factors such as the difference of living style, religious beliefs, building codes imposed by Nguyen Dynasty, and also the characteristics of Hue climate and geography made a great impact on the formation, spatial organization, and built form of HTGHs. These factors have brought unique characteristics to HTGHs, which could not be observed in traditional houses in other regions of Vietnam. Therefore, HTGHs are considered as one of integral elements that contribute to the cultural characteristics of Hue region.

HTGHs are also the dwelling houses that symbolically express the inheritance of Vietnam national culture and the valuable cultural heritage of Hue. Moreover, they are the places that living pattern and religious belief of people in the past can be observed, as well as the represented form of expectation and feeling of the owners of HTGHs.

After 1993, when Hue was registered on the list of the World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO, heritage buildings such as royal buildings and royal tombs have been well conserved by the government, Hue Monuments Conservation Centre, and other organizations. However, except several priority houses, most of HTGHs have been inefficiently protected². They have just been recorded with a brief information such as location, real condition, and name of the owners.

Recently, a large number of HTGHs have been severely demolished and converted into various configurations due to the urban expansion, rapid growth of population, economic development, and the rise of land speculation. The difficulty in conserving the houses for contemporary use also aggravated the problems and a large number of HTGHs were altered or/and extended without uniformity due to use of new materials. Owners of the houses sold some parts of their houses, built new annexes, or subdivided the land into several pieces for their children. Moreover, a large number of the houses have been reused or converted into other usage patterns such as restaurants, karaoke, bars, and rental houses. The result of these situations is that the

² Several HTGHs such as An Hien, Ngoc Son Cong Chua, and houses in Kim Long villages have been conserved and preserved by government and other concerned organizations for tourism

number of HTGHs has decreased in alarming rate. From more than 1000 houses in the period of Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945) the number downed to 331 houses in 1998³, to 318 houses in 2004 and the number still continuously declines now (Tinh, 2005). In term of inestimable value, historical data, religious belief, and social and cultural conduct of Hue people are also disappeared with these HTGHs.

HTGHs are one of the most significant cultural assets of Hue that should be conserved, but as above mentioned reasons, they have been reduced their value, and their transformation also has deteriorated the whole townscape of Hue city. A comprehensive understanding of their formation, spatial organization and transformation of HTGHs will help us to improve our understanding about their value and comprehend that what are the factors and conditions that influence the deterioration of HTGHs. From that clarification, the research can propose some preliminary approaches for conserving and applying HTGHs for contemporary use.

1.2 Objectives

From the above mentioned perspective, it is evident that a extensive research of HTGHs should be facilitated to obtain comprehensive knowledge and understanding of their formation, physical and spatial characteristics, as well as their transformation in order to conserve and apply them for contemporary use. The research will be developed from this viewpoint, so that the objectives of the research are as follows;

- 1) To clarify the formation, spatial organization, and typology of HTGHs
- 2) To reveal the transformation process of HTGHs and the conditions or the influences that shape their mechanism
- 3) To propose some preliminary guidelines for conserving and applying HTGHs for contemporary use

³ The statistics of Hue People's Committee and the survey of Architectural Faculty of Hue College of Science, Hue

An analysis focuses on alteration and extension of the spatial elements, their organization and quality in HTGHs and also their physical features in order to disclose the conditions and factors that control the transformation process of HTGHs until they reach the present configurations. These conditions and factors are the rationale for discussing preliminary guidelines for conserving and applying HTGHs for contemporary use.

1.3 Scope of Research

As mentioned earlier, HTGHs are distributed around the palaces of Nguyen Lords and the citadel of Nguyen dynasty; hence, these houses are located mainly in the inner area of the citadel and the surrounding villages such as Kim Long, Vy Da, and Nguyen Bieu. These villages have not been heavily influenced by the development of urban, society, and economy, while the citadel area has been in the opposite situation. HTGHs in the citadel area have been rapidly transformed. This is the reason why HTGHs in the citadel area are chosen as representative objects of study.

After 1945, when Nguyen Dynasty was collapsed, the citadel area had to serve a number of immigrants and new families derived from disintegration of extended families. The result is that various types of dwelling houses were built, while *Ruong* houses brought from homelands of the owners were also constructed⁴. These *Ruong* houses are also included in as the objects of study. To sum up, HTGHs, constructed from 1802 when the citadel was established to present, are the objects of the study.

1.4 Research Structure

This thesis is comprised of seven chapters:

⁴ According to the field survey, the other cases are that *Ruong* structure were bought by the owners and there is no case that the owners make *Ruong* structure by themselves. *Ruong* house is a typical traditional house in Hue and neighboring regions such as Quang Binh province and Quang Tri province. It is developed from *Roi* house, another type Hue traditional house. *Roi* house with small spaces inside is usually used for ordinary and poor families, while *Ruong* house can solve the problem of the small spaces in *Roi* house and it is usually used for rich families. *Roi* house and *Ruong* house are known as the precursor of HTGHs. According to study works of (Quynh, 2002) and (Tinh, 2005), these traditional houses were formed derived from Nghe Tinh area (Ha Tinh and Nghe An at present)

- Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter firstly mentions about the brief explanation of the emergence of HTGHs in Hue, and then provides the significance of the study and the objectives of the research. Research structure and term definitions are also discussed in the later part.

- Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the background history of Hue citadel and HTGHs based on discussing previous study works of Tinh, (2005); Thong, (2001); and Thuy, (1999). Then, the study overviews the legal documents for conservation and protection of cultural heritage relating to HTGHs. The theory of correlation between house form and culture of Amos Rapoport (1969) is then reviewed. Moreover, some methodological approaches about formation and transformation of traditional dwelling house in various sites are shown such as the study work of Showa Women's University, (2003); Funo, (2003); Funo, (2004); and Funo, (2005). The study work of Showa Women's University concentrates to the architecture of Hoi An ancient town in Vietnam, while that of Funo and his collaborators focus on the formation, transformation, and various aspects of Kampung house in Jakarta.

- Chapter 3: Methodology

Four principal components of research method are used for this research. They are documentary research, base map, field survey, and analysis of collected data.

The documentary research is used to obtain the background and history of HTGHs. It includes policies, laws and other relevant documents relating to the objects of the research such as journals, newspaper articles, and reports. The base map drawn in 2000 by the City Planning Institute of Hue Provincial Office is utilized for making field survey. The field survey of HTGHs in the citadel area is done for collecting data that are classified into three categories: physical, sociological and historical data. 91

HTGHs in the citadel area were surveyed by taking photographs. Among them, 59 houses were measured while their dwellers were interviewed.

- Chapter 4: Spatial Formation of Hue Citadel

This chapter deals with the origin of the citadel from 1802 when Nguyen Anh, the first King of Nguyen Dynasty, started the construction. Then, the water system, the street patterns and distribution of facilities in the citadel area are studied for clarifying factors that shape the formation and built form of the citadel. Three groups of facilities, religious and heritage facility, education and public facility, and commercial facility, in the citadel area will be discussed. Finally, the relationship among the distribution of these facilities, the street pattern, and formation of HTGHs will be clarified.

- Chapter 5: Spatial Formation and Transformation of HTGHs in the Citadel Area

This chapter identifies the establishment of HTGHs in the citadel area and then, elaborates the definition of basic elements of a HTGH and their arrangement in order to reveal the basic characteristics and typology of HTGHs.

The transformation of HTGHs is respectively discussed from the facade elements and its designs, site planning to the spatial organization of the houses.

- Chapter 6: Preliminary Guidelines for Conservation of HTGHs into Contemporary Use

This chapter discusses the present condition for conservation and protection of the citadel and also HTGHs located within the area. The confliction between the conservation of HTGHs and the application of them for contemporary use under the influence of urbanization will be discussed. Finally, based on the legal document derived from the international conventions of ICOMOS, Vietnamese government, and

the field survey, the preliminary guidelines for conservation of HTGHs will be suggested.

- Chapter 7: Conclusions

This chapter concludes the results of the research. At the end of this chapter, the limitations of the research and the directions for further studies about conservation of the citadel area and HTGHs will be discussed.

1.5 Term Definitions

Because of various meaning of “Traditional House” and due to the brief understanding of some “local words”, the term used in the research must be defined.

- **Hue Traditional Garden Houses** (HTGHs): They were formed during the period of Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945) and comprised of *Nha Chinh*, *Nha Phu*, garden, and other elements such as *Binh Phong*, *Be can*, hedge, and gate. After Nguyen Dynasty was collapsed in 1945, some new *Ruong* houses are built and they are also called HTGHs in the research. In sum up, whether *Ruong* houses in the citadel area having gardens from the period of Nguyen Dynasty to present time or not, are also called HTGHs in this research⁵.

- **Hue Garden Houses** (HGHs): The spatial organization of this type is similar to HTGHs but *Nha Chinh* can be *Ruong* house or other types of house. Hence, HTGHs and houses with garden are included in HGHs.

- **Hue Traditional Houses**: This includes of all traditional houses in Hue such as *Ruong* houses, *Roi* houses, deformation of *Ruong* houses and *Roi* houses, HTGHs, and French ancient houses.

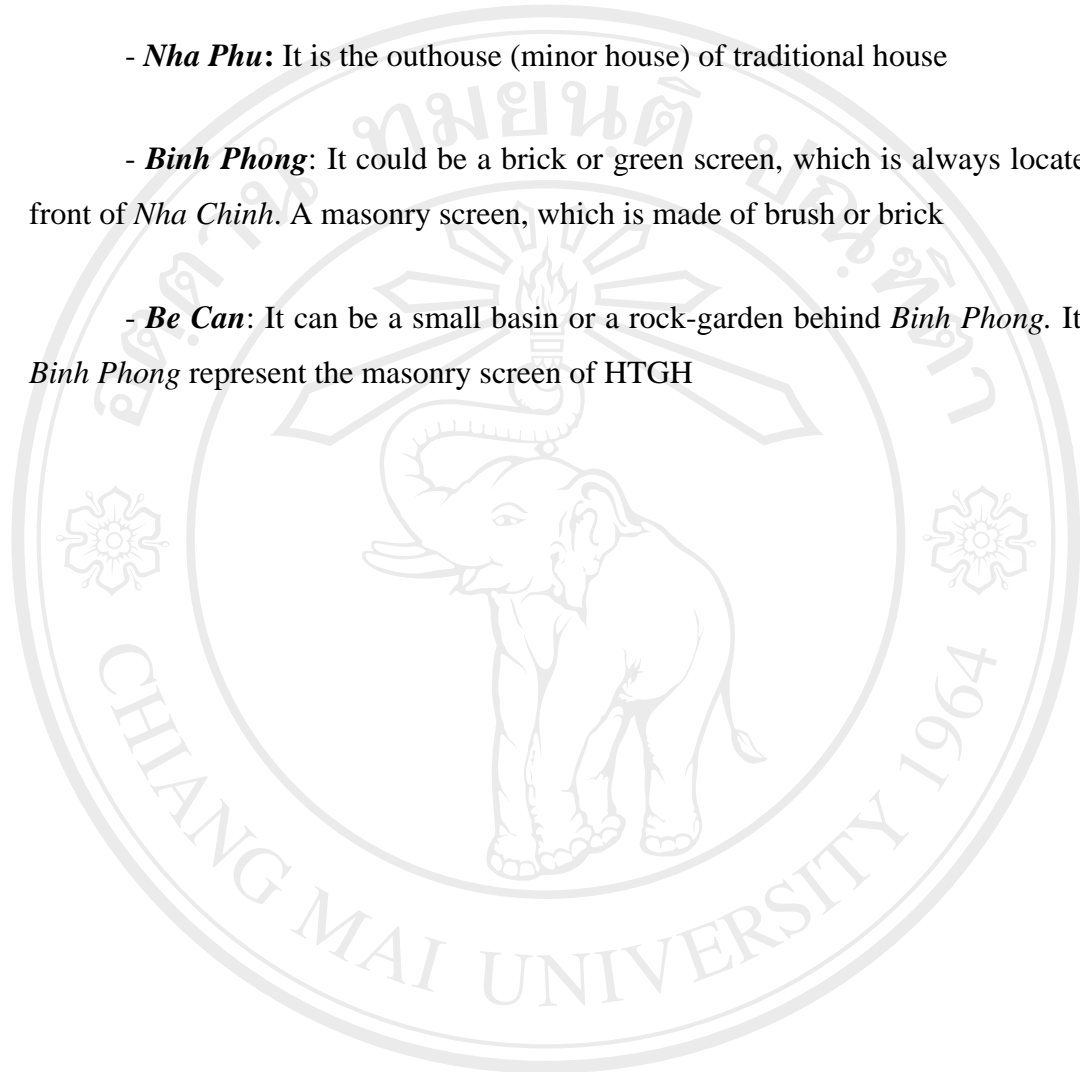
⁵ *Ruong* houses that used to have garden in the past or in case that were moved and reconstructed in the new sites are included in the objects of study as well

- ***Nha Chinh***: It is the main house of traditional house and normally is *Ruong* house or *Roi* house in HTGH

- ***Nha Phu***: It is the outhouse (minor house) of traditional house

- ***Binh Phong***: It could be a brick or green screen, which is always located in front of *Nha Chinh*. A masonry screen, which is made of brush or brick

- ***Be Can***: It can be a small basin or a rock-garden behind *Binh Phong*. It and *Binh Phong* represent the masonry screen of HTGH



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