

## Chapter 4

### SPATIAL FORMATION OF HUE CITADEL

This chapter deals with the origin and spatial formation of Hue citadel. The first part will discuss about the emergence and the context of the citadel from 1802 when it was constructed to present. Then the study will come into spatial formation to discuss about street pattern, distribution of facilities, and water system in the citadel area.

#### 4.1 The Origin of Hue Citadel

In 1802, after unifying the country, Nguyen Anh chose the land of Hue as the citadel of Nguyen dynasty and constructed it based on three principles as mentioned in literature review chapter. These principles are the Feng Shui principle, Vauban model, and the repetition of use of former palace sites. The history of Hue Citadel from 1802 when it was constructed to present could be divided into two periods. The first period is the time of Nguyen Dynasty from 1802 to 1945 and the second period is after the collapse of Nguyen Dynasty (from 1945 to present).

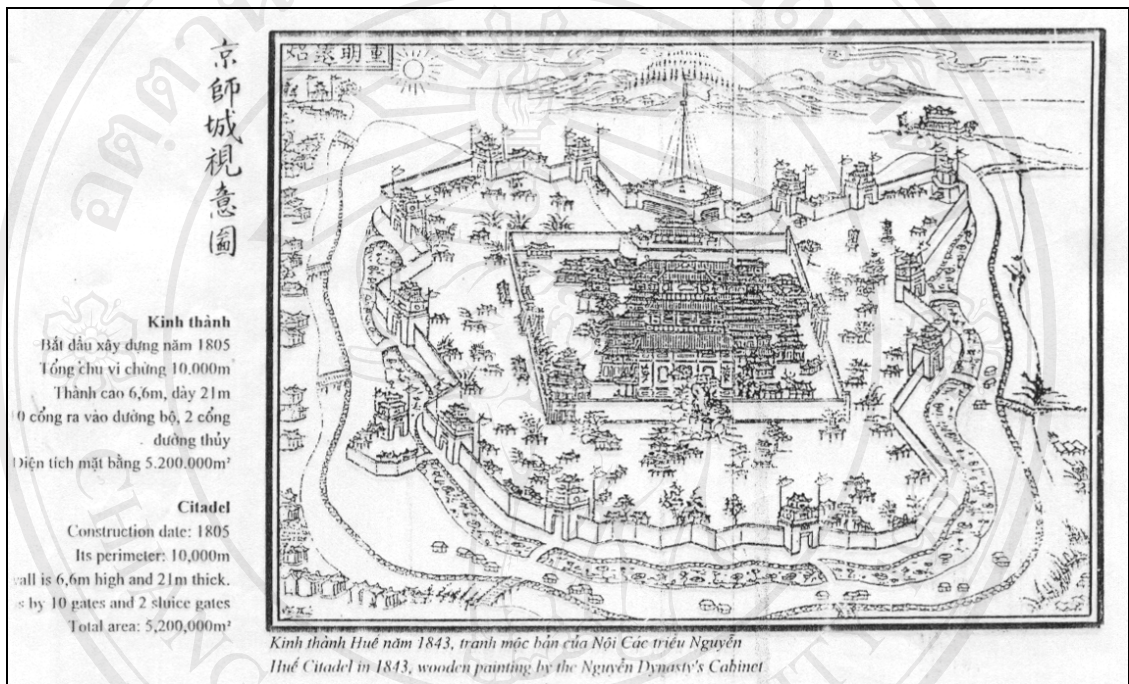
##### 4.1.1 Hue Citadel during the Period of Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945)

At the beginning, the area within the citadel and outside the Imperial City was divided into 95 checkerboard quarters and each quarter (with area is about 1000sq.m), maybe, is the precinct assigned by Nguyen Dynasty<sup>1</sup>. In general, there are one or two royal buildings, garrisons, or temples located in each precinct. Most of royal offices are placed on the left side of the Imperial City while other entertainment buildings for royal family are scattered around. Other quarters, in which no building is constructed, are granted to mandarins and civilians for building dwelling houses. The wood-block painting of Hue citadel in 1843 by Nguyen's Cabinet also demonstrates this

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<sup>1</sup> Quoc Su Quan Trieu Nguyen. Dai Nam Nhat Thong Chi (History of the Unification of Great Vietnam), p.17.

phenomenon (Fig. 4-1). On the painting, the two types of buildings can be observed. The first type is the buildings laid in outside of the citadel around the left side. These buildings could be regarded as the dwelling houses of inhabitants. The other type is the buildings, which concentrates within the citadel with bared columns. They are the public royal buildings of Nguyen dynasty.



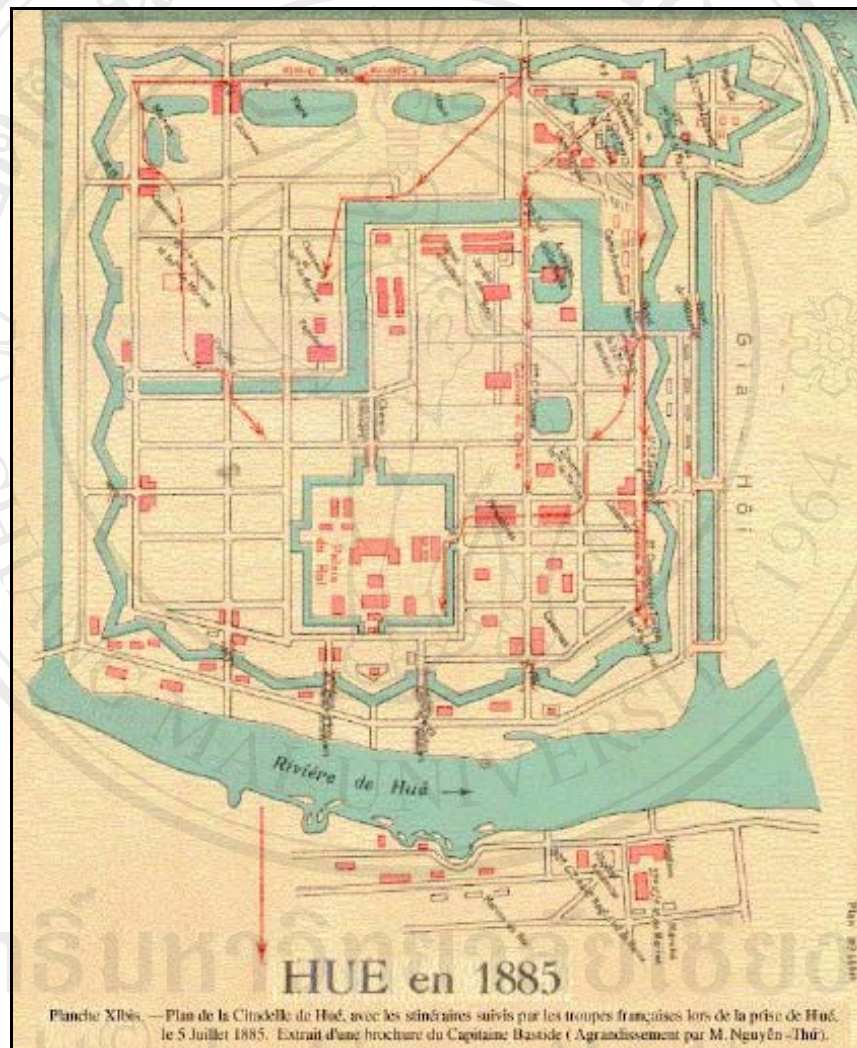
**Figure 4-1: Hue Citadel in 1843 (Source: Nguyen's Cabinet)**

Later on, a small number of residents existed and lived in the citadel area. However, most of them are the people who worked for the royal families such as servants and guardians. They did not have the property right of the land, while the Nguyen court can take back in whenever they want. Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, more people freely came and settled down in the area.

After the period of Tu Duc King (1847-1883), the French colony seized control the city although there were still nine Kings of Nguyen Dynasty until 1945 but they were just nominal position<sup>2</sup>. The confusion of Hue in that period gave impact on some alterations in the citadel area. On the map of 1885 (Fig. 4-2), the built up areas

<sup>2</sup> See the genealogy of Nguyen dynasty in appendix 4.

are seen on the left part of the Imperial City (Royal Palace) where most royal office buildings were located, while the areas on the right part were in opposite condition. This statement is also supported by the number of streets laid on the citadel area, all of which on the left part of the Imperial City is more complex than those on the other areas.

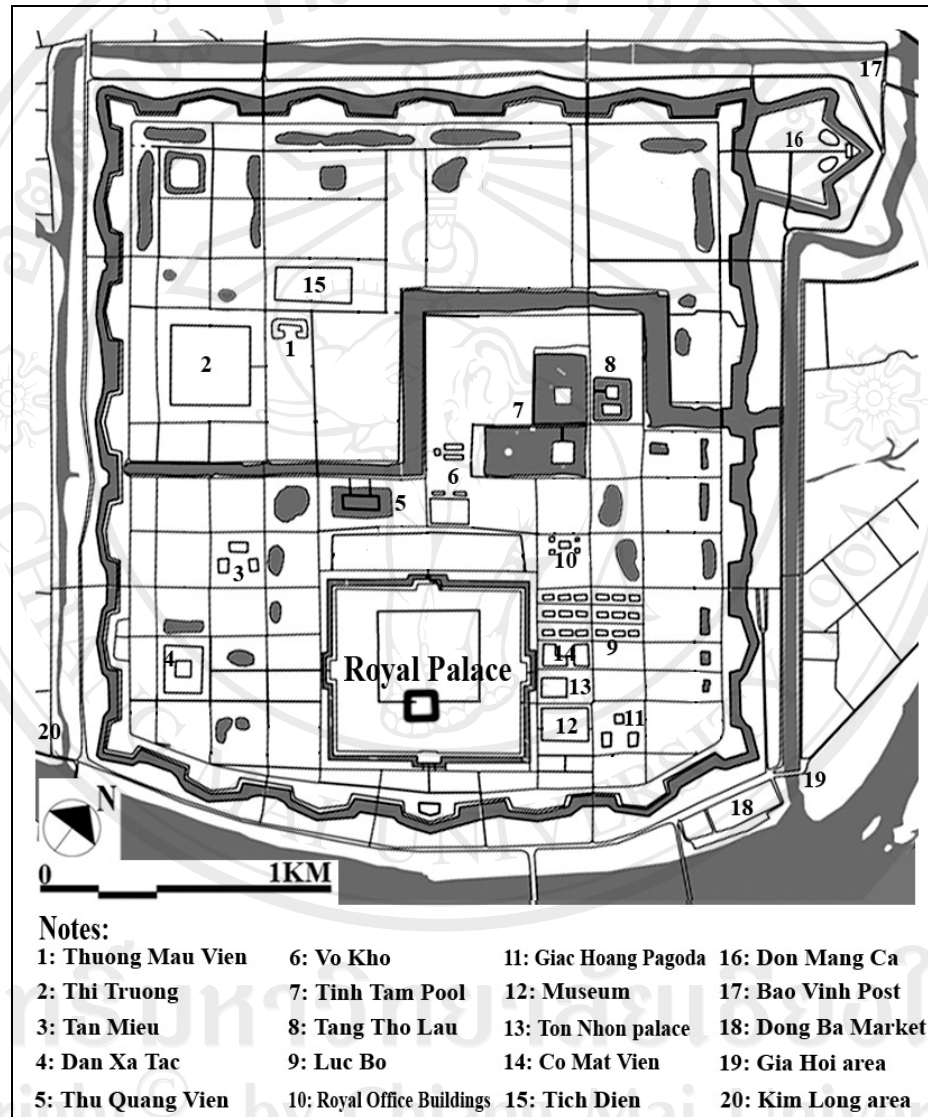


**Figure 4-2:** Hue Citadel in 1885

(Source: Nhung Nguoi Ban Co Do Hue, 1933. No.12; Drawn by Nguyen Thu)

By 1909, the right part and the right rear part of the Imperial City still looked empty where only few royal buildings such as *Dan Xa Tac*, *Tan Mieu*, and *Thu Quang Vien* were erected in scattered location (Fig. 4-3). Fig. 4-3 also demonstrates that most

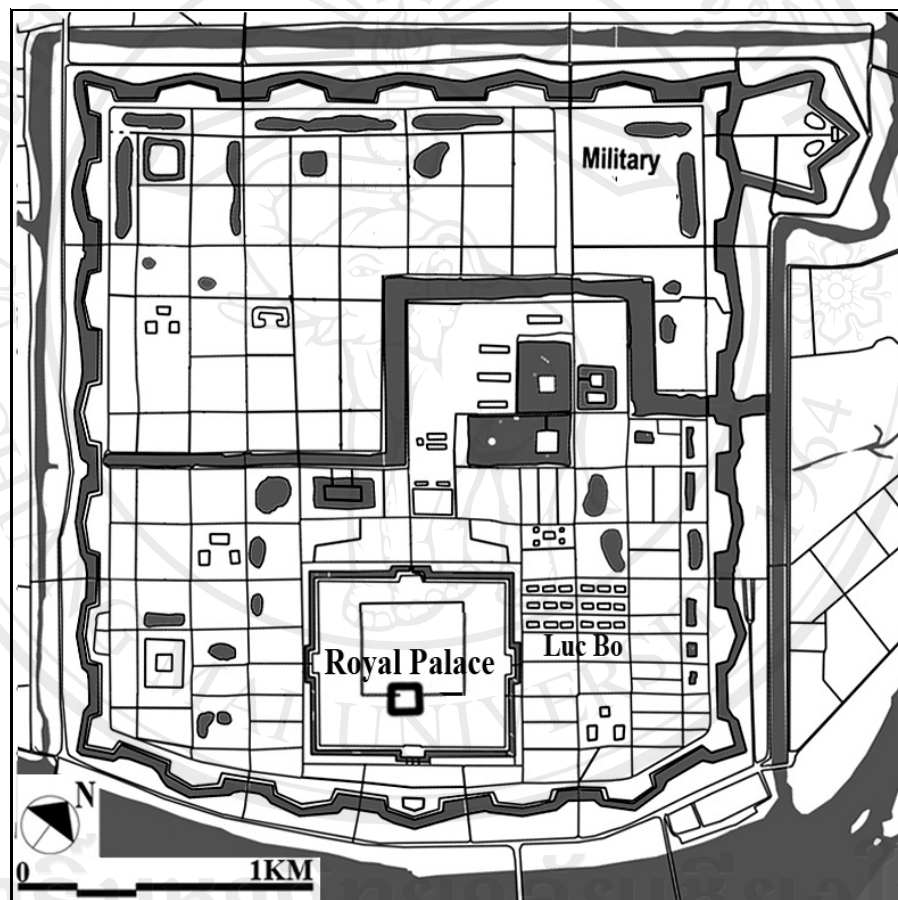
royal office buildings, which were serviced as working spaces of Nguyen Dynasty, concentrated on the left side of the Imperial City such as *Luc Bo* and *Co Mat Vien*. While the royal buildings located in other sides were used for entertaining purposes of royal families such as *Thuong Mau Vien*, *Thu Quang Vien*, and *Tang Tho Lau*.



**Figure 4-3: Hue Citadel in 1909<sup>3</sup>**

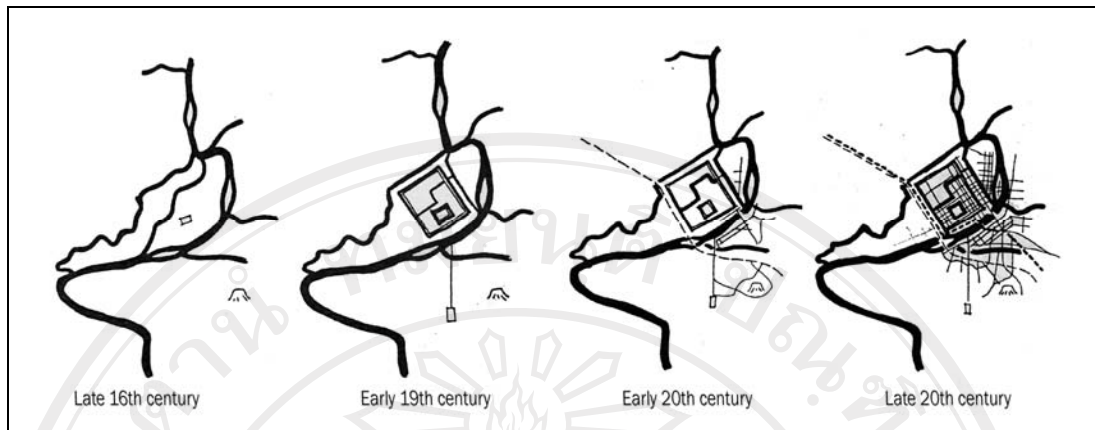
<sup>3</sup> (1) Thuong Mau Vien and (5) Thu Quang Vien were the beautiful famous gardens for recreation of royal families. (2) Thi Truong was the place for doctoral competitive examination of Nguyen dynasty. (3) Tan Mieu, the place for worshipping Duc Duc King, was built in 1891. (4) It was the place for worshipping the Earth Genie. (6) Vo Kho was the arsenals of Nguyen dynasty. (8) Tang Tho Lau was the archives of Nguyen dynasty. It is used for tourism at present. (9) Luc Bo was the six ministries of Nguyen dynasty. At present, this area is used for government offices and residents. (11) Giac Hoang Pagoda was the palace of Ming Mang King when he was the prince. Then, it was converted to the

From that time until the middle early 20<sup>th</sup> century, some small streets and lanes had been cut in the areas around the Imperial City (Fig. 4-4). However, although there were many residents, who immigrated and settled within the citadel area, the shape of the citadel area was hardly changed. In contrast, the outside area, especially the area in the south bank of Huong River had rapidly transformed by the planning of the French (Fig. 4-5).



**Figure 4-4:** Hue Citadel in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century

pagoda in 1839 by Minh Mang King. At present, it is the office of Hue Monuments Conservation Centre. (12) Museum was the recreation place of the princesses and princes of royal families. In 1909, it was the library office named “Long An” of Nguyen dynasty. It was converted to Khai Dinh Museum in 1923. At present, it is the museum of Hue named “My Thuat”. (13) Ton Nho Phu was a royal office building. (14) Co Mat Vien was a royal office building. (15) Tich Dien was the place that the King ploughed and worshiped the Emperor Shen Nong. (16) Dong Mang Ca was the area of military. (17) Bao Vinh Port was replaced by the concrete bridge for connecting to Bao Vinh area, the ancient town under Nguyen dynasty. (18) Dong Ba Market is the biggest market of Hue at present. (19) Gia Hoi area was another commercial ancient town under Nguyen dynasty.



**Figure 4-5:** Transformation of Hue Citadel by periods

When HTGHs were firstly built in the citadel area is not yet clear. Several reliable documents, however, assert that HTGHs had been formed during the period of Ming Mang King (1820-1841). The quote derived from “Ming Mang Chinh Yeu” (1993) mentioned about time when the King supplied HTGH to his prince:

*“Grand HTGHs for using as place of study and recreation. Therefore, the princes should concentrate to their target...”<sup>4</sup>*

These HTGHs were very big with more than five *gians* in *Nha Chinh* with added three front *gians*. Furthermore, the main use of these buildings was for study, recreation, and entertainment of the princes. Therefore, they were called the palaces of royal families (Tinh, 2005).

Until the period of Thieu Tri Reign (1841-1847), HTGHs were used not only by princes, but also by princesses and royal families. Mandarins and ordinary people also build HTGHs for their living houses in the following period if they could affordable. Their HTGHs are smaller than that of royal families representing in the number of *gians* and in the transformation of their functional pattern HTGHs from the purposes of recreation and study to the living purpose. Generally, the number of *gians* in *Nha Chinh* follows the position of the owners. If the owners are princes or relative of royal families, the number of *gians* in their *Nha Chinh* is usually five or seven. For

<sup>4</sup> National Historiographer’s Office of Nguyen Dynasty, 1994. Ming Mang Chinh Yeu, p.103.

the high-ranking mandarins, that number ranges from three to five, while the range of one to three is the number of *gians* in *Nha Chinh* of below-ranking mandarins and ordinary people. At that time, the royal office buildings, temple, and HTGHs were still the structure elements in the citadel. The density of royal office buildings on the left side of the Imperial City leads a significant number of HTGHs, which are dwelling houses of the high-ranking mandarins located in this area for convenience on their daily activities.

Around 1924, there were several dwelling houses around Mai Thuc Loan St built following traditional street style named *Nha Pho* on the left side of the Imperial City<sup>5</sup>. These houses and the market named “Qui Gia Thi” are the elements representing formation of commercial streets in the citadel area at present<sup>6</sup>. At that time, the residents could have right of their lands.

#### **4.1.2 Hue Citadel – From 1945 to Present**

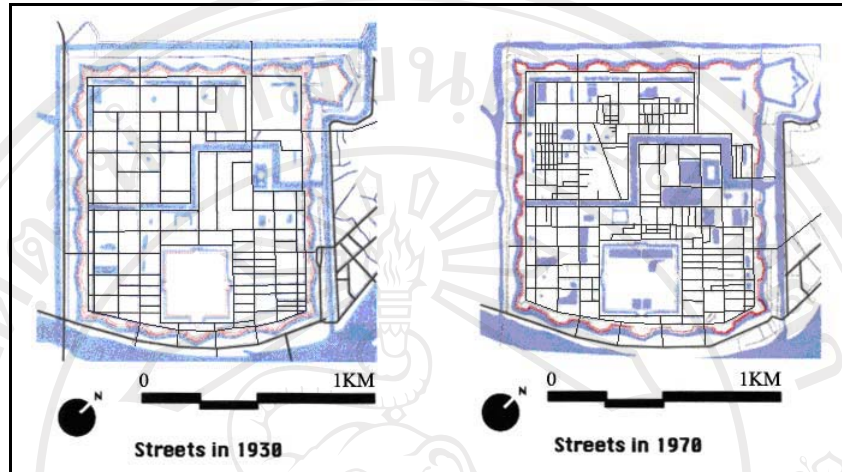
In 1945, Bao Dai King (1925-1945) declared the collapse of Nguyen Dynasty. Then, Vietnam had been in the state of the war against the French colonization for nine years (1945-1954), American colonization and Puppet Regime for twenty years (1955-1975). The citadel area became the place that people used for avoiding the war attacks. The fierce fighting made rapid change to the urban configuration of Hue. Many royal buildings and dwelling houses were heavily destroyed such as Luc Bo, Tan Mieu, and Thuong Mau Vien. In addition, many small roads had been cut making the land of the citadel be divided into various patterns and scales of plot of lands. The rapid alteration of Hue citadel can be clearly observed in the street pattern in Fig. 4-6 and Fig. 4-7. These figures show that many small roads are newly cut and they concentrate in the rear part of the Imperial City. Therefore, it can be implicated that there have a large number of immigrants came and settled in the rear area. At present,

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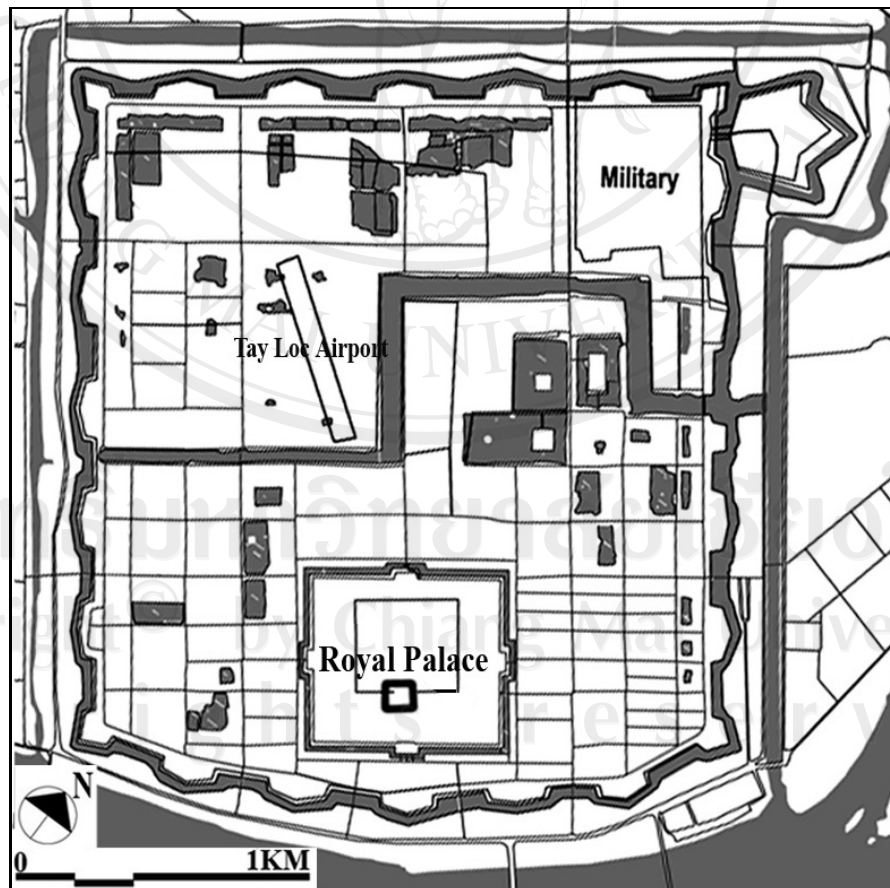
<sup>5</sup> *Nha Pho* has rectangular shape of plan and the front space is used for commercial activities, while the rear space and upper space are used for living and service.

<sup>6</sup> Hai (2002) provides evident legal document for demonstrating the formation of ancient shop houses in Mai Thuc Loan St, the most prosperous shopping streets in the present citadel area. Qui Gia Thi Market was formed during the period of Gia Long Kinh and located in Mai Thuc Loan St at present around the rampart wall of the citadel. In 1899, it was moved to Dong Ba market at present (Cadiere, 1996).

in this area, most of architectural characteristics of dwelling houses were constructed in modern fashion.



**Figure 4-6:** Street system of Hue Citadel in 1930 and in 1970 (Source: Satoh, 2004)



**Figure 4-7:** Hue Citadel in 1968



After Vietnam became the unified country, Hue was affected by a huge influx of immigrants, who vastly built various types of dwelling houses within the citadel and also the land on the enclosure wall making much alteration in urban configuration in the citadel area as we can observe in the present.

#### 4.2 Street Pattern

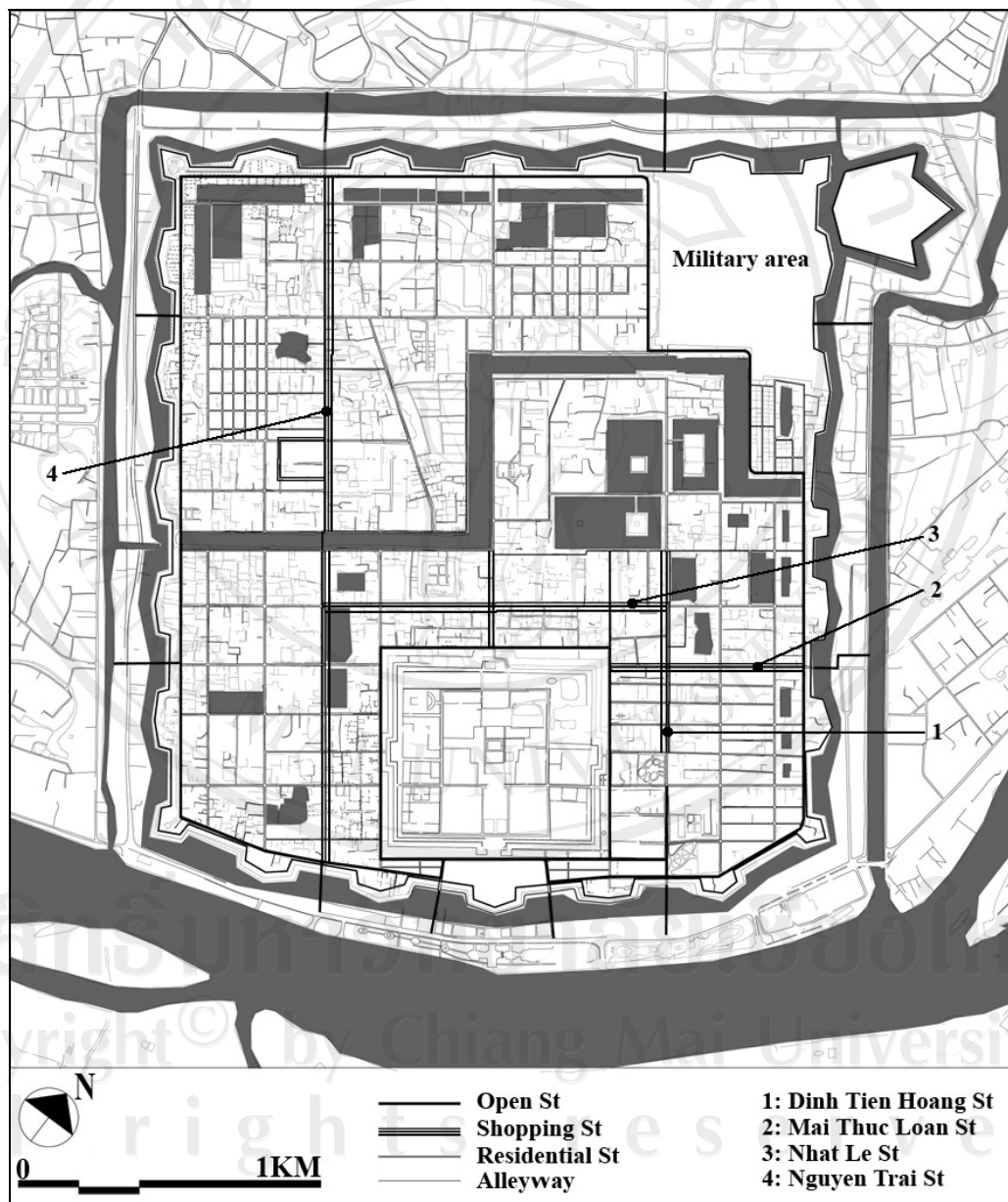
It is quite interesting that the main street pattern in the citadel area has not much changed. An area that alterations can be evidently observed is in the western part of the Imperial City where French built a domestic military airport. However, when that domestic airport was established is not clear. During the period of 1986 to 1970, the airport was collapsed. After 1975, the huge influx of immigrants was the cause making alteration in the site of that domestic airport as land for dwelling houses and farming.

Most of the streets in the citadel area are paved and their pattern could be divided into two types making the checkerboard layout of the citadel. The first type is streets running northwest – southeast axis, and the second type is streets running perpendicularly to the first type. At present, the original checkerboard plan has been broken up by the proliferation of alleyways in several areas such as the area in the western Imperial City and the area near Tinh Tam group of pools behind the Imperial City (Fig. 4-8).

Based on the width, townscape, and usage pattern of the streets, four types of streets can be identified: alleyways, residential streets, shopping streets, and open streets. Several basic characteristics of these types of streets are shown in table 4-1.

Due to the urbanization of Hue citadel, shopping streets have well established along several streets such as Nguyen Trai, Mai Thuc Loan, Dinh Tien Hoang, and Nhat Le where many *Nha Pho* and markets were erected. The establishment of these streets could be related to the market centers outside the citadel for the convenience of




transportation, such as Dong Ba market and Bao Vinh Commercial Street<sup>7</sup>. Dwelling houses in these streets are developed and altered to the *Nha Pho* styles for adapting to the commercial activities. A small number of HTGHs located in these streets were found along these streets. The front space adjoining the street in these HTGHs are used for commercial activities.



**Figure 4-8:** Street pattern in the citadel area

<sup>7</sup> Dong Ba Market is located in the eastern part of the citadel, it is known as the biggest market of Hue at present. Bao Vinh was the ancient commercial port of Hue during the period of Nguyen dynasty. It was formed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and located in the northern part of the citadel.

**Table 4-1:** Typology of street system in the citadel area

	Open Street	Shopping Street	Residential Street	Alleyway
<b>Width (meter)</b>	9-12	9-12	5-9	2-4
<b>Survey covering</b>	Asphalt	Asphalt	Asphalt	Asphalt + Gravel
<b>Usage</b>	Residential - official access	<i>Nha Pho</i> access	Residential-commercial access	Residential access
<b>Description of Townscape</b>	Open views of landscape and historic Monuments	Heavy traffic-modern style buildings	Hedge-garden houses and modern houses	Hedge-garden houses
<b>Feature</b>				

Open streets are the streets laid in front of Imperial City and along Tinh Tam group of pools, where many landscapes and historical monuments appear. Most of these streets are well maintained and paved. The closed drainages are equipped along sides of the streets. Most dwelling houses and other buildings along this type of streets have garden and still keep style of local traditional architecture.

The residential streets have narrower width than the open and shopping streets (with about 5-9 meters). There are different types of dwelling houses built on their both sides. Most of these houses have spaces for small shops or stalls in the front part while the rear parts are used for living and service purpose. These houses were formed by land subdivision due to the growth of population and urbanization.

Also, alleyways were formed as the consequence of land subdivision by the huge influx of immigrants from 1975. There are various types of dwelling houses, mostly used for living purpose. In general, the width of these alley walls is less than 4 meters. Most of them are not equipped with drainage system. In these streets, local dwelling houses are the predominant structure and most of them still keep their original configurations at the first stage of construction. Most of new streets are the

tertiary streets or lanes called alleyways connecting the inner areas within the quarters.

### 4.3 Distribution of Facilities

The citadel area consists of four precincts, namely Thuan Thanh, Thuan Loc, Thuan Hoa, and Tay Loc. Three groups of facilities could be identified in each precinct: religious and heritage facility, education and public facility, and commercial facility (Fig. 4-9). Among them, heritage facilities concentrate in Thuan Thanh precinct where many royal buildings were located during the period of Nguyen dynasty such as Hue Monuments Conservation Centre, My Thuat Museum, and Binh An Ancestral Temple. At present, several heritage buildings in the area were converted into the government buildings. For example, almost buildings of Luc Bo (Royal Office Buildings of Nguyen dynasty) are converted into the factories and government buildings, while Hue Monuments Conservation Centre used to be the Giac Hoang pagoda. In addition, the religious and heritage facilities can be also found in the other precincts such as Tay Linh pagoda (Thuan Loc precinct), Tay Loc pagoda and Tay Loc church (Thuan Loc precinct), and Cat Tuong pagoda (Thuan Hoa precinct).

All nursery school, primary school, secondary school, and high schools are scattered around four precincts, while all universities concentrate in Thuan Thanh precinct. Other public facilities such as parks and open spaces are distributed along Ngu Ha River and in front of the Imperial City.

At least six commercial facilities including trading offices, garages, printing offices, grocery stores, internet shops, and stalls can be found along the shopping streets such as Mai Thuc Loan St and Dinh Tien Hoang St in Thuan Loc precinct, and Nguyen Trai St and Nhat Le St in Thuan Hoa precinct. Along these streets, most dwelling houses are built in *Nha Pho* style (Shop-house fashion) where the front part is usually used for doing commercial activities, while the rear part is served for living purpose. Markets are also distributed in each precinct, and Tay Loc market located in Nguyen Trai St of Tay Loc precinct is the biggest market in the citadel area.

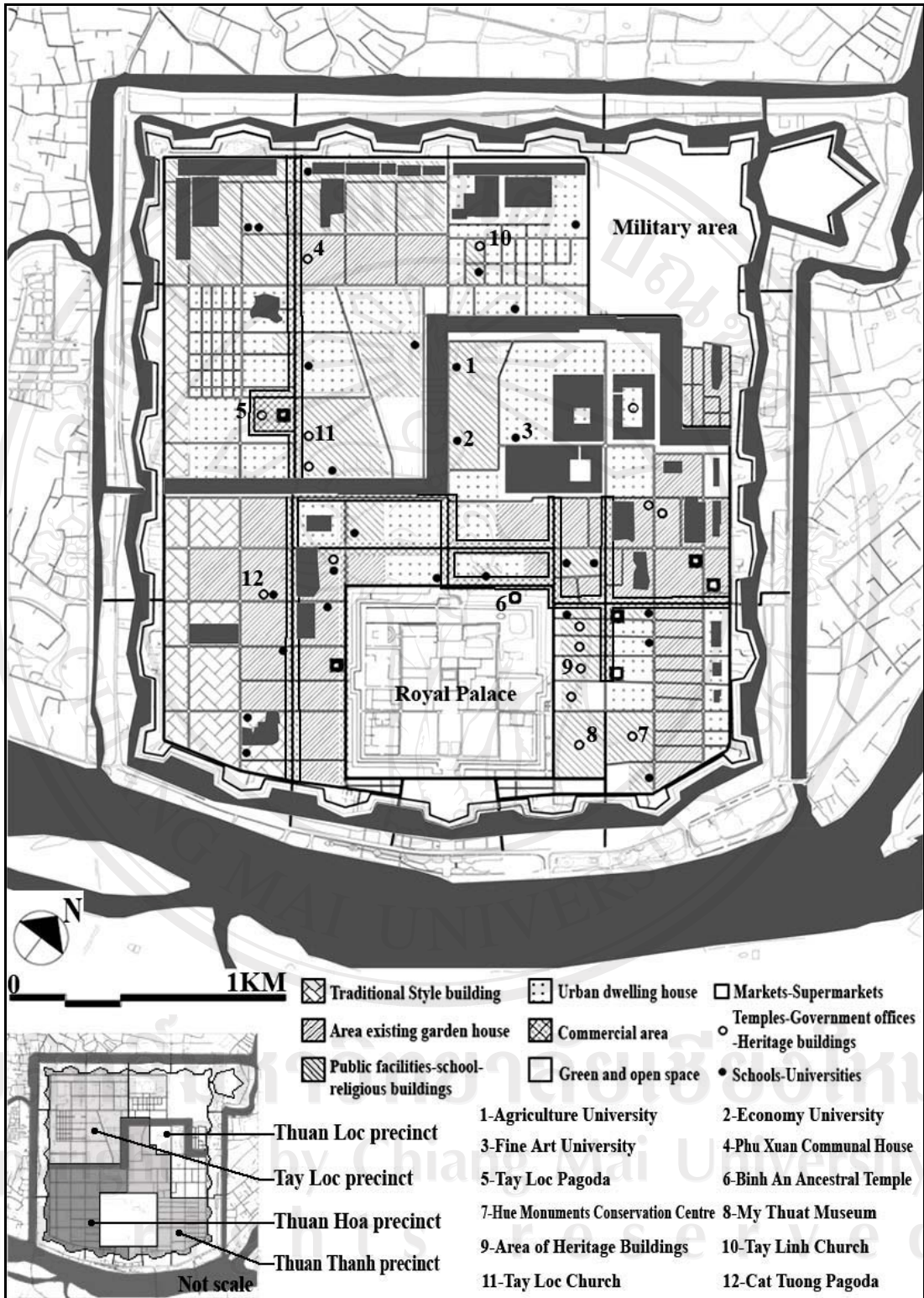


Figure 4-9: Distribution of facilities in the citadel area

#### 4.4 Water System

Hue is one of the places that have the highest rainfall in Vietnam. The rainy season in Hue is from October to December with annual average rainfall of 3,000mm, while the other periods are only from 300mm to 400mm. Therefore, Hue is usually threatened by the disaster of flood. That condition can be demonstrated by the pierce floods in the history such as the floods in 1953, 1985, and 1999, which had adversely destroyed many historical monuments and dwelling houses of Hue.

Due to low level of the citadel area, protection against flood is very important because the low ground level of it (Table 4-2).

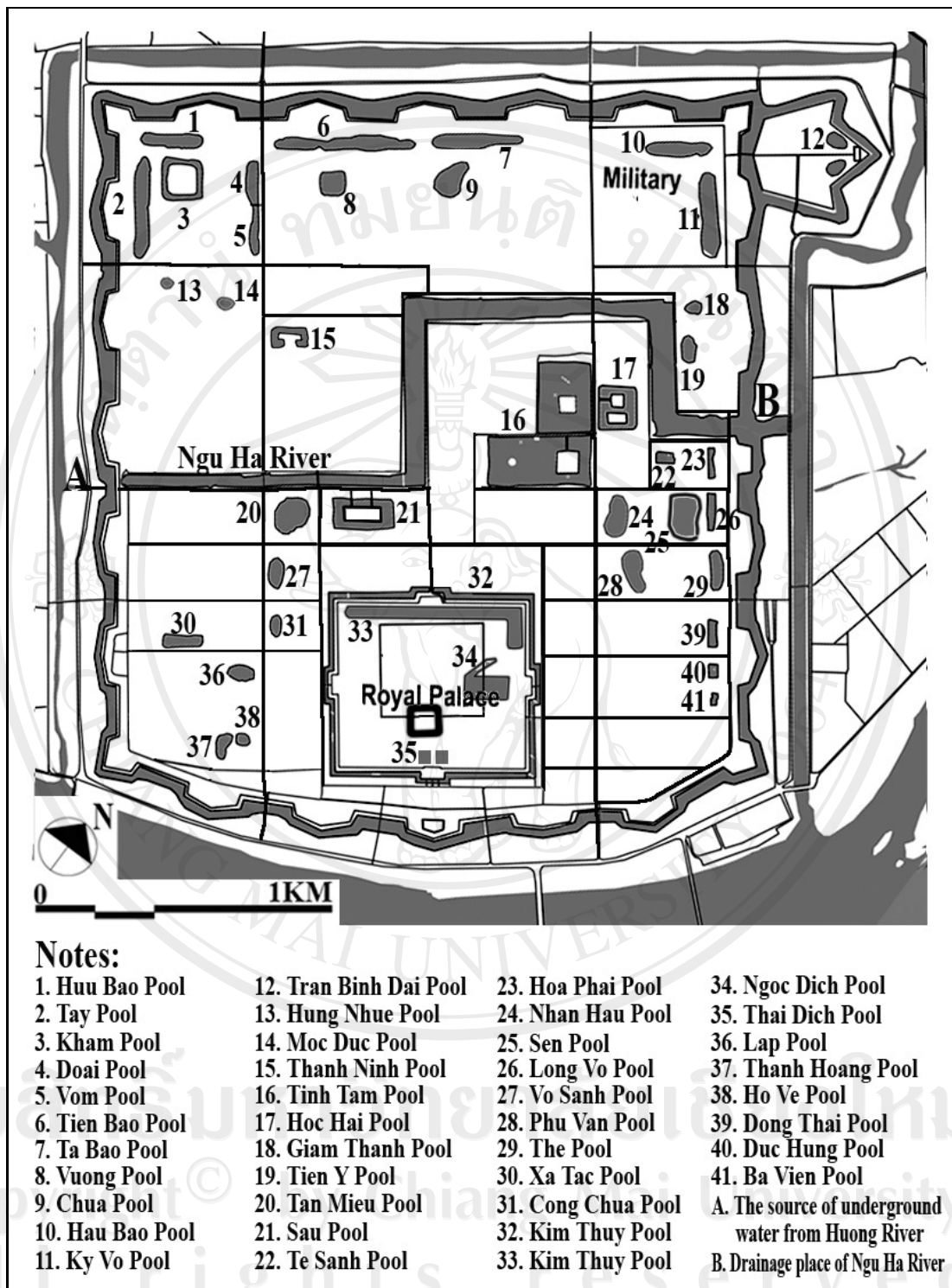
**Table 4-2:** Flooding areas of Hue

(Source: Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 1998)

	No flooding	Minor flooding	Serious flooding
Citadel area	27%	28%	45%
Other areas	30.5%	39%	40.5%

Fig. 4-10 demonstrates that Ngu Ha River and 41 pools play the vital role in adjusting the water system for the citadel area. Normally, the sewage in the citadel area firstly flows to these pools before flowing to Ngu Ha River. Then, the source of underwater, which flows from Huong River to Ngu Ha River in the western part of the citadel (position A in Fig. 4-10), conveys the above sewage towards the eastern part by the slope of the terrain (position B in Fig. 4-10). Thus, Ngu Ha River plays the important role in the sewage system of the citadel area by using the source of water from Huong River.

At present, inundation in the citadel area is usually occurred because of trespassing upon Ngu Ha River by local residents making connection among Ngu Ha River and those pools is blocked. The environment of the citadel is also getting worse and worse due to polluted water. The consequence of these conditions made the serious damage for the citadel area.



**Figure 4-10:** Ngu Ha River and pool system in the citadel area

To conclude, from the origin of the citadel, the first establishment of HTGHs is in the period of Ming Mang King (1820-1841) and these houses were originally used by princes for recreation and study. The layout of the citadel is constructed

follow the type of checkerboard pattern. The formation and urbanization of the citadel made a great impact on the formation of dwelling houses and also HTGHs located in the area. The street pattern in the citadel area could be divided into four types; open streets, shopping streets, residential streets, and alleyways. Shopping streets have an influence on land subdivision and alteration of dwelling houses and HTGHs located along them due to the need of space for doing business. The formation of street pattern, where various small streets had been cut, implies the growth of population. The distribution of facilities in the citadel area has also influenced on the distribution of HTGHs. The left side of the Imperial City, where many royal buildings are converted into government buildings, leads the concentration of a large number of HTGHs, which originally were dwelling houses of high-ranking mandarins. In addition, the distribution of three types of facilities in the citadel also has influences on the transformation of dwelling houses and HTGHs. Ngu Ha River and the pool system in the citadel area play an important role in adjusting the water system for the area. However, the blocked connection among them and the low ground level of the citadel's terrain are the causes making the inundation, which is usually occurred.

The detailed influence of the above spatial formation of citadel area on the transformation of HTGHs will be discussed in the next chapter.