

From Alienation to Return: The Materiality, Criticality, and Possibility of Architecture from a Humanist Perspective

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Abstract. This paper aims to explore the relationship between humanism and materiality in the field of architecture. Based on Marxist theory and "Four Healthy Housing Model" (including housing cost, housing conditions, housing stability and housing environment), this paper analyzes and examines the internal contradictions and ethical issues existing in social housing practice (such as the situation in the former Soviet Union and Hong Kong). Through the comparative study of "empowerment-oriented renewal" in Wong Tai Sin village in Hong Kong and "relocation-oriented renewal" in Khrushchyovka community in Moscow, this paper aims to reveal the conflicts among humanism, space and capital in the process of urban renewal. By citing Ralph Erskine's Byker Wall and bulke Risha Dorsey's Kamala House, this paper points out that "co-construction" is one of the most important ways to revive architectural humanism. Architecture must have certain memory, health and culture. The ultimate goal of urban renewal is not to replace the original city with a new city, but to return to the original essence of architecture-"the poem of life"-while maintaining human dignity, emotion and all aspects of human development.

Keywords: Humanism, Urban Renewal, Healthy Housing, 4C Model, Co-building

1. Introduction

Whenever I pass through a city with many tall buildings, I always have two different senses of space. On the one hand, it is a glittering glass curtain wall projecting the desire for capital and power, and on the other hand, it is an old community hidden at every street corner. The elderly are sitting around chatting, the children are running around, and the air is filled with real life breath. And this internal and external confrontation. This is the confrontation I feel. When architecture is not just putting stones one after another and arranging some functions, I believe that every building is like a battlefield against these three things. Power, money, people.

I saw bulldozers erase a lot of memories built by generations overnight; I also saw the puzzled expression on residents' faces when they faced new but unfamiliar resettlement houses. In my life, I really feel the era I live in now-this is an efficient era and a fast-paced society. To restore humanism, we must do it with new vitality. Architecture is used to nourish life, not to imprison the body. Cities are used to carry memories, not to show off force. Judging from historical experience, whether it is the ideology-driven architecture under Soviet collectivism or the capital-driven high-density

architecture in Hong Kong, both have reduced people to abstract data or dispensable costs in the name of "progress".

In the contemporary building design and development landscape, a profound evolution is underway—a transformation that transcends the mere construction of buildings to embrace a deeper understanding of human interaction within these spaces. This paradigm shift underscores a fundamental truth: buildings are not static structures but dynamic environments that both influence and are influenced by human experiences. Human-centered building design is an interdisciplinary approach to architectural and systems design that prioritizes comfort, physical and mental well-being, and diverse occupants' needs. Integrating human-centric design principles into building systems is at the core of this transformative journey. Based on these observations and reflections, I believe that the Marxist dialectical perspective may provide a key to resolving this contradiction. Architecture is the materialization of social existence: it is constrained by the productive forces and relations of production, yet it can also be transformed by human beings and their practices. Within this framework, the Four Pillars of Healthy Housing (4C) is introduced as an analytical tool, which seeks to transcend the long-standing form-versus-function debate in architecture and address the underlying ethical issues. I am increasingly convinced that the level of civilization of a society can be judged by whether its architecture cares for the most ordinary people.

This paper draws lessons from the practice of community symbiosis in Wong Tai Sin Village, the relocation logic of Khrushchyovka residential area in Moscow, the co-construction driven by Ralph Erskine's advocacy and the regional poetic spatial narrative of Bal Krishna Dorsey. Through the comparison and analysis of many cases, this paper tries to find a people-oriented road to urban renewal. For me, urban renewal is by no means to accumulate technology and change architectural style, but to restore human scale and return to basic urbanization. In the past, I firmly believed that we could amplify the voices of residents, respect the "life fragments" created and experienced by them, and transcend the materiality that really resonated with the humanity of the originally silent masonry. This is not only my pursuit as a researcher, but also my desire as a city resident.

2. The poetry of dwelling: the dialectic of humanism and architectural materiality

Humanism is a very powerful ideological movement, which holds that man himself is the purpose of social progress and development, not the means. It emphasizes that people should understand, care and respect each other more, and radiate irreplaceable brilliance. In this era when everything is changing so fast, it feels like we are all trapped by some structures, as if efficiency is everything. Sooner or later in his formation or practice, every architect is compelled to confront a peculiar dilemma: to project the possible he has to think the impossible. In other words – and perhaps without knowing it –, he has to imagine something that appears impossible in order to make way for new possibilities. If he avoids this, his visions and designs will be thwarted by the present: they will either endlessly repeat the already existing, or they will trivially modify it, making it appear as truly new, or else, they will nostalgically regress to a longed past. They will not be projections in the strict sense; they will fail to envision an alternative. In the field of architecture, the main principle of humanism is that architecture is not a collection of cold materials and a monologue of power will, but a platform for nurturing human life and cultivating human emotions, interaction and health. This is not to treat people as abstract data or the object to be trained, but to take concrete, flesh-and-blood people to heart in the whole design process.

Viewed from a Marxist perspective, architecture, as one of the most intuitive and stable material forms, is primarily rooted in specific social and material living conditions. His perceptions and thoughts about that reality are conditioned by his place in it, and that is the actual source of his

views on architecture, on the issues it should address more urgently, the objectives it should aim to, and the most suitable methods to pursue those objectives. As historical materialism reveals: "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life" [1]. This internal conflict between what appears to be possible or impossible within the spatial and temporal horizon of a given society reveals a permanent tension within architecture: on one hand, it cannot avoid the projection of a possible state of things, hence envisioning a transformation of a given reality; on the other, it is the expression of everything that is fixed in that society: its social structure, property relations, the state, and so on. Grand palaces, regimented factories, dense residential blocks. These diverse architectural forms are, first and foremost, the material condensations of a given era's productive forces, economic structure, and power relations [1], faithfully mirroring the society's resource allocation and organizational modes. Consequently, architecture throughout history and into modern society has often inevitably become a symbol of political power, highly symbolized and instrumentalized. In a way, nothing about architecture has really changed. For all its modern dress, what building is about, and always has been about, is the big questions that confront us. They are about who we are, where we are and what life is for. Architecture is always about the same things: power, glory, spectacle, memory and identity [2].

This entanglement of architecture with power finds its most stark and systematic expression not in the monuments of ancient empires, but in the seemingly neutral, utilitarian spaces of industrial production. These open, flowing, transparent factories of concrete or steel and glass were also places of a new kind of power, exercised by and through spatial organization. The transparency and continuity of space within them facilitated the surveillance of workers and enforcement of work pace by the new managerial/technical class of Fordism. The very concentration of masses of workers in open space made it easy for supervisors to oversee their work. And because every worker was tied to a particular position in the flow, anyone out of place was easily detected. Finally, the closely spaced and timed flows of production enforced a uniformly high pace of work and made immediately visible any "shirkers" or recalcitrant workers. As two engineering journalists wrote of the introduction of production lines in Ford's Highland Park plant: "the floor was cleared, and all the straw boss had to do to locate the shirk or operation tools in fault was to glance along the line and see where the roll-way was filled up." This timed and coordinated flow of work was conceptually created by the new managerial class in the flowcharts of engineers and inventory records of accountants. But to achieve the desired control, these abstract symbols had to be translated into real spaces of surveillance—transparent, open spaces created by the new industrial architecture. Here, then, architecture's complicity with power reaches its logical extreme: the built environment becomes an instrument of bodily discipline, a mechanism through which human activity is rendered visible, measurable, and subject to control [3].

However, the Marxist dialectic further points out: matter determines consciousness, yet consciousness reacts actively upon matter [1]. This means that architecture is not merely a passive byproduct of the economic base. It is not only a refuge, but also an investment in a country's infrastructure. When you build something, it seems to be built for a specific reason, but in fact, architecture is a good way to share your thoughts and feelings [2]. It is in this human expression that the initiative of consciousness is displayed. Humanism originated from specific material conditions, and then tried to intervene, shape and optimize the material world of architecture. This is an inevitable reflection on the architectural environment that has been divorced from human nature.

Therefore, humanism in architecture is a kind of balance. It warns us not to ignore people's happiness and comfort in the pursuit of power and wealth. It is like a bright lamp, which can keep people from getting lost on the highway ahead and keep the warmth and luster of our humanity. It

recognizes that material conditions are the foundation, but it emphasizes more on mobilizing people's conscious practice, that is, moving people's consciousness to transform the material world to meet the needs of people's all-round development, so as to realize the unity of materiality and consciousness in the historical process through people's conscious practice.

Finally, we can't judge how advanced a society is according to the height or splendor of its buildings. On the contrary, the real standard to measure the level of a society is the care of the weakest and most ordinary people. This is the truest form of humanism. This means that we have gone beyond simply succumbing to the power of materiality, and we have learned to use this power to create a more just and warm living philosophy.

3. Power, capital, and human dwelling: a critique of housing practices based on the "4C" model

Architecture is not only the creation of physical space; It has always been a place for power, capital and ideology. From the great collective narrative in the Soviet era to the high-density maze driven by Hong Kong's capital logic, architectural practice is not only to meet certain social needs, but also to deeply involve the distribution of individual health and life opportunities. The public housing system in Hong Kong is neither a "problem" nor a "solution". This is a public housing system with constantly changing internal contradictions and a constantly developing governance system. It is the foundation of social stability and the factor of social exclusion and stratification. It was born in the colonial period and was an emergency measure. Its basic logic was continued and strengthened in the SAR period [4]. This is a great revelation about the essence of architecture as a governance technology: architecture is not only the foundation of social stability, but also the machine of social stratification.

From the Marxist point of view, this mode of distribution has been linked with certain social and material living conditions from the beginning. As historical materialism reveals: "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life" [1]. However, when architectural practices excessively serve abstract ideologies or pure economic efficiency, the "human scale" is systematically sacrificed, becoming a tool for the reproduction of health inequalities. The Marxist dialectic further points out: matter determines consciousness, yet consciousness reacts actively upon matter. It is precisely this active role that provides the theoretical possibility for humanist architectural practice that is, to transform the existing material environment through conscious practice, making it more congruent with the needs of human holistic development.

Soviet housing practice, particularly Stalinist architecture represented by the "Seven Sisters," was the most intuitive material declaration of its ideology. Implicit in Constructivism's Bolshevik bond was the quintessential Modern idea that architecture could heal the diseases of individuals and society. It was an architecture for the people by the people, an architecture governed by rationality, space, freedom, and cleanliness. This ambition of "building a therapeutic society" is essentially an ideology that uses the materiality of architecture to build a new society and new people. But this ambition is inconsistent with its original purpose. These large-scale and commemorative forms aim at generating the recognition of the collective and the country, but in the end, the individual is reduced to the lost symbols and images in the grand narrative. The "rationality" of architecture lies in the standardization and large-scale replication of units. Its so-called "freedom" and "order" boil down to a discipline that obeys collective norms. This design philosophy tries to pursue a basic level of order and stability, but it also leads to various potential problems, such as how consistent things are, how stable people's houses are, what kind of psychological belonging you have, whether it

conforms to your background and community spirit, and whether you can develop your own personal social network.

This critique points to a deeper issue: architecture, in its traditional conception, is understood as a stable structure that gives form to permanent values and consolidates urban morphology. Yet when it is thoroughly drawn into the logic of production under modernity, its role undergoes a fundamental transformation. Architecture, however, at least according to the traditional notion, is a stable structure, which gives form to permanent values and consolidates an urban morphology. Those who may wish to shatter this traditional notion and link architecture with the destiny of the city, can only conceive of the city itself as the specific site of technological production and as a technological product in itself, thereby reducing architecture to a mere moment in the chain of production. And yet in some way, Piranesi's prophecy of the bourgeois city as an "absurd machine" comes true in the nineteenth-century metropolises, which were organized as primary structures of capitalist economy [5]. If the Soviet case demonstrates how architecture was subsumed by ideology, then Piranesi's prophecy of the "absurd machine" finds its even more thorough realization in the capitalist metropolis—where the city itself becomes both the site and the product of technological production, and architecture is reduced to a mere link in the chain of production.

In stark contrast to the ideologically driven Soviet model is Hong Kong's highly pragmatic, capital and density driven housing model. Given that economic hardship motivates fighting for value, challenges such as land availability, high density, and environmental degradation function as key drivers in seeking effective housing solutions that are easy to scale for mass production, high performance, and resource consciousness [6]. A classic embodiment of this logic was the emergency housing established for the victims of the 1954 Shek Kip Mei fire: In 1954, the fire victims were successfully settled in emergency housing units. On average, five adults shared an 11 m² unit. Cooking was carried out at the corridor outside the unit, whereas tap water and sanitary facilities were centralized. The ground floor was partly reserved for basic community facilities and partly as an open space for natural ventilation [6]. This emergency model satisfied people's urgent demand for housing, but it also established a path dependence of "function first" for Hong Kong's public housing. It is no accident that Hong Kong has become a "vertical city". It is "actively" constructed by complicated political, economic and social machines [4]. The internal contradiction of this system just proves our most important argument, that is, architecture is not just an empty hole, but a concentrated form of social existence. It has made great achievements in cost control, but it is obtained by sacrificing people's body and mind, living conditions and environment—this is a calculable cost.

If the Soviet case reveals the fate of architecture being subsumed by grand ideology, and the Hong Kong case exposes the reality of architecture being devoured by the logic of capital, then beneath these two seemingly opposing forms of alienation, does there exist some common essence? My argument is that the International Style of modern architecture was such an aesthetic, for its technological and rational forms idealized the cultural capital of the knowledge professions and symbolically challenged the rule of moneyed industrialists. But when many American artists and architects went to work for Fordist industries, they lost this autonomy and began to cater to the monetary demands of their corporate employers. Because the class bargain of higher wages for workplace discipline made workers important consumers in mass markets, making money required that corporations and their aesthetic professionals cater to worker demands for products and buildings that aesthetically obscured, not displayed, the technology and instrumental rationality of work. This argument reveals a crucial fact: the International Style of modern architecture was never a neutral aesthetic choice, but rather an aesthetic projection of specific class interests—namely, the

cultural capital of the knowledge class. However, once this aesthetic was integrated into the Fordist system of production and consumption, it lost its critical edge and was instead turned to serve capital's manipulation of mass consumer desires. Thus, architecture falls into a deeper paradox [3].

The architectural ideology therefore resolves the contradiction between the internal subjective resistance to the metropolitan impact and the external structural totality of the production system: this is its utopia. For Tafuri, this utopianism—whatever other objectives and localized concrete effects it may have—ultimately leads to the generalized, systematic planning of capitalism, while concealing this fundamental function within the rhetoric of its declarations and the purity of its forms. Architecture's struggle for self-rationalization through autonomous formal operations reminds us of architecture's success, rather than the historical moment of modernity as a limiting condition, a condition that closes off certain social functions that architecture had previously performed. Tafuri's theory takes ideology as its object (it is an ideology of ideology), and from his perspective, within modernity, all aesthetic ideologies are equivalent, even interchangeable. Therefore, they are equally useless for social production: such is the fate of architecture [5].

The examples of the Soviet Union and Hong Kong prove that if we want to build really healthy housing, we can only solve one aspect of housing. Need more analysis. In recent years, the 4c concept of healthy housing has been gradually put forward by public health researchers [7]:

Cost (Cost): Housing affordability is related to residents' disposable income, food consumption cost and medical care costs.

Condition (Condition): Quality of physical hardware and physical building environment related to health risks.

Consistency (Consistency): Residential stability, that is, to avoid the pressure caused by moving and the rupture of social networks.

Context (Context): Residential stability: not disturbed by relocation and social network.

The value of this framework lies in revealing how the four pillars are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, collectively constituting a "cumulative burden" on residents. Modern research provides evidence for this: From a spatial perspective, human-centered design is important in office and residential layouts, as activity-based working (ABW) spaces and purposefully designed floor plans demonstrated significantly higher satisfaction levels across key indoor environmental quality (IEQ) dimensions, perceived productivity, and health [8]. This precisely indicates that its core lies in Designing activity-based workspaces: satisfaction, productivity and physical activity depends on respecting human scales and behaviors [7].

In short, as the carrier of social will, we should not simply measure the value of architecture according to its beauty or efficiency or its ideological tendency, but to what extent it promotes human health and well-being. It is this beacon of humanism that keeps the rapid development of human beings from getting lost and makes human beings glow warmly. Today, we have established four principles of health and fairness. It seems that the tools we use in this arduous work—including observing different types of housing practices and revealing people's choices and what happened because of these choices—are more complicated and meaningful than before.

For future building related to people's lives-public housing, it is time to get rid of the follow-up of great forces and return to the human scale. A fundamental change must take place: the house must be regarded as more than just another thing we can buy. They are things that everyone has the right to have. What we need is not only the number of houses, but the home that everyone really yearns for. Don't yield to power, but to daily necessities.

In the end, whether a society's civilization is promoted is not measured by how high and luxurious its buildings are, but by whether its buildings can surpass its original status as a symbol of

"social existence" and take care of the weakest and most ordinary members of that society through "active practice". This is not only the deepest expression of humanism, but also the most perfect expression of the ultimate goal of human liberation in Marxist architectural discourse.

This critical reflection on Soviet and Hong Kong housing practices brings us to a broader historiographical observation. As a whole, the section "Putting High Modernist Planning in Its Place" underscores both the great powers and the limitations of the high modernists. In contextualizing the projects, practices, and discourses of these planners, contributors demonstrate how housing questions were both critical issues that high modernists had to confront and ones that they could not resolve. Their efforts stand as a warning against constrained, totalizing visions and authoritarian state interventions in the field of housing. Yet they also underscore the complex nature of housing questions, in which integrated and ambitious thinking is necessary. This dual recognition—of modernism's ambition and its inherent blind spots—provides a crucial theoretical foundation for the subsequent examination of alternative renewal paradigms that prioritize empowerment over displacement [9].

4. Empowerment vs. replacement: two paradigms of urban renewal and the humanist choice

Yet the rejection faced by modernist architecture was by no means monolithic; different social contexts gave rise to distinctly different aesthetic responses. In the United States, strong capitalist opposition diverted popular resistance into fantasies of a future technological utopia. In Germany, however, an antiquated class structure turned popular dreams of wholeness toward nostalgic longings for a fictitious past. Both political programs found aesthetic expression in a rejection of modern architecture, in its *moderne* and International styles. In the United States this rejection gave rise to an aesthetic of romantic modernism, which was supplemented by neoclassicism in state buildings and nostalgic populism in individual housing. In Germany, popular longings for a premodern past were aesthetically expressed in neoclassical monumentalism for the Nazi state and a *völkisch* aesthetic for public housing. This historical divergence reveals a crucial insight: the aesthetic rejection of modernism was never merely a stylistic dispute, but rather a spatial projection of class forces and political imagination under specific social conditions. It reminds us that every value choice in urban renewal—for whom it is built, and through what aesthetic expression—is deeply embedded within broader social structures and power struggles [3].

Urban renewal is not just spatial reconstruction; This is about defining who the city belongs to. This is especially true when a large number of buildings are demolished as part of this reconstruction—this reconstruction process should be measured according to humanitarian standards. Humanism entails placing people's needs, sense of dignity, emotions, and all-round development at the heart of urban structures, while attaching great importance to the value of community fabric, the aspirations of residents, and the continuity of life. The urgency of this humanist approach becomes palpable when we recall the historical conditions that gave rise to the very slums and informal settlements that urban renewal programs have so often sought to erase. Cities became more densely populated, placing pressure on the physical capacity of urban infrastructure. Urban poverty spaces proliferated, and housing options for middle- and working-class families became scarce. As a result, substandard forms of living intensified in downtown areas—overcrowding the existing tenements and boarding houses—while shantytowns, slums, and squatter settlements multiplied along the limits of the cities, or, when geography allowed, on the hillsides of cities like Rio de Janeiro or Caracas. Those places were inhabited by the lower segments of the working class, usually unskilled workers employed in the service sector (petty trade, street vending, construction, domestic service) and, to a lesser extent, in industry. A large part of these new residents had recently arrived from the

countryside and settled in the slums, assisted by already settled acquaintances and family. They could not afford better housing options. While the features of slums and shantytowns varied from country to country, from city to city, and from site to site, they shared certain similarities. Slums usually occupied private and public lands illegally; improvised shacks were generally single-room, rudimentarily built (at least initially) with unsuitable materials, and for the most part lacked sanitary facilities and access to urban services, such as hospitals or schools [9]. Utilizing the conceptual model of the "Four Pillars of Healthy Housing" (Cost, Condition, Consistency, Context), this section compares the reconstruction cases of Wong Tai Sin Village in Hong Kong and Moscow's Khrushchyovka, aiming to reveal two distinct paradigms: one is an empowerment-based renewal with humanism at its core, aiming to systematically restore the foundation of residents' lives, the other is a replacement-based renewal that prioritizes spatial and economic efficiency, neglecting resident agency in the process, thereby leading to the alienation and loss of the "human" element in development.

First, in the philosophical foundation of the renewal process, the two models present a fundamental opposition between "community symbiosis" and "spatial replacement." The "in-situ reconstruction, phased implementation" model of Wong Tai Sin Village as shown in the figure1 and figure2 finds its soul in the humanist adherence to the Consistency pillar. This model does not treat residents as obstacles to be cleared but considers the maintenance of the original community network and social capital as one of the core objectives of renewal. The focus of the renewal strategy is tolerance, and residents' feelings for their homes and dependence on their neighbors are paid the most attention, thus eliminating potential measures that lead to psychological conflicts and social separation. This kind of management is an appreciation of the dignity and freedom of residents as masters of their own affairs. Both recall the notion of the 'social production of space' and provide inspiring meanings to it, especially when conceived within the context of a dominant capitalist mode of production, relations and practices. Contrary to Moscow's urban reconstruction project, which adopts the overall and thorough demolition method, this is essentially a logic of space production through "creative destruction". Henri Lefebvre is acknowledged as one of the main progenitors of the multi-disciplinary spatial turn in the geographical and social sciences. His seminal works on the production of space, the urban and the right to the city provides a means for analysing and understanding the complexity of the form, structure, organisation and experience of modernity. It also offers a critique and the possibility for a reconfigured approach to the planning, design and structure of the architecture and landscape of the city. Khrushchyovka's architecture was denied by discussing the value of culture and time, which positioned the building and people as outdated and allowed it to be demolished from the entity. This model has caused cruel damage to the lives of people living here. From the above empirical research, we can see that the destruction of micro-social space such as bench network will cause the elderly to suffer serious "displacement" and "depreciation" [10-12]. Undoubtedly, it has caused irreparable harm to humanistic concepts such as sense of place and belonging.

In addition, in the process of setting new goals, these two models also have different value orientations for "inclusive upgrading" and "exclusive modernization". Humanism requires that the fruits of development should benefit all citizens, especially the most vulnerable groups. The reconstruction of Wong Tai Sin Village aims at comprehensively and inclusively improving the "four pillars", that is, improving housing and community conditions; Control costs through public housing policies; And ensure continuity through phased reconstruction. This systematic transformation will make people who once lived here no longer excluded from the improved living conditions after reconstruction. They will become witnesses and participants in development. On the other hand,

Moscow's urban renewal project pursues exclusive modernization. Pricing new buildings at market prices to exclude the original low-income residents, thus saving costs; This rapid large-scale mode has seriously damaged the continuity of housing. The most likely scenario is that the modernization of physical space will lead to the demise of the original community and the displacement of local residents [12]. Although such reconstruction is expected to improve the city appearance of the region, the living space of the vulnerable groups will be relocated, which is contrary to the core concept of humanism-"people-oriented"

Ultimately, in terms of health equity outcomes, the two paths lead to starkly different consequences: "cumulative gain" versus "cumulative burden." Health from a humanist perspective is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. The model of Wong Tai Sin Village, through the synergistic improvement of the four pillars, creates conditions for cumulative health gains for residents: A better living environment can reduce the risk of physical diseases such as asthma; A stable and sustainable life and a good community environment can improve mental health and social activities; Reasonable prices can avoid poverty caused by housing. This forms a virtuous circle. The potential to improve the hardware condition provided by the Moscow model comes at a price, especially for the more vulnerable residents. The interruption of continuity leads to mental problems and loss of community awareness, potential costs, economic difficulties, and difficult relocation environment will also bring health problems. This model gives up some basic things (mainly continuity) in exchange for something slightly better (conditions), which may actually cause more harm to people and make health injustice worse.



Figure 1. Before the renovation of Lower Village in Wong Tai Sin

In a word, through the in-depth comparison between the reconstruction of Wong Tai Sin Village and the architectural renovation of Hrus Jovka in Moscow, we find that whether humanism can be realized in urban renewal mainly depends on whether the integrity of "people" and their living world can be placed at the center of decision-making. Wong Tai Sin Village has been rebuilt through clever and steady social policies. It tries to protect the soul and human dignity of the village in the process of change, showing the warmth and wisdom of urban renewal as a "social project". In contrast, Moscow's renovation projects serve as a warning that without sincere care for humanity, any form of spatial production carried out in the name of "modernization" and "progress" will run counter to our

aspirations, become exclusionary, lose its humanistic essence, and deprive newly built residential areas of the most precious sense of "home". As for future urban regeneration policies, they should transcend the logic of spatial economy, adopt a humanistic perspective, view the Four Pillars of Healthy Housing in a holistic manner, and strive to achieve the lofty ideal of high-level health equity through housing.



Figure 2. After the renovation of Wong Tai Sin Ha Tsuen



Figure 3. Before dismantling Khrushchyovka

5. Let architecture become a resonance box: on the co-building philosophy of humanist renewal

Having discussed the Four Pillars of Healthy Housing and the people-oriented approach, we are now well-positioned to see how to renew a city in a sound manner by establishing such a framework, and this also constitutes one of the most important ways to conceptualize urban transformation. Ralph Erskine's Baker Wall Project is to apply the same principle over and over again, and extend this model to our whole school from the very beginning. Contrary to the Moscow project mentioned earlier, it provides a concrete way to realize the concept of "electricity-based regeneration".

The Baker Wall Project in Erskine is the four pillars of a forward-looking and serious healthy house, as shown in Figures 4, 5 and 6. From a certain point of view, Erskine's advocacy of architecture means the certainty of people's sense of belonging to this building or the process of building it [13].

Erskine opposes bulldozer-like urban renewal. He tried to preserve "community memory and structure", interwoven new elements with existing urban structure, and emphasized the two main pillars of "continuity" and "context". It is mainly to maintain the integrity of people's social relations

and sense of place, and there is no danger that the community will be divided because of reconstruction, so it is the best way to comprehensively protect "continuity". The "social courtyard" and many other public spaces he created promoted a safe and active atmosphere, encouraged people to meet each other, and turned physical space into a stimulant for social health [13].

As for the conditional pillar, the famous "urban landscape coat" is not just a formal exercise. It connects the architectural form with the most important physical conditions for residents' health—wind and cold—to create a comfortable microclimate, which represents the most caring care for residents. His additional design makes the house more malleable, so it is more suitable for living families. As a result, it may improve the situation in the condition pillar.

Erskine's practice eloquently proves that the excellent architect is not a dictator of space, but a translator and enabler of community needs. He treated residential appeals, the site's memory, and the harsh climate collectively as the "client" for the design. The finally realized architecture is a unity of function, emotion, and social value, whose core lies in the participatory nature of the process, the sense of belonging in the outcome, and the active adaptation to the environment.

In contrast, the fundamental flaw of Moscow's Khrushchyovka "replacement-based renewal" lies in the absence of an "advocate" role in the process. Decision-makers and planners top-down imposed the label of "obsolete" upon the community. Their design logic served macro urban image narratives and capital logic more than it responded to the specific life needs and emotional attachments of the community residents. Ultimately, even if the newly built structures improved physical Condition, the process's damage to Consistency and the outcome's Cost exclusion of some original residents rendered this renewal fundamentally contrary to the humanist spirit advocated by Erskine.

Erskine's Byker Wall and the reconstruction of Hong Kong's Wong Tai Sin Village, though situated in vastly different spatiotemporal contexts, resonate remotely in their spiritual core. Both embody the effort to place users at the decision-making center and to uphold the maintenance of community fabric as a core value. The pragmatic strategy of "phased reconstruction" in Wong Tai Sin Village and Erskine's insistence on "preserving the fabric" achieve the same goal by different means; its emphasis on perfecting community Context facilities coincides with the goal of creating a "social inner courtyard" at Byker Wall.



Figure 4. The three-dimensional structure of Byker Wall

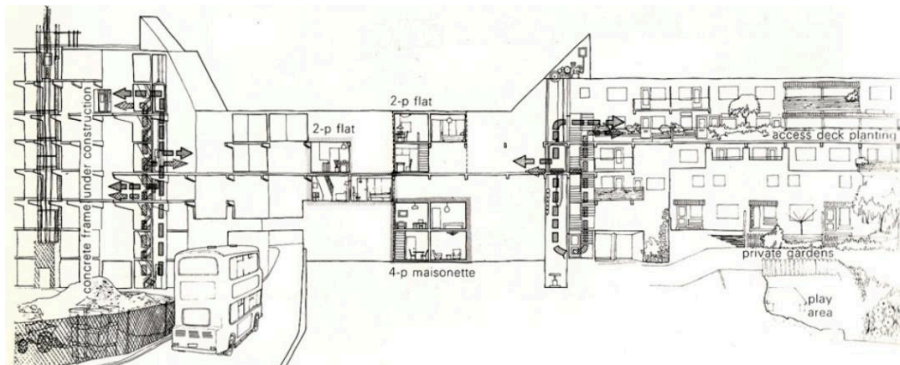


Figure 5. Interior design plan of Byker Wall



Figure 6. Byker Wall

6. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of Erskine's advocate concept, we clearly see that genuine humanist design is never the rigid application of universal standards, but rather a profound insight into and creative response to specific locales, cultures, and ways of life. The works of Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi, represented by the distinctive form of his own residence Kamala House, offer us a new dimension through which we can perceive this philosophy, as well as how beauty can be manifested by an idea brought to life—provided that it is a genuine response to the land, family and the poetic essence of daily life from a profound level.

As can be seen from Figures 7 and 8, Doshi's Kamala House breaks away from the conventional functional zoning logic of modernism in its spatial layout, creating an intertwined sequence of interconnected courtyards and rooms. This is not a nostalgic design of the past, but a wise response to Indian joint family and climatic conditions.

The pillar of conditions is to create a microclimate through low cost and simple design, such as sunken courtyards, vents and pools, and to transform harsh natural conditions into conditions suitable for people to live in. This shows great concern for the health of residents.

As for the continuity and contextual pillars, various spatial mazes create different experiences. More importantly, it subtly retains the traditional family ethics and intimate relationship, thus turning the building into a place that nourishes people's well-being and the feeling of home.

Doshi's practice shows that the highest point of humanism is the integration of climate adaptability, which belongs to the ceremony of culture and daily life, and it makes the home a lively, vivid and warm whole.

In short, whether from the Baike Wall in Erskine or the Kamala House in Dorsey, we can see a road of healthy urban renewal centered on humanism. This road is successful because it has changed from building for residents to building with residents-whether with community residents or with regional culture and environment. It needs us:

We will shift from empowering experts to empowering communities, and treat residents as co-creators and owners of local knowledge and power.

Goal: From creating space to creating place-create a sense of community, a sense of belonging and a sense of being alive.

When we started talking about protecting social networks, upholding cultural identity and striving for universal health care, we no longer believed that a complete economy was more important than our complete health.

Finally, humanism is not a concept, but a standard of success or failure in the process of urban renewal. I think the future urban renewal should have such a principle, which is a complete value at every action point. Whether it is a plan or a building, bricks and stones need to bow down to human beings and admit their existence, respect for human beings, and human life and poetry. In this way, we can build a truly healthy, fair and dynamic urban civilization.

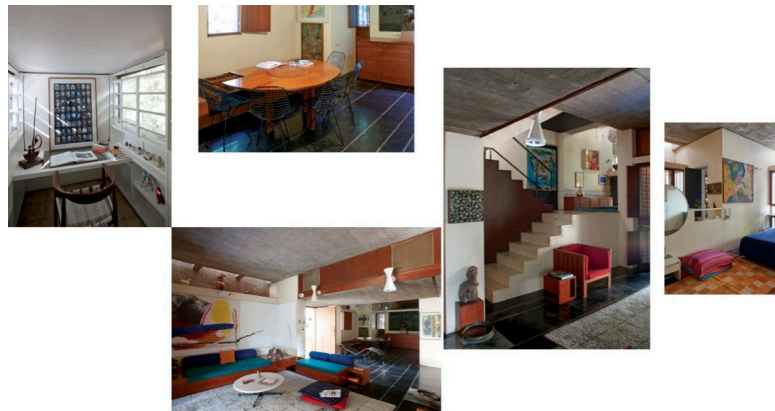


Figure 7. Kamala House Interior Layout (Partial)



Figure 8. The sunken garden of Kamala House

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