Chapter 5

Social–Architectural Design of Community–Based Embedded Comprehensive Elderly Centers in China:
Design Content and Process

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ABSTRACT

The community-based embedded comprehensive elderly center (CECEC) was proposed in 2015 to address ageing population issues in China in existing communities. However, there is as yet no satisfactory solution for how to design the CECEC to properly integrate resources and create social inclusion. Synthesizing the social design and architectural design literature, this study proposes a CECEC architectural design that incorporates the approach, content, and design steps of social design. This study argues that social-architectural CECEC design goes beyond traditional architectural design. It is not limited to the construction of material space; it also focuses on the participation of different stakeholders. Considering the needs of the people and the potential of existing communities, the proposed social-architectural CECEC design process involves architectural-social problem definition, project establishment, architectural programming, design ordering, strategy confirmation, and architectural design.

INTRODUCTION

Many countries have ageing populations, and ageing in place has been proposed as a strategy to address the issue. In the US, governments and NGOs have advocated several different models, such as naturally occurring retirement communities (NORC), communities for all ages, village model communities and university-affiliated communities to help older people remain active and well (Bookman, 2008; A. Scharlach, Graham, & Lehning, 2011; A. E. Scharlach & Lehning, 2013). In Japan, the government has formulated and implemented various housing and transportation policies to enable older citizens to continue living within their neighbourhoods and communities rather than shifting to nursing institutions. The Japanese government has also proposed universal design guidelines for dwellings in an ageing society (Saito, 2014). In addition, architectural programming and designs for composite elderly centres and small-scale multi-functional community care are specifically tailored to their needs (Asanumayuki, Kuni, Masahiro, & Nishidatatsuo, 2002). In the European Union, ageing in place refers to support and services provided by governments and NGOs that allow older people to remain in their homes and surroundings for as long as they can (Mestheneos, 2011). Countries have used different approaches to provide older persons with suitable environments and have designed suitable architecture and community models of ageing in place in different cultural contexts. However, irrespective of the retirement patterns that are adopted, governments, design professionals, elderly service enterprises, and private capital and social organisations need to work together.

Since 1999, when China became an ageing society, many urban governments in the country have promoted '9073' or '9064' social service systems, pursuing a goal where 96% of older people age in place via home care and community services (Lai, 2009; Wang, 2013). However, most older-built or existing communities cannot sufficiently meet older persons' basic needs or provide an appropriate living environment (H. Hu, Wang, Wang, & Zhang, 2015; P. Zhang, 2016; S. Q. Zhang, 2013). It is thus essential to solve this issue. In 2015, the Chinese government strongly advocated the participation of private capital and social organisations in elderly services (*Opinions on Encouraging Private Capital to Participate in the Development of Pension Service*, 2015). As a result, some urban governments, elderly service enterprises, social organisations and experts have advocated an innovative system of ageing in place, the Community-based Embedded Retirement Pattern. This plan would involve converting buildings or space in existing communities to embed small-scale, multifunction and networking elderly service centres in existing communities (H. Hu et al., 2015; P. Zhang, 2016). These Community-based Embedded Comprehensive Elderly Centres (CECEC) would bridge the gap between ageing in place and continuous care and promote social inclusion. However, despite these proposals, there are no satisfactory systematic solutions to the questions of how resources from existing urban communities can be integrated, how the demands of different stakeholders can be met, and how governments, elderly service enterprises, social organisations, private capital and design professionals can work together to create appropriate living environments for the elderly in existing urban communities. Studies of the CECEC to date mainly focus on developing strategies for the CECEC, its management and the needs of the elderly (Dong, 2008; H. Hu et al., 2015; Y. Hu, 2012; Lu, 2014; Sun, 2015; P. Zhang, 2016), but ignore the development of the whole community and the acceptance and attitude of residents. The literature on CECEC architectural design is not sufficiently comprehensive. Studies do not explore the whole picture of CECEC design from the perspectives of social design and architectural design.

Social design is intended to be accessible and useful to everyone in the community, and it aims to improve social inclusion and quality of life in the whole community (Whiteley, 1997). The social design

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