

51056961: MAJOR: ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AND  
TOURISM

KEY WORD: VERNACULAR, TRANSFORMATION, TRADITION,  
REPRODUCTION

POOMCHAI PUNPAIROJ : THE TRANSFORMATION OF  
TRADITIONAL THAI HOUSES: STEPS TOWARD RECOGNITION OF  
CHANGING VERNACULAR FORMS. THESIS ADVISOR: WILLIAM R.  
CHAPMAN, D.Phil. 219 pp.

The emergence of the new types of vernacular houses shows the evidence of change leaping from the popular image of the *traditional Thai houses*. The change is impacted from many factors including contemporary cultural needs. New vernaculars, which are found in the central Thailand, are *transformed Thai houses* and *reproduced Thai houses*. These two occurrences began since the 1960s (for the first type) and the 1990s (for the second type). The traditional house is assumed as an archetype of the Thai vernacular house. The vernacular houses were surveyed in three districts: Pakkran village, Ladchado village, and Bangpahun area in Phra Nakorn Si Ayutthaya province during the late 2000s. These new vernacular houses have developed from the *traditional Thai house* among other modern housing developments. However, there is a lack of awareness and understanding of this change. Most of the policies from Thai government, study courses and research topics have focused only on the image in the past. Accordingly, contemporary vernacular tends to be disregarded.

To redefine the new vernacular, there are three main subjects: 1. viewpoints on vernacular architectures both from local and international scholars; 2. definitions and previous studies relating to vernaculars; and 3. establishment of new vernacular architecture, which closely relate to the *traditional Thai house*. This study involves developing an understanding of the transformation of the vernacular houses, as well as providing ways to expand the scope of vernacular studies. The findings show the ways in which vernacular traditions have been integrated within modern contexts in various ways. The process of transformation and change in the architectural elements are indicated. These reflect the direction of development of Thai vernacular houses. The results suggest that the developments have been influenced by the non-traditional characteristics of the early period of the modernization. Although some traditions are in a declining stage, much local experience, knowledge and skills have been transmitted to the new generation.

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