

USER ID : ID_100609

CATEGORY : Socialising

AHSA Farmstay

Location of Project: Chiangrai, Thailand

Project Stage: Completed (2018)

INTRODUCTION

Our ambition is, for the AHSA Farm Stay project to be a generator for change. The aim is to encourage exchange between the local community and visitors from around the globe. To achieve this, we considered positive exchange at all the scales from large through small. Tourism will bring a steady source of income for the community, and in return they will share their undisturbed culture with these visitors through an immersive experience. Another means to influence locals to rediscover their traditional ways of living and prevent further replacement of beautiful vernacular homes for generic concrete houses, a present trend in rural life.

Simulate a local living experience, with tourist living with a local host in groups of four houses following the traditional way of Northern Thai lifestyle. There are five groups in total; each host will run different workshops according to the host's specialty, herbal production for traditional medicine, fruits plantation and local cuisine using ingredients from the farm. The aim is for tourist to learn from local knowhow, culture and traditions thus adapt them where appropriate to ensure relevance in present times and well into the future and to prevent further replacement of beautiful vernacular homes for generic concrete houses, a present trend in rural life.

The AHSA Farm Stay project carefully considers sustainable tourism as a catalyst for cultural and knowledge exchanges, which benefits both tourists and locals, as well as positively impact the surrounding community.



1. SPATIAL DESIGN

The buildings comprising of homestay cluster and day tour cluster are designed as replicable units for ease of future expansion. The layout of the homestay cluster and day tour cluster meant to create a connection with one another. The pavilions are set amongst active rice paddies, where the whole village gets involved in planting of saplings and harvest. Designed to give an intimate feeling, the homestay clusters give off a traditional compact living vibe which elevated from the traditional vernacular.

Hoping it would be more sustainable for the community, AHSA Farm Stay is designed to be a place for learning, socialising and exchanging knowledge and future expansion on the land. These units are designed to be easily replicated and be adapted by locals as demands changes. The vision is to have 3 – 4 clusters to fill the site.



2.COMFORT

Part of the program, day tour pavilions showcase local food production. Visitors can learn from locals about traditional food production processes in an immersive way. In the Thai tradition, farming as a village is a great social event where all generations get involved. Rice is stored the traditional way in Kapoms (large cylindrical baskets woven from locally sourced leaves). These are integrated in the main kitchen unit, where visitors sit down to learn intuitively from a local.

Colors, spaciousness and natural elements, the textures and shapes of the furniture in the house helps produce emotional responses, enhancing the sense of comfort and happiness. By bringing in elements of nature to create an optimal atmosphere for relaxation and health. Traditional Northern Thai vernacular have an overhead storage which is ergonomically suitable for a range of occupants. Adapted and elevated from the traditional Northern Thai vernacular, though keeping the same aesthetics which connects with occupants and local on emotional aspects. The architecture is designed to help ease foreigners' experience of cultural immersion. For example, the pavilions originally have no flooring only roof structure, the adapted pavilions do have platformed that raised 45 cm. from the ground such that visitors are able to take a break from sitting on the floor and stretch their legs overboard for rest.

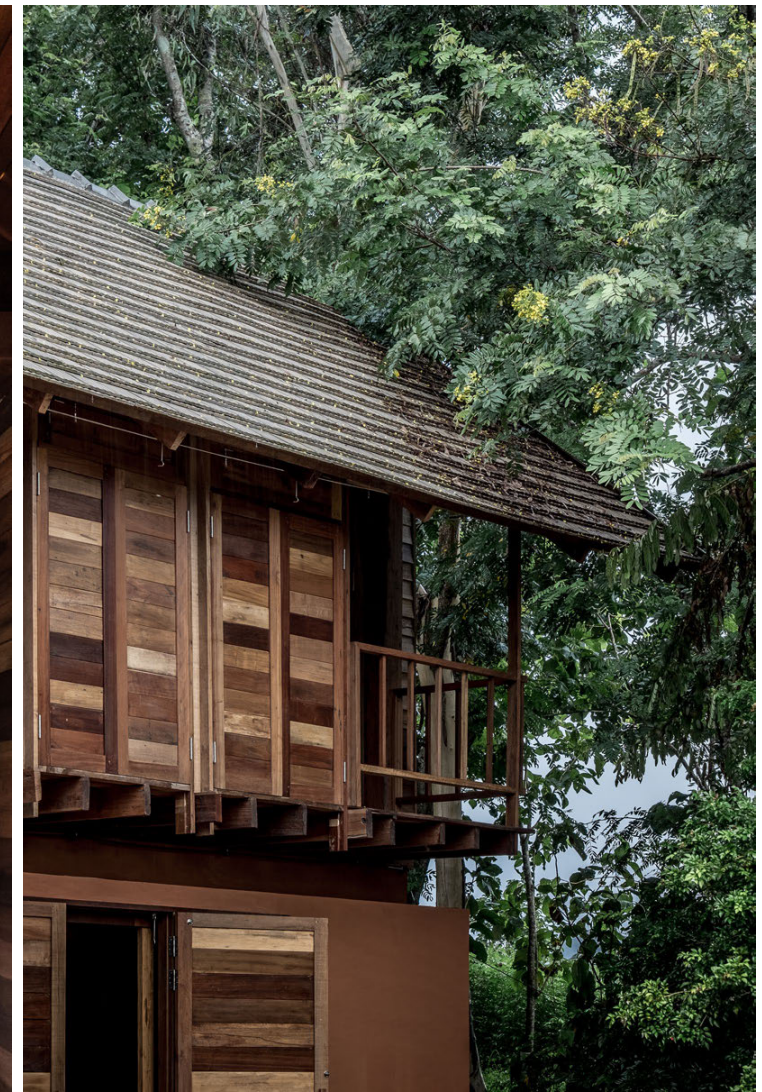


3. AESTHETICS

The buildings comprising of homestay cluster and day tour cluster are designed as replicable units for ease of future expansion. The design development and construction phases involved the local village and community to the extent that the community is currently building new units which are self-tweaked to better match their needs and circumstance as the project expands.

Adapted and elevated from the traditional Northern Thai vernacular, the aesthetic of the modernised vernacular is to stimulate the public about the slowly forgotten local heritage that has been neglected and giving it a revamp.

All interiors in the homestay cluster and the day tour cluster designed as a continuation of the exterior with everyday items used by local, developed and adapted Thailand's local crafts to fits current trends. Reclaimed timber has it owns charms and beauty as it shows variation of tone and texture, each mark tells a story of its own, reflects on the interior of the modernised vernacular and people can observe the beauty of reclaimed timber while using the building.

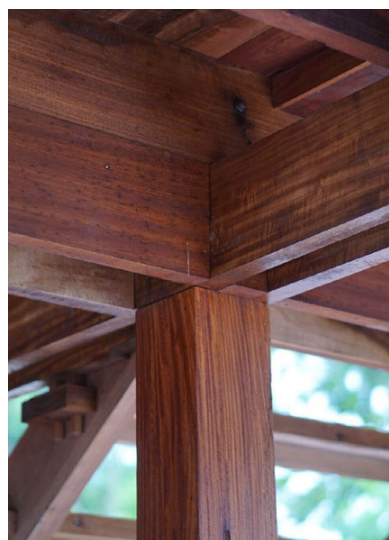
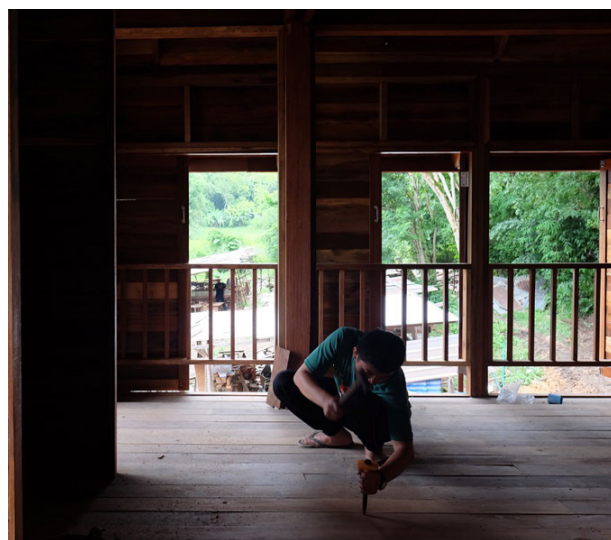


4. INNOVATION

The three main building materials were reclaimed timber, earth mixed concrete and locally sourced roofing tiles. Reclaimed timber requires more labor hours than freshly milled standardized planks which incur higher construction cost, however, this is offset by lower initial material cost. Extensive documentation of individual plank was done to minimize construction cost and material wastage.

The project relied primarily on renewable resources. Rainwater is collected in a natural reservoir on a hill behind that is piped on to the site for freshwater uses during construction and continued through to operation. Earth used in the concrete render mix that gives a natural orange appearance is extracted from the site, which extends the existing rice paddies to increase food production capacity to match future demands the development will induce. All wooden structures are raised on concrete stumps to separate timber from the ground and allow the structure to stay dry in events of flash floods from the mountain.

In terms of energy, the project currently relies on the national grid for electricity, however, the design has provisions for photovoltaic panels and spaces for battery storages, to be installed when adequate funding is achieved after a few years of operations. Implementing Thailand folk's craft into the building as the elements, this is to herald the heritage handed down from generation to generation, though adapting traditional vernacular building technique to make it suitable to the current technology and times. Mitigation of climate change has also been considered. The Homestay unit guests' bedrooms are designed with double layer façade. As weather pattern will become less predictable and the range will widen, the double skin façade help improve insulation during extreme heat and when it is cooler, the shutters can open to facilitate cross ventilation from all sides.



5. REALISATION EFFICIENCY

The design is the first phase of the project served as prototypes for the villagers and owner to continue this experiment and adapt it as time passes. The building process had great involvement from the locals and there was knowledge transfer during this stage. The AHSA Farm Stay vernacular demonstrate the potential of an adaptation and elevation local vernacular that fitting to contemporary use. For the next phase and further expansion, locals and owner can easily adapt the current design as needed to fit. To realise the project master plan and hopes to stimulate and influence locals to rediscover their traditional ways of living.

Due to the complicated process of dismantling reclaimed timber, project architect has been working closely with the contractor and craftsman team, guiding them throughout the dismantling and assembling process with the workshop onsite.



