



Aga Khan Award for Architecture

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WINNING PROJECTS

Bridge School

Xiashi, Fujian Province, China

Architect: Li Xiaodong Atelier

Client: Xiashi Village

Project Description

The “Bridge School” bridges the two parts of the small village of Xiashi that lie on either side of a small creek that runs through the village. The structure is created by two steel trusses that span the creek with the space between them housing the functions of the school. Suspended from the structure and running below it is a pedestrian bridge for the people of the village to use. Small and modern in design, with no reference to the area’s traditional building style, the school has nonetheless become the physical and spiritual centre of what was a declining village. Placed in such a way that it addresses its surroundings, the Bridge School connects the village together, providing a central, social space. The broader social aspect of the project was part of the brief, which was developed with the school principal and head of the village to answer community needs rather than simply those of a primary school. A public library separates the two classrooms and the ends of each classroom, or the two ends of the school can be opened up, creating open stages at either end of the building that are integrated with the public spaces outside. The stage at the northern end can be used for performances, with the *toulou* as a backdrop. The result is a project that has successfully invigorated the entire community, encapsulating social sustainability through architectural intervention.

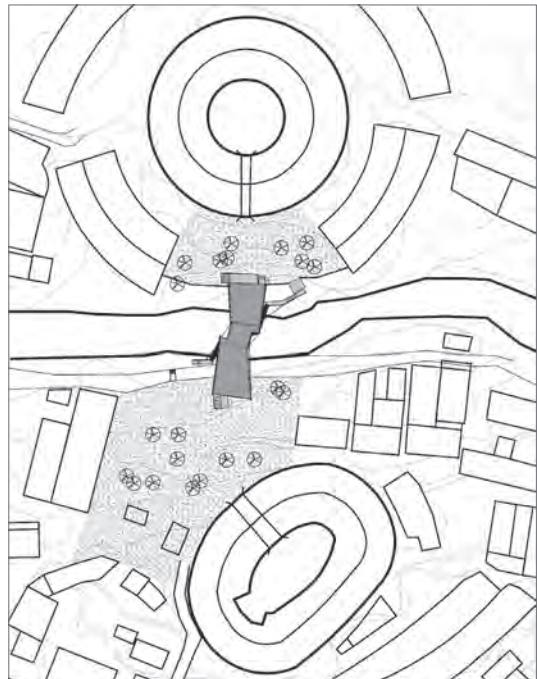


Jury Citation

“When architect Li Xiadong was asked to build a tiny school for a small village crossed by a river, he had the inspiration of placing it on a new bridge, near the spot where two ancient toulou - traditional fortress-like, circular structures - were erected on either side of the river. The very modern structure not only blends successfully into the landscape, it also succeeds in joining the bulky forms of the two historic structures through a linear lightweight sculpture that floats above the river.

“By placing the school on the bridge, underneath which the waters flow, the architect is giving the most important lesson a child can learn: life is transient, not one second of it similar to the next. The structure’s lightness and playfulness, and its naturalness, as though it had always existed in the landscape, appeals to the children, who use it as a big toy. These qualities, and the sense of security the children feel, all come from the excellence of the architecture, from the project’s concept to its smallest physical details.

“The Bridge School achieves unity at many levels: temporal unity between past and present, formal unity between traditional and modern, spatial unity between the two riverbanks, social unity between one-time rival communities-as well as unity with the future.”



Project Data

Client

Xiashi Village; Shi Xiu Qing, village head, China

Local government of Pinghe County, Fujian; Hong Lizhuan, County Leader; Zhang Guoyang, Party Secretary; Zeng QingFeng, County Official, China

Architect

Li Xiaodong Atelier: Li Xiaodong, principal architect; Li Ye, Chuan Wang, Qiong Liang, Mengjia Liu and Junqi Nie, project team, China

<i>Collaborator</i>	Hedao Architecture Design, Xiamen, Fujian, China
<i>Project Manager</i>	Chen Jiansheng, China
<i>Structural Engineer</i>	Li Xiaodong (Concept); Hedao Architecture Design (construction drawing), China
<i>Contractor</i>	Zhangzhou Steel; Minqbiao Ma, manager, China
<i>Built area</i>	240 m ²
<i>Site area</i>	1,550 m ²
<i>Building height</i>	6.5 m
<i>Cost</i>	US\$ 100,000
<i>Commission</i>	2007
<i>Design</i>	2008
<i>Construction</i>	2008
<i>Occupancy</i>	2008
<i>Website</i>	www.lixiaodong.net

Li Xiaodong Atelier

Li Xiaodong is a practicing architect, educator and researcher on architecture. He graduated from the School of Architecture at Tsinghua University (1984) and received his PhD from the School of Architecture, Delft/Eindhoven University of Technology (1993). He established Li Xiaodong Atelier in 1997. His design work ranges from interiors and architecture to urban spaces. His work has won national and international design awards in China, Germany, the United States and the Netherlands. Li Xiaodong has received international recognition for his teaching, including an RIBA tutor's prize (2000) and SARA tutor's prize (2001) from the Department of Architecture at the National University of Singapore. He is currently chair of the architecture programme at the School of Architecture at Tsinghua University, in Beijing. His research and publications, including articles and books in both Chinese and English, cover a wide range of subjects: cultural studies, history and theory of architecture and urban studies.

