

BBT

BEIJING BOOM TOWER: THE THEORETICAL PRODUCT OF THE MARKET RESPONDING TO ALL FUTURE DEMANDS: SUBURBAN STYLE LIVING IN THE HEART OF CHINA'S CAPITAL.

3D* Designers and Developers Discourse:

THEME: PRESENT DREAM OR A FUTURE NIGHTMARE?

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"We'll see a forest of chimneys from here"
Mao Zedong, Beijing 1949

Fifty years ago the Chinese city was set to become an orderly grid of danwei: small worker units packed around the bases of glorious factories, extending on past the edges of the horizon. The low even population dispersion which would eradicate the potential for corrupting bourgeois downtowns, and the skyline would be dominated by monoliths of industry, rather than malls, offices, or exclusive

residential blocks. Half a century on this concept of communist planning is wholly outdated, and nowhere more so than in Beijing. Rows upon rows of glittering apartments demarcate the envy-skyline of a vast metropolis. The housing boom has become the driving force of the nation's optimism - its glass towers are the new chimneys, mass-producing modern urban lifestyles.

However as the new China is taking shape, the drawbacks of modernity are becoming apparent. The sudden transformation of the city proves to be dense, congested, and ultimately unrewarding. The products of excessive motorization and fortification are urban gridlock and social lockdown. Housing blocks and villa parks with their gates and cameras incrementally fence-off the public realm. Buildings and infrastructure have exploded well beyond the human scale. Big block architecture has taken over urban planning. What are the cornerstones of this new

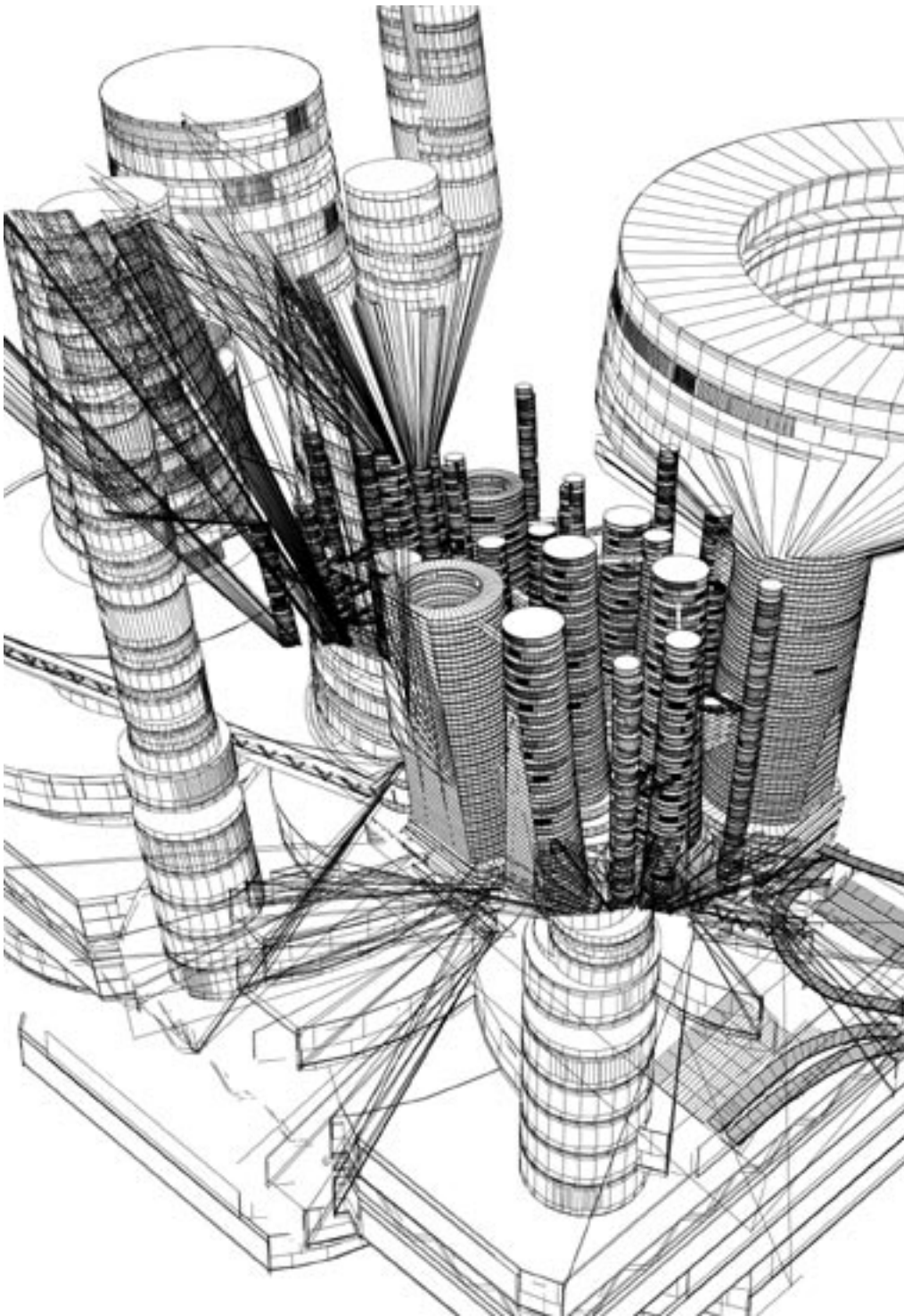
urbanism? Sprawl, exclusion, and copy 'n' paste architectural remedies. This is the reality of the building boom at hyper-speed for half a billion new urbanites. BBT is architecture's final attempt to tame the city.

Is it possible? Join the debate NOW and subscribe to our traveling symposium 3D* - Designers and Developers Discourse. Theme 1; Present Dream or Future Nightmare. For details www.dynamiccity.org

400 cities

Inspiration against sprawl

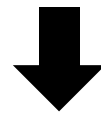
In the cross-curves of underdevelopment and accelerated progress, of appetitive market expansion and old communist bureaucracy,



***CAN THE CITY WITH-
STAND 15 MORE
YEARS OF
UNCONTROLLED
EXPANSION?**

***CAN ARCHITECTURE
EVEN
COMPREHEND THE
SCALE OF THE
URBAN PROBLEM?**

***CAN THE MIXED-
USE MEGASTRUCTURE
COMBAT OUR
SEGREGATING
SOCIETY?**



**VIEWING 2020
THROUGH THE INNER
WORKINGS OF BBT'S
LUXURIOUS
RESIDENTIAL
MACHINERY BUILT AT
AN ALMOST INHUMAN
DENSITY WILL SPARK
THE DEBATE...**

an entirely new urban reality is being created. Deep shifts in the focus of Chinese society are leading to mass migration and the emergence of a raw social landscape. As we watch we can anticipate rising prosperity, ongoing reform, and extensive urbanization. Nothing less than the new urban continent is in the making. Those living within it will be forced to come to terms with an environment of unrelenting change. The global impact of China may be secured, but the speed, complexity and sheer bigness of its development defy all pre-existing approaches to its future. To investigate if a strategy can be formulated, the Dynamic City Foundation has commenced a multi-disciplinary research and design project. The plan to build 400 new cities by the year 2020, as stated by the former Chinese Minister of Civil Affairs, provides its research framework and its name: Urban China 2020. The results will be presented in models, animations, two symposia, and a book: *The Chinese Dream - a society under construction* (forthcoming December 2005).

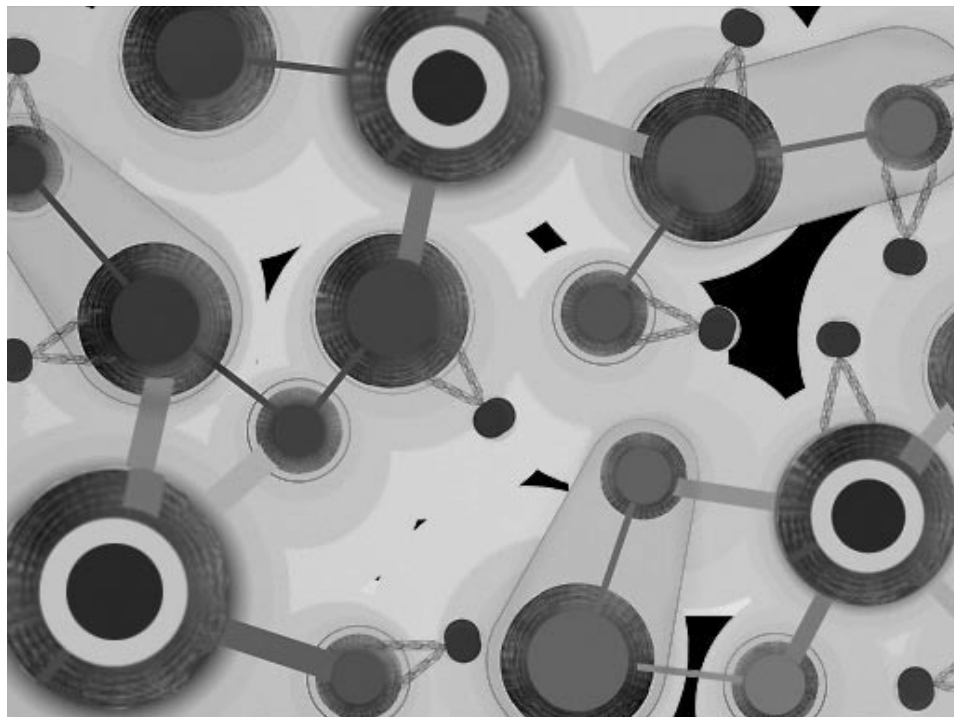
Interview with architect Neville Mars

*DCF Studio, Beijing
conducted by Adrian Hornsby*

AH: Why did you develop a new residential block? Across Beijing we find huge bright billboards advertising the arrival of large modern housing in vast green settings. They look comfy.

NM: The current projects express an approach which is, essentially, anti-urban. They are conceived and marketed as pieces of "garden-city": fully metropolitan villa retreats, high-rise towers hidden in parkland. You only have to look at the names of some of them - Fragrance Park, Natural City, Somerset Fortune Garden. Incontrovertibly urban zones are being repackaged as moments of rural serenity. The very notion is at odds with itself, and completely incompatible with the reality of increasing urban pressure, and the rapidly expanding Chinese cityscape.

AH: Incompatible - in what sense?



CONCEPTS

Beijing boom tower
Stacked villa
Green illusion
Urban dream
Vertical neighbourhood

Guarded luxury (enclave)
Gridlock
Skyline view
Valet parking
Anti-urban
Pro-urban
Infinite shopping
Luxury gradient
Privacy gradient
Sun gradient
Floating squares

No walls environment
Consumer lifestyle engine
Sprawl free concept
Spare space concept

Pocket of potential
Coarseness

精品生活梦工厂
头顶上的别墅
绿色幻象
都市梦想
空中邻居

设防的,封闭的
设防奢华的
堵死的路口
空中视角
代客泊车
反都市
亲都市
无止境的购物
奢侈的递变度
隐私的递变度
太阳宫

城市中的城市
没有围墙的小区
消费生活的机器
无扩张理念

袖珍空间的潜能
粗糙,劣等,粗劣的



BBT Space Occupation

<i>total</i>	1,295,134 m ²	100 %
<i>public</i>	106,908 m ²	8,3 %
<i>commercial</i>	399,646 m ²	30,9 %
<i>residential</i>	650,665 m ²	50,2 %
<i>office</i>	22,260 m ²	1,7 %
<i>parking</i>	112,516 m ²	8,7 %
<i>transport</i>	3,139 m ²	2,8 %

FAR (Floor Area Ratio)

21.6

NM: There are a number of problems being generated. First of all the contemporary Chinese block has become a fenced-off enclave - girt by walls and accessed only through guarded gates. It operates as an isolated plot carved out of the city. As developments like these step-repeat their way around the ring roads, we see the incremental privatization of the surface area of Beijing. Whole blocks of public streets just disappear. Add to this the scale of the blocks, and consequently that of their infrastructure, and you get ribbons of fortified compounds opening onto six lane arterial highways. The cityscape is

bands of income homogeneity. The gates function on many levels. In addition to this phenomenon of lockdown, the flash-motorization which accompanies such car-dependent typologies presents cities like Beijing with the scenario of total gridlock. Even the Photoshopped green-space of the billboards is more circulation area than community space of any real destination quality. For people living in outdated Chinese homes, and confronted daily with the problems of a congested polluted city, these images are highly persuasive. But what they offer is a false concept.

common homes today, most of them with big balconies, and all supported by a full retail and facilities system. There's drive-in parking, 2 subway stations, and 8 public squares. Moreover we have built BBT on half the available land. The Spare Space concept sucks up offcuts usually situated around towers and amalgamates them to make at one end a real park, and at the other a building so compact, it puts the subway within walking distance of all the inhabitants. Thus the current trend in China of increasing individualism and space demand is met, as is the need to achieve sufficient density to support an advanced mass-transit system. The design aims to tackle sprawl, and indicate the kinds of sacrifices which need to be made to ensure future living standards comply with our goals for a compact integrated urban environment.

“IN BEIJING THE QUESTION ARISES AS TO WHETHER PEOPLE ARE BEING LOCKED OUT OR SHUT IN.”

broken up into segregated units, and the size of those units has exploded beyond the scope of local planning. A kind of inhuman coarseness emerges in the urban texture - not only on the physical level, but also on the societal. The economic thrust of these units is towards pure crude geographical stratification. The volume of land they take up is wholly disproportionate to their window of accessibility, and so creates map-

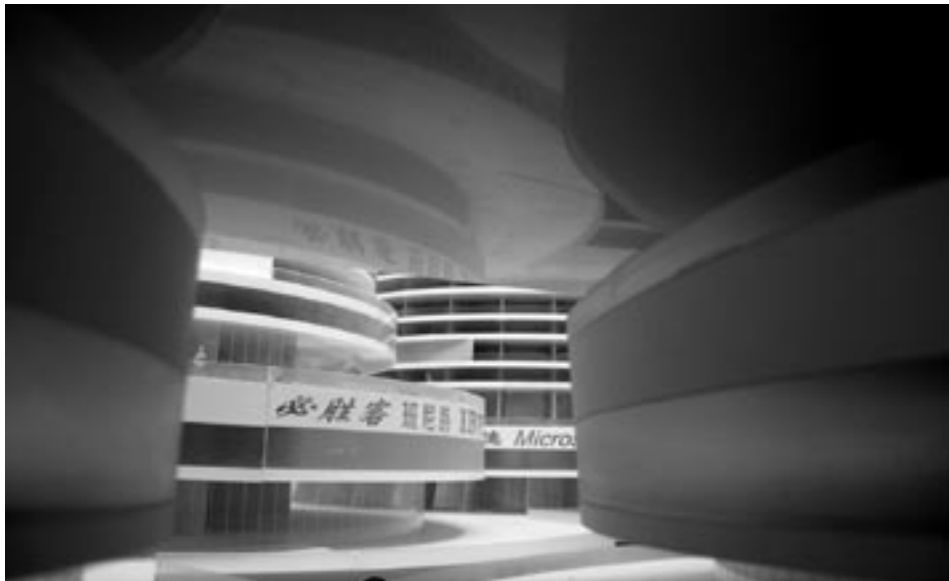
AH: And so what is BBT?

NM: The logical conclusion of the current channels of desire. BBT is the theoretical product of a genuine market attempt to supply according to demand: suburban luxuries in the centre of a major city. In BBT you can have your cake and eat it. The 12,500 inhabitants are accommodated in apartments on average 200% larger than

AH: What sacrifices and how integrated? Is BBT not only for the wealthy?

NM: No. Unlike the billboard projects it has no bounding walls. We think of BBT not as a building but as a genuine vertical neighborhood. Everyone can obtain a home here, but the sacrifice they make is life in a very condensed environment. The structure incorporates a number of inherent gradients which necessarily relate to comfort and to unit-cost. Among the upper levels networks of interconnecting bridges allow communication between bright and airy penthouse suites. But as you descend lower down the towers, increasingly you are forced to relinquish your access to natural light and privacy. There are 60 floors to drop through, and it is at the lower levels that you find the cheaper apartments. This is reinforced too by the infrastructural scheme, where three decks service three different economic clusters. Pedestrians and cyclists pass underneath among markets and foodstalls. On the second level are the subway stations, and links to the main retail centre and atrium buildings. Car owners enter from the highway direct to the third level, composed of open decks and express elevators to luxury apartments. This separation of flows based on mode of transport is a subtle yet effective way to enforce a degree of locale discrimination, by which different consumers are naturally guided to their most appropriate retail environment. It works for shoppers and shopkeepers alike. Throughout the block public space is reinvented as a continuously flowing semi-commercialized fully conditioned public podium.

AH: 5,000 apartments on 6 hectares of land at



ten times Manhattan density. 12,500 people implicitly compartmentalized according to the car they drive - or don't have to drive - and the fraction of the day they get to see. That sounds as close to dystopia as utopia, as much nightmare as dream.

NM: And maybe it is. The project aims to reveal what the modern desires necessitate, and how radical the consequent measures need to be. It should be apparent that the desires themselves are as sordid and inhumane as their natural product. Beijing cannot withstand another 15 years of uncontrolled expansion. Copy-paste architecture cannot even begin to comprehend the scale of the urban problem. We want to underline the necessity to research and respond to an inevitably all-encompassing urban realm.

AH: And so as a design statement BBT aims to provoke these visions of future scenarios?

NM: The goal is to stop people from ignoring or hiding from the urban condition, and to annihilate the anti-urbanist approaches in circulation at the moment. Instead we need to use all the urban means possible. Only by acknowledging the urban pressure can you possibly respond to it.

AH: And if that response turns out to be BBT?

NM: Our next step is to reengineer the city.

Upcoming exhibition

The 2005 installation Beijing Boom Tower (BBT) presents a model showing 6 hectares of the Chinese capital in 2020. The design of the block underlines the conflicting desires of the modern metropolis: its boom demand for urban space, and its consequent suffocation.

BBT presents an extreme architecture of networks, bridges, escalators, highways and towers; a continuous system that reunites the segregated Chinese society within one vertical neighbourhood. Its model is the central part of an integrated video-installation with three projections. The first shoots graphic information against the facade of the tower block, turning its skyscrapers into giant bar diagrams. It highlights the political and economic dimension of the Chinese residential block. The second projection shows the closed circuit TV's of the building. Mini-cameras capture the inner-world of the structure as they weave through the abstract spaces. These images feed back to a wall of black and white monitors. Interviews with the people that live and work in BBT are projected in a third screen. These are combined with an animation detailing the phases of its development and construction; the reality of life at ten times Manhattan density becomes apparent.

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TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Movies:

BBTV	<i>Duration</i>	4.30 minutes
	<i>Format</i>	DVD PAL
	<i>Colour</i>	Yes
CCTV	<i>Duration</i>	4.30 minutes
	<i>Format</i>	DVD PAL
	<i>Colour</i>	Yes
PROJECTION	<i>Duration</i>	4.30 minutes
	<i>Format</i>	DVD PAL
	<i>Colour</i>	Yes

Model:

Built in DCF studios Beijing
First DIAF – international Art Festival
Millennium Art Museum; In the line of flight
Curators Zhang Ga and Alex Adriaanse V2

<i>Scale</i>	1:100
<i>Material</i>	PVC on a wood and steel base
<i>Size</i>	2 x 4.2 x 2.7 m (w, l, h)
<i>Parts</i>	29 towers; largest diameter 0.75, height 2.20 m, 2 podium blocks: 1 x 4 m
<i>Lights</i>	40

**“ANY ACT OF BUILDING INEVITABLY
CONTRIBUTES TO THE PROBLEM ...”**

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