

Threatened Community Spaces: A Study of Traditional Bahnar 'Rong' Houses in Kon Tum City Under Modernization

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1. Introduction

The 'Rong' is a traditional communal house found in every Bahnar village in Kon Tum City, Vietnam. It serves as a community space for meetings, rituals, and gatherings. However, many Rong houses are now being altered, damaged, or are in decline due to urbanization, modernization, and natural disasters (Fig. 1, 2).



Fig. 1 - The Condition of Bahnar Rong Houses Threatened by Neglect, Fire, and Modern Materials (Authors, 2025).

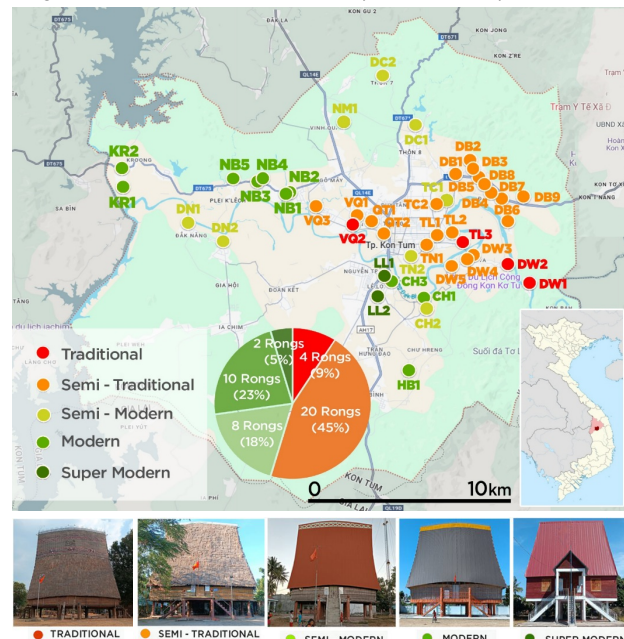


Fig. 2 - Location of 44 Bahnar Rong houses in Kon Tum City and their modernization status (Authors, 2025).

2. Methodology

44 Rong houses in Kon Tum City were surveyed through on-site documentation, including drawings and observations. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with villagers, elders, and local authorities about their history and changes (Fig. 2, 3).

No.	Name of Village	Map code	Admin Unit	Year of Cons.	Elevation	Plus	Length (m)	Height (m)	Area (m ²)	Transformation level (1, 2, 3, 4, 5)	Condition Assessment
1	PLEI DÓN Q11	Q11	Quang Trung	2001			11.8	14.0	69.6		Semi-Traditional
2	PLEI TÔ NGHIA Q12	Q12	Quang Trung	2001			11.1	12.4	58.8		Semi-Traditional
3	KON MO NAY SÔ LAM 1 TC1	TC1	Trương Châu	2012			18.8	16.0	178.6		Semi-Modern
4	KON MO NAY SÔ LAM 2 TC2	TC2	Trương Châu	2010			11.1	10.1	68.8		Semi-Traditional
5	KONTUM KÔ PONG TL1	TL1	Thăng Lọt	2004			14.4	12.3	77.8		Semi-Traditional
6	KON RÔ WANG TL2	TL2	Thăng Lọt	2016			12.3	14.2	77.5		Semi-Traditional
7	KON KLOE TL3	TL3	Thăng Lọt	2010			17.2	18.9	129.0		Traditional
8	PLEI TRU M BAK CHOUH NM1	NM1	Ngũ Mỹ	2010			8.7	8.8	48.7		Semi-Modern
9	KONTUM KÔ NAM TN1	TN1	Thăng Nhì	2021			13.6	12.1	97.9		Semi-Traditional
10	KON HIRA CHOI TN2	TN2	Thăng Nhì	2007			11.8	12.7	74.3		Semi-Modern
11	PLEI RÔ HAI 1 LL1	LL1	Lê Lợi	2003			11.4	12.4	75.2		Super-Modern
12	PLEI RÔ HAI 2 LL2	LL2	Lê Lợi	2003			11.4	12.4	75.2		Super-Modern
13	PLEI RÔ LONG DC1	DC1	Dak Cấm	1998			9.2	7.6	42.3		Semi-Modern
14	YANG ROONG DC2	DC2	Dak Cấm	2016			12.6	11.3	69.3		Semi-Modern
15	KROONG TU KR1	KR1	Krong	1997			10.2	10.6	59.2		Modern
16	KROONG KLAH KR2	KR2	Krong	1997			10.2	10.5	59.2		Modern
17	KON RÔ NGÔ CLAB NB1	NB1	Ngũ Bay	1999			10.2	10.5	59.2		Modern
18	KON NAM NB2	NB2	Ngũ Bay	1999			10.2	10.2	59.2		Modern
19	MANG LA 1 NB3	NB3	Ngũ Bay				9.0	11.4	44.1		Modern
20	MANG LA 2 NB4	NB4	Ngũ Bay	1999			10.2	10.3	59.2		Modern
21	PLEI KLECH NB5	NB5	Ngũ Bay	1999			10.2	10.3	59.2		Modern
22	KON RÔ BANG 1 VQ1	VQ1	Vinh Quang	2021			8.8	10.5	54.6		Semi-Traditional
23	KON RÔ BANG 2 VQ2	VQ2	Vinh Quang	1987			13.5	13.7	97.2		Traditional
24	KON BONGO KOTU VQ3	VQ3	Vinh Quang	2005			11.4	12.4	79.8		Semi-Traditional
25	KON MO NAY SÔ TU 1 DB1	DB1	Dak Bô	2006			10.0	10.7	62.0		Semi-Traditional
26	KON RÔ RI XET DB2	DB2	Dak Bô	1999			10.7	8.9	63.1		Semi-Traditional
27	KON HING DB3	DB3	Dak Bô	2003			12.3	9.8	78.7		Semi-Traditional
28	KON RÔ LANG DB4	DB4	Dak Bô	2005			9.8	10.8	58.8		Semi-Traditional
29	KON DREH PLONG DB5	DB5	Dak Bô	2006			11.8	14.2	87.3		Semi-Traditional
30	KON JO DREH DB6	DB6	Dak Bô	2006			10.4	9.1	59.3		Semi-Traditional
31	KON DREH DB7	DB7	Dak Bô	2005			11.8	10.5	83.8		Semi-Traditional
32	KON KÔ PÂT DB8	DB8	Dak Bô	2024			12.0	12.0	82.8		Semi-Traditional
33	KON CTR DB9	DB9	Dak Bô	2006			11.5	11.3	63.3		Semi-Traditional
34	PLEI JO DREP DN1	DN1	Dak Nang	1996			11.1	11.5	59.9		Semi-Modern
35	PLEI RÔ WAK DN2	DN2	Dak Nang	2006			9.4	10.6	57.3		Semi-Modern
36	KON HIRA KLAH CH1	CH1	Chư Krong	2003			12.2	10.2	72.0		Modern
37	KON HIRA KOTU CH2	CH2	Chư Krong	2008			12.0	13.1	81.6		Semi-Modern
38	PLEI GROI CH3	CH3	Chư Krong	2019			9.3	10.8	48.4		Modern
39	KON KÔ TU DW1	DW1	Dak Rô Wa	1969			13.1	16.8	90.4		Traditional
40	KON RÔ DBI DW2	DW2	Dak Rô Wa	2024			12.8	14.9	76.8		Traditional
41	KON KLOE 2 DW3	DW3	Dak Rô Wa	1999			12.2	12.2	80.5		Semi-Traditional
42	KON PONG DW4	DW4	Dak Rô Wa	2001			12.6	11.4	58.0		Semi-Traditional
43	KONTUM KÔ NAM DW5	DW5	Dak Rô Wa	2023			11.9	12.2	78.5		Semi-Traditional
44	DAK KRAK HB1	HB1	Hoa Binh	2018			9.1	10.6	45.5		Modern

Fig. 3 - Table of the current status and modernization levels of 44 Bahnar Rong houses in Kon Tum City (Authors, 2025).

3. Results

Most Rong houses have seen major changes, such as metal roofing, concrete frames, and the loss of side porches and entrances. 36 porches were rebuilt in concrete, and at least 07 houses have burned in the past. Fire stoves and sacred shelves have mostly disappeared, and over half Rong houses are now used less than twice a week (Fig. 2, 4).

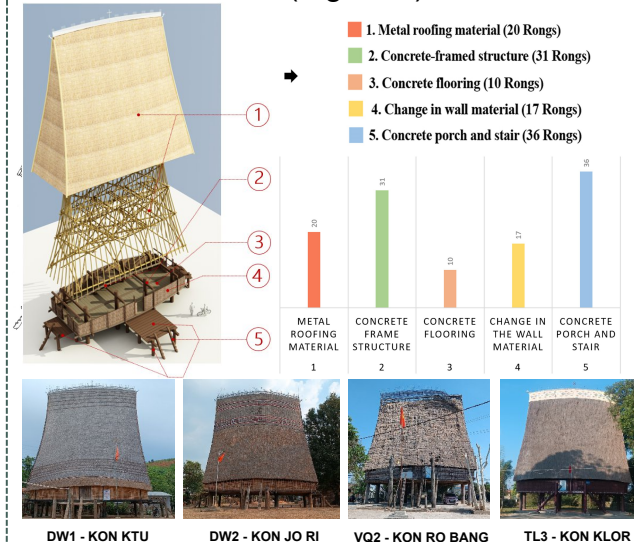


Fig. 4 – Architectural elements threatened by modern materials and four of the most traditional Rong houses (Authors, 2025).

4. Conclusion

Although most Rong houses have changed, four still preserve key traditional features that require community involvement for sustainable conservation (Fig. 4). | The poster uses part of the materials from the authors' paper presented at the International Conference HERITAGE 2025 (DOI: 10.4995/HERITAGE2025.2025.19201).