

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
FIRST SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture (Construction)
Honors theses

Confronting with the context in new China:

project for an urban masterplan in Zhaoqing East River Area
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The site of the project is situated within the framework of the transformation of the East River Area of the city of Zhaoqing, in the province of the Guangdong, one of the most industrialized and economically developed areas in China.

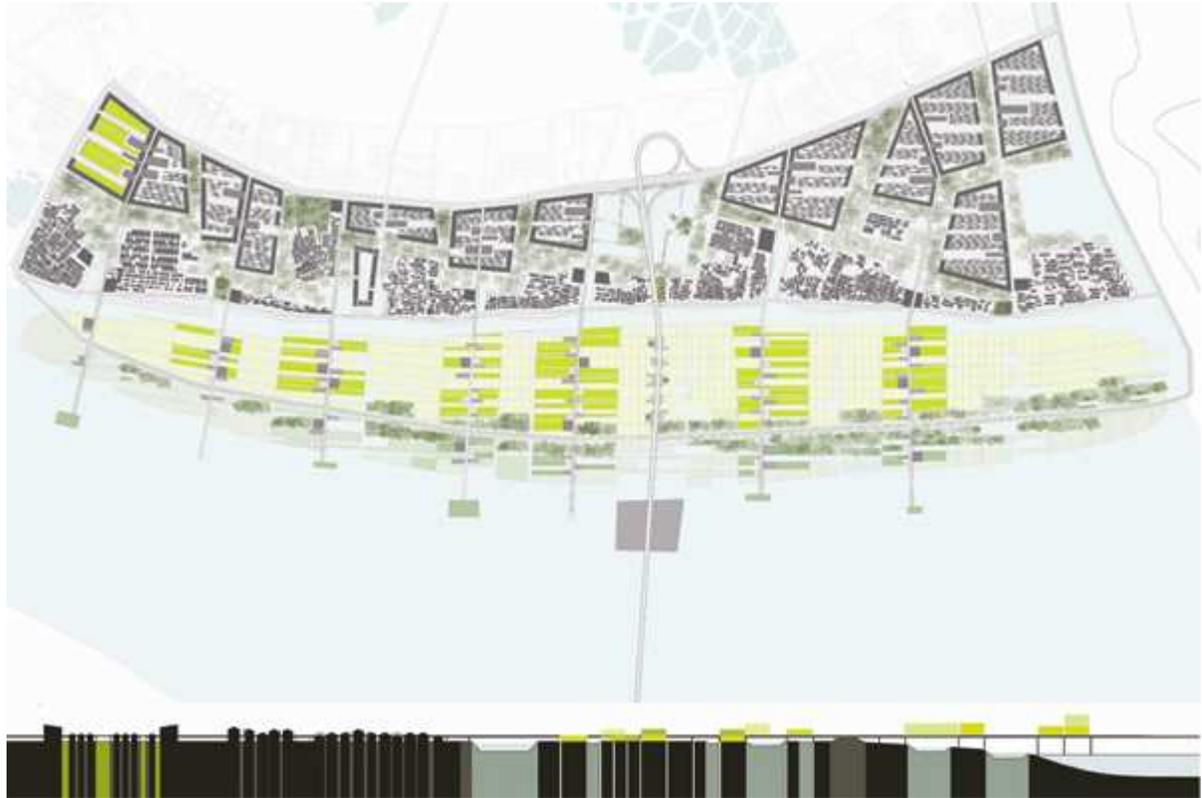
The purpose of the operation is the rehabilitation of the riverside area of Zhaoqing and the re-invention of a new urban front along the river Xi Xiang.

The project develops after having recognized the very strong identical values of the place and its extraordinary potential: the project proposed by the Urban Planning Bureau of the city, which should be completed in 2020, is characterized by a deep will of radical transformation, which risks to ruin the delicate balance of the zone, between urban fabric and rural tissue.

The purpose of the project for this masterplan is to "answer" several questions and requirements expressed by the municipality of Zhaoqing, trying to get closer to the project through a deeper analysis of the site and the context, in order to preserve and to value existing local tissues with the proposition of new settlement typologies according with the rural local tradition and in contrast with the will of individualization and cancellation of the values of the area.

The proposal conceived by our team of work, which worked within the framework of "Piattaforma Tirrenica" (a group of students and professors of architecture from the major Italian universities which cooperate in collaboration with the Chinese municipalities to make new China "sensitive" to a more "aware" planning), looks to preserve the small urban tissue of the ancient village, the original conformation of the hydric system, the identity of the area dedicated to the agriculture with its social dynamics, its rhythm and its habits of rural life to be protected and preserved.

The starting point of the reflection is the observation of the complete absence of transversal infrastructures connecting three different tissues of the site: the carrying idea of the project, is the transversal re-connection



Masterplan and cross section of the area

In parallel, we led a study about the life of infrastructures in modern Chinese cities: we noticed that the big infrastructures which cut the urban fabric of the city are not only perceived as elements dedicated to car traffic, but on the contrary, to the main function of infrastructure are associated social dynamics of appropriation of the space occupied by the infrastructure: these elements offer "infraspaces" where take place many various collective activities.



General view of the area

In the project this concept of the infrastructure as the gathering element of traffic fluxes, urbanization and collective activities was interpreted and proposed in a " light " key ; subtle infrastructural elements re-connect various parts of the site, by working as functional support in the different activities and by defining the themes of the project, elements according to existing buildings and tissues: a more urban and denser part in the upper area of the site which can maintain a link with the ancient village, by evoking the community lifestyle of the ancient " Hakka " villages of the region; a linear park between the new communities and the old village valued by the creation of a new ship canal.

These elements express the will to conceive the infrastructure as a functional element in the densification of the agricultural strip, by attracting the farmers houses which will host activities for tourist accommodation while leaving intact the weft and the agricultural function of the ground.



The densification of the agricultural strip

The approach to the river refuses the idea of a designed, traditional riverfront by proposing punctual elements, which host the collective functions suspended above water on the river Xi Xiang: this approach reflects the Chinese ancestral and intimate relationship with this water element

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