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From Urban Village to Urban Community

A regeneration proposal for Shixia Village in Shenzhen

Double Degree Master's Thesis

by

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July 2021

从城中村至城市社区。
深圳石厦村的复兴计划

**From Urban Village to Urban Community.
A regeneration proposal for Shixia Village
in Shenzhen**

(申请清华大学建筑学硕士专业学位论文)

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**From Urban Village to Urban Community.
A regeneration proposal for Shixia Village
in Shenzhen**

Thesis Submitted to
Tsinghua University

In a partial fulfilment requirement for the professional degree of
Master in Architecture Design

by

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摘要

尽管近年来深圳城中村终于被公认为是城市过去和现在发展的重要组成部分，但它们的命运，尤其是对经济特区内的人来说，是拆迁。该论文旨在提出一种针对当地村庄规模的设计方法，该方法可以潜在地增强快速现代化的副产品，即建筑和社会资本，以便让村庄的居民获得他们所代表的公民身份。并认识到“深圳梦”不包括成功或失败，而是移民身份在城市背景下缓慢而有机的构建，这是他们自起源以来一直梦想的。

为此，本文从总体层面调查了该市城中村的社会和空间状况，验证了理论家和建筑师对此问题的研究结果，并以石厦村（位于福田中心区的一个定居点，靠近中央商务区）为具体案例，这不是以往研究的主题，但它在相关文件中被确定为可再生的定居点。《深圳市城中村综合整治总体规划（2018-2025）》实际上，石厦经历了一次表面清理，拆除了三分之一的表面，在此又一个摩天大楼群将兴起。

认识到拆迁是为居民创造更健康的生活条件所必需的，本论文分析了该村的历史、布局和类型结构，以制定项目建议书，让石厦的现有部分与新建部分连接；为村庄提供所有成员都可以使用的新公共空间。与政府提出的重建计划不同，该项目并没有将石厦置于过去的某个时刻，而是保持其活跃并参与其未来的发展，延续了自1980年代经济特区诞生时的强化的分层式的变化。

关键词: 深圳; 城中村; 类型学; 公共空间

Abstract

Although in the last years the Urban Villages in Shenzhen have been finally recognized as crucial to the city's past and present fast growth, their fate, especially for the ones within the former borders of the Special Economic Zone, is demolition. This work of thesis aims at proposing a design approach at the village local level that could possibly enhance its built-up and social capital, by-products of the rapid modernization, in order to allow Village residents to acquire a Shenzhen civic identity that represents them on the local scale, and to acquire the awareness that the "Shenzhen Dream" cannot consist of either success or failure, but of the slow organic identity construction of migrants inhabiting an urban context which they have dreamed of since its origins.

To do that, the thesis investigates the social and spatial conditions of urban villages in the city on a general level, verifies the results of theorists and practitioners on the topic, and looks at the specific case of Shixia Village, a settlement in central Futian, close to the Central Business District, which has not been of particular interest in the existing literature, but identified as remediable among the ones in the "Shenzhen Urban Village Comprehensive Remediation Plan (2018-2025)". In fact, Shixia has underwent a general outlook cleaning, and the demolition of one third of its surface just to house the umpteenth podium-towers complex.

Recognizing the demolition as necessary for the development of healthier living conditions for residents, the thesis investigates the history, the layout and the typological conformation of this Village, in order to develop a design proposal which establishes a certain relation with the preexisting parts and the new ones; providing the village with new public spaces accessible to all members of Shixia. Unlike the governmental proposals, the research does not relegate Shixia to a fixed past moment in time, but it keeps the place active and involved in its future development, continuing the stratifying metamorphosis of the Village started with its intensification in the 1980s during the birth of the Special Economic Zone.

Key words: Shenzhen; urban village; typologies; regeneration

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Topic choice and statement of the problem

When confronted with the choice of the topic to develop for this thesis, it emerged that most of the architectural experimentations present in Shenzhen consist of new design projects promoted by the city government, also through public competitions, within their program for “*Ten Cultural Facilities of the New Era*”, like the Shenzhen Opera House, the Science and Technology Museum, or the Conservatory of Music, all projects which will contribute to turn Shenzhen into a world-class city at its famous Shenzhen-speed.

It was quite eye-opening to hear in the same period, a very different narrative on the same city, brought forward by the architect Juan Du, who in a lecture presenting her book “*The Shenzhen Experiment*”, introduced the history made about the origin of Shenzhen, the “*miracle city grown from nowhere*”¹, as false and non-respectful of the hundreds of villages preexisting in the area that were eventually surrounded and consumed by the modern city. These villages became Urban, and until recent times there has been no governmental interest in observing them or their characteristics, adopting the reconstruction-by-demolition approach of new buildings, producing spaces not accessible to the evicted residents. Home to 50% of the city population these villages require a vision more respectful of their social conditions and their spatial one, as human-scaled examples in a modern city like Shenzhen.

Thus, the issues related to this topic are several: from the wrong narrative around the city, the mistakes done in the past when considering the Villages, and the reconstruction proposals for the demolished parts. Assuming that the demolitions are inevitable mainly for the spatial conditions of the Villages which are extreme, and also for agreements among actors on many Villages that were taken long before the local government published the “*Shenzhen Urban Village Comprehensive Remediation Plan*”, the thesis addresses mainly the reconstruction design issue in a specific Village where a preliminary analysis is considered necessary, as the one tool through which a reconstruction design coherent with the identity and the conditions of the place can be produced.

1 From Juan Du's lecture on October 24th 2020 during the event “*Torino Stratosferica, Utopian Hours*”

1.2 Thesis significance, purpose, and objective

1.2.1 Significance

The research explores how the social issues in Urban Villages, already studied in the last two decades by several experts and practitioners from various fields, can be addressed and reduced through architecture and urban planning as the tools. The thesis aims at showing that urban villages can be a deliberate inviting option to the rest of the city areas, and as much as the latter, can contribute to the identity construction of human beings inserted in a contemporary fast-changing urban context.

1.2.2 Purpose

This work of thesis aims at observing the intrinsic potential of urban villages, as environments that in Shenzhen still offer a human-scaled option compared to the hyper-modernized rest, in order to develop a regeneration design for a specific village. The intangible qualities of these spaces can become visible through architecture, urban quality regenerations, and the creation of welcoming environments; all for the construction of an enduring collective memory, sense of belonging, and shared sense of past in a village local community.

1.2.3 Objective

The research investigates the current condition of the buildings in the chosen village and its spatial development to create a proper contextual basis of work for the design project. Trying to prove that the villages constitute a built and social value, a relevant question that the research addresses is the one around what is heritage and what could be considered valuable in a contemporary urban network, by observing its stratification and proposing its continuation.

1.3 Thesis design

1.3.1 Structure and questions

In the following text two main parts can be identified: one of literature research on the theories and practices involving Shenzhen and Urban Villages, based on the consultation of books, academic publications, journals, and architectural designs; and another one about the area chosen for this work, Shixia Village; namely the theoretical analysis of it, and the design proposal for its regeneration. The end of chapters two and three present a short summary of their contents in order to recap the key points reported in their para-

graphs, and also to introduce more rapidly to the following chapter.

The different parts of the thesis could be seen as answers to the questions that characterize the overall research, which are listed here following the order of the chapters as in the table of contents.

In chapter two, “Shenzhen and the Urban Villages” the research targets and answers the following questions:

Question 1: What is the history of Shenzhen and its Urban Villages, and how did the two affect each other?

Question 2: What are specifically the spatial and social conditions of Urban Villages, widely recognized as critical?

Question 3: What has been the attitude towards the issue in terms of theoretical studies and practical solutions?

In chapter three, “The case of Shixia Village”, the thesis addresses the following questions:

Question 1: How are the general conclusions on the topic reflected in a specific case?

Question 2: What tools are useful for observing and draw conclusions on an Urban Village, from afar?

In chapter four, “Regeneration Proposal for Shixia”, the thesis answers the following questions:

Question 1: What are the staples which a regeneration design should revolve around in Shixia?

Question 2: What design solutions might ensure the regeneration as beneficial for the whole village?

Question 3: What functions are more adapt to Shixia and its residents?

1.3.2 Methodologies

In order to answer these questions, the methodologies followed were heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic during which this research started and was brought

forward. In fact, although the literature work would have been based on books and the observations of published works anyway, the studies and analysis of the chosen Village, which was never observed carefully before and about which no existing literature or mapping were found, was carried out through the digital tools available on Google and Baidu, namely the satellite views and the street-level views which provide information on building heights, commercial activities, functions, and general atmosphere in the place. Furthermore, thanks to the help of Professor Yang from the Department of Architecture at Shenzhen University and Haobin, a peer student, it was possible to carry out a face-to-face survey in the area, which produced some testimonies of the spatial and social conditions in the Village, and a small photographic report useful to understand the conditions of the area at its latest time possible.

These tools allowed the construction of a typological study on the area, contextualizing the research in the framework of the *Transitional Morphology* topic, shared within the thesis seminar where this work was presented and discussed regularly during its development in the last months.

Chapter 2 Shenzhen and the Urban Villages

2.1 The birth of Shenzhen

In order to understand the rapid growth of Shenzhen, it is crucial to insert it into the economic and political context of 1979. The Chinese Opening Up Reform started in the Deng Xiaoping era invested in various Special Economic Zones (SEZ), areas where economic laws are different from the rest of the nation, in order to attract in the country foreign investments and foster its opening through the import of technology, learning of management, acquirement of knowledge, and implementation of foreign relations¹. The choice of the area was not casual, the Pearl River Delta had always represented for the country a powerful economic interchange land and the presence of the two enclaves, Macao and Hong Kong, at the time still Portuguese and British, were the economic models that the revolutionary leader looked up to. A semi-capitalistic experiment could have been done easily in those lands without infecting the rest of the socialist country (figure 2.1). The first of these experiments was Shenzhen, right across the Hong Kong border, where the former Special Economic Zone comprised four districts (Nanshan, Futian, Luohu, and Yantian) making the so-called *guānnèi* of the city, while the outer ones (Baoan, and Longgang) were the buffer areas forming the *guānwài* (figure 2.2). Since 2010 the SEZ border has been expanded to the one of the whole city, dividing the areas into central and suburban². What characterized the development of Shenzhen and really puts it into a capitalist perspective is that its urban development was mainly planned through two masterplans which have been reviewed in many occasions (the 1996-2010 one was reviewed 13 times)³, to always respond to the market logics in terms of investment in the city: *“the ‘city’ assumed its place in a continuum by variation”* (Craciun, 2001). The massive affluence to Shenzhen was never predicted, the city in its first masterplan was believed to reach one million inhabitants by 2000, but that year it already counted more than six million. The growing miracle has been going on since then and today the city counts over 20 million people, distributed in two polar realities; while the official population count reports 12 million people, the real amount is not precise and, considering the floating population, is estimated to be around 20 millions⁴.

1 See Craciun M. in “Project on the City I: Great Leap Forward”

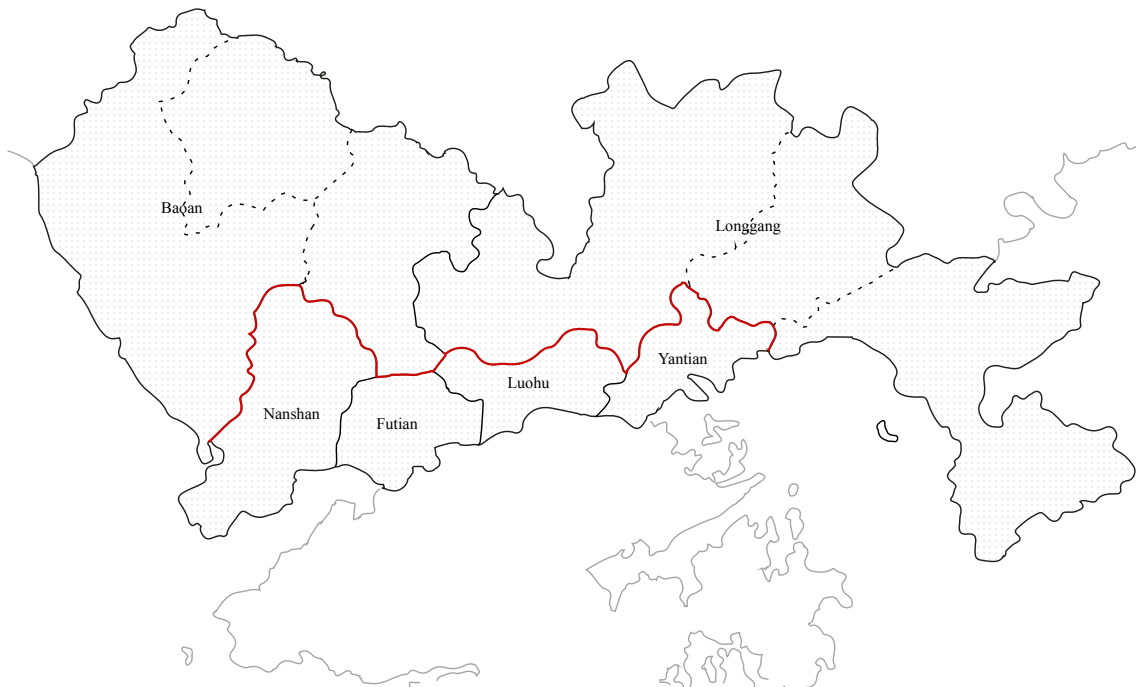
2 See Song et al., 2020

3 See Bulanda-Jensen, 2019

4 See Du, 2019



[2.1] The Pearl River Delta region and its location in the Guangdong province (top right corner).
Source: Drawn by the author



[2.2] Shenzhen former division. North of the SEZ border (in red): the two districts divided later on (dotted line), south of it: the four districts composing the Zone.
Source: Drawn by the author

2.2 The Shenzhen product and its by-products

The narration behind this growth has always been nourished by a governmental propaganda which contributed to the construction of an actual product waited to be sold to people and developers. As mentioned before, the selling strategy of this product has worked beyond its expectations and what people have been attracted to is an urban environment that offers money, chances and a prosperous future (figure 2.3); what was never expected, or planned either, is the parallel development of an urban reality ideologically far from the rest but physically very well inserted in it.

The growth of Shenzhen produced since the beginning a huge demand of people, required for the physical development of the city and also attracted by the opportunities offered there, but the only supply for this big low-income migrants demand were the former rural zones of the city: the pre-existing villages around which the city kept growing. These lands, which were turned urban by the government to face the rising housing request in the 1990s and to bring under their control all agricultural lands within the Special Economic Zone¹, followed their unique growth that was never regulated strictly or controlled on either urban or architectural scale and underwent three main stages of development: expansion (where possible), densification and intensification. The destiny of these villages was pretty much dependent on their location as regarded the Special Economic Zone, that is why the ones within its borders reached the intensification before the ones out of it, and why today the ones that still result expanded, densified, but not heavily intensified, are the more peripheral villages or the ones inside the environmental locations of the city.² Finding themselves within the urban environment, these portions of land were named *chéngzhōngcūn*, literally “villages-in-the-city”, and are generally referred to as “Urban Villages” and represent the “*by-product*” of Shenzhen rapid modernization (Bach, 2011) (figure 2.4). What is less evident in the Shenzhen narrative, and only recently recognized by the government, is that the formal and informal city are naturally interconnected and they have been mutually benefitting from each other since day one.

2.3 The spatial conditions of urban villages

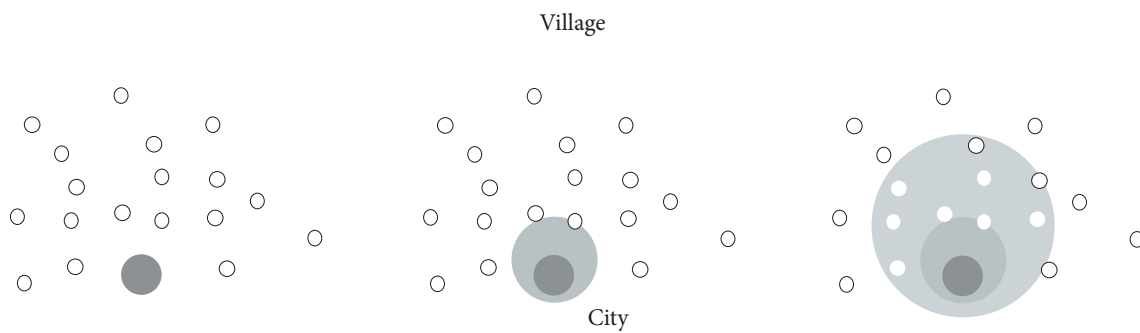
The fast development of the Villages was carried out by the former residents themselves, no strict urban or architectural regulations were followed, and the amount

¹ See Wang et al., 2009

² See Hao et al., 2013



[2.3] Lianhuanshan Park, Shenzhen.
Source: <https://cutt.ly/knS4sKu>



[2.4] Scheme of the birth of Urban Villages in Shenzhen.
Source: drawn by the author

of people in those areas led to unhealthy living conditions in which half of the Shenzhen inhabitants still live. In particular, the development in all villages led to the construction of the now infamous “handshake” buildings, residential concrete structures so close to each other where people can shake their hands from one window to the other, and to a series of common issues coming from that: in urban villages *“streets are narrow and congested; electricity, telecommunications routes, and water and gas pipelines are disorganized; lighting, ventilation, and drainage are insufficient; and sanitation is poor”* (Liu and Lo, 2020) (figure 2.5, 2.6). Furthermore, although the villages are well inserted in the urban environment, they are not necessarily connected to the urban fabric, and the access to city services or transportations is easier from its borders, but the inner infrastructure deficiency makes life harder within the village fabric where public schools or public facilities are often missing. Most of these issues result from the high built-up ratio in the villages, which often is higher than 70%¹. This prevalence of buildings leaves little space to outdoor green areas or public spots and by consequence, fewer socialization options within the village space are available. In most cases the villages accommodate in the same space several functions throughout the day, for instance, a basketball court transforms into a market, a playground, a parking lot, or a storage area. In this sense, when thinking of Urban Villages the usual socialization occasions of most cities should be forgotten to leave space to *“food markets, ‘laundry holes’ or street corners”* (Kochan, 2015) which provide naturally a unique socialization moment for villagers. The spaces in urban villages are characterized by a strong sense of dynamism, flexibility and movement, and reflect the instincts of its people and their resilience inhabiting the space (figure 2.7, 2.8).

2.4 The social conditions of urban villages

As much as a social cooperation and collective sense at the base of the villages’ rapid development can be recognized to the former villagers, in most cases they are not inhabiting the area anymore. The ones living these spaces are mostly temporary migrant citizens in Shenzhen which make up the so-called “floating population”, who lives in a temporary condition given by the household registration document, the hukou, that is rural and does not allow them access to many urban services, including, for instance, public housing.² The hukou, inherited from the pre-dynastic era and turned stricter during the Maoist one, splits the Chinese citizens in urban and rural, it controls the movement

¹ See Hao et al., 2013

² See Wang et al., 2009

between the two parts, and it is effectively a citizenship status within the same country, at the base of a profound social, and widely accepted inequality. It has been reviewed many times since Shenzhen was officially founded and these allowed massive migration fluxes starting from the 1980s; the most relevant change in the system came in 2014 when the “National New-type Urbanization Plan 2014-2020” formalized the abolition of the hukou *leibie* (the agricultural and non-agricultural status division), therefore ending the *nongzhuanfei* practice to obtain urban residency and rights, and leaving the hukou the single defining criteria of residence. The reform can really be considered a groundbreaking moment for Chinese society, and although this decision was covered by medias as an equalization of the two social realities in China and as the possibility of agricultural people to finally obtain non-agricultural rights, it has to be kept in mind that in exchange for an urban hukou, a peasant migrant would lose any land-use right and with it, especially in urbanizing zones, big profits from a soon-to-be valuable land.¹

Furthermore, the villagers’ floating condition is given to their economic impossibility of becoming owners (the average monthly income for migrants is considerably lower than urban citizens) and to the Chinese Land-Use Rights Law which entitles “*to property rights on urban village land and houses*” (Hao, 2013) the former villagers only, who are not allowed to sell except to the local government. As much as people are driven to Shenzhen with optimistic attitudes, carrying a rural hukou in an urban environment constitutes a prolonged condition of temporariness which, together with an overall “*dirty, chaotic, and poor*” appearance (Liu and Lo, 2020), leads to a series of negative social outcomes: alienation from the city, that fuels a missing sense of belonging, and undermines the construction of local identity.

Furthermore, the deficit of social securities in most of these areas generates high criminality rates (including gang violence, gambling, and drug trafficking)², contributing to the formation of an unsafe and uncertain social environment.

What profoundly divides migrants from the rest of the Shenzhen urban population is that the latter is aware they are currently making history in a young city, they find it exciting and stimulating³; while the rest is not given the opportunity to think the same, to believe that they are contributing to the construction of the past of Shenzhen, to know that they inhabit it, and that is socially and typologically inheritable and valuable for the next ge-

1 See Chan et al., 2008

2 See Liu and Lo, 2020

3 Interview from “Shenzhen: The Migrant Experiment”, available at <https://cutt.ly/5nS4iLC>



[2.5],[2.6] Life in the Urban Village.
Source: <https://cutt.ly/BnIMpC1>

nerations. The villages do not constitute the destination for most of its people, they are aware that at some point they will leave to either reach the formal Shenzhen or go back home because of failure or eviction; and in this sense, in this limbo, urban villagers live their worse condition, one of a perpetuated “*existential homelessness*” (Bach, 2011).

2.5 Early interest in the topic

The amount of documents concerning Shenzhen and Urban Villages in general, is quite high, it consists of books and academic publications dating from the late 1990s to the current year. The tendency can be divided in two main moments: from the late 1990s to the first decade of the 2000s, and from 2010s until 2020. This division is given by the absence from the discourse around Shenzhen, of the critical conditions of Urban Villages in the first part, followed by a wider argumentation on the topic in the second part. The early literature on the matter focuses on the modern miracle of the city of Shenzhen and the Pearl River Delta region, whose development is widely narrated but with poor reference to the Urban Villages, which the Harvard GSD early refers to as “*FLOATING life*” (Lin, 2001), that were spatially intensifying right in the 1995-1999 period as shown by studies on their spatial development carried out later.

The early 2010s saw a rising interest in the matter probably deriving from the relevance that the Bi-City Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism in Shenzhen slowly acquired since its first edition in 2005; although that year they were defined “*poisonous tumors*” for the city of Shenzhen (Du, 2019), the Urban Villages were proposed to be hosting part of the Biennale exhibition, and surprisingly it happened.

2.6 Changing the narrative

Starting from the Biennale, all the studies done on the Villages contributed to recognize their importance for the city development and to adjust the narrative which displayed the miraculous growth of Shenzhen, from “*a fishing village of 30.000 people*” (Du, 2008) to a city of millions, enabled exclusively from “*central policies and foreign investments*” (Du, 2016). Although there can be found some documents describing the developing phases or others supposing the spatial interpretations, it is quite difficult to get information on specific villages from academic sources. This lies probably in the missing regulations of their development and the absence of formal documents which can testify their history; the most efficient way to understand them is by physical surveyings and interviewing villagers, and these approaches are documented on online sources like



[2.7], [2.8] The same square throughout the day.
Source: Kochan, 2015

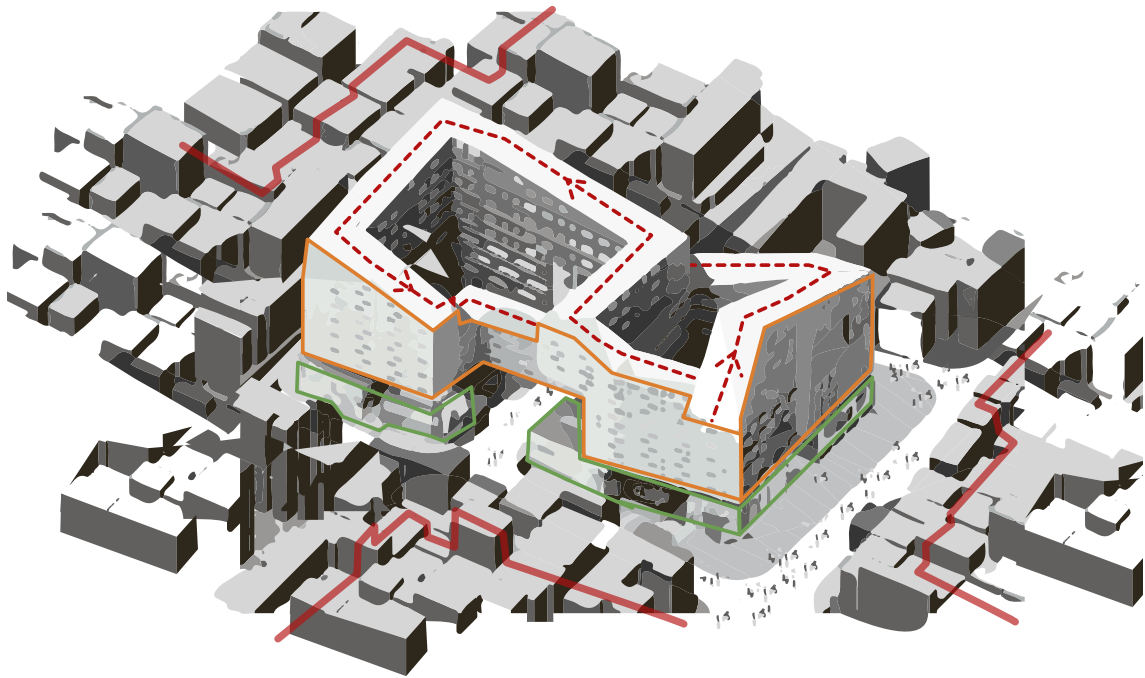
dedicated websites or blogs, but not on a deep academic level. These studies and works share the common thesis of the importance that Urban Villages hold in the city and how a specific understanding of each of them would lead to a richer comprehension of the pieces of history of Shenzhen. What can be considered a formal written recognition of the Villages is the document approved in 2018 by the city government “Shenzhen Urban Village (Old Village) Comprehensive Remediation Plan (2018-2025)” (深圳市城中村(旧村)总体规划). A translation of the document was carried out for this research and what emerged from it is an intention of the city government to invest in regenerations and renewal (both terms are used, causing confusion on a coherent direction from them), and more freedom to the single districts to evaluate the villages mapped in the document and to present a correction program to the city government.

2.7 Designs for the Urban Villages

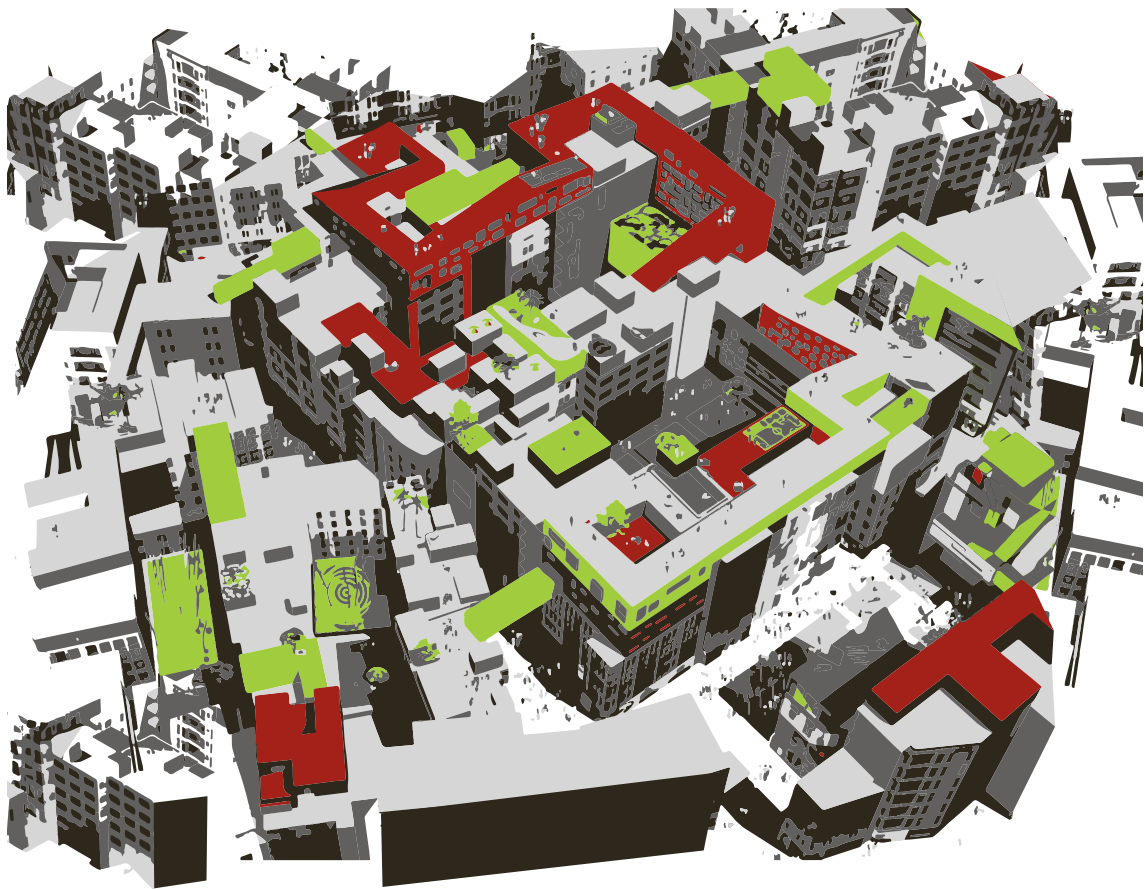
To verify how the theoretical things are reflected in practice, and what are the potentials and limits of architecture design in this context, a few projects have been observed. The projects mentioned below follow a main conceptual / built division and are presented in chronological order; they were chosen as the best representing of the conceptual and building trends in Urban Villages.

Two of the conceptual designs chosen are from the Shenzhen-based studio Urbanus who has been very focused on the Urban Villages topic since the early 2000s and their works constitute a precious documentation to rely on. At the base of their works lies a deep understanding of the local behaviors, like in the Xinzhou case (2004, figure 2.9) where the “*community energy*” felt in the village and the “*birds-eye-view texture image of the existing roofs*”¹, then manifested in the roof shape, led to a proposal in which the ground floor – upper floors division is kept in their functions (respectively commercial and residential) but their layout and scale strongly differs from the rest of the built environment. The project keeps the village vibrancy and commercial energy and, much taller than its residential informal surroundings, it stands in the heart of Xinzhou becoming its effective landmark. The Ganxia proposal (2005, figure 2.10) is a first attempt to an approach which is recurrent in many other work of thesis on the topic, a pedestrian pathway that connects the rooftops of the village offering the same functions of a demolished building, redistributed horizontally. The design is very conservative towards the existing buildings and

¹ From designers’ description of the project, available at <https://cutt.ly/anFgFGf>



[2.9] The Xinzhou proposal (schematic redrawing by the author)
Source: <https://cutt.ly/jnS4hp3>

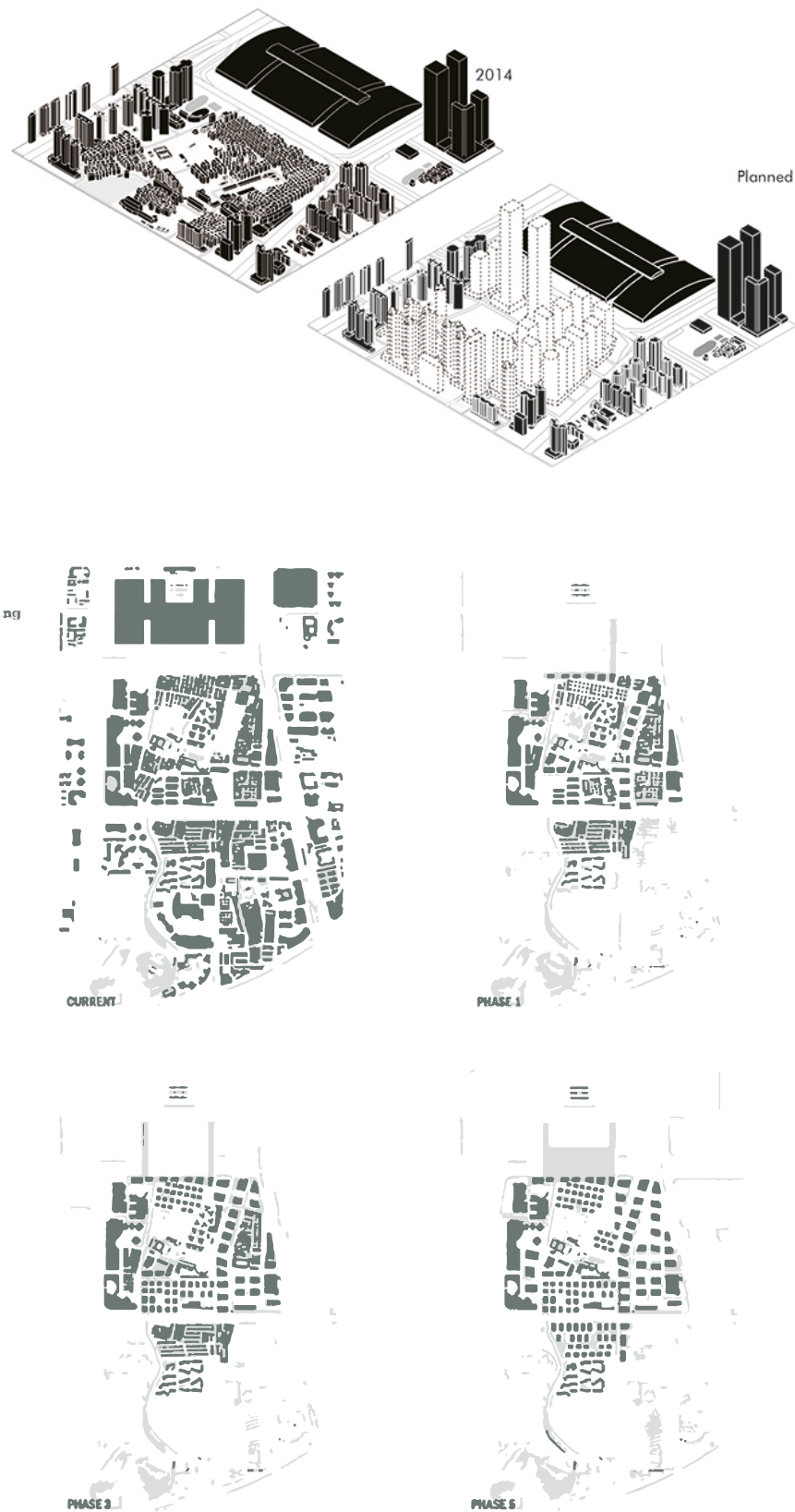


[2.10] The Gangxia proposal (schematic redrawing by the author)
Source: <https://cutt.ly/EnS4hBj>

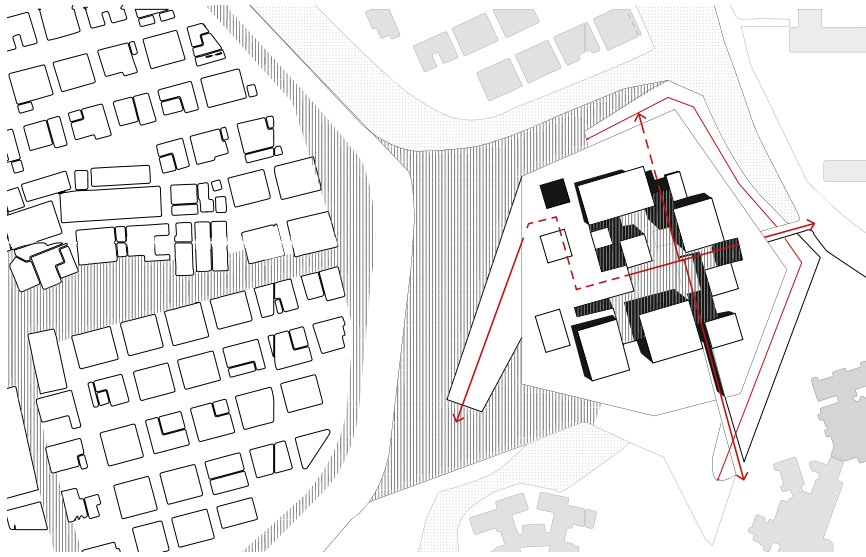
structures, it provides new outdoor spaces and interaction options, and offers a new opportunity to the villagers to look at the surrounding city and at the village, now underneath, from a new perspective. The Huanggang design proposal (2007, figure 2.11) is from a Hong Kong based studio whose principal is Juan Du, the architect mentioned previously who has been producing works and lecturing about Urban Villages since 2005. Their proposal is very relevant to the reality, in fact the project splits in *“five sequential phases that each balance demolition and construction for sustainable economic and operational management”* (Du, 2016), and in this strategy probably lies the most interesting part of the design which is the result of a real negotiation among developers, government and the village collective that, since the 1990s was very involved in the maintenance of the quality of the social and built capital in their village. Sadly, the renters’ future was *“not stated as an issue that the design needs to address, neither by the government agencies or the village corporations”* (Du, 2016), but at least their presence in the village is extended to its maximum through the phases mentioned above, and through the proposal of temporary housing during the transition phases. From digital surveys the project looks like is still at its phase 0 but considering the Shenzhen speed it will soon be a reality.

The first village project built from the Urbanus studio is a museum in Dafen (2007, figure 2.12), a village known for its copies of famous paintings produced by its inhabitants; the project brings forward the idea of using the new museum as an opportunity to enhance the social characteristics of the close village. The proposal contrasts the typology of the village as it spreads horizontally and for three floors only; it offers mixed use functions and a series of outdoor public areas which the visitors are brought to by a pedestrian infrastructural system acting in four directions (in and out of the village) that creates *“maximum interactions among people”* (Yan, 2007). These intentions have met many *“political implementation problems”* (Kochan, 2015) which led to empty museum galleries; also the few organized activities have let the outdoor public areas failing *“to grow into a more spontaneous everyday community space”* (Kochan, 2015).

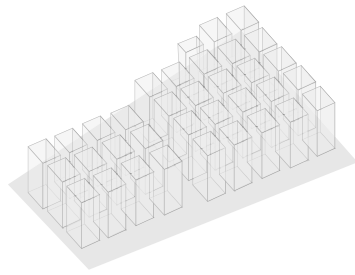
A one-of-a-kind governmental negotiation was held for the Shuiwei village where a residential re-use intervention was possible thanks to the leasing by the government of a group of housing towers, that in 2018 were given a new appearance by the Dutch studio Doffice. The design provides new interiors and mixed social housing functions, a new use of the rooftops which became accessible and, most importantly, connects the towers with sky corridors turning the buildings into one working unit allowing new possibilities of social interactions (figure 2.13).



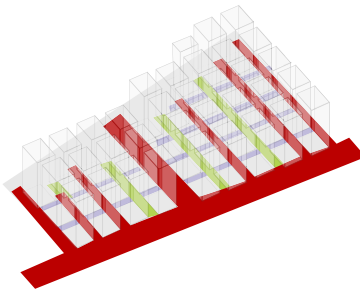
[2.11] The Huanggang proposal and the planned phases for its realization
Source: Du, 2016



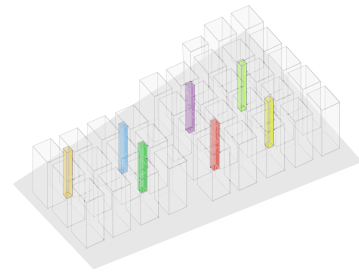
[2.12] The Dafen museum and a scheme explaining the connection concept
Source: Drawn by the author; <https://cutt.ly/RnS4kUQ>



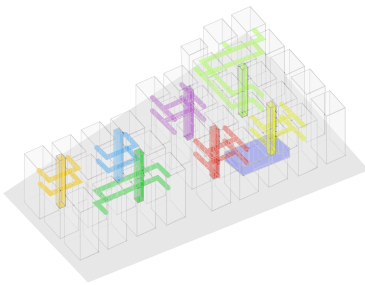
1. 35 individual “handshake”s



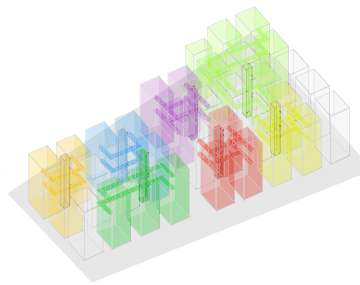
2. Bringing hierarchy inside



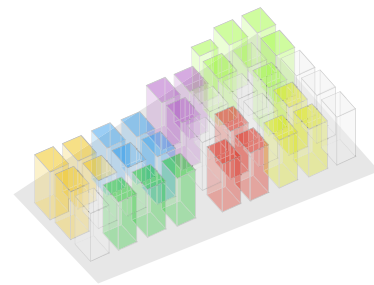
3. New elevators



4. Sky corridors and living room



5. Coloring for way-finding



6. Roofs for laundry and leisure



[2.13] The Shuiwei project and a scheme explaining its genesis (redrawn by the author)

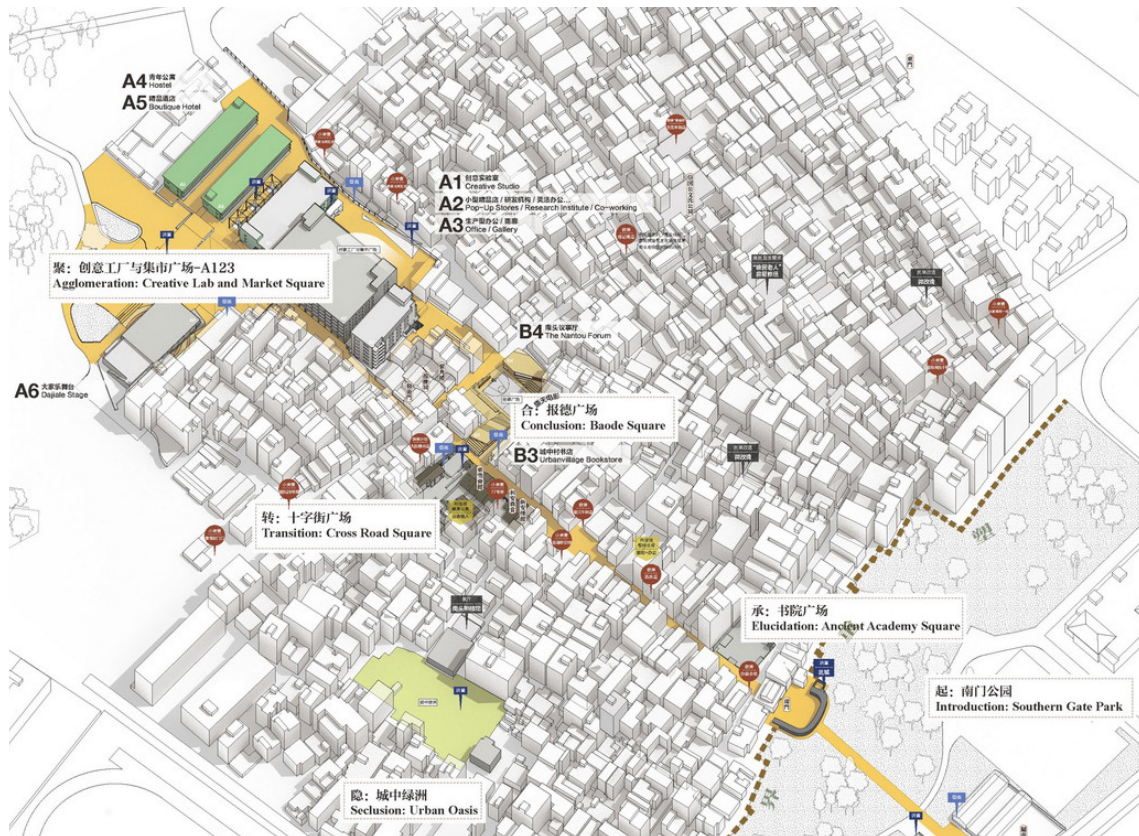
Source: <https://cutt.ly/InlMXIO>

The greatest accomplishment in terms of preserving the existing Urban Village over its demolition is the Nantou regeneration case which was enabled by the Urbanus intervention on the occasion of the 2017 UABB. Their project consisted of the adaptive re-use of a few buildings along a central axis where the exhibition would have been hosted, temporary structures to host outdoor activities, and the construction of two new buildings at the center of the axis that introduced the village to new public facilities (a library and a collective flexible central open-air space). The best outcome of this project and event consists of the following regeneration projects that took place in Nantou since 2017, completing the rebirth of the central axis just mentioned (figure 2.14) and positively contributing to the renewal of the Village appearance keeping intact its typology and soul.

Comparing the intentions of designers with the practical interventions, some useful conclusions can be taken: the built projects act directly on the architectural level, while the conceptual ones present village-scaled solutions. This local-over-urban approach follows an holistic logic where the local intervention acts punctually but in fact it operates on a broader scale over time, by triggering a regeneration chain as showed in Nantou. This is much more plausible mainly because of the difficulty that a village-scale intervention would face, requiring the negotiation between several actors involved (government, local developers, foreign developers, several former villagers). The project generally address the demolition-for-reconstruction approach as negative and unproductive because it tackles the typology of the built environment and leaves its people eradicated from their social network and leave them with few possibilities to use their social capital anywhere else in the city. In this sense, the real challenge for regeneration designs is the one to maintain as many residents as possible providing them and the village with a healthier spatial and social context, and designing spaces with a certain degree of connection and reasoning with the existing typology of a place.

2.8 Stakeholders in Urban Villages redevelopments

In redeveloping Urban Villages the main stakeholders involved and whose position is considered influential are market firms, the government, and the former villagers. In Shenzhen, “*where developers have largely replaced the government in financing urban redevelopment*” (Luo, 2017), the working system for regenerations are Private Public Partnerships who bring forward the main goal of profitability from the negotiation and reconstruction process, which involves huge amount of money and local resources. These three figures are all involved in the completed projects mentioned in the previous



[2.14] The Nantou regeneration and a scheme for the Biennale exhibition intervention

Source: <https://cutt.ly/OnlMB8F>

paragraph, and in other designs observed in order to understand the role of architects and designers in regeneration projects. The general process for designs operating on the architectural scale, like the Dafen museum, the “Green Cloud” in Gangxia (figure 2.15) or the “10.Creative Drink” bar in Xinzhou (figure 2.16), identifies a single commissioner able to finance the redevelopment and thus allows a certain freedom for architectural experimentation, investing the architects with a high relevance. While in larger projects like the Huanggang redevelopment and the Shuiwei one described above, the role of architects changes in the two main moments of the redevelopment: the negotiation process, and the realization of the design. In the first case, the realization phases described previously, result from a negotiation table where architects had a voice and were commissioned with the preparation of the design allowing residents to stay as long as possible, but eventually the design realized still looked at economic success, leaving out the main subjects of interest of designers. While in the Shuiwei case, the buildings were already owned by the district government who was interested in carrying on a regeneration focused on the social needs of people, and thus architects were responsible of understanding the spatial and social conditions; in this sense they were pressured on realizing a convincing result, but not on convincing other actors about their ideals.

In general, architects cannot be considered heavily relevant in the redevelopment processes, especially during the negotiation phase, but due to the impossibility to identify the specific stakeholders from afar, this research operates in the hypothesis of a regeneration where the interest of social and spatial needs in Urban Villages is shared equally among all stakeholders, and thus the architectural proposal represents an important tool around which the negotiation takes place.

2.9 Chapter 2 summary

The birth of the Urban Villages is a phenomenon which involved the densification and intensification of former rural villages in the area where Shenzhen started to be developed during the 1979 reform period as the first experiment of a Special Economic Zone in Mainland China. The impact of such experiment was the rise of concrete residential buildings within the limits of the Villages that could house the high number of people attracted to Shenzhen which was rapidly growing. Since then, the magnetic power of the area has not lowered down and the villages still constitute for most migrants the only affordable area of the city where they can hope to start an urban future for them and their



[2.15] The Green Cloud by ZHUBO Design
Source: <https://cutt.ly/mnlM66K>



[2.16] 10. Creative Drink by CM Design
Source: <https://cutt.ly/Qnl1p5u>

children.

The social and spatial conditions of the villages started to be investigated and described by scholars and experts starting from the first half of the 21st century, and the recurrent spatial issues include general low living conditions, especially if compared to the formal Shenzhen, due to the quality of the close residential buildings, namely the “handshake” buildings, in which people live without being presented the possibility to belong or to feel part of a social group.

The importance of Urban Villages for the city of Shenzhen has been formally recognized by the government who recently published the “*Shenzhen Urban Village Comprehensive Remediation Plan*”, a document where all Shenzhen’s Villages are mapped and the ones suitable for remediation are pointed out; nevertheless, most of these are out of the former Special Economic Zone, and the ones within it have been already negotiated for demolition and reconstruction in the years before, leaving them to their vanishing destiny. The topic of Urban Villages constitute an interesting choice for many scholars and practitioners who have cared to bring on a series of studies and projects of different cases, and also realizing small and big regeneration designs in some of them during the last decade.

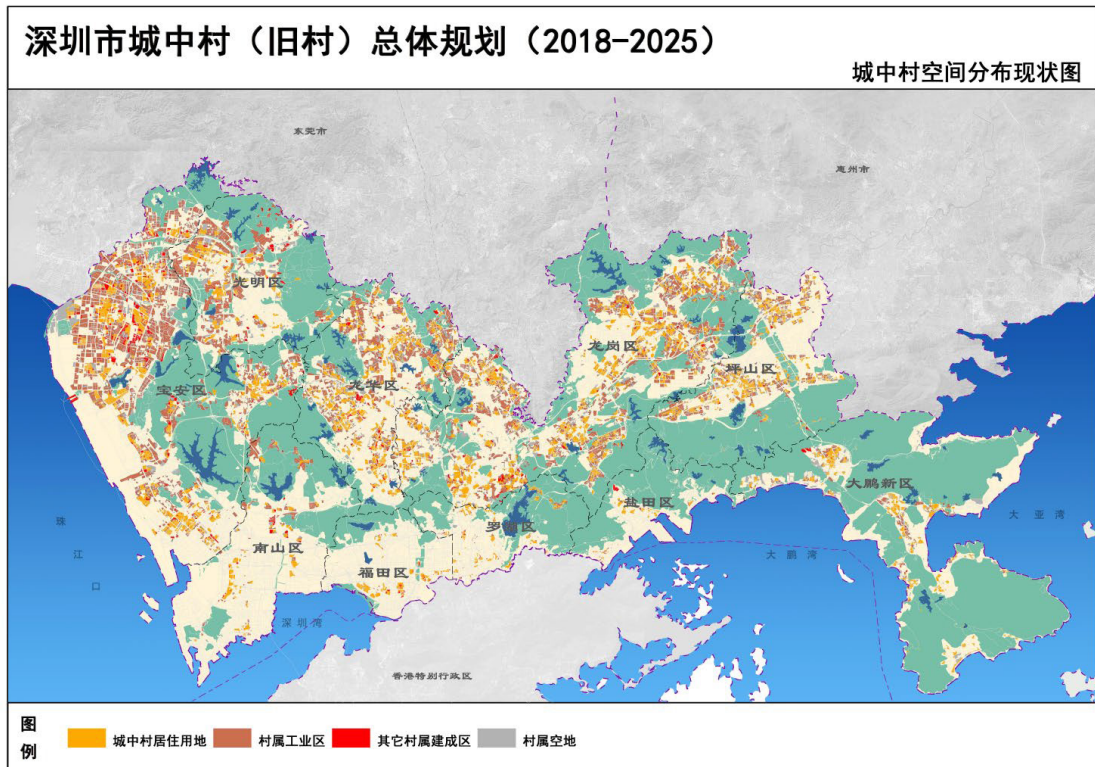
Chapter 3 The case of Shixia Village

3.1 Village choice criteria

The site choice for this work of research was driven mainly by the design trend in urban villages and governmental documents on the city; specifically, the latest Shenzhen Master Plan (2010-2020), and the Urban Villages 2018-2025 plan mentioned above. In the latter, the map showing the villages among Shenzhen displays a general distribution imbalance between the *guānnèi* and *guānwài*: within the former SEZ much less villages are left and not all of them were selected as suitable to city “*remediation*” (Shenzhen Municipal Government, 2018) (figure 3.1, 3.2). This work of thesis intends to act right in the *guānnèi* where the formal – informal dichotomy is stronger and where it was denied for years, leaving less and less traces. Furthermore, the former SEZ still constitute the biggest attraction with its Central Business District, and is considered Shenzhen’s downtown; this area is also the closest to Hong Kong. Starting from the map showing the villages suitable for remediation, a digital survey was conducted to examine their present condition and it emerged that out of the 54 villages indicated for remediation within the *guānnèi*, two have already been demolished; while from a web-bibliographical survey, others indicated for remediation, like Hubei and Baishizhou, were already negotiated for demolition (before the document was issued) and currently undergoing destruction or eviction of its residents. This validates the impression of vagueness given from the government on the villages like mentioned above. The village chosen for this research is Shixia (石厦) (figure 3.3), close to the Xinzhou area, in Futian District; it was selected considering the available sources on the area, its integration status within the formal urban environment and its inner spatial features visible from the digital survey. It needs to be specified that when Shixia was chosen as the object of this thesis, in December 2020, the maps were updated at the date of January 2020 (figure 3.4), and in the months in between the southern part of the Village had been undergoing a demolition that became visible from satellite views only in March 2021 (figure 3.5) , months after it was chosen as the object of this study.

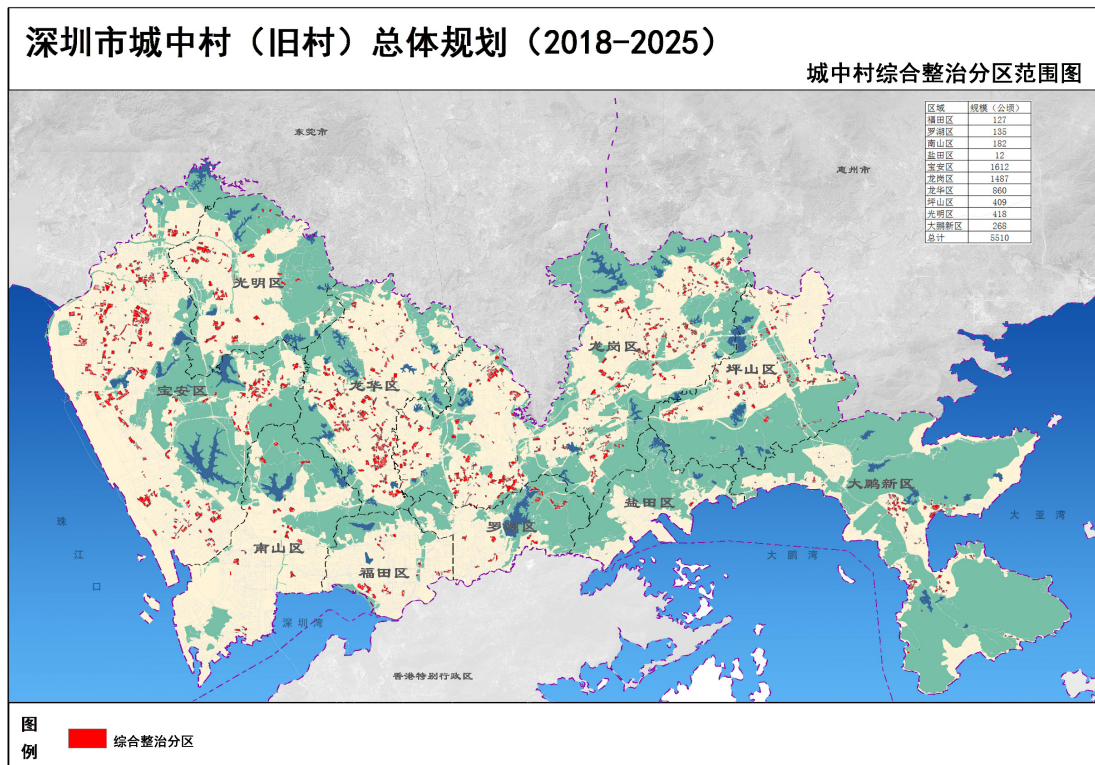
3.2 The history of Shixia

Like many other urban villages, the history of Shixia is not carefully reported by governmental or academic sources, its transmission mainly occurs verbally, and the key



[3.1] Location of Urban Villages within Shenzhen

Source: Shenzhen City Government, 2018



[3.2] The Villages suitable for “remediation”

Source: Shenzhen City Government, 2018



[3.3] Shixia Village (circled in white) and the central business district (dotted line)
Source: Google Earth Pro



[3.4] Shixia Village layout before the southern demolition (2017-early 2020)
Source: Google Earth Pro



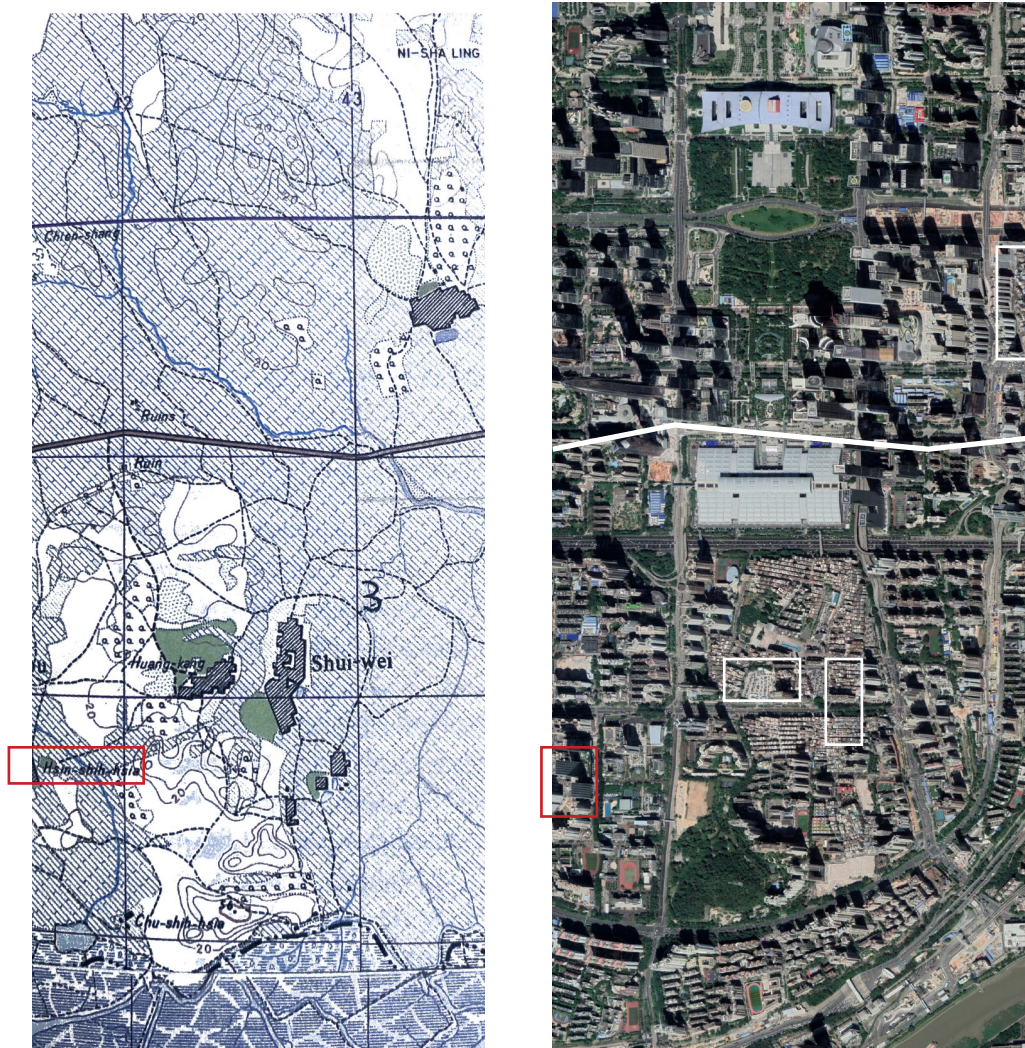
[3.5] Shixia Village layout after demolition (2020-ongoing) (next page)
Source: Google Earth Pro; on-site survey



moments of the Village are reported by web sources who collect them through interviews and visiting the area, where the main events are also displayed on a wall right in front of one of the historical halls.

The origin of the Village dates back to the early Ming dynasty when members of the same family carrying the surname Zhao, reached the area from neighboring zones of Guangdong; in fact, records of the Zhao surname can be found in the province back to the Qin period, but when during the late Southern Song, in the 1270s, the Yuan army invaded the Pearl River Delta, some Zhao members escaped towards the southeast coast of Guangdong, settling in the Shixia area. The name etymology, from 石下 “under the rock”, derives from the natural conditions that allowed the birth of the settlement, in fact Shixia stands at the foot of an area once slightly shallow, that would naturally shelter from wind and rain, in the intersection of Shenzhen River and the Shenzhen Bay, favoring the fishing activity that naturally attracted people. For this reason, in the early Ming times, newcomers from the Pan family migrated from the Bao'an area to Shixia, settling close to the consolidated 旧围 (Jiùwéi, “old wall”) built by the Zhao clan, and realizing the 新屋 (Xīnwū, “new house”). The later expansion of the village occurred towards north forming the 上旧围 (Shàng jiù wéi, “above jiu wei”), completing the three parts the Village was split in (figure 3.7). Due to its locations, the area continued attracting many families who were always welcomed and enriched the character of the place; Shixia reached the peak number of eight clans living together, the Zhao, Pan, Mo, Chen, Li, Zhang, Long, and Cen, constituting a unique condition if compared to surrounding villages in the area which were inhabited by one or two clans. But it was not until the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns of the Qing dynasty, that the Village turned into a cohesive community to defense itself from surrounding villages who based their economy on agriculture, that noticed the proliferation of the fishing and oyster activity possible in Shixia. The first action as a tight community was building in the central Jiùwéi area the 敦睦堂 (Dūnmùtang), an ancestral hall which differed from the traditional ones, as the meeting point for all clans in Shixia to discuss matters of collective living, in fact Dūnmùtang stands for “hall of sincerity and harmony”; unfortunately, the hall does not seem existing in the Village anymore.

In addition, the Zhao family and the Pan family also built their personal ancestral shrines, the 村赵氏宗祠 (Zhàoshìzōngcí) and the 潘氏宗祠 (Pānshìzōngcí) (figure 3.8, 3.9), respectively in the Shàngjiùwéi and in the Xīnwū, in order to host family meetings which today still take place among the members of the clans who still inhabit the place. Also, the Zhao family built in the same years the 杨侯宫 (Yánghóugong), a memory hall dedicated



[3.6] Shixia Village in a survey map of 1952-Shenzhen (left) compared to current satellite view
Source: Du (2020), Google Earth Pro

to Yang Liulang, a famous military general from the Northern Song period who defended the border against the invasion attempts from the Liao dynasty; thus uniting the people of Shixia to the prestige of the Yang family (figure 3.10). Zhao and Pan also built two artillery towers, the 碉楼 (Diāolóu), one in the northern Shàngjiùwéi and one in the southern Xīnwū, during the early years of the Republic of China, but to this day only the first one is still standing (figure 3.11).

The tower is facing an area where another historical preexistence stands, two banyan trees which are dated to the Ming period and that have been shading the small square since then (figure 3.12).

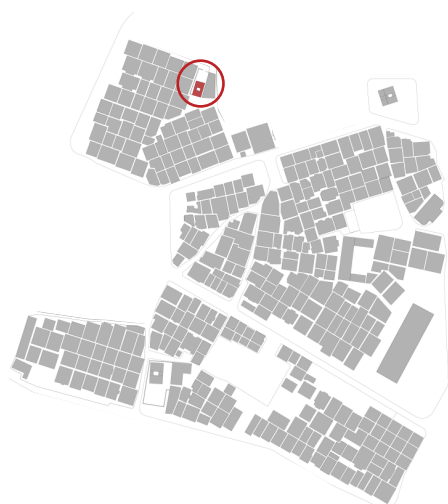
For most of its history Shixia residents based their economy on oyster farming, until the years after liberation during the land reform period, when encouraged by the government to open up wasteland, they started to invest time and resources in it, implementing it year by year during the Cultural Revolution. In the years of the Special Economic Zone formation, as in many villages, land and oyster fields were requisitioned and Shixia's former villagers turned their economy onto the renting activity, consequently intensifying its built system as schematized in figure 3.13.



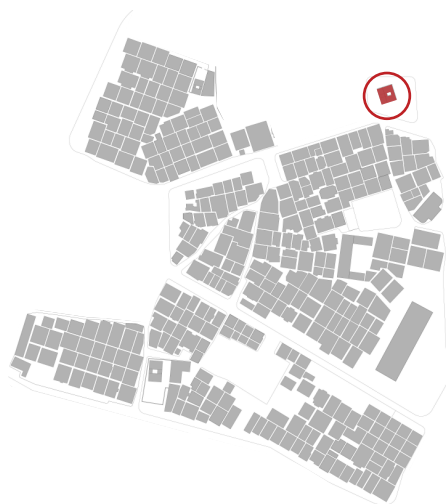
[3.7] Shixia Village former division (on 2017 - 2020 map)
Source: Drawn by the author



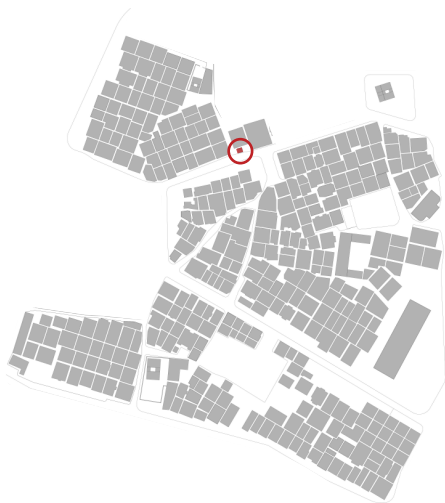
[3.8] The Pan Ancestral Hall in Xinwu area (on 2017 - 2020 map)
Source: Baidu Maps, Drawn by the author



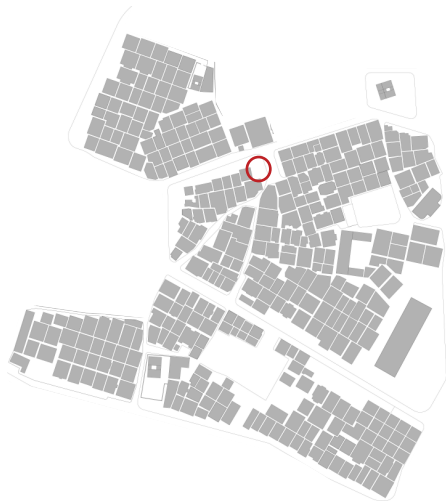
[3.9] The Zhao Ancestral Hall in Shangjiuwei area (on 2017 - 2020 map)
Source: Baidu Maps, Drawn by the author



[3.10] The Yanghou Commemorative Hall (on 2017 - 2020 map)
Source: Baidu Maps, Drawn by the author



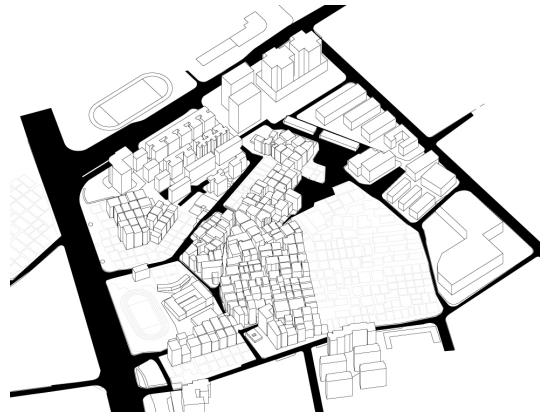
[3.11] The Diaolou Tower in Shangjiuwei area (on 2017 - 2020 map)
Source: Baidu Maps, Drawn by the author



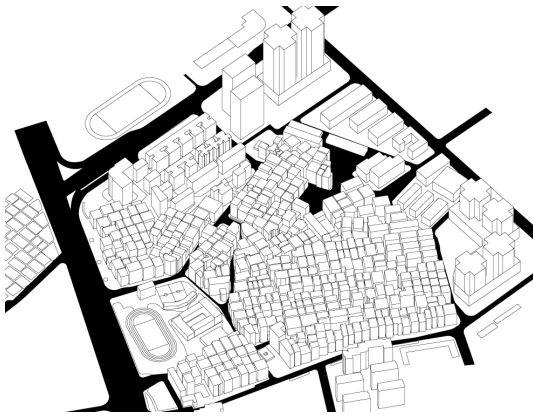
[3.12] The two Banyan Trees between the Shangjiuwei and Jiuwei area (on 2017 - 2020 map)
Source: Drawn by the author



Pre-existences in Shixia (before 1980s)



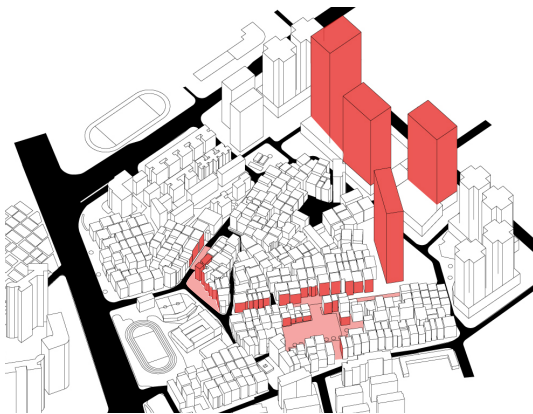
Intensification (1980s - 2000)



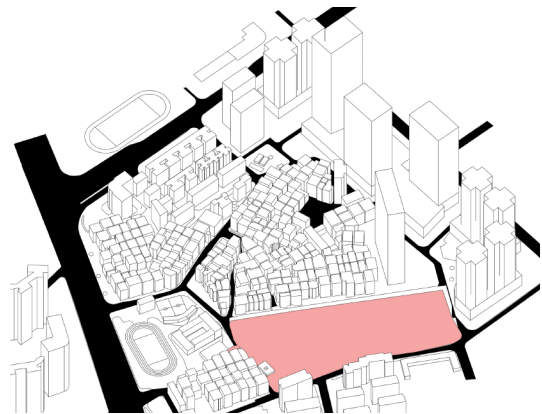
Fully intensified (2000)



Demolition and construction (2010)



Demolition (2017)



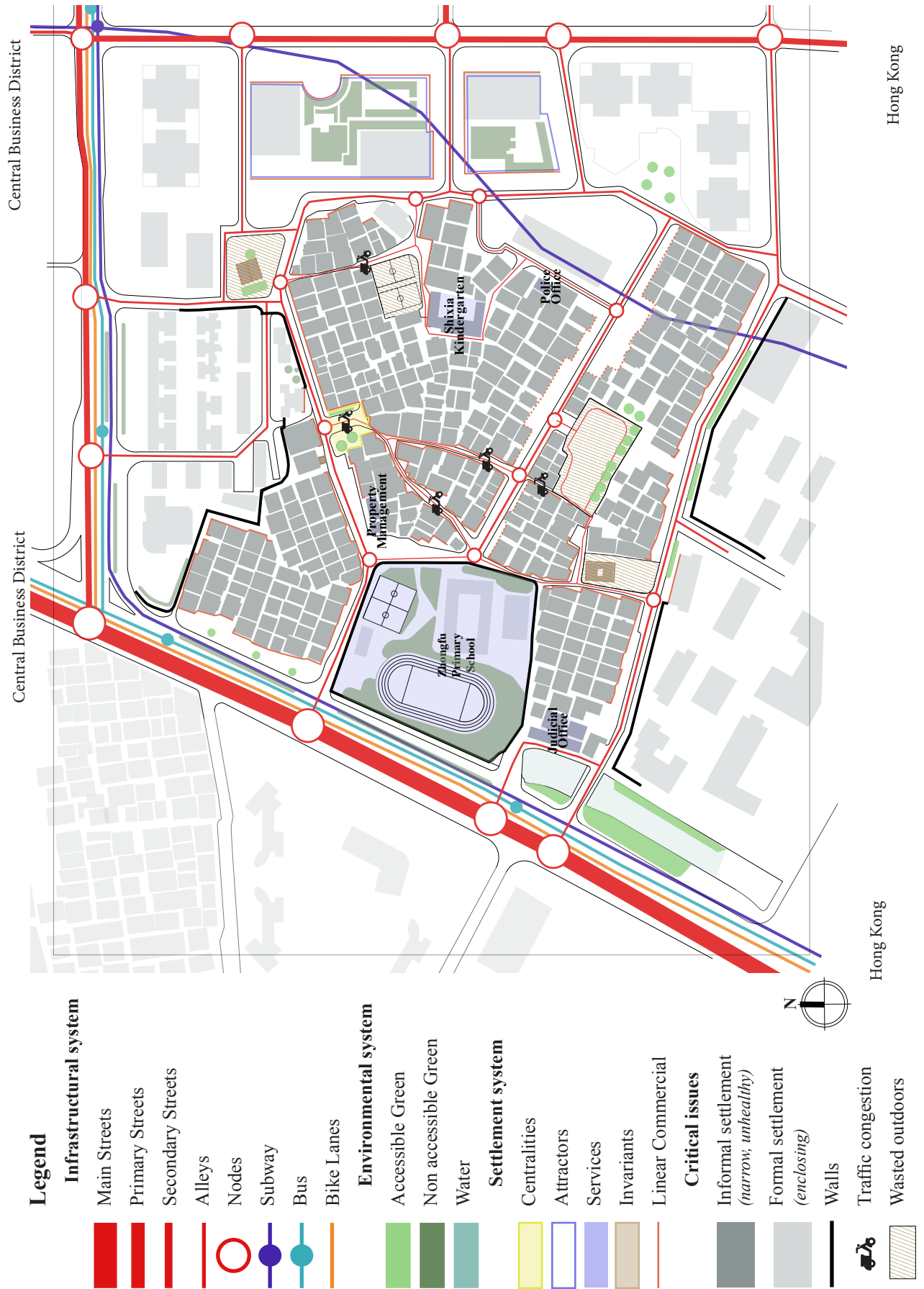
Demolition of Southern Area (2020 - 2021)

[3.13] The development of Shixia Village

Source: Drawn by the author based on satellite views observation

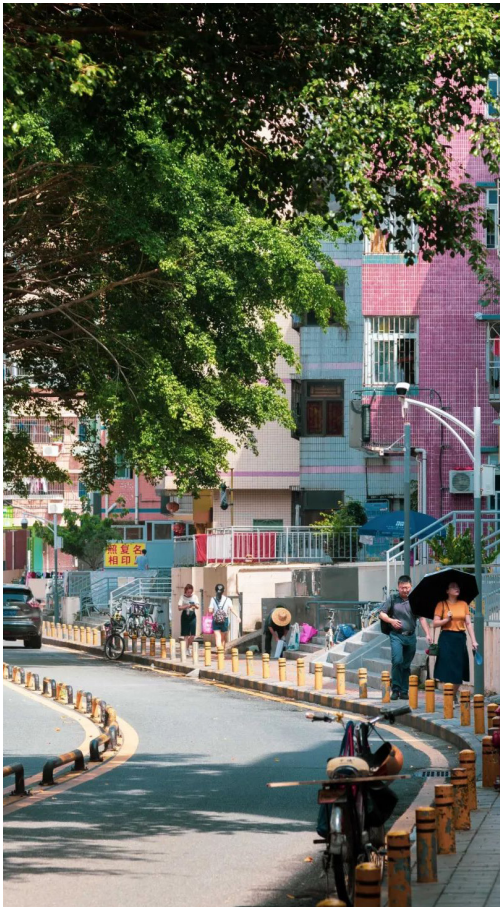
3.3 Shixia's current layout

Aware that the Village layout is now different, the analysis of the systems is still reported including the southern part as built, in order to provide a wider comprehension of the village, which looked like the map (figure 3.4) for several years before being demolished. The studies include an analysis on the infrastructural, environmental and settlement system; also, the same groups are investigated for the formal surroundings of the village to verify how its relation with the rest of the city works. The maps showing Shixia (figure 3.14, 3.15) highlight a well-organized infrastructural system serving primarily the borders of the area, and its formal buildings, and indirectly the village inside; also, the map displays the contrast between the two “sides” of the city through its infrastructural nature, in fact when reading the map from the borders (Xinzhou Road or Shixia Street), the streets become gradually more irregular as they enter the inner core (figure 3.16), where they eventually turn into the narrow alleys typical of Urban Villages between the buildings (figure 3.17). The environmental system of Shixia is poor, considering that the only green areas for the village are single trees and that the wider green areas are not accessible to people (like the primary school green or the rooftop of the mall on the east side). Most of the buildings are residential and host commercial activities on their ground floors; to this, Shixia adds the historical buildings mentioned in the previous paragraph which constitute a peculiar condition being more than the usual average for Urban Villages. The only centralities emerged from the survey are the outdoor area in the northern part shadowed by the two banyan trees; and the one in the north-eastern part with two basketball courts. Thus, as shown in the map, Shixia was never provided with adequate outdoor public spaces for residents, in fact the square that was in the southern side, created in 2017 by the demolition of residences, is identified as “wasted-outdoor” being used exclusively as a parking lot. The only public services present in the area are the Judicial Office, the Property Management office, and a Kindergarten, plus a Primary School which, enclosed by its wall, cannot be considered inserted in the system. Another issue emerged from the digital observation is the traffic congestion of the inner streets where both cars and pedestrians are allowed, like on Shixia Diaolou Street and the street parallel to it. Shixia village covers an area of 90.000 m² approximately, 56% of which is built, and it has a Floor Area Ratio of 3.9.





[3.16] Infrastructural system going from regular to irregular as it enters Shixia's core
Source: Drawn by the author



[3.17] Border-running street (Shixia Road, left) and an inner alley of Shixia
Source: <https://cutt.ly/Knl6Poa>; on-site survey

3.4 Typological study

In order to acquire a deeper comprehension of the Village conditions and working systems as a unity, a study was brought forward to develop a typological map of Shixia (figure 3.18). Defined as the map of the ground floors “*of an urban settlement at a determined date, which is drawn [...] adopting an urban morphology reading method that is based on the ideas of typology and analogy*” (Bao et al., 2018), the typological map was chosen for this work of research as a useful tool in the analysis process for two main reasons. One is that it provides information on the indoor functions, the outdoor spaces, and their arranged relation in a given area, and therefore it allows a series of reasonings on the activities available to the inhabitants as individuals and as a group. Secondly, it allows an historical overview of the buildings and the way they have been layered over time, providing a broader view on the cultural heritage and identity developed in a place. These studies do not intend to elevate the architectural relevance of the handshake buildings to something which they are not, as described broadly by many theorists, but it contextualizes them in an area and a time, raising consciousness on an existing reality in order to design places which make sense culturally and historically for an area and its people.

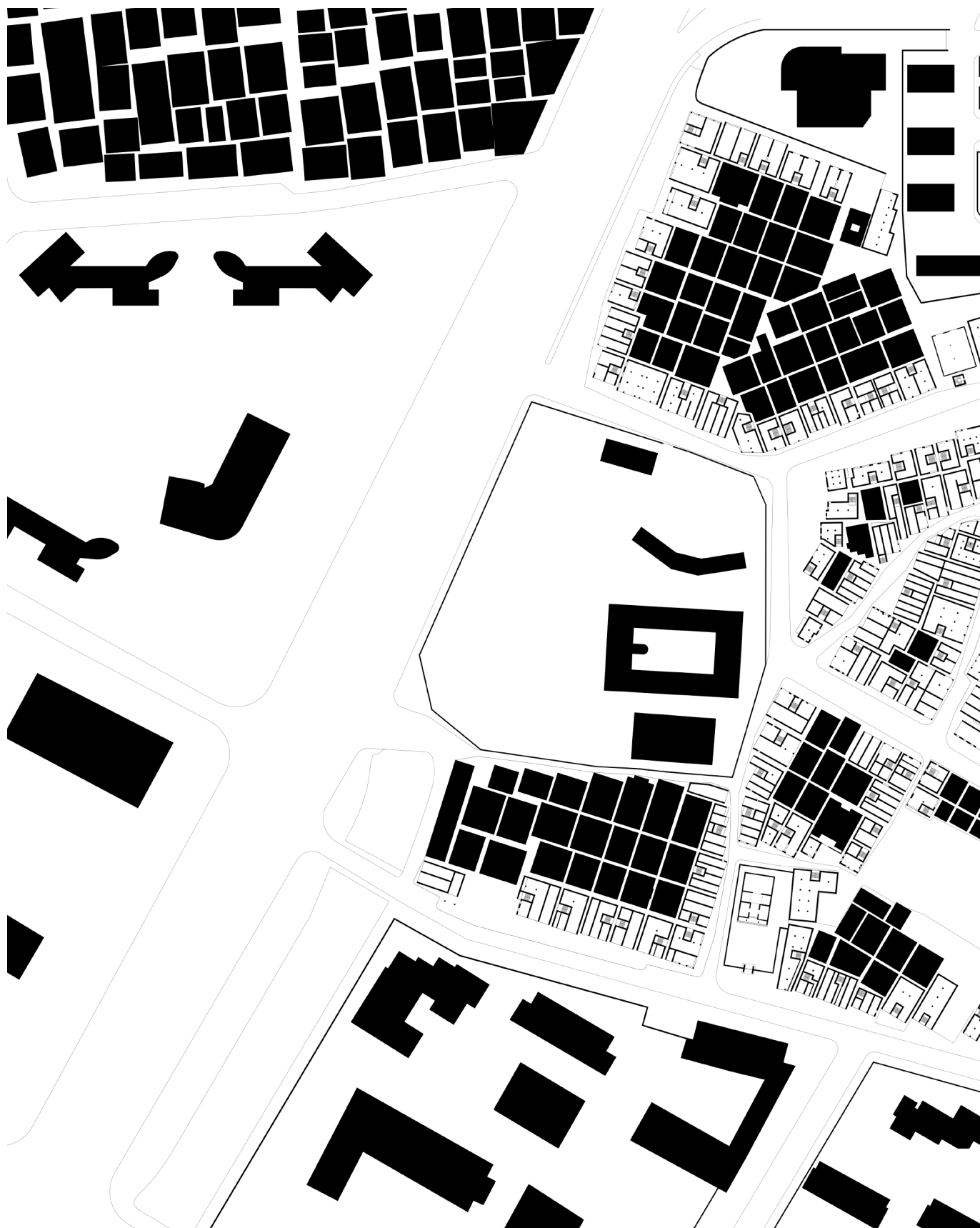
It is necessary to specify the reason why in this work it was considered possible to draw a map being far from the site, without personal surveys on the area, and the methodology followed to do it despite no plans of Shixia exist. The observation of the Village was possible through the use of digital tools (Baidu Maps, Google Earth Pro, YouTube) whose record of Shixia was exclusively on its borders, because of the impossibility of the surveying car to access the narrow alleys; nevertheless, for this research it was assumed that because of their reduced dimensions the alleys cannot host any specific activity except walking in or out of them; this is confirmed in the existing studies on surrounding villages who present similar spatial conditions to Shixia, where the average status of the alleys can be deduced and thus not considered a primary interest in this work of research. Therefore, the information gathered studying the borders of the Village, was considered enough to formulate general conclusions on the life there, being the areas where public life occurs. As mentioned, another relevant tool for the drawing was a tour footage of Shixia filmed in December 2020 and published on YouTube, which was highly useful to get an updated eye on the Village, to get closer to it, to hear its sounds, and have an overall view of the dynamics of the place which in all the other tools is displayed through static pictures.

3.4.1 Typological drawings

The drawing of Shixia is largely based on satellite views of the area which provided the outline of the buildings, their width and length, the length of the streets, and the location of stairwells in each building. Knowing that all the handshake constructions are low-budget concrete buildings, a frame-structure organization for the interiors was supposed and confirmed through eye-view survey of Shixia done in Baidu Maps. In fact, through the latter it was possible to redraw the ground floors' inner division by looking at the front signs and counting how many retail spaces are in the same building; also through the eye-view tool it was possible to look at the border buildings' height, and consequently compare them with the inner buildings, visible from top views pictures taken from the surrounding towers (figure 3.19, 3.20), in order to verify their height and the overall arrangement there.

The representation style chosen for the typological map is inspired by the Rome map of Giovanni Battista Nolli from 1748, "*Nuova Topografia di Roma*", a ground floor map of the city's historical center which is still considered a masterpiece in its innovative representation and displays the way the city allows public pedestrian movement from outdoors to indoors in a fluent way. For this reason the map draws the historical sites, churches, public buildings and courtyards with a detailed interior distribution (like the position of columns and the articulation of walls), and fills the rest of buildings with a black hatch. The Nolli map proves to be a relevant contribution to the understanding of the city as the first example of a ground-figure map of Rome after an heritage of urban representation done through bird-eye-views; also in Shixia such representation might help to enrich the existing records of the village made mainly of top-view pictures and ground-level views. This section reports a typological map displaying the Village before the southern demolitions, as the latter is a recent change in the layout of Shixia, undoubtedly very impactful but too recent to be thought as a deepened and absorbed spatial condition for people. This decision was done mainly to bring forward an idea of the village and his historical layering more comprehensively, but it does not reject the current situation of an empty-lot onto which the design process is focused, as described in the next chapter.

The map displays the cluster-like arrangement typical of urban villages and its clear contraposition with the surrounding Shenzhen, in fact a visible element in the layout are the continuous walls which separate the formal areas from the inner village (figure 3.21). This occurs on the north, west, and south side, while to mark the limit on the east one is the 200m long podium onto which the residential and office towers are built, which con-



[3.18] Typological map of Shixia (at the 2017 - 2020 state)
Source: Drawn by the author





[3.19] Aerial view of Shixia (2017)
Source: <https://cutt.ly/unl8gRC>



[3.20] Aerial view of Shixia (2017)
Source: <https://cutt.ly/unl8gRC>

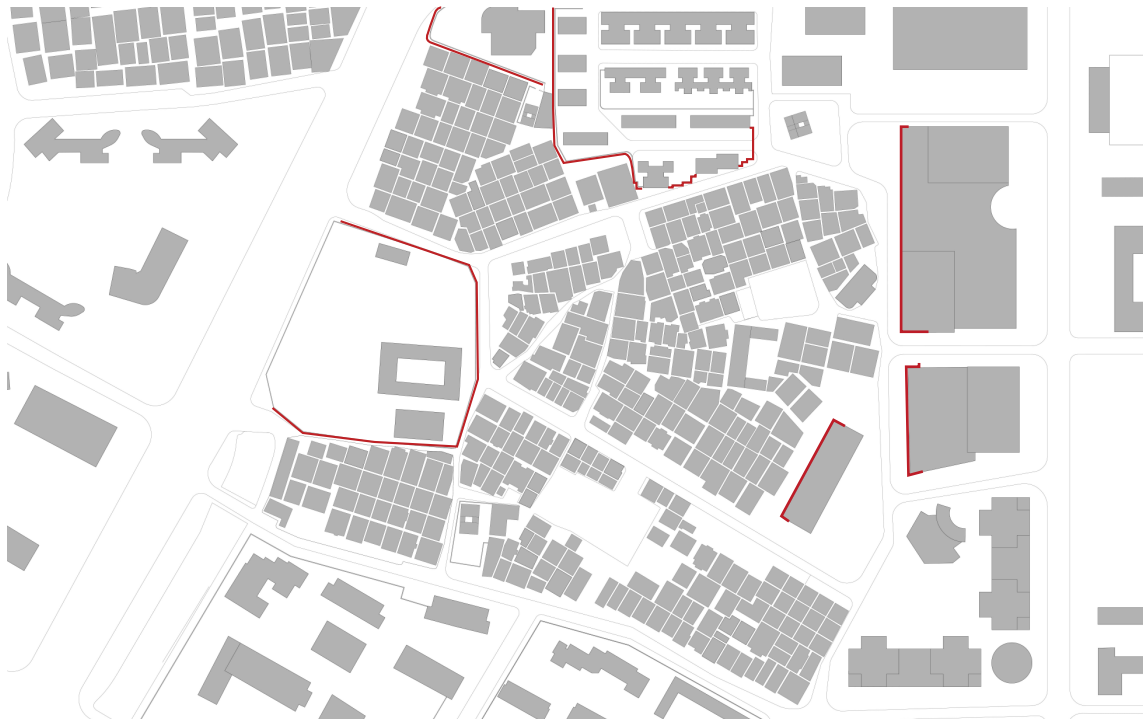
stitute a barrier in terms of heights and scale (figure 3.22). As much as gated communities are common in Chinese cities, they result critical to Shixia which, being attached to them, ends up enclaved and left out of the spaces which reject its villagers.

Observing the configuration of the street fronts some considerations on the village development, displayed previously in the historical schemes, can be taken. The borders are continuous but arranged in two ways, linear or fragmented: linear ones might be due to a lot division that occurred together with the street definition, resulting in aligned fronts; this is the case of the eastern part of Shixia Yanghou Street, or the southern front facing Shixia Road which proceeds continuously almost for its whole length; also the two centralities, the sport court and the Diaolou Square, are defined by aligned buildings and therefore more likely present since the intensification started (figure 3.23).

While fragmented borders are consequent upon two main conditions, preservations and demolition. The first is very unique and is the case of Diaolou Street which has kept its configuration, visible in the oldest satellite views available on the internet too, and it is likely due to the intention of wanting to keep a physical connection between the historical buildings within the dense handshakes, maintaining a network in the village that was at the base of the formation of a solid community as described in its history. The second are due to the demolitions that occurred after 2000, realized to implement the car connections between the formal parts of the city at the sides of Shixia, this is visible particularly on the western part of Shixia Yanghou Street, on Shixia Second Street, and on Shixia South Street (figure 3.24). Looking at the borders development (figure 3.25) from 2000 to 2019, it is evident how the Village was submitted to the expansion of the surrounding city that has been appropriating its pieces. Nevertheless, it must be noticed that in most of these cases, the ground floors of the “uncovered” buildings became homes to retail activities, manifesting again the metamorphic feature typical of Urban Villages that has been ongoing since their construction, only 40 years ago.

3.4.2 Built types

As all urban villages, most of Shixia's built surface is occupied by handshake buildings. The type is based on a 10x10 m, or 12x12 m, lot onto which commercial activities and a stairwell fully occupy the first floor, and is topped by residential floors; sometimes between the first and the second floor, a storage mid-floor is present and used as an extension for the retail places underneath (figure 3.26). The base area derives from the



[3.21] Scheme of the enclosing walls in Shixia
Source: Drawn by the author

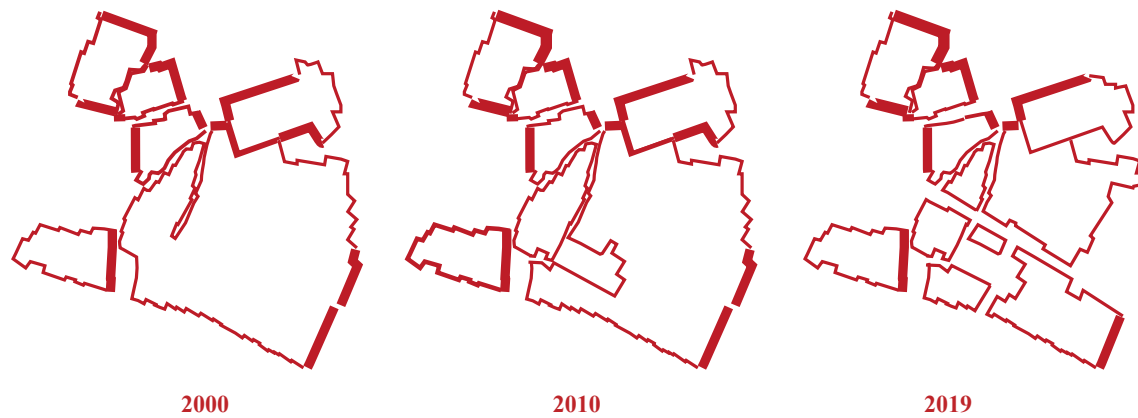


[3.22] The Primary School Wall (left) and the enclosing mall complex (right)
Source: On-site survey; Baidu Maps



[3.23] Borders scheme

Source: Drawn by the author



[3.25] Scheme of the borders' development

Source: Drawn by the author



[3.24] Aligned border on Yangzhou Street east (above) and fragmented border on Yangzhou Street west (below).

Source: Baidu Maps

size of the lot that each household was entitled to in exchange of their rural land¹, which then expands or reduces in different dimensions keeping a main dual division, in terms of form: the regular buildings, intended as the ones with parallel sides, and the “adaptive” buildings which have more sides than usual often tilted to adapt to the surrounding conditions, like other buildings or streets (figure 3.27). The heights of these vary from two floors, up to twelve floors, with an average of six, seven, and eight storey buildings, that are 63% of all the handshakes in Shixia (figure 3.28). It is interesting to notice that the term “handshake” now used to refer to a single building in an Urban Village, derives from the peculiar condition that the buildings assume only when grouped with others; thus it can be affirmed that the buildings, which do not carry any particular single architectural relevance, together constitute a typology worth of considerations reported in the next paragraph, which relates directly the handshake cluster and the public space.

Together with the handshake buildings, the other built types in Shixia are the historical preexistences mentioned previously: the ancestral temple (the Zhao Hall and the Pan Hall), the commemorative temple (Yanghou Hall), and the Diaolou. The first is a two-halls ancestral building: a one-floor construction fully enclosed by walls, with a single main entrance, which opens to the succession of the entry hall, the open-air patio sided by two parallel corridors, and the resting hall; each of these spaces are covered by double pitched roofs. The shrine is fronted by a small entry square, and the complex is enclosed by a red perimeter wall that allows entries from the main gate, also covered by a double-pitched roof. In both shrines the roofs are clad in green tiles and decorated with traditional animal ornaments typical of imperial times, while the vertical walls are clad in blue brick-tiles in the Zhao Hall, and left to a rough state in the Pan Hall (figure 3.30).

The commemorative temple, the Yanghou Hall, is structured similarly to the ancestral shrines, as a two-halls temple with an entry hall, a central outdoor patio with corridors, and a resting hall in the end. This structure is sided by another wing whose information are not reported on websites or academic sources. As the other case, this whole complex is covered by double-pitched roofs, but in this case the roofs and the building’s walls are clad with yellow tiles.

The last type identifiable is the Diaolou, a five-storey tower measuring 4.9 x 4.6 m, 16.5 m tall and with a surface of 22 m²; the tower reduces its section as it grows, and it ends in an arched roof covered in dark tiles. Coherent with its former function, it is characterized

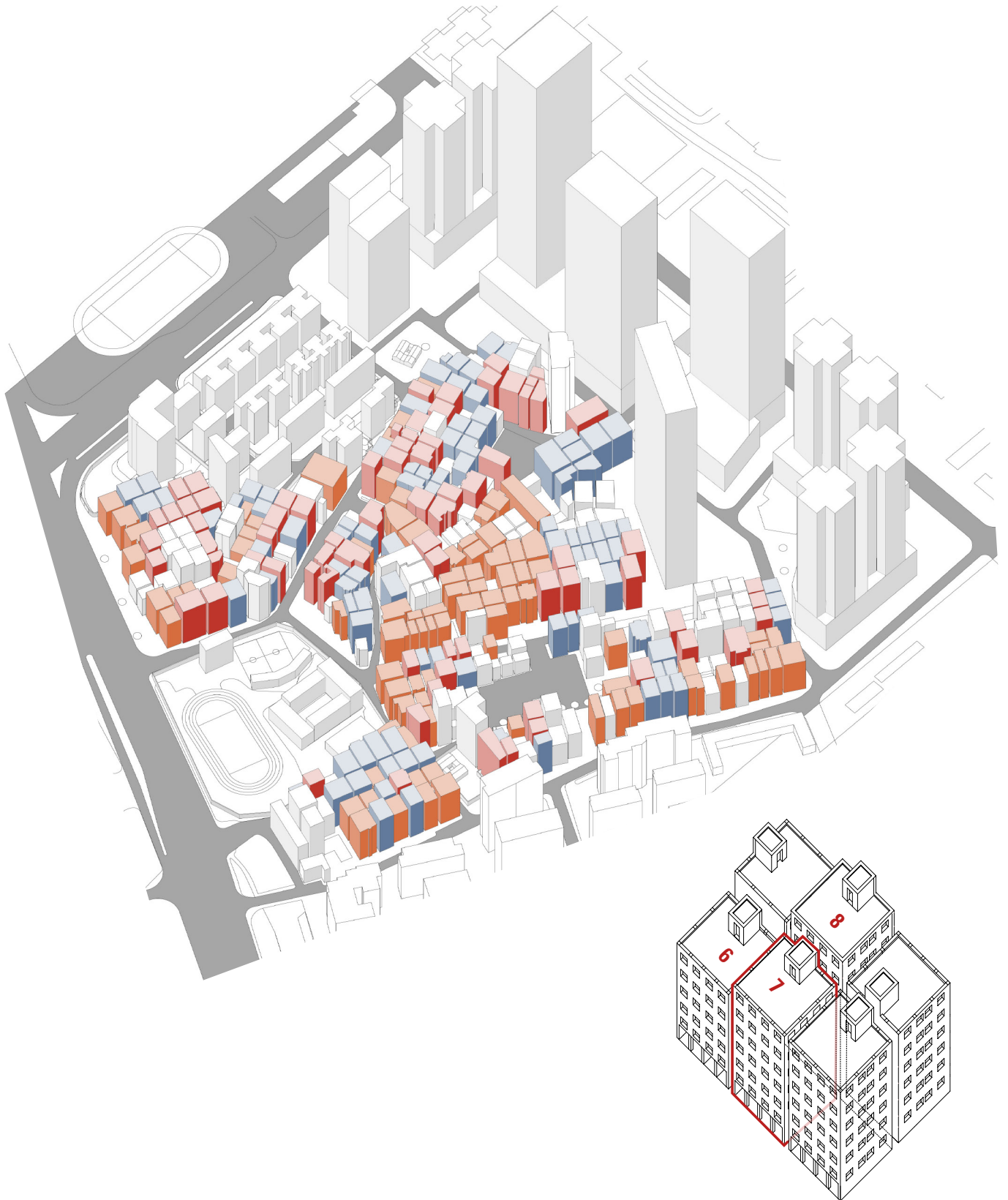
¹ See Qu, 2020



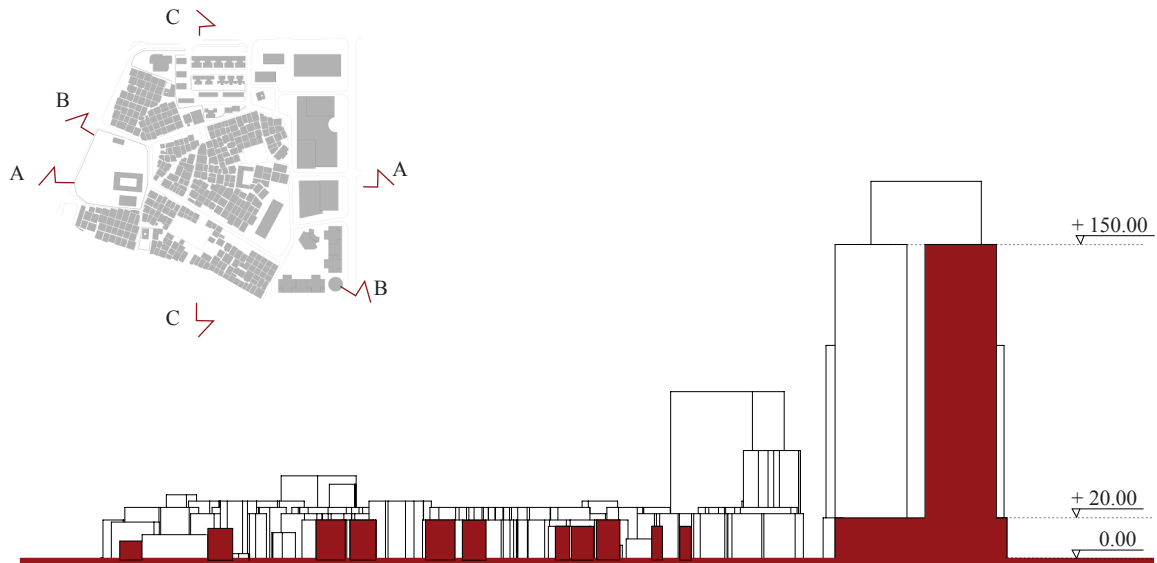
[3.26] Handshake building typology
Source: Drawn by the author



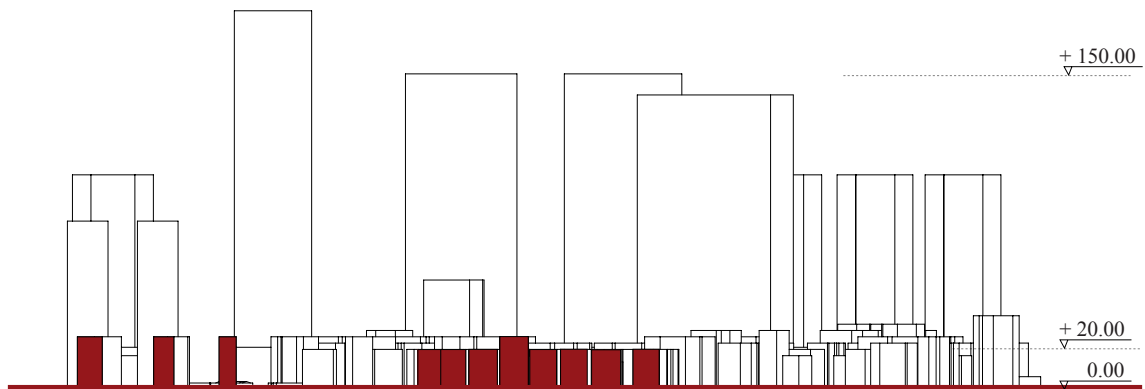
[3.27] Regular buildings (grey) and adaptive buildings (red)
Source: Drawn by the author



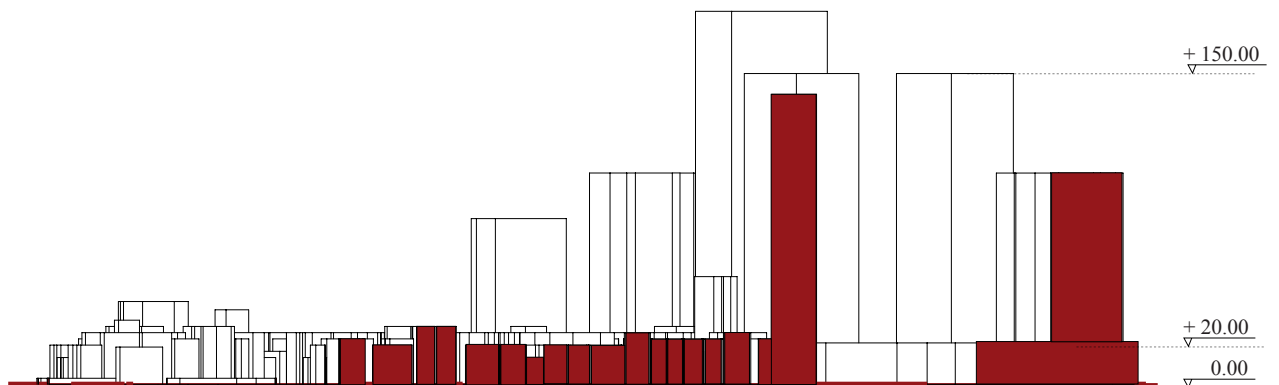
[3.28] Average heights in Shixia: six-floors (orange), seven-floors (blue), eight-floors (red)
Source: Drawn by the author



Section A - A



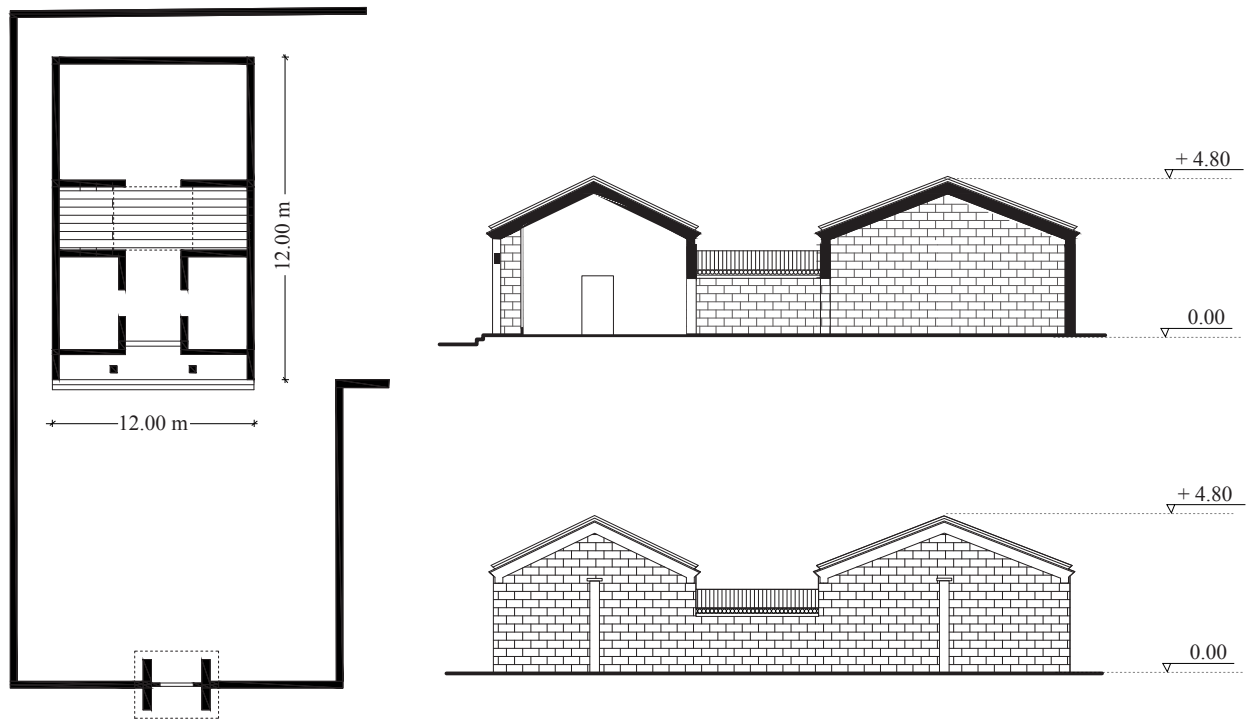
Section B - B



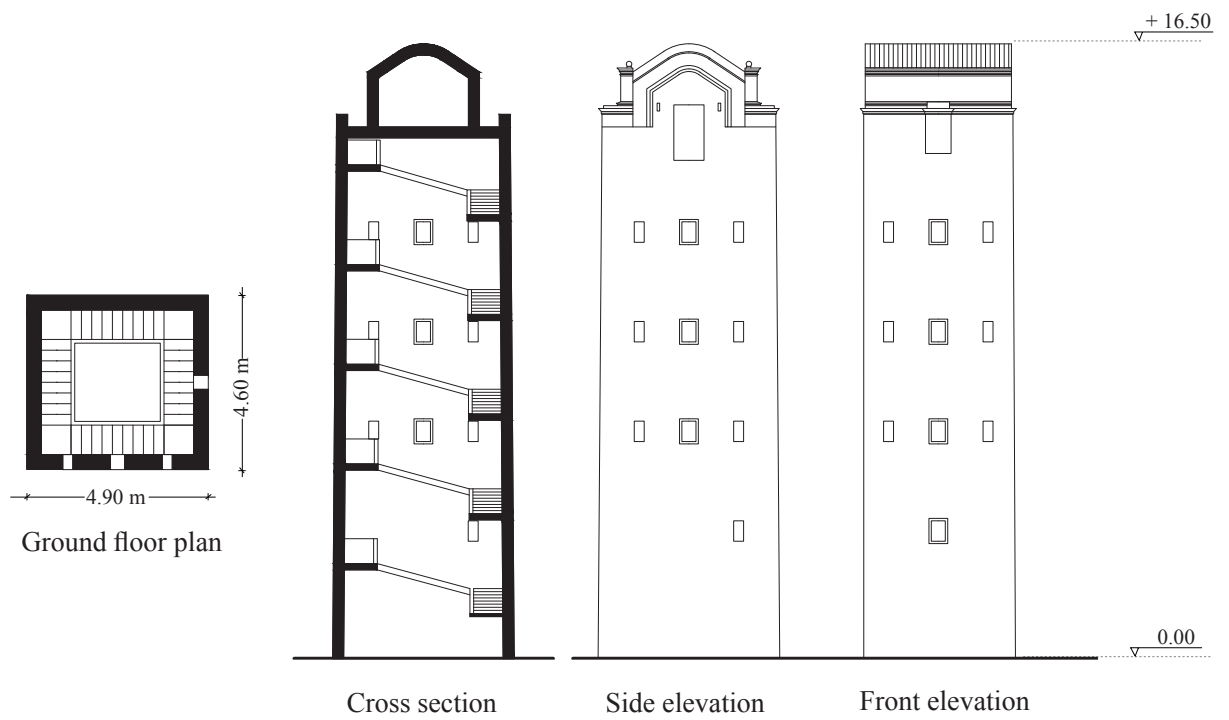
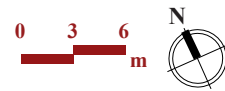
Section C - C

[3.29] Sections of Shixia and its surroundings
Source: Drawn by the author

0 10 20
m



[3.30] Ancestral Hall typology (Pan Hall plan)
Source: Drawn by the author



[3.31] Diaolou Tower typology
Source: Drawn by the author



by holes in its walls for shooting and favoring ventilation to the indoor rooms (figure 3.31).

3.5 Shixia spatial and social conditions

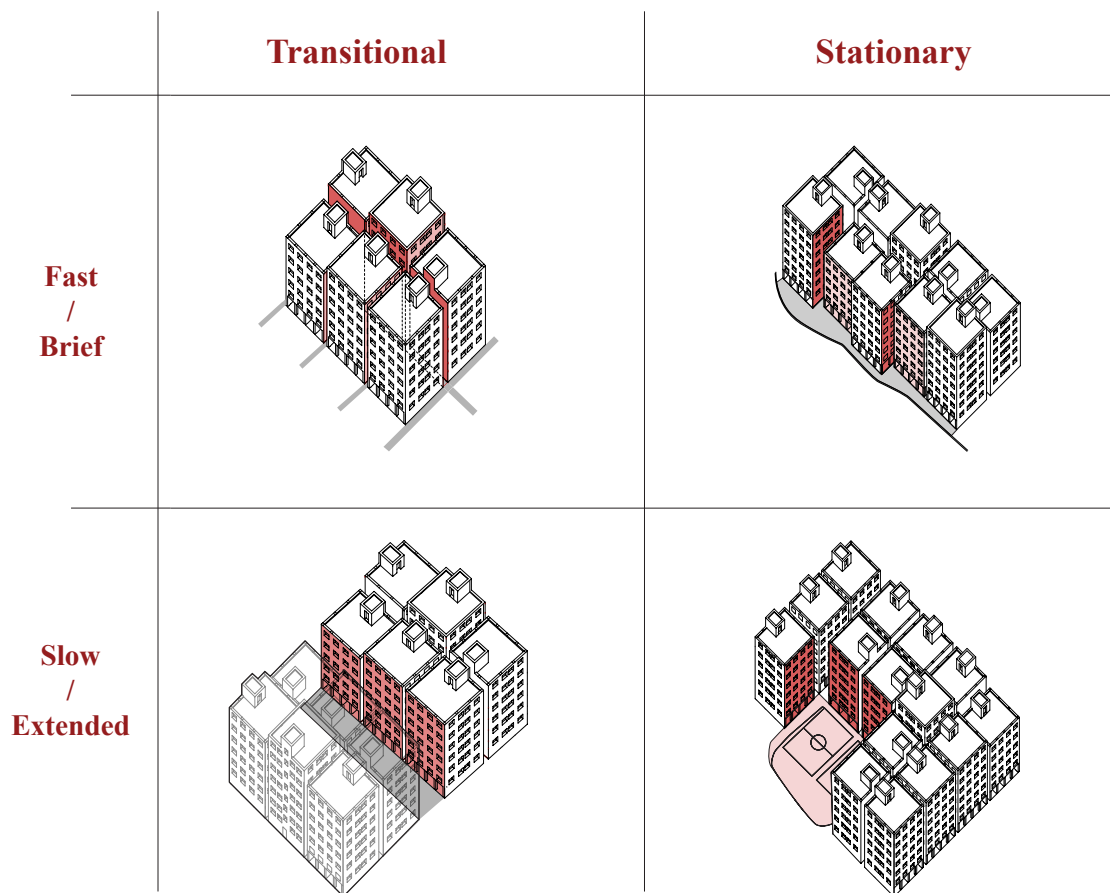
The organization of these built types, mostly the handshakes, is responsible for the conformation of public spaces and the collective life in the Village. Except for the two centralities identified in the study, the public outdoor spaces provided to residents are residual spaces where no specific activities can actually occur. These spaces can be classified following the duration of usage from the users, and can be either transitional or stationary which, in turn, can be divided into fast (or brief) and slow (or extended) (figure 3.32).

The narrow alleys between the handshakes can only allow transition through them, considered fast because of the absence of functions to keep people there longer, and for the dimensional inability of the alleys to host many people at the same time (figure 3.33). This latter option is given by the main streets where the alleys end into, that are slow transitional spaces for residents who can walk there contemporarily thanks to a wider section, and are attracted by the stores that define the street and keep it active through the whole day. These are spaces that are functionally attractive but where people overflow from the small sidewalks into streets dedicated to vehicles, meaning that they are not designed intentionally for pedestrian use, but also emerging as a space typology collectively enjoyed by users, like Shixia Yanghou Street, or Shixia South Street (figure 3.34).

On these streets, the encounter between sidewalks and the buildings above them, can generate resultant areas where people can meet for a brief conversation or invade the space with chairs for the day (figure 3.35). Lastly, the stationary places allowing extended use are the sport court, and the banyan trees square, where thanks to specific functions and furniture, people have the chance to stay for a prolonged time (figure 3.36).

All these spaces are the ones allowing “*simple and noncommittal contact*”, like seeing and hearing others, as in the words of Jan Gehl who looks at low-intensity outdoor activities as crucial and necessary in a community to proceed to a high-intensity ones, which allow a deeper connection among its components.¹ However, because of the dense built environment that does not include a variety of outdoor spaces, the high-intensity activities are not possible in Shixia: it is based on a system that does not give the chance to live a

¹ See Gehl, 2011



[3.32] Division of spaces in Shixia
Source: Drawn by the author



[3.33] Fast Transition space (alley)
Source: On-site survey



[3.34] Slow Transition space (street)
Source: <https://cutt.ly/Knl6Poa>



[3.35] Brief Stationary space (sidewalk)
Source: Baidu Maps



[3.36] Extended Stationary space (sport court)
Source: On-site survey

public life and build a relation with other people or the place, nourishing the existential homelessness described previously and obstructing the creation of the sense of belonging to a stable community.

Thanks to the help of a peer student from Shenzhen University, it was possible to survey the area with a questionnaire to analyze the insiders' vision on two main areas: the way they perceive the spatial conditions, and the way they perceive the social ones. Unfortunately, it was not possible to collect many interviews due to the difficulty in making people trust a stranger asking personal questions, but some similarities among the answers can be noticed. All the six subjects interviewed had different ages, from 26 to 43; different jobs, food-delivery, shop-owner, shop-keeper, white-collar, full-time mom; and different times spent living there, from 1 year to 12 years. The questions related to space conditions show a shared feeling towards the narrow alleys as impossible to navigate through and, even who is familiar with them, would use the outer streets as wider and safer at night too; on the historical preexistences in the area, four people out of six declared to not be aware of them, and on the idea of more green available in the area, almost all of them confirmed the usefulness but know that there are no conditions to have it. On the social conditions, none of the interviewees said they would call Shixia Village a tight community, not even the two subjects who have been there for over 10 years. Everyone looks at demolitions like a necessary transition for development, but they are also aware of the possibility of rent increase with fewer residences left there, and of the loss of memories it would cause for many people.

The full interviews and the results can be found in the appendix at the end of this work. Although these answers are not articulated enough to base a strong reasoning, they are a useful tool for an overall feedback from the eyes of who live Shixia every day, confirming most of the observations drawn from the spatial studies reported previously.

3.6 Chapter 3 summary

The village chosen as the object of observation for this work is Shixia, a settlement in Futian, close to the city's Central Business District, which is highlighted among the ones in the governmental document mentioned previously, and that was not found to have been studied or observed before by scholars or practitioners.

The observation and study of the area was heavily influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic which forced the study to be brought forward exclusively via web tools from afar, for instance the e-navigation systems available to everyone (Baidu Maps, Google Earth

pro), or video libraries online (Youtube). These tools provided information mainly on the borders of the Village's conglomerates, like their heights and the commercial activities at their ground level, and from these observations a typological map of Shixia was drawn displaying the most evident characteristics and issues related to the built environment.

In the study it emerged how the history of Shixia and the historical preexisting buildings are quite unique when compared to the neighboring villages, in fact before its densification Shixia had been the home to several clans that decided to come together as one group and live in the same shared place, where the most influential families built their shrines which to this day still stand among the thick handshakes' labyrinth.

The spatial condition of Shixia is the main cause of the social status of the people there, who are not provided with healthy indoor or outdoor environments, and therefore with proper socialization opportunities where the sense of belonging and collective identity of the area could be developed. Thanks to the help of the Shenzhen University Architecture Department, it was possible to do an on-site survey in Shixia, asking the residents in the area about the general spatial conditions of the place and their perception of the social realm there; although it resulted quite hard to find people willing to be interviewed, the answers confirmed most of the hypotheses and the general characteristics common to all urban villages. Also, the survey showed that the whole southern part of the Village, which on web-maps was showed standing at its early-2020 status, has been undergoing demolition in the last year to leave space to another tower-on-podium complex.

Chapter 4 Regeneration proposal for Shixia

4.1 The interpretation of heritage

The data emerged from the typological studies show what fixed points the life of the village revolves around, its perks and limits, and in this spatial layout a recurrent condition can be noticed, one of the stratification of the historical artifacts of Shixia that lay on the village ground just like any other residential concrete construction there. In three cases out of four, the Zhao Hall, the Pan Hall, and the Diaolou tower, the ancient buildings are in close proximity with the rest (figure 4.1); and as much as the reason behind this is a profit-driven intentionality of using as much surface in the area as possible for its densification, the result shows an informality in conception and use of the older buildings, that have witnessed a past prior to 1979; this confers a fascinating atmosphere typical of Urban Villages and that resonates particularly strong in Shixia due to the number of these artifacts, which is higher than usual.

This observation on the area raises questions concerning the relation between past and present in the Village, especially when looking at the governmental plan for the reconstruction (figure 4.2), specifically: what makes historical buildings more valuable than the handshakes when they are treated and looked at in the same way by its insiders, and when they both embody relevant pasts of the same place still in the making?

The value and meaning these two typologies carry, the handshake and the hall, is twofold and given by the two “actors” involved with the buildings: the people negotiating the demolition, and the people living there, more generally the ones out of in and the ones in it. As mentioned above in the history of Shixia, the historical artifacts in the Village were built by families who formerly inhabited the area, and who later on enlarged and became clans; to this day, the halls are used for gathering reasons by the clan members who still inhabit the Village or who go to visit (figure 4.3). In this reality, the design brought forward by the government for the eastern border, already completed, and the one for the southern one, currently under construction, cannot be considered coherent with the identity of the Village, since they “steal” the historical buildings (respectively the Yanghou Hall and the Pan Hall) from Shixia and englobe them in their new design. This one gesture, creating a distance between Shixia and the two buildings, is the symptom of a superficial comprehension of the place and thus a superficial design solution which tries to elevate



[4.1] Historical buildings among the fabric of Shixia (circled in white)
Source: <https://cutt.ly/unl8gRC>; drawn by the author (next page)





[4.2] Governmental plan for the reconstruction of Shixia
Source: <https://cutt.ly/dnzwpph>



[4.3] Reunion of Pan Clan members from Shenzhen, Dongguan, and Hong Kong
Source: <https://cutt.ly/qnS51Zd>

the building to a monumental level, but leaving it empty of its social and historical value, both still needed. It fails when trying to give to these buildings a meaning and use which not even the former builders and users gave them when deciding to build a whole new Shixia around them in the 1980s; they kept them in the urban fabric as available as the rest of the amenities there.

Therefore why should the Hall be now destined to an interruption of its history, if not to materialize the idea of erasing traces of a certain time, leaving the only trace valuable of memory? Standing alone as a relict separated from the rest, the hall is a witness of itself and of a vague pre-1979 past shortly summarized on a plaque at its entrance, and it is not recognized its relevance from the times of the SEZ's formation and it neglects a certain involvement of the object in the Village that its inhabitants could previously experience. On past and present in cities, and the role of preexisting objects Aldo Rossi wrote: *“As an architect, I never had greater comprehension of Roman architecture than in front of the Roman theater and aqueduct in Budapest; where these ancient elements are placed into a convulsive industrial area, where the roman theater is a football court for local kids, and a busy tram line runs parallel to the aqueduct. These images, this use of a monument, are not proposable; but it does stimulate a vision for the element in the city which certainly is not the one of a museum-city. Thus, not a field of sterile conservation, but one where architecture might open new researches and give new answers to the progressive city”*.¹

This potential of the historical building is recognized to the Pan Hall in the idea for the masterplan (figure 4.4) which looks at it as a building whose history is still ongoing, and despite the demolitions of the southern area left it in a desert spot, the hall is being proposed as one of the elements around which the layout occurs, involving it actively in the usefulness of the area just like the other buildings there.

These observations are not intended to hierarchize the buildings in Shixia by their age, but to affirm that the reasons each of the buildings exist, and the way in which they are slot together, has established a degree of connection and relation between them for which is impossible to not think that any action on one would affect the other in some way, and that any action on the area, like this design proposal, may not include a thoughtful process including both parts.

The masterplan proposal, resulting from the understanding of the needs of Shixia and its residents, stands on the assumption that the new southern part of village should not be

¹ From *“Architettura e città: passato e presente”*, published in Italian and German only; here translated by the author
See Rossi, 1995 or *Das Werk: Architektur und Kunst*, 12/1972

separated from its peer surroundings, enabling both parts to benefit from the introduction of new public spaces and services brought in the area to serve all its people. This is why Shixia South Street, running from the primary school's wall to the south-east towers, is kept ideally in its public space essence since its relevance for the inhabitants emerged when observing the village; but Shixia does not expand on a big surface, and the design plans the exclusion of car circulation, limited to the sides of the Village, in order to favor pedestrians and low-speed vehicles (bikes and electric bikes), contributing to the well-being of the residents. (figure 4.5). Thus, losing its function, the street is kept as a public space but redirected towards the Pan Hall and, in order to properly host the walking action which people "invaded" the former space with, it is designed like a pedestrian boulevard with public green where users, bikes and electric bikes can circulate on. The insertion of this axis provides an infrastructural connection with the south-eastern intersection where the village begins; while the other infrastructural intervention planned, the prolongation of the northern street towards south, provides a direct connection between Shixia new area and its northern part (figure 4.6).

Just like for the infrastructural system, the organization of the built parts derives from typological considerations hinted previously. As showed in figure 4.7, Shixia lives a constant block-status on two levels: the village level, due to the parts of formal city around it which make it an enclave; and the neighborhood level, due to the arrangement of the handshake buildings that, despite being very permeable with their resultant alleys, the latter are wide enough to let one or two people in, but narrow enough to effectively constitute the border of a block.

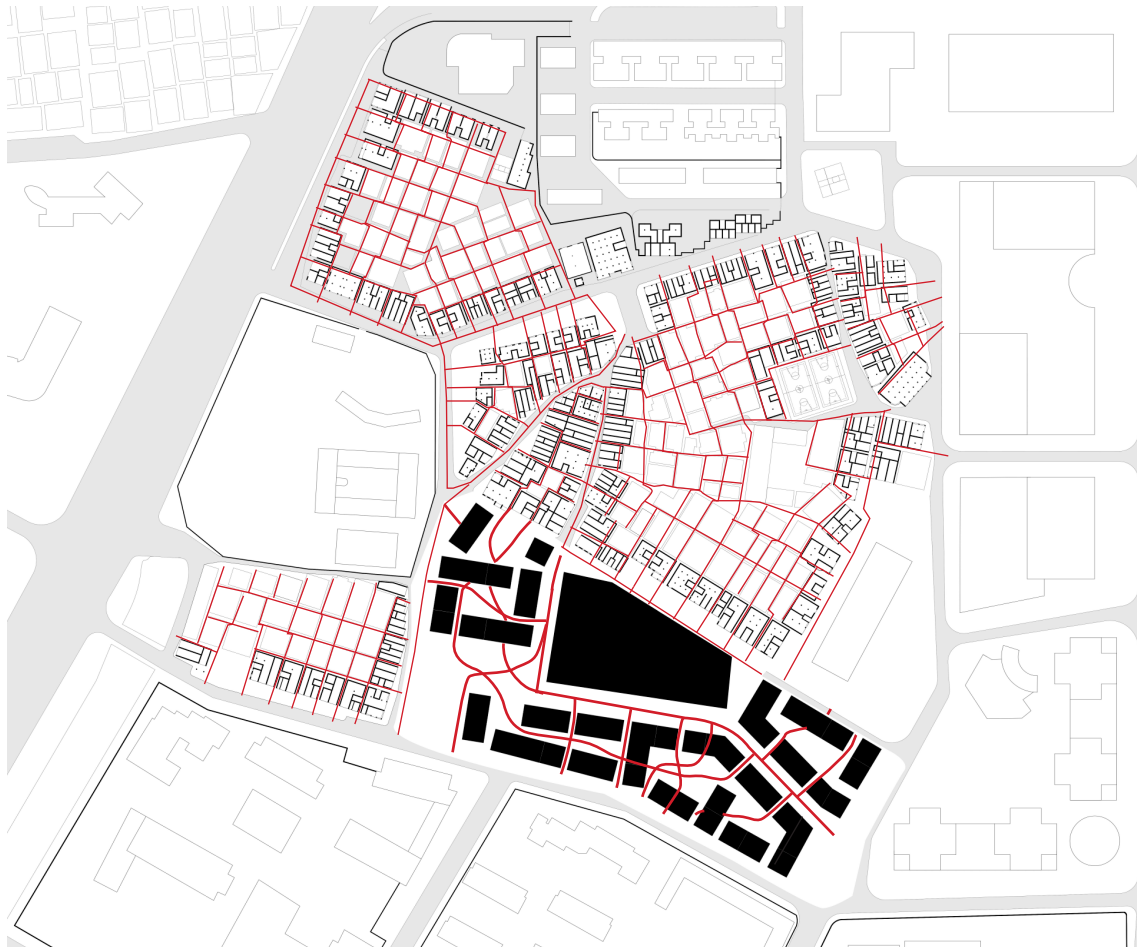
The masterplan proposal recognizes this condition and embraces the enclave status of Shixia and enhance it by distributing on the borders of the lot a group of residential buildings that, except for two entrances, constitute a solid mark of Shixia's limit with its surroundings; these buildings are arranged in smaller semi-public blocks, and reference the permeability of the handshake layout, but in this case enclosing an open air core; furthermore, this built residential border constitutes itself a block created around the public building that lies at its center.

The presence of a collective central building comes from the intention of providing a place at the service of all Shixia residents, and from the observation of an example of analogous spatial conditions in Europe; specifically the one of the Gothic Quarter in Barcelona as a part of the city still inhabited and that presents peculiar characteristics fixed from centuries, and where the residential scale is often interrupted by indoor or outdoor

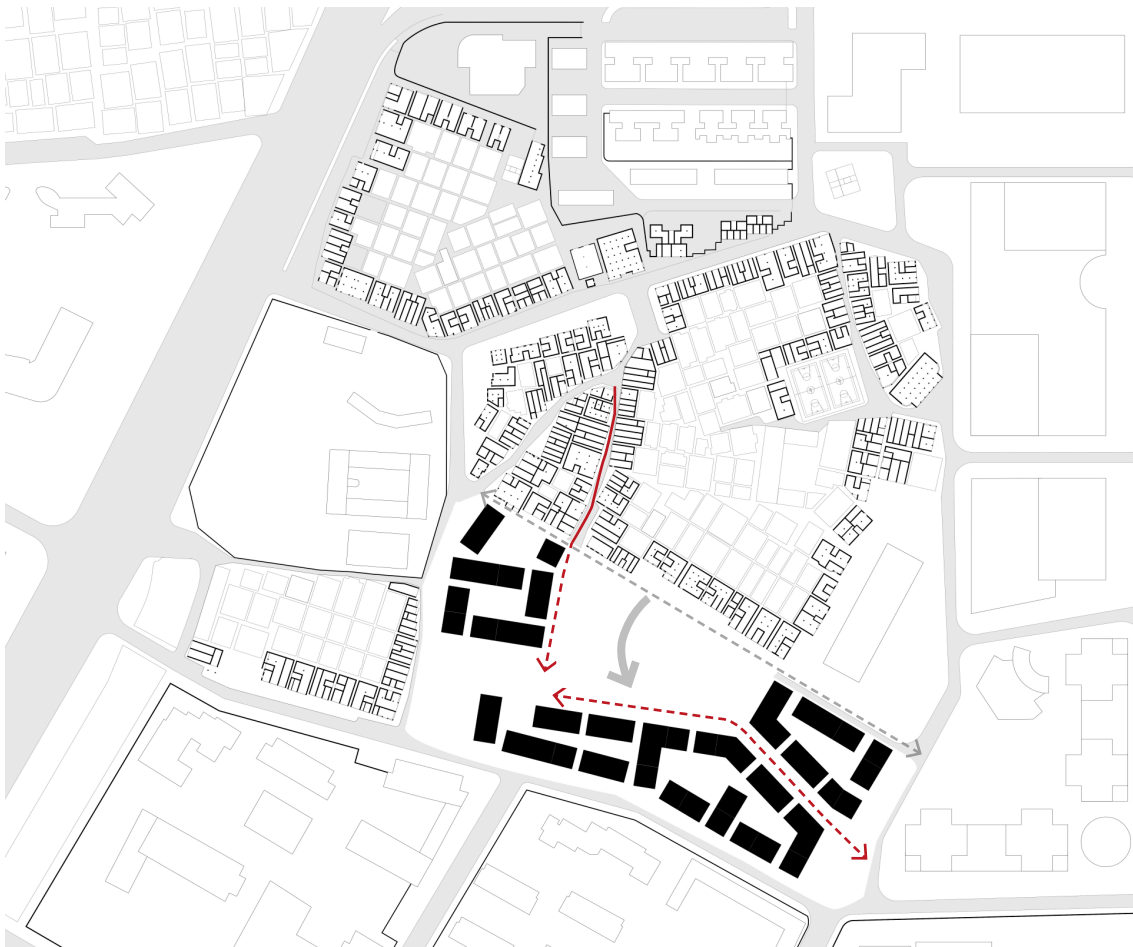


[4.4] Masterplan Proposal for Shixia Southern area
Source: Drawn by the author





[4.5] Proposal for new organic circulation in South Shixia (pedestrian and bike-only)
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.6] The former Shixia South Street (grey dotted line) and the proposed streets in Shixia (red dotted)
Source: Drawn by the author

centralities (figure 4.8). Aware that this confrontation could have not been literal due to evident differences, mainly the longer life span for the western case, and the conditions of the space much more extreme in Shixia, it served as an inspiring tool to propose in the masterplan a building which interrupts the residential scale of Shixia, and offers a larger-scale building with new spatial and social possibilities.

This building, together with the mixed-use residences, and the Pan Hall all define the square where the two new streets mentioned above end and start; facing the square with its east side, left empty by the demolition of a previously attached building, the Hall assumes a new and unique relation with the Village, reflective of a new time where it still is involved in the life of the residents in a continuous and fluid way. The presence of these objects facing the same square and each other, blurs the lines between times: the buildings are at the same moment representative of their individual pasts, and of the collective past and heritage of the Village, constantly in the making.

4.2 New public and private realms in Shixia

In this new organization of southern Shixia, buildings and public spaces are inserted with the intention to introduce its residents to new socialization spaces, covering a series of interaction options that are currently missing in the Village spectrum. In fact, the current spatial and social conditions of Shixia described previously, if looked as enablers of certain social experiences, results very limiting towards their users who in most cases can only take advantage of the space in the best way possible. The fast or slow-use stationary and transitional spaces analyzed, project the residents of Shixia in an environment where the collective exists by co-presence of the single individuals but that does not favor or offer at all prolonged socialization experiences except for a few cases. From this overwhelming dimension, users are transferred to the extreme opposite spatial condition of their dwellings where they are alone or in small family groups, alienated from the outside by the surrounding buildings.

Therefore, a Shixia resident is pulled from one limit to the other, subordinated to the use of spaces that, as mentioned previously, are the results of the construction of the handshake buildings, and not the result of a design process.

As the thesis identifies this condition as one of the responsible of the missing sense of belonging in residents, and consequently a weak environment where to develop a collective identity for people to reflect in, it aims at offering new spaces and functions for daily life. The latter are part of a series which fills the void between the two extremes among



[4.7] The block-status of Shixia
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.8] Barcelona's Gothic Quarter
Source: Google Earth Pro

which the alone individual swings back and forth, with new opportunities for individuals and groups: like public courtyards, co-living residential options, ground-floor collective functions and a central garden. All these services are given to Shixia contributing to a updated behavioral model of use, moving from a linear alternation of two dimensions, to more parallel dimensions all available to the residents: the home, the block, the neighborhood, and the village scale.

Thus, the design pushes forward the idea that the presence of new functions and public realms acts positively on the creation and affirmation of self-identity in a place, and contributes to the construction of collectiveness and collective memory; this is possible in a place where people can meet and be confronted with each other, where *“the number of new situations and new stimuli is limitless”* (Gehl, 2011), and from this stimulation a societal bond sparks. In this idea of mutual enrichment and growth between residents, the architectural choices in the design were taken aiming at the composition of a habitat where newcomers and those present can travel through, expanding their vision of dwelling to places out of their homes, where human relations are built, and the attachment to the Village is deepened.

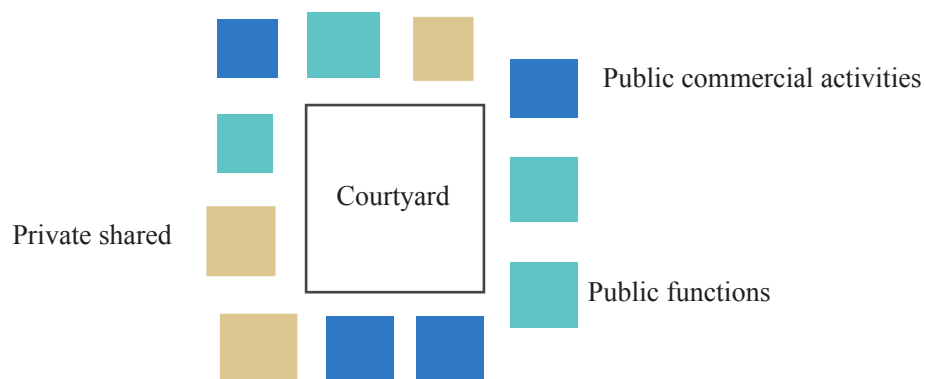
4.2.1 The mixed-use residences

Inspired by the Shixia layout that keeps the ground floor vivid and moving throughout all times of the day thanks to its commercial activities, the new residences maintain the conceptual division of a public ground floor, topped with the residential floors; but, aiming at providing diversity in terms of uses and social possibilities, the ground floors are not occupied by retail spaces only. In fact, since the arrangement of the buildings defines the public and semi-public contraposition, respectively with the outer primary streets and the inner courtyards (figure 4.9), the distribution of functions and services on ground floors are related to this condition, and can be conceptually divided in three main categories serving respectively the neighborhood, the block, and the building, three of the new social dimensions provided to residents. These categories are the public commercial activities, facing either the outer or the inner sides of the block; the public functions facing mainly the inner courts, and the private shared functions which face the courtyards and are accessible to the residents of the buildings only (figure 4.10). The first group includes commercial activities like bars, convenience stores, tech-stores, small furniture stores, laundries, barber shops, clothing stores, etc.; the second one includes co-working spaces, libraries, kindergartens, community centers, postal services; the third one includes the functions of



- A1 (facing the outer streets and the courtyards)
- A2 (facing the outer streets and another building)
- B1 (facing the boulevard and the courtyard)
- B2 (facing the boulevard and another building)
- C (inside the courtyards)

[4.9] Classification of the buildings based on their immediate surrounding
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.10] Conceptual scheme of the three ground floors categories distributed around the courtyard
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.11] Ground floor plan
Source: Drawn by the author



the co-living residences, like entry halls with leisure spaces or gathering areas; all these functions offer diverse degrees of individuality and socialization in them, based on the nature of the function itself.

The surface occupied by each of these categories (figure 4.12) confers each block different degrees of privacy and publicness, for instance in block C the level of public services is much higher than block D, resulting naturally in an overall diversified environment available to users depending on their preference.

Their location is thought mainly to guarantee a flux of people who do not stop at the outer borders of the block but are invited into it, through the secondary streets, and where they can find some of the commercial spaces, like bars or smaller stores facing the inner green courtyard. A third infrastructural connection between the outer street and the inner court, is provided by the short alleys that cut through the residential buildings' ground floors and are mainly thought to allow the residents an easier and more private entrance to their dwellings (figure 4.13).

The residential buildings are thus based on a square plan of 12x12 m, recalling the handshake typology, but that in this case is thought to be working in couples or threes separated on the ground level to allow the alleys, but united and working as a rectangular block in all the upper floors (figure 4.14); also, coherent with the three ground floor categories proposed above, the squared base is articulated in three main options which can be arranged together differently: two "sides" buildings, and a central one with heights varying from 3 to 5 floors. The presence of these options is related also to the target of the residents, which being mixed-income, allows parts of the residential floor to be more private, while others more coherent with the cohousing character.

Therefore, option C provides a compact vertical connection placed in the corner which can be accessed from the alley only, and can be considered a more private connection to the dwellings it leads to, that are one or two-bedrooms apartments for couples and couples with one or two children, ranging from 30 to 70 m² (figure 4.20); option A bases its layout on a vertical connection that is tilted by 90° compared to the other one, in order to allow an open space ground floor, accessible from both the alley and the secondary street, that leads to one or two-bedroom apartments of 30 and 60 m² (figure 4.18); both A and C can lead also to building B where the 15 m² single-rooms with bathrooms are (figure 4.19). As mentioned, the residential floors do not present divisions between option A, B or C, allowing all the residents of the floor to potentially meet for prolonged or brief time in the collective dining areas and leisure rooms which occupy a surface ranging from 40 to

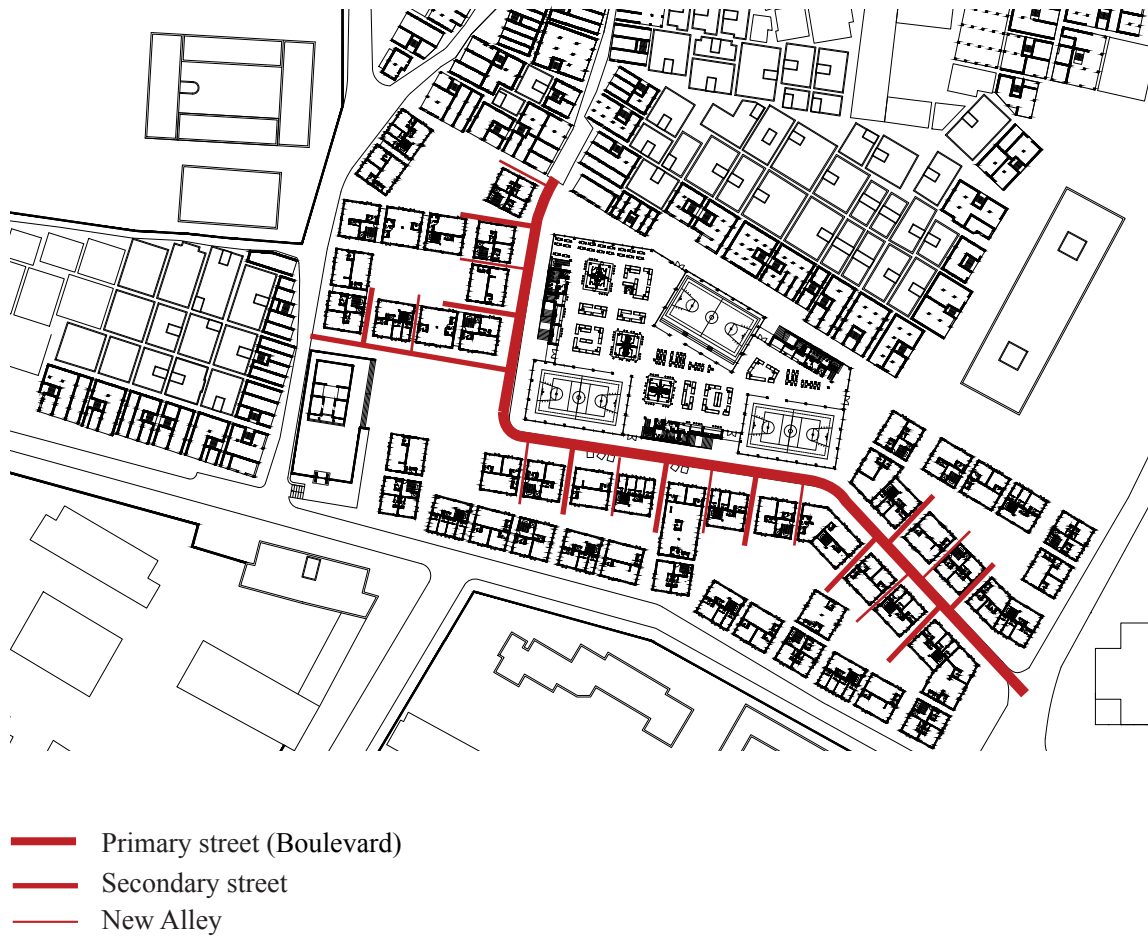


- Category 1 (Public Commercial)
- Category 2 (Public Service)
- Category 3 (Private Shared)

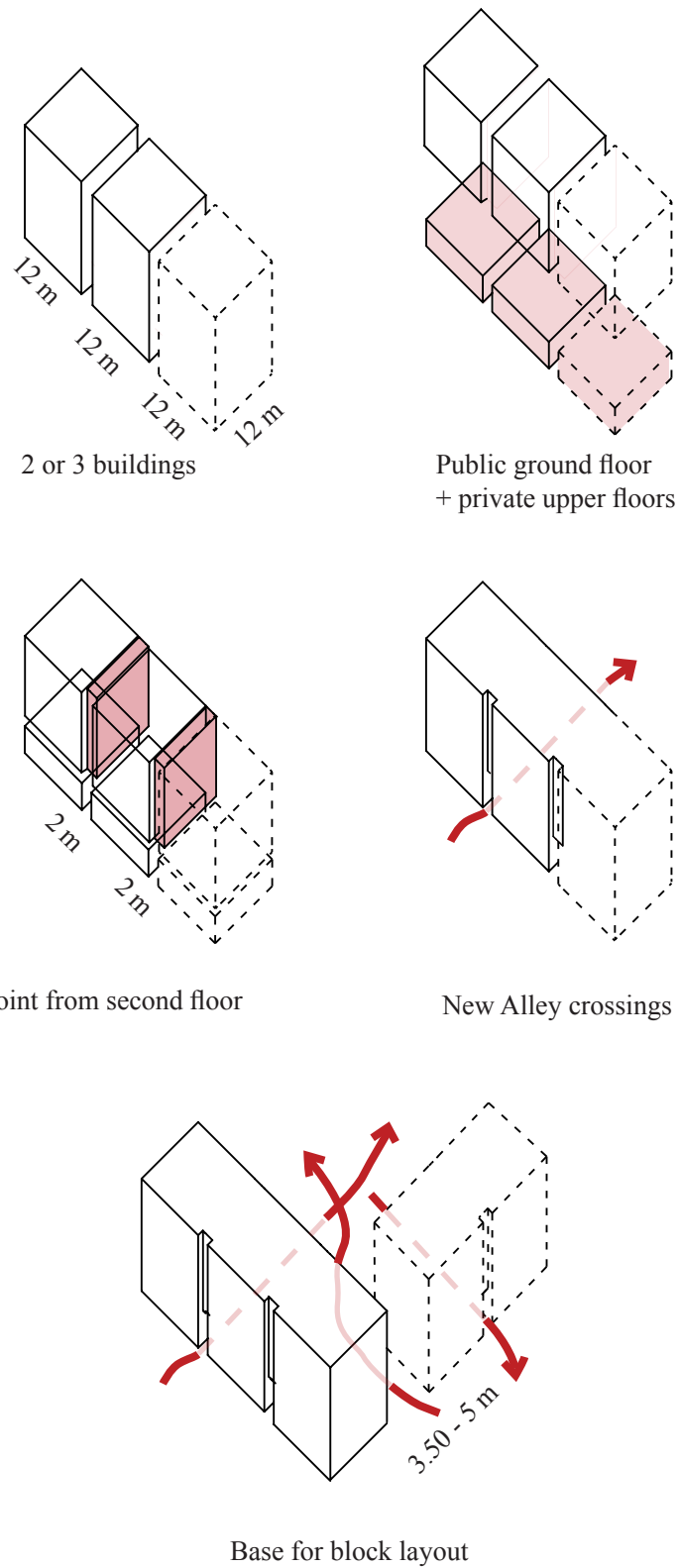
	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3
	[m ²]	[m ²]	[m ²]	%	%	%
Block A (north - west)	900	576	216	53%	34%	13%
Block B (south - west)	900	432	144	61%	29%	10%
Block C (south - east)	1152	1044	288	46%	42%	12%
Block D (east)	1080	324	72	73%	22%	5%
Total Design Lot	4032	2376	720	57%	33%	10%

[4.12] Distribution of ground floor categories

Source: Drawn by the author

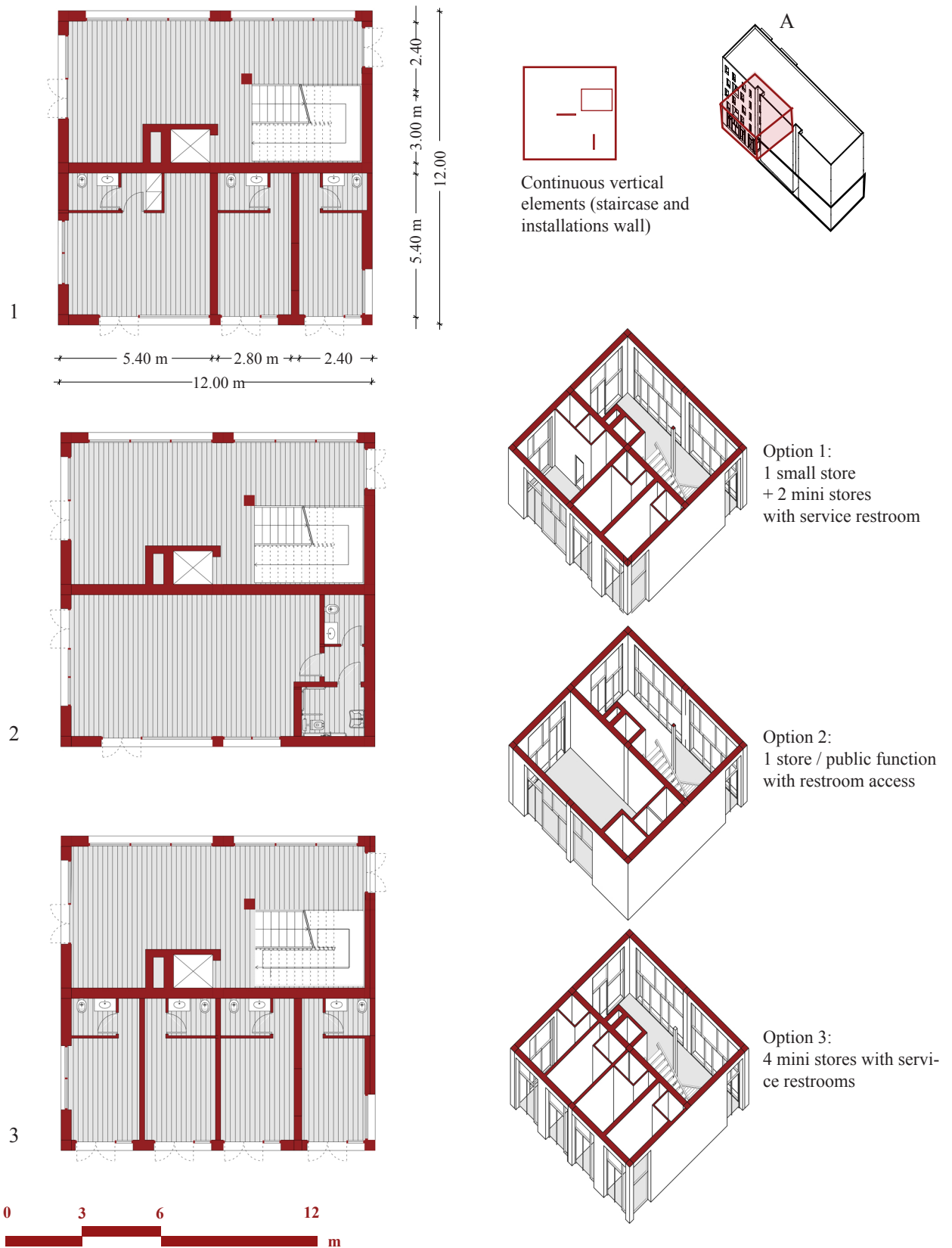


[4.13] Scheme of the infrastructure hierarchy
Source: Drawn by the author

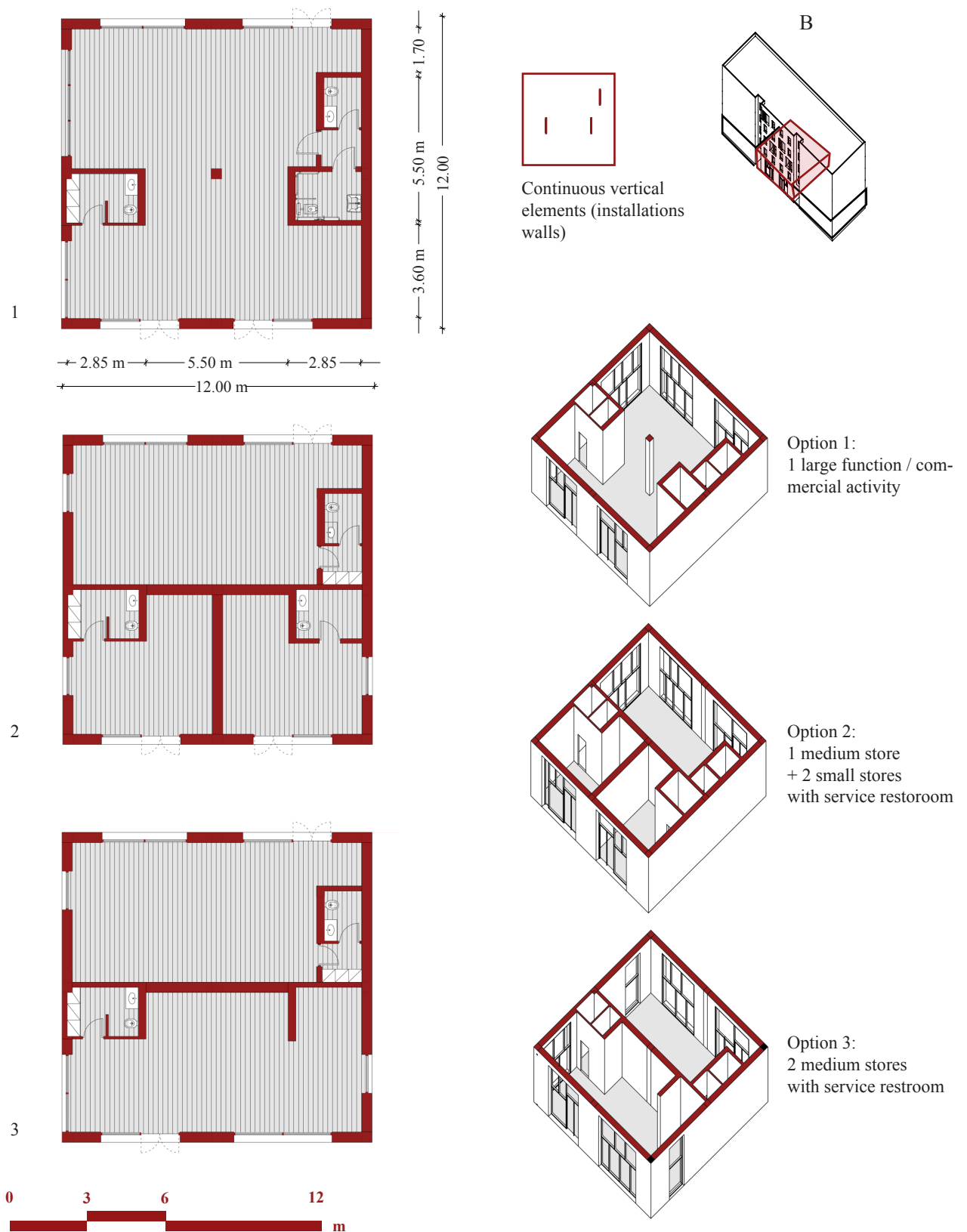


[4.14] Scheme of the residential buildings' layout

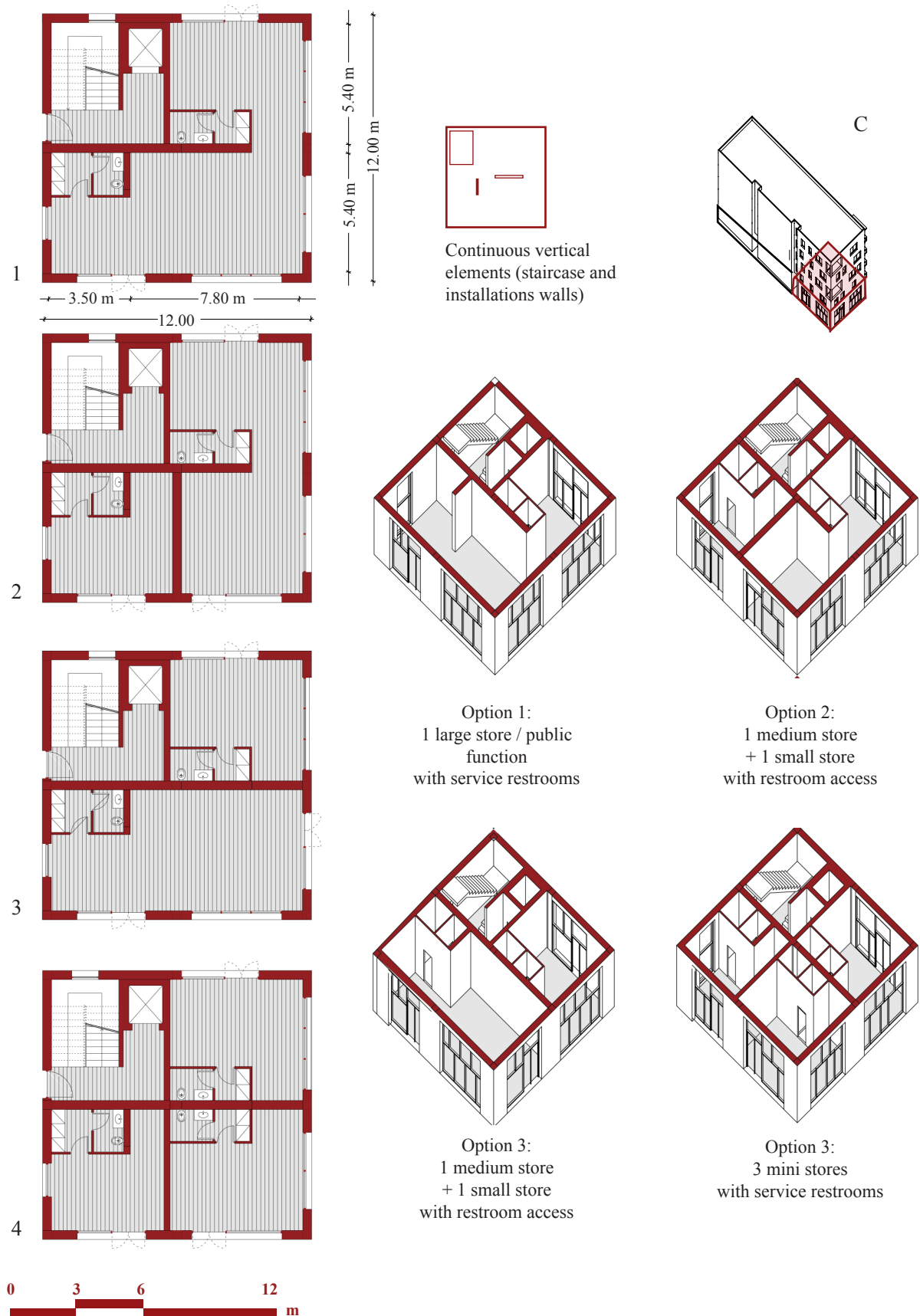
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.15] Ground Floor configurations of Building A
Source: Drawn by the author

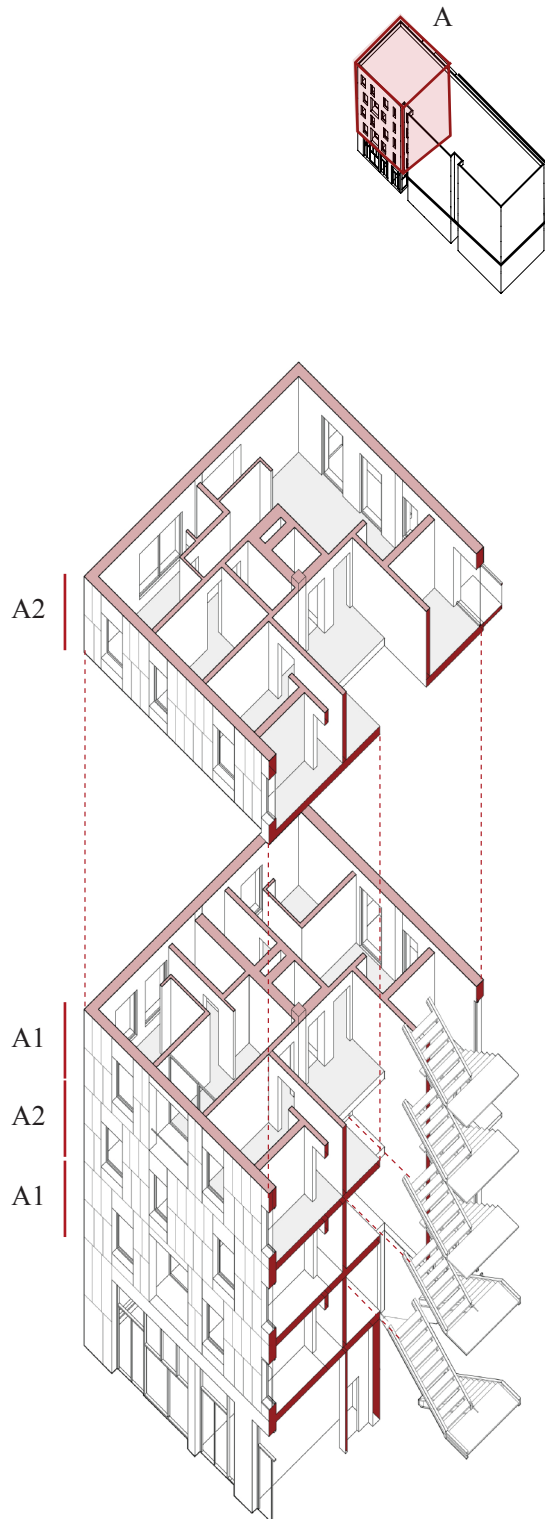


[4.16] Ground Floor configurations of Building B
Source: Drawn by the author



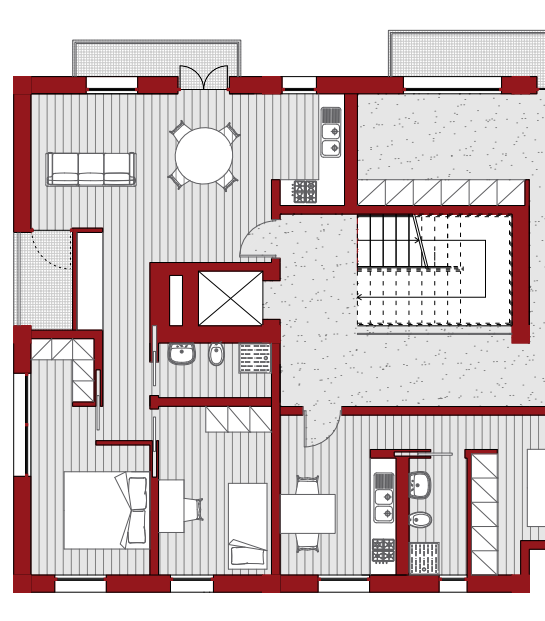
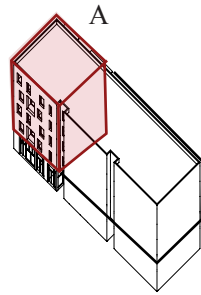
[4.17] Ground Floor configurations of Building C

Source: Drawn by the author

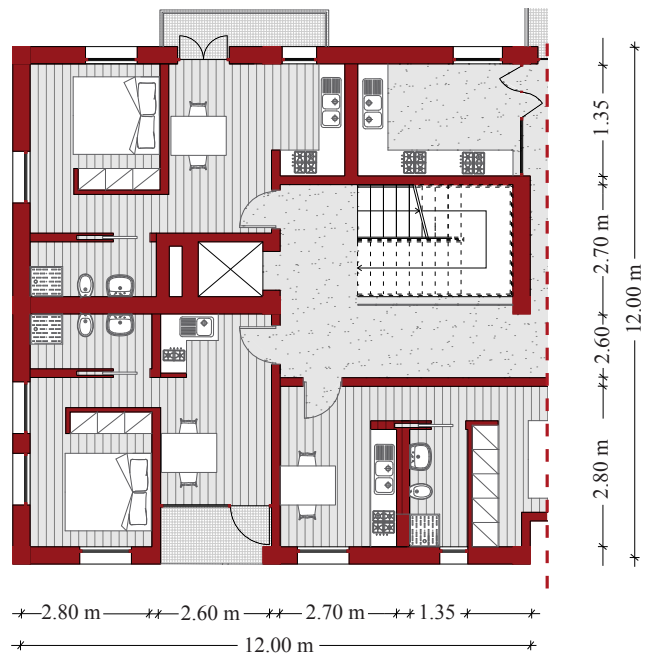


Exploded axonometry
(out of scale)

[4.18] Building A
Source: Drawn by the author

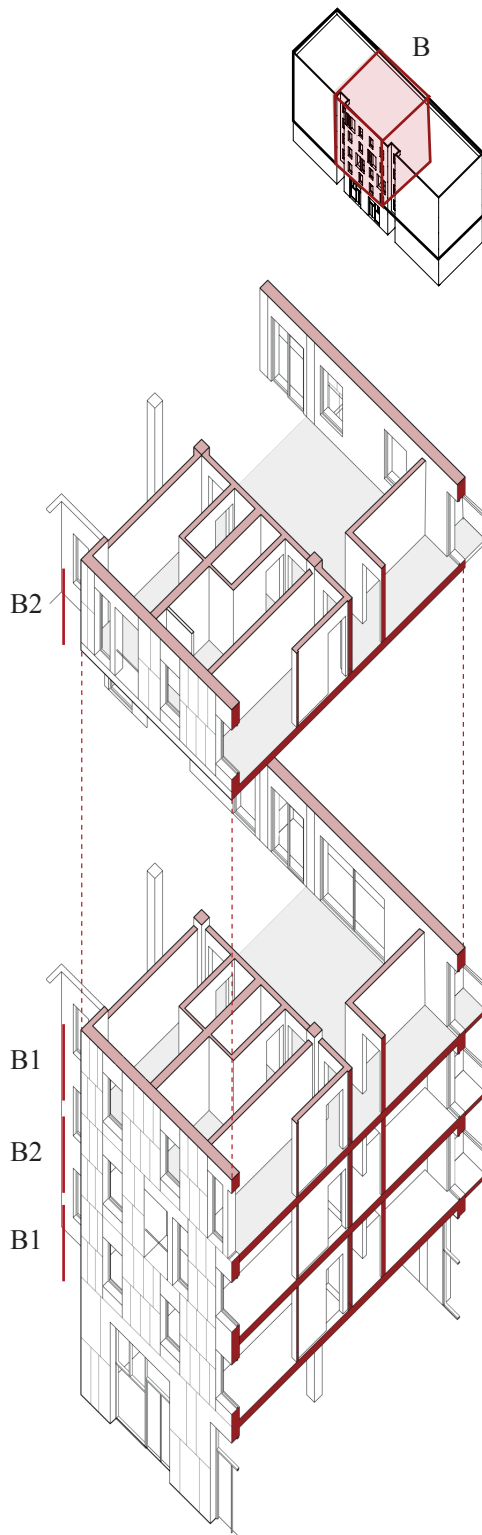


Floor A.2



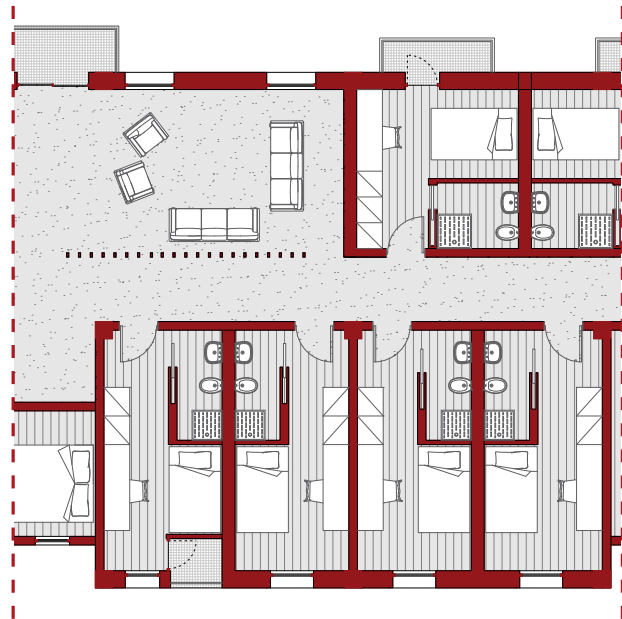
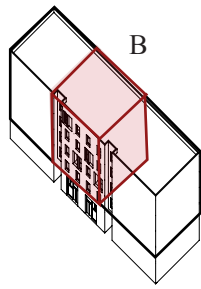
Floor A.1



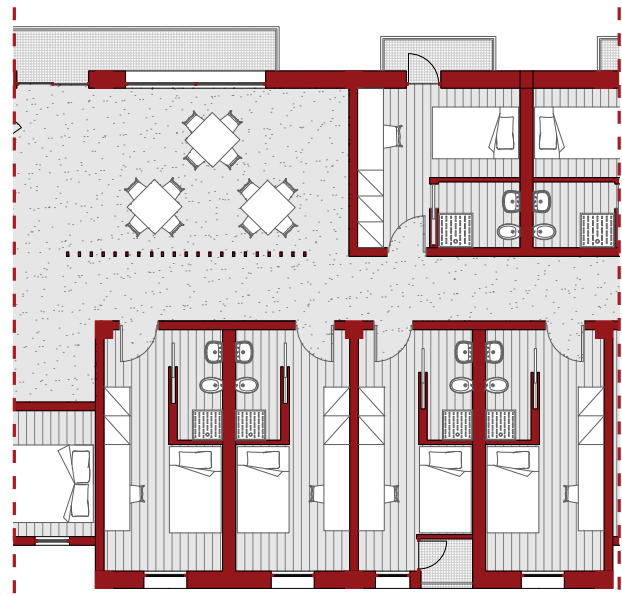


Exploded axonometry
(out of scale)

[4.19] Building B
Source: Drawn by the author



Floor B.2



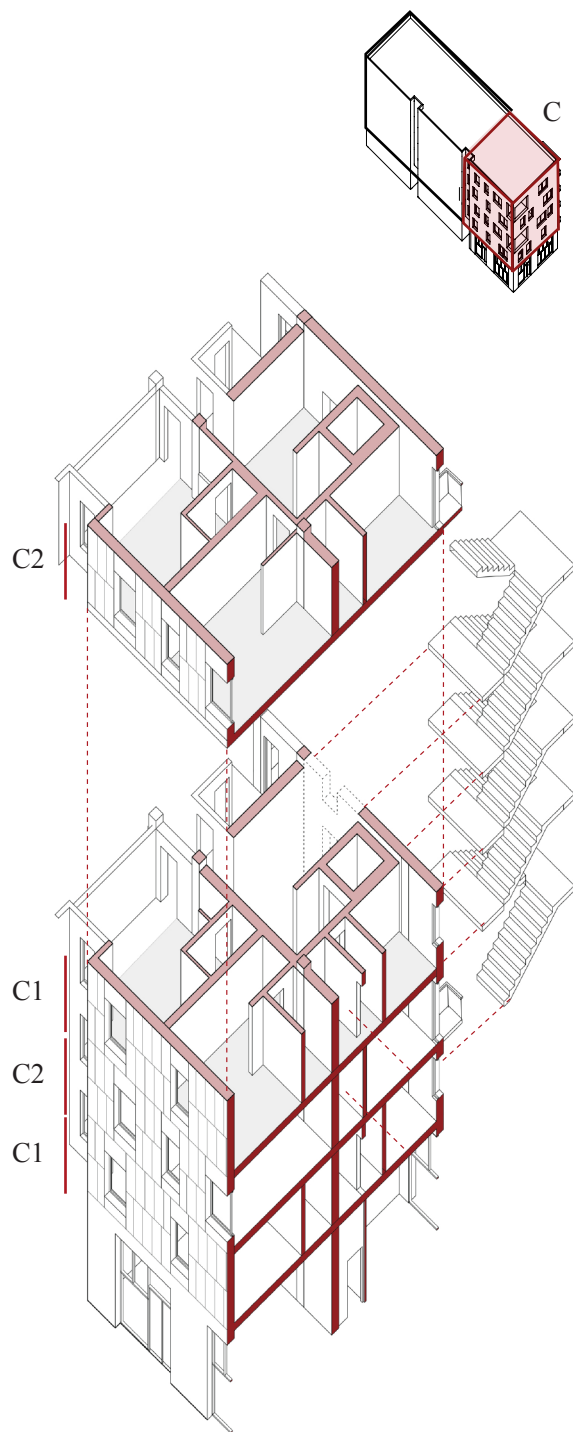
Floor B.1

5.60 m
1.50 m
3.70 m
12.00 m

2.70 m 2.70 m 2.70 m 2.70 m
12.00 m

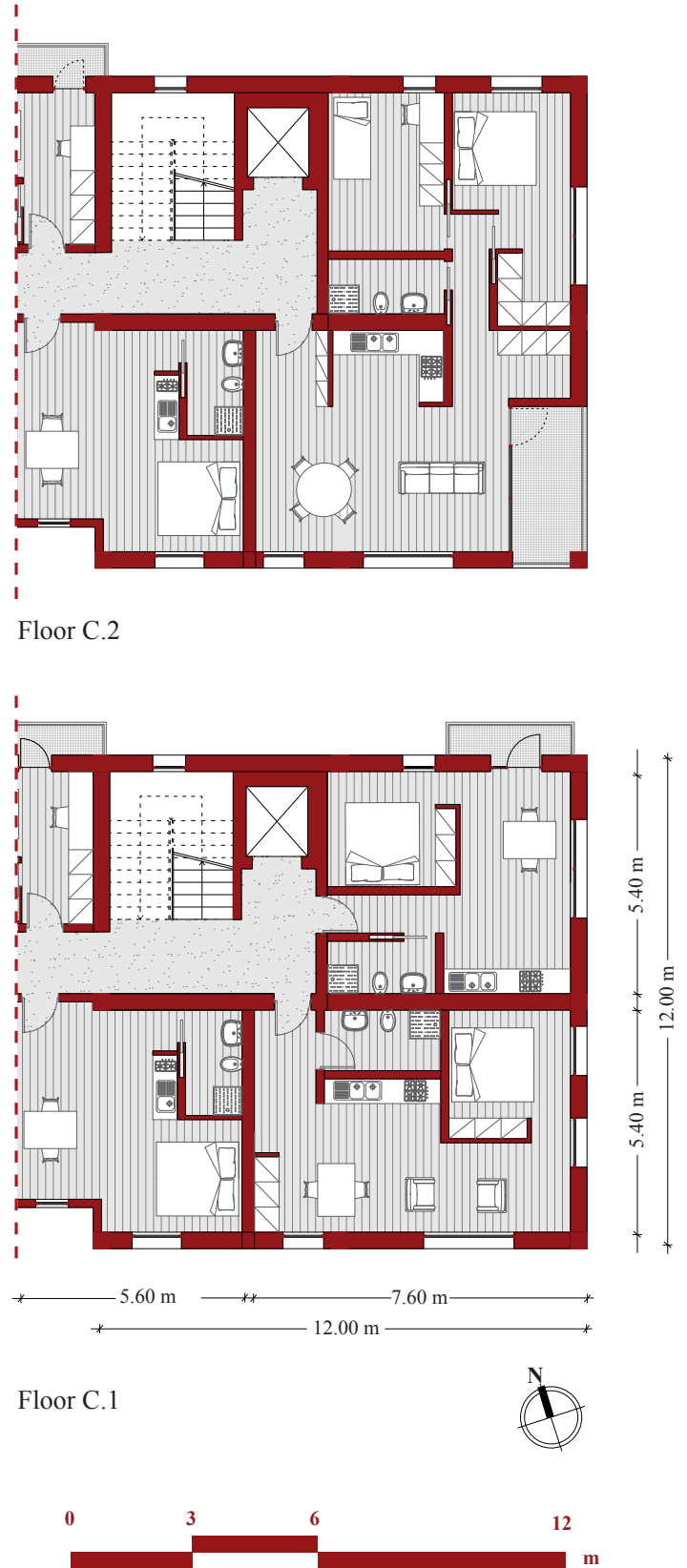


0 3 6 12 m



Exploded axonometry
(out of scale)

[4.20] Building C
Source: Drawn by the author





[4.21] Exploded axonometry of the three-piece building and scheme of its distribution in the area
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.22] Exploded axonometry of a two-piece building and scheme of its distribution in the area
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.23] Exploded axonometry of a two-piece building and scheme of its distribution in the area
Source: Drawn by the author

50 m² depending on the floor. According to their exposition, the rooms are also provided with cantilevered balconies facing the inner courtyard, or with recessed balconies facing the outer streets, allowing more privacy and continuity of the block, whose facades are interrupted and slightly rearward to point out the alleys and to leave the three, or two, buildings still recognizable as single ones, maintaining the vertical rhythm typical of the “forest” outlook of Shixia. The facades present an intentional non-alignment of their openings in order to contrast clearly with the repetitive surrounding pre-existing handshake buildings, which they dialogue with through the use of colored concrete prefabricated cladding slabs that confer each block in the new area a distinguishable shade and an immediate visual sense of unity.

The courtyards’ environmental system hidden behind these fronts is designed as an organic piece of nature which integrates the new buildings that gently stand on it, referring to the idea of a preexisting nature mostly disappeared due to the densification of the area, but that can now dialogue with the constructions. In fact the green areas are either distant or touch the ground floors depending on the functions inside them, acting as a guide towards the indoor space or as a filter from it, allowing visual contact only (figure 4.24). The courtyards provide different functions like sitting spots, grass areas, playgrounds for children, bars’ outdoor seats etc., all depending on the ground floor activities that face them, and on the dimension of the courtyard itself. In fact the north-west block and the bigger south-east one present similar conditions in terms of dimension, and therefore a wider variety of outdoors, that in the two other blocks are smaller and thus provide less spaces (figure 4.25). This condition enables the movement of people between blocks, and also provides a general diversity of context for the dwellings, with consequent different market values and a stable mixed-income target.

The total number of dwellers in the proposal for Shixia’s southern area is 1980 people, including migrants, migrant couples or families, new graduates, or white-collar workers, distributed in 22 buildings, where they are provided 15 m² per person of personal living space, that rises to 22 m² per person including the shared parts of the building; this amount of people is estimated to be around 1/3 of the number of residents in the lot before eviction and demolition took place in 2020. This is due to the average heights for the new buildings that is lower than the previous one, but proposed to guarantee the right sun exposition to the apartments unlike the handshake buildings do; consequently the value of the floor area ratio lowers too, from 3.2 to 2.0, while the green area ratio, previously at 0, is now raised to 0,3 (30% of the design lot), impacting positively on the life of dwellers at



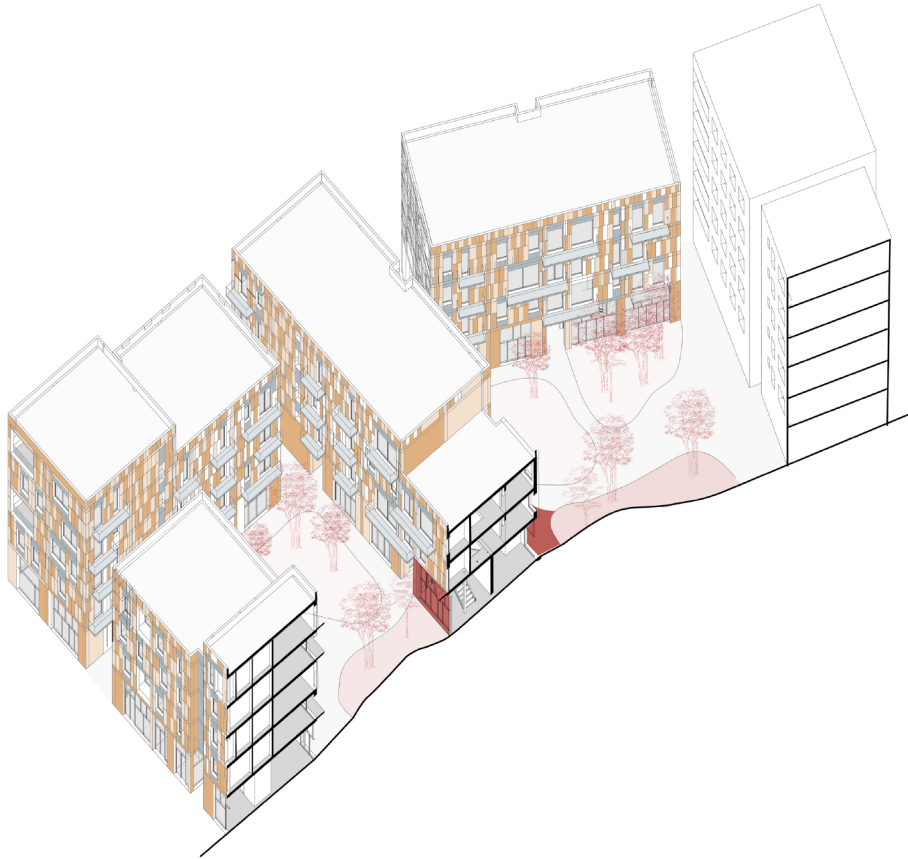
- 1 - Co-housing entrance + gathering room
- 2 - Large function (kindergarten)
- 3 - Small store
- 4 - Large activity (co-working bar)
- 5 - Housing private entrance

- 6 - Housing private entrance
- 7 - Medium function (laundry)
- 8 - Large function (library)
- 9 - Playground

[4.24] Environmental system in the courtyards (Block A)

Source: Drawn by the author





[4.25] Block A sectioned axonometry
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.26] Scheme of the environmental system in the different blocks
(above) and schematic section

the Village scale, particularly thanks to the new garden at the center of the design (figure 4.26).

4.2.2 The central building

The new residential buildings constitute the belt that together with the existing Shixia encloses the central market hall, a building which interrupts the scale of the residences from all sides and works as an attractor for the inhabitants of the Village by mixing together several functions: the food and the sport ones on the first floor, contributing to the theme of the project of the ground level vibrancy, offices, co-working and workshops spaces on second floors, and the garden on its roof level. The choice of the functions for this building, stems from the observation of the commercial success of food-related functions in Shixia, from the degree of attractiveness of the two basketball courts in north-east Shixia which enlighten a whole area as showed in the video survey mentioned previously, and from the necessity of outdoor green for everyone in the Village.

Observing the existing stores in Shixia, it emerged that 53% of the commercial activities, 138 out of 257 visible from the digital surveys, are food-related functions including grocery stores, convenience stores, small warehouses, restaurants, and fast foods (figure 4.28); therefore, in the new building this strategy is continued but reimaged into the typology of a market which at the same time represents a service for the users but also a main socialization opportunity, in fact the space is organized as a food-court which alternates market stalls for fresh products (like vegetables, fruits, meats, seafood) that are open air to favor informal circulation through them, and closed stalls for cooked meals placed on the entrance sides and at the center, which front the sitting areas where users can eat or gather; these functions occupy an area of 2100 m² out of the total 4800 m².

The stalls are distributed in three main sectors of the market which are resultant from the sport courts that interrupt the food-related circulation blurring the lines between the path serving the market and the one of the sport court, and consequently the lines between the two functions. In fact, the basketball court and the two multisport courts, are limited by solid transparent glass on the side next to the entrance, and only by a light net-material on the long sides facing the interiors and the stalls, enabling visual and sound interaction and therefore establishing a strong informality in the uses typical of urban villages. Each sport court stands on an enclosed area of 580 m², where it is also sided by a servant space for people who can wait, look or play (figure 4.29). In addition to these main ground floor

	Shixia in 2017	Design Proposal	SZN Government Design
Total Lot Surface	26551 m ²	26551 m ²	26551 m ²
Built Up Area	12982 m ²	13300 m ²	12511 m ²
Covered Area Ratio	0,48	0,5	0,47
Floor Area Ratio	3,2	1,8	4,6
Green Area Ratio	0	0,3	0,4

[4.27] Calculations of CAR, FAR, GAR

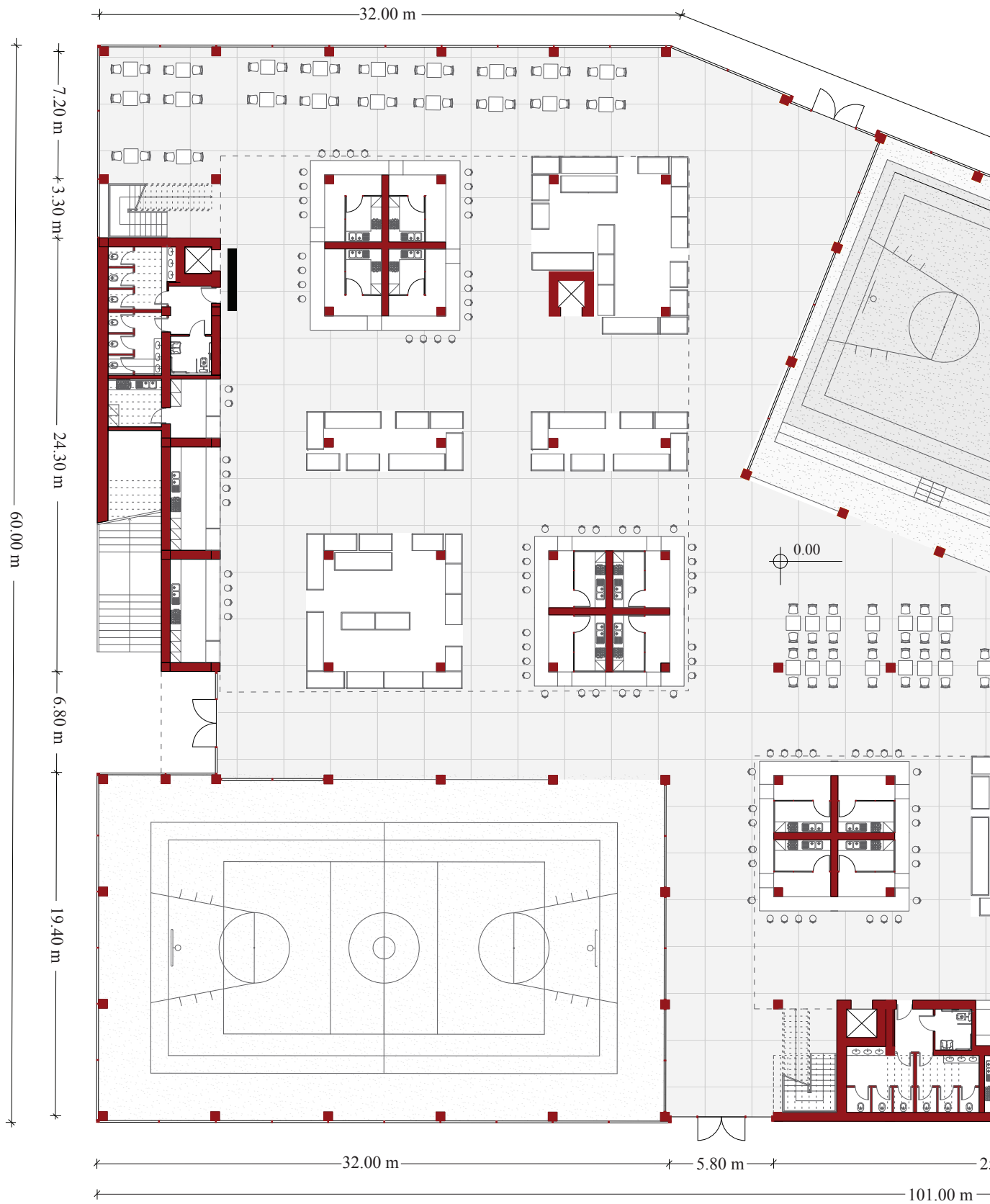
Source: Drawn by the author



- Food retail (grocery stores, convenience stores, warehouses, seafood, meats etc.)
- Meals retail (restaurants, fast foods, bars, noodle bars)
- Not food-related (furniture shops, barber shops, tech-stores etc.)

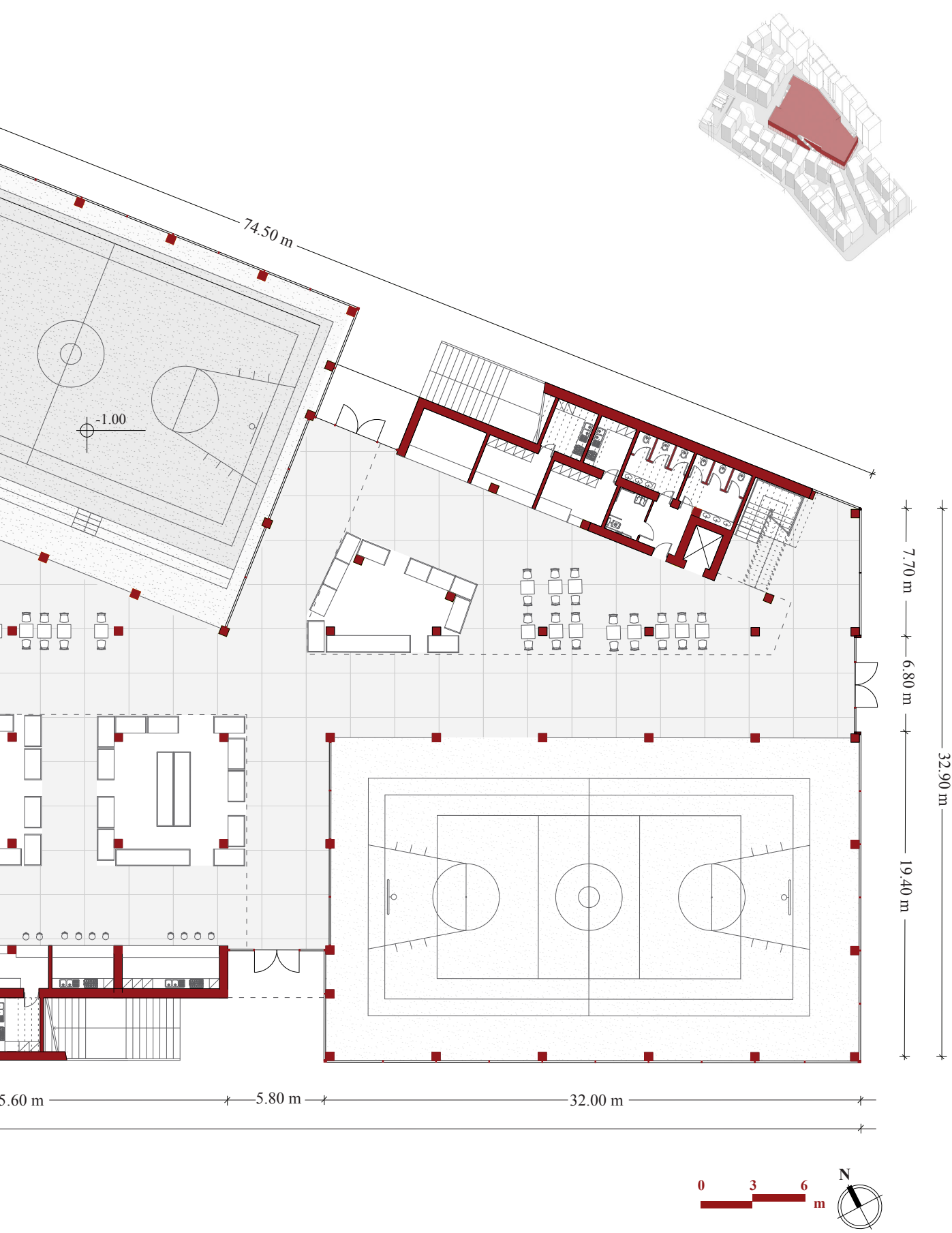
[4.28] Study on the existing commercial activities

Source: Drawn by the author



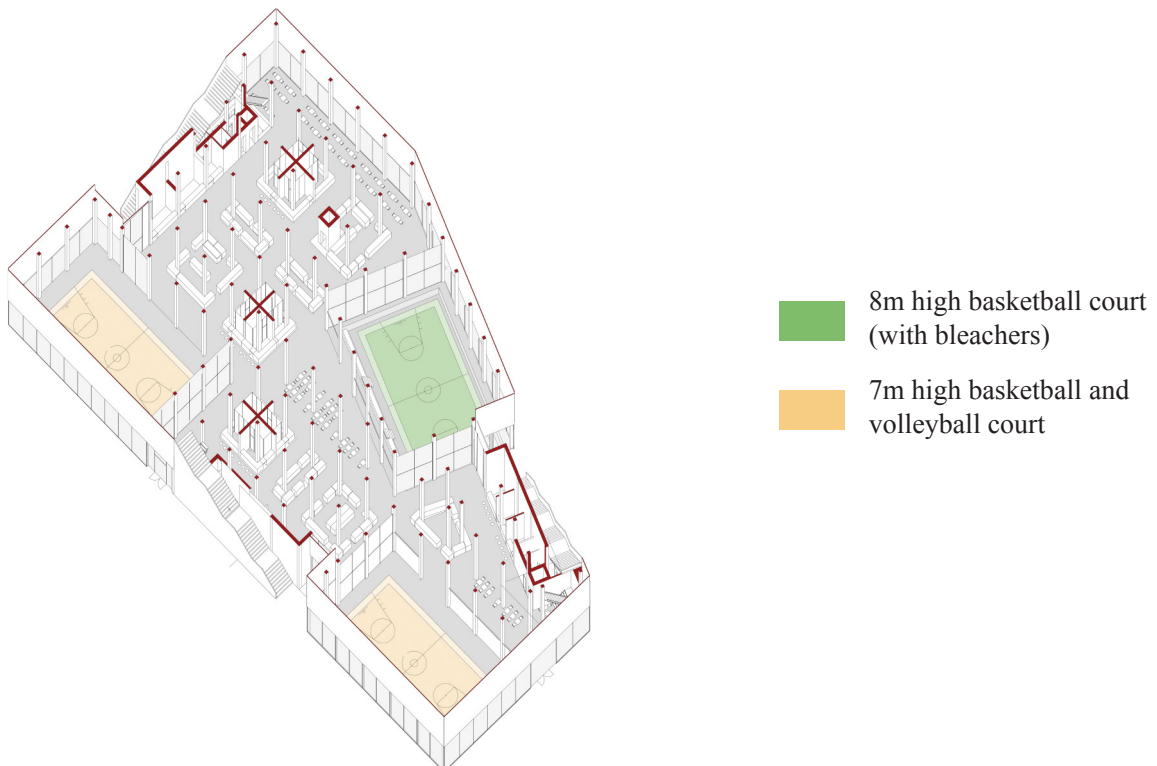
[4.29] Central building ground floor

Source: Drawn by the author

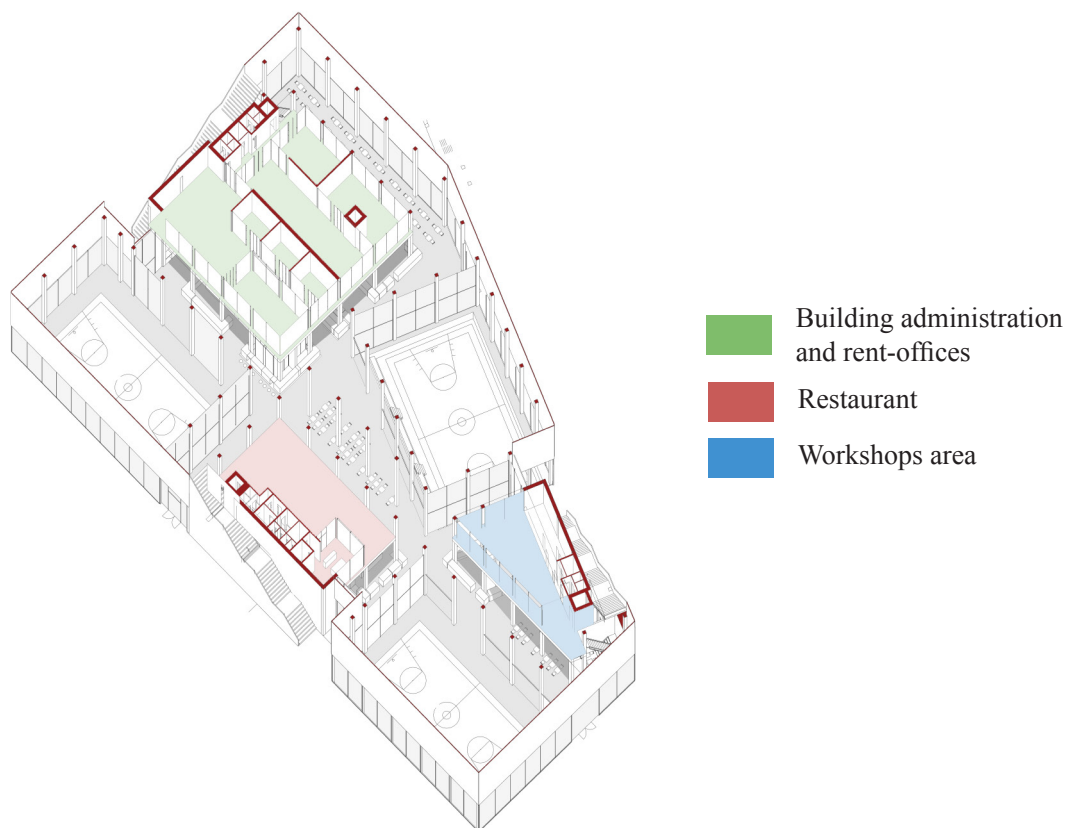




[4.30] Scheme of the market stalls (first floor)
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.31] Scheme of sport courts (first floor)
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.32] Scheme of other functions (second floors)

Source: Drawn by the author

functions, the building hosts office spaces, co-working, and a restaurant on its second floor, that is only built partly in order to keep the full heights proportions which contribute to the collective atmosphere provided in the building.

The whole ground floor maintains a visual permeability with the outside on all its facades, through the use of transparent glass on half of its height topped with a translucent polycarbonate which at the same time absorbs and reflects the color of the surrounding residential buildings. The continuous facades pause when the staircases leading to the outdoor garden touch the ground; they are placed along the building's borders, providing a smooth prolongation of the ground floor infrastructural system. Like in the residential courtyards, the environmental intervention of the garden is thought as a piece of nature englobed and modified by the buildings and in this case it is elevated from the ground creating a different dimension that lets the user almost escape from Shixia. As shown in the section (figure 4.34) the building and the garden are lower than the surrounding buildings, maintaining a visual perception of the rooftop greeneries from both the ground level streets and from the residences' windows; also, the proximity of mixed uses around and underneath the garden, provides a mixture of people throughout different times of the

day, keeping the area active, and safe under the eyes of the residents.

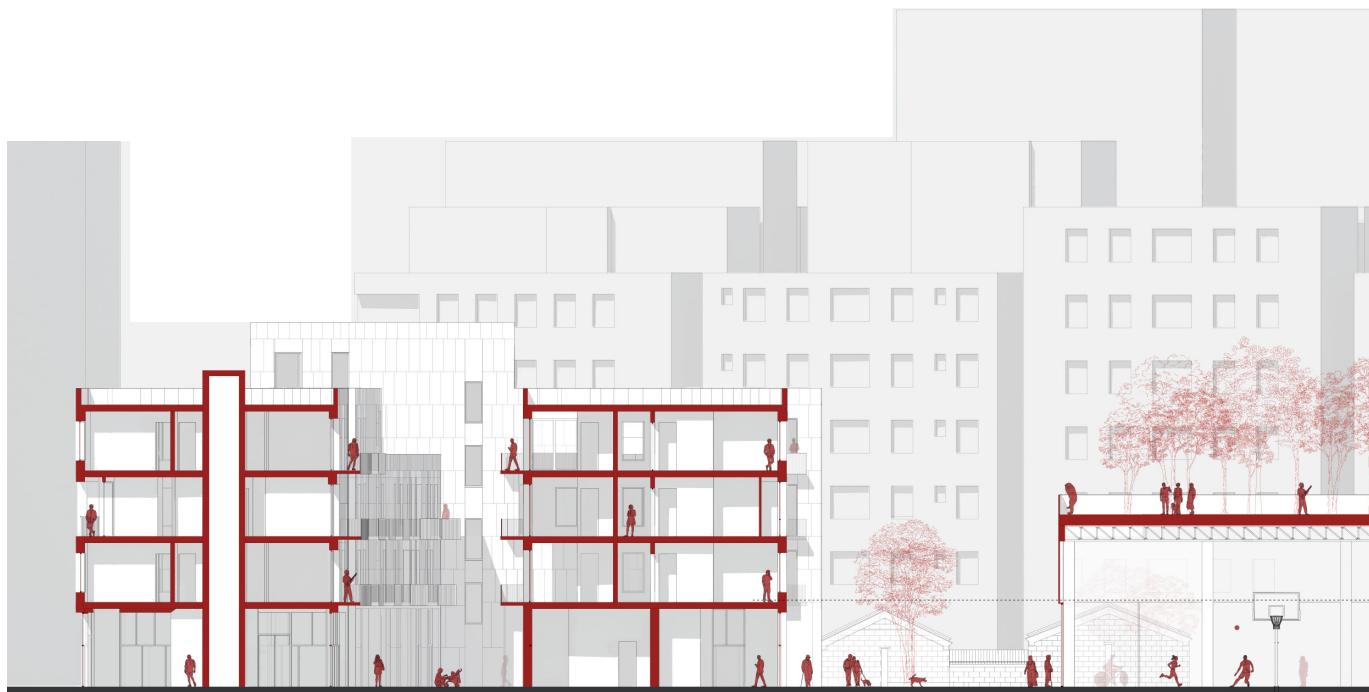
4.2.3 The outdoor spaces

The building is fronted on two of its elevations by the boulevard proposed in the design, whose section varies throughout its length; in fact in its first 70 meters, starting from the south-east corner, it holds at its center the bikes and e-bikes route, separated from the pedestrian corridors by linear vegetation (figure 4.38); while it changes as it fronts the market building, moving the bike route closer to the latter, and leaving more room for pedestrian circulation on the south side facing the commercial ground floors, for outdoor bike-parking, vegetation, or seats (figure 4.39). Therefore the boulevard provides two conditions of pedestrian strolling, a slower one facing the retail ground floors where users alternate walking, stopping by, taking a look, going in or out, many times on the same path; and a faster one next to the market where the walk is mostly continuous and stops only to either go up to the garden, or enter the building.

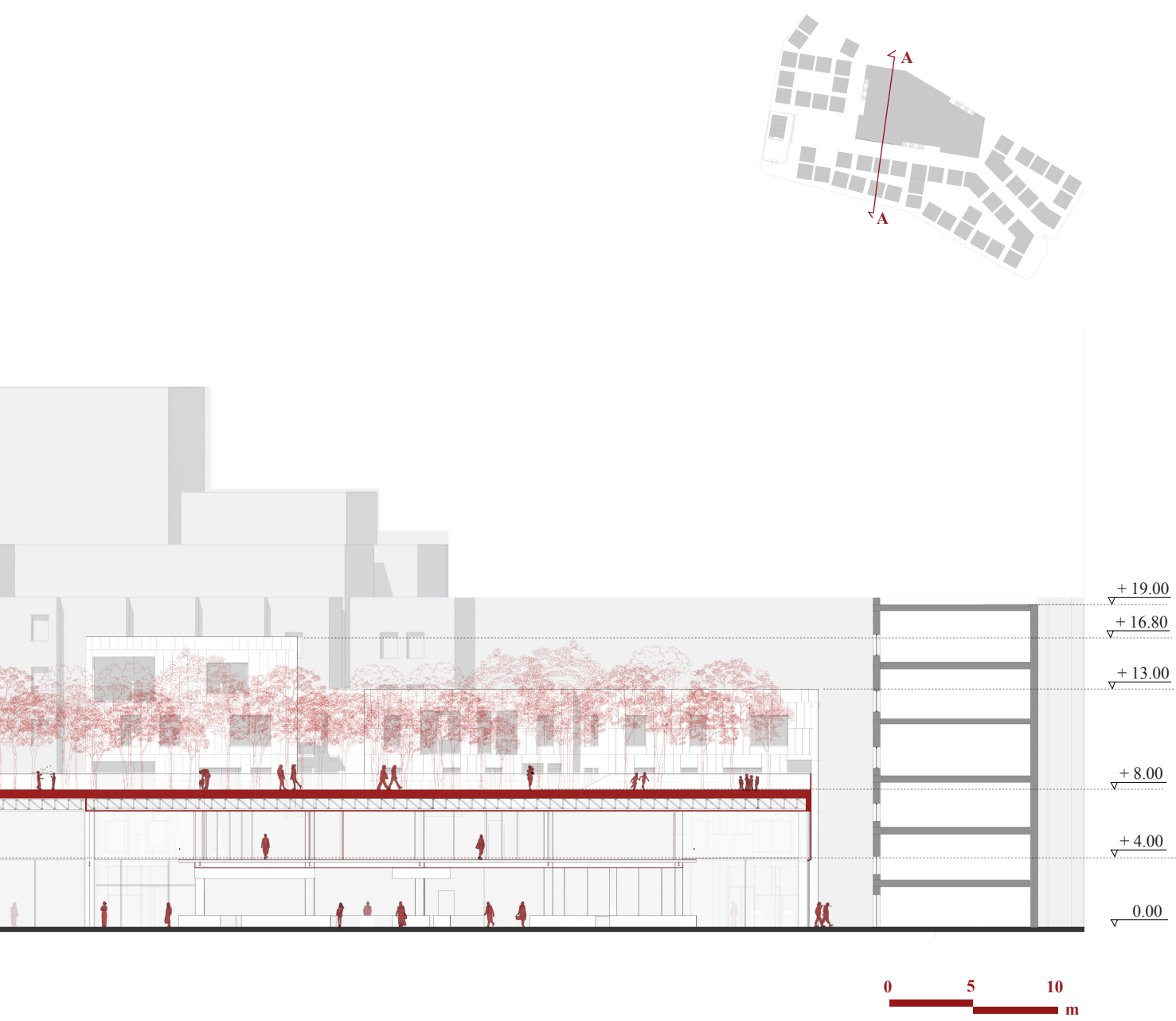
As mentioned previously, the boulevard leads to the square limited by the residential buildings, the market and the Pan family hall, backgrounded by the handshake towers; the environmental design of the ground floor as natural pieces extends in this area too, integrating trees for shading spots, tables and seatings for games similarly to the existing Diaolou square (figure 4.41). The Pan hall stands on a lower height than the rest of the Village and it is connected through a set of stairs to the square which is where all the characters of the design and of Shixia are displayed; it is a centrality for the residents, a stage for Shixia's public life, witnessed by the surrounding old and new buildings and by the people in them.

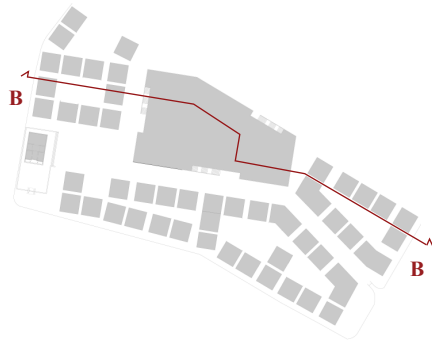


[4.33] Co-working mezzanine above the market stalls, overlooking the basket court
Source: Drawn by the author

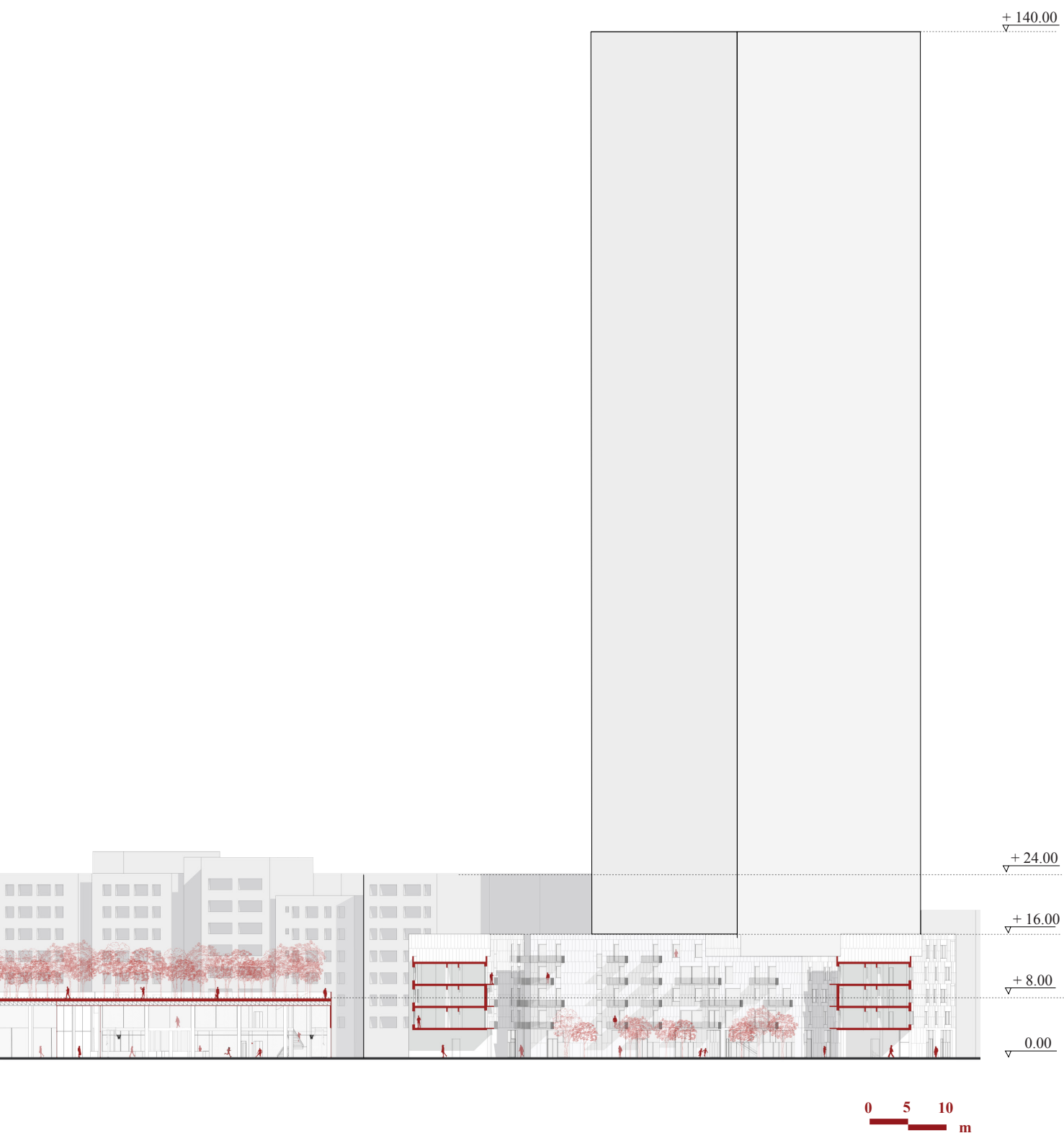


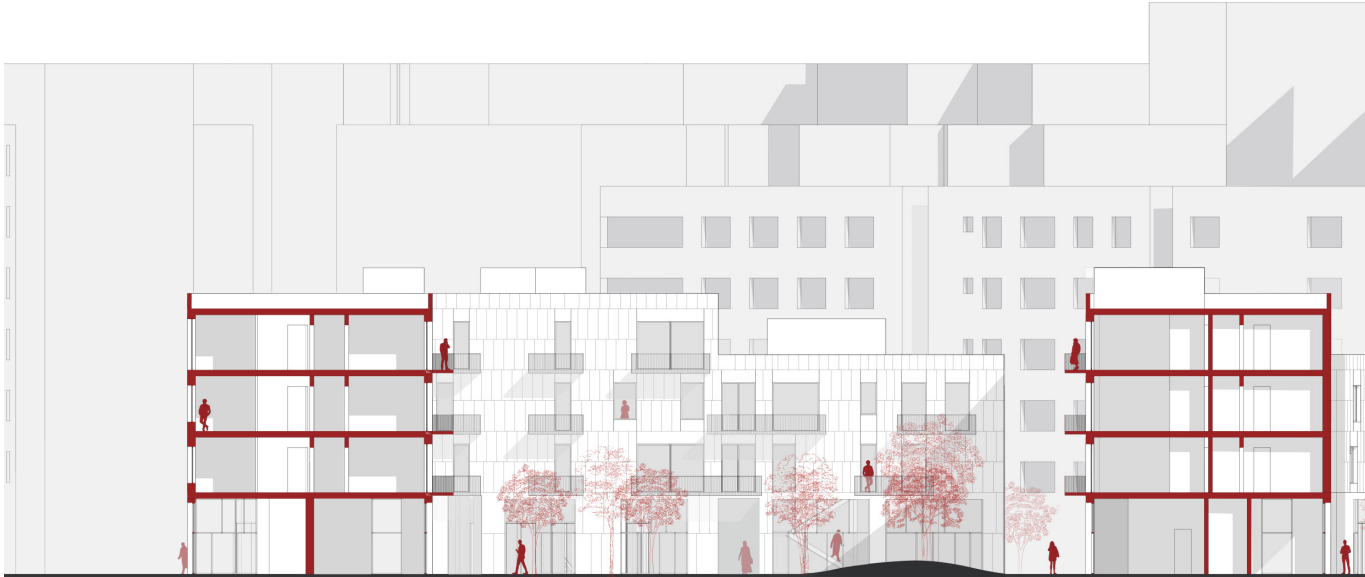
[4.34] Cross section A - A
Source: Drawn by the author





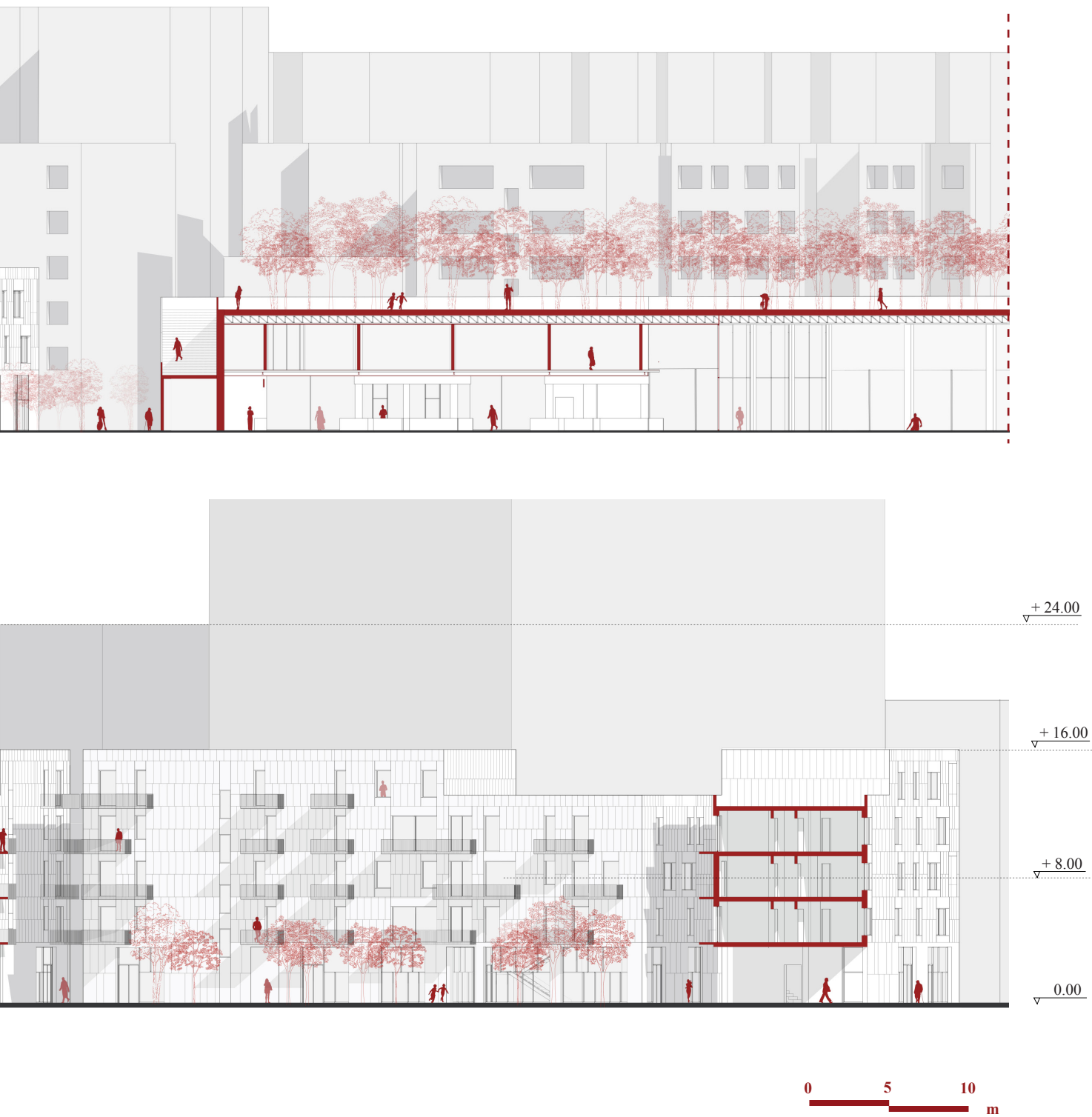
[4.35] Longitudinal section B - B
Source: Drawn by the author





[4.36] Longitudinal section B - B (zoom views)

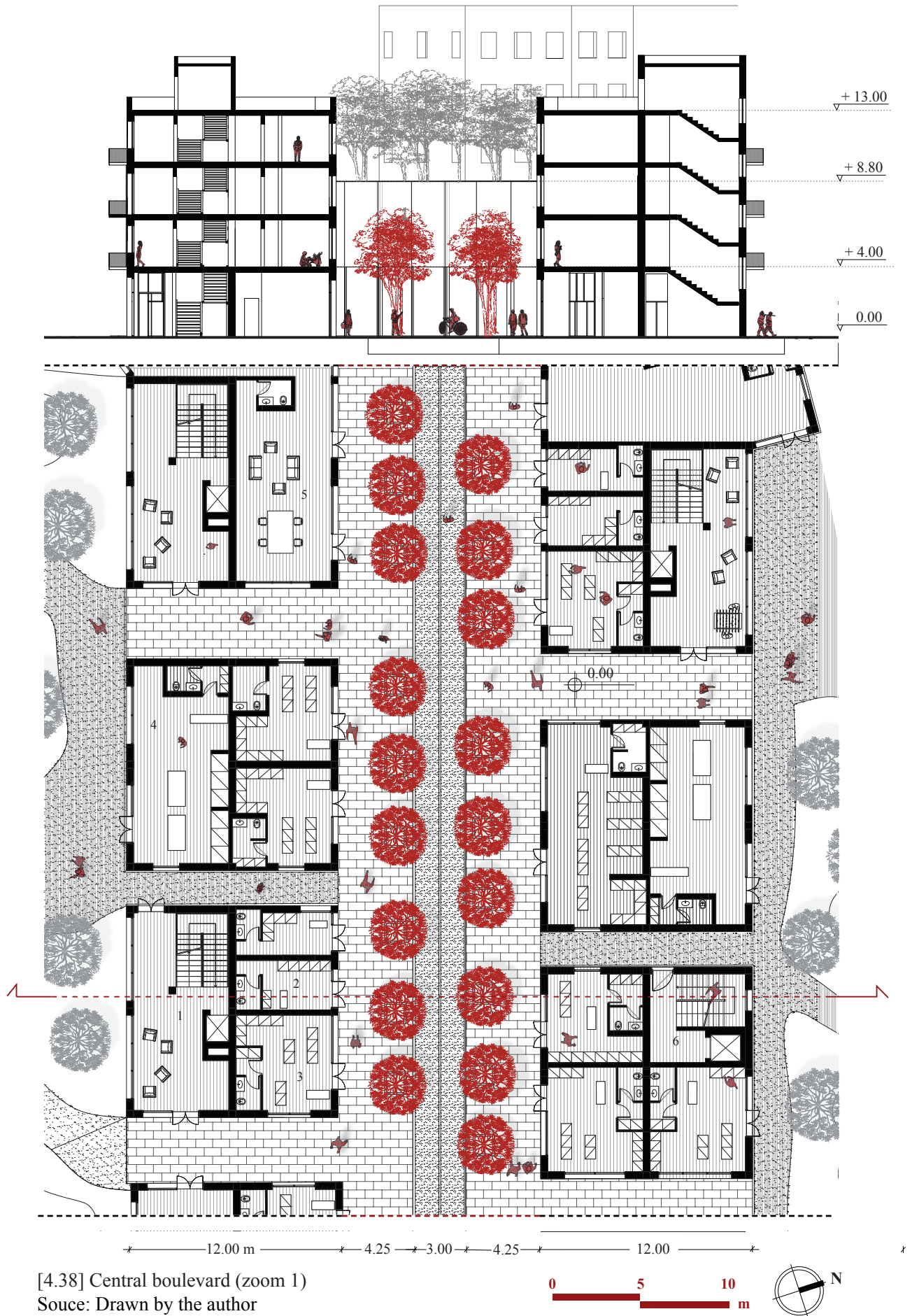
Source: Drawn by the author



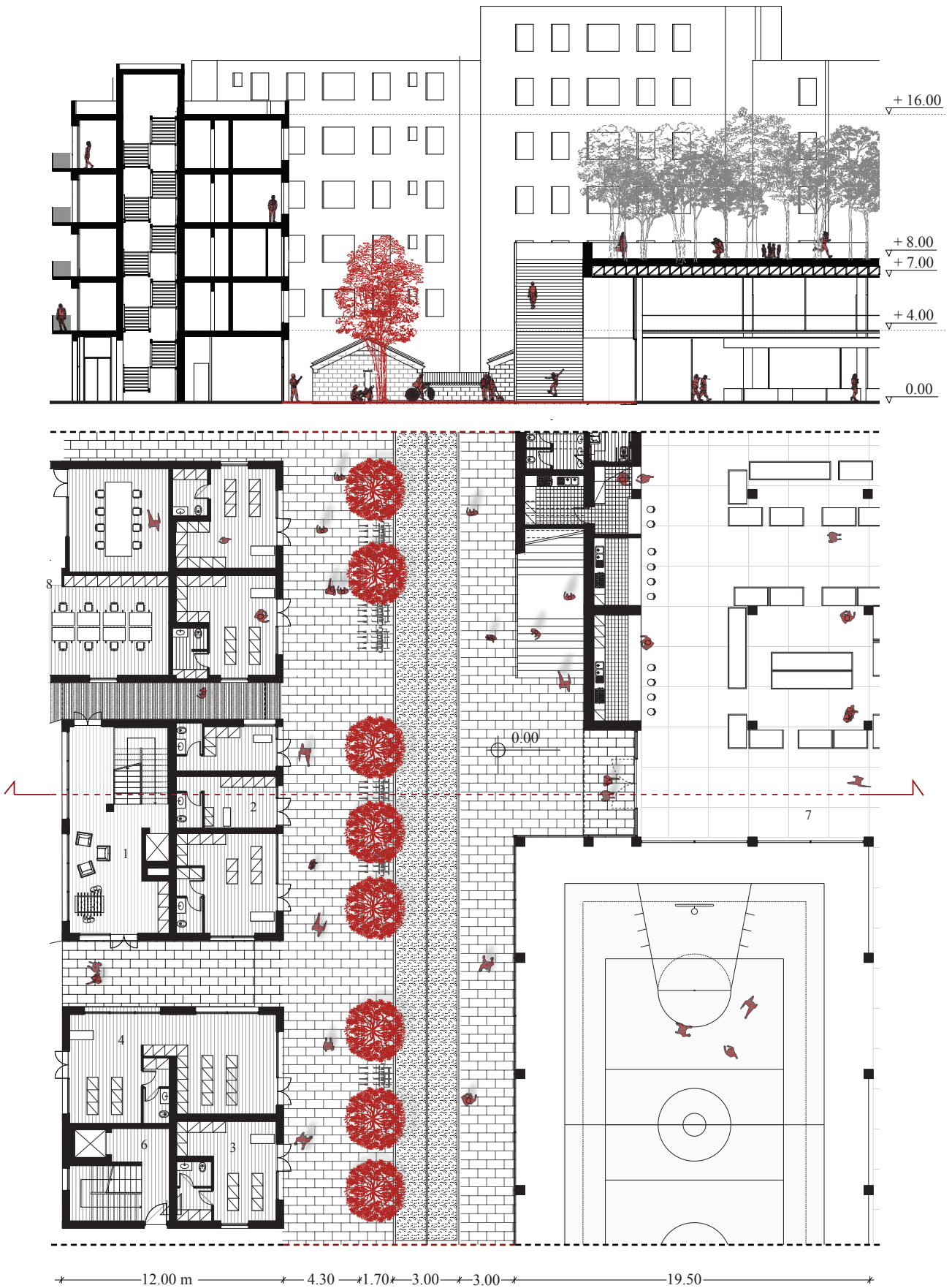


[4.37] Axonometry (out of scale)
Souce: Drawn by the author



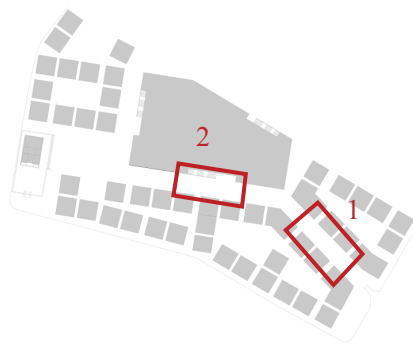


[4.38] Central boulevard (zoom 1)
Source: Drawn by the author



[4.39] Central boulevard (zoom 2)
Source: Drawn by the author





- 1 - Co-housing entrance
- 2 - Mini store
- 3 - Small store
- 4 - Medium store (in the plan, laundry)
- 5 - Large function (community center)
- 6 - Housing private entrance
- 7 - Central markethall
- 8 - Co-working

[4.40] Zoom 1 and 2 (previous figures) on the boulevard and ground floors legend

Souce: Drawn by the author



[4.41] Pan Hall Square
Source: Drawn by the author

Chapter 5 Conclusions

As many cases of Urban Villages, Shixia is characterized by current spatial and social conditions that do not favor the participation to a solid collective life among its residents due to the conformation of its built system, which was thought to favor profit and to serve the rising city of Shenzhen, specifically of Futian District. If the latter are characterized by a strong sense of modernity and progress, Shixia is limited in a definition of its identity mostly based on the dense condition, one recurrent in Urban Villages.

As a Village that has recently underwent a big outlook cleaning of its buildings but also the demolition of 1/3 of its surface, in times when the sensitivity towards the topic is higher, Shixia presents the opportunity to reflect on its future and how its identity, rooted in its preexisting parts, can be elements of a reconstruction design.

When analyzed through typological studies in order to examine its conditions and nature, its identity emerges confirming many of the characteristics present in other Villages already subject of precedent studies, and revealing unique characters of the place that intertwine its history, buildings, functions, people and spaces, providing a comprehensive view of the life available to the residents and therefore their poor collective identity. The absence of collective spaces and functions, of outdoor and indoor centralities; the circumstance of public spaces where residents are subordinated to the buildings; and the hukou state of migrants, are all factors that contribute to a weak base that socialization needs for happening, and therefore that a community needs to exist. As widely accepted by scholars, the latter cannot be called such only because of a physical closeness, thus the design is based on a built morphology which propose new opportunities for people to see each other, encounter, gather, and carrying a life in public which involves human and city engagement, therefore generating social and community characters. Furthermore, the safety of the area, where no cars are accessible, the pedestrians public accessibility to the ground floors, and an overall organization of the built parts spatially more distant than the handshakes are, contribute to the perception of a healthy and more livable area, where the home feeling is transferred to the outdoor areas too.

The proposal affirms the continuation of the historical stratification of Shixia in its proximity and informal character, not interrupting a constant development and mutation started 40 years ago, but presenting a new stage of it in order to affirm the Village's identity in

and for the future, not freezing it to a past time of the city.

In the description of Zenobia, a city made only of pile dwellings, despite the dry conditions do not require it, and where residents can imagine their happiness just in cities similar to theirs, Calvino states that *“It makes no sense to divide cities into these two species (happy or unhappy), but rather into another two: those that through the years and the changes continue to give their form to desires, and those in which desires either erase the city or are erased by it”*.

Shixia, shaped by the interests of former villagers, and made of the desires of the first migrants attracted to Shenzhen, has been consumed and erased by the formal city, but it continued to be filled with ambitions and hopes until this day, regardless of the critical conditions of its spaces, thus entitling the latter to the right of observation and analysis for the reconstruction of their fallen parts.

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Appendix B Survey on the life in Shixia

As mentioned in the text, thanks to the help of a peer student from the Department of Architecture of Shenzhen University, it was possible to interview six residents with a questionnaire written by the author of this thesis. The questions are divided in three main categories: personal information of the subject interviewed, the spatial conditions of the Village, and general view of the Village; they are listed below in both English and Chinese, and the answers are reported in the two following tables.

1. Interview structure

1.1 Personal information

1. 年龄 Age
2. 性别 Gender
3. 你在石厦村出生吗? 如果不是, 你是哪里人? Were you born here? If not, where are you from?
4. 你在石厦村多久住了? How long have you been living in Shixia?
5. 你拥有什么户口? What's your hukou status?
6. 你的职业是什么? What is your job occupation?
7. 你的住宿是什么 (业主还是承租人)? What is your accommodation (landlord or tenant)?
8. 你们是多少人? 它有多少间房间? How many people do you share it with? How many rooms are there?
9. 你的房租多少钱? If renter, how much do you pay per month?
10. 如果你是商店工人, 商店的房租多少钱? If a shop worker, how much is the rent for the commercial activity (per month)?

1.2 Spatial Conditions

11. 你可以容易地通过石厦村方向? 你习惯于狭窄的小巷吗? Can you navigate easily through the village? How long did it take to get used to the narrow alleys?
12. 你知道石厦村有历史建筑吗 (杨侯宫、碉楼、大榕树、赵氏宗祠、潘氏宗祠)? 你知道谁维护吗 (深圳市政府还是石厦村公司)? Are you aware of the historical build-

dings in Shixia (Yanglou Hall, the Diaolou, Banyan Trees, Zhao Hall, Pan Hall)?

13.你认为石厦村没有什么功能? What functions would you say are missing in the village?

14.大体你认为石厦村什么缺少? (社会地 和空间的) In general, what do you think is missing in Shixia? (socially and/or spatially)

1.3 General view of Shixia

15.你认为石厦村是不是紧密的社区? 为什么? Would you say that Shixia is a tight community? Why?

16.你可以描述你第一次在石厦村吗? (声音, 总体素质, 总体感觉) How would you describe the first time you were in Shixia? (sounds, environment quality, general feeling, people)

17.你能说出石厦村积极和负面的事情? (社会地 和空间的) Can you name negative and positive things of the Village (spatial and / or social wise)?

18.过去十年深圳市政府制作新的街道和停车场, 你如何看待那些拆除? 你认为现在石厦村的某些地方是更宜居吗? In the last decade new streets have been realized and a parking lot in the southern part of Shixia has been opened, what is your opinion on the demolitions that occurred? Do you think that the resulting outdoor spaces made the Village more livable?

19.你可以说石厦村是你的家吗? 假如驱逐出你的家, 你觉得如何? Would you call Shixia Village your "home"? How would you feel if you were evicted for demolition?

20.你认为石厦村最特有的事儿是什么? (可以是一个地方、一栋大楼、居民、等等) What would you say is the most defining thing of Shixia Village? (it could be a spot, a building, trees, people, crowds, shops, etc.)

2. Interview results

The answers are reported in the summerizing table B.1 and table B.2, in some cases the full answer is quoted if considered relevant and meaningful.

Questions	Subject 1	Subject 2	Subject 3
1 Age	43	32	28
2 Gender	Female	Female	Male
3 Hometown	Hunan	Hunan	Zhangjiang
4 Time in Shixia	1 year	10 years	3 years
5 Hukou status	Hunan rural	Hunan	Shenzhen Company Collective
6 Job	Delivery	Shop owner	White collar
7 Owner or tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
8 Accomodation	1 room for 2 people	1 bedroom / 1 living room for 2 people	Single room
9 Rent	1800 yuan / month	4000 yuan / month	2200 yuan / month
10 Commercial rent	4000 yuan / month	5000 - 6000 yuan / month	/
11 Alleys	Not easy	Used to it	Do not use them
12 Historical buildings	Not too aware	Not too aware	Yes, the Diaolou
13 Missing functions	No needs (does not go out)	Nothing in particular	Activity square
14 Social / spatial lack	/	Fewer and fewer people	Social activities
15 Tight community?	<i>"It isn't, everyone comes to Shenzhen to work and make money, there isn't much contact."</i>	No	No
16 First impression	Many people	Crowded	The handhaske buildings
17 Pros vs Cons	High rent	/	Cheap rent vs poor public conditions
18 Idea on demolition	Demolition = development	Demolition = development	Troublesome, it means moving out
19 Is it home to you?	No	Yes	No
20 Shixia character	/	/	/

Table B.1
Interviews to Subjects 1, 2, 3

Appendix B Survey on the life in Shixia

Questions	Subject 4	Subject 5	Subject 6
1 Age	36	46	26
2 Gender	Female	Female	Male
3 Hometown	Jiangxi	Shantou	Hunan
4 Time in Shixia	8 years	12 years	2 years
5 Hukou status	Jiangxi	Shantou	Hunan
6 Job	Mother	Shopkeeper	Delivery guy
7 Owner or tenant	Tenant	Tenant	Tenant
8 Accomodation	2 bedrooms / 1 living room for 3 people	2 bedrooms / 1 living room for 4 people	Single room
9 Rent	4500 yuan / month	4300 yuan / month	1800 yuan / month
10 Commercial rent	/	5000 yuan / month	/
11 Alleys	Do not use them	Used to it	Frequently for work
12 Historical buildings	No	Knows them	Not much
13 Missing functions	Activities for kids	High demand ones	<i>"There is no place to rest, there is no place to rest after delivery"</i>
14 Social / spatial lack	Activities for kids	Nothing	<i>"There is no sense of belonging"</i>
15 Tight community?	Sort of	More or less	So and so
16 First impression	/	Strangers	Better than othe urban villages
17 Pros vs Cons	Convenient but bad conditions	/	/
18 Idea on demolition	Demolition = development	Demolition = development	Demolition is development but memories are lost
19 Is it home to you?	<i>"It must be home, after so many years living here, the kids also have been studying here for a long time. If you are expelled you will have to move, and it would be troublesome for your children to study"</i>	<i>"I have lived here so many years and sometimes haven't gone back home for New Year. If you get expelled you might go back to your hometown and not live in Shenzhen, and that would make your children to work very hard for themselves"</i>	No
20 Shixia character	/	Neighborhood feeling	/

Table B.2
Interviews to Subjects 4, 5, 6

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声明

本人郑重声明:所提交的学位论文,是本人在导师指导下,独立进行研究工作所取得的成果。尽我所知,除文中已注明引用的内容外,本学位论文的研究成果不包含任何他人享有著作权的内容。对本论文所涉及的研究工作做出贡献的其他个人和集体,均已在文中以明确方式表明。

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论文选择深圳的城中村复兴更新作为研究议题，选择石厦村作为具体的研究对象，从社会和遗产两个视角进行研究设计，选题具有理论和现实意义。

论文基于对深圳城市发展演变的梳理，分析了城中村的诞生及其空间和社会特点，以及城中村复兴更新的成功案例；进而选择石厦村作为具体对象，系统分析了村落的发展历史和社会构成，并对村落的空间现状进行了比较深入的形态分析，从中总结石厦村在社会和遗存两个层面的特点，在此基础上提出以新旧融合为基调的村庄更新设计方案和对策，具有创新性。

论文结构完整，逻辑清晰，文字通畅，图表规范。论文研究表明作者拥有扎实的基础理论和专业知识，具有较强的独立研究和设计能力。

论文达到硕士学位论文水平，同意安排论文答辩。
